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THE FORTY FOOTSTEPS.

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BY

JANE AND ANNA MARIA PORTER.

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COMING OUT;

A TALE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY

MISS ANNA MARIA PORTER.

" What mighty ills from small beginnings flow!"



COMING OUT.

It was near the middle of March, when, as Alicia found herself seated by the side of Lady Donnington in her flying travelling chaise, she comforted herself by thinking, that as her father had been gone four months, and had promised to return as quickly as possible, she might hope that her splendid captivity would soon be ended. She thought he could not be so callous to her distressed delicacy as her mother was; and trusting therefore to his consideration of her situation for a quick recall to Castle Barry, forced herself into more than usual complacent attention to her fellow-traveller's conversation.

VOL. II.

Conversation, however, it was not. Lady Donnington's tête-d-têtes with any one she believed completely subjugated were of a very unceremonious kind: she spoke when she pleased, and what she pleased; broke off when she pleased; did or did not answer, just as it suited her humour or her purpose; let down or pulled up windows and blinds without enquiring the wishes of her companion; in short, testified the most magnanimous contempt for all the courtesies of life, upon the strength of her public character alone.

In snatches of talk and snatches of sleep on the part of Lady Donnington, the road was got over as far as Dorking, after which the remainder of their journey was performed almost silently:—the one slept and the other ruminated. London noise, business, and bustle, roused up both the travellers.

As they drove rapidly through Hyde Park at six o'clock, whirling the March dust in clouds, first about the numerous equestrians galloping in the same course,

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and then round the crowded equipages crawling up and down the drive between Piccadilly and Cumberland Gate, windows let down — hands kissed — voices calling out — horses checked; — such were the various welcomings which Alicia saw bestowed upon Lady Donnington, as their light post chariot flew past unnumbered belles and beaux, in spite of its lady's indolent exclamations against her hard-hearted postillions, whom "neither friend nor foe could stop."

As she chose to drive to her brother's house (where she alighted a moment) ere she was set down at her own residence in Grosvenor square, Alicia was taken a round which was not unamusing. Every elegant street through which they drove was thronged with well-dressed people on foot or in carriages, returning from the parks or going out to dinner: the busier quarters swarmed with hackney coaches and stage coaches; with hurrying feet and eager faces; with parcel-carriers and window gazers. The shops were gaily full of ornamental ma-

pleasure and business, wealth and comfort, was diffused over all she saw of the capital, that even this thorough lover of peace and privacy could not but feel a generous glow of sympathy and exultation. There was evidently, she thought, a quickening principle of activity and utility here, which redeemed the portion of time given to amusement. At Brighton every face and every habit seemed to proclaim that the people were idlers, and life deliberately left running to waste.

Here, the existence of different classes, and equally happy classes, was strikingly shown by the great variety of mien and apparel of the persons and houses passed; none less than decent, the greatest proportion far above that character. Alicia certainly would not have liked a whole city of such streets as Regent street; for from such she must have known that the labouring poor would be banished: but her taste was delighted with the splendour of all the new buildings, and the greatness of their design; and aware that the

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royal mind had studied to combine utility with magnificence, she lent herself to pleasurable emotion without apprehension of being wrong.

Lady Donnington was no sooner known to be in London, than every creature resident there who had ever been privileged in doing so, hastened to renew their neglected charters with every demonstration of unshaken fidelity. Her Ladyship's season at Brighton had been too brilliant for any thing else to be thought of except Donnington House, and Lord St. Lawrence's expected parties through her influence. Report had said so much of the young Earl's devotion at another shrine, that every body was dying to see the "Miss Barry without a sixpence," whom it was expected he would soon "lead to the hymeneal altar."

Some of Alicia's indefatigable admirers and enviers, together with those of Lord St. Lawrence, had already bestirred themselves so effectually to find out every thing about her since their removal to London, that they had completely

established the fact of her brother's debts being unpaid; and, what was of more consequence to her individual character, that her father's estates were "desperately dipped," therefore that he could not give any money down with her; and that she had a silly mother in Paris who was going about talking of "her daughter's great conquests."

To imagine that a beautiful girl so educated and so circumstanced was aiming at a high marriage, was not a very uncharitable conclusion; such circumstances at least warranted caution. Mrs. Barry had blabbed her expectations, and read extracts to Parisian acquaintance from letters written to Miss Ponsonby concerning Alicia's admirers; and poor Alicia's excessive elegance of personal decorations and appendages was hastily concluded to be entirely her own choice: prudent parents, therefore, decided from the first, that they would keep shy of her; and men whose habits of extravagance were even now beyond their means, or with whom a hackneyed career of

COMING OUT

dissipation had staled even the power of sense, excused their rising indifference to such beauty and sweetness, by confessing their belief, that "Miss Barry was upon the look out for a fortune."

Thus Alicia made her début in London to a prejudiced and ungracious audience.

Yet was she admired, crowded round, followed in public places, dressed after, paragraphed in newspapers, and confounded every day by fabricated prints of her lovely face in magazines and shop-windows.

Alicia could not be deaf and blind to such oblations: but did they give her happiness?— Did she find them an equivalent for the bosom peace, the respected privacy, the home enjoyments of many who passed through crowds unnoticed, only to retire into the very embraces of family affection and of conscious usefulness?—Did they deaden her heart to the earnest voice of her friend Rose's letters, or to the remembrance of Jocelyn Hastings's perpetual exhortations against flow-

ing down willingly with the tide of the world?

No. - Serious thoughts, nay, saddening thoughts, had of late been forced upon her; and if ever she considered Lord St. Lawrence's marked attentions without dismay, it was only when she believed him one of the few who would gladly enter into her views of a life looking to higher objects and to simpler pleasures. The surprise of novelty, and the enchantment of ignorance, which had first kept her from detecting the hollowness of many a pleasure and many a person, had ceased : - she was beginning to understand half sentences, and to construe looks: she saw that where one half of a room was admiring, the other half was ridiculing or misrepresenting her; that some young ladies had disingenuous reasons for affecting her society; some married women mischievous ones; and that some of her most professing male adorers worshipped her because it was the fashion

Though happily unconscious that her

family's circumstances were in truth unsuitable to the station in which they had placed her, she felt little enjoyment amongst scenes and characters which she now considered with apprehension:—neither the persons nor the pleasures were the hurtless things she had once fancied them; she felt their power to injure, and she wished to get away from them, ere they should have taken the same hold upon her which she found they did upon others.

With this revolution of feeling, Alicia's appearance and manner underwent a change: — she still blushed when looked at or complimented, and she still manifested unmanageable emotion whenever her sensibility was roused by music or acting, or her modesty shocked by a ballet-dancer; but she exhibited no other signs of newness in the world. She had no longer the animatedly enjoying look, the eager delighted air of youthful expectation; an expression of sweet endurance, or rather of pensive self-sacrifice, softened her beauty, and made it

doubtful whether the tenderest of sentiments did not give her eyes their thrilling charm.

Whether it were that Lady Donnington really allowed her more of her own way, or that Alicia had learnt unconsciously how to obtain it, is doubtful: be it what it might, she did in fact take a firmer ground of conduct. Nothing induced her to admit that she could play or sing beyond a fireside, or garden-seat circle; she never suffered herself to be beguiled into the mere appearance of a flirtation, or to exhibit herself behind the stalls of a ladies' bazaar; she excused herself as often as possible from appearing in the park; she wore the least remarkable of fashionable hats; and so far from seeking to display her lovely figure, refused riding in Hyde Park; wholly discontinued the Grecian quadrille, and withstood every temptation to waltz. With some discerning persons this conduct had weight; her character finally made its way with them, and they would gladly have become her friends, had not

Lady Donnington's habits and temper placed an insuperable bar to their intimacy with a protegée of hers.

But exceedingly ill-natured persons maintained that "Miss Barry was a finished actress, admirably prompted; that her retenue was artifice, her delicacy calculation: they were perfectly sure she would end by becoming a countess."

Lord St. Lawrence appeared very well inclined to gratify them. Whenever he was not in his place at the House, or deeply engaged in other business, he was to be found wherever Miss Barry went, or was expected.

Since her appearance in London, he had fully made up his mind "to woo her in good earnest." He had watched her in public, he had studied her in private; he had collected and collated every jarring opinion and tale concerning her; he had then endeavoured to sift truth from falsehood, and he had come to this conclusion, — that she was what she seemed, artless, yet mentally cultivated; sweet and home-keeping by in-

clination; not easily wrought to love, but of a character to take a deep and abiding stamp from true affection and trusted virtue. Such a character was of all others the one best suited to Lord St. Lawrence's individual views of happiness in marriage, though he frequently owned to himself with a wringing sigh, that he ill deserved such happiness. Miss Barry's thorough gentility of birth justified any man of fortune in dispensing with wealth in addition to other endowments: Lord St. Lawrence thought he might well abate much more, for the pure heart to which he pretended.

Once resolved, he ceased to throw any cloak over his purpose, or to hold back his impetuous inclination; and, conscious of his own power of interesting, he was not very blamable for feeling more transports than apprehension, when he observed a softening shade stealing over that fawn-like animation of look and manner which had distinguished Alicia at her coming out.

It was impossible for him to attribute

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the change to any preference for another. He saw all the persons she saw; he noted all she noticed; not one of these persons, either by his approach or his retreat, caused her the slightest visible emotion. Yet Alicia's heart was seen to beat quicker than ordinary sometimes; her looks were often disordered, and her manner irresolute: it was when Lord St. Lawrence himself drew near her, or when she caught some malicious eye observing them together.

She began to shrink from him, especially in the garden of the square where it was Lady Donnington's custom to walk occasionally for half an hour before a late or after an early dinner, and where he generally contrived to join them, by having, luckily, to cross the square at the precise moment, either on foot or horseback.

Lord St. Lawrence further knew, that Alicia had never been taken out by her family until the very night he first beheld her; and, knowing from the Mr. Donovans who the men were by whom she was subsequently surrounded, was assured that no impression inimical to his hopes could have been made on her ere she came to Eugland.

Jocelyn Hastings's visit to Mount Pleasant had been so short, and himself so entirely unknown to such men as the Honourable Mr. Donovans, that his name had never been breathed to Lord St. Lawrence, Alicia herself rarely uttering it; as every month that passed, rendered her more painfully sure that she had better cease to think of Jocelyn with the deep interest of early regard. Thus it was not surprising, that so admired and popular a man as Lord St. Lawrence should hope, and perhaps believe, that his happy destiny was to make the first, and he trusted the only impression upon this youthful heart; nay, that he should suspect such impression was already made, and that Alicia's altered manner was the consequence of a conscious prepossession fearful of betraying itself.

It cannot be denied, that men are

entering she found him already there.

frequently deceived, by the merely constitutional habit of blushing, in the women they seek to please, or by what is simply called nervousness. Alicia Barry was innocently guilty of both these modes of deceiving; in addition to which, she was in truth agitated by contradictory wishes on the subject of Lord St. Lawrence.

She was every day more sensible to his generous attachment; she was continually pressed in his favour by her mother's and Flora's letters; she certainly felt a gentle interest in him growing upon her heart; yet she shrunk from his attentions, principally because she now suspected they had been calculated upon from the first by her relations, and that too many lookers on were ready to accuse her of a systematic siege of his affections, and what was worse, of his coronet.

"People tell me you live in my opera box, Lord St. Lawrence," said Lady Donnington one evening, as on entering she found him already there. "I only hope you are not in love with Pasta."

"Certainly not in love with Pasta," was his Lordship's half-smiling, halfembarrassed answer, his eyes instinctively turning to Alicia. The sind nov as hism

"Do mind what you are about, my Lord!" cried Lady Charles Everleigh, who was of the party: " you are tearing off loads of Miss Barry's trimming with that horrid chair." Lord St. Lawrence apologized. Alicia made the usual confused assurance that it was of no consequence, while taking the seat he presented.

"Oh! - of no consequence to you young ladies with immense fortunes," resumed Lady Charles. "Such poor girls as the Miss Everleighs can't afford Paris gowns every day."

"Then I am sure I ought not to pretend to them," was Alicia's gentle 19984

"O, Miss Barry, you may pretend to any thing!" chimed in Miss Everleigh with marked emphasis.

"Surely not, when I protest I am never likely to have an immense fortune," Alicia said.

"O Miss Barry!" again exclaimed Miss Everleigh, "with such a French maid as you have outbid all the world for: and have not you a page too?"

There was no standing the derisive tone in which this satirical enquiry was made. Alicia changed colour, doubtful whether it were most honourable to herself, to notice or not to notice its evident purpose. Lady Donnington ended the matter at once, by as sarcastically telling Miss Everleigh, that unless she had one of her brothers to propose for Miss Barry, she could not comprehend what her last question meant. Miss Everleigh, puzzled between conjecturing whether Lady Donnington intended to say that Mr. Everleigh was upon the look-out for a great fortune, or that he was only worthy of being Miss Barry's page, did not immediately find a reply; while her mother, darting a black look at the fair

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cause of this skirmish, abruptly attacked Lord St. Lawrence.

"I suppose you know, my Lord, I am not asked to your ball to-morrow."

"I beg your Ladyship's pardon, but I believe I am not going to give a ball."

"O yes!" with a gasping laugh of vexation; "look at Lady Donnington, if her face is to tell you what people are invited to, at your house. I won't know who sends out your cards, for whatever it is to be; all I know is, that when I got to town yesterday, every body was talking of your concert and ball, and I had no invitation."

Lord St. Lawrence hastened to appease her wrath by assuring her she was to have one, — that there must be some mistake, &c.

"Well! and what do you give us, my Lord, after all?" asked her cross Ladyship, somewhat mollified.

"Not much more, I fear, than my rooms to walk about in, and find fault with," said his Lordship, in a tone of provoking banter. Alicia could not help giving him a gentle look of reminder; he had so lately agreed that it was wrong to irritate the irritable!— He bowed his head in silence, and, though he smiled, an ingenuous glow of colour came into his face.

"Oh! I hope, my Lord, you will use your great interest with Miss Barry," exclaimed Miss Everleigh, fixing her bold eyes on both as she spoke, "to dance in the Grecian Quadrille. We are all dying to see it; every body told us at Brighton, that Mercandotti's Bollero, ages ago, was not half so good to see as Miss Barry in the Grecian Quadrille."

Lord St. Lawrence's personal pride was wounded by this side-stroke at the object of his preference, as well as his delicacy; and greatly disgusted at the double ill-nature couched in this mention of another fortunate beauty, quietly asked whether Miss Everleigh was not singular, in considering dancing at private houses as an exhibition, rather than a social amusement?

Miss Everleigh felt the point of this question, and reddened: — her mother had a shaft ready at her service. "What a likeness!" she exclaimed, levelling her glass at the stage — "one of these chorus singers is so like the Marchioness Isola Bella! I beg your pardon, my Lord."

"For what, Lady Charles?"

Did not I lean back upon your fingers?" The first query was made by Lord St. Lawrence certainly with a hurried nervous voice that did not appear suited to so simple an enquiry; the answer was given in a tone of studied artlessness by Lady Charles Everleigh, who knew well that Lord St. Lawrence's hand was not resting on her chair, and that he must be aware she was conscious of this.

But Lord St. Lawrence could not—dared not, court explanation now as he had so lately been doing: he mastered a startling sigh, a sigh tributary to past misdeeds and present aspirations after a new and better life, while Miss Everleigh, who was seated in front with Alicia, whis-

sively crowded in and crowded and

pered, laughingly, "That was too cruel of mamma." - home bear one not coup

Before Alicia was aware of it, she had asked why it was cruel, and received the still lower answer, that the chorus-singer resembled a certain Italian married woman with whom his lordship was known to be successfully enamoured when abroad.

Lady Donnington, who had not been able to resist the amusement of seeing Lord St. Lawrence disconcerted (considering men's conduct with most indulgent indifference), now recovered the command of her muscles, and telling Lady

mand of her muscles, and telling Lady Charles that the poor Garcias were screaming themselves hoarse in vain, besought her whole party to be silent, and hear the very prettiest music of the opera.

This call was effectual; especially as Lord St. Lawrence was not himself yet, and Alicia was somewhat disturbed by what Miss Everleigh had whispered. Both mother and daughter were awhile silenced; and before they could venture upon a new charge, several men successively crowded in and crowded out of the

box; with them Miss Everleigh began her usual open flirtations, while they were staring down the sweetly-varying eyes of Alicia, or seeking to pique her into notice of them by affected attention to Miss Everleigh. — Thus ended the evening.

The day for Lord St. Lawrence's first great assembly now arrived: the party had never been announced as a ball: it was understood to include music, quadrilles afterwards, and promenading through his lordship's fine gallery, or rather suite of rooms, hung with paintings collected by such of his ancestors as had transmitted to him their passion for the fine arts.

Alicia was not familiar with fine pictures; but her eye and her taste had been educated by Jocelyn Hastings's drawings, and by his remarks upon engravings after eminent masters; so that, although she was yet ignorant of those masters' individual style, she felt their different excellencies the moment their works were presented to her; and as she was passing through Lord St. Lawrence's rooms,

COMING OUT.

paused before various chefs d'œuvre in a perfect rapture of admiration.

Lord St. Lawrence could with difficulty command himself sufficiently to receive the rest of his company when he saw her thus doing public homage to what he was most proud of in his many possessions. It was a sympathy of taste which thrilled him to intoxication; and as soon as propriety permitted he hurried to her side, leaving Lady Donnington to act lady patroness with the greater triumph, because Princess Azorinski was to be one of the guests.

Having gratified himself by leading his fair companion to one or two of his favourite pictures, and watched her deep feeling of their beauties, he confessed a collector's vanity by way of excuse for praying her to honour his gallery by coming to see it some day in quiet, and by a better light than that of wax-lights. Alicia was recalled by this proposal to the recollection that she ought neither to bestow all her own attention upon the pictures, nor to take Lord St. Lawrence from his

company; and she said something about not monopolizing him. He said something too in reply, confusedly, whisperingly:—it confused her; yet it was neither distinct enough nor explicit enough to warrant notice; and, seeming not to hear it, she rejoined Lady Donnington.

As she mixed with the throng going into the concert-room, she was surprised by the buzz of "a lottery!" and the request, from a pretty child with a basket, to take a ticket thence at random. She followed every other lady's example, in first drawing out a ticket, and then claiming her prize of another little creature, whose office was to distribute various gifts, from a single artificial rose, to articles of jewellery.

In this gallant lottery, Lord St. Lawrence had left every prize but one to be dispensed at random: — whatever ticket Miss Barry presented, was to have a settled return. She drew a bracelet: one of exquisite workmanship was held out to her. Quite unconscious of its value (believing it an imitation of precious stones), she

admired the taste of the ornament, and suffered the child to fasten it round her arm, as he had done the waist clasps or brooches of other ladies.

The bracelet was composed of massy shamrocks in emeralds, clasped by the rose and thistle in gems of appropriate colours. As it was put on, a whisper went round of "the union;" and Lord Lewis Rivers, who now nearly detested Miss Barry, because she scarcely ever noticed him, had the pitifulness to prompt some lady to ask, in a tone of banter, whether the little rose-crowned child was meant for Cupid or Hymen.

Indignant at such mean attempts to tease him out of a serious feeling, and allawakened to hope and joy by Alicia's artless admiration of this symbol of her country, Lord St. Lawrence answered, animatedly, "I wish Miss Barry would determine the question." Miss Barry, however, was gone forward; and no one that followed had the slightest inclination to put the question to her. It was now evident, most people thought, that

Lord St. Lawrence had either proposed already, or meant to propose immediately. Struggles to obtain his particular notice therefore were useless; and the next best thing to getting Lord St. Lawrence for a husband, or a son-in-law, being to get to his wife's parties, every body who cared for pleasant parties began a new tone; and for the remainder of the evening Alicia became an object of marked attention.

In the concert-room the most exquisite music was given, just as long as lively admiration may be sustained, without exhausting the powers or palling the taste of the hearers. Alicia was delighted with finding much of the old composers' instrumental pieces mixed with those of the modern school; and as Lord St. Lawrence occasionally thanked his professional performers, or requested some slight variation in the order of songs and concertos, she could not but do justice to the graceful courtesy with which he preserved both the singers and himself in their due relations to each other, yet

showed the former how much he respected talent.

In the ball-room, the pains Lord St. Lawrence took to infuse a real spirit of gaiety into the dancing, and so take from it all appearance of exhibition, was felt by Alicia while yielded to without remark by giddier heads and hearts. He was even adroit enough to have the Grecian Quadrille danced, without importuning her to share in it.

It would be absurd to say that a gentle girl of eighteen, with a heart to which love had never been whispered by the only breath that would have found there a slumbering flame to waken — it would be absurd to say that such a heart did not warm and throb under the soft touch of so many tender flatteries — indeed, so lively and so pleasurable was her mixed glow of gratitude and approbation, that Alicia's sweet eyes beamed with it; and something of complacent expectation stole into her breast. At that moment her attention was called to the entrance of the saloon, by whispers buzzing round.

Every one was observing the meeting of Lady Donnington and Princess Azorinski for the first time, as the receiver and the received. Lady Donnington looked too triumphant; Madame Azorinski neutralized her elation at once by an air of perfect good humour and undisturbed dignity. After the introduction of an instant by Lord St. Lawrence, the Princess hurried forward in her usual volatile way, noticing mere acquaintance with that graceful ease which peculiarly distinguishes high-bred foreigners, and talking gaily to friends.

Alicia once more heard those musical tones and mirthful laugh which had charmed her at Brighton; and when her acquaintance was soon after claimed for Madame Azorinski by Lord St. Lawrence, she felt that there was real kindness in the frank smile and out-stretching hand with which the former welcomed their mutual presentation. Aware of the Polish lady's rank, though she did not shrink from such greeting with ungentlewomanly distance, her looks showed

that she knew herself honoured by it, as well as flattered.

Lord St. Lawrence, desirous either of propitiating his lady patroness, or of leaving these new acquaintances to themselves, hastened to Lady Donnington, and thus sealed her triumph of being first, where Princess Azorinski would not, under any circumstances, as a foreigner, have consented to play the leading part.

To talk of the person who had brought them acquainted, the moment he quitted them, was a thing of course, and in less than a quarter of an hour the Princess had playfully said all the good she thought of him, with a freedom and earnestness which would have told any other woman than Alicia that she believed herself addressing his future wife. She regretted that she and Lady Donnington had not visited each other whilst at Brighton, since now, that she and the Prince were returning to the Continent, she might not hope to see Miss Barry again for years, unless the latter would

promise to include Poland in any tour she might hereafter make abroad.

The broken English and the silvery voice, the open-hearted expression which white teeth and cheerful eyes gave to the Princess's countenance, were so charming to Alicia, that Lord St. Lawrence, who was afterwards told by his Polish friend what the latter had been listening to, was pardonable for attributing the heightened glow of her lovely cheeks to the subject rather than to the manner.

Madame Azorinski did not stay longer than an hour: she had appeared at his party because Lord St. Lawrence had entreated her to do so, and because she wished to know Miss Barry, and because (as she was to set off for Dover the very next morning) Lady Donnington and she would meet no more in England; but as she had no desire to irritate a rival, she shook off the little knot of pleasant persons whom her happy air ever attracted and detained, and repeating a cordial invitation to Alicia, sportively said she had

an impatient husband at home, who meant to be in his carriage by day-break the following morning; then, kissing her hand with a succession of smiles, left the field to Lady Donnington.

Alicia saw her depart with an emotion of regret. She looked after her as she had often done upon bright clouds at sunset, grieving that they could not be detained. What the Princess had said of Lord St. Lawrence had completely banished the disagreeable impression left by Miss Everleigh's whisper at the opera: and though Alicia might have been led to pause by remembering the Princess's summing up - "however, I don't tell to you, my Lord St. Lawrence is de one perfect man," - the amiable credulity of youth taught her to credit only the fairest testimony to another's character, whilst, with disinterested benevolence, she rejoiced that he was only pronounced to be not perfect by one likely to judge him fairly. Such thoughts were put to flight by Sir Edgar Trevor claiming her hand for a quadrille. After dancing with him

she sat down, listening to and laughing at his joyous talk about boat-races and gymnastics, when he suddenly begged leave to look at her lottery bracelet.

She took it from her arm.

"Wise as ever!" exclaimed the young Baronet, examining it. "After all, I don't know real stones from sham, which is unlucky, as I have a bet with Lewis River's about it. He says these are paste. I will have it, for St. Lawrence's credit, that they are gentlemanly emeralds. — Which of us are right, Miss Barry?"

Alicia confessed equal ignorance of gems, deciding, however, that those in debate were false stones, because the bracelet was only one of two hundred prizes. "O! don't be too sure of that!" was Sir Edgar's remark. "St. Lawrence is a capital fellow!—he knows how to make a present—and we all know how to understand it."

The good-humoured roguishness of the boy's look brought the colour into Alicia's cheek. — "Now don't keep on looking so awfully pretty, Miss Barry," he

resumed with hilarity, yet no impertinence, "or I may get up and run St. Lawrence through with this fan of yours, for want of a better weapon. I was getting as desperate about you as all the other fellows are:—faith, I was stark mad on your account for a whole fortnight at Brighton; but when I saw St. Lawrence going to run, I backed out as well as I could. Now, don't take off your bracelet with such a whisk of horror! it isn't a ring; it hasn't married you yet to——"

"Sir Edgar — pray — for Heaven's sake!—" Alicia looked breathlessly about her lest Lord St. Lawrence himself were near. The young hussar tried to prevent her from leaving her seat. "If you don't keep still, Miss Barry," he laughed out, "I shall tear your gown. Now, pray, what have I said so very alarming? I don't tax you with caring a straw for Lord St. Lawrence or for any one of us. I only say that there never was a more chivalric way of making a declar-

ation than this ingenious device of the union.?

Alicia repeated the word, ignorant of its connexion with her bracelet; she had thought, indeed, of Ireland when looking at the shamrocks, but remembered neither England nor Scotland when making the rose and thistle meet in the clasp. She now caught the meaning of the device, and, remembering the expression of Lord St. Lawrence's countenance as he stood aloof watching the distribution of his prizes, a burning blush overspread her face. Sir Edgar Trevor's spirits soberized. "I hope I have not been abominably impertinent, Miss Barry," he said: "I am a sad mad fellow, saying every thing that comes uppermost. If you cut me after this, I shall be done for. Here, Lady Donnington, - most divine, omnipotent Lady Donnington! - do stop a moment, and patch up a peace between me and Miss Barry!"

Lady Donnington's sole answer was ordering him to go and seek for a dancing couple who had wandered beyond

her ken. "Come, Miss Barry," she said, with a peculiar air of triumph and graciousness, "I wish you would waltz this once, to oblige me: it is really much too absurd your going on refusing to do what every body else does; — but only this once! to distinguish my night. Here, my Lord (beckoning Lord St. Lawrence), there is to be a waltz before supper; Miss Barry will waltz with you."

Lord St. Lawrence half approached; Alicia's look, movement, and exclamation stopped him. "I must not press it," he said; "Miss Barry dislikes it so much — and — I scarcely think any man would wish to see her dislike it less."

"O mercy!" exclaimed his lady patroness, shrugging up her shoulders—"if the other young ladies did but hear! Now, as I am not a young lady, come and waltz with me!" So saying, with perfect sang-froid, Lady Donnington carried off her partner, and was seen the next moment whirling round with him in that most graceful yet most

doubted of dances. Alicia could not but be sensible to Lord St. Lawrence's delicacy, remembering, as she did, his admiration of the slow and rapid waltzing which formed a part of the Grecian Quadrille. He, like herself, obviously liked to contemplate the exquisite grace of that slow movement and the undulating sway of the linked figures; but he, as evidently, gave the free rein to admiration only when the dancers were all of the long-robed sex, as Sir Edgar Trevor sometimes denominated women.

She was touched by such consideration and such sympathy; and, though incessantly surrounded by persons either persecuting her to waltz, or harassing her with undisguised devotion, she could not escape from serious thought of what all had tended to throughout this momentous evening.

It was impossible for her to forget what Sir Edgar Trevor had been saying, and Lord St. Lawrence looking; the very pressure of the bracelet upon her arm recalled it. She knew that, directly after entering his rooms, the earl had engaged her hand for the first set of quadrilles; and that in presenting her to Princess Azorinski, he had said something expressive of a strong interest in both:—but one inference could be fairly drawn from these things.

While Alicia pondered on them with fluttered thoughts (too fluttered for steady conclusions), she felt that she was in the midst of splendour, rank, and elegant pleasure; and that every one of such envied advantages might hereafter be offered to her acceptance. It may not be denied, that although with far different notions of using station and fortune than most other women would have had, she did not contemplate this vision without momentary dazzlement. Yet until this evening, when Lord St. Lawrence's delicate care of her delicacy, and Madame Azorinski's lavish praises had penetrated somewhat below the surface of her gentle breast, she had never imagined the possibility of his serious addresses, without shrinking.

Thrilled as she was now, or rather agitated by the imagination that she was likely to be one day mistress of all she saw around, there was nothing venal in the passiveness with which she yielded to the impression. Wholly to leave out friends and family in a woman's views of marriage, is rather selfish than disinterested. When free affections may be directed towards an object approved by duty and reason, it is surely commendable to endeavour so to direct them. Sordidness consists in sacrificing an existing affection to interest; or in consenting to mingle beings with an unworthy and unloved person for the sake of situation.

To please her parents by such an alliance, to secure to herself the amplest means of blessing and benefiting many; of lavishing gifts and advantages and enjoyments upon Flora; of recalling her exiled brother; of having interest, influence, and an overflowing purse ever ready for the use of Rose Beresford, her children, and her husband; of showing Jocelyn Hastings that his instructions

had taught one heart how to employ the awful talents of wealth and nobility worthily:—to do, and have all this, was what moved Alicia on the present occasion; and if a touch of sadness mingled with a sense of grateful pleasure, its source was unsuspected by herself; nor was it deep enough to have proved dangerous to her peace, had she on that instant given her hand to Lord St. Lawrence at the altar.

After such musings, when she took her seat at the supper-table, where the young Earl sat down in common with others, and found herself therefore placed beside him; an air of consciousness, in spite of her efforts to the contrary, was diffused over every thing she did and said. How earnestly at the moment did she wish for that command over every feeling, as well as look, which in better seasons she had often been revolted by, when contemplating it in others, feeling then that it imparted an air of finesse, or argued a coldness unfavourable to their characters!

Bashful consciousness, however, is always interesting, whether mere maidenly modesty, or a preferring sentiment is its source: unlike triumphant vanity, it seems to intreat for, and it obtains, sympathy. Alicia's downcast eyes and raised complexion were not seen without emotion. Many a mother looked on her with true maternal hearts, believing her worthy of the high rank to which Lord St. Lawrence's choice would elevate her; consequently, giving up the hope of him for their daughters, without seeking to find a fault in the successful candidate: and not a few young men, with sensibilities yet unwithered by the world, stifling a sigh, wished it had been their fortunate lot to have had titles and fortunes to lay at her feet, and to privilege them in giving way to the inclination she inspired.

Some there were, however, like Lord Lewis Rivers, who found a malicious pleasure in heightening her distress, by whispers and half-laughs, and side glances; by affected compliments, and dexterous impertinencies: others, who had already got to care no more about Miss Barry than about the beauty of the last season, whether dead or living, went on with their small flirtations unheeding.

Amongst the gentler sex, too, there were frowning faces and poisoned tongues. Lady Charles Everleigh headed this party of malcontents; contriving to annoy both Alicia and Lord St. Lawrence so successfully, by taunting questions and rude observations, rather striking at Alicia's family than at herself, that it required all the young Earl's practice of keeping his temper, to prevent him from saying a rude thing at his own table.

Alicia felt that offence was meant by Lady Charles; but being ignorant of what every body else knew (her father's embarrassments), was happily preserved from the pain, the resentment, nay, the mortification which Lord St. Lawrence experienced.

When his party broke up, ere Lady Donnington, as she said, broke her baton of command, the Earl in walking with her through the ante-rooms, intreated her not to let Miss Barry forget her promise of honouring his gallery with a second view by daylight. Alicia was now rather inclined to evade this promise, but finding from himself, that he was going for a week to his estates in Wiltshire, she consented to accompany Lady Donnington to see his pictures during his absence. He was obliged to receive the emotion of her manner as a qualifier of so mortifying an arrangement.

The next morning having got the Lives of the Painters to look over, by way of information concerning one or two Spanish artists, whose finest pictures were in the St. Lawrence gallery, Alicia begged for the forenoon to herself, and actually remained at home while Lady Donnington went with a large early party on the

water to Richmond.

Although, since her settlement in London, our heroine had found an hour now and then which she could devote to reading and writing (and when at Brighton, an incessantly out-of-door life had wasted every moment), yet in London

don, too, a stating nowe was for ever in her ears, starting away the power of attention; and a perpetual giddiness of expectation or apprehension about visits and visitors, notes and messages, kept her mind in a state of such nervous anxiety, that no activity, no steadiness was left for the prosecution of better things. Self-convicted of a criminal acquiescence in this ruinous habit, she turned to the account of Velasquez, and was deeply absorbed in the analysis of his style, when a letter was delivered to her from her mother.

Mrs. Barry's epistle was couched in so unusual a strain, that her amazed child had to read it a second time ere she could make herself entirely sure that it came from that well-known hand: its contents were a confused, yet decided avowal of being perplexed how to meet her husband when he should return, unless Alicia could tell her that Lord St. Lawrence or some other person of fortune and consequence "had spoken out." Mrs. Barry said she was now forced to

own that affection for her darling daughter, and anxiety to see her "well settled," had tempted her into a freer expenditure of money than, under present circumstances, was prudent to do, or could be approved by Colonel Barry; that he had long since written to say he found his West Indian estates in a very sad condition, owing to roguery (of course) in his agents; to the heavy drains made upon them by Marcus's late expensiveness; and that, consequently, they must all economize for the next year or two; that, unless Alicia positively put herself forward by way of encouraging Lord St. Lawrence to make a proposal, the whole thing might go off in a dawdle, and then all the difficulties Mrs. Barry had plunged herself into for Alicia's sake would be in a manner so many useless miseries and certain shames. She must now tell her daughter, that the last large sum consigned to Lady Donnington's stewardship for the London season was obtained by the pledge of Mrs. Barry's few diamonds to a French jeweller; an

act which the Colonel never would forgive, unless some great good luck were secured by it. Mrs. Barry, therefore, looked confidently "to her dear Ally's good heart, and high principles, and strict religious notions, and correct ideas of duty (learnt from that excellent daughter, Miss McManus), for the due return of all these maternal sacrifices. Now was the time to prove her duty and affection, and wish to save her mother from a husband's anger, since the Colonel was already on his way from Jamaica, not for Ireland, but for France, where the moment he joined his wife, certain explanations must be made."

Mrs. Barry further added, that, in consequence of Marcus's thoughtlessness and the temporary embarrassment of their estates, Colonel Barry could not give his girls any present fortunes, therefore Alicia must make the best of her present opportunity of marrying well; since, perhaps, they never might again be able to afford her such a splendid set out.

This secret, however, the careful

mother exhorted her to keep concealed from Lady Donnington and every other person; no one, she said, having any business with family affairs except the family themselves. "If a right person proposed, Alicia ought to accept him at once, without reference to her fortune, young ladies never being expected to know any thing of such matters; the gentlemen enquired about that afterwards; and if a man were excessively in love (as Mrs. Barry heard from every creature Lord St. Lawrence was), and had an enormous income himself, he never would break off after things had gone any length. Thus it would be Alicia's own fault, and the most beinous sin against gratitude and filial affection, if she did not marry a man able and willing to free her father and mother from their pecuniary difficulties."

How easily are the lessons of falseness and selfishness learned even by the weakest capacity! Mrs. Barry evinced no small progress in cunning, by these suggestions, and by the appeal she made to her poor

girl's tenderness and pity; but she had gone too far by her last exhortation. Alicia started from the proposition of thus deluding a generous heart; and for the moment, in which she fancied Lord St. Lawrence the victim of it, her whole soul was on his side.

And how did the entire sum of the letter appal and humiliate her! In it she saw all her misgivings justified: her unwillingness to let herself be dressed and exhibited, and carried about by Lady Donnington! her earnest wish of being permitted to abide by the habits and means of her parents only, and so taking her chance for a peaceful single or a happy married life! How solicitously did she strive not to see that her mother was unwise and unprincipled—that she herself was cruelly drawn upon to be grateful for the very things which she had so often and so pathetically remonstrated against!

To put herself forward; to conceal that she was not to have any fortune;

not to make Lord, St. Lawrence understand this, and that her father's affairs were embarrassed!—these concealments were as impossible to her, as to go on carelessly spending in the way Lady Donnington had hitherto spent for her.

Not that Alicia had even yet an idea of her family's real state, or a suspicion that her father was going to France because he might not venture his person in Ireland before certain arrangements were made with creditors there; she merely believed that his income was vexatiously straitened for a while by unusual demands and dishonest agents; therefore, at the end of a short vista of trouble, she still beheld Castle Barry, competence, and comfort.

Whilst she paused upon the passage which mentioned Mrs. Barry's pledge of her diamonds, and dread of her husband's displeasure, poor Alicia found her better purposes giving way. She was dismayed at this array of adverse obligations; and she felt all the cruelty, because she

strongly for the effect, of thating an iniquitous line of conduct proposed to her as the test of the most sacred duty.

But, happily, the instructions of Rose McManus (whose sacrifices to the command of honouring our parents had proved her right knowledge of it), and the deeper teaching of Jocelyn Hastings, were too fresh in her memory not to move her spirit to courageous resistance. The principle of truth was enjoined to her by a Parent of higher authority than any earthly one, however loved or honoured; and exclaiming, "O thank Heaven that I do not yet feel too much for Lord St. Lawrence!" she inwardly determined, by Heaven's assistance, not to deceive him should he indeed talk to her of marriage.

In her mother's letter there was no longer any of that deceptious indulgence with which she had hitherto beguiled her artless daughter. She never for a moment allowed her to suppose that she might return to Ireland as Alicia Barry: she must marry, and marry greatly. A bitter sense of her mother's

utter indifference to the possible state of her child's affections, and of her unconcern about that child's after performance of a wife's duties (thus unwillingly wedded), pressed painfully upon Alicia's heart: it was aggravated by the everrecurring thought that, instead of keeping in the same place with other private gentlemen's daughters, and taking the recreations of youth as they arose, she had been set upon a stage for show, held up for purchase, decorated to catch the eye; her very fortunes painted to delude and take in the unwary. Pleasures had been created for her; expenses courted; female intimacies denied; competition excited; every thing, in short, put into a sort of hot-bed to force forward what her parents wanted-a great marriage! At such a throng of distressful, disgraceful images, her eyes rained down with tears, and exclamations against her coveted, but now to her fatal, beauty burst from her lips. It was the trans the stones

Could Lady Donnington be in the secret of all this? At this hasty question

even Alicia's gentle eyes ceased to flow with patient suffering: filial respect had quenched resentment against her parents; but from another hand she could not brook such disgrace; and, as she fancied Lady Donnington's connivance possible, her indignation amounted to momentary abhorrence.

An instant's review of the past, however, cleared Lady Donnington of any purposed connivance: - in going every day to scenes of splendid gaiety, in casting aside every hour some new article of fashionable attire, and making her young companion do the same, Lady Donnington was merely pursuing her ordinary course in life. So far from taking pains to make a match for her lovely visitor, Lady Donnington professedly cared nothing about it; and since their first conversation concerning Lord St. Lawrence, had certainly never uttered more than a passing joke on the subject of his reported partiality. Alicia was thus obliged to acquit her either of intentional good or intentional harm, and to own,

with a fresh burst of tears, that her titled chaperon was not to blame for the extravagant mode of her appearance; since Mrs. Barry's letter testified that this leader of fashion had been led to imagine her young guest a girl of large fortune. Many a successive flood of tears shed, and her full heart relieved, Alicia could think more temperately of what was best to do, both to avoid future expenses and to recover her own respect.

She wrote then directly to her father in France, beseeching him, if he were already arrived there, to allow her instantly to join him, or to come for her; referring to her mother's general confession of pecuniary difficulties as the reason why she could not remain in London, where she must go on expending largely, unless permitted to speak plainly to Lady Donnington on the subject of family affairs. She added, that if in quitting England she should leave any one behind whose regard were worth wishing for, or indeed of a serious nature, that person would not like her the

less when he found she had acted justly; and if no such consequence followed, she could declare before Heaven, that she was conscious of no stronger desire than that of being suffered to go back to home and comparative privacy.

Alicia's timidly tender nature, ever fearful of giving pain, or infringing a duty, made her reluctant to state the extent of her hostility to the ambitious views of her dearest relatives; and closing her letter here, she addressed one of the same import, though written more at large, to her mother.

Of pride our young heroine had as little as any erring child of Adam has inherited; yet there was pride; — there was too anxious a care also of human opinion in her throbbing heart, when it turned dissatisfied from the witness within, that she was guiltless on this one occasion before Him who judges the inmost thoughts. She could not brook the idea of Lord St. Lawrence fancying hereafter, that she had made one in a plot to entrap his affections: without

loving him, she esteemed him to a degree that made his respect necessary to her comfort; she was, therefore, eager to get out of his society, ere he might, by an explicit declaration of his sentiments, oblige her into the avowal which

her parents forbade. Jabano ot bas saus

Inexperienced as Alicia was, urgent circumstances and accurately-scrutinized feelings taught her the necessity of not appearing to hurry on such a declaration; and were she to suffer any hint of her likely removal from London to get abroad, it might seem as if she had meant so to force out Lord St. Lawrence's sentiments. Concealment, therefore, was indispensable, from Lady Donnington as well as from others; concealment, which, to the transparent character of ingenuous youth, is ever hateful; and which, till now, Alicia believed nothing on earth could induce her spontaneously to resolve upon.

Delicacy and discretion commanded silence so long as the letters she had just written should remain unanswered.

If her father were to consent to her joining him in France, then nothing need be said, unless events wrested family secrets from her: if he should command her to remain, she would make it her business to avoid every expensive pleasure, and to conduct herself so reservedly towards every man, that none might be authorized in accusing her of drawing them on. Her prime expectation, however, was, that Colonel Barry would come for her immediately upon receiving her letter; and in this hope youth's buoyant spirits once more revived : - she felt conscious of purposing rightly; and that conviction made her able to bear the pain of being reserved when otherwise she would have dealt openly.

By much exertion she was so far restored to her usual manner, that she could meet Lady Donnington at dinner, dress and go with her to Almack's, dance there, talk and look a vision of beauty, and leave no one imagining that her heart was all the while smarting under a keen sense of humiliation. As if to reproach

her for the eagerness with which she sought separation from Lady Donnington, that lady's manner to her throughout this evening was marked with unusual attention. From any other person such attention would have had an air of great kindness; but Lady Donnington's manner was barren of softness, so that whenever she did show solicitude to oblige, the act was never met as the evidence of a nature spontaneously cordial, but felt as a positive obligation.

"Well, Miss Barry," said her Ladyship, as they were standing together, "I have had no time to ask you to-day whether you have learned all the painters' names by heart yet. Are you ready now for looking at the St. Lawrence collection without book? or must we send an express for his Lordship to Grey Friars?" Alicia almost too eagerly expressed her wish of visiting the pictures during the Earl's absence; stammering out something about seeing them then in more freedom; and internally conscious, that she merely sought to get this promised visit over

without risk of the avowal she now believed more probable, because her mother's disingenuousness had rendered it more fearful.

Lady Donnington was all smile and compliance:—she betook herself to count engagements with her fan and the tip of her finger.—"The rehearsal of Rossini's music to-morrow at Lady Thoresby's: I would not miss that rehearsal for all the pictures in the Louvre!—Mrs. Vernon Haygarth's breakfast next day;—the officers' rowing match, Saturday,—Sunday?—no!—too sainty, as usual!—Monday, what is there?—O, the gondola party at the Baroness's—no, that is the next week. Well then, Monday,—do remind me,—the St. Lawrence gallery on Monday."

Alicia gladly promised to refresh her Ladyship's memory, happy thus to escape from passing a whole morning by Lord St. Lawrence's side in a sort of familiar companionship, which might seem to favour such views as she now dreaded should be imputed to her. Several times this evening had glances and expressions touched her, which hitherto she had never suspected to have any meaning derogatory to her own disinterestedness; and one speech, evidently about herself, particularly roused natural pride. It was spoken by Lady Sarah Colliton (the cidevant Lady Sarah Mostyn), who, returned from a continental tour, was not yet upon the best terms with her family.

"I have begged," she said, "not to have my aunt's protegée presented to me; her silly good-looking brother took such impertinent liberties with my name, I find, by way of excusing his own vanity. Of course the poor girl has to make her fortune by her face too. I wish she may succeed."

These sentences had met Alicia's ear in common with other persons passing behind the speaker to the door-way, and kept stationary awhile by the press:—no names were uttered, but those meant could not be mistaken; and her fast-throbbing heart showed that she heard and understood the cruel remark.

Monday came: it was a beautiful day of closing April, tempting Lady Donnington to walk to Lower Grosvenor-street, attended by a servant only. The two ladies were respectfully met by a groom of the chambers, to whom, as he preceded them into the suite of picture rooms, Lady Donnington carelessly put the question of how much longer Lord St. Lawrence would remain at Grey Friars.

Lady," was the reply; " and has ordered me to say he will have the honour of attending your Ladyship and Miss Barry immediately."

Alicia was electrified by this unforeseen intelligence. Her first wish was to go back; but, recollecting that as Lady Donnington was ignorant of his return, she could not be suspected of knowing it, and that with two ladies solely to attend to, his Lordship could not have an opportunity of saying any thing particularly to one—recollecting this, she recovered herself, and went on in silence, though with an unsteady step, and a heightened colour.

Lady Donnington uttered an exclamation of pleasure at finding Lord St. Lawrence in his own town house, instead of sixty miles off.—" My Lord, you must be the man that had the wonderful spy-glass and the charming wishing-carpet," she repeated, as he entered all glowing with his rapid journey and eager purpose. "How could you guess there were people in your gallery?"

"I have the kindest guardian angel," he said, with animation and emphasis, smiling at her as he passed on to Alicia. Alicia guessed not how literally for that once Lady Donnington had earned this compliment.

The ordinary greetings and enquiries exchanged in no common manner between them, and one or two amusing incidents of the traveller's journey told with graceful gaiety, the pictures were apparently studied by Alicia, and admirably commented upon by their enlightened possessor. Lady Donnington, who affected

through; so turning on her steps, she

a taste for all the fine arts, yet refused to use any of their technical terms, was not unamusing by her absurd or fantastic epithets applied to what she called dowdy Madonnas, and poor-persony saints. Her vivacious indifference threw so much of the playful into their desultory conversation, that Alicia gradually recovered from her first perturbation of spirits; yet she still kept so close to her chaperon, that it was impossible for Lord St. Lawrence to question the cause of that tremulous expression, which seemed fluctuating between more kindness, more coldness, and greater distress, than he had ever before seen in the countenance he had of late watched so carefully. -"guardian angel," however, soon gave him an opportunity of fathoming its cause led remember homeon on al beginsdexe

In the last large room of the suite, Lady Donnington suddenly proclaimed excessive weariness, exclaiming, that she "must sit down, and she must eat!" Refreshments had been standing upon a table in the apartment they had last gone through; so turning on her steps, she was hastening back, when Alicia more eagerly hastened to follow her.

Lord St. Lawrence ventured to snatch her hand and draw her towards a boudoir, the door of which stood open. — "Only one moment more, Miss Barry! — I have one picture yet to show: — my best picture. — Pray do me the honour of looking at it: — but one instant." Alicia's inward agitation rendering her powerless, she was the next moment in the boudoir, and in front of the celebrated Marcella, which she herself had represented.

A moment afterwards, Lord St. Lawrence had avowed the ardent wish of his heart; expressing it with an earnestness and delicacy that left no doubt of his sincerity. She had answered too, ere she knew what she answered, or even wished to have said; but her dominant thought being to undeceive Lord St. Lawrence as to circumstances, her first words were an avowal of being portionless, and of regret that she had learned this too late for a proper regulation of her appearance in society. — Falteringly uttering this, and beseeching Lord St. Lawrence to cease,

she endeavoured to escape from his equally-agitated hold.

do But Lord St. Lawrence was not an habitual doubter of his own winning qualities; and hearing nothing of indifference towards himself personally, continued bending over her as she sank on a seat from great emotion, pressing his suit in defiance of her pathetic entreaties to the contrary, and her confused appeals to his sense of propriety, for detaining her from Lady Donnington.

"Lady Donnington will not judge me very hardly," he said, with whispering tenderness. — "Dearest Miss Barry, only say, that if you had a fortune, you would not be thus cold to me; —only allow me to hope that I may have the added joy of giving every thing with my heart into this dear hand. — May I—dare I interpret that lovely cheek?"

The cheek, whose white and red changes he now gazed on, the beauteous bending form, which kept shrinking from his touch, were, indeed, so lovely, and Lord St. Lawrence's susceptibility of

beseeching Lord St. Lawrence to cease,

beauty so intense, that he did not, in fact, deserve all the praise for generous disinterestedness which a surprised heart lavished upon him. Alicia heard him own that he had early informed himself of every particular concerning her family; — that, from the mere circumstance of her having an expensive brother, he knew she could not have a fortune; and that, for himself, a wife unaccustomed to the habits of an heiress had always been his object of desire.

She was deeply penetrated by such bounteous attachment — she was sensible also to the laudable wish of gratifying her parents; and though unagitated by such feelings as overwhelm a woman when the affection she has wished for is finally avowed, she could not be indifferent to the prospects an union with a nobleman held out. Power pleases all who are not intimately acquainted with their own feebleness under temptation, for power is the instrument of self-indulgence. The amiable love it for the sake of exercising their constitutional benevolence as much as the

bad do for very different purposes. Is it wonderful, then, that with such prospects before her, with feelings relieved from bitter mortification, and not aware that any sentiment lurked in her bosom which eught to have made her try her heart severely ere she ventured to plight it for life to a solemn duty — is it wonderful, that thus fluttered, excited, overcome with gratitude, and awakened to admiration, she had not voice, nor, perhaps, inclination to say no, when he asked her permission to write to Colonel Barry?

Lord St. Lawrence re-urged his suit because she was silent, and still striving to get away: — determinately-downcast eyes, a brighter tide of blushes, and a hand no longer resisting the impassioned pressure of his, were all-sufficient.

Every imaginable demonstration of rapture and thankfulness followed; and when, at Alicia's breathless entreaty, he consented to lead her to Lady Donnington, and presented her as his future wife, her agitation flowed out in tears. He sighed, — and sighed so startlingly, that Lady

Donnington stared: she could not comprehend his countenance; — nor would he have had it comprehended at that moment for his whole fortune. Alicia's mind, however, was for once wholly absorbed in self.

Lady Donnington, who, to do her justice, had never been formally put into Lord St. Lawrence's confidence until this visit to his pictures was projected, now expressed herself "delighted that it was all settled," exactly in the tone she would have used at hearing of a new pleasure party; and having no ceremony in her questions, soon obtained the welcome information of Colonel Barry being by this time probably in France with his family.

Lord St. Lawrence's engagements at Westminster would not permit him to cross the Channel; he therefore signified his intention of writing to the father of his fair betrothed that very instant. To accommodate him, Lady Donnington instantly found out that it would be a great breach of decorum to let Alicia stay a

second longer under his roof after what had just passed; then bidding him see if her carriage were in waiting, gaily told him he might find them in the gardens till six o'clock, if he chose to join them after they were all come to their senses.

Alicia in vain tried to escape Kensington Gardens, though her chaperon plead-Lord St. ed an appointment there. Lawrence strenuously voted against them; for the variations of the former's complexion, and the tremor of her voice, made him sensible that, whatever were the emotions he had raised, they were not slight. A look of soft acknowledgment hastily given and as hastily withdrawn, while he interceded for her, could not fail of renewing his raptures; it filled, indeed, the cup of his joy, and, perhaps, roused the dormant vanity of wishing to display his happiness to more than Lady Donnington. Her railleries were no longer combated. "It will be the most tyrannical, ungrateful, monstrous thing possible if I am not to have my own way to-day, my Lord," ex-

claimed her Ladyship, precisely when she saw she had gained the victory. "From this day, of course, Miss Barry will command you, and her own whims will command Miss Barry; so I really think I have a positive claim upon you both for a little complaisance at the end of my reign. If Miss Barry is but wise enough to act by pattern, she will do like all other young ladies, who regularly cut their old intimacies after they marry. Your Lordship must, of course, do as she does." Lord St. Lawrence was ready to swear that his Alicia was not like any other young lady existing; and Alicia's gentle look expressed so much sweet humility, that Lady Donnington, assured she had piqued the one and pleased the other into the resolution she wanted them to make, of letting her govern them under the name of advising, graciously shook both by the hand, and, changing her tone, said, she must keep her engagement; besides which, nervousness was always cured by fresh air. " I really am not all made of rock-work,"

she added, with affected feeling: "however, my dear Miss Barry, if it actually would be too much for you, I will set you down by the way, and make the thing out alone." Any show of sensibility in another was enough for obtaining an instant sacrifice from our young heroine: she brightened her countenance by mere resolution to smile, and confessing culpable nervousness, expressed her willingness to try Lady Donnington's remedy. Lord St. Lawrence then handed both ladies to their carriage, and having ascertained that he should find them an hour afterwards in the gardens, unwillingly resigned the trembling hand he now freely possessed himself of, that he might write and demand it of Colonel Barry, was and the property of the bearing

While their gay equipage was rattling along the streets, Alicia could not restrain her tears; yet, as her eyes glittered through these tears with expressions as brightly varied as the hues of the rainbow, Lady Donnington only exclaimed, "You foolish, entertaining person!" and would

have gone on discussing other subjects to prevent her, as she said, from thinking too seriously of the awful words, "I am going to be married!" had not Alicia honestly avowed that, for the present, she could think of nothing else, except Lord St. Lawrence's generous affection, and her own apprehension lest she should not make him such a wife as he deserved.

In truth, every thing she had ever heard to his honour was full in her memory; every thing to his prejudice forgotten, or remembered as having been disproved. The warmth, the delicacy, the frank character of his foregone attentions, the very happiness she saw she had bestowed, were so many causes of delightful emotion; and so sweet was the feeling, that she could not miss the ecstasy which an exclusive sentiment would have caused. Lady Donnington, though in wondrous good humour, was not in the least qualified to sympathise with an unsophisticated heart, equally alive to the claims of duty, the apprehensions of conscious sensibility: and as Alicia knew that even now she ought to be reserved upon the subject of her family embarrassments, from consideration for the man with whom she was already almost identified, she gradually stifled her emotion, and, by degrees, endeavoured to give attention to her companion.

Tears dried and smiles unclouding, Lady Donnington boldly ventured upon uttering her lively imaginations of the various scenes which must necessarily follow the past event of the morning. Her Ladyship was perfectly sincere in the pleasure she manifested at her young friend's brilliant destiny, since she secretly considered her as a fair puppet, who never would be the fashion except for her beauty; therefore, ever her puppet; romantic adherence to seeming obligation being the wire which Lady Donnington believed she held her by.

Alicia blushingly suffered her to settle every thing as she pleased, while her own softening thoughts contemplated a life of home with Lord St. Lawrence, such as he had early owned his predilection for. She fancied a never-ceasing round of benevolence enjoyed at his paternal mansion in the country, with dear relatives and friends to share it. London, except for mere gala or business, did not enter into her views of settled happiness; yet it would be untrue to say that she wholly excluded it in her scheme of life. Alicia was too young, too much awakened to the pleasures of taste and of the higher walks of intellect, not to believe that a metropolis, being pregnant with information as well as pleasure, might be resorted to for the sake of finding minds and genius there to bring into rural quiet: she was persuaded, too, that many of its pleasures, if not drank of too largely or too often, could not be hurtful; and acquainted with all Lord St. Lawrence's mental pursuits, she looked forward to a more endeared and endearing companionship with him than she had ever enjoyed with her early playmate, Jocelyn Hastings.

Jocelyn Hastings's image was never

voluntarily called up: she turned from it now with a pang which she believed due to his strange unkindness:—strange, because, take it as she would, his absolute oblivion of old friends was unworthy of him, being a sort of desertion of a principle. Was then frail human nature, at its best, unveiled to her in his person? As she asked herself the question, sadness clouded her heart's glow; for she had known Jocelyn from his boyhood, yet he had proved less than she thought him: how could she build, therefore, upon the man whom she had known only five months?

Such ruminations, though never wholly banished, were often broken in upon by repeated challenges for attention from different gentlemen riding up to the carriage, and talking in at the windows. Their questions and badinage, and Lady Donnington's excessive spirits, made it impossible for Alicia to pursue a regular train of thought: she was obliged to yield herself up to a multitude of nothings, and to the gladdening influence

of a sunny day; and having traversed Hyde Park in the usual procession of equipages and equestrians, entered Kensington Gardens with a feeling of relief.

There, the cool grass, the tall trembling trees in their first spring green, and the different groups dispersed under their shades, or lounging upon the wall, were refreshing objects after the heat and dust and noise of the park. The mere sweetness of the air itself had something soothing in it. While Alicia entered the gate, her throbbing pulses beat less tumultuously; and her eyes, once more able to look up without directly meeting Lady Donnington's, gradually recovered their youthful expression of timid pleasure. As they proceeded up the walk, Lady Donnington's commanding figure and well-known air were speedily recognized, even by such of her usual followers as were sauntering at a distance by the side of other ladies. Miss Barry's celebrated complexion of light and roses was equally conspicuous from afar; and no sooner were both ladies discerned (lacqueyed as

they were by several dismounted cavaliers, who had hurried in after them,) than crowds of other gallant idlers already in the gardens came thronging round them with the hum of bees.

These very soon began to be as tiresome or as entertaining as usual; and the party rapidly swelling by the addition of several young and pretty women, a very fair proportion of quiet flirting was going forward, when Lord St. Lawrence joined it.

Finding the small doorway thronged up, as he threw himself off his horse, his Lordship literally jumped the wall, and hastened forward. A military band were already playing as he gained those he sought. His only rival of equal rank was persuasively entreating Miss Barry to do him the honour of letting him make way for her into the circle round the musicians, after Lord Lewis Rivers and Lady Donnington, when Lord St. Lawrence breathlessly interposed, exclaiming in a voice but half suppressed, "My arm—my Alicia!"

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Alicia's arm was instantly through his, while a sweet and lovely confusion spread over her whole countenance. Her eyes timidly thanked, yet timidly reproached him for this public seizure of a right so lately accorded. She turned her blushing face away, and as she did so, the long white feathers of a hat then fashionable, mixing on the spring air with the ringlets of her hair, actually swept the cheek of a young man fixed in looking at her. Her own sight was obscured by the ruffling of her feathers, so that she did not see who it was, that, in passing accidentally across Kensington Gardens, and getting involved in the crowd, now beheld her, after a year and half's absence, in a blaze of brightness and beauty, surrounded by gazing throngs, and taking the arm of a young man whose mien and manner denoted high birth and conscious happiness.

"Did you hear that, Lady Donnington?" asked Lady Charles Everleigh, who had caught the words "my Alicia."

"Don't tell me it is all settled!"

The question was put in a tone of menace, as if an answer in the affirmative would be followed on the instant by the annihilation of the respondent.

"All settled," was, however, the provokingly calm reply, as the lady speaker pressed on through the bystanders.

Jocelyn Hastings, for it was he whose ear had caught each of these laconic speeches, was now beyond the reach of hearing more, soon almost beyond sight of the whole party. Yet he stopped at the gate with a relaxing heart, and looked back. He could then but just see Alicia's white plumes blowing out on the light breeze, as she and Lord St. Lawrence, having withdrawn from the circle round the musicians, turned in an opposite direction down one of the shaded walks.

He looked after her many minutes, forgetting where he was, or that any persons were near him. The continued buzz of those who kept going out and coming in, at length roused him; or rather the frequent repetitions of Alicia's name, coupled with that of Lord St.

Lawrence, recalled him to self-recollection; and starting as he found himself stared at by every passer-by, he pressed through the crowd out of the gate; and hastily getting from the ordinary path, proceeded to cross the park in a direction little likely to give his sad and tumultuous thoughts any interruption.

He continued for some time to walk hurryingly and breathlessly,—still under the grasp of sudden agony,—still questioning whether he were not walking in a horrid dream, hoping every moment to awake, and find again the precious anticipations which his present vision had caused to disappear:—still haunted by that brighter vision of beauty and sensibility which he had just beheld in Alicia, and which for the time had disordered every sense, and quickened every pulse.

Jocelyn Hastings was of an ardent temperament originally: principle and practice had long disciplined it; — but in a moment like this, nature resumed her power, and his whole being was one tumult of warring passions and principles.

Lord St. Lawrence's voice repeating lin the thrilling tone of happy tenderness, he My Alicia!" seemed stinging his ear: he tried to fly from the irritating sense in vain. This unexpected rencontre had crushed every fond imagination connected with her whose secret remembrance had lain like balm upon his heart, so long as he believed her remaining in the retirement where they had parted. It is true, when he left Castle Barry, he had gone, assured that her parents' views were high for her; his own fortune lost, and his prospects limited to a better kind of curacy, or small living, at the best :but since then, happier views had burst on him, and as they were realised, wishes and hopes hitherto forbidden had once more been indulged, and not doidw has

A debt from a mercantile concern abroad, which had been bequeathed to him by his deceased uncle, and which at the time no one expected could be paid, was almost miraculously recovered, putting him into quiet possession of twelve thousand pounds. In addition to this piece of good fortune, a handsome living was promised to him by the father of the young man with whom he had just returned from Madeira, upon the sole condition that he would allow its duties to be performed by the curate, who had long administered them, should the death of the present incumbent happen while he was accompanying his recovered charge in a tour upon the Continent for the perfect settlement of his health. With these advantages in possession, and the assurance of his young companion's gratitude and friendship for life (sentiments which family fortune and influence rendered important in a worldly sense), it had been Jocelyn's purpose to have made another brief visit to Castle Barry, there to state his new circumstances to Alicia herself, as well as to her parents, if they would hearken to him; and if, as he sometimes fancied, there did exist for him some slight preference in her unconscious heart; if, as he confidently believed, she did indeed abhor the idea of being shown about to attract a greater

number of competitors for her favour; if she did in truth love domestic happiness and unboastful usefulness, then she might not deny him permission to cherish the thought while abroad, that if her affections should still be free on his return, he might endeavour to win her for himself. Were she to remain single so long, he flattered himself that her parents' views might become less extravagant; they might grow sensible that she was not to be trafficked away; and if a tender sentiment for him had kept her free, what happiness might he not hope for!

But such hope was over: Alicia was another man's Alicia. Zealous friendship, a positive station, powers of usefulness, and the fervent wish of doing his bounden duty as a Christian minister, remained to Jocelyn Hastings; but all the blessings and dear remembrances which had hung like so many garlands round these solid buttresses of life, were stripped off, leaving them for awhile bare, dark, and unlovely in his eyes.

Let not the scoffer ask, where is the

Christian's strength, when even he cannot always stand the shock of overthrows like this? It may be answered, his strength is support granted to natural weakness at the first earnest call. The Christian boasts not to be the stoic; he is graciously allowed to weep when stricken, though he may not resist correction.

The throes of Jocelyn's heart were assuredly at first for his own disappointment: more abiding ones (because they were for Alicia) arose afterwards. — His brief view of her so lately had opened a volume of information:—her developed beauty, her exquisitely-tasteful dress, the obvious fashion of the party with, and the numbers following her, were so many proofs that she was what his late return to England prevented him from hearing, the idol of the day.

Her countenance, indeed, was still angel-like; and a modest glow had covered even her fair brow on her happy lover's audible address.—But does not every woman blush at such addresses? and was so slight a sign of grace to be received as a

proof that her character was unaltered?
—Perhaps she was altered: or her bright
principles were beginning to tarnish; or
the giddy height to which she would be
elevated by a marriage with a peer, might
eventually turn so youthful a head!

Hastings knew little of the gay world by his own experience; but he had heard much of its worst parts from the unhappy young man whom his blessed ministry had called "from death unto life" (the life of a new heart, and a new career), and he trembled for Alicia's innocence or for her peace. - Her own beauty might be a snare for her innocence - or her husband's previous habits the perpetual canker-worm of their domestic happiness. At this thought, self was quelled; and anxiety to ascertain the character of the man with whom she was likely to pass her life, and by whose opinions it was possible she might be biassed to good or ill, usurped its place. He revolved how he should endeavour to learn the reputation of Lord St. Lawrence with the best prospect of success; and quickening

his steps, after long relaxation of their first rapidity, hurried into the busy streets of town.

Hastings knew very few persons in London; for at the break of his fortune he had but just entered amongst its people and pleasures. Since that period he had lived principally in a foreign country, devoted to the youth whose dissipated career had been short though ruinous, and from whom, therefore, he was not likely to learn any thing (at least, he hoped not) of Lord St. Lawrence; and now he had only a brief fortnight in which he might enquire about him, either in the metropolis or at the retired country residence of Sir Francis West, his young élève's father.

During that fortnight, his careful collection and collation of various accounts, brought home to him the sad yet satisfying conviction, that Lord St. Lawrence was not unworthy of Alicia Barry:—that he was all such a heart as his desired to find in the earthly guardian of her happiness, he might not venture to decide—but he had no right to sift farther.

In prosecuting his enquiries, Hastings did not confine himself to the higher classes of society, although his means of getting information were very limited. He could only employ one highly respectable tradesman, with whom he dealt, to question others; and he knew but one Wiltshire gentleman, who, professing to know little of his noble neighbour's conduct abroad, but holding the same political principles with him at home, was ready to testify warmly to his private conduct and his public ability.

From these two sources principally, and a few minor ones, Hastings learnt that Lord St. Lawrence had rather been a neglected than a spoiled child. His mother, an expensive fine lady, had died at an early age; his father, a disappointed statesman, had expatriated himself in a fit of political spleen, continuing to live upon the Continent (whither his son accompanied him) with a soured temper and broken health until his death restored the heir to his country.

When Jocelyn heard that Lord St. Law-

rence had spent the principal part of the years between eighteen and six-and-twenty in the most licentious capitals, and most seductive society abroad, he might be pardoned for doubting whether he could have returned from them untainted: but it was said that the young heir, though an only son, had shown himself a most affectionate one to a repulsive father, and that testimony reassured him.

The Wiltshire gentleman testified that his Lordship was liberal to his tenants, and forward in every scheme for benefiting the labouring classes and relieving the poor, as his conduct in the Upper House went to prove: that he was no gambler either on the turf or the cardtable; scarcely merited the name of a sportsman, being avowedly indifferent to the preservation of his game, therefore anxious to keep in peace with his neighbours; and so correct in his notice of rustic beauties, that fathers and brothers saw him enter their houses without apprehension of future shame or sorrow.

It is true, the young Earl had not

yet been much above twelve months in England: but having no one to control him, and no particular object to gain by putting a force upon his natural inclinations, it was fair to presume that these were rather amiable than otherwise. — Nay, if all this report were true, it might be trusted that so much integrity of conduct proceeded from a surer and higher cause than mere constitutional benevolence, however excellent.

To this character the London testimonials added, that Lord St. Lawrence was scrupulously punctual in his payments to tradesmen, yet magnificent in his orders: no haunter of mere assemblies until his passion for Miss Barry was talked of: a frequenter of the opera, theatres, exhibitions, &c. indeed, because a patron of the fine arts, but never given to familiar companionship with the subordinate professors of those arts. His servants spoke of their master as generally gracious, though as one who never forgot his nobility, being conscious that respect

is the best foundation for every sort of attachment.

Such was the sum total of testimonies, with which the enquirer forced himself to be contented, in the fear that, were he not so, envious unwillingness to do a rival justice might be cloking itself under seeming anxiety for Alicia's best happiness. There was, indeed, so much of positive good in what was said of Lord St. Lawrence, that Hastings would have been wanting in the first of Christian graces,-that "charity which hopeth all things, believeth all things," - had he scrupled to believe that certain unfixed tales which his banker mentioned as having been once afloat while the Earl was still on the Continent, were scandals built upon his enthusiastic taste for music.

These reports accused Lord St. Lawrence of a culpable attachment either to a celebrated singer in Genoa, or to the lady at whose house he used to hear her sing. They had, however, died away; and nothing in England having arisen to

cares, nov. calumnies might beset her on

corroborate such accounts, the banker suggested, and his interrogator believed, that these differing imputations were solely referable to that passion in Lord St. Lawrence for publicly-exercised talent, which it could be wished were less intense.

The most grievous part of the history was, that the Earl had no female relation except very distant ones. He could not confide Alicia either to mother or sister, qualified to guide her inexperienced youth through the labyrinth of new duties. And what were her own near kindred? Certainly not the persons who could show her how to keep fast hold of the one great principle, while meekly endeavouring to render all lawful compliance to every habit and wish of her husband and his society.

At this painful thought, however, Jocelyn Hastings checked his misgivings, for he knew that if 'Alicia herself had not departed from the path in which he left her walking, sorrow might assail her; cares, nay, calumnies might beset her on

the high ground of her future course; she might even find it one wholly of thorns, treading it with bruised, nay, bleeding feet; or she might go through life over roses; yet, angel-led, walk steadily to the end.

Why was his trembling tenderness to limit the power of Omnipotence? Younger than she, fairer, feebler perhaps than she, had come out of the world's fiery furnace unscorched. Although Jocelyn had ascertained under whose roof Alicia was in London, he resisted the temptation of seeking to see her once more: every fresh transport of love and despair was a fresh enemy to conquer; and either looking on her again, or witnessing the plenitude of Lord St. Lawrence's happiness, would be a trial of strength which he had no warrant for believing might challenge forgiveness. He bounded selfindulgence to the poor gratification of once passing the house that contained her, at that hour, between late and early of the night, when the streets are stillest, and most eyes are closed.

There, by the holy moonlight, which even upon such streets is lovely, he stood, and put up a prayer for her that slept within. He thought of days past; and when fond remembrance had satisfied itself with one dear image, it turned to others associated with that image. Thinking of Flora, for whom he had ever felt a fraternal regard, and wondering what was the general situation of the family, he withdrew from the dangerous ground on which he stood, determining to ask and know more of them all, ere he quitted town.

The result of this determination almost immediately acted upon, opened a new series of thoughts and actions. He had gone for information to a man of business employed by Colonel Barry, with whom his own lawyer had some acquaintance. He learnt there the present residence of the Barrys abroad, and of the prize they had drawn in their daughter's expected elevation to the rank of a countess. He was further told, that if he chose to get capital interest for his

money, with Castle Barry for security, he might at this moment lay out part of his twelve thousand pounds to advantage, and do an essential service to an old acquaintance. Colonel Barry, not knowing where to find proper funds for the outfit of his daughter (the only fortune Lord St. Lawrence would accept), being just at this moment embarrassed by certain enormous though temporary demands for repairs, improvements, purchases, &c., required by his trans-atlantic estates.

This adroit agent declared, that money was so scarce, and borrowers so many, that enormous premiums were perforce given by the latter. On the present occasion, Colonel Barry would not care what interest he gave, that his transient want of ready cash might not stand in the way of his daughter's happiness; for as he had too much proper pride to let the temporary difficulty be known to his future son-in-law, any seeming backwardness in seizing such an honourable connection might disgust his Lordship,

therefore was a thing to be guarded

against most carefully.

Whether Mr. —, in imparting this to Jocelyn Hastings, kept back all that would have startled a prudent lender, solely from good-nature to the half-ruined Colonel Barry, or out of care for his own interest (being himself a creditor), is uncertain: certain it is, that he stated the bad seasons in Jamaica; funds drained for a time by Mr. Marcus Barry's extravagance; and, lastly, Miss Barry's very expensive visit to Lady Donnington, as sufficient explanations of the Colonel's want of money, without giving the remotest hint of deeper and wider involvements.

"To be sure," the voluble negotiator ended, "it would be very annoying if such a marriage should go off just because the Colonel's momentary want of cash made it halt a little. Never dreaming of such a thing as this proposal from Lord St. Lawrence, Colonel Barry went direct from the West Indies to his lady in France, meaning to enjoy himself for

a few months upon the Continent.—
Now, they must all go over to Ireland, or come to England, and take a house—(I don't exactly know where Miss Barry is to be married)—and all that requires disposable funds. The next returns of his estates may give the Colonel a great surplus, but by that time it may be too late."

"Yet if Lord St. Lawrence really loves Alicia!" was the thought of Hastings as he stood sadly fixed by the images Mr. —— had carelessly conjured up. The latter, imagining him pondering upon the pros and cons for lending his money, and imploring him to be upon honour, requested he would just read Colonel Barry's letter upon the subject; as that perhaps might induce him to enter into the speculation.

enter into the speculation.

Colonel Barry's own pen certainly threw a stronger varnish over his circumstances than his agent did. He had just reached France, just got and accepted Lord St. Lawrence's proposal for his daughter; and full of self-importance,

gasconaded a good deal about the transient nature of his pecuniary difficulty, even while pressing with great earnestness for five or six thousand pounds to be raised by mortgage on his Irish property. In common with many parents who never take their children's inclinations into consideration while a marriage is in mere pursuit, now that a brilliant one was nearly certain, Colonel Barry wrote with much sentimental jargon about the "mutual attachment" of the contracted lovers;—deprecating so great a misfortune as the separation of such congenial souls.

Mr. —— smiled somewhat sceptically as he read over Hastings's shoulder the lesson he had conned before; while the latter, remembering the fine person, prepossessing manner, and, above all, the reported accomplishments of his happy rival, sighed from sad conviction. His mind was now fully made up to lend the money; but it required a few minutes' consideration, before he could manage to say so with sufficient coolness, and to lay

down rules about the mode of doing it, which, while they suited his own yearning to serve Alicia through her family, might not lay him open to the impertinent conjectures of his present companion.

Having stated that he was going from England in a few days, but would leave the six thousand pounds in the hands of his banker, who was already in possession of his power of attorney, and would therefore make the proper consignments in his stead, he requested that his name might from delicacy be kept as long concealed from Colonel Barry as possible; if possible, not mentioned at all; and that henceforth every thing connected with the business might be addressed solely to the gentleman through whose hands the money was to pass.

Mr.—'s acknowledgments were as profuse as though the sum were advancing for himself. Indeed, as he was creditor for a third of it, such gratitude was not beyond bounds, especially as the low interest to which the unpractised

lender insisted upon binding himself, rendered its payment possible, and at twice that amount it must have been hopeless.

From Colonel Barry's friend, Hastings went to his own, and there made the necessary dispositions. The gentleman to whom he had previously confided a power of attorney during his absence from England, firmly refused to take any share in the business unless permitted to act according to settled rules. He insisted upon demanding due security for the payment of the interest and for the repayment of the original loan at a definite period. Hastings's sole care being to have Colonel Barry accommodated, and little suspecting that a time would come when some security might be a cause of satisfaction, empowered his agent to act for him in any way most favourable to the Colonel, without actual wastefulness on his part of the fortune which Providence had not given him to misapply.

If any, or all, of his twelve thousand

pounds could have smoothed the path of Alicia, would not generous love have freely given it? He could not bear the thought of any impediment continuing to exist to the marriage upon which, it was said, her happiness depended. One did exist, and he could remove it; not by a sacrifice, - simply by an act of common His imagination at once good-nature. suggested the many petty humiliations and miseries to which this unforeseen embarrassment of her father's must subject her at a juncture when a delicate mind more especially desires to be freed from every thought of what is connected with sordid interest. He did not detect in himself the infirmity of being proud for her sake. He abhorred the idea of her parents receiving for her use, ere she were the wife of Lord St. Lawrence. the means from his hand of her bridal adornment; and to prevent this was almost on the point of insisting that no other security than Colonel Barry's word should be required, lest the latter might be tempted to borrow or accept

the sum from his future son. He did not, however, yield to this better sort of selfishness; but, leaving every thing to his agent's discretion and equity, left London for Devonshire, where Sir Francis West was preparing to send his son forth again to establish the health which Hastings's companionship had mainly contributed to restore.

The plan of the young men's tour and the term of their absence had been previously settled. Hastings was satisfied with both. Italy lay before him; Magna Grecia, the Isles of the Archipelago, Albania, Egypt, Syria, lay before him, with a companion snatched like a brand out of the fire, and going with an awakened heart and re-illuminated mind into scenes of deep and delightful interest. To Jocelyn himself such a tour had often been the subject of a vehement, almost an impassioned, wish; for what did it not embrace? What soul-stirring events was it not associated with in memory? How had he longed to tread certain hallowed spots and to fancy he trod in the footsteps or heard the echo of that voice which once sanctified those holy places! How great was his selfabasement to find that one earthly object now stood between his heart and those coveted enjoyments; darkening them all, and poisoning at their well-spring both ordinary pleasures and anticipations of a higher character!

of a higher character!

He felt, then, by how many ways a passion may keep possession of the breast after duty and reason have imagined it expelled by their joint exertion, and he rose again to the task of overthrowing

such hopeless destructive affection.

He became resolute in refusing to let his fond fancy feed upon the memory of Alicia's sweet childhood and lovelier youth. He determined no more to think of her timid idolatry of his imagined superiority, or of her many fine capacities, or of her sympathy with his best pursuits. He was resolute in refusing so to infatuate himself, because he knew there was positive criminality in wilfully encouraging an attachment to another man's betrothed; but he could not as steadily turn from importunate anxiety upon heraccount, assuming as it did the shape of calm sanctioned friendship, nor could he at once commit her destiny as he had often done his own, with perfect confi-

dence into the keeping of Heaven.

To overcome such unworthy fear and such vain regrets, was the object of his prayers and his efforts; and if he were long of obtaining the strength he sought, the gift at last found him better prepared to receive it with gratitude. Let enthusiasts boast as they may, the humble Christian will freely admit that his task is one of perpetual watchfulness over, and struggle with, rebellious feelings. His course is a race which he loses if he stop to rest by the way; but if he run to the end, he will gain an immortal crown; and if he take to himself the armour he is invited to take, he will subdue every enemy at last. Yet, how many has he to conquer, and how short is life! Happy he who knows how to estimate the pains and warfare of so brief

an existence, comparing it with the eternity and felicity promised to "those who endure to the end."

Full of convictions like these, yet bleeding with human passion, Hastings felt that his safest course was to deny himself the gratification of enquiring about Alicia from the moment in which he saw the necessity for such a proceeding; he, therefore, left no one behind him in charge to write him on the subject of her or her family; and, content to leave less interesting concerns to the sole care of his friendly agent, he bade a long farewell to the island that contained her, with his mind braced up to resign and be still.

During the ten days in which these things were transacting, Lord St. Lawrence had duly received, as he had expected, the official letter of consent. Having previously stated his earnest desire that whatever had been intended for Miss Barry should be added to her sister's fortune, he saved the Colonel from the disagreeable necessity of unmasking one part of his affairs; and so

egregious was the latter's folly, that, far from suspecting the possibility of this being the result of partial acquaintance with his embarrassed circumstances, he accepted it as a piece of becoming gallantry, complimentary to his daughter; vapouring about his own fortune with his usual ostentation.

Lord St. Lawrence, though despising his future father-in-law very sincerely, suffered less, perhaps, while reading this verbose letter than a man of equal feeling would have done in the next rank of society; he knew himself entitled to cast off, or keep on, whom he chose; and with some of that instant resolution to have as few inconveniences about him as possible, (which is peculiar to persons born to control others,) he determined to be liberal to Alicia's parents of everything, except invitations to his house. Alicia had her letter, too, from her father, full of an extravagant joy which humbled her: and Lady Donnington hers; in which the transported Colonel's adulatory strain, while recommending

his daughter to her continued kindness, equalled that of his flattering wife.

But as there is to be no unmixed joy in this world, even the triumphant vanity of Colonel and Mrs. Barry was mortified by the vexatious necessity they were under, of remaining abroad until the way was smoothed for their return, and means found of getting back the valuable diamonds pledged to the Parisian jeweller.

The gentleman in whose hands Jocelyn Hastings had left the power to act for him in all money concerns, was not so easily satisfied as his employer would have been, with the soundness of the security offered: the time he consequently took in settling matters to his mind, was so tedious, that it obliged Colonel Barry to have a severe fit of the gout to detain him in France just as long as the negociation lasted for obtaining the six thousand pounds, and afterwards satisfying former demands in part. These negociations drew out from week to week through two successive months; during which, there was ample time for settling future plans, and giving the affianced pair opportunities of studying each other's character closer than heretofore.

Lady Donnington, to whom most things were complaisantly referred by all parties, had not the least objection, when once a marriage was certain, to take the merit of having made it by her no-management; nor did she hesitate about ordering every arrangement consequent upon her protegée's engagement. Command being her element, she went at once into a set of details which made Alicia tremblingly sensible that she was actually going to be married, and that almost immediately. Certainly, unless a very young woman has been often or long agitated by the fear of never becoming the wife of the man her heart is wedded to, she may not find herself upon the brink of matrimony without a momentary wish to recoil. Alicia was not free from this natural shrinking; she was taken by surprise; since even after her father's consent arrived, she had expected to be allowed ample time for habituating herself to mingle thoughts and feelings with Lord St. Lawrence, and to learn the peculiarities of his temper and tastes, ere she were given to him for life.

Lady Donnington wanted to hurry on the marriage, and proposed Colonel Barry's taking a house in London for his daughter to be married from; after which, they might all go abroad again and travel separately or together, until the next season recalled every fashionable adherent to his post under her gay banner.

The moment Alicia heard of her father's torturing illness, she wished to join her family abroad: to this proposal an ardent lover was not likely to agree; although he did yield to her blushing entreaties, that instead of urging her parents to come to England, he would part with her when they had returned to Ireland, and following her thither himself, receive her from their hands in the home of her youth.

Parliament was to sit so long that year, and there was so much business to be

got through, that as he could not desert his public duties, and as Lady Donnington was graciously inclined to enjoy the amusement of carrying the future Countess of St. Lawrence about, to the exasperation of mammas and misses, he entreated and obtained Alicia's promise that she would refrain from going from him, until it was possible for him to regain her almost directly afterwards. Alicia would not hear of any other than the most unostentatious marriage; and as Lady Donnington had no wish to cross the Irish Channel again, therefore could have no part in the ceremonial at Castle Barry, this wish was in no danger of being frustrated. The revol tuebes us

Lady Donnington, however, was still lady of the ascendant. Every minor and major thing had gone on so exactly in the way to exalt her power and notoriety, that she was in sovereign good humour. She heard no more of Princess Azorinski:

— and Lord St. Lawrence's second party under another Lady Patroness, proved a thing manquée: he had been engrossed

with Miss Barry, - Miss Barry was known to be engaged to him, - some people were disappointed, some were vexed, others professed to be bored; the ices were not cold enough, and the illustrious personage who presided was voted "fussy," - so that every one maintained, the sole charm of the last St. Lawrence House party, lay in Lady Donnington. All excited by this popular suffrage into her very best temper, this fashionable idol consented to run down to her place in Berkshire for a day or two, merely that she might take Alicia to see Grey Friars in the next county, where an old maiden aunt of the late Lord St. Lawrence's, appointed with due propriety to meet, receive, and be presented to her future great niece.

It was not without emotion that Alicia made this short excursion; first to Birkham, and then to look at her destined home. A noble house built above a century ago, upon the site of an ancient one, surrounded by extensive parks and woods, watered by more than one fine

stream, and commanding views of a character in harmony with the place, presented almost a palace front as its visitors approached. Alicia had previously passed over many miles of the St. Lawrence estates; where every village farm-house, or cottage, was occupied by thriving tenants. She saw testimonials of her lover's influence and activity in the great towns through which Lady Donnington's carriage drove with the rapidity of her own impatient mind. Signs at inn doors, placards posted on town halls and market places, announcing county meetings and public associations, were each distinguished by his name, - she could turn nowhere without seeing it. wall to broll

Upon entering the house, (whither its lord had accompanied them from Birkham) the number of persons waiting for him in the hall, to ask his favour, or have grievances redressed, together with the age and respectfulness of his domestics, impressed her yet more with the sense of the young Earl's importance and usefulness. His kind notice of some, and

his courtesy to all, did not escape the observation of a heart virtuously upon the watch, for whatever might infuse more life into that calm affection which did not satisfy herself, or sufficiently honour him. And when she noticed the pride and delight with which he regarded such of the humble crowd whose countenances expressed their admiration of his choice, her heart flushed as well as her cheek.

Deeper blushes were called for, when, leading her into a sitting room, he presented her to his aunt, Lady Anne Aubrey, as the future pride and joy of his life.

Lady Anne was an old maid of the last century, — stiff, staid, and stately. Her manners belonged to the vielle cour, manners which, however modern youth may despise or detest them, never fail to impress those upon whom they are exercised, with feelings of respect. We shall not wonder at this, when we remember that such manners are founded upon the principle of controlling self in our social

intercourse, domestic or public, and of paying homage to that wise distinction of ranks and privileges, which the experience of ages has proved to be the great bond of society. Such manners may be caricatured by folly, or rendered hateful by masking purposed deceit; but when directed by good sense and good feeling, they well deserve their distinctive appellation of the best breeding.

Perhaps there could not have been brought together two more perfect specimens of the old and the new school, than Lady Donnington and Lady Anne Aubrey; nor, indeed, two greater contrasts in personal appearance. The one, rapid and regardless in all her movements, doing every thing she chose, and how she chose; thinking of nothing in short beyond her own gratification. The other, slow and studied, and obligingly observant, never doing the veriest trifle she desired to do, until she had ascertained that it would be agreeable to her company.

It cannot be denied that Lady Don-

nington's way was by far the pleasantest to herself, and that even an Esquimaux would have concurred with a dandy in upholding its fashion. But we may be allowed to doubt whether the Sidneys and Raleighs of our most gallant age, or the lovers of any time, would have deemed it a safe road to favour: therefore, after all, whether unbiassed judgments would not have given the preference to Lady Anne's scrupulous courtesy. Perhaps the golden mean is is yet to be found between republican independence and slavish submission, in the usages of social intercourse.

In a large banquetting-hall Alicia once more found fine paintings to enjoy. They were principally portraits, yet, as the representations of Lord St. Lawrence's ancestors (many of whom were distinguished in history,) they were fully as interesting to her as his gallery in London.

Lady Anne Aubrey's acquirements fitted her for showing such pictures, when before the higher works of art she

might have been silent. She was an excellent herald as well as genealogist; and the intelligent attention of her youngest hearer encouraging her to repeat many a family anecdote which otherwise would have been kept back in dignified reserve, she went on, unconscious that she herself was a *study* to Lady Donnington, who, though talking with Lord St. Lawrence, was mockingly registering his aunt's looks and somewhat ostentatious expositions, that she might mimic them to a chosen set hereafter.

As they "travelled" in Lady Donnington's patois through the suites of magnificent ground-floor rooms, she cried out against them for being furnished in a style which, in fact, added to their stateliness. Every thing in those lofty saloons looked fresh, yet not of yesterday; every thing appeared in use, though not wearing; every thing told of an English nobleman's home, nothing recalled the idea of a Parisian hotel.

Alicia had seen the houses of many nouveaux riche, and of the first nobility

in London; in all of these she had found not only a tiring sameness, but an unmellowed newness, which made her think of the cost and the tradesmen. Frequently the fortunate speculator's house was finer than that of the peer. Here all she saw of embellishment within, and all without, were memorials of family antiquity, and registers of family honours and family taste. Probably each individual of the race had added something to this stock. As a mere matter of taste, she would have preferred the variety. thus produced in so large a mansion, to the uniformity of a residence planned and finished by one person; and, looking upon every preserved decoration as a tribute by each successor to preceding memories, she valued them upon the score of sentiment, sent to be added to delid

Immediately after one of Lady Donnington's voluble recommendations of her favourite furnishing artist, Lady Anne Aubrey gravely enquired whether Miss Barry held the same opinion upon the subject in question. "Far, far, from it!" was Alicia's low blushing reply; "I like so much better what is inherited, than what is bought."

Had she studied how to win the esteem of the female dignitary by her side she could not have succeeded more perfectly. Lady Anne smiled in every feature of her still sad-brown face, while saying "I am glad we agree," gave place to her nephew, who now came forward, to realise what Alicia said were her expectations, "that he could tell her some interesting history of each old hanging, rusty cuirass, and Indian screen."

Lord St. Lawrence's favourite room, which terminated the lower suite, saved Lady Donnington from yawning herself entirely out of Lady Anne Aubrey's consideration; the exquisite carving of a high old-fashioned chimney-piece, with one of Vandyke's portraits in the centre, excited even her admiration. Alicia took an instant affection for this secluded room, simply because it was not unlike the chapel-room at Castle Barry, where her lover whispered, he might now say

his heart first received its abiding impression of her character.

The windows of this apartment looked out upon a wild-looking flower-garden, clothing the steep slopes of a deep hollow, once filled by water, and which, now shaded by the trees that had formerly overhung it when a pond, presented massess of verdure round its margin of the liveliest character. A May sun was checquering the bright green grass under these trees with alternate lights and shadows from many a waving bough, while the whole centre of the basin was filled by tulips and other gay springflowers, exposed and shining in the warm sparkling air. Bees and butterflies were on the wing over the sunny beds; but under the willows sweet stillness and reviving coolness seemed to rest, and invite to rest, if the bollan esw it as

"What a delightful summer room!" exclaimed Alicia, directing the observation to Lady Anne Aubrey.

"And what a winter-room, too!" ejaculated Lady Donnington; "do

look at Lord St. Lawrence's little establishment close to the fire-place! a bookstand! a reading-stand! those springmaps! that great chair! that everything of a table! and that enormous screen! how surely every Englishman establishes himself by a fire!"

Lord St. Lawrence pleaded guilty to the national notion of comfort and a fire, leaving pleasure and public malls to gayer Frenchmen.

Lady Donnington remarked that he appeared so perfectly well acquainted with the way to make himself comfortable, that it would be a pity he should ever have any body to assist him in the task. Alicia did not hear this mischievous pleasantry, nor see the amiable glance which half petitioned and half rebuked its speaker. This comfortable corner, as it was called, with the high oldfashioned screen of gold leather which fenced it in, had some features of resemblance to the fire-side at Mount Pleasant, where she had spent so many happy winter-evenings; tears started into her eyes as she contemplated it, and unwilling to have them seen, she turned away to a window.

Lord St. Lawrence followed. Her taken hand felt the tender questioning of his; she smiled round upon him, with a frank confession of what had caused her emotion. It was of her friends in Brazil that she spoke, and as there was nothing to excite jealousy in this pensive remembrance of a grey-headed man of letters and of his daughter, it was received with unfeigned sympathy. Not that Alicia had never spoken of another friend, now separated, yet then associated with them; in her anecdotes of former years, she had incidentally mentioned her early protecting playmate, and subsequent grave monitor, Jocelyn Hastings; but always calling him Mr. Hastings, referring principally to his religious instructions, and distinctly showing that he kept up no acquaintance with her family; she impressed Lord St. Lawrence (unintentionally) with the notion that this serious personage was in appearance,

manner, and mind, very like one of the Scotch covenanters, as described by the author of "Old Mortality," therefore perfectly incapable either of inspiring love, or feeling it in himself.

From the house the party walked into the gardens, and home park, Lady Anne Aubrey accompanying them in a parkchair, being, from her age, unequal to fatigue. Lady Donnington soon deserted, and put herself under the care of the land-steward that she might be shown the more profitable parts of the Grey Friars estate; whilst Lord St. Lawrence and Alicia continued walking leisurely by the side of Lady Anne's little carriage, talking of the beautiful sun-set, the sweet evening air, and the majestic trees of the park with feelings of enjoyment.

The rooks returning to their nests in a grove of tall elms, under which the saunterers were passing, called forth another expression of pleasure from Alicia. Lady Anne Aubrey was gratified by this second agreement in taste with her future relative, and signifying her approbation,

added—"a rookery appears to me indispensable to a gentleman's place in the country; they are another witness of antiquity." Lord St. Lawrence, with a smile, owned that he certainly respected rooks when thus considered, and had suffered them to remain from sheer dislike of destruction, but until this moment had not particularly relished their hoarse sounds.

The tender compliment implied in the last words was enforced by the cheerful submission of his eyes, and Alicia went on, leaning upon his arm, thinking how amiable he was, and how unworthily inanimate herself. His affectionate assiduity about his aunt, the care he took that she should never feel neglected while he was showing every thing to another, and the good-natured way in which he spoke to different children whom they encountered picking up sticks, or gathering wild flowers in the remoter walks, made her sensible that his natural dispositions were kind and generous. -What a favoured destiny then was hers! and

how inadequate was her grateful joy to the blessings thus promised!

After she and Lady Donnington returned home, which they did by moonlight, she confessed great bodily weariness, and retiring to her own room, felt that she might then give way to suppressed emotions. Her head was dizzy with all she had been seeing and thinking of; her feelings over-excited, her strength over-wrought: she sat down, and shed tears profusely.

Never had she been more impressed with a sense of the disparity between her condition and that of Lord St. Lawrence, or with that of his disinterested, honouring attachment; — never had she felt more entirely her power over him, and his anxious solicitude to mould himself into the form she liked best, and that from the only motive she could approve — the wish to please a higher than any earthly object of love. Never had she felt a stronger conviction that he was formed to make an excellent husband and father,

reflecting honour and happiness upon all connected with him.

The rank and consideration which even the greatest nobleman merges in a capital where he is lost amongst many others of equal degree or more pretension, had been pressed upon Alicia's sense while at Grey Friars, with a force which had almost the effect of a surprise. It reawakened her to thoughts of his generous passion, making her doubly feel its generosity; while at the same time she recalled their conversation as they had stood together looking down from an eminence skirting the park, upon the village and the village church, remembering how much there had been in it to satisfy her that he who spoke, was earnest in the expressed wish of living after the law delivered there alike to rich and poor. A tide of tender esteem and sweet expectations came with the recollection; and ere she laid her head on her pillow, her nightly prayer had been as much addressed for Lord St. Lawrence's best interests as for her own. The next day carried her and Lady

Donnington back into the giddy crowd of London. There, although she went about less than formerly, she did it in far greater composure of spirit. Since her engagement with Lord St. Lawrence had been proclaimed, her reception in society was become strikingly different from what it had been when she came out. Then, one half of the persons she mixed with chose to look upon her as a pretty show; and the other half either kept a prudent reserve towards her, or importunately proclaimed their admiration, even to distressing its object. Now, she was approached as the future Countess St. Lawrence, and so freed from the intrusive attentions of men who were only waiting until the marriage ceremony should equally release her and them from what they called mere decorums, to recommence a siege of dangerous flatteries, so lightly is the sacred bond of life considered by some orders of character!

It was not undelightful to a man of Lord St. Lawrence's feelings to find the woman he loved, indifferent to public admiration, and ever disposed to prefer being alone with him to joining in scenes of live-lier pleasure. In truth, Alicia indulged her own taste while pleasing him, by perpetually escaping from the morning parties, which, towards the beginning of summer, in London, give such a pernicious increase to its dissipation of time and thought; often excusing herself from balls, that she might have a few hours free for better things after every one was gone.

Lord St. Lawrence would not utter a word likely to influence her from conduct so flattering to himself; but while reaping all its advantages, took care to preserve Lady Donnington in good humour, or rather, to prove his sense of obligation, by every other sacrifice in his power to make. Her taste, her judgment, and her accommodation uniformly consulted, it was scarcely possible for her Ladyship to be otherwise than gracious; she therefore suffered Miss Barry to withdraw from the public gaze occasionally, while she herself went from gaiety to gaiety, be-

sieged as formerly by candidates for Almack's, for Lord St. Lawrence's concerts, and for such *friendship* as mothers and daughters now believed must conduct the favoured person to a brilliant settlement.

If it were gratifying to Lord St. Lawrence's opinion of his own value, to observe how many wishes he had disappointed, and how many hopes he had destroyed, he felt a nobler happiness in marking every day how much more he conquered of Alicia's heart, or of that sweet reluctance to avow deep feeling, which brightens the chain of affection by surrounding it with modesty.

From the first she had not professed equality of attachment:—she had laid open her whole guileless bosom even as she knew it herself, lamenting that her nature seemed incapable of such vivid sensibility as she admired in others. But to this, her lover had answered with excessive emotion and convincing earnestness, that he had learned to prefer a soft affection to an ardent one; to know that gentle feelings were ever-lasting ones;

declaring that he would rather have tenderness than passion; and that, in short, at six-and-twenty, he was more rational and less extravagant in his expectations than at nineteen.

As Lord St. Lawrence was privileged in almost living at Lady Donnington's, he was not backward in using the means such a privilege afforded, of making his best qualities better known to his future wife. When his mornings were not claimed by business, he spent them with Alicia (in the room she called her own), reading to, or talking with her, or enjoying the exercise of that timid talent for music, which she still shrunk from displaying in society. Sometimes he paused upon his book, to utter the reflections to which its pages gave rise, and to hear hers; sometimes he went over parts of his early history, or drew forth hers; sometimes sketched their plan of wedded life, amusing himself and her, by playful imaginations of the surprise and vexation of half the gay world at its domestic character: thus weaving

himself into her thoughts of sweet and sanctioned pleasures, and laying up for her many a tender recollection to soften bitterer feelings in days to come. During these quiet meetings, Alicia made the discovery that Lord St. Lawrence was not of a gay temper; or rather, that he was not throughout the day what his polished and smiling surface in the evening assembly gave out. She even accused him of a constitutional tendency to melancholy; yet when she did so, the softer tenderness of her eyes testified that what his graceful animation had failed to effect, this interesting sadness was rapidly producing. The clasm tot

At these times, when the mood was too painful for a touch, her lover would only answer by endeavouring to shake it off; at others, he would instantly banish it, and rally himself for being "too happy." Upon some occasions he would meet the enquiry frankly, by confessing that the more he saw of her unsullied heart, the less he liked the spots and blemishes of his own; reminding her,

that he had not always thought as he now did, upon the government of the thoughts as well as of the conduct; that to her influence he was indebted, if not for many vital changes in his character, at least to the suspicion that they were necessary, and to the habit of seeking a higher sanction than that of mere moral laws; that in looking to life spent with her as a compensation to him in every way for the errors and remembrances of the years that had gone by before they met, it was scarcely possible for him to do so, without regretting that they had not met sooner, ere he had so much to be sorry for.

Alicia was too young, too confiding, too much in the habit of exalting others and depreciating herself, to imagine, even from these agitated acknowledgments, that the generous, the humane, the honoured Lord St. Lawrence could have more sins to answer for at the age of six-and-twenty than those of mere omission; sins, which by early youth are rarely regarded with sufficient dread.

She therefore loved him the better for this general humiliation of himself; and finding him every day more and more inclined to reflect back her serious views of serious subjects, her heart began to settle into a sweet serenity of trust and preference, perhaps more favourable to human character than feelings of intenser happiness.

Many, indeed, were the smaller streams that poured into this peaceful flood, brimming it with as much of enjoyment as our limited being may hope to retain.

Upon the certainty of Miss Barry's elevation to acknowledged rank, Lady Lilias Vavasour had been permitted to write her a congratulatory letter, and had done so with such warmth of friendly feeling, that every doubt of her continued kindness was removed from the gentle breast that had often sighed over its probable withering.

Marcus's first letter also from India came to testify that his heart was neither broken by Lady Sarah Mostyn, nor by the remembrance of his debts. He spoke with too much levity of both, perhaps, yet as he expressed a strong wish that his father would discharge the latter, and make his future heirship debtor for the sum to his sister's fortunes, it seemed fair to conclude that even a short residence of two months with a highly-honourable man had revived gentlemanly feelings, at least, within him.

Flora's correspondence was absolutely rapturous. Lord St. Lawrence had not only written to her with some elegant tokens of remembrance, but having ascertained Alicia's wishes, while suspecting her mother's incompetency, had arranged with Colonel and Mrs. Barry for the transfer of Flora to England, after his union with her sister should have given him a brother's part in her welfare.

of time, comprehended, in Flora's estimation, all human felicity; while, to Alicia herself, the proposed plan was another source of tender gratitude to Lord St. Lawrence. In consenting to it, Mrs. Barry thought solely of her daugh-

ter's manner being perfected; her husband of the expense it would spare him; but Alicia looked to that mental and moral improvement which is the sure consequence of valuable every-day society. No education, in truth, is comparable to such unsuspected teaching, provided the learner have an awakened spirit, and the instructor be gifted with that happy charm which rivets attention, and excites the desire of approval.

Flora's enthusiasm was already allawakened by Lord St. Lawrence's conduct, character, and situation; and though Jocelyn Hastings was still remembered by her with romantic constancy of girlish admiration, it was no longer as the only existing model of manly excellence. Her letters proved that she would sit with as devout scholarship at the feet of her brother-in-law as ever she had done at those of Hastings. Her impatience to get from France may consequently be imagined; yet in France it seemed as if some cruel spell detained Colonel Barry.

The wilful fit of gout was still upon him, torturing his mind instead of his body; since every moment he dreaded some discovery of circumstances to Lord St. Lawrence, which might justify the latter in breaking off the marriage. Six weeks had elapsed since the proposal, and nothing more was done in the way of forwarding it, except carte blanche having been given to Lady Donnington for all that Alicia would require of bridal dresses and decorations. Little did Alicia dream that every one of the bills thus incurred were destined for Lord St. Lawrence's payment, after the marriage ceremony should have identified their interests.ow aleew mon reasons - , gaisolo

Suspicious of so many delays, and such extraordinary tardiness, her lover had contrived to smooth at least one difficulty, by requesting and obtaining permission to have his taste displayed in conjunction with that of Lady Donnington, upon this important point; maintaining that he could not give his expensive habit the reins, unless free from consideration of another person's ideas on the subject.

Further than this act of interested generosity (for the impatience of love rendered it so) Lord St. Lawrence dared not go at present. He partly guessed the extreme embarrassment of Colonel Barry's affairs, yet believing it impossible for them to be in a state of such positive ruin as hazarded even the latter's personal freedom, he could not bring himself to humiliate still more the object of his love in his own eyes, by offering her father an actual sum of money before the sacred ceremony should have given him a son's right to offer it.

Time, however, was not as lame as Colonel Barry: the month of June was closing, — another four weeks would release every peer from public duty, and empty London, — Lady Donnington would quit it, and Alicia must either continue as if dependent upon her, or have a home to go to elsewhere. Mrs. Barry, inspired by necessity, at once crossed over to Ireland, ostensibly to hasten the preparations at Castle Barry; in reality, to negotiate security for her

another person's ideas on the subject.

husband with a claimant of long arrears due to him as an annuitant, who was become more troublesome since the report of Miss Barry's coming marriage. This step on Mrs. Barry's part was announced as a thing quite straight forward and proper; as by its means the Colonel would be spared all hurry of spirits, and could return home by way of England for the purpose of fetching his daughter, and meeting his future son-in-law.

This arrangement rekindled every joyful feeling of Alicia's heart. To find
herself once more in the dear quiet of
her early home, even though soon to quit
it for another almost unknown, was a
prospect fraught with tender pleasure.
She did not separate Lord St. Lawrence's
image from it; on the contrary, she
never thought of the delight she should
have in acquainting him with the haunts
and the habits of her foregone years,
with her cabin friends and her domestic
pets, with the house at Mount Pleasant,
endeared to her by so many recollections,
with her beloved Flora and her kindly-

tempered parents, without imagining herself doubly happy. She felt that she was not all herself, whilst in the atmosphere of great London assemblies; that her very heart seemed to want breathing-room amidst their pressing and unthinking crowds. She was weary of dissipation and admiration; she was anxious to see her future companion through life for whole days and weeks out of the glare and noise of general society. She fancied, that walking alone with him under the still trees bordering the lake, with no eyes save the starry ones of Heaven to witness their placid happiness, she should feel more deeply than she had ever done the value of his love and of his character.

Alicia well knew, that if in such sweet solitudes there are no tongues to praise the object of our affection, there are none to speak of him with malignancy, and none to aim at our own self-respect. She could not but long for such retirement, therefore, since even her envied

with her beloved Flora and her kindly-

situation was not without its mortifica-

Although several persons, since Lord St. Lawrence's inclination was made public, had been properly forward in doing honour to his choice and to his popularity, there were some who seemed resolved not to let Miss Barry carry off such a prize, without sending many a poisoned shaft after it, and her. Broad hints, that Lord St. Lawrence, when Lord Aubrey, had not been immaculate, were often mingled with contemptuous references to such of the peerage as were either the offspring of unequal matches, or had themselves offended by a misalliance. Lady Charles Everleigh, in particular, perpetually talked of "lucky faces," and the wonderful effect of a mere determination to marry one especial person; maintaining, that "a resolute" set at a man" was sure to succeed, provided the setter were neither very delicate nor easily abashed, or else was mighty expert at concealing her purpose.

from right principle, Alicia inwardly

These remarks invariably ended by a list of odd marriages, wherein the names of singers, dancers, strolling actresses, and women not fit to be classed with a virtuous beggar, were mixed with those of

the portionless well born.

Lord Lewis Rivers talked at Miss Barry also, yet he was less intelligible than his sour resemblance. Alicia felt from his looks, that what he said was meant to annoy, but she could not understand why; — and prudence as well as delicacy preventing her from imparting her vexation to Lord St. Lawrence, she remained uncomfortably dubious as to the notice she ought to take of such conversations.

Lord Lewis Rivers, indeed, never expatiated upon these favourite topics, either before Lord St. Lawrence or Lady Donnington, so that his impertinence was not likely to receive check or chastisement whilst exercised under the roof of the latter. But it may be supposed, that not merely from resentment, but from right principle, Alicia inwardly

resolved to let no consideration except her lord's will, awe her into receiving such persons as Lady Charles Everleigh and Lord Lewis Rivers amongst her visitors, when mistress of St. Lawrence House. Neither of these worthies appeared desirous of avoiding their fate; fresh impertinences seemed meant to provoke and brave it. In fact, both had been pierced to the quick in their sorest part by Lord St. Lawrence, and both were too much irritated for politic proceedings towards the object of his present views.

Alicia was one morning waiting for her lover to drive her out, and talking to a party with whom Lady Donnington had appointed to visit exhibitions, when Lady Charles Everleigh walked in, followed by Lord Lewis Rivers employed in folding up a letter. Lady Charles scarcely took time for the ordinary greetings, or of ascertaining that the mistress of the mansion was not yet in the circle, ere she burst forth with the news she had just derived from a confidential peep

at Lord Lewis's letter. The latter in vain reproached her with perfidy: — she maintained that there could be no harm, as Lady Donnington was not present; and that, indeed, even she must hear it at last. The discomfited gentleman shrugged his shoulders, and resigned himself without much effort to the mortification of hearing his correspondent's details quoted.

All Paris, it was said, was full of a domestic scene that had just occurred in the family of an English gentleman, who the year before had married the widow of an Italian marquis. The lady was discovered to be engaged in a disgraceful attachment to another Englishman, and steps were already taking by the husband to secure a divorce. The alleged seducer's friends repeated, that he meant to protect himself from enormous damages by bringing forward testimonials to prove that the lady's character was not previously immaculate; and by so doing, would in all probability make most prodigious discoveries. The tent had

"Yes, and get himself shot by one of her former friends," exclaimed young Sir Edgar Trevor. "Such a fellow should be scouted out of society: it is too bad to show up a poor woman so shamefully."

"On the contrary, it is a blessing to all the rest of us," said a pretty married woman of lighter manners than principles, fixing her eye upon one of the gentlemen present: it shows us what honourable and humane hearts the men have, who try to make us think ill of our husbands."

"Well then," resumed the easily-defeated Trevor, "you will allow it is too cruel to bring up the ghost of a fellow's wild oats. Oh! you may laugh at the ghost of a wild oat; but I know I should exceedingly dislike seeing one just as I was going to be married to somebody I was desperately in love with."

"No allusions, if you please, Sir Edgar," uttered significantly by Lord Lewis Rivers, caused the former to enquire what he meant. An answer was

rence; her heart was unshaken; she

evaded; but Alicia, though shrinking from such a discourse, and therefore moving away, could not help catching Lady Charles Everleigh's whisper of, "Lord Aubrey was one of the old favourites." Neither she nor Sir Edgar at first knew who was intended by a title which they had not been in the habit of hearing; both, however, recognized it at the same moment; when, luckily, the confusion and concern of the young hussar, together with his hasty endeavour to turn the conversation, afforded Alicia time to repress her own glowing indignation.

It was not a subject for a young woman to discuss: familiar, alas! as such subjects have become of late! she could not take up her lover's defence; it was proper for her, therefore, not to appear as if she had heard the implied accusation, and calmly passing the speakers, she sate down to some trivial piece of work. Her nerves only were fluttered at this insinuation against Lord St. Lawrence; her heart was unshaken: she

could as easily have believed him capable of murder, as of violating the next awful commandment; and inwardly blessing God that he knew, and reverenced, and desired to be guided by the same divine laws she had early learned to love, quietly cut out her rice-paper while waiting the

appearance of Lady Donnington. 1949

Lady Charles Everleigh looked at her with a vexed countenance; but as if determined not to lose the chance of finally annoying, went on repeating the name of the Marchioness Isola Bella so frequently, that Alicia could not fail to recollect the time and way in which she had first heard it. From her Ladyship's rapid details she learnt that the notable personage whose intended defence was said to be an exposure of his own greatest intimates, was no other than Sir Lionel Colliton, and that the whole Harlech family must in a manner share his disgrace.

At this information Alicia felt a pang of real concern for Lady Donnington: she was spared a second, by her Ladyship's entrance and careless confession that she was just come from her brother's, where she had left such a scene! "O spare condolences, Lady Charles!" she added: "these things will happen. Sarah Colliton knew the sort of man she was marrying: — she knew he had spent every thing; so she must take the consequences, and let her fortune go to pay for his folly."

Sir Edgar Trevor, as he stood near Alicia, muttered something about a wife caring less for the money such a business might cost, than for the annoyance of discovering what a short time her husband's love had lasted.

Alicia ventured to breathe in an undertone, though with a heightened colour, "that love alone, was not the ground to build married happiness upon.

"Why, what then?" was the astonished demand of her impressible hearer.

"A principle of fidelity, to stand in the place of that powerful sentiment, if it should chance to cease," was her

she was spared a second, by her Lady-

hesitating reply, half-afraid she ought not to have spoken. Young Trevor would fain have got her to say more; but she was timid of the subject, and Miss Everleigh was calling him to come and kill a spider for her: he crossed the room, therefore, musing upon what might, perhaps, stimulate him to deeper enquiry hereafter, and not in the least inclined to oblige Miss Everleigh even by killing a

spider.

Lady Charles was at that moment clamorous to know whether there was any probability of the matrimonial fraybeing hushed up. Lady Donnington could not resist a pleasantry at the idea of hushing up any scandal known to Lady Charles Everleigh, and her sarcasms, in consequence, were as brilliant as biting. Lord Lewis Rivers professed himself inhumanly amused by the little skirmish of cool wit and angry retorts which followed. But Lady Charles was not to be driven from the field: she rolled her dull dark eyes threateningly towards Miss Barry, resuming, "People say, some of

your great friends won't escape, Lady Donnington. I hope it is not so.—My son said this morning the trial will be a second edition of some book or another (I'm sure I don't know what), that broke off scores of marriages by the discoveries it made."

Lady Donnington treated this implied prophecy with utter contempt, averring that no young woman had any business with the foregone part of a man's life, so that it were all right and proper when he was addressing her; but added, that all her acquaintance might use one another as ill as possible without dreading interference from her.

"Now do open the door, Sir Edgar Trevor. — O! you choose to be so chivalric, Lord Lewis! — How I dislike gossip! — Do forgive me, Lady Charles."

"So you an't going with us?" exclaimed Miss Everleigh, who had just been insisting to Alicia that she looked dreadfully pale. "O, do! It is such a pretty Diorama this time! It will do you good."

Alicia smilingly replied, that she was

going out in an open carriage with Lord St. Lawrence, and that she was quite well.

This was the first time since her engagement with Lord St. Lawrence that she had thus openly proclaimed it; and even now, though courageously showing that no insinuations could awaken a doubt of his integrity, the modest blood rose to her cheeks.

Lord Lewis Rivers, affecting the sportive, cried out at St. Lawrence's wonderful privileges abroad and at home, finishing with, "Now, had I presumed to solicit the honour of Miss Barry's society in a drive—"

"Pooh! stuff!" interrupted young Trevor: "there never was a question of you with Miss Barry; nor there sha'n't be, if I can help it, with Lady Donnington. — Lady Donnington, dear Lady Donnington! don't drive me out of my senses by taking Rivers's arm: — take mine! and I'll kneel all the way to the Diorama."

The fashionable idol answered by putting her arm provokingly through that of a lady: while laughing at the boyish proposal, urging its acceptance, and betting gloves against its performance, the remainder of the party hurried from the room, leaving Alicia to await the coming of Lord St. Lawrence, who was already much behind his time.

Minutes passed; - half hours; - a whole hour passed, during which she sometimes stood watching at the window, sometimes took up a book, then touched her guitar, but with a troubled remembrance that he had never before been a single instant later than his appointment, and that, consequently, something unusual must have occurred. She recollected that his curricle horses were new horses, and might not be safe ones; then, that he had looked pale the evening before; in short, she frightened herself as tender women are apt to do, when they wait for those they love. The arrival of a note from him gave some pause to her anxiety; yet the apprehensive emotion with which she opened it made her feel, gratefully feel (for she wished to love Lord St. ting her arm providingly through that of

Lawrence), the progress he had made in her affection.

The note justified former imaginations: -Lord St. Lawrence was not well enough to keep his appointment. Only two hours before, he had been seized with a giddiness, for which he was ordered to lose blood immediately: they had bled him, and condemned him, he said, to quiet and a darkened room for more hours than he could calmly resign himself to. By the next morning, however, he hoped to show himself at Lady Donnington's, quite recovered; when, if he were not well enough to attend the ladies to a breakfast at Wimbledon, at least he might have the comfort of a few words with Alicia ere she went.

The brevity and hand-writing of this note left Alicia in such a state of uneasiness, that she derived little consolation from the messages which passed and repassed during the day between herself and her lover, under the form of enquiries from Lady Donnington. The latter looked amused when first told of his illness;

then assuring Alicia, that if he could see how foolishly wretched she was, he would be well on the instant, carelessly betook herself to dress for dinner.

Luckily, Lady Donnington was not going out that evening, but received company. Alicia was able, therefore, to show herself merely for an hour in the circle. Not that she was seriously alarmed for Lord St. Lawrence; but imagining him sick and solitary, she could not bear the idea of being herself surrounded by musick and With all that rank and wealth pleasure. may bestow, still she knew he had not one dear relative to watch by and cheer him: - no mother - no sister! She now saw what a blessed equivalent it would be in her power to give him for all that he was to bestow upon her, and at that thought she ceased to shrink from sharing "his high estate."

The two great topics of the evening appeared to be the Paris story and Lord St. Lawrence's illness. It is true, the absurd and contradictory accounts of the former affair circulating round, were not

addressed to Lady Donnington, but they buzzed amongst so many sets in different parts of the room, that no one could escape hearing some of their gossip.

Lady Charles Everleigh, and a sentimental Miss Montressor, who was known to have set springes for Lord St. Lawrence the moment he appeared in England, made it their business to furnish Alicia with reasons for her lover's indisposition, and with lessons for her own conduct.

Lady Charles Everleigh supplied the first, the fair Selina Montressor the last, although they certainly did not act in concert; as Lady Charles's address to Alicia testified, even after having turned Miss Montressor out of her seat: she exclaimed, as the former glided sighing away —

"How men dislike such girls as Selina Montressor! She could not succeed at all with your Lord St. Lawrence, and I know she made sure of him, from his reputation abroad of being never out of love. -Don't look frightened: - he will change now, of course.

"I must hope not," was the blushing,

yet playful answer.
"Oh!" from Lady Charles, in her usual gruffy breath; "you are so very smart and clever, like Lady Donnington! But I meant, never out of love with one pretty face after another! - Those poor Montressor girls! - how they go maundering about, looking for men to admire them and propose for them! And there sits their great fat white mother, as usual, with half the men about her, laughing and flirting, leaving her daughters to go their own way with every body: never troubling herself whether they get partners or not. It is my amazement how so many of those girls have married!"

"They are all so pretty, and, except Miss Selina Montressor, perhaps, so wellmannered. I do not defend Mrs. Mon-

tressor," observed Alicia. Charles. - "Say what they please about some people, I think a mother only does her duty when she tries to get her girls well off, instead of thinking about lovers

for herself. I dare say your mother is a very different person from Mrs. Montressor?"

"She is, indeed!" was Alicia's reply.

"Well, then, Miss Barry, let me say, as a friend, that it will be very abominable in you to disappoint all her plans and expectations by not marrying after all. I do hope then, in spite of the nonsensical stories going about, you will not be so over-nice and romantic."

Alicia's expanded eyes asked explan-

ation.

"Oh! I did not mean to put you in a fright," returned Lady Charles, continuing her tone of rough interest; "but I have been so provoked by what some people have been saying just now, that I can't help telling you my opinion. A person I sha'n't name, because you have a regard for them, says you are so delicate and so religious, that if any thing not exactly correct comes out about a certain person, during the business of Sir Lionel Colliton and that Italian woman, you will give him up without caring for

his title, and never see his face more; for fear you should be thought to marry him for his rank: - of course, these people think he is kept away to-night by something or other relating to the tiresome affair - but I believe he is entirely innocent, and really ill. Now, whether Lord St. Lawrence is or -

At this opportune mention of the certain person's name, Alicia rose from her seat. - " Pardon me, Lady Charles Everleigh, if I do not stay to hear the character of Lord St. Lawrence questioned;" and firmly resisting the hand that would have detained her, she walked with a steady step out of the room.

Alicia retired immediately to her own chamber, where some thought, and more time devoted to the best reading, succeeded in calming her ruffled spirits. Not even yet did her loyal heart admit a single doubt of Lord St. Lawrence's integrity; though allowing the possibility that circumstances might exist which privileged indifferent persons in doubting and canvassing his principles.

Lady Charles Everleigh's conversation had formed an able commentary upon the darker, because more cautious, hints of Miss Montressor. The latter had contrived to suggest the conduct she wished her hearer to adopt, by remarking upon a recent novel, the heroine of which had been placed in something of a similar situation to that which Alicia must be in, should her betrothed prove unworthy; and had warmly eulogised scrupulous adherence to the resolution of never seeing the offender again.

Miss Montressor, perhaps, fancied she was giving the advice she would herself have taken: but, alas! how seldom do we know the strength or weakness of our own hearts until the hour of trial has put them to the proof! To abide such trial, and come out of it victorious over forbidden inclination, we must have other power than any which the mere admiration of good can bestow!

After such a day, Alicia's sleep was broken and unrefreshing, yet her chief anxiety was for the health of Lord St.

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Lawrence, from whom the morning message was, that he was better, and would be at Donnington House in good time to accompany the ladies to the Duke of Tewksbury's breakfast. Alicia herself was not quite well, and so little inclined for mixing with a gay crowd, that she frankly told Lady Donnington so, and prayed to be excused going. "Lord St. Lawrence, of course, then!" was all the observation in reply. To any other woman than Lady Donnington, Alicia would at once have said what was on her spirits; the idea of having the character of the man she honoured questioned, and her own conduct speculated upon. But Lady Donnington's total silence upon every subject of supposed interest to herself, together with her naturally unsympathising disposition, made such frankness both unwise and difficult. She therefore bounded herself to promising, that if she found Lord St. Lawrence better before Mrs. Chetwynd went to Wimbledon, later in the day, they would join her party.

This arrangement was scarcely com-

pleted before Lord St. Lawrence appeared a sed and before home points and before appeared as a sed and before a sed and a sed

His arm was, of course, bound up and in a sling, which Alicia's hand was soon put into requisition to dispose better. He looked ill; but he refused to admit that he was more than indisposed, partly from a hasty walk under a very hot sun the day before. No other visitors being admitted after he came, his enjoyment of the society from which he had been exiled for the last eight-and-forty hours was undisturbed; yet, although Lady Donnington left him alone with Alicia at last, merely bidding him not forget to bring himself and his fair charge to Wimbledon before every body went away; and although Alicia's sensibility was all awakened by his evident suffering, Lord St. Lawrence seemed incapable of enjoyment; he was silent and thoughtful; once or twice forgetting what they were talking of, or stopping short in the middle of a sentence. As he put his hand to his forehead at these times, Alicia's apprehensions would have amounted to alarm, had not

his ready assurances, and the paleness of his complexion, satisfied her that any pain there must be mere nervous sensation, not a dangerous flow of blood to the head.

He had asked her to sing to him; and she was obeying with an unsteady voice, when hearing him say in a suffocated tone, "O, not that air!" she looked back from the instrument at which she was seated, and saw him with his face thrown upon the arm of the sofa where they had been sitting together.

There was something in his position, and the previous sound of his convulsive whisper, which made her assured he was suffering under more than illness; and when her gentle touch would have removed the hair from his brow, which clustered over that and the arm of the sofa, he started up with a face of scarlet, rallying himself upon his nervousness after the loss of a little blood, yet acknowledging her kind solicitude with passionate gratitude. He then hastily enquired,

whether she meant to follow Lady Donnington. —

"Do you think I could?" I wygaits!

Lord St. Lawrence answered the sweet smile and the tender question by seizing her hand, and pressing his lips upon its trembling whiteness in agitated silence.

Trembling that hand indeed was, for Alicia became convinced that he was sick at heart. All the insinuations breathed into her ear the preceding night came over her for a moment with terrifying power: it was the panic of an instant; better thoughts returned; and, believing him free from merited reproach, though most likely tortured by the consciousness of having incurred suspicion, she uttered a few words of tender enquiry into the cause of his unusual emotion, praying him to believe that she wished henceforth to be identified with him in every joy or grief; and gently, tearfully urging her right to share them now. douby thos solvies tada

At this first unreserved show of tenderness on her part, Lord St. Lawrence was almost hurried out of himself; but, checking the impulse that would have caught her to his breast, he said hesitatingly, "I do confess then, my Alicia, that I have been annoyed, - disturbed yesterday by some unpleasant circumstances, which, but for your dear sake, I should not regard. A disagreeable affair has transpired, by which my name is likely to be brought into question, -in a way that you - that every right-minded woman ought to shrink from: - and I"-Here Lord St. Lawrence stopped for want of courage or words, and Alicia, to relieve him, was on the point of saying what she had heard, and how disdainfully; but recollecting how much better it was not to irritate him against the persons who had sought to awaken her distrust, she remained silent. Journa lenguage aid

Her eyes, however, continued fixed upon him with the tranquil steadiness of moonlight; for their tranquillity was of that tender sort which seems blessing what it shines on: it spoke of sympathy with his distress, as well as of faith in his

truth. Lord St. Lawrence could not bear such a look; he cast down his eyes. After a short space of deep self-upbraiding remembrances, which yet did not arm him with courage to dare all he knew he ought to dare, though strong enough to wring him to torture, he tried to raise his head, while hurriedly naming what was then noised about, concerning the Marchioness Isola Bella; avowing his apprehension, that, from the boyish vanity which had once made him proud of her notice, her seducer might seek to add his name, to those whom he threatened to bring forward, by way of palliating his own guilt.

It was a difficult and distressing subject to speak of, especially to the woman he loved; but every lesser consideration gives way before the struggle for what is dearer than life; and Lord St. Lawrence managed distinctly and solemnly to assert, that, whatever suspicious circumstances might be told of him in private, or maintained in a public court, he was

innocent of any other connection the Marchioness Isola Bella than what a

conscientious man might avow.

"Can you, will you believe me, Alicia, upon my unsupported word? I have nothing stronger to offer." Thus he ended; thus he questioned.

"Can I ever wish for stronger evi-

dence?"

At this thrilling answer, Lord St. Lawrence did fold her in his arms; but not with that transport which would have made him tremble at his own temerity. It was, indeed, the clasp of strongly-awakened feeling, so mixed up of contradictory thoughts and wishes and regrets, that it might as well belong to misery as to rapture.

He kept her locked in his arms long after the impassioned impulse that had snatched her there was over, and that with such a disordered expression countenance, that Alicia felt alarmed for

his head.
"Frederick," she said at length, wistfully regarding his changing colour and changing eye, "dear Frederick!" It was the first time she had addressed him with such sweet familiarity; and in another mood the words would have acted upon him like a spell; at present, he merely noticed them by a painful smile. All at once, he released her from his arms, though retaining her hand, and in a desperate determined tone, that too often haunted memory in after times, said, with unlifted eyes, "Alicia, I have never represented myself to you as a man who had nothing to regret or repent in his foregone life; you will not then say I have deceived you, if I should own - Ah! do not start thus! - own to having erred like most men; sinned, I fear, is the proper word: but I take Heaven to witness, that I never did other than shudder at such attachments as that of which I find I have been suspected. I repeat, that I am wholly innocent with respect to the Marchesa Isola Bella. Do you believe me ?"

me?"
Checked in the re-flow of her confidence, Alicia could not at first answer:—
feeling as she did every pressure of his

agitated hand while it clasped and closed upon hers, as if it pressed her very heart. There was so much more to excite alarm in Lord St. Lawrence's manner than in his words, that she began to entertain some vague apprehension of coming sorrow: the subject they were upon was embarrassing to pain; and, unable to meet his eyes, she merely bade him, in a low voice, go on. He was evidently discouraged by her averted looks; for he said hastily, "Why did I hazard this?—Only a year ago, I should not have thought any principle required me—"To do what?" she questioned, as

"To do what?" she questioned, as he broke off, and took a few steps across the room, muttering something about the

folly of being too sincere.

"To confess the sorrowful secret of my life," at length he answered, coming up to her; "a secret that might never have been known even to you, could I have stooped to the disgraceful compromise proposed in this letter, which I got yesterday, between character and conscience. But that would have been impossible to me, even with no better principle than common honour. I cannot, however, bear to have this wretched secret possibly wrung out by other people; — or by Sir Lionel Colliton's counsel when he may try to place to the Marchesa's account that conduct which sprang from a passion for another. - He sighed heavily as he spoke. "You have often seen me dark and joyless, Alicia, in your dear society: - this was not humour, not constitutional gloominess either; -it was the humbling conviction that you thought better of me than I merited: it strengthened with my attachment, and with my deeper sense of your confidence in my character. I felt, and still feel, that I cannot be thoroughly happy until I shall have left you nothing to find out against me after I am your husband. Often have I meditated this confession; yet God knows whether I should ever have had the resolution to make it, had not this exposure of -

"O Lord St. Lawrence, what is it I am to hear?" interrupted Alicia, sinking

upon a seat, her face whiter than her

cold, trembling hands.

"What you must condemn, — what I hate myself for, — what you will, perhaps, find an excuse for, — at least, if you love me." — His tone drew a soft sigh from the breast of Alicia, and its sound animated him to proceed. "Do not judge me strictly. Bear in mind, that I was in Catholic countries, at an age when young men are most open to danger, — not fortified by such principle as you have taught me to value, — with a father always ill or always brooding over political mortifications, — without mother or sister, — without a home, and with a heart too wishful for a home, — too ready to find one in the first tender bosom — "

Lord St. Lawrence's face crimsoned; for the shrinking action of Alicia's person made him painfully sensible of the effect his words produced. He stopped, partly from nervous loss of voice, partly from fear of proceeding. She would have risen from her seat to go away; but seeing

her design, he threw himself impetuously before her.

Since I have begun this confession, I must finish it:—a few sentences more—"

A few sentences did end it, leaving Alicia fixed and motionless.

The history briefly told by Lord St. Lawrence, was that of a wild passion, before he was one-and-twenty, for a beautiful dependent of the Marchesa Isola Bella's, and whom he would have married after he became of age, had she proved worthy; but she left him. Since then, he said, he believed his life had given no warrant for similar reproach; and all the remainder he fervently desired to dedicate to such purposes as she would approve, and Heaven engages to bless.

Alicia scarcely heard the winding up of his address: she was dizzy with painful surprise; and, paler than the marble pillar against which she had supported her head, knew not what she ought to say, or how she ought to act. The images thus brought close to her, by the

man she had hitherto honoured even more than she loved, were such as woman's eye would avoid: they sullied every thought of Lord St. Lawrence. Yet she knew that all of mortal mould are prone to err; — that pardon is offered to repentance through one mean, by the Highest and the Holiest; and was she, all weakness and imperfection, to exact more than God?

While she sat covering her face with her hands, as though she were the criminal, Lord St. Lawrence stood intently looking at her, endeavouring to imagine

what was passing in her mind.

"How am I to interpret this silence?" he said at length. "Can you not bear to look at me, Alicia?—Good Heaven! am I then so utterly fallen in your opinion?—Had I wilfully deceived you in myself, then, indeed!—But remember our early conversations at Brighton; were they not always full of allusions to past faults? Did I ever try to represent my youth as better spent than that of other unguarded young men? This, I will

say now (and Heaven bear witness to its truth), that I abhor such a life as you would abhor for me; — that I never pursued such a life, — though at one time, — only because I despised it; — and that I have successfully combated temptations within the last two or three years, which would have overcome me before bitter suffering had led me to suspect that such suffering might be deserved chastisement: — yes, and sent me to seek the only security against the world and my own nature."

Lord St. Lawrence paused, but still Alicia did not speak; for what she longed to ask, she knew not how to ask.

"I have, indeed, forfeited your esteem along with your affection," he resumed in a tone of grief and resentment. "You pay no regard to my protestations of a changed heart. — Do not tempt me to repent my sincerity. Take care, Alicia, — do not quench the smoking flax."

Alicia raised herself with a shivering motion. "But two questions," she said,

in a voice scarcely audible, "was she innocent when you first knew her? Did you desert her?"

"O memory! memory!" exclaimed Lord St. Lawrence, his countenance shadowing with the passions and regrets of the past. "She was not innocent,—and I did not desert her.—She left me."

"Thank God!" burst from the lips of Alicia as she started up, her eyes showering happy tears. Her movement awakened Lord St. Lawrence from his trance of thought, and he would have caught her hand, but, breaking from him, she waved him off with a bright smile, — "To-morrow, — not now, — I cannot —" She could not, indeed, say more, and he suffered her to pass.

Every pulse in Alicia's body was throbbing; yet was her heart lightened of a heavy load, when, reaching her own room, and fastening herself in, she sunk upon her knees, and wept out a thanksgiving: not that she considered him she had left, any longer as she had done; his image was tarnished, but his suffering,

his penitence, his magnanimous sincerity were vividly present; and the guilt from which he seemed delivered as if by midracle, at the very moment her thoughts had given him up, was so frightful to imagine, that any offence short of that could not be looked on with adequate horror.

Again and again she repeated the short sentences which had answered her two questions, by way of assuring herself that he was neither the seducer of innocence nor a domestic traitor, even while shrink ing from entire communion with the heart which could voluntarily link itself to that of a dishonoured and venal woman. How was virtuous pride offended at the thought of following such a woman in a man's affections! How deeply did she feel that with respect for its object, pure love loses one of its strongest props! Sometimes she was tempted to wish that? this spot upon Lord St. Lawrence's past life had not been shown to her; but had he concealed it still, or had he glossed it by a falsehood, she might have been at

peace; yet he would in fact have been less worthy than before, and her domestic happiness as insecure.

The shame and anguish he suffered in making such a confession, appeared to her sufficient guarantees for his future conduct. She held in her hand a letter which proved that he might have smothered the whole affair, had he not preferred the preservation of conscious truth to the temptation offered by a disgraceful compromise. The letter, written by a friend of Sir Lionel Colliton's, artfully insinuated, that a sufficient sum of money would prevail upon him to take all the consequences of a prosecution by the Marchesa's husband upon himself, and so leave Lord St. Lawrence's character clear; a circumstance most likely of some importance to him, as an engaged man. This proposal Lord St. Lawrence had spurned, though by refusing it he was obliged to make the confession to her that life had not been shown to he anob bad ald

Such conduct certainly warranted her in thinking she might rely upon his rec-

titude for the future. Why then did she hesitate to write and tell him he was forgiven for concealing a blot which she would try henceforth to forget? Perhaps she was afraid that her own heart was not purely influenced by his repentance of error; that she yielded something to the brilliant advantages of rank and fortune; something more to a weak excess of grateful attachment; that she thought too much of her family, too little of that public opinion which Lady Charles Everleigh repeated; and not at all of those early friends who would have counselled her against precipitate decision. The pen was unused in her hand with which she meant to write to him. Whilst thoughts like these vainly toiled after her own wishes and purposes, one conviction, however, was stationary, - that she had taken too much of her lover's character upon trust, and wilfully discredited what was too credible, simply because it was said or hinted by persons she disesteemed. of the new acciniques

Lord St. Lawrence had himself told

her how long his sole guide through life had been that moral taste and those undefined notions, which she well knew could never guard one human heart against the assaults of passion: she had no right, therefore, to fancy that he could have escaped from such conflicts unscarred at least.

To stand firm in faith, when fixed upon long-approved worth, resisting every attempt to shake our confidence in it, is at once our duty and our safeguard; but to give the same faith to the virtue we believe in without evidence, and where we are told one great principle was long wanting, is superstition, not rational devotion of heart.

Had that principle still been wanting in Lord St. Lawrence, Alicia would not have hesitated a single moment in terminating their engagement; for how could she have committed her happiness to the keeping of a man who acknowledging no higher control than his own unsettled opinions, was self-convicted of having deliberately sinned against them?

But, trusting in his avowed sentiments. and encouraged by the high character he was establishing in England, she believed that she might, with a clear conscience and unblushing face, ratify her engage. ment after the public investigation might be over which was likely to bring his name into question. She was about to say this on paper, when Victoire tapped at her door with a note from Lord St. Lawrence, Alicia averted her disordered countenance as she took the little billet and pleading indisposition as a reason for not wishing to be further disturbed, even by Lady Donnington when she should return, dismissed her maid. 1191 luoz and

The contents of this short note threw her back into alarm and perplexity. "You have gone away under a wrong impression. I did not mean to give it, and I must not take advantage of it. Alicia, I may lose you; I shall, perhaps, after you hear more: but I shall not rest to night unless I have explained every thing. Come back, then; for God's sake, come back! I will say nothing to shock

your modest ear — but I must say all now: — I have wound myself up to it. I could not bear to owe you to a mistake. On my knees I entreat you to come to me again, if but for ten minutes. — After that, doom me to what you will."

The letter fell from Alicia's hand. At first she sate speechless and motionless; every faculty was paralysed: there was neither sensation nor thought within her. "What was she to hear?" at last crossed her, and as she asked herself the question, she sprang up with desperate resolution. If she stopped not to supplicate upon her knees for light and assistance from above, her soul felt its own weakness and insufficiency, and that very feeling was a prayer, it along the manufactory and that

When she reached the room she had left a short time before, Lord St. Lawrence was traversing it with disordered steps. His face was pale at the moment; but as he advanced to meet her, it flushed with embarrassment and shame in She gave him her hand in silence, and he led abode of guidion 184 liw I also smooth

her to a seat: she sat down trembling, while he remained standing by her side. His hand leaned upon the back of her chair, and shook it with its agitated motion; but he did not speak.

Alicia involuntarily glanced back at this unnerved hand, and up to his more agitated face. He read the question she would have asked. "I am a coward at undeceiving you, after all! The bare possibility of being again cast out of my paradise — of having every thing uprooted and for ever lost!—I must have a moment to recover myself." And he pressed his forehead as if to still the throbbing pulses there, and to collect his thoughts.

"O do not torture me!" exclaimed Alicia, with a look and voice of agony. "Tell me at once what I ought to know."

"You will never think of me as you have done, I fear," was the faltering answer. "Remember that you broke away before I had done replying to your questions. I had not fully explained —— I —— "He hesitated, then recommenced more passionately. "I dare not

go on: only assure me, promise me to pardon——"

He would have taken her hand, but resisting the action, she said tremulously, "I have long considered myself almost your wife, Lord St. Lawrence, and I can forgive whatever wives may forgive. But some offences against God and your own conscience—""

"I have sinned against them, then," he said with gloomy stillness; then, suddenly relapsing into wilder emotion, " I told you that Lorenza Castelli was not innocent when I first knew her: that was true; but I thought her as spotless as yourself; and when I gained her by an artifice, believed I was deceiving a really virtuous-" Here Lord St. Lawrence's own feelings were so overpowering, and Alicia's low cry so full of dismal meaning, that it was with difficulty he could resume, and hurry through the promised explanation. What he said, imported, that the object of his early love (besides his inferior in situation) had been Catholic, and that, aware of his father's rooted

aversion to all of that religion, he had taken advantage of what he then believed to be her perfect ignorance of such subjects, and married her only by the forms of her own church, yet purposing to make her lawfully his wife after he should have come of age. At that critical period, however, he discovered that previous to their meeting she had yielded herself to another, upon whose unexpected return from a different country she seemed gladly to seize an opportunity of quarreling with her English lover; meeting his resentment at the deceit practised upon him, by violent accusations of his greater perfidy in deluding her by a false marriage. Although they had parted then in anger, it had not been upon Lord St. Lawrence's side with an intention of never meeting again. "For I dare not tell you, Alicia," he added, "to what excess I loved the fatal creature: even now the vision comes over me." He turned aside his head with an expression of countenance, of which he might well dread the effect upon the object of a pre-

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sent attachment; since it proved that the memory of a first love haunts the heart as surely as the memory of a murder: but recovering voice, resumed less hurryingly -tilhad indeed grace enough left, to feel that no earthly power could induce me to marry her after such a discovery of baseness added to frailty; but I was still so infatuated as to resist every idea of separating from her. I made excuses: her extreme youth, her unprotected state, my own vile deception. She however left me clandestinely. A long and dismal illness followed this, after which I was ordered change of air, and my father took me to some baths in Germany. Had she ever cared for me, my deplorable illness would have proved it. But she made no enquiries: I was duped throughout, even in her short-lived devotedness" bebbs of "sioilA , nov llet

There was deep wretchedness in Lord St. Lawrence's tone, without any of that bitterness which might have been expected: it would have started those tears in Alicia's eyes for his past suffering, which had all this time refused to flow for herself, had they not gushed out violently and hastily, at the conviction that she too must separate from him, or consent to accept a husband to whom she could no longer give her whole trust and confidence.

Wrung by this idea, she continued weeping, incapable of answering Lord St. Lawrence's impatient and fearful questioning. "I know not what to say," she cried, at length, endeavouring to conquer herself—"I would fain do what is just, and—""

"O no! — what is merciful!" interrupted her lover. — "I confess that I have justly forfeited this dear hand — but you may give it again — a free, gracious gift, to bless and animate me in a different course. — I will receive it as such, Alicia; and if my prayers are heard, you shall never have cause to repent it."

Alicia looked from side to side to avoid his earnest eyes, which pursued her with their pleading; she strove to extricate her hand, while saying in a voice nearly extinguished, "Spare me the misery of being hurried into promising what I may wish to —— I cannot decide to-night: —— I must think — (her raised and streaming eyes said she must do more than think) ——Let me go!—Unhappy St. Lawrence!"

Lord St. Lawrence evidently had deluded himself, as many do when they profess to despair utterly of some desired good. His countenance expressed surprise as well as agony, when he heard this implied wish of giving him up entirely; and for the moment he was paralysed: but, seizing her gown as she would have quitted him, he detained her on her seat, urging his altered habits, and altered principles; reminding her of the many changes her gentle power had already wrought in him; of the plans they had concerted together for pursuing a very different life after they were married from what the world expected; and how much good they had hoped to produce, by Heaven's blessing on their example and influence. - He painted in vivid colours the probable effect of this happy life upon himself, as well as upon others: then

extinguished, a Spare me the misery of

changing the picture, showed himself cast loose again upon the world, discarded and disgraced by her, and with the sacred sentiments she had taught him where to seek, not sufficiently rooted, perhaps, to withstand such a storm of sorrowful passions. He ventured to urge, that, if sincere repentance were admitted even by sinless perfection as the warrant of a claim upon redeeming love, it might be pleaded more boldly to one of the same nature with himself.

ineffectual. Alicia felt her tumultuous emotions subsiding while he spoke; but afraid of being too much or too quickly influenced, once more endeavoured to escape. "Do not detain me!" she said.

"I must still this feeling (pressing her hand upon her throbbing side) before I can discern what I ought to do?"

"You do then actually meditate giving me up, Alicia," he repeated, in a tone of indignant grief, "for a fault committed long ere I knew you! Has my sincerity no value in your eyes? I could

not, I confess, have longer concealed so much of my story as was needful to prove my freedom from all blaine on account of the Marchesa; but this last—worst part—nothing could have wrung out of me except real contrition, and the dread of sinning again by deceiving you."

St. Lawrence; but I must go away? In Go then!" he resumed, in an altered voice, suffering her hand to drop from his. — "Unfortunate that I am! Love how I may, it is my destiny never to inspire affection!"

As he concluded, he sate down at a distance from her, fixing his eyes dejectedly upon the ground.

There is something to a soft-hearted woman almost irresistible in a man's passive wretchedness; she fancies the manly heart so strong, and the sorrow so great which may subdue it. Alicia remained standing where he had dropped her hand, saying, in a suffocated tone, "You wrong yourself and me by this cruel sentiment. My heart is only too much yours—it is

this which makes me fear to —— "Her voice trembled, and would wholly have failed, had not the sudden sparkling of his eyes warned her to hurry on. — "I expect my father in a week — When he comes —— "

"You will let him decide?" was the eager question.

"No!" looking down, that she might not see his great emotion. - "His counsel will assist-perhaps strengthen mebut only myself at last -" Her lip quivered, and grew paler as she continued, - " I cannot conceal from you, Frederick, that I may not think of you-at once—as I have done: but whether we are to part for ever after this sad, sad day, O be assured, that if I had not considered you honouringly as tenderly, the confession you have just made would not have pierced me as it has done. Had I not believed you superior to all other men, should I have felt thus, at finding you could-sink to their level?"

The last words expired upon the white lips which affected a smile, a wretched

smile, less tolerable to Lord St. Lawrence than ghastly lightnings, for he pressed down his eyes with a sort of shiver: then breaking out afresh into agony, bewailed her slight feeling for him, and his own infatuated sincerity, as he madly called it; dwelling upon her calm mention of Colonel Barry's coming, when she knew it might be to take her from him for ever. At one time refusing to owe any thing to her father's interference; at another, beseeching her to let his knowledge of men's characters and temptations plead in favour of one who thus humbled himself to the very dust. One moment he upbraided, the next entreated pardon for his impatient arrogance; passing through all those varieties of feeling which mark the presence of strong passion contending against a sense of just condemnation.

Alicia entreated him to calm these transports. "In our happy time," she said, "I knew not the extent of my regard for you—(blushing ere she found a word to substitute for one of truer

import), "You won me by such gentle degrees, that only in an hour like this could I learn how wretched you alone can make me. Do not fancy my heart is not bleeding. — If you had but told this on our first acquaintance. "" months of the could I, Alicia?"

you would not have deceived me, could you have avoided it? It is this deceived ing a second time a second person."

St. Lawrence, starting up as if a real arrow were quivering in his heart instead of her words; then turning towards her, he confessed the culpable weakness which had deterred him from at least hinting at the foregone part of his life when he asked her hand, yet continuing to urge his present voluntary sincerity as a proof of that "repentance which worketh amendment," entreated her not to quit him, or send him away without a hope that he might recover her affection.

Lawrence," she replied, softening into

should not fear the influence of your looks—your voice. I wish you would leave—leave town a very little while (she gasped for breath, irresolute only from the consciousness of the pain she was inflicting, and disengaging the hand which he had taken again in a transport of sudden hope); it would spare me many embarrassing moments—prevent remarks."

I understand you, Alicia. You can no longer behave to me even in company as you have done. Be it so! Colonel Barry will come; you will have made up your mind to give me up; and you will go to Ireland with him while I am away, to spare me and yourself, as you will fancy.—Be it so, I repeat. It shall be all as you choose. I can but be miserable. I want to destroy self! I will do as you wish therefore. I will go to morrow; but to morrow, that is Sunday—Alicia, may I not once again?"

Alicia knew too well what he would have added, and penetrated by the grief

in which she fully shared, faltered out, " Not to-morrow, then; Monday: tomorrow we shall meet as usual." She could support herself no longer; her resolution as well as her strength was failing, and turning from him, she hastened to regain the solitude and security of her own chamber.

There, sinking upon her bed, a short oblivion came over her heart and senses, during which, if consciousness were not wholly lost, thought, feeling, memory, and imagination ceased to act. This interval might be necessary to strengthen both her body and her mind, for as both awakened, grief and perplexity returned, and sharper struggles ensued between grateful affection for Lord St. Lawrence and the fear of plucking condemnation upon her own head by becoming his wife

If his character were yet uninfluenced by those reforming truths to which he professed himself a willing convert, how was she to believe in the sincerity of that profession? To gain Lorenzo Castelli,

he had practised one deliberate deception; to insure herself, he had, at least, withheld the confession which conscience suggested, until she were little likely to have the will or the power to annul their engagement.

It is true, one deceit led to a dishonourable end, the other to an honourable one; but does any end sanctify bad means? Is not a habit of self-indulgence here, incompatible with a serious pursuit of the happiness which is beyond this earth? And if selfishness could triumph over Lord St. Lawrence's better principles as effectually now as it formerly had done over his natural sentiments of honour and honesty, what was to assure her that it would not do so again and again, to her sorrow, after he was her husband?

To those who have lived only the life of the world, the feelings here described may appear little worthy of regard: not so to persons brought up in the sanctuary of a virtuous home, where the impress, at least, of what they ought to desire in others, and aim at in themselves, is yet fresh and undefaced. It is only when this blessed impress is worn away by contact with changed characters, that young hearts learn indifference to what is pure and praiseworthy. The high-minded, indeed, often begin life by too arrogant a notion of their own power, as well as too arbitrary a requirement of excellence in their companions; but; although experience ought to teach them humility and mercifulness, woe to their present good and future acceptation if they shall ever learn "to call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter."

Alicia had just been listening to a confession which, however shaded by the passionate eloquence of the offender, was still the confession of guilt. Believing the misguided girl an innocent one, he had taken (as he supposed) advantage of their difference in religion to cheat her ignorance or her credulity by a ceremony which could not bind himself. That she had not been virtuous from the first, that she had wearied of, and left

him, was neither to be wondered at nor regretted; they were after-circumstances, or discoveries, which did not abate the original sin of the intention. Having once witnessed the family wreck which had followed the ruin of a poor girl, taken from the neighbourhood of Castle Barry, and having at that time imagined that the curse of Heaven must rest upon the head of a seducer, Alicia's blood ran cold while giving such a title to Lord St. Lawrence, and fancied swearing to him at the altar honour and obedience.

It must be remembered that her affection was not of that involuntary nature which, taking the heart by surprise, involves every thought and feeling, and, after a certain period of indulgence, renders resistance to it impossible. On the contrary, it had found a scarce perceptible preference for another buried deep in her breast, had gradually overgrown and finally choked that unsuspected sentiment, substituting for it the most perfect confidence in her lover's excellence, and the tenderest gratitude for his generous

attachment. How sorely, then, was it shaken by the present exposure! In important considerations like these, our heroine long overlooked the other dependencies of this difficult subject; but when they did rise in array before her, she trembled at what she might have to encounter from her family, whose hearts, she could not conceal from herself, were set upon rank and riches.

Her father might treat her scruples with worldly ridicule, or over-rule them by his positive command; or Lord St. Lawrence himself, remembering the height from which he had stooped to her, might take fire at the only proposition which she could bring herself to contemplate, and, refusing any probation, break from her entirely.

What then would be the disappointment of her mother, who had made such humiliating sacrifices to attain this one object! What the vexation of her father, who certainly calculated upon some great advantages to himself from the projected alliance! And what the cruel

surmises or contemptuous pity which she must endure, since the cause of this extraordinary rupture must necessarily remain a secret!

Each and all of these probable occurrences were so painful, whether separately or together, that she could not think of them unshaken. Her parents' displeasure and mortification had real terrors for a heart which sincerely wished to fulfil every duty. The world's opinion, too, was of sad value to her; suspecting, as she did, that it would not give her credit for the dissolution of so brilliant an engagement, but rather set her down as one wearied of and thrown by. Lastly, the recollection of all that Lord St. Lawrence had cheerfully renounced to elevate her, came to crush her with a weight of obligation as overwhelming as the gushing tenderness by which it was accompanied. That he should think her ungrateful, arrogant, self-exalted! that he should not understand her virtuous apprehension, but attribute it to cold affection! and that, not believing in her present agony,

he should angrily insist upon their breaking at once and for ever! That such might be the consequences of that hesitation which delicacy and principle demanded from her was only too likely, and while she thought of it, her firmest purposes became unsteady.

After so many weeks of constant companionship with a mind so elegant, and a heart so devoted as those of Lord St. Lawrence; after accustoming herself to contemplate the whole of after life as spending with him, and guiding by him; after indulging in many a delightful dream growing out of the station she would then have held; and, above all, after having joyfully opened her young heart to welcome every new impression of his imagined excellence, it was impossible for her now to see such hopes, nay realities, fading away, without a deep sense of desolation. Clouds seemed to pass over higher hopes; while every feeling was absorbed by the past, present, and future, of the trying world she was in onco you no show any interest

Tord St. Lawrence gone from her, con-

vinced of her pure motives, acquiescing in them, and content to abide the trial of constancy both to her and to his new character, was an object of comparative comfort for thought to rest upon; but when she pictured him in a state of strong resentment, and fancied the utter wreck which the loss of a happy home might prove to such a nature as his, every just fear and caution vanished, and she was ready to believe that she alone would be answerable for his future course.

Vainly did she look round for one helping hand. She was sorrowfully sure that neither of her parents were sufficiently influenced by the principle which opposes itself to all evil, to be satisfactory guides on this momentous occasion. The honoured friends of her childhood were too far away; and Jocelyn Hastings, who, from his holy profession, might at this moment have held the lamp to her feet, was perhaps still in Madeira; and, whether there or in England, had ceased to show any interest in her concerns. One Friend, however, she retained, in common

with every humble and devout Christian; and to this Friend she turned with a sad fervour, which, by degrees, obtained the composure and steadiness it sought.eirs Her eyes finally closed in sleep under the conviction that when her father arrived, whatever might be his opinion, a superior duty commanded her to regulate her conduct towards Lord St. Lawrence by the dictates of conscience alone. Lady Donnington did not return from the Wimbledon breakfast till after midnight, so that Alicia was excused from seeing her ere she slept; and as the next was a day on which, in London especially, her Ladyship rarely rose before noon, she was spared an enquiry into the causes which had kept her away from the party. and Although rising with heavy eyes and colourless cheeks, our heroine did not absent herself from church : on the conltrary, she would have prepared for it with a sense of refuge, had she not dreaded thinking too much while there of her companion of ylao awould notifie as

rence had always accompanied her to the morning service, in defiance of Lady Donnington's guarded, yet not hurtless railleries on their return. Nervously anxious now to avoid even five minutes tête-d-tête with him in the house, Alicia watched at her window, and when she saw him at a distance, hurried out, followed by her servant. They met, almost at the door; she took his offered arm without speaking, though he endeavoured to utter the usual formulary of meeting, with something of calmness, in spite of the sigh which he stifled as it rose. His sigh, and her trembling arm, spoke volumes to each Ladyship rarely mee being poorsafte

But closely followed as they were by the servant, and in view of several persons of their own class going the same way, both felt the necessity of commanding their feelings, though so painfully impressed with a sense of their changed relations to each other. They continued, therefore, walking on in agitated silence; an agitation known only to themselves; for Alicia's varying complexion was hid

by a thick veil; and Lord St. Lawrence holding down his head, as if the sun annoyed him, evaded the observation of acquaintance, by hurrying his companion so rapidly through the press of carriages and of people at the entrance, that no one had time to remark how he looked. This, indeed, was always his practice when he found his beautiful betrothed more than usually surrounded by strangers, anxious to catch a glimpse of a face which the general gaze never failed to cover with confusion. Some persons there were, amongst the throng, who, knowing both merely by reputation and by sight, saw them enter the house of God together with pious pleasure and natural admiration. Perhaps such hearts blessed them as they passed, putting up a benevolent prayer for their continuance in the paths of peace. Others looked after the young and graceful Lord St. Lawrence and the lovely Miss Barry, thinking how enviably fortunate was the one, how eminently happy were both. Little did either class dream how different they were in fact,

nor how much the prayer of fervent dharity was wanted by one, at least!

Lord St. Lawrence led Alicia to Lady Donnington's seat in the chapel, and, after an instant's hesitation, followed her in, as usual.

There is something in the act of prayer, nay, in the mere sense of being in a place dedicated to the Most High and Most Merciful, which unlocks every sorrowful heart: anguish that has, till then, refused to vent itself in words or in tears; hopes that have been silenced, and yearnings which we have feared to indulge, all flow out at the feet of Him who alone is mighty to save, and whose ear, we are told, is never shut to the cry of human suffering.

In his holy temple we feel, that "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," so does the Father of all, gather and comfort them who seek him in humbleness and love; that, protected by this shadowing wing, sin cannot approach our thoughts, nor sorrow fasten upon our hearts, even while abandoning ourselves to freer, fuller feeling of what we know we are called upon to renounce.

As this blessed conviction pressed upon Alicia, tears trickled down her cheeks with salutary flow; she felt assured, that if she sought assistance there, she would not seek it in vain; that if she asked sincerely for illumination while thus dark and doubtful, He, before whom all hearts are open, would bring light out of the chaos, and enable her to preserve herself from error, without utterly ruining the peace of another.

While these thoughts crowded on her mind, she was kneeling with a bowed head over her prayer-book, which lay open on the seat before her: when she arose from her knees, the wetted leaves of the book did not escape the watchful notice of her companion. His own feelings were painfully at variance with the holy composure of every thing around him; but he strove to calm himself, resolute in the previous determination of not endeavouring to work upon a soft

nature by a studied display of great feeling.

alloyed by a little of that pride which prompts the frail being who thinks himself judged extremely, to do something which may at least give himself the consciousness of deserving better thoughts; and, in consequence of it, Lord St. Lawrence appeared only seriously occupied with the ordinary service, when too often his perturbed spirit was addressing in its own words, and for its own especial wants, the great object of general worship.

When we are under the influence of any particular passion or circumstance, we rarely listen to a discourse, or open a book, which does not seem directly addressed to our situation. Thus, neither Alicia nor Lord St. Lawrence could hear without increased emotion a penitential psalm of David's, together with the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, among the psalms and lessons of the day. The pathetic expres-

sions of the one, and the sublime appeals of the other, testified that the cry of penitence never ascends unregarded or unanswered. A site tremore sit as I

Alicia felt this assurance with an awakening heart; even though he for whom hope and joy were springing up afresh within her, never once raised his head to enforce their effect by a look. She sat weeping noiselessly, but irrepressibly, while he continued mastering his rising emotion.

As the service proceeded, her agitation subsided; and the sanctioned enjoyment of being thus joined with the man to whom her faith was plighted, in humble prayer when both were sorrowing, spread balm over her spirit. The earnestness of his devotion, the stillness of his very looks (pale and sad as they were), gave birth to respect as well as tenderness. She felt that even penitence may have dignity; and while looking upon this obvious humiliation (conscious of many imperfections in herself), almost of coursel and 181 prospect of relief

doubted whether she had any right to demand superior excellence in a husband.

For the moment, she forgot that the more we feel our own proneness to error, the greater ought to be our care of avoiding such connections which, so far from confirming our best resolutions, are calculated to sink and destroy them. If Lord St. Lawrence had only sinned against herself by his long concealment and foregone offence, she would not have tried him so rigidly:—but he had sinned against Heaven; and she was not omniscient, to read his inmost heart.

As is frequently the case in the churches and chapels of the metropolis, the communion service was read by a different clergyman from the first who had officiated. At the commencement of the divine prayer with which it begins, and through the fine human one immediately following, Alicia's emotion was renewed: — she heard the voice of Jocelyn Hastings. Surprise, joy, hope of counsel, and the prospect of relief,

came on her with the full, sweet, supwhich she had once considered vrotacilg 19 He was near her, then! He was one of her appointed guides, since he belonged to the chapel she frequented. Providence seemed to have sent him for her aid in this great crisis of her fate! Agitated by expectation, she did not, perhaps, give her whole soul, as she had previously done, to the service going on, but listened to the chanted response, and the pealing of the organ, with an impatience which her better thoughts rebuked. The rolling sounds passed slowly away, and again that single voice was heard (to her ear the music) flowing forth after every swell and soar of the choir, with a silvery sweetness, which, softening the awful words of the decalogue, seemed given to invite the sinner back to the way of life. oann a reduct red When the communion service ended, and the singing which precedes the sermon was filling the whole chapel, Alicia vainly tried to steady her thoughts upon the subject of what she was come to They would not obey her will.

Whatever had been the feeling with which she had once considered Hastings, unknown to herself, it was now either wholly effaced by time and the belief of his aindifference, or suddenly crushed under the keener interest and fender sympathy excited by Lord St. Lawrence. She waited for the appearance of the young divine, whom hitherto the situation of Lady Donnington's pew prevented her from seeing, with an eagerness which arose solely from the hope that he might satisfy her conscience agreeably to her inclination. When she saw a different person ascend the pulpit, yet heard the same voice, her disappointment amounted forth after every swell and chingus ot

Again was she thrown back upon her own uncertain, perhaps too scrupulous opinions; or, what seemed worse, upon her father's unsound and interested judgment. The glow with which surprise and expectation had re-coloured her cheeks, faded almost on the instant of making this discovery. Lord St. Law-

rence's frequent glance noted the change; but having no clew to her feelings, he was left to attribute the fluctuations of her countenance chiefly to himself.

Well might he do so; for as if the whole service had been intended to probe his wound to its utmost, and to soften the convictions of Alicia, the preacher chose his subject from the parable of the poor man's lamb, as spoken by the prophet Nathan; dwelling upon the enormity of similar offences with as much force as he put tenderness into the description of that saving grace which follows sincere contrition.

Still to Alicia it seemed Jocelyn Hastings that spoke; and yielding herself willingly to the charm of such an imagination, she sat with her face bent down, listening to the exposition of truths which she knew must eventually decide between her wishes and her bounden duty.

The sermon ended, the blessing was given, and in a few minutes every one was departing. Alicia quitted the chapel once more by the side of Lord St. Law-

rence. They walked to her present home together, not exactly in the same silence with which they had passed the few streets before, but saying little, and that little solely referable to what they had been hearing. As they drew near the house, he told her, that having just heard his aunt was seriously unwell, he should go immediately to her instead of remaining at Grey Friars during his forced absence: - that as he must see Lady Donnington to apologise for deserting her the day before, he should speak of Lady Anne Aubrey's illness by way of excuse for quitting town at such a moment as the present. He would have hazarded an entreaty that Alicia would terminate his suspense quickly, by writing his sentence to him, if after thoughts rendered it favourable, but his lip shook, and his voice became inaudible.

Alicia's heart was pleading so earnestly in his behalf, that she durst not trust herself to speak.

She turned away, yet not coldly; and as she hurried from him into the house

and through the hall, her unchecked sigh assured him that he did not suffer alone.

The plea of laying aside her bonnet gave her a few moments to herself. The freedom of solitude was indeed welcome. If her sensibility to his distress was still more awakened by his manner, her thoughts were more imbued with the sense of awfulness in the duty she had to fulfil to herself. The authoritative voice of scripture had just been denouncing offences like those of which Lord St. Lawrence had confessed himself guilty: it had suggested to her many questions which she now felt the necessity of having satisfactorily answered before she could be assured that, although a criminallyselfish deceiver, he had not been a ruthless one. These related principally to the degree of shame and sorrow which he must have supposed he was inflicting upon Lorenza Castelli's relatives. If she had had parents living; if he had known them; if he had attempted nothing by way of reparation? Alicia felt that she must no longer take what she wished, for

granted; but through her father's agency search and know; nor sacrifice the positive duty of thoroughly sifting the character of him she was to obey hereafter, to a point of delicacy or of romantic generosity.

The persuasive voice so lately heard had renewed such a lively remembrance of those solemn truths which the world's ways were already weakening, that she felt strengthened to bear, what hitherto she had shrunk from — the mortification of knowing herself the public talk should she decide upon refusing to marry Lord St. Lawrence.

She could contemplate with some composure the probability of having her reasons unfavourably canvassed; but she could not so readily submit to have his character suspected of more evil than it merited; to have his name for ever branded by opinion, when his after conduct had redeemed it: or herself, perhaps, condemned even by the good, for suffering his rank and fortune to outweigh her knowledge of his transgressions, if at last

she should bestow her hand upon him in marriage.

To prevent this mischief, if possible, she saw the propriety of not giving publicity to her present indecision. Concealment would not be difficult; as she would soon be removed to another country, provided she could preserve while in this her former surface of cheerfulness and ease. Lord St. Lawrence had himself cleared the way by projecting a visit to his sick aunt, which might well be prolonged until the arrival of Colonel Barry; after which, whatever might be the result of that period's reflections, Alicia would be directly taken from the London world, and her proceedings cease for a while at least to be either thought of or talked of. It now became her, therefore, to endure the discomfort of appearing what she was not in reality: and summoning up that most wretched of smiles, the smile which our heart disclaims and fears to have believed too real by one individual, she descended to the sittingroom.

As she entered, Lady Donnington was still vehemently scolding Lord St. Lawrence, for absenting himself, and withholding Miss Barry from the Duke's fête, refusing to see that the accused was not yet restored to what he called gala looks; and mixing her elegant invectives with careless pleasantries about his share in the general fright produced by the uncivil jealousy of the Marchesa Isola Bella's husband. At Alicia's appearance, of course the latter part of her attack was discontinued; leaving only more disposable wit for pursuit of the first theme.

Alicia's expressive complexion wanted none of its bloom while the gay woman of fashion rallied her supposed sentimental sadness over a lover's aching finger. Lord St. Lawrence amended the phrase by suggesting aching head. Alicia felt that even so their mutual suffering was ill denoted. At this moment their inward pain was poignant, to absolute agony; for both were called upon to answer sportive challenges, to jest with their own

tortures, and as the shafts struck deeper and deeper, to affect the more amusement.

Such are the sacrifices demanded by the world's votaries! While their feet only press the rose-leaves strewn there, it is well: but let the thorns pierce them, and where are they? Thrown down, and left to bleed; or hurried on, receiving more wounds.

Nothing would appease Lady Dominington, she declared, for the base desertion of her at Roehampton, except some out-of-door party by night or by day, given by Lord St. Lawrence, of which she and Miss Barry should design the plan, leaving the execution to his Lordship. London was just ending, and such a party would be the last and the brightest gleam of its sunset.

In vain the Earl protested that he must give it then in the streets or in Grosvenor Square itself, as he had no house nearer town than Grey Friars; unless indeed it were Lady Donnington's sovereign pleasure that he should purchase one for the purpose.

Mr. Harrowby had done last year; give the fête at night, during the full moon, if he chose to save money and lights: if not, illuminate the whole place, hang all the trees with coloured lamps, to imitate the jewel trees in the story of Aladdin; in short, give something quite odd and magnificent, and make every body come dressed like people in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments."

Lady Donnington's fantastic imagination once excited, was not easily quieted: Alicia turned grieving away from a conversation so little suited to the sacred duties from which she and Lord St. Lawrence had but just returned, while he said with an embarrassed mixture of carelessness and seriousness, that he was obliged to leave town for a few days, during which her Ladyship was free to mature her plan, or project any pretty thing she chose, assured he would realise it if possible to give her pleasure; adding, with a smile of deeper meaning than even she

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could divine, that it would certainly be the last party he would give in London.

"For this season?" she lightly questioned. "O! I understand. After a certain nervous ceremony, you mean to cut London entirely; give fêtes only to farming-men and milk-maids; have cattleshows and sheep-shearings-(there I can help you still); fatten prize oxen, and take up poachers—(there I won't help you, detesting sportsmen); go about in a short plush coat and leggings; come into ladies' rooms only to dirty them with your feet, and up to Town only to make speeches: in short, make yourself hideous, and odious, and bearish, and as unlike the smart well-looking man I am now talking to as possible."

Never were epithets worse applied than the preceding ones. Lady Donnington's raillery restored, however, Lord St. Lawrence's colour, and an irrepressible laugh at the portrait which her liveliness had painted of him contributed to impose upon her for ease of heart. "And what

exceeding in her efforts which generally

says Lady St. Lawrence to this laudable intention?" she exclaimed, looking back at Alicia, who was now industriously settling the flowers in a vase, which needed no arrangement.

Even the questioner could not wonder that she was not answered. Differing in their nature and in their present feelings, the two persons implicated heard this question with far different emotions. To Lord St. Lawrence it sounded like his marriage peal; to Alicia it seemed a knell. He was reanimated by the very effort he yet knew she could not avoid making to appear as usual; and she was dejected by the seeming ease with which he could assume a levity foreign to his heart. It is certain that from Lord St. Lawrence's manner, perhaps, no one could have discovered that any thing was amiss between him and his fair betrothed; whilst she, unused to feign, and early taught by Rose McManus to abhor every species of deceit, could not attempt to appear the thing she was not, without that fear of exceeding in her efforts which generally renders them abortive. Yet were both, at heart, equally agitated.

After a moment's joyful bewilderment, Lord St. Lawrence recalled his scattered thoughts, returning in an altered tone to the mention of Lady Anne Aubrey's indisposition, and her wish of a visit from him. Lady Donnington cried out against "tiresome relations," and "old people's fancies, that every cold was to kill them;" carelessly asking, whether she was to suffer Colonel Barry to carry off his daughter, provided Lady Anne chose to keep her nephew longer than it suited the Colonel to stay in England, or she herself in town.

This question was easily evaded; more easily than the one of whether Lord St. Lawrence "would come in the evening, as usual, for his walk?" He therefore answered promptly in the affirmative, and, hiding his distressed feelings under a greater air of cheerfulness, abruptly took his leave.

The door had no sooner closed upon him, than Lady Donnington rose up, and ALL DOWN

walking to a window, looked after him till he was out of sight. "Quite gone!" she exclaimed, in a theatrical tone. "There, Miss Barry! I have done your part. To be of a piece with your pretty stay-at-home fit last night, you should have gone and looked after Lord St. Lawrence till not a vestige of him was seeable. I am not going to rack you with questions; only to vindicate my own sagacity, must tell you, that I see you are tormenting that poor man to a shocking degree. Take care that you don't vex him too much: there are such scores of women ready to pet him, and put him up in cotton!"

Alicia uttered some unintelligible exclamation.

Lady Donnington fixed her black piercing eyes on her face, with the proud look of superior intellect, "If you are quarrelling with him about the on dit of the town just now, I shall think you exceedingly absurd. Twenty other women are in your situation, I can tell you. This Italian woman turns out to have been

so bad so long, that her present husband, the Collitons think, has dropped the idea of a public trial, being sure he would neither get damages nor divorce; so, at the worst, Lord St. Lawrence only comes in for his share of the little scandal going on amongst misses and maiden aunts about every Englishman that happened to be at Genoa in this Marchesa's time. And if the thing were true, who would ever think of taking Lord St. Lawrence to task for what Lord Aubrey did, five or six years ago?"

"I am afraid I should," replied Alicia, incapable of giving even a tacit assent to such dangerous doctrine; "but I have no suspicion whatever of Lord St. Lawrence on this occasion. I am convinced of his freedom from any improper regard for the Marchesa Isola Bella. We have not quarrelled." Here her eyes fell under the levelled beam of Lady Donnington's, who, shrugging up her shoulders with affected indifference, exclaimed -

"Well! it shall be exactly as you please; you have not quarrelled; you are not changing colour twenty times in one minute; Lord St. Lawrence did not look as he went out like a man going to be hanged. Only do let me remind you, my dear Miss Barry, that our original compact was, you were never to use any man ill under my roof. I do not suspect you of the extreme folly of intending to jilt Lord St. Lawrence; that would be too absurd as well as too bad; but it is just possible that you may play at plaguing him rather too long; that he may find out, now he is away, that he is not so desperately in love as not to be capable of being made very angry; and that, in short, the whole thing may break off. I shall be rendered ridiculous." A destate apparent a grown

The last words were said in an irritated tone, which proved their seriousness. Alicia looked earnestly at her, though tears were gathering in her own eyes at this painful prophesy.

"Surely, dear madam, nothing which either Lord St. Lawrence or I may do can affect your character, for sense and conduct? I repeat, that I have not any jealousy of this Marchesa, or any suspicion of Lord St. Lawrence with her; and that I have not the slightest doubt of his strong, true attachment to myself; but you will allow that it is unpleasant to know we are talked of so much, and that persons do not believe him guiltless of—"She hesitated for want of a fitting expression, and from a troubled sense of the true source of her present suspicious manner.

"So then all is right, and going on as usual!" slowly ejaculated Lady Donnington, in a tone of ironical conviction, half-offended at what she thought an attempt to baffle her skill in countenances. "I see I cannot understand people in love; in fact, I never pretended to make out young ladies who have been brought up in a different set." (Lady Donnington's flickering smile would have irritated any person ambitious of belonging to her set.) "I suppose it is a thing of course, for the cold fit to come after the fever always, and then the fever again. I shall know more about it if you will hand me one of those books that I

was reading last Sunday: — any novel there will do, if you will be so good."

Alicia lifted one of the books from the

table near which she stood, without speaking, and literally without looking at its title, and having put it into her lady-ship's hand, withdrew to her own apart-

ment to far different studies.

Circumstances alone had in a manner bound up Lady Donnington and Miss Barry in that sort of companionship which privileges lookers-on in calling such persons friends; yet never were there two individuals more apart in their tastes, habits, and opinions. In proportion as the latter, by acquiring more freedom of action after her engagement with Lord St. Lawrence, was enabled to show the whole of her character, the more was the former's opposition of sentiments, natural and acquired, manifested and confirmed. Regard for her ladyship, therefore,

did not increase, though obligation did: and Lord St. Lawrence was so thoroughly sensible to the same impressions of distaste, coupled with great demands upon his gratitude, that he could only satisfy his contrary feelings by a succession of complaisances and presents, which, instead of paying off the debt, rather contributed to stamp the character of friendship upon an intimacy which, but to have studied Alicia, he never would have sought.

It may not be supposed that he could converse often and unreservedly with the future partner of all his serious thoughts, without partly communicating his opinion of Lady Donnington's character, and of her claims upon them through life. He knew well how to define those claims, and how to preserve himself and his wife from irksome bondage in consequence; yet did he avow his purpose of "paying to the uttermost farthing," in minor compliances, what they really owed her, during the progress of their attachment.

By constraining himself and Alicia to accompany Lady Donnington wherever she most wished to show them in her train, he had obtained for them both an exemption from the eternal round of dissipation. Thus on this day of rest, Alicia retired to her own pretty dressing-room, assured that in spite of carriage after carriage rolling up to the door, she was not obliged or expected to join the gay sets dropping in successively, to talk over the last night's ballet, or the last morning's gossip; that she was not required to go and drive for hours in the park, nor to accompany Lady Donnington afterwards to Lord ——'s music. She had full leisure to think over every subject pressing upon her heart.

It may not be denied, that after the feelings and observations of the morning, she would scarcely have hesitated to decide at once upon restoring her confidence and her vows to Lord St. Lawrence, had he not been Lord St. Lawrence. The inequality of their rank, and the circumstances of her family, not only rendered her suspicious of her own inclinations, but suggested a fear that in after times the Earl himself might revert to her easy acquittal with some doubt of

its motive, or at least of her delicacy; for if her father made too large a use of his generous attachment, such an idea would be almost unavoidable.

Two reasons, however, preserved her resolution of waiting Colonel Barry's arrival; first, a sense of propriety, in referring so important a matter to a father's consideration; then, the hope that he would obtain satisfaction upon the obscure points of Lord St. Lawrence's story, which womanly delicacy forbade her to question. In this hope she joined Lady Donnington at dinner with overacted cheerfulness.

Lord St. Lawrence came in the evening, as usual, for an hour before visiting time; not as formerly alone, but in company with Sir Edgar Trevor, whose good nature and good spirits helped on the heavy task of dissimulation. Lord St. Lawrence himself was in what are literally called frightful spirits; and Alicia was so earnest to avoid more questioning from her sharp-sighted chaperon, that young Trevor was completely taken in

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by her gaiety. Lady Domington could not resist the jest of pretending to forget it was Sunday, "because Miss Barry was laughing and talking delightful nonsense."

Alicia pleaded guilty to meriting the rebuke; doubly glad so to have a right plea for ceasing from those feverish exertions of pleasantries and joyous looks, which had given a new character to her beauty, painful perhaps to one, while strikingly heightening to all the others. To Lord St. Lawrence, indeed, at first this novel charm only "mocked a soul in agony;" but his nature, averse to misery, soon yielded to the belief, that if he could thus agitate Alicia, she would eventually restore him to his full power over her heart.

In this glow of hope he parted from her, when Lady Donnington's carriage being announced, he and Sir Edgar were called upon either to accompany her to a Sunday party, or to go away. The young hussar's choice, unhappily, may be imagined. Lord St. Lawrence walked

back alone to his own cheerless, splendid house, wholly changed; for his spirits were checked by the mere ceremony of bidding good night; and a superstitious dread came over him, that, once separated from Alicia, he never should see her again: — she might take advantage of his absence, and depart with her father.

Perhaps the weight of former years hung upon him, and another parting, which at the time he had as little suspected would be an eternal one, was busy with memory. The transports and the anguish of that long past period, were yet capable of returning upon Lord St. Lawrence in all their freshness, at moments like the one now passing;—reviving emotions, which made it difficult for him to know whether the pangs he was suffering under, belonged more to the present than to the past, and whispering, that for him, the brightest future would always be shadowed.

Such is the sure, the merited, the salutary pain which remains with him who has once deliberately sinned against conscience, but who, as years roll on, awakens more and more to its severe requirements. For him, the future always will be shadowed, unless divine mercy allow him an opportunity of making reparation to the person injured (should his fault have been, wronging the innocent); or if he have no power so to evince his penitence, —if he have sinned with the guilty, then unless the same mercy vouchsafe to him the steady light of an abiding falth, born of true contrition, his way through life will continue dark and tempest-tossed.

As neither Lord St. Lawrence's short absence nor his great aunt's indisposition would have been accepted in society as a solid reason for moping at home, Alicia too hastily tried to avoid curious remark, by giving herself wholly up to Lady Donnington for the week that was to pass before her father had positively settled to come for her.

come for her.

What a week it proved! — The very demon of torment must have planned its engagements! Reviews, races, water-par-

ties, Vauxhall-parties, operas, and Almack's! - Alicia was not through half its wasted hours before she felt convinced that no exemption from sarcastic ill-nature was worth the positive pain of affecting ease when torn by mental anguish; nor yet of the self-accusing pang which belonged to the consciousness of desert. ing her principles by thus mis-using time. She was harassed, too, by the fear of overdoing what discretion required; if, indeed, she were blame-worthy for conceding too much to this nervous dread of being talked of, the fault brought its own punishment, and, we may add, its lasting lesson. Instead of peaceful occupation. and gradually tranquillising spirits, which, after all, would have been the most likely way of baffling malicious imaginations, she found she had to support the fatigue of forcing conversation, the torture of having her marriage with Lord St. Lawrence eternally talked about, and the humiliation of feeling all the time that she was prevarieating and acting. To this was added, the mortification of perceiving

that, so far from succeeding in her scheme of appearing happy in the way she was a month before, her assumed vivacity, coupled with her lover's absence, emboldened those who chose to believe that she and the Earl had quarrelled. Some of these insinuated admiration, others hazarded impertinent surmises.

Amongst the former was a nobleman whose evident captivation at her first appearance in London had, perhaps, hastened Lord St. Lawrence's declaration, and who now, seizing at the rumour of Miss Barry's match being off, chose to be the Earl's successor, either in good earnest or for the triumph of a day.

Lord Ullswater was very young, very handsome, and very silly; but he was a marquis, and piqued at the idea of being thrown out by a man of inferior nobility, hurried to every place where Miss Barry appeared during this week of dissipation and chagrin, making his admiration as conspicuous as possible, and forcing her at last, when she became sensible of his object, to throw as conspicuous an air of

coldness into her rejection of his de-

She did not, however, suffer only from Lord Ullswater's attentions: her heart (humbled to find its own weakness) was secretly dismayed at the strict obedience paid by Lord St. Lawrence to her parting injunction. She had forbidden him to write, and was sincere when she forbade him; but that he should make no attempt to avert the fate he professed to dread, was so unnatural, that she could not forbear thinking it either argued sudden indifference, or the consciousness of deserving much less esteem than he challenged. Whichever was the case, pain, extreme pain, was the consequence; and the new apprehension of possible desertion by him who had till now loved her with what seemed the highest order of attachment, opened her heart to all that variety of hopes, expectations, alarms, and disappointments which too often distract tender woman, and palsy her strongest resolves in a crisis of moment.

Lady Donnington luckily knew not

what letters were brought or not brought to her house; nay, she was rarely in Alicia's company when the postman's knock sent the blood from the latter's cheek; she did not, therefore, see the effect of this man's departure, when he came and went without leaving the letter now almost desired. She herself heard once from Lord St. Lawrence, and knowing by this means that Lady Anne Aubrey was seriously ill when he went to her from Grey Friars, did not ask any questions of his supposed better-informed correspondent.

Alicia saw the week close with a sinking spirit: either Lord St. Lawrence had given her up, or she might have to give up him: If the former, how was she to meet her father, whom she now expected to see every moment?

Completely subdued by these apprehensions, she could not accompany Lady Donnington out to a late party, and had the pleasure therefore of receiving without witnesses, a proof that one of her fears, at least, was groundless. A letter in the form of a parcel had been brought by

the mail from Wiltshire that evening, and was delivered before night. It came not from Lord St. Lawrence, but from his aunt, who wrote directly after a long conversation with her nephew, entered upon the instant she had been well enough to give his confidence a hearing.

Alicia now saw that instead of attributing her lover's silence to censurable causes, she ought to have given him credit for self-denial and delicacy. She had parted from him, secretly wishing for one of her own sex to act both as a medium and an umpire between them; yet she had not the hardihood to propose such a humiliation, as the very one to which he had voluntarily submitted: it was impossible for her not to be touched to the soul by this conduct.

Lady Anne's letter was long, and perhaps what moderns call prosy; it began by a formal statement of what had been confided to her; recapitulating every word of the confidence with the precision of a person giving her evidence in a court of justice. After repeating all that Alicia

already knew, with those particulars in addition which were wanting in Lord St. Lawrence's agitated personal account, she went on to plead his cause with as much zeal as might be compatible with the strict notions of a single woman, educated at a period when the highest principles were supposed inseparable from high birth.

In the same lofty tone Lady Anne laid it down as incontrovertible, that no one could expect a nobleman to marry a woman of low origin, brought up, as Lorenza Castelli had been, for a public profession. She therefore denounced severely such habits of life as brought the talented ignoble into familiar society with those of gentle blood: pleading for her nephew, that, habituated to hear mis-alliances spoken of with horror, and aware that the young creature he saw daily at the Marchesa Isola Bella's was educating for a singer, he was too likely to fall into the snare of his own passion. After mentioning her nephew's youth and habitual awe of his father, as a reason why he should

consider marrying a Roman Catholic almost as criminal as betraying innocence, she suggested the pernicious effect upon a young man's mind, of living in a foreign country, removed from the wholesome check of friendly observation; living, too, surrounded by persons professing a creed which tempted to sin, by offering pardon alike to purchase and to penance. Lorenza Castelli, believing in the efficacy of such pardon, and destined to a profession which, in Italy, is so rarely followed without leading to moral ruin, was not such an object of respect nor yet of such selfdenying regard as an English girl would have been, brought up in a virtuous and pious home, and meant for domestic life. Lady Anne quoted her nephew's repentant confession when she penned these cruel, however prevalent opinions; owning that they had operated to blunt the edge of remorse after he had gained his point of a half marriage, but were so little satisfying to conscience, as passion tranquillised, and a truer love grew out of his growing belief in Lorenza' purity of heart,

that he was positively on the point of making her legally his wife when her former shame was manifested.

At this part of her letter Lady Anne stopped to offer her own remarks, evidently anxious to acquit her nephew, even at the expense of family pride. She said it was only fair to presume, from this speedy resolution to marry Lorenza lawfully, after she was his by stratagem, that he would have done it at first, had she been, in fact, what her blandishments and arts at length persuaded him to think her. No unvirtuous woman, Lady Anne thought, could so successfully imitate the manners and sentiments of a virtuous one as to satisfy a man of delicacy's scrutiny: something, she concluded, must be in such a woman's deportment, which, though he would not allow it to himself, might render him fearful of trusting his honour as a husband in her hands; and if so, Lord St. Lawrence had not been so culpable as many men in circumstances seemingly similar. To rol rolly a bur boelling

The scope of the noble spinster's

letter was to paint her nephew's tortured state; to offer arguments in favour of his present conduct and principles; to palliate the single great offence of his past life; to require his restoration to happiness after some probation; and to insinuate that if love were still capable of making him forget what his relations believed it incumbent upon him to look for in a wife, it was evident that such victory over family prejudices (if prejudices they were) was the utmost of its triumph.

In this part of the letter there was a strong tincture of hereditary pride: its writer felt keenly the mortification of having not only to press her nephew, the Earl of St. Lawrence, upon the portionless Miss Barry, but the sharper pang of being forced to feel that one of the Aubrey race was justly denied the deference of a grateful and glad acceptance by the daughter of a mere gentleman. This mortification was too great not to render Lady Anne's style cold and reserved; and as she reverted to Alicia's hesitation to believe at once what Lord

St. Lawrence had said in extenuation of his transgressions, she was not able, with all her courtesy, to avoid writing something as offensive to the pride of conscious disinterestedness as wounding to

suffering affection.

Alicia saw that Lady Anne made her own and her nephew's preference of Lady Donnington's untitled élève a sort of merit. The conviction was bitterness. Tears started into her eyes as she remembered her almost theatrical bringing out; but better feelings dispersed them. If she were not much above Lorenza Castelli in pretensions of a worldly nature, she conceived that, by the Divine blessing, she was far above A dearer character and conduct. collection followed this thought; the recollection that never to her had Lord St. Lawrence's intention been doubtful from the first instant in challenged her notice by his attentions. Over such remembrances she suffered herself to hang with softening tenderness, encouraging the conviction to grow upon her, that she might safely consent to trust her happiness in his hands, since he was a changed man upon the guiding principle of life; and the particulars of his attachment to Lorenza Castelli, as given by his relative, rather tended to lessen than to increase his degree of actual guilt.

To justify the facility with which our heroine yielded to the reasonings of her stately correspondent, it may be well to give a more accurate summary of the history (hitherto only hinted at) which involved so many persons' fates.

Lord St. Lawrence (then Lord Aubrey) found himself at the early age of twenty the most admired Englishman at Genoa. His invalid father's unsocial humour driving him to seek compensation in welcoming society at night for the gloom and gêne of the day, he gladly availed himself of a general invitation to the Palazzo of the Marchese Isola Bella, whose young and handsome wife gave the finest concerts in Italy. Thither he was first attracted by the refined graces

of cits mistress, as well as by the charm of exquisite music. The Marchesa being a tasteful composer, employed the most perfect performers to execute her really beautiful compositions; and Lord Aubrey's enthusiastic passion for this favourite science bringing him for ever to her rehearsals and concerts, she soon distinguished him by a reference to his taste and opinion not a little flattering to youth.

Without a doubt either of her or of himself, he was beginning to enjoy more than he ought to have done the dangerous consciousness of such distinction, when his guardian angel (at least, he thought so soon afterwards) interposed to save him from what he would even then have deemed guilt of the blackest dye.

The Marchesa produced at her concerts and employed in female works during her levees, an orphan of seventeen, brought from one of the musical conservatorios where she had been placed during two years, for the education of a voice sweeter than flutes. The Marchesa

was ambitious of fame, as a benefactress to the musical world; and desirous of opening a brilliant career to the object of her bounty, destined her to succeed a celebrated singer belonging to the chapel and theatre of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

In addition to her ravishing voice, Lorenza Castelli had that touching style of beauty which inspires the profoundest passions, though less rapidly than that of a more sparkling kind. Pale, sad, and retiring, the exquisite contours of her face and figure did not catch the common gaze until she came forward to sing: then, the alabaster cheek and brow kindled with a glow that seemed a light; then the dark, deeply-fringed eyes, upturned and suffused, looked as if an angel pleaded in them with heaven for earth. Lord Aubrey, passionate in his admiration of beauty and of music, and peculiarly sensible to a sentiment of interest in woman, no sooner saw and heard the élève of the Marchesa, than he ceased to think of any other object. He gathered

from her patroness that she felt or feigned an extreme repugnance to a public life, and finally submitted to her destiny only from a sense of obligation and utter dependence. The melancholy which had at first surprised him was now accounted for; and exalting the character of Lorenza, would have led him to the humane task of persuading her amiable benefactress to change her purpose, had he not feared it might end in the removal of the former to a convent for life. Lord Aubrey would not acknowledge to himself what unsearched desire lay under this suffocation of a worthy sympathy: that wilful ignorance of his own heart wrecked himself

Every evening Lorenza sang at the Marchesa's concerts. In the morning she sat embroidering for her, or wreathing the pillars of porticoes and halls with flowers, gathered by her hands in the gardens of the palazzo, and of a casino belonging to the Marchesa on the seacoast. There, too, she was accustomed to stay for days at a time, when she had

new music to study. At Genoa, in the mornings, Lorenza, though admitted to her patroness's society, sate at a distance, untalked to, seemingly unnoticed. Her silence there, at first simply touching from its air of modesty, soon became fatally eloquent to the heart and the imagination of him who had already found the way of making sighs, looks, and whispered interest speak for him to the shrinking orphan. He fancied in the silence of Lorenza a sentiment as intoxicating to his soul as her beauty to his senses. Sometimes the dark eye was never lifted; at others, a single glance would be detected; after which, blush succeeding blush, and an unsteadily-moving hand, would appear to show that the silent girl dreaded having betrayed herself, or sate thrillingly conscious whose eyesstill rested upon her. thitior doctor numerical a elogo

A young man in love soon learns when and where to find the object of his passion alone. In the vast gardens round the palazzo, and the wilder solitudes of the casino, Lord Aubrey quickly managed to obtain many moments in which he could express to Lorenza, without witnesses, the interest she inspired. At first, he spoke only of kindly interest; but from the instant in which he hinted at a kindling passion, lamenting the prejudices of his father and the disparity of their condition, she shunned every private meeting with a care which baffled his utmost vigilance. Yet as she still appeared at her work in the Marchesa's apartments, and sang as usual at her concerts, she could not wholly conceal from him the effect his profession of love and despair had produced.

The burning cheek, the hurried breath, followed by the slower sigh and stealing tear, the disorder of her whole countenance when he approached, and the deepening melancholy of her shaded eyes, spoke a language which youthful passion knew too well how to translate. Lord Aubrey believed her as angel-like in purity as in person; he felt that to attempt winning her voluntarily to dishonour, would hurl him from her heart. He

dared not ask his father's consent to marry her; he was not of age to render the ceremony valid without it; but passion, uncurbed at first, was now ungovernable. Other men were surrounding and boldly admiring her; in a few more months, she would go to Florence, or he be removed from Genoa. He could not live without her; and he sunk into the guilt already known.

Their false marriage took place by favour of Bianca, a female servant, charged with the care of the young singer whenever she remained at the casino: and through her means they met unsuspected by the Marchesa. To prevent, indeed, any suspicion of their attachment, Lord Aubrey redoubled his grateful assiduities to the accomplished mistress of the mansion; whose kindness to Lorenza rendered the task a gratification; and to whom habitual homage, both for genius and personal graces, was paid both by old and young, making her incredulous of another's superior attractions.

In the early dream of love, nothing

but the present is heeded: entranced hearts awake to the future, only when roused by the shadow of some coming evil. It was the end of summer, and the Marchesa talked of taking her protegée to Florence in the autumn, that she might be heard by the Grand Duke. As if alarmed at the possibility of being separated even for a day from her husband. and seeing no other way of preventing it, Lorenza suggested the necessity of intrusting their secret to the Marchesa, praying her to continue her protection until Lord Aubrey could subdue his father's prejudices. Such a confidence of course was not possible to him. Conscious that theirs was not a marriage, he was confounded. He hesitated and temporised; soothing her fear by a proposal of removing her himself clandestinely to some other part of Italy, whenever the dreaded journey should be fixed by her patroness. Lorenza still pleaded passionately and seductively; urging, with apparent sensibility to character and delicacy, M. 3

that it was not fit for his wife to incur the scandal of a flight and a concealment; that she shrunk from causing such mortification to the benefactress of her youth, and would fain have his leave to tell her by what bonds she was tied to the son of Lord St. Lawrence.

More alarmed lest his own deceit should be discovered, and Lorenza's affections forfeited, Lord Aubrey's anger kindled with his apprehension; for the first time since their union, he spoke with warmth and authority; assuring her, that of all persons he was most averse to put such confidence in the Marchesa; declining to say why, yet commanding her to rely upon him for properly preventing a separation between them. In this temper he left her; affecting far more displeasure than conscience permitted him to feel; and doing it, simply because he believed she loved him to an excess that would render his resentment less tolerable to support than the greatest worldly evil.

What then was his astonishment and chagrin, when he came again to the ca-

sino, and was admitted as usual by her confidant into a garden pavilion, to be received with a burst of seeming anguish and indignation! The tender wife, who had hitherto met his caresses with timid and trembling joy, now repulsed them as if in horror; accusing him of having betrayed her by a false marriage, the invalidity of which she had just learnt; taking Heaven to witness that she would bury herself in a convent, or beg her bread over the world, unless he repented his cruel deception, and married her by the forms of his own church.

Although she refused to say by whom she was enlightened, her virtuous indignation was so well acted, that Lord Aubrey fell at her feet, owning his shame and remorse. Confessing his incapacity of atoning to her by a valid marriage until two months were past, he repeated his father's abhorrence of the Romish faith, and his own repugnance to act in direct opposition to such a sacred duty as that of a child to a parent; imploring her therefore to forgive the past, nor to

take the rash step she threatened, but to rely upon his love and honour the moment he should become his own master. Lorenza would not listen to any compromise: affecting to consider herself called upon, both by self-respect and reverence of Heaven's ordinances, not to see him again as she had done until they were united lawfully, however privately. If he would re-marry her at the end of the ensuing two months, when he must come of age, she offered to submit, if he then chose it, to the misery and degradation of a doubted character.

At this unguided period of his life, the young Lord Aubrey knew the forms rather than the spirit of his religion: perhaps he looked upon all religions with so little heart in the speculation, that he was not inclined to forgive the woman who could prefer a faulty mode of worship, to the object of her earthly devotion. While about to yield to Lorenza (conscious that by marrying her he would sacrifice every prospect of ambition), in the pride of youthful passion he believed

himself certain of obtaining a sacrifice in return.

In this confidence, he proposed her change of religion as the only circumstance which could embolden him to reveal their union hereafter to his father; or indeed authorize him in bringing her forward amongst the high and conscientious of his country, when his father should be taken away.

His proposal was rejected with a mixture of assumed grief and firmness: whether from an idea of appearing more dignified, or from sincere attachment to a church which absolves even purposed sins. So it was, she refused to be bribed, as she termed it, out of her soul. Here Lady Anne Aubrey had interposed in her history a thanksgiving for her nephew's deliverance from a creature who, like the dissolute Montespan, sought to atone for iniquity by bigotry.

Indignant in his turn, the disappointed lover gave way to passionate reproaches; accusing Lorenza of altered attachment; menacing the priest whom he concluded

had told her at confession the invalidity of their tie; and maintaining that such influence alone could have made her refuse to embrace the faith in which he had been educated. Lorenza's resolution was not shaken, though she solemnly declared no priest had told or tutored her. They parted unreconciled.

After some stormy days' struggling between resentment and remorse, filial duty and more powerful passion, Lord Aubrey came to the resolution of securing Lorenza upon her own terms. He had kept away from the palazzo and the casino all that time, and she had not sent one enquiring billet to show that her purposes faltered: he had no alternative but following the counsel she suggested, and putting the Marchesa partially into his confidence. It was not necessary, he thought, to tell her what had already passed; and though somewhat ashamed to own that his flattering admiration of her musical productions was chiefly due to another's performance, he trusted to the natural wish of a protegée's elevation,

for insuring her interest and her discretion.

To the palazzo Isola Bella, therefore, he hastened, and finding the Marchesa alone, more gracious and winning than ever, began almost a faltering avowal of his love for the orphan Lorenza. With a sudden seizure of his arm, and a countenance expressive of the most painful concern, the Marchesa interrupted him, blaming her own easiness and want of judgment for the misfortune she could not have contemplated, from the decidedly humble way in which she had brought her protegée forward; beseeching him (yet with the kindest reluctance) to conquer his ill-placed passion, for his father's sake; to remain awhile from Genoa till she could place Lorenza out of his sight. Lord Aubrey, encouraged by her friendship, and unchanged by her considerate reasonings, pressed his purposes so earnestly, suing for her continued protection of his wife after he should have made her so secretly in her presence, that his agitated companion, having vowed

concealment of his confidence, required him to swear the same secrecy to what she must then reveal. Lord Aubrey gave the required promise; and the Marchesa opening a cabinet, and seeking in a packet of letters, drew forth one, dated above two years back, telling him it was written by her youngest brother, who, at that period, had been obliged, by former extravagancies, to marry a rich heiress at Naples, with what sentiments that letter would show; and the nature of its contents would say why it was given to him. Lord Aubrey read the letter with such feelings as may be imagined; it was a brother's confidence to a sister, given for the sake of securing a young creature, who had loved him to her own ruin, from utter destruction by his forced abandonment. It spoke of Lorenza as the child of peasants near Monaco, to whom the writer had already made pecuniary compensation; entreating his sister to receive the poor girl under her protection, and either place her in a convent, or, if her conduct merited it, endeavour to marry her respec-

tably. The Marchesa's answer to Lord Aubrey's frantic interrogations substantiated this frightful history. She confessed, that although she could not attempt to impose a frail wife upon any honest man, however humble, she was induced by the girl's extreme youth and sorrow to rescue her from the desperation of abandonment, and the dangers which her beauty surrounded her with. From these motives, finding she sang sweetly, she had her placed in one of the best musical establishments, whence slie had only withdrawn her to fit her completely for the respectable situation offered by the Duke of Tuscany. That Lorenza should call herself by the name of a poor, though wellborn officer, once in the service of the Prince of Monaco, and pass for his orphan, was, the Marchesa hoped, a pardonable deception, under her circumstances. At this moment her patroness was doubly interested in obtaining her a prosperous settlement far from Genoa, because Signore Manzoni, released by his wife's death, was returning to his native

place; and his sister dreaded the effect upon him of Lorenza's increased beauty, and what she had always suspected, of her unabated preference.

What anticipations for Lord Aubrey to hear expressed, however softened by commiseration with his bitter disappointment! He knew not what he answered nor what he promised, until reminded by the Marchesa that he had given her his honour he would not shock the misguided girl by charging her with a past error, redeemed by present good conduct; nor yet be careless of the reputation thus unavoidably placed in his hands; nor ever allow that his honourable attachment had been arrested by the Marchesa's disclosure of her brother's less-sanctioned passion. The Marchesa, he knew, guessed not how far his love had already gone; but counselling him to smother the flame, proposed his going directly to Monaco, where he might, by questioning the neighbours of Lorenza's parents, confirm those painful facts which a lover could with such difficulty believe.

Lord Aubrey lost not a moment in satisfying himself doubly of what, indeed, he could not doubt, after reading the letter from Signor Manzoni. He flew to Monaco: there he heard the same story of her, whom the villagers supposed to be repenting in a nunnery. He was disappointed at not finding her parents: they had quitted the place immediately after the Signor's desertion of their daughter, and had never since been heard of: but the great fact was ascertained, and he returned with a feeling at his heart frightful to himself. It was at once scorn of the fallen creature who pretended to cheat him into linking himself for life to her dishonour, and delirious fondness for the charm of her beauty and manner. For some days he combated the disgraceful wish of retaining her, sunk as she was; but he was not then armed with the strength of sound principle; and once more he sought her, to propose removing her privately from the protection of the Marchesa. He forbore to tell what he had so lately ascertained; but he spoke

with a steady composure, bestowed by his belief that she would finally cease from her assumption of high-strained virtue. Lorenza treated his manner and his language as insults; reproached him again with his deception; bewailed her utter disappointment in his character, and suddenly broke from him in a frenzy of violent feelings.

That night she disappeared from the casino, and not even their former confidant could tell whither she was gone. The Marchesa was in despair, fearing she had gone to try her early power over Signor Manzoni, from whom a brief letter offered some frivolous reason for not visiting his sister. Lord Aubrey suffered what he merited; agonies of self-contempt for continuing to love one so worthless; fear of having his weakness discovered by his father; and a burning wish of doing what he knew he could not do without betraying himself — tearing Lorenza from his rival.

The Marchesa's sympathy became his sole consolation: she knew how to touch

a heart in agony without exasperating its smart, ever softening and soothing, and holding out hopes of being happily mistaken as to the object of her protegée's flight. The direct enquiries, however, which she put to her brother were never answered. This silence was decisive; confirming Lord Audley's desperate resolution of tearing its fair idol from his heart. Why, indeed, should he seek her? She was unworthy; and she had loved only his expected coronet. Offended Providence, merciful even in anger, had manifestly interposed to save him from the remorse of disobedience, and from a shameful union!

Struck with this awful conviction, and awakened by it to fearful self-examination, the wretched lover strove to forget the period in which he had believed Lorenza pure, and himself happy; but her fascinations kept a dangerous hold of memory, combating, often too successfully, with reason, honour, and conscience. The Marchesa's assiduous friendship failed to support him; he sank into

a low fever, which for weeks threatened both intellect and life.

It was during this illness, and in a correspondence subsequent to it, when Lord St. Lawrence took his son to the baths of Baden, that Lord Aubrey apprehended the danger of friendship with a married woman. He soon terminated a correspondence, from its subject carried on by stealth, and resisting all the seductions of flattered vanity, and the cravings of a solitary heart, — averting his eyes, in short, from the scarcely-veiled sensibility of the fair Italian, he returned no more to Genoa.

Time, and a resolved abstinence from every scene which could recall Lorenza's image, gradually closed the wound of his bosom; and always sighing for a home and a heart to anchor his soul upon for life, he beheld Alicia Barry, only to be sure he had found in her beauty and purity, principle which gives stability to virtuous inclinations, and that gentleness of affection which is often truer than idolatrous devotion.

Some of Lady Anne Aubrey's remarks upon this history proved them to be the consequence of a wish to clear her nephew wholly in her own mind: she judged him leniently, and every other person with severity. The stainless spinster assumed the fact, that from the Marchesa's indulgence to Lorenza's early lapse, she herself already required similar indulgence, and was consequently culpably wanting in that discretion which would have shown the danger of bringing her pretty dependent constantly before the eyes of a susceptible young man.

Lady Anne, however, did not conceal that her nephew refused to sanction this opinion, and that he maintained, with expressions of bitter regret, the excellence of the Marchesa's reputation in Genoa when he visited the palazzo. He sincerely believed that her principles had first been sapped by the pitying interest she took in his misery; and that losing so her self-respect, — or tempted to avenge herself upon his vanity for this silent rejection of her almost-offered love,

— or reckless of her good name, from knowing it to be injured by her friendship for the young Englishman, — she had at once sunk into the character of a faithless wife.

While repeating this, Lady Anne failed not to enlarge upon her nephew's generous candour, and the reluctance with which he made any confession of the Marchesa's weakness towards him: the publicity now of her positive infidelities, and the stake he had depending, alone excused him to himself for revealing her mere dereliction from virtuous inclination. He was forward to confess; that his sincere admiration of the Marchesa on their first acquaintance, and his interested assumption of it after he knew Lorenza, were circumstances which might tend to animate forbidden thoughts when once entertained, and well deserved that they should be visited upon his head by their sure consequences hereafter.

Lady Anne, conceding every thing she could to delicacy and dignity, admitted that it would not displease her to find Miss Barry declined meeting Lord St. Lawrence at the altar, until the rumoured public investigation were either fairly over, or wholly laid aside.

This proposition was in exact accordance with Alicia's present wishes. She was greatly moved by the description of the temptations and artifices to which Lord St. Lawrence had fallen a prey. She repeated again and again every particular which helped to excuse him, balancing the mischievous effects of his early notice of the Marchesa, and subsequent correspondence, with his just sorrow for both, and his self-accusing truth. With a full and thanking heart to the gracious Power which had thus new-created him, she decided to accept Lady Anne's offer of naming the terms of his restoration to her young kinsman. Alicia well knew, that unless she did this before her father came, he would most likely urge her into an immediate act of grace, from not feeling as delicately and nicely as a woman: but if an arrangement suggested by Lord St. Lawrence's aunt had been so far consented to as to wait only his ratification, he would not presume to change it.

An answer to Lady Anne Aubrey's letter was written over and over again in Alicia's mind while she lay on her sleepless pillow, communing with Heaven and her own heart, humbly earnest in her prayer to be influenced by no unworthy motives in the re-acceptance of a hand which brought with it both rank and fortune. She put her latest thoughts upon paper directly after rising. Lady Anne's plan was agreed to, with a tender assurance, that when her late agitated feelings had quite subsided by the conclusion of private whispers and newspaper paragraphs, Alicia's confidence in the future partner of her life would be restored to its former steadiness, and every cloud would be gone which otherwise must have overshadowed their union. She forbore to notice the passages in Lady Anne's letter which proper pride had felt to be offensive; betraying her mortifying sense of their loftiness only

by the firmness with which she testified her resolution of rather risking the loss of Lord St. Lawrence entirely, than yielding one point of delicacy and principle. If she were his inferior, she knew how to show that his nobility could have no power over her, unless enhanced by his character,

This letter written, and left on her table to be despatched by that day's post, she descended to Lady Donnington's late breakfast with a breast lightened of many a load. The brightening of inward joy was visible on her countenance.

Lady Donnington cried out at her rayonnante appearance, rallying her with mischievous pleasantry upon this new capacity of enduring Lord St. Lawrence's absence, and the Marquis of Ullswater's impertinent admiration; secretly doubting meanwhile, whether, after all, Miss Barry might not turn out "a flirting married woman."

Confessing she had no right to the merit of bearing an absence well, which was just going to terminate, Alicia mentioned Lady Anne Aubrey's recovery as a reason for Lord St. Lawrence's speedy return. Much of the bright colour which, while she spoke, restored its charm to her cheek, was due to shame at her own forced dissimulation; but it passed very well as a blush of mere modesty, and her gay companion, without questioning its nature, flew off into other conversation.

Their twelve o'clock breakfast, always prolonged by Lady Donnington into the very middle of the day, was not half over, when the introduction of a milliner from Paris with a rehearsal of wedding finery, privileged Alicia in seeing the postman crossing the square. Having pronounced a general sentence of approbation upon all the articles her elegant friend selected, she confessed eagerness to know whether her father would arrive that day, and, leaving the room, hastened to meet her expected letters in her own apartment.

Not a quarter of an hour afterwards, Lady Donnington was summoned by Victoire to Miss Barry, "who had got dreadful news of some kind, and had fainted away."

Never was summons more unwillingly obeyed; indeed, never was human being less fitted to enter upon scenes of sorrow or of illness, than the woman who was the very luminary of joy to careless hearts. However she might wish to do so, Lady Donnington could not refuse going to Miss Barry; but professing the most disagreeable ignorance of how to manage young ladies in hysterics, did not disdain the proffered aid of the obsequious milliner, who declared herself an adept in the art. As both the fine lady and her satellite ascended the stairs, housekeepers and housemaids were put into requisition for assistants. No sympathies suggesting that Miss Barry's swoon might proceed from circumstances she would be shocked to have blazoned abroad, stopped such proceedings. Her room (where Lady Donnington alone appeared empty handed) was filled by a crowd, of which every face expressed

anxiety, and every one had smellingbottles or reviving drops to offer.

Alicia was lying insensible upon the sofa, where she had fallen, Victoire volubly said, as if pistol-shot, upon opening a letter, which now lay on the ground.

The first idea that struck into Lady Donnington's mind was, that the suspected quarrel between her and Lord St. Lawrence had been a positive one; that he had gone abroad, instead of having been at Grey Friars. She asked if any one knew what had happened to Miss Barry? A weeping housemaid curtesyingly ventured to say, she thought something had happened to Miss Barry's father, for she called out upon her father just as she fainted.

Lady Donnington silently took the open letter which Victoire stooped for, and glancing over it, saw that this conjecture was right. Colonel Barry had died suddenly of apoplexy at the hotel in Dieppe, whence he was to have sailed in the packet for Brighton the next day.

The letter came from his servant Dennis, who meant to proceed with his master's remains directly to Ireland, certain that such would be the wish of his lady, to whom he wrote the melancholy tidings by the same mail which brought them to England.

" How very shocking!" was Lady Donnington's exclamation as she dropped the ill-spelt epistle. "These sudden things are so very shocking!-Isn't it strange Miss Barry don't come too, Mrs. Tomlins? - O pray, Madame Chevalier, don't drown her so with that Eau de Cologne! Those horrid smelling drops one of the maids poured out just now have made me quite sick. I can't stay in the room, Victoire: I will go and write a note to Doctor Scarborough;" and turning away with a general order that every body should try something more to recover Miss Barry, and some one come down stairs, and let her know if they succeeded, she went out of the scene.

It is but justice to say that Lady Donnington twice rang her bell to know how Miss Barry was, after she received the first account that she was recovered, but did not wish to have her Ladyship summoned. She rang a third time, when she saw Doctor Scarborough's carriage drive off, to hear that his prescription had been limited to quiet and no society except such as might soothe the sufferer without putting too hard a restraint upon her salutary indulgence of sorrow.

Lady Donnington remained therefore writing notes in her own dressing-room, not in the least inclined to intrude upon the desolate mourner without an invitation.

Alicia meanwhile soon dismissed her humbler attendants, whom curiosity had at first collected and better feelings detained, that she might give full way to those natural bursts of grief which were necessary to relieve her burthened heart. Remembering only her father's indulgent temper, she accused herself of many faults towards him for which she now asked pardon of her heavenly Parent, weeping afresh to think he was snatched

from life at the moment in which his strongest desire was on the point of being gratified.

Conscious to the sincerest wish of omitting no duty, either to her father's memory or to her bereaved mother, nav. yearning for home, she believed herself called upon to quit England directly, that she might have a chance of attending the regretted remains to the grave. A confused sense of difficulty and perplexity consequent upon this sudden death came over her, as she recollected the half confidences of her mother before her engagement with Lord St. Lawrence, and Colonel Barry's extravagant joy afterwards. Such a recollection made her doubly anxious to get back to Ireland; for, young and humble-minded as she was, she felt the power within her of acting better in certain emergencies than her mother was ever likely to do. In truth, she dreaded some hasty appeal from the latter to her future son-inlaw, which, situated as Alicia now was

with him, might compromise the family respectability to Lady Anne Aubrey.

But how was Alicia to get back to her country? She could not travel alone. Only a short fortnight ago, her affianced Lord St. Lawrence would have been the first friend to whom her heart would have turned with implicit trust in the disinterestedness and propriety of all his decisions; now she feared to rely upon him. The evil habit of his character, self-indulgence, had been too painfully unveiled by the late disclosures, to give her full confidence in his seeming change: she durst not ask him to advise and act for her. She must determine for herself.

All at once she remembered that as the two houses of parliament were on the eve of breaking up, many Irish families would even now be on the wing for their own country. If any one of them could take charge of her to the coast and across the Channel, her difficulties would be over. Travelling any length of way afterwards would be no hardship to one who felt every spot of ground in her

native land almost a home. She had already exchanged her French maid with Lady Donnington for a supernumerary English one (a steady, elderly woman); and in her company she believed she might very well proceed even from Dublin to Waterford.

Lord St. Lawrence, indeed, might desire to have his future bride travel otherwise; but until she were his wife, it was not possible for her to accept the attendance either of himself or his servants. She knew, however, that he was prepared to part with her for a time; and as the common forms of society would of themselves have obliged two engaged persons to put off their marriage upon the death of a parent, she felt with thankfulness that she should now be spared the mortification of making excuses to the world for the delay of their union. Thus was a drop of sweetness cast into her bitter cup of present sorrow.

Having finally determined upon her plans, and as moments were precious to her, she sent a message to Lady Donnington, expressive of the wish to see her. The summons was obeyed. Alicia could not speak at first, from that suffocating renewal of tears which is common to persons under affliction, whenever a fresh face presents itself, looking either real or assumed sympathy. She returned Lady Donnington's awkward pressure of the hand by one of genuine emotion: rising as she did so, yet turning aside when her quivering lips refused to utter the words of welcome.

"I am really very sorry, my dear Miss Barry; exceedingly sorry. It is a dreadful shock! But you must remember, Colonel Barry was not a young man, and had been suffering horribly with the gout. Mrs. Barry could not be quite unprepared. Then do think what a pleasant thing it is, that he knew you were on the point of being so happily settled! I hope you will think of that."

Alicia was sensible to the consolation these remarks suggested; although the frigid look and unvarying voice with which they were accompanied, proved the heart was not their source. Strange to say, she remembered with more gratitude the whispered commiseration of her late companions, who, if they unwisely expressed their sorrow for "the poor gentleman dying away from his family," said it in a tone of true and gratifying

sympathy.

Checked and chequered as Alicia's fate now was with Lord St. Lawrence, still it was a matter of joy to think that her father believed her earthly happiness secured; and assuring Lady Donnington that she felt this, endeavoured to recover the power of speaking distinctly. Sobs and sighs at length stifled, and impetuous bursts changed into merely trickling tears, she was able to state her wishes and her plans with regard to Ireland, and to request that a letter might be written to Lord St. Lawrence, informing him of her sudden loss. The utmost of her ability that day would be to write to her mother.

This address met with the most favourable reception from Lady Donnington.

"The dress of dismals," as she constantly termed mourning, was as little pleasurable to look on as to wear: nor was even Miss Barry's lovely face half so lovely, she thought, "when pale and poky," as when all lighted up with colour and animation. Lady Donnington had not therefore the smallest objection to offer against her young friend's immediate return; especially as Lord St. Lawrence's fête of lamps could not be expected without Miss Barry, and as every body was going out of town. She consented with the best grace imaginable to begin a tour of enquiries after a proper chaperon for her; and as it became Lady Donnington to do every thing properly, insisted upon sending with her a clever old servant, who was never employed by his lady except as a courier at home and abroad.

This point settled, and a few more spiritless exhortations offered, the fine lady hurried out of the gloom into the sunshine; leaving a sad heart to feel its desolation, at first painfully, then gratefully, when turning to one great Com-

forter, it sought and found compassion and support.

By making a prodigious round of visits, Lady Donnington missed the post-time, so that she could not write the news to Grey Friars before the next day, when her letter went in company with Alicia's forgotten one to Lady Anne Aubrey. Two things, however, Lady Donnington effected: she found a respectable Lady Conolly ready to undertake the charitable office of protecting Alicia to Dublin; and she spread the news of Colonel Barry's sudden death all over fashionable London.

Long ere night, large sums were depending upon the events of the next six months. One set of gamblers maintained "that it was all up with Miss Barry; that Lord St. Lawrence would change his mind before six months were over." Others betted "it would never be a match unless she did not leave him time to cool, but married him in her first mourning." A third party insisted "she would not marry St. Lawrence, because she would marry Ullswater." A fourth set (and

many of these were betrayed by goodnatured indignation into the misdemeanor of betting), asserted that, in spite of every contre temps, Miss Barry would be Lady St. Lawrence by the end of a year.

Lord Lewis Rivers and Sir Edgar Trevor were the leaders of these adverse parties. Lady Donnington refused to bet even a pair of gloves with either of her rival pets; but Miss Everleigh was deep in pledges on the side of Lord Lewis; and her mother went about exultingly repeating, that she never knew a marriage take place—at least, not a lucky one—which was put off by a death.

Such were the circulating speculations when the mail was carrying into Wiltshire the two letters from Grosvenor-square. By the time Lord St. Lawrence arrived in town, all dust and disorder, from a journey performed almost at full gallop with four horses to the lightest of carriages, half the young ladies there, were dressing their feathers to fly at him again.

The probability of meeting Lord St. Lawrence once more at the opera, and in

the parks, and afterwards at houses in the country, without Miss Barry on his arm, again set hearts beating; just as they beat for the Marquis of Ullswater, the Duke of Lochinvar, and other such unfortunate fortunates, who must often doubt the quantity of their individual attractions. It was now known that Miss Barry was going directly to Ireland, and that decorum must prevent her lover from attending her thither: indeed, if the Colliton cause came on, perhaps his Lordship might have to remain and look after his own character, instead of following his fair betrothed: yet, with all this, some of the young ladies, more good-natured than Miss Barry, conscious that they would have taken him sans character at first, felt animated by the thought, that if her coldness should lose, their kindness might win him. Lord St. Lawrence, however, did not give them a sufficient number of opportunities: he went nowhere after he reached town but from his own house to Lady Donnington's.

The meeting between him and Alicia

was silent, and agitated: both were strongly affected by the remembrance of what had passed at parting; yet neither ventured to mix feelings so different with the awful sorrow of a sudden bereavement. One mute clasp sealed their reunion, which this unexpected dispensation seemed meant to ensure and to sanctify.

After momentarily resting upon his shoulder, Alicia sate down and wept too violently for speech - and from another cause, too happily: her hand, not always passive, rested within his; sometimes answering his speaking pressures by a movement of softer, yet gratifying meaning,sometimes raised to wipe away the tears which, though showering over her face, could not hide its brightening expression. Lord St. Lawrence spoke only by the kisses he gave that trembling hand, and by thronging sighs, eloquent of gratitude and happiness. At such a moment, he might be pardoned for thinking more of their recovered trust in each other, than of her father's death.

When he saw her agitation subsiding,

he ventured to whisper his aunt's hope that she would immediately go to her until Mrs. Barry's wishes might be known, and go assured, that she should see no more of him than what she herself might deem right. To this kind proposal Alicia replied by briefly stating her purpose, and her reasons for hastening to her mother; and conquering his unwillingness to part with her by the tenderness she displayed for himself, while insisting upon her duty to her father's memory, succeeded in obtaining his sighing approval.

Having ascertained whom she was to go with, and how protected, he besought her to promise, that if she should find her mother in want of a male friend to act for her in the absence of Mr. Barry—if the suddenness of the late sad event should have left family affairs in any confusion—she would allow him to be called upon, as a second son. His time, his people of business, his whole heart,—she well knew, every thing that was his, was hers

now, and for ever.

Alicia replied with a blush of appre-

hensive feeling, that she trusted there would be no perplexity in affairs that were always managed for her father by agents still employed; that of course her brother would be allowed to come home and take possession of his estates; and that, until then, she supposed things would go on as usual.

Lord St. Lawrence took alarm at her embarrassed manner. Far from guessing that she shrunk from bringing her mother and him in contact on money matters, not from want of affection for him, but from just dread of the former's humbling deficiencies, he construed this evasion of his offer unfavourably, and asked, with some agitation, whether he had not lost his best friend in Colonel Barry?—whether he might trust to the letter written only an hour previous to the receipt of the sad news from France?

"Your best friend!" repeated Alicia, pressing her hand upon her heart, as if to say, "your firmest friend is here."—Tears of tender reproach burst out with the words, — tears more precious to Lord St.

Lawrence than any he had ever started in her eyes. He seized her hand. — "I have no right to make a merit of ending a suspense as painful to myself as to you," she continued, with deeply-suffusing cheeks—"O no! Frederick. I will henceforth think only of your generous conduct to me, and forget every thing else. I am sure my mother will let me act as I think best, now that my dear father—" (she paused to recover voice)—"therefore, by the time my mourning is over—"

" And how long will that time be?"
Alicia hesitatingly said it was usual
to mourn twelvemonths for a parent.

That Lord St. Lawrence should combat this implied resolution, and after much earnestness at first, and persuasiveness at last, obtain the victory over a gentle heart already softened, is not to be doubted. His next effort was to know how soon he might follow her to Castle Barry, there to recommence that free companionship of engaged hearts and plighted hands, which would be his only solace while waiting for the termination of the six months she

devoted to respectful memory of her father.

Alicia was again embarrassed when she intimated that delicacy and propriety would not allow her to resume such happy companionship until the pending discussion were over, and his character either left without attaint, or sufficiently cleared to warrant a virtuous woman in accepting him before the whole world. He heard the mortifying sentence in silence: then, after short parley with himself, and in something of his ordinary cheerfulness, acknowledged he ought to bless his fate, not quarrel with it. Assuredly, Lord St. Lawrence thought, as imperious man is apt enough to do, that where he saw he had so much influence, he would soon be enabled to exert more; trusting to the humility and passionateness of his letters, for winning off some part of this probablylengthened period.

While the sudden death of Colonel Barry was one of the subjects talked of in the parks and in opera boxes, a great deal of sincere sympathy was excited for

his daughter amongst the best and noblest of the set with whom she had been living. Such as could and did appreciate her steady conduct under bad guidance, felt grieved that so sad a stop was put to her fortunate establishment. The uncertainty of all marriages is proverbial; and these kind persons, inclined from longer experience of human fallibility, to demand less from their fellow-creatures than youthful romance requires, imagined the probability of Lord St. Lawrence being flattered or schemed out of his engagement with the absent Miss Barry, by women accomplished in the art of dissolving even stronger ties.

Lady Anne Aubrey was one of the earliest in writing a letter of gratifying condolence. The mixed dignity and sweetness of Alicia's late epistle to her had completed the conquest of that pride of birth, which was previously conciliated by her conduct at Grey Friars. In her future niece, Lady Anne had found with pleasure that sweet deference to the opinions of age, which is a herald of re-

verence to higher powers; that interest in times past, because they were dear to the chronicler, which is received as a testimonial of affection; and that attentive observation of the habits and infirmities of older persons, which stamps upon the young the character of judiciousness and sensibility. Perhaps Lady Anne, recently acquainted with the risk she had once run of having a Roman Catholic of low origin imposed upon her relationship, was not the less eager to secure a gentleman's daughter for the mistress of Grey Friars. Much as she now desired to see her installed in that noble mansion, she was not inclined to dissuade her either from the purpose of immediately joining her mother, or of mourning half a year for her father. Both resolutions, she thought, were honourable to the womanly character; the latter especially, as testifying no haste to secure a splendid marriage, and as a proof of confidence in her nephew's honour and attachment.

Alicia's answer to such a letter was, of course, full of feelings calculated to raise

her higher in her correspondent's opinion; and there her writing tasks ended while she remained in England.

The lady by whom our heroine was to be protected as far as Dublin did not intend lingering an hour longer in town than she could help; and Lady Donnington was so heartily tired of a quiet house and long faces, the consequence of Miss Barry's loss, that so far from making the slightest opposition to her departure, five days after she received the afflicting intelligence, she hastened it as much as possible. Alicia's last day in Grosvenorsquare was brightened by the joyful intimation, through Lord Harlech, that the disgrace of his worthless son-in-law would not drain his daughter's purse. The aggrieved husband of the Marchesa Isola Bella had given up the idea of a prosecution; the lady had relieved him of herself by flight; and now every reputation that dreaded striking upon those rocks, was in the free seas again. Lord St. Lawrence, released from his quarantine, joyfully proposed following the beloved of his heart at the end of a fortnight, when the two houses would break
up. With this prospect before him, he
was not only able to endure the thought
of their being soon divided by the Irish
Channel, but to bear the vexation of being
hastily summoned on business of vital interest to a friend, at a place fifty miles
off; still, however, he flattered himself he
should return long ere Alicia might be
called to join Lady Conolly and her
daughters, who were at a house fifteen
miles on the road to Holyhead.

In this hope he was disappointed. Lady Conolly was induced, from family reasons, to hasten her departure; and Alicia had but a few hours' notice ere she hurried herself and her maid to have every thing ready for reaching the place appointed that night. They were to sleep at the house of Lady Conolly's friends, so as to set off with the dowager and her daughters early the next morning. Lady Donnington had an engagement with her brother at his villa on the opposite side of London; and having to remain the

whole day there, took leave of her young friend just before she herself set off for Twickenham.

She parted from this sweet companion with an attempt at looking sad and sorry, but without success: not that Lady Donnington did not feel something like regret in losing sight of one who was always embellishing, and naturally complying; but she was impatient of black gowns and quenched spirits; and knowing her own empire re-established, cared no longer for the face that had done so much towards restoring it.

Only a few more hours had yet to pass, and Alicia would be in a manner upon her return home, since she would be on the road to Lady Conolly. She would have felt a saddened joy at the thought, had not home and its dear inhabitants been lost in the idea of her absent St. Lawrence disappointed of his expectation, and she herself robbed of another meeting with him. It was possible he might return to London that night; not probable, however; and if he

did, too late most likely for coming to the temporary residence of Lady Conolly. She was writing to him, that he might at least find a letter from her, when the coming in of the post called her attention first to a few melancholy lines from Flora, expressing their mother's earnest desire to have her home, with Lord St. Lawrence for her escort; and then to a small packet directed in the hand of Mrs. Beresford.

The post-mark of an English port, at first, made Alicia's heart beat. She fancied her friend was come to England; but quickly discerning the words "shipletter" upon the cover, she guessed it had come by some vessel intervening between the ordinary periods of despatching regular mails. It was opened, therefore, with calmed spirits. There was something inclosed in the letter, which, putting aside unlooked at, Alicia hastened to read what seemed, from its scrawled characters, to have been penned in the greatest haste.

No language can describe the amazement and horror with which she perused the following:

" Dearest Alicia!

"I have just seen the English papers of February and March, which, corroborating something your mother hinted in her letter from France, distracts me with a thousand fears. Both accounts imply that you are greatly admired by an Earl St. Lawrence, whom I only know as Lord Aubrey. I cannot wait for the packet which will bring me, I trust, a letter from yourself, saying whether you do or do not encourage him; but must seize this providential opportunity of putting you upon your guard, not against mere disappointing flatteries (for of these, I think, you can never be the object), but against deeper designs: or, at least, against the honourable proposal of a dishonourable man. Let nothing tempt you, Alicia, to listen to any addresses from Lord St. Lawrence; neither his title, fortune, nor yet your parents' wishes. They will not wish it, after I have sent them, as I mean to do, every particular I know. It is impossible you should not have mentioned him, had he made an impression upon your heart; therefore I am not too late in beseeching you, as you value your happiness here and hereafter, not to let him win upon you. Believe nothing he professes, except his passion; for he is accomplished in hypocrisy. You remember my mention of a French family here:the beautiful niece in whom I was so interested, on being attacked by a disorder for which she was given over, gave me what she thought her death-bed confidence and commission: it was to claim justice from its father (this very Lord St. Lawrence) for their child; to hide whose disgraceful birth she had come to this distant land after the most cruel betrayal, being abandoned, in short, for a married woman. It pleased heaven, however, to restore the mother, and take the child; it died of the fever which spared her. But I think her heart is breaking over the past and the present; and my only comfort is, that the Almighty has made me, an humble instrument of good to her once-darkened soul. O that I may not be too late to save my far-dearer Alicia

from the dreadful fate of attaching herself to an unprincipled libertine! If it be possible for any serious engagement to exist already between you, stop there do not ratify it. - I will consent to take any odium, if I fail to substantiate this story by certain documents, which I must induce the poor possessor of them to give up, ere I can forward them to your parents. How I dread this man's fascinations for you, when I see his continued power over the creature he has wronged and ruined! What she suffered when she heard of his admiration of my Alicia! She tried to extenuate his fault; at least, to hope he was so changed, that a happy marriage would make him yet better. She almost repented having made that dismal confidence, at a time when neither she nor I dreamed of her Lord Aubrey's acquaintance with you. Let this last circumstance give weight to my

" May the Almightywatch over, guide, and save you, is now the unceasing

prayer of your distressed and anxious

Rose BERESFORD. sate pressing her throbbing head with her

It was not a first, a second, n a third reading which awakened Alicia's astounded mind to any thing like comprehension of what she read. She sate almost lifeless, though her eyes continued running over the paper in restless wildness. By degrees she began to understand that, if she were to believe the friend of her earliest years, -one who had no interest in blackening the character Lord St. Lawrence,—one who never yet had taken up a criminating story without clear evidence, - she must cease to credit both his explanations and his professed repentance of the past.

But how to believe him capable of such hideous guilt as that of which he was now accused? Another ruined crea-A disgraced child! and both! Perhaps for that very Marchesa with whom he had so solemnly protested himself free from blame.

Alicia did not weep, nor did she lose her sad senses in blessed oblivion. She sate pressing her throbbing head with her hands, incapable of calling upon Heaven to help her. In this hush of her soul but a single object was present, as if bodily visible — the man she had so lately believed humbled to the dust for a solitary transgression, covered now with the guilt of aggravated, perhaps unnumbered iniquities. She recollected that he had cleared himself of his first imputed crime only by his own assertions.

This confession might not have proceeded from repentance, but from mere expectation of discovery; in all things he might have deceived her and his aunt.

The frightful probability of a youth abandoned to such principles and pursuits as poison the whole of after-life and after-character, came upon her like sudden light breaking over some fearful scene; and when she would have banished it, by recalling his generous conduct to herself, the delicate nature of his attachment, and the happy hours they had

spent together in perfect sympathy upon the sweetest as well as the most sacred of subjects, the words in her friend's letter, cautioning her against his hypocrisy, gave fearful witness to the fallacy of her attempt.

It was in vain to say she would suspend belief until Mrs. Beresford's second explicit letter should arrive. She felt that the mortal blow was given to her peace, and to conceal it from Lord St. Lawrence was impossible: she could no longer look at, or think of, or write to him as she had hitherto done. Nothing short of a miracle could re-establish a confidence thus repeatedly shaken. She might, indeed, doubt his guilt throughout life, but she must also doubt his truth; and dare she take the most solemn of vows to him at the altar?

It was past, then!—The pageant of pomps and honours—that "vain shadow in which she had been walking"—was dissolved in a deluging sky, and the phantom happiness had vanished with it. Her soul saw with a prophetic glance the

wholly altered fate before her: she guessed much of its coming evil; but resolved to brave every thing rather than unite herself to a deliberate deceiver.

In the present stillness of those tenderer feelings which higher and firmer ones over-awed, she believed herself incapable of being moved by any afterattempts of Lord St. Lawrence's to explain away her friend's allegations. She thought the agonized prayer of her spirit was answered, and that some heavenly minister had at once plucked out those regrets which might else have rankled there through life. Alas! she foresaw not the agonies of self-doubt and returning affection which she had yet to endure, nor the bitter tears she had to shed over other sorrows consequent upon the separation she was resolving on. It is and or anov

Strengthened for the time, and resolute to brave every new shock, she opened the enclosure from her friend's letter, which she had hitherto forgotten. It contained a small enamel portrait, taken out of its setting, and secured for conveyance between two cards. On one of them Mrs. Beresford had written, "The unhappy original of this picture gave it me for her child when she believed herself dying. In the absence of other testimonials at this moment, I send it. Put it in Lord St. Lawrence's way, and mark his countenance. He will remember his victim in her beauty." I saw ylde

In her beauty, indeed! Even the heartbroken Alicia looked at it, with wonder that any after-seen face could charm or general character of purity and nateriatri

The enamel represented a young woman about her own age, of the most perfect form, clothed with modest simplicity, and looking down upon a garland of flowers which she held in one hand. Her figure and features had that mixed character of softness and nobleness which painters seek to give their youthful saints. Although the eyes were not seen, the loveliness of their deeply-fringed lids, and the marble brow from which the parted dark hair was drawn back, showing (but not as if intended to show) a

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cheek of the finest moulding, were full of beauty and expression. Thought and sensibility were on these lids; and imagination fancied the depths of the veiled eyes beneath.

A smile, — the smile of happy love, — sate on the softly-tinctured lips. So eloquent had it been in the original, and so ably was it copied in the portrait, that no one could mistake the blissful feeling it expressed. No searching, however, could find in it ought to impair that general character of purity and maidenly majesty which made a sort of halo round the youthful face and form.

As Alicia looked upon that lovely face, and thought of its beauty and its innocence, both despoiled by one hand, her heart gave way; and, melted by generous pity for the unhappy creature whose image she was regarding, — perhaps overcome by regrets and remembrances peculiar to herself, — she burst into a flood of miserable tears.

More than once, during momentary suspensions of such bursts, she lifted up

the picture, and contemplated it afresh. It may not be denied, that she compared it then with her own face in idea, not lightly, not vainly, not repiningly:—rather with sorrowful conviction of the dangerous gift nature had bestowed upon each; with crueller conviction, that Lord St. Lawrence was enslaved by a passion for beauty; and with humble persuasion, that if such a face as this could pall upon his eye, hers, of fainter expression and common bloom, must assuredly lose its charm.

Perhaps Alicia could not have looked thus long upon the picture of a happy rival; but upon this resemblance of a forlorn, disgraced, and deserted creature, she could look with no other feeling than that of merciful compassion, and the hope that it represented a present penitent. It was a creature apparently born for nobleness and happiness, but defeated of both, and plunged into ruin. It was not a hardened and triumphant sinner, like what she supposed the Marchesa Isola Bella had become.

As she breathed that name to herself, every thing suspicious in Lord St. Lawrence's account of the woman to whom it belonged, crowded upon her mind, making it doubtful whether he had resisted her proffered love, - whether he had not deserted Lorenza for her, or for this poor French girl, - and how much or how little she was to believe of all he had told her. In the consequent agony of her soul, she prayed for the moment that Lord St. Lawrence might reach town again ere she left it, that she might end her suspense at once, by showing him Mrs. Beresford's letter, or confronting him with the picture. The next instant she repented this hasty prayer, conscious that if she trusted her easily-melted heart within the influence of his dangerous eloquence, her reason would soon be blinded. There was no safe course for her to take, except expediting her own departure to avoid a meeting with him, and leaving him her everlasting adieus in a letter.

Once she thought of writing to his

aunt; but that idea she dismissed, unwilling to ruin him so completely in his only near relative's opinion, and to close the door for ever, perhaps, (humanly speaking) against his reformation. Determined not to risk entangling herself again, either by affection or promise, to one in whom her confidence was for ever destroyed, she decided upon writing to Lord St. Lawrence, and returning every memorial of their engagement.

To do this, Alicia was necessarily roused into much personal action; her tears were forcibly suspended; she was obliged to order the unpacking of trunks already prepared for removal; to have her maid's assistance in finding books and jewel-cases; and to collect herself, into one large packet, the various gifts of a lover who seemed to have lived solely to heap upon her every mark of generous affection.

It may be supposed how often her gentle nature was on the point of breaking down under this weight of remembered and lost happiness. Often did her trembling hands refuse to help, and her tottering feet to support her;—she frequently sate down, and yielded to floods of ungovernable tears. What her new attendant thought of these paroxysms, she could only learn by the woman's countenance, which, grave and respectful, testified that she never guessed what these different things were wanted for, and that she attributed her young lady's grief to distress at losing a father, and leaving a lover.

The hurry and perturbation with which Alicia did all this, lest Lord St. Lawrence should arrive ere it was accomplished, or any unlucky accident send back Lady Donnington, helped to distract her thoughts from the paramount object of painful reflection. She ordered out the travelling carriage which was to take her to Lady Conolly's long before she herself was ready; for when she tried to write, every faculty deserted her:—she could neither frame sentences nor hold her pen; and she hesitated long and weepingly before she could bring herself

to draw off the plain gold ring which Lord St. Lawrence had put upon her finger, in pledge of another to be placed there with holier ceremonies at a later period. The bracelet, his first present, had been the first resigned.

When at length even this sacrifice was made, she wrote and tore several letters, the last of which was left to be given to him for whom it was intended, merely because it was the last.

The utmost of her capacity amounted to enclosing her friend's letter to Lord St. Lawrence, in a few lines from herself, referring him to the former for the resolution of never seeing him more, until he could clear himself of the charges there, and produce better evidence of his truth in the history of Lorenza and the Marchesa than his own unsupported assertions contained. She said, that she had too easily accepted such assertions; suffering partial affection to go before reason and principle in her reliance upon his truth, and that she was justly punished for her fault; that she now re-

turned every memorial of his prodigal attachment, resolving henceforth to consider herself released from their engagement, though little likely ever to form another. Alicia could have said much of her anguish for him and for herself, but checking such useless display of sensibility, she hastily terminated her letter.

While sealing it, her heart trembled even more than her hand; for one set of distressing ideas pressed upon her. Lord St. Lawrence was either the most unprincipled or the most injured of human beings: if the first, then she was doing right; and, however it might wreck her earthly happiness, was assured of His favour, who has promised to overpay every sacrifice made in His name. But if he were slandered, -if Rose Beresford were misled by some vile woman, - what a frightful weight of remorse might hereafter be Alicia's portion! Could she ever lift up her eyes before him, if he should come out stainless? Could she expect a renewal of his vows, after such insults to his honour and his professions?

For the moment of asking this, every strong purpose was palsied; but she struggled to recover a firmer hold upon her first convictions; and, revived by many a fervent prayer, was strengthened to consider every thing over, now and for ever, between her and Lord St. Lawrence; yielding to the idea as she would have done to the calamity of his death, in silent, yet not unsorrowing submission.

While walking through the rooms of the lower floor, to the door of the house, her grief was again on the point of breaking its boundaries, and overflowing before servants and strangers. Leaving Donnington House was, under her circumstances, taking leave of all connected with it. Alicia could not look upon a single object, or pass through one of the decorated saloons, without noting places and things which forcibly recalled Lord St. Lawrence. "There he stood at such a time, - there he sat, when Memory was instantly suffocated, and breaking away from every remembrancer, and hurrying past the collected servants,

not unregardingly, though silently, she sprang, by a last effort, into the carriage. There was something so like utter desertion in the mere circumstance of going away, surrounded only by domestics,—she who had till now had titled crowds at her command,—no Lady Donnington,—no Lord St. Lawrence! It seemed so prophetic of future desolation and abandonment, that her mind sunk under the distempered impression: she threw herself back in the carriage, and as the postillion drove off, yielded to deep and audible lamentation.

No interruption, of course, was given to her excessive emotion by her maid, who sate silently wondering that a fine lady should have natural feelings. Alicia, therefore, wept herself calm; and when on reaching Lady Conolly's she found company there, she was excused by her deep mourning for retiring directly to her appointed room. A sleepless night, spent in thinking alternately of her family and of Lord St. Lawrence, left her so bodily ill, that only earnest en-

treaties persuaded her obliging companions to continue their intention of setting off. She took every proposed remedy for nervous head-ache which maids and mistresses presented in place of breakfast; and forcing smiles, that she might look less wretched than colourless cheeks had made her, succeeded in getting rapidly on in the road to Bangor.

The party had reached the place where they meant to sleep the first night, and had already parted for their different rooms, when first the sound of wheels whirling into the inn-yard by horses at full gallop, and then the voice of Lord St. Lawrence, went from the ear to the heart of Alicia. She had dreaded this probable act of his; yet now she caught at the hope of its being a proof of innocence; and though she sunk upon a seat when she first heard him, almost lifeless, she could not be said to wish he had not followed her. So imperfect is our best performance of every bounden duty! So do we all, and always come short of what we know we ought to do; thus humbling

us in our own sight, and obliging us to confess that we are nothing, but may acquire every thing, if we continue instant in petitioning for guidance.

Alicia's breast had returned for a brief space to its confidence, at the mere tones of one human being's voice, or rather to its desire of distrusting every other person, or of pardoning his faults! She was, however, recovering from such culpable weakness, when one of the Miss Conolly's came to say Lord St. Lawrence had followed them; and having very properly sent up his name, and his request for a few moments' conversation with Miss Barry, his request of course was granted, and Miss Barry would find him below in the room they had just left.

Although it was to be supposed that the contracted lovers had previously exchanged adieus, it did not seem strange that Lord St. Lawrence should wish to have another glimpse of his fair betrothed; nor, as they were situated, could there be any thing indecorous in a cha-

though at ten o'clock at night. Alicia could not explain to mere acquaintances her reasons for refusing the sanctioned meeting. Miss Conolly stood waiting at the threshold to accompany her down stairs to the entrance of the sitting-room. There was no escape. Miss Conolly might have seen there was no joy in her companion's looks; but not observing the sudden whiteness of her lips, she civilly motioned her to come forth and follow. Alicia had entered the great half-furnished room where Lord St. Lawrence was standing, had seen Miss Conolly leave them together, nay, Lord St. Lawrence had spoken, before the mist which covered her sight cleared away, and made her sensible that he was before her with a countenance of which every speaking feature resented her cruelty or credulity. He did not look now, as he had done in their late interviews, humbled and contrite: he was evidently prepared either to feel or to feign honourable indignation; and there was something in his bearing

which reminded her of their different ranks, and made her think he too remembered it. In that bewildering instant, she felt half-humbled, half-indignant, and

she turned aside her head.

"I am not come, Miss Barry," he said, haughtily, though with great emotion, "to persecute you with my despised affection: it is now too clear that it would be persecution. Such easy credence of so monstrous a tale against me, proves that you have never had that trust in my character which is inseparable from real attachment. My intrusion here is solely to defend my reputation." He paused, either to recover breath or resolution.

"When I first offered you an erring, but not determinately wicked heart, I did it in serious earnestness: not so much to possess myself of Heaven's fairest work, as to bless myself with a virtuous and happy home, and with a bosom friend dearer than every thing besides. I have felt a wilder, perhaps now I may own, a more absorbing passion than your

charms excited; for while that lasted, I made no such calculations, nor saw ought beyond its object. It was a dream!" "never to be forgotten!" was added by his looks though not by his lips. His firmness was obviously shaken, and he had to pause before his voice was steady again. "I mean to say," he resumed, "that in coming solemnly to contradict the statement of this violent letter, I am not seeking the renewal of an engagement which I would not have ratified, without that sentiment on your part which I see you never have felt for me."

"Never felt for you! O Lord St. Lawrence!" exclaimed Alicia, her whole face turning whiter than the handkerchief which her trembling hand could scarcely retain in its grasp. on an noiteeffa bearev

"Spare me," he cried, hastily interrupting her, "spare me the pain of hearing you endeavour to impose upon yourself as well as me, only to save me from mortification. It is time I should know the truth, and be allowed to comnot these weak, these facilish tomanic?"

prehend all that a lover may owe to the authority or persuasions of a father."

Roused by this rash expression, her whole face suffusing with offended honour, Alicia turned upon him with unwonted displeasure. "What is it you mean, Lord St. Lawrence? Am I to understand that you accuse me of having feigned affection for you to please my father?"

"If it were so," he answered, evading a direct reply, "I would not accuse you. You never professed an involuntary, uncontrollable attachment to me; and I was fool enough to tell you I did not wish for such idolatry. Having tried and found the brevity of an intenser love, I believed my security lay in such a soft and governed affection as yours; but I was wrong."

"You said you would not accuse me," resumed Alicia, still more agitated by his tone, "yet you are accusing me; and of a deceit, which,—O Lord St. Lawrence! if I had not loved you, would not resentment,—not these weak, these foolish tears—?"

Tears, indeed, choked her voice; but making a powerful effort, she added with firmer resolution, "What has been the bond between us is now of small consequence: if you cannot clear yourself of this last most dreadful charge, we part here—this night—this hour—for ever!"

Lord St. Lawrence, whose proud feelings were softening at sight of her unexpected emotion, stood irresolute whether to approach and take her hand. His eyes were bent upon her graceful figure, rendered doubly interesting by her mourning garments, and by the touching sadness of her pale and tearful face. She looked as he had first seen her at Brighton in the tableau of Marcella.

"If I cannot clear myself!" he repeated, in a voice of gentler reproach: "and you can bear to think me the villain your friend maintains me to be! But who is this French woman that at such a distance — across the very Atlantic, thus wantonly murders my happiness? I do not find her name here. Your friend

refers to some former letter: tell me then the name."

Alicia confessed her ignorance, remembering only that Mrs. Beresford had once mentioned an interesting French family to whom accident had introduced her at Rio Janeiro, of whom even then she had given no details.

"And what do justice and affection dictate after this acknowledgment?" asked Lord St. Lawrence with something of bitterness in his tone. "Am I to be condemned upon unknown evidence?"

"No, not condemned!" Alicia replied, faltering and fearful—"but—O Heaven! that I must say so, — not trusted as I have trusted you; not looked upon with that delight, — that confidence ——" She turned from him, trembling through every nerve, and retreating to a short distance supported her throbbing head upon her clasped hands.

Lord St. Lawrence took some hasty steps across the room, then stopping beside her, said with re-awakened resentment, "It is not a little galling to observe that this friend of yours is believed on the instant, while my solemn denial, — to say nothing of foregone relations, — passes by unregarded.

"And do you deny it?" was Alicia's low-breathed question, half-raising her

face to look at his.

"I do solemnly deny it. My conscience accuses me but of one such offence, and that not, thank God! foul as this. — No child — O Heaven! — no — no! — Almost at your feet, Alicia, did I tell that sad history, calling Heaven to witness that I had no similar weight upon my soul. You seemed capable of believing me then; and now do you tell me that you can no longer trust me?"

"O do not torture me by those recollections!" interrupted Alicia, wringing her hands, impatient of her own weakness. — "My mind is quite destroyed by so many shocks; if it were not so, I should be able to control these unworthy tears. Pray, pray understand me! I do not absolutely believe any thing: —that is the misery! —but I doubt every thing

most precious. — How is my peace ever to be restored? — how am I ever again to think of you as I have done?" The words died upon her quivering lips, while bending forward, she covered her face again in an agony.

Lord St. Lawrence looked at her in silence. His raised complexion and the expression of his eyes told what was

swelling in his heart.

"This may be well for both!" he said, in a suffocated voice. — "We should not have been happy. —I love too fondly, and you too feebly: you are so easily warped to doubt; and I am so long infatuated by —my own vanity, doubtless."

"Go on, Lord St. Lawrence," Alicia said faintly, hiding her tears in her hand-kerchief: "pierce my heart through and through! — If you know yourself undeserving of my suspicions, you cannot say too much: and if conscience tells you I am right — if I am to find I am right — these cruel expressions may afterwards be remembered for my good. They may rouse at last —" Sobs choked her voice,

and tears gushing out impetuously, prevented her from resuming.

Lord St. Lawrence threw himself on the ground where she stood. "Pardon me, Alicia," he cried, — O pardon a soul in agony!—These tears are drops of blood from my own heart. I knew not what I said. But am I to understand that merely doubting, you decide upon giving me up? Will you not wait for positive proof against me or for me? Why are we to be rent asunder now?"

"Because I could not live under such racking hopes and fears," was her hurried answer. — "Better end them at once. How many months must pass before any explanations can be made to and from Brazil! And my timid spirit—these dreadful ideas once excited—how am I to feel quite assured? Even with regard to your connections in Genoa, what have I had to rest upon except your own—" The word "testimony" expired on her lips in an agony of distress, although the solemn nature of their present interview justified the plainest speaking.

Lord St. Lawrence's face crimsoned to the very brow: it might be the flush of conscious guilt, or it might be the glow of generous indignation. Alicia's senses were too disordered for right judgment.

"I see," he exclaimed, "that it is no longer the question about my private happiness that I am to strive for: every part of my character is attacked; and whether clearing that, is or is not important to your future peace, it is a duty I owe myself, to take measures for my vindication. You remember my conversation with you upon the subject of my life in Genoa: you have my aunt's more explanatory letter; send them to your friend, and tell her, such is the amount of my offences against my fellow-creatures knowingly committed. My sins against my Creator he alone may estimate and mercifully pardon. I demand from this lady the most explicit statement of the fabricated tale by which she is duped; producing names, and dates, and places, which you may refer to yourself, either to acquit or confound me. Meanwhile,

since you now own, that you doubt what so lately you appeared to believe — my truth in narrating the Italian affair,—I will immediately cross over to the Continent, find out the Marchesa Isola Bella, and every other person connected with that fatal period of my life, that you may have their testimony. My first confessions substantiated, and this last accusation disproved, at least I may venture to challenge the respect due to truth."

Alicia knew not whether she were most awed or penetrated by Lord St. Lawrence's manner; he spoke with a severity of tone which proclaimed the ascendancy of wounded honour over passion; and for the moment she felt as if they had changed situations. But her friend's adjuration to beware of his consummate hypocrisy, and the powerful circumstance of the confidence which criminated him being made almost on a death-bed, by one who knew nothing of his new attachment, suddenly re-appeared in her mind, and darkened its hasty comfort.— She tried to speak audibly.

"You may challenge then any sentiment you choose. It will be your turn to dictate — perhaps to quit: — I cannot — do not expect otherwise" — (gasping as she spoke). — "But even with such a stroke hanging over me, I may not repent what I am now doing. Dreadful doubts have been forced upon me. — I should ill deserve and ill return the affection of an honourable man if I could give him my hand while a shade remained upon his character in my secret thoughts. — O Frederick! had it been your rank and accomplished mind only that I loved!—"

Lord St. Lawrence turned on her with an illuminated countenance: the bright look melted into tenderness as he stood gazing on her. Some impulse he checked; for drawing back, he said in a gratified, agitated tone:—"No! I will not try my power over that soft and lovely nature. Your scruples shall be satisfied: I will earn a full acquittal before I reclaim my right:—but now—surely you will not send me away without some conditional engagement between us?—Will you not

wait six months — twelvemonths, for my acquittal? I must have time, Alicia, to unravel both affairs. The infamous calumny of which I am the victim shall be fathomed, if I cross the Atlantic to confront my slanderer! She must grossly deceive your friend; or some villain must have assumed my name when he destroyed her."

Alicia's heart bounded at the probable idea he suggested: her tears were scattered: shethought no more of clearing him to herself; but, eager to have his innocence evidenced to Mrs. Beresford, took the enamel out of its coverings, and asking if he knew that face, held it before him.

The action was like a shock of electricity! Lord St. Lawrence started with such violence, that he struck his head against the marble of the chimney-piece; but whether the blow had stunned, or the picture smote upon his conscience, at first seemed dubious. He was silent many minutes, during which he sate down in convulsive agitation, pale as death, only motioning away Alicia, whose terror lest

he was greatly hurt increased at his drawing his head back from her touch.

"My head is not hurt!" he said at length, answering her repeated enquiries with much effort: "the blow was here" (pressing his hand on his heart). "Why did you show me that picture, Alicia? How did you come by it?" The pure anguish of his tone changed into surprise, doubt, and wilder emotion, when she hurryingly said where it came from, and who it represented. He snatched it into his own hand, and looked at it again intently.

Never before had Alicia seen such an expression in the countenance of Lord St. Lawrence. All that he had ever felt for herself, appeared slight when compared with the passionate agony with which he gazed upon that dumb image of another. His emotion convicted him; and faintly exclaiming "It is enough!" she endeavoured to reach the door. Without observing her movement, Lord St. Lawrence continued fixed upon the picture, muttering over it some broken sentences, in

which the name of Lorenza was audible. Alicia hesitated; and sinking deathlike upon a seat, demanded the name of the person whom that portrait represented.

"Lorenza!" was the deeply sighing answer.

"Lorenza!" she repeated, doubting now even Lord St. Lawrence's leastgoverned expressions, — " in Brazil!— Italian—not French!—"

"I can give you no explanations," he returned. "I am all bewildered, and — shaken!—The sight of that face—it was painted for me when she was — O no! when I thought her — all, all mine, —"He broke off again, and again looked intently upon the picture.

Although the present discovery, by identifying the unfortunate woman in Brazil with his Italian love, reduced the number of Lord St. Lawrence's reputed victims, it threw a sad suspicion upon the truth of his first narration; and testified, that, however he might have acted towards her, the object of his early attachment yet retained a strong hold upon his heart.

Alicia fancied herself his wife, and he within the reach of this artful foreigner's attractions; then she imagined Lorenza's history faithfully related by Mrs. Beresford, and falsely by him. Whichever way her thoughts turned, darkness surrounded his image. She seemed called upon by the solemn voice of Providence to renounce her engagement with him, now and for ever. With as much firmness as she could command, she told him what was passing in her mind, conjuring him to prove the sincerity of his most serious professions, by doing the obscure Lorenza justice, if she were indeed what Mrs. Beresford declared, a deceived and deserted woman, of which his conscience alone could judge.

This address roused and rallied back Lord St. Lawrence's faculties. He laid down the enamel, and repeating the main circumstances already known to Alicia, urged the cruelty of his happiness being withered by the unfaithful history of one who had herself left him. Long habituated to confide in Mrs. Beresford's discernment and veracity, Alicia would not admit that she could be duped by pretended injuries, or led to exaggerate their account. She thought of the Marchesa's after attachment to Lord St. Lawrence, together with her recent conduct, and the idea of her wilful falsehood rushed in with the thought. She hastily suggested this possibility, and her reasons for imagining it.

At first Lord St. Lawrence's colour changed repeatedly, while he stood listening to her with fixed eyes and lips compressed, mastering contending feelings; but suddenly discarding whatever agitating possibilities she had conjured up, he refused toadmit their likelihood; referring to the letter from Manzoni which he had himself seen, and the abode of Lorenza's parents, which he had himself visited. He added to this a repetition of his purpose to go directly to the Continent for authentic proof of all he said, and then to embark for Brazil, and dare the pang of meeting as an enemy, her whom he owned he had loved beyondall that their gentlerhearted sex could imagine. Clinging to the only mode of reconciling two widelydifferent histories, Alicia persisted in suggesting doubts of what he maintained to have been proved; and when he turned upon her with the agitating question of "And if it were so, what must be the conclusion?" answered faintly, "Our separation for life!"

Much disordered discussion followed, during which Lord St. Lawrence obtained her promise to wait a year ere she endeavoured to uproot all affection for him. If after that period he could satisfy her upon every point of the present charge, and prove himself traduced by Lorenza, then she engaged to restore to him both her heart and hand. But if Lorenza were found to have been the injured one, defamed by the Marchesa, her brother, and their creatures, there was but one line of conduct by which Lord St. Lawrence could manifest the sincerity of his penitence for his first crime.

Whatever were the passions roused and wrestling in the mind of Lord St. Law-

rence, they were violent and of long continuance; yet he still spoke with gloomy assurance of Lorenza's early shame and present revengeful hatred; contrasting her now dark character with that of the balmy nature to which he had looked for a serene domestic life, and imploring Alicia to remain linked to him, at least by correspondence with his aunt, while he was prosecuting his momentous enquiries abroad.

She would neither consent to this, nor admit of his making the least appeal to her family; engaging only to send in a blank cover the expected letter from Mrs. Beresford to his London house, for his people to forward; intimating, that as their former bond was wholly cancelled, and their present conditional one more than precarious, she wished the last never to be spoken of. To the world, if not to her mother and sister, it must appear that every thing was over between them. His own delicacy and sense would say why such discretion was necessary.

"Here then we part, Frederick," she

added, "for God knows how long!-Restored, or not restored to my esteem, you will ever have my prayers. If we never meet again - but I will not think it -O that I may see you again! cleared, vindicated, - all that I once thought you were, -though the husband of another!" She clasped her hands as she spoke, and looked upwards with fervent expression; then faintly articulating, "Farewell!" would have passed him: but he caught her gown, and detained her an instant in silent emotion; then releasing her, said, "Go, go, since you can part from me thus: not even your hand!" Alicia silently put her hand into his. -She felt that something beyond her own strength was sustaining her, enabling her to resist her softened heart.

The convulsive pressure of his hand made her feel the ring he wore upon his finger. Awakened by it to recollection that it was her gift exchanged for one she had already sent back, she tremulously demanded its restoration. This unavoidable requisition produced a new burst of

resentful feelings from him; and scarcely knowing what he said, he accused her of merciless caution — of total indifference to his feelings: hinted at the conclusions some men would have drawn from her present conduct after the late pointed attentions of the Marquis of Ullswater; and kindling into resentment of what he chose to term her preference of a friend, reproached himself for base submission to an ill-requited love.

At once offended and wounded by this remote mention of a man whose only advantage over his rival was a step higher in rank, Alicia could but see in it a covert accusation of her general disinterestedness: and shrinking from the possibility of being further misinterpreted, she forbore to urge, what she otherwise would have done, the warmth of her past affection, and the joy with which she would yield to it again were Providence to allow her. This proud reserve, rendered less tolerable by her now steady demand of the ring, finished the conquest of Lord St. Lawrence's better feelings. The weak

point of his character was self-love: he could bear much from a beloved person; every thing from their mere caprice of humour or infirmity of temper: but once led seriously to doubt their degree of affection, and he was transported out of himself. He now tore off the disputed memorial without speaking, and thrusting it into her hand, rushed hastily from her presence. Almost the next moment she heard the carriage, which had been all this time in waiting, drive off. Lord St. Lawrence was gone!

Miserably mistaken by each other, as is nearly always the case when two hearts, once linked together, begin to doubt their mutual truth, they had parted at last without show of tenderness or regret. Whether they were ever to meet again, and if they did, how they might meet, were questions Alicia's labouring heart vainly asked. This long interview had terminated without producing any satisfactory result. Except by the effects wrought upon her feelings by Lord St. Lawrence's stormy sensibility, she felt no

alteration in her salutary apprehension of his truth. Mrs. Beresford's warning was as worthy of attention as before. The powerful emotion of Lord St. Lawrence, upon seeing the picture, proved that it had either awakened his conscience or revived a justly-smothered tenderness. It might be a portrait of Lorenza; or it might represent a second victim, whom he chose not to acknowledge. There was no following the labyrinths of deception; nor indeed of laying suspicion asleep, when the whole happiness of a woman's life was connected with the object of enquiry. No situation could be more cruel than our poor heroine's. She could not resolve upon using every effort to banish him from her thoughts, lest she should thus wean her slowly-gained affections from one who deserved them with overflowing measure, and might hereafter appear to claim them. She feared to brood over the sweet hope of his justification and of his constancy, lest he might only have made their parting scene a pretext for

thinking of her as his future wife, being

breaking with her, and so evading those future explanations which he might know he never could give. At no moment did she suspect the veracity of his passion for herself: yet if he merited Mrs. Beresford's bad opinion, he would be more likely to banish the smart of that, by seeking a new object of adoration, or new pleasures, than by pursuing such things as were redeeming and praiseworthy. It was a dreadful thought, that of helping to alienate a human soul from its highest duties! Alicia dwelt on it trembling and awe-struck; but when she remembered what hand was always stretched out, ready to guide and uphold all who would accept it, she felt her own weakness in the first thought.

Besides these ways of losing her affianced St. Lawrence, there were others equally dangerous. Pride and resentment, if he were unjustly accused, might at once quench affection: or during his long absence in search of documents, the want of letters from her, and the habit of thinking of her as his future wife, being

weakened, he might gradually become cool enough to calculate and repent the great advantages he must forfeit by marrying her. Or if a faithful enquiry proved Lorenza Castelli and himself the victim of a vile woman's artifices and a forged letter's testimony, he might, nay he must (Alicia hoped) become her husband.

Such were the tumultuous feelings and imaginations, which kept her long standing where her impetuous lover had left her, and then accompanied her to a late rest. Her eyes did not close that night: they wept themselves nearly blind, while alternately thinking over the recent scene, and the fatal ambition of her parents. Had they not striven after wealth and honours for her, from which she herself turned with sincere disinclination, these sorrows, these indignities, these bitter mortifications would not have been her portion. Their unwise choice of an introduction for her at first, had sowed the seeds of all this misery; adding to it the painful recollection of many a habit

acquired, and many a taste indulged to excess, which the sanctuary of a quiet home would have protected her from. Their misjudging fondness or pride had therefore entailed upon her both sorrow and self-blame; and in this aweful moment, communing with her own soul, she lamented with filial tears the faults of her earthly parent. But he was gone to his dread account; and the Christian daughter, humbled by her own errors, felt that, for him as for her, there was one covering mercy, ample enough, if sought for, to hide the sins of a world.

Alicia rose from her sleepless bed only to get into the carriage which was to convey her far from places and persons which she could no longer behold without anguish. Her travelling companions were luckily always barren of subjects for conversation when passing through mere country; and she herself, now indifferent to every outward object, was privileged in remaining silent.

Her unchanging sadness and frequent

sighs, during her short land and sea journey, were of course attributed to her recent loss and late parting: none guessed the complicated misery which oppressed her; namely, the conviction that her conduct would give her mother the severest disappointment, and might produce the most disastrous consequences to their family affairs, now left without a guide. She felt, too, a presentiment that she and Lord St. Lawrence were parted for ever. His precipitate anger had added to the bar between them. If her father's circumstances were involved, she could never make advances towards a reconciliation, should after-discoveries render that desirable and warrantable: and he had gone from her, avowing too much resentment and suspicion of her attachment, for such an after-attempt upon his side.

When she remembered, therefore, the many instances of his generous affection and his seeming frankness, her heart melted, and she was ready to accuse herself of exacting perfection, and refusing

reformation. But when she thought of what he was accused, and by whom, and how the whole of his apparent reformation hung upon its truth or falsehood, she checked the weakness. It was, indeed, evident to her, that, at the best, Lord St. Lawrence had shown, in their last interview, an irritability of self-love hitherto unsuspected; though she might have discovered it in his own narration of his break with Lorenza. Principles yet unfixed, and feelings yet unsubdueda lingering passion, even while loving another, - for a first unworthy object were evidenced by his inconsistent language. And while Alicia fancied their fatal effect upon married life, she blessed Heaven for saving her ere too late.

Alicia was not selfish; for she knew that in losing her, Lord St. Lawrence would lose nothing valuable to one of his pretensions, except her individual self. As he had loved once passionately before, he might, if he deserved a heart and a home, love so again, and as nobly as happily. She tried to think that it was as easy to forget her, as to crush the memory of a woman who had justly forfeited every worthy regret; — unwilling to recollect that her erring lover had professed to build not only his hope of domestic joy upon her character, but his expectation of having in her a sort of guardian angel for those habits and principles which he seemed bent upon maintaining through life.

It may not be denied, that she was painfully alive to the certainty of being made a public talk, perhaps a public scoff, whenever the termination of her engagement with the English Earl should be known to their mutual soi-disant friends. To that, however, she schooled herself to submit, determining to let it pass by in silence; referring all who might have the indelicacy to ask why it were so, to Lord St. Lawrence himself, for the mere testimony due to a fair fame.

Having landed at the port of Dublin, our dejected heroine got into a chaise with her maid, and attended by Lady Donnington's courier, who was to return immediately after seeing his charge to her place of destination, proceeded ra-

pidly to the county of Waterford.

How different was Alicia's return to Castle Barry from what she had anticipated only a few weeks before! What a rush of hitherto-banished remembrances did the sight of its trees and its waters bring over her! Every place she passed as she drew nearer home, was peopled, in her mind's eye, with the events and feelings of the past; and as these thronged upon her, - as cabin doors were crowded with welcoming faces, and the well-known accent of her country was heard in blessings and rejoicing,-the world, with all its empty shows and baseless sentiments, fled like a dream before the light of day.

In this secluded spot of earth seemed her appointed place; — among simple, true-hearted creatures, whose ignorance offered an excuse for many faults, and whose affectionateness often redeemed them. Here she could be useful, resigned, and, perhaps, ultimately happy: could she but overcome two distressing images,—that of Lord St. Lawrence plunging into fatal dissipation from mere recklessness of himself, and distaste of whatever recalled her; or wandering over the Continent in search of that happiness from which her rigorous virtue had driven him!

The meeting with her mother and sister, although they all met as mourners, was less a trial to them than to Alicia: to her it was a meeting purely sorrowful; to them it was softened by the comforting expectations connected with her destined marriage. Mrs. Barry, however, talked at first solely of her poor Colonel, shedding tears with child-like profusion, quite unobservant of their effect upon her exhausted daughter. Flora's eyes flowed as much from joy as grief, while sitting with her arms round her sister, gazing at, and kissing alternately, her arm, her brow, her cheek, with ecstasy of young affection. Alicia was too deeply affected for other expression of her feelings than what was given by profound yet smothering sighs, and half-whispered questions. Yet she often pressed Flora against her side, and sealed her lips in distressed silence upon the hand that held hers. She grieved inwardly some moments, when told she had come too late for her father's funeral.

Mrs. Barry coupled her sobbing account of this solemn ceremony with an earnest wish that their dear Lord St. Lawrence could have come over to it; enquiring why he had not attended his betrothed to Castle Barry, and when he was to join them.

Alicia's lips for some time would not unclose, and when they did, she had barely voice to falter out that he was gone upon the Continent on business of the utmost importance, which it was impossible for him to delegate to another: that of course her mourning, if nothing else did, must put a stop to certain preparations for a while; therefore his forced absence was not to be so much regretted.

After uttering these disjointed sentences, she scarcely heard her mother's

vexed exclamation, and Flora's doleful one; for her head was absolutely dizzy with the efforts she had made, that she might not suddenly shock her afflicted relations with the blow she was fated to give them. The present was not the moment for any grievous disclosure which might be delayed: they were quite aw prepared for it; and she felt too much; to enter willingly upon details which must tear her heart in pieces d noqu evil Evading direct replies to several direct questions, and suffering her convulsed countenance to be interpreted as imagination chose, she begged to set the subject of her own concerns aside for that evening at least, that she might give quieter attention to those of more general in terest. Mrs. Barry immediately went into histories of her residence abroad, and of her late husband's vexatious visit to Jamaica, disclosing, while she did so, circumstances hitherto unknown to her daughter; which, though it was done with too little connection or explanation for the latter to see exactly what they

might issue in, opened her eyes to their probable consequences. soil red rol ; end Confidently reckoning upon the counsel and assistance of a new son, Mrs. Barry was in some degree justified in treating family difficulties trather lightly. She reverted to the involved state of the West India property, which must render her jointure a nullity for the present; cheerfully professing her willingness to live upon her dear Alicia in England, until Lord St. Lawrence's kindness had released the estates for Marcus by loan or security; meanwhile, she could let Castle Barry, as that was left to her for life, and the income arising from it would do for Flora's masters, and other merelypersonal expences. to sand of notineria

Alicial gave no interruption to these plans and proposals. Whilst her mother was gradually forgetting her husband in reviving anticipations of comfort and amusement, she sate fixed in silent misery, pierced by the unavoidable apprehension of her mother's deficiencies; conscious that Lord St. Lawrence would only have

entered her family to have been made a prey of; and certain that, after such a conviction, she was doubly barred from seek. ing arguments for his re-acceptance. It was grievous to her to see how little the awful suddenness of Colonel Barry's death had impressed his widow: - her grief, and regret, and consolations, belonged solely to the things of this world : - there was no mention of what was to be derived from contemplation of another: - there was no reference to those spiritual balms which true mourners feel their need of, but which the Christian mourner alone seeks and finds. Her home, in fact, was not such a house of mourning as she had often witnessed in a cabin, where no sounds were heard except those of natural sorrow and of prayer. Her chilled heart involuntarily owned, that Heaven's blessing could not venly Father until he smote it noqu iten

Trial or chastisement has indeed come in vain; if it have not softened the stricken heart, and filled it with a dread sense of Almighty Power; if it do not humble our high thoughts, and abate our regard for the perishing objects of desire and ambition: and if, instead of this, it leave us still looking only to a world of vanities, solely engrossed by the care of retaining as many of them as possible, how are we to expect the plague to be stayed, or the warning thunders to be hushed?

As Alicia falteringly recommended thoughts and views more consonant to their present circumstances, than such as depended upon a mere mortal arm, Flora's sympathetic looks acknowledged their influence; but her mother exclaimed pathetically against such "very melancholy sentiments in a young person," quite incapable of believing that they were full of consolation to those who trusted in them, and were gloomy only to such as never remembered their Heavenly Father until he smote them. She concluded, that her favoured daughter was not of a cheerful character.

Some words indicative of this opinion fell from her lips as they were sitting

together on a bank, a short distance from the house. There had been a pause in conversation, during which Alicia was looking round upon every familiar spot with brimming eyes. The recollection of what her mother had said of letting Castle Barry, and that from necessity, went like an arrow to her heart; she started up, covering her face with her handkerchief, and hurried away to overcome the momentary pang by herself.

Flora followed her into the chapel room, whither she had gone, not seeing where she went. This room, so like Lord St. Lawrence's favourite parlour at Grey Friars;—the idea of him banished from it by her rigid justice;—the thought of strangers dwelling in her home;—the recollection of all associated with it, and with that world which had caused every sorrow she was now lamenting, at once pressed upon her heart with a force she could not resist. Burst followed burst of anguish, while her head lay supported on the breast of her young sister, whose whispered consolations,

though not deficient in such expressions as become creatures born for immortality, chiefly rested upon the merits, the attachment, and the ample power of Lord St. Lawrence.

Alicia listened to her in sad stillness. Desolation was in her heart, while Flora's was warming with its own eloquence, and opening afresh to hopes and expectations allowable to ardent and affectionate youth. It was agony to have Lord St. Lawrence thus talked of. Hurryingly beseeching her sister not to mingle such subjects with their present serious ones, our poor heroine proceeded to question her upon the necessity for letting Castle Barry.

Barry. Flora was tolerably well qualified to answer. Her mother had acquired the habit of confiding in her while they were abroad, and, since the Colonel's death, had regularly imparted to her everyday embarrassments as they arose; she, therefore, began the desired narrative.

It contained a confused account of debts and claims, bonds and bills, mort-

gages and life-annuities, which the listener was too ignorant of money-matters to comprehend without instruction; she felt, however, that it had become her duty to understand them by some means or other, that she might prompt her mother to act for the honour and welfare of them all; and she admitted that, circumstanced as they were, letting Castle Barry was inevitable. A word judiciously dropped by Alicia quickly roused the natural proud delicacy of her sister's character; and, from that awakening moment, Flora was, from romance of feeling, as eager to prevent any reference to Lord St. Lawrence before his actual marriage with her sister, as the sad sufferer herself. Her agitating imaginations ending in painful certainties, Alicia became outwardly composed; after which she rejoined her mother worsd wo doldw

Mrs. Barry, professing to avoid distressing topics that night, if possible, entered into conversation about Donnington-House and its visitors; remarking with delight her daughter's exquisitely-fashioned air: mistaking, perhaps, the

elegance of deep and simple mourning, for the frivolous distinction of which she was so foolishly fond, and which the natural grace of the figure it clothed completely distanced.

Flora noticed only her sister's lovelier loveliness, as she enthusiastically and audibly called that pathetic and paler countenance. Till now, she had seen only tender affections and soft sorrows shade its brightness; but at this moment she beheld it either grasped by stronger feelings or fixed in sad abstraction; it was, therefore, a face of deeper interest to her; and her ardent temperament, to which every intense emotion was welcome, making such interest pleasurable, prevented her from being alarmed at the change.

The depressing circumstances under which our heroine had returned, together with her rapid journey, offered a fair plea for retiring early to her own room, and, taking advantage of it, she soon released herself from the painful restraint of her mother's and sister's presence. Certain

filial recollections more freely indulged, and pious duties performed with a deeper sense of her own wants, she gave up her whole thoughts to what now seemed her appointed task.

By renouncing Lord St. Lawrence she had, in a manner, made herself responsible to her family for their future well-being; and it became her, therefore, to rouse every faculty for the purpose of action. She must now stand for her brother in the breach of their ruinous fortunes; what he from whom she was parted would have done, and might have done, had he been her husband, at the moment of her father's death. She must see men of business, examine papers, sift accounts, calculate contingencies, that she might be able to draw out some clear statement of the family situation, upon which to ground her plans of proceeding. Until this were done, they would continue terrified by apprehensions which calm investigation might prove to be mere phantoms, or, at most, conquerable evils. It was possible that their West Indian property might not be in the state represented; agents might be careless or unskilful, and patient retrenchment might rectify every mischief.

Alicia had heard in the world, too frequently to forget, of estates placed in the hands of trustees for the gradual liquidation of just debts, with a fair allowance made from them meanwhile for the family. Why might not such an expedient succeed in their case? She knew that for herself, any income, however small, upon which they might support the appearance of gentility, would be sufficient, if it were the will of Heaven so to humble them; but she dreaded her mother's stronger attachment to wider indulgences, and she had to remember how little needful, nay, how pernicious often such indulgences were, before she grew reconciled to the prospect of her mother's living without Until this were done, they would cominant

Marcus, with the power of remaining abroad if he disliked returning to a hampered estate, was less to be considered. Poor Flora would be the greatest sufferer:

her education could not be finished by expensive masters. Here, however, Alicia found a substitute in her own willingness to devote herself to the task; and her consciousness that the best part of education she was perhaps qualified better than ever to teach, from being more awakened to the superior importance of cultivating the heart and mind. What now would be her office in life, except that of rendering herself useful to a few dear connections? Wider usefulness and more extended benevolence were gone: they were visions passed away; and so entirely passed, that she was tempted to think all relating to England had been a dream, from which she was waking upon the pillow where she had laid her head at night. Every object in the room where she had slept from childhood, seemed to substantiate this idea; the very tree-tops she saw without, silvered by the moon, and bending to the breeze; the sound of the water laving its quiet shore; - all appeared to strengthen such a thought. In truth, the glow, the gaiety, the unfruitfulness of her

English life, suited as ill with her foregone years as with her present anticipations at any rate, she could not help believing she was not born for rank and riches; too probably, not for any happiness purely of this world. She had already been cruelly disappointed in the characters of some she wished to love, and some she had loved. Jocelyn Hastings had proved cold in his friendship; Lord St. Lawrence had either sinned past forgiveness, or, unjustly accused, had resented where he ought to have allowed for her conscientious alarms; her brother had long ago disappointed her hopes; her mother fell far short of what their difficult circumstances demanded; family competence, family honour, perhaps, family credit, was dissipated by their common extravagance. Her own share in the profuse expenditure she could not remember without grief. It is true, she had not been sufficiently aware of her father's straits for money, and her expenses were certainly not under her own direction; but she condemned herself for not having resisted

such expenses solely upon the ground of their culpable wastefulness. The more she revolved the past, the more seriously was she convinced that her first great fault was that of yielding to opinions which reason or conscience disapproved, when urged to do so by persons she loved or feared. This conviction taught her what she ought to make the prime subject of her frequent prayers; convincing her that weakness may prove as fatal to human character as violent passions, and that even an amiable temper may become a snare, if not watched by a higher principle.

The same conviction roused her to observe, that she was beginning never to think of Lord St. Lawrence now, except with feelings of tender regret; dwelling upon the idea of their eternal separation from minor causes, rather than continuing to see their disunion certain only upon the ground of his utter unworthiness. She trembled at this discovery, fearful it might undermine her resolution not to answer any letter he might write to her

pefore he should have cleared himself fully. She might give way, partly from her own individual wishes, partly for her family's sake; yet, to act rightly, she must neither seek his advice, nor ask his The deeper their difficulties might prove, the more did conscience and delicacy command her to abstain from showing the least disposition to accept of less than perfect proof of his being calumniated. She must remain as one dead, or in a trance, to him and every one connected with him; she must leave every explanation of her conduct, to himself and Lady Anne Aubrey, to whom she could not volunteer a letter, and from whom it was not likely she should hear again, however her nephew might represent the circumstances of their second rupture. Alicia knew enough of the world to be sure that her interview with Lord St. Lawrence on the road to Bangor, the storm of feelings in which he left her there, together with her return of his presents, and his hasty departure for the Continent, would pass from servants to mistresses, and be blown round town in a few hours; that she must prepare herself for the most mortifying conjectures in consequence, and be resigned to the probability of having stories fabricated in which the sole blame would be given to her.

She was resigned; neither her late solemn impressions nor humble petitions had been vain: she could drink the bitter cup when it was offered.

There is a sad seriousness peculiar to minds made up to any subject of painful importance. When too much occupied with one great object to bestow attention upon lesser ones, this mood is sometimes mistaken for a want of personal feeling or of sympathy. Softening associations and local reminders pass by unfelt, because unheeded; and intent upon needful action, it ceases to indulge in expressing the very sentiment by which it is actuated.

Alicia was under the influence of this seriousness, when she quitted her room the next morning. The mere habit of

late rising kept her thus long in her sleepless bed, which formerly she used to quit at the first sounds of out-door labour. Flora had been long expecting her, and one or two of their old pensioners were already waiting in the kitchen, asking to see their "jewel of a young lady." exchanging a speaking embrace with her sister. Alicia would not taste breakfast until she had seen and shaken hands with the old servants and the poor people from the cabins. Their clamorous welcomes showed they were in the secret of her expected marriage. Lamentations for "the master," by which Colonel Barry was meant, were mingled with prayers for "the young master abroad," and blessings upon her and "the fine English lord, that it was a sorrow couldn't be turned into an Irish one;" a sorrow which became more vociferous as her cheeks, growing whiter at every mention of Lord St. Lawrence, convinced them that the very air of England was not comparable to that of green Erin. and nadw asansuoiras

This scene over, Alicia went back to

breakfast, ill able to relish with that zest which belongs to every memorial of home, the well-known lozenge-shaped bread and oaten cakes so often remembered in the midst of Gunter's most elaborate compositions. By tacit agreement, no reference was made to their recent loss, for Mrs. Barry's sake; who would not learn any better way of enduring a husband's death than that of driving him out of her thoughts. She naturally spoke of her dear Alicia's fortunate prospects: exacting descriptions of Grey Friars; questioning whether she might not take a cottage ornée in its neighbourhood, near enough, in short, to give her the advantage of Lady St. Lawrence's carriage and company; and anticipating the pleasure she and Flora would have in seeing all the pretty things given to the Earl's intended. Every word her mother spoke was a stab to her unhappy child, who yet dared not explain why she seemed coldly to put off unpacking her principal trunks until a later period. Mrs. Barry was rather piqued at this seeming rebuke of from Lord St Lawrence, rashly hurried her childishness; and Flora felt, that in so obviously rebuking their mother, Alicia proved herself altered. The latter endeavoured to banish these impressions, by gently remarking, that she would not allow herself to think of minor subjects before the most important one was in a train for settlement; reminding her mother that she had promised to let her see all her father's papers, and to speak with his agent.

Mrs. Barry willingly assented; at the same time repeating, that although Lord St. Lawrence's unlucky absence would prevent him from coming personally forward, she was sure that a letter from him would do every thing; therefore she recommended Alicia to learn from Mr. Boyle what she ought to ask Lord St. Lawrence to do, and then write to him on the instant.

Alicia could not speak, but she bowed her head, and turned away. 129 301 beach

Flora observed her sister's filling eyes, and naturally attributing much of her uncheerableness to the temporary separation from Lord St. Lawrence, rashly hurried

conversation to what she thought would be most soothing to an attached heart, praises of its object. She endeavoured to give her sister, at least, the sweetness of remembered happiness, by enquiring about his tastes, habits, and modes of benevolence. Alicia answered as she could, hastening from so cruel a theme to others of less interest. Flora's eagerly-affectionate spirit was checked: at first, she was offended; then conjecturing that her sister might have involved her in their mother's frivolous anxiety to look at trinkets and gowns, softly repelled such an imputation, expressing a wish only to see her future brother-in-law's miniature. Alicia's scarcely-articulate answer as she got off her chair to end the conversation, transfixed Flora, - "I have no picture of Lord St. Lawrence!" The astonished girl looked at her as if she doubted her identity; then relapsing into a conviction of intended unkindness, abruptly quitted the room to shed alone some of those bitter tears which her precipitate temper often wrung from her eyes. 300 10 19wood

Mrs. Barry then went with her eldest

daughter into what had been called "the Colonel's room," where she put her in possession of the disorderly papers, even while insisting that they would make her head ache to arrange them; and make her melancholy, by reminding her of her poor dear father. Alicia, however, mildly persisted, and her good-natured mother de-

The patient inspection of all these packets, at first more than once by herself, and afterwards assisted by the presence and comments of Mr. Boyle, her father's attorney; the letters written since her father's death in her mother's name by this man; the bills of tradesmen, and the recollections of old servants, failed to give one so inexperienced in money concerns any new light by which to guide her less-informed mother. It was impossible for one so young to understand several of those MS. rolls: she knew nothing of leases, nor the law of mortgages, nor of life insurances, nor the taxing of lawyers' bills, nor the ruinous power of one signature to a deed: she

Mrs. Barry then went with her eldost

could only ask and ask; and at length believe upon trust, that one half of their property abroad must go to the hammer to save the other half, and the portion at home remain swallowed up by mortgages. How they were all to subsist until these sales were effected, and how present demands were to be met, was the question. Mrs. Barry had rashly and inconsiderately administered to her husband's will, by which means she had made herself liable to his debts. The whole fortune had once been hers; but she had given it up entirely to her husband when they married, contenting herself with a handsome settlement, in case of surviving him. Even that she had yielded up to a transient necessity. To Marcus of course (though not entailed) was given the West India property, burthened with portions for his sisters, now likely to prove nominal ones. Castle Barry was left to the widow in lieu of her jointure: but Castle Barry was mortgaged to its full amount; and bills from London tradesmen were pouring in to meet the heir, or

AL JOY

to scramble for their payment amongst those of his father. Nothing, in short, could make this tangled skein run smoothly, except some friend would either give his word or his money for the purpose. Mr. Boyle ventured humbly to propose an application to Lord St. Lawrence on the occasion; displaying the sure results of such a step, and maintaining that if his Lordship could not or would not lend so large a sum at small interest, his guarantee to the various claimants would be sufficient to make them quiet.

Sensitive as Alicia was to every species of pecuniary obligation, in this cruel strait she felt that she would not have wholly shrunk from seeking such as the last-mentioned assistance, had her heart and Lord St. Lawrence's been indeed one. But now it was impossible; and taking advantage of the plea offered by delicacy, she negatived the proposal, noticing her hope of obtaining some friendly help nearer home.

It was not from a want of sincerity,

nor very much from fear of humiliation, that our heroine thus evaded an explanation of circumstances which must eventually declare themselves. She had not yet acquired strength enough for the task: she dreaded the sight of her mother's disappointment even more than her reproaches; and she justly believed that she would better support herself through such a scene after she should know the worst of their threatened fate than while tortured by uncertain imaginations.

When Mr. Boyle left her, she looked round in vain for a tried and sensible male adviser, to guide them by his counsel, and strengthen them by his countenance. Colonel Barry had never made a friend; his trifling helpmate had never wished for more than acquaintance: their neighbours had always been contemned by them. Alicia herself had no friends except those of her childhood, now scattered and distant: later ones were of too quick growth to be tried and found steadfast. In truth, the friends we make in the sunny haunts of pleasure are not such as may

abide storms with us, or teach us how to get beyond reach of the coming deluge they are ours for different purposes. Alicia felt this; and felt, too, that in giving up Lord St. Lawrence, she must at once renounce every intimacy in a set to which she had no other pretension than what mere fashion bestowed, and his attachment completed. Lady Donnington would soon forget her, she knew; but Lady Lilias Vavasour, she thought, would regret her; and such kind hearts as Sir Edgar Trevor's put a charitable construction upon the mysterious termination of her engagement. For Lord St. Lawrence's sake, she hoped her family involvements might remain secret; yet ill-nature might falsely accuse him of ungenerous motives. For her own part, she was beginning to care little for the

buzz of the world.

Having in some degree made her mother sensible that it would be expedient to have some active friend's assistance at the outset, that another false step (like that of administering to the will) might

not be taken through ignorance (always putting Lord St. Lawrence out of the question, on the score of delicacy), she discovered that Mrs. Barry had an insuperable objection to unveiling their affairs before neighbours, or other persons accustomed to consider the Barry family with envy or respect; and it was with much difficulty she got permission to apply to Sir Luke Ponsonby for his advice. He was just returned from the Continent, but unluckily he was going off to Cheltenham that very moment, and the Barry's reaped no other fruit from this application than the vexation of having made it. One or two more unsuccessful efforts tried, and these failing, either from the unwillingness or the incompetency of the persons asked, Alicia saw herself obliged to go on, almost blindfold, alone, taking summaries and abstracts from one agent to place under the scrutiny of another; and so to come at the facts of their family circumstances, and the trust-worthiness of those she employed. The misery of her situation was aggravated by the longing she had of unburthening her fainting heart, and her dread of the consequences. She could not endure the sight of her mother's regained composure when she knew it rested solely upon the prospect of her marriage; nor could she contemplate destroying this security without a pang which almost unsettled reason.

Whenever the post came in, and no letters whatever arrived from England for Alicia, she saw in Flora's eyes astonishment and enquiry; and she heard her mother fret against etiquette (in her half-good-humoured way), attributing every body's silence to some new fashion, which commanded supposed mourners to be undisturbed. Her unhappy daughter vainly tried neither to hear nor see.

Her sister had not been more than a week at home when Flora's jealous alienation from her single society, gave way before kinder, though not less painful imaginations. She watched the former into the most secluded walk of their domain, and finding her in tears there, tremblingly threw her arms round her,

exclaiming, 'Alicia! dearest Alicia! something besides papa's death makes you unhappy. If you do not love Lord St. Lawrence, for Heaven's sake, do not marry him! I would rather beg my bread than see you ——"

Alicia interrupted her with a confused question of why she fancied she did not love Lord St. Lawrence? has great and

"Because you call him Lord St. Lawrence, not your Frederic, as you latterly
called him in your letters; because you
have not written to him since you came;
and you never talk of him, if you can
help it."

Alicia turned away, and covering her face with her handkerchief, sobbed audibly. Flora meanwhile poured out a confession of her first resentful feelings and subsequent observations, adding to them the most passionate entreaties that her sister would not sacrifice herself for her family, if her heart were indeed averse to the marriage upon which their mother's hopes were built; arraigning herself for having lent her aid in her

letters from France to promote Alicia's acceptance of him. The unfortunate victim of so many persons' folly or selfishmess, for some time answered only by redoubled tears: but more than once she pressed her convulsed lips upon the brow of her young sister, in token of grateful kindness; and at length having exhausted her tears, and taken her resolution, she bade Flora turn back with her to the house.

fremulously: " it is time to end this sad struggle. It must be told — I can bear it no longer. Flora, dearest, prepare for a cruel disappointment; but do not blame me; and do not think I did not love Lord St. Lawrence!" She hurried her sister forward as she spoke, who now, silenced by sudden apprehension, and awed by the wild manner of Alicia, could only gaze at her in mute alarm.

Mrs. Barry was found in the chapelroom, "a amusing her mind," by spreading out upon chairs and tables all the bridal finery which had come with Alicia from England, by Lady Donnington's order; excusing her childish desire of thus seeing blondes and satins, by saying they might otherwise be spoiled by damp or creases.

The altered creature these gauds were to have adorned, turned from them with abhorrence for their own sake, and for the money wasted upon their purchase: she knew, however, they were paid for; but she was spared the pang of knowing by whom. — The horror with which she motioned them away, and then hastened from them herself, could not escape the notice of her mother, dull as she was in general to every silent demonstration of feeling. She hurried after her daughter, followed by Flora, and as they entered another room, piteously asked what was the matter.

Alicia had wound herself up to the dreaded disclosure, and contending powerfully against that excessive agitation which would have rendered articulation impossible, slowly revealed the secret of her broken compact with Lord St. Lawrence.

It would be vain to attempt a description of her mother's alternate incredulity, conviction, and stupefaction. There was nothing hysterical in her present griefthe shock was too great: - she did not even shed tears. Above all, she did not utter one word of unkindness. But the reproach she did not direct against her own child, soon found vent in lamentations and upbraidings, of which the distant Mrs. Beresford was the subject; arraigning her for having in early life infected Alicia with such overstrained notions, and romantic feelings; and now of having, by the most unjustifiable interference, blighted their prospects for ever.

In vain the almost crushed Flora interposed in Mrs. Beresford's behalf, with the reminder of that lady's total ignorance of the existing engagement with Lord St. Lawrence when she wrote concerning him;—in vain she besought her to think of the motive, rather than the consequences; nay, to thank Mrs. Beresford for preserving their dear Alicia from mar-

her broken compact with Lord St. Law-

rying a man of such character. Mrs. Barry could not see that the evidence was against her lost son-in-law; but satisfied that he had, indeed, resentfully given up her daughter, gradually turned from invectives of Mrs. Beresford to piteous wailings of what she herself was doomed to by this unexpected change.

Whilst her mother was, indeed, presenting the most frightful consequences before both her children—imagining the violent seizures by creditors—the probable failure of remittances from Jamaica—their forced flight to the Continent—the contumelies of neighbours, and the extreme anger of Marcus, her unhappy daughter lay at her feet more dead than alive, wishing, in the anguish of her soul, that it were not sinful to pray for death.

Torturing questions and agonized replies passed between them, perpetually finished upon Mrs. Barry's side with predictions of her heart's breaking ere many months were over. Alicia now and then uttered a few meek words, acknowledging the misery of which she was for con-

science' sake the cause, yet avowing her incapacity of acting otherwise. on ymall Bit Flora had soon ceased to speak : - the moment her mother forbore to accuse, and she had no one to defend, self took possession of her thoughts. She was, indeed, deeply disappointed every high-raised expectation was overthrown; her pride in her expected brother's rank and character was utterly mortified. There would now be no extended scene for her to perform upon, the part she had allotted herself in vain imagination; a part which she had often mentally rehearsed, elate with expectation of there displaying her disdain of common pleasures and distinctions. She would now have nothing to tempt, and nothing therefore to take merit to herself for renouncing; she would have no surprised and admiring witnesses of ther triumph over the ordinary objects of early desire. She had lost, too, those intellectual enjoyments which were, indeed, to have neutralised this very merit, by rendering inferior things indifferent. Flora had inherited somewhat of her

father's ostentation of character, though her love of display demanded more enlightened spectators, and aimed at a better species of exhibition, than ever his did. The pernicious self-exalting principle was the same, however different its fruit; it was not Christian humility, ever fearful of a defeat where pride anticipates a triumph. Yet, blinded by her own natural dispositions, and the film which had grown over her mental sight from late neglect at home and abroad, it was not to be expected that at the present moment she should see, that disappointment and humiliation were better for her than what she had lost. After-years were to awaken the erring creature to a just sense of her own weakness; to humble her arrogant thoughts; to make her grateful for the power of performing commanded duties, and denying forbidden inclinations; and to convince her, that vainglorying, self-exalting, and self-sufficient, her best actions might benefit others, but must ever be prejudicial to herself.

To these first pangs succeeded worthier

and more enduring ones for her sister and for Lord St. Lawrence himself. Although Flora tried to hope he would reappear at no distant day with a refutation of the tale against him, she was incapable of being warped by circumstances, into disregard of his alleged crime, or of joining her mother in the wish that Alicia would at least renew a correspondence with Lady Anne Aubrey. She was more likely to counsel sacrifices than humiliations; and refusing, therefore, to say her sister might write to Lord St. Lawrence's aunt without suspicion of an interested motive, turned her sole attention to cheer and comfort her.

Mrs. Barry interrupted their mutual endearments by a sudden burst about her diamonds. They were still in pledge, she said, at the Parisian jeweller's, because the Colonel could not release them when he came to her, and had, therefore, advised their remaining there until just before or after Alicia's marriage, when he might, perhaps, find means to redeem them. The jewels had not been pledged

for a third of their value, it is true; but where were they now to get the sum required? and if they were not regained before a certain period, they would be entirely forfeited.

Alicia understood at once, that even these diamonds were to have been restored by application to Lord St. Lawrence. She would have heard of their probable fate, as mere ornaments, without concern: but she felt their importance as substitutes for nearly two thousand pounds. - Abandoned for a single moment to her own weakness, forgetting a higher hope in apprehensions for her family, she felt crushed to the earth, and saw no shelter from her mother's expected reproaches, save in her own perfect inability of recalling the past. She dwelt upon Lord St. Lawrence's strict obedience of her prohibition not to attempt at interesting her kindred, as a proof that he either meant never to renew their engagement were he innocent, or as a testimony that he knew himself guilty. She did it, urging the necessity and the advantage of resolutely making up their minds to a very different mode of life than that which they would think it incumbent upon them to pursue, with the ignis fatuus of his rank before them.

"What can I now do, my mother? O! what can I do?" was her frequent and pathetic question, while she sate bowing her head to the storm in true humbleness, yet fixedness of soul.—" I would lay down my life for you all; open every artery of my body; but I may not act against my conscience! God will raise up some friend; O trust in him, dearest mother, trust in him, and spare my broken heart!" do

The agony spoke in her face; and as Flora threw her arms round her with an impassioned exclamation of sympathy, the submissive stillness of the one, and the half-reproach of the other, checked their mother's ungoverned expressions. The late disclosure, however, had opened such a gulf before them, that even this inconsiderate woman could not but feel appalled; and her enquiries as to what they must do to silence those applicants

for money who were now waiting patiently till after Miss Barry's marriage, forced Alicia out of her dejected trance.

She possessed many rich trinkets, the gifts of various English admirers of her own sex, as well as bridal ornaments. She offered to give them up for private sale; suggesting that of useless carriages, horses, and plate, and the dismissal of servants: her own personal maid amongst the first. Still she endeavoured to think that their present extremity would prove but a passing storm, or that some miracle would be worked for their preservation through it by that gracious Providence on which she relied. Mrs. Barry's faith was not so strong, or rather not so often exercised towards the same object as her daughter's: she certainly looked only to an arm of flesh; and under the present black cloud, could discern no blue in the heavens. She withstood for a time the humiliating proposal of parting with servants and equipages. Other things might be privately got rid of; but these-O no! It was too much to require of Colonel

Barry's widow!—it would be proclaiming their poverty!"

It is as hard a task to argue with pride as with passion. Alicia could only plead and temporize, and appeal to that pride, when better pleas failed, to save them from the degradation of being treated with rude contempt by some under-persons to whom Mrs. Barry talked of applying for a loan of money. Happily, Mrs. Barry was too jealous of her footing amongst persons of fashion, to allow of any reference to them in that way; her daughter was consequently spared the pain of being asked to impart their strait to Lody Dennington. She harealf as to Lady Donnington. She herself naturally shrunk from unavailing and unnecessary expositions of their circumstances; but could she have purchased an upright and judicious friend, to direct her how to be at once just and prudent—to spare her mother, yet not culpably sacrifice to her vanities—she would have done it, at any cost of her own feelings. No such friend, however, was at hand; and from this eventful hour she saw herself obliged to

take the whole weight of family care and individual responsibility.

Without presumption, therefore, nav. with the most sorrowful conviction of her own incompetency, did our poor heroine resume her task of settling her father's affairs in her mother's place. Having no disinterested person to turn to, she was obliged to go on, confiding in the very men who had assisted, by their time-serving expedients, to plunge the estates into their present ruin. She knew no other pole-star except honest intention. That just principle impelling her inexperience, precipitated her into measures which had the payment of debts for their sole object, but which often left her defenceless on some other side. Knowledge added to honesty would have attained the same, and with less sacrifice. Our youthful heroine thought principally of sacrificing herself in every way. She proposed binding herself by any deed to transfer her claim to the sum willed to her by her father, provided Mr. Boyle would find means to honour certain bills which he

knew were circulating with Colonel Barry's signature, and which must otherwise be protested, to their family dishonour and danger. But neither her right, nor the estates themselves, were now sufficient security. The money could not be raised, nor would any one Mr. Boyle sounded upon the subject, advance the five hundred pounds necessary to redeem Mrs. Barry's diamonds. No one could make sure, without examining them, that they were valuable enough to indemnify the lenders, and materially assist the borrower. Alicia's jewellery, the carriages and the horses, were at last permitted by the weeping Mrs. Barry to depart privately to Dublin for immediate sale. She talked to her neighbours of going abroad for her health, since her daughter had found out she could not be happy with Lord St. Lawrence; and Marcus, when he came home, would probably like to have every thing new. She then touched upon the probability of letting Castle Barry for a time on the same account, conscious now that it must be let, or there would be no sure way of paying the interest of the two mortgages.

To no one of these sacrifices was Alicia so long of bringing herself to consent, nay to advise, as this of parting with Castle Barry: she did it sadly, yet perseveringly. Their circumstances called so imperiously for such sacrifices, to evince their sincere desire of doing justice to the claimants who were consenting to wait for their due until Mr. Barry wrote or returned, and it was so painful to go on living where they had lived so differently, that both Alicia and Flora joined in recommending their mother either to remove to some place in Scotland where no one knew them, or to go abroad, and wait in retirement for the return of

Both sisters saw that it was in vain to go on struggling against their appointed fate: they were to be driven from a home because some of them had fixed their hearts upon one more splendid. Mrs. Barry's love of the world was to be visited by the world's neglect; Alicia's

boasted charms were to be proved a bane rather than a blessing; and Flora's proud spirit was to be brought low by contumely, poverty, and exile. The wheel of fortune had turned with each, and all: every thing, they felt, was reversed.

Every thing abroad and at home, indeed, was changed; it was now generally known, even in Ireland (for the Mr. Donovans had reported it), that Lord St. Lawrence was gone upon the Continent, no one knew why; that Lady Anne Aubrey refused to give any other answer to a direct question upon the subject, than that she believed the marriage of her nephew and Miss Barry was now very uncertain, although she begged to be understood unchanged in her esteem of the young lady. Lady Donnington professed to know nothing about it: in fact, Lady Donnington, when surprised by hearing of Lord St. Lawrence's sudden departure from England, and his long interview with Miss Barry on the road, had written to ask the latter, rather categorically, what was the meaning of such strange circumstances; intimating, that if Lord St. Lawrence was in the least ill-used, the person who had been so unlucky as to bring about the acquaintance could not possibly continue a correspondence with her former young friend, unless she could present herself hereafter as Lady St. Lawrence.

To this epistle Alicia had sent a brief answer, acquiescing in the implied sentence of banishment, as grounded upon her resignation of the distinguished lot once offered to her; yet declining to unveil reasons for a conduct which she knew exposed her to the suspicion of caprice. She closed by taking a respectful but not undignified leave of her gay acquaintance.

Two other letters, entitled of condolence, but in fact atrocious productions of malignant curiosity, came successively from Lady Charles Everleigh, who chose to fancy the first had miscarried; insolently believing it impossible for a private gentlewoman to be so very impertment as leave a letter of Lady Charles Evercia math shuder rebuke than silence in the least in special

Letters like these, apparently speaking the sentiments of half-fashionable London, were the sharpest trial of Alicia's gentle submission. She seemed called upon to vindicate both herself and Lord St. Lawrence from the most absurd or most odious suppositions. Many unfounded, and some partly correct ones, were circulating; others of a cruel kind (such as her lying in wait for the Marquis of Ullswater, and Lord St. Lawrence having taken fright at the family involvements) were retailed, when charitable interpretations were not registered. In truth, the activity of evil natures is lamentably superior to that of ordinary good ones; and now, as in the complete crush of her family, Alicia was tempted to believe all the world, save a very few, cruel or kindless. Longer experience was to teach her, that insult and outrage will rush in where delicacy and benevolence would wait; where the most earnest wish to relieve and sympathise would be checked by the fear of intrusion or of misinformation: that many, very many, would do the utmost good, if they knew but how and when to do it.

Some obvious kindness was certainly shown the Barrys. Sir Luke Ponsonby wrote from Cheltenham, lamenting "his own rack-and-manger affairs," but proffering a hundred pounds whenever his old friend's widow might be absolutely aground for such a sum, and chose to apply for it to his banker. Two or three other Irish gentlemen cordially invited the whole Barry family to take up their residence with their own wives and daughters, till such time as Mr. Boyle and Mr. Marcus should bring things round. Servants refused their wages, and tenants distrained themselves to bring " a few pounds to the mistress and the dear young cratur that the English Lord had kilt." But these few kindly acts were drops of water poured into the empty bed of a sea; even the persons that offered them, guessed not the utter destitution of the family.

The hopeless ruin of Colonel Barry's affairs was, indeed, a secret for the present known only to lawyers and moneylenders, however suspected by tradesmen and neighbours. Mrs. Barry, clinging to every plank, was supported by the false hope of receiving a sufficient remittance by the return of the Jamaica mail which had taken out the news of her husband's death, to redeem her diamonds; and these entirely parted with (horrid as was the thought), she trusted would allow her to go abroad in some style of elegance, -tradesmen, of course, waiting out the twelvemonth. There, if Lord St. Lawrence were no longer to be thought of, Alicia's beauty might rebuild the fortunes of her family.

In this specious hope, Mrs. Barry became more and more solicitous to throw a veil over her distresses, that her consequence might not be destroyed; and to soothe rather than upbraid Alicia, that she might restore that bloom to the latter's face, and that roundness to her form, which were no longer there. A

few weeks had done the work of years. Among the mortifications her poor daughter was obliged to submit to, was that of personally conversing with creditors, who refused reference to an agent. Hard selfishness brought one, mere impertinent curiosity a second, absolute necessity a third. The last two classes' were not difficult to deal with, although many a tear of regret for putting off the necessitous man, fell from Alicia's eves after they were gone. But claimants of the first kind (especially one of them) not unfrequently shocked her, either by the most unfeeling censures of her father's memory, or by rude remarks upon her reported great marriage; sometimes by an insinuation, that if it had been broken off by the gentleman, the law would recompense her in a way that might satisfy every creditor. Sufferings like these, our poor heroine endeavoured to receive as trials she ought cheerfully to bear, since she was in some measure the cause of the present family poverty. But there were times, when, quite wearied,

she felt ready to sink down and yield up the useless struggle, not only against circumstances, but herself.

This hopelessness grew out of her dismay at human character. Every hour now appeared to make new discoveries to her of the most sorrowful nature. While settling the terms upon which Castle Barry was to be let, and calculating its probable returns to her mother, she found that, at the most extravagant rate, the rent would be insufficient to pay the interest of the money already raised upon it; and when to this was added the name of the person who held the mortgage, her very heart was crushed.

Until now, she had merely heard the mortgage-holders talked of by that title. The persons acting for them were named, indeed, and frequently, but she knew neither of them: on this occasion, she was shown a document which proved that the Reverend Jocelyn Hastings had lent her father six thousand pounds upon the Castle Barry estate. The parchment

nearly dropped from her hand as she saw that name so registered.

Jocelyn Hastings ! - Could he deliberately traffic in the merchandize of other men's necessities? Could he not only have taken the one mortgage, but through his English friend's agency purchased the other when it was offered for sale, as Mr. Boyle assured her? Hastings who had represented himself as poor, and whom she had honoured for his virtuous, may, noble poverty. What appalling disagreement between profession and practice! and how unjustly had she sometimes exalted his character, even above the man's she loved, when forced to see the latter's feeble resistance to his natural frailties! Was she not rebuked for the presumption of similar judgments, by this lesson, which must convince her that the same selfishness prompts to secret basenesses in cold-blooded hearts, as hurries the slave of warmer passions into open and flagrant sin.

This, however, was not the moment for yielding to any new shock. Alicia

violently wrested back her attention to the most important part of the subject, its connection with her mother's distresses;—and turning to Mr. Boyle, faintly uttered her hope that the interest upon both mortgages had been duly paid.

What was her additional horror to find, that although Mr. Hastings's share, at first, did not yet entitle him to make more than a half year's demand, he must claim on the score of his recent purchase to a large amount. The arrears due to the original bond-holder were of an alarming extent. The difficulty of recovering these, together with information of the impracticability of putting Irish law in force, when defied by an unprincipled debtor, had induced the person in question to sell his share at a public mart for so inconsiderable a sum, that it had tempted Mr. Hastings's friend to purchase the whole mortgage for him.

From the way in which Jocelyn Hastings's name was inserted in the lawpaper, it seemed as if he must have got a living in England, and was there, per-

haps, at this period. Alicia, however, would not ask; she was determined not to tell her mother the painful discovery she had made, for fear Mrs. Barry should insist upon his forbearance being solicited; a degradation to which she felt she could never submit, " fallen as he now was from his high estate? in her thoughts. She therefore bounded herself to requiring from Mr. Boyle a promise that he would leave nothing undone to let her beloved home at the highest rate, and to pay off, as quickly as he could, by instalments hereafter, those grievous arrears. Yet more, she exacted of him, that no particular mention of herself and her family should be made in his letters of business to Mr. Hastings's acting agent, nor any other favour asked of him than what several other demandants had granted, namely, that of desisting from useless applications for twelvemonths to come. Having made this arrangement, she quitted the man of law for sad and solitary rumination. The series of the series

In thinking over the secret transaction

between her father and her early playmate, our heroine felt the sure comfort which is treasured up for us under certain evils, by long acquaintance with the characters of those who may appear to pain us knowingly, or to deserve our aversion, through bad conduct. She was conscious to such a firm conviction of Jocelyn Hastings's sincerity in good, that, the shock of a first bewilderment over, she found her confidence in him unshaken. It had not been so with her credence of the story against Lord St. Lawrence; for him she had known only a few short months, in scenes and under influences calculated to throw a transitory brightness over any character; and every thing relating to him was too likely to bribe her judgment out of its integrity. She now reflected, that her father must have applied to Hastings, as appeared by the date of the mortgage, at the time in which her marriage was first proposed; that probably they had kept up some friendly correspondence before, although it had not pleased her father to say so to

his family; and that if Jocelyn Hastings had possessed the means, or had applied to his patron-friend for them, his assistance of Colonel Barry was certainly a kindness, and might not be a venality. If Sir Richard West had advanced the money for his son's faithful guardian, it would of course be Hastings's duty to accept due security upon the Barry estate; — nay, the gentlemanly spirit of the Colonel would make him insist upon giving it.

Thus Jocelyn might be cleared; and he was cleared. Alicia felt that to find him only a specious show, would be to strike at the root of all her earthly affections, and all her hopes in brother, sister, friend, even self! From childhood to manhood his faults and virtues had been as well known to her as her own; and if she could be thus mistaken in him, how was she to calculate upon any one? Peace came with the thought; but not the wish of applying to him further in their necessities. The delicacy of her situation with regard to Lord St. Law-

rence would have prevented such a step, independent of her desire to retain some remnant of family respectability by avoiding fresh obligations, and rather enduring privations than publishing their wants and her father's imprudences. Mr. Boyle's application was favourably answered; the friend acting for Mr. Hastings cheerfully agreed to abstain from requesting any payments, so long as the business remained in his hands; but stated that the latter was expected in England very soon with his young companion (who chose to return for a favourite sister's marriage), and that, consequently, Mr. Hastings would then choose, probably, to act for himself.

It would be vain to say that Alicia did not read this account with joyful emotion. To hear that even one friend of other days, was drawing nigh, and, probably, with the same disinterested and warm regard as formerly, was comfort. Although it did not become them to seek him, he might seek them; and his advice, given by letter to her mother, as to

their men of business, might essentially benefit the future fortunes of Marcus. No tenant as yet had offered for Castle Barry; but the Jamaica remittance was earnestly looked to, for the means of getting to the continent, where Mrs. Barry was resolute to go, instead of to "horrid, dismal Scotland," and where her careworn daughter now began to apprehend that she and Flora would be forced to turn their talent for drawing and fine works, to account, to obtain subsistence for a time.

What a prospect for her, who had so lately been the grace and glory of the highest circles!—for her, who had gone about like an idol hung round with the votive tributes of worshippers!—of her, who had so lately stood in the splendid houses of a British peer, conscious that they, and every advantage belonging to them, were to be given her by his generous hand! Alicia was a young and a soft-hearted human-creature; she felt reverses and humiliations as it is natural to do; and she mourned that so many of

them were but the consequences of the misconduct of persons she loved. Rivers of tears, therefore, flowed down her cheeks at the dead of night, when her spirit seemed deserted even by the ministering angel, and nothing present to it except the sense of destitution and desolation.

It was well that she had now broken every link with the London world: she no longer read of it even in newspapers, for she no longer saw any. Three months had passed since she quitted England, and, like other bright wonders, she would have been forgotten long before that, had not the curiosity excited by Lord St. Lawrence's proceedings, and her subsequent reverse of fortune, re-called notice to her fate.

With due respect for the awful region of fashion, it may be affirmed that no story is too extravagant to be disbelieved, or rather not circulated there. Exaggeration, both of the ridiculous and the pathetic, is absolutely necessary to attract the attention of persons hurrying

along in joyous troops over the fields of

pleasure.

It was gradually discovered that no one heard from Lord St. Lawrence, and no one saw him upon the Continent; that is, he was in none of the capitals and at none of the baths. Lady Anne Aubrey had almost entrenched herself in her country-house, refusing to admit acquaintance, and requesting her friends never to introduce the subject of her nephew or Miss Barry. Upon these facts a titled romance-writer immediately erected a most imposing story. Upon her authority it was whispered that Lord St. Lawrence and Miss Barry had turned out to be brother and sister, therefore could not marry-(no one cared what became of poor Mrs. Barry's character meanwhile). Lord St. Lawrence had put himself out of the world, to a certainty. In what manner? was the quest tion agitated. The original inventor of the tale asserted he had shot himself; but the greater number inclined to the opinion of his having turned Roman

Catholic, and shut himself up in the monastery of La Trappe.

To match this tragedy, one of a humbler character was imagined for Alicia. No sooner had the Honourable Mr. Donovans reported the sale of Colonel Barry's horses and carriages, and that Castle Barry was to be let, than the sentimental Miss Montressor fabricated a pathetic description of Mrs. Barry and her daughters almost in rags, in a mud-cabin, "entirely reduced, living upon potatoes and peat." A less plaintive narrator described Mrs. Barry keeping a school, and the pretty Miss Barry going out into the world as a nursery-governess.

Every body was "very sorry" and "very shocked;" but "it was so impossible not to laugh at Miss Montressor's mistake of peat for something eatable! and so comical to fancy all those fine wedding-dresses worn for want of money to buy plain stuffs and cottons, in an Irish cabin! Poor Miss Barry! with that figure and complexion, and such

dresses, she must really look like a painted strolling actress!"

The last entertaining idea was never traced further than to a small coterie at Lady Charles Everleigh's, where, by the way, both Lord Lewis Rivers and Lady Donnington were of the party; it was, however, received with unbounded applause far beyond that circle, and served for the foundation of the last report, that Miss Barry was coming out upon the Irish stage under a feigned name. Two or three men of a certain character crossed over to Dublin immediately afterwards in consequence.

Which of these accounts was correct might be a question; but no one could doubt that Lord St. Lawrence and Miss Barry would never be united. It is true the former had at last been seen,—positively seen,—in a boat, rowing to a ship off Marseilles. Where could Lord St. Lawrence be going except to Greece? No: the vessel was said to be bound for the new world, and Lord St. Lawrence was pronounced mad.

How many persons absolutely believed any one of these fictions, and how many grieved to fancy they might be true, is vain to enquire. It may not be doubted, that all who merited the nobility which graced, or the fortune which blessed them, bestowed the meed of a generous and honouring pity upon both the sufferers; and that many, very many, there were, who wanted only the privilege of former intimacy with the forlorn Alicia, to come forward with sympathy and succour; and who now (little known as she was to them, save by outward conduct,) suffered no history about her to pass unscrutinised, and no levity with her name to go unrebutted. one but a witten product

Lady Donnington was not wholly without human feeling, even when she could not resist the temptation of being extremely entertaining upon the subject of her pretty friend. She wrote most graciously to Alicia again, professing the "utmost horror" at learning "how shockingly things were left;" begging to know fairly how they were situated; and whether

they would dislike her setting about a subscription fancy-ball for their advantage? If they did not, they must write and tell her whether they would wish it to be done directly at Cheltenham (which luckily was full of people she knew), or would wait till the London season, when people and purses would be more abundant. - In either case, the particular objects of her interest, she said, need not be named to more than half-a-dozen leading women of fashion: - their patronage and her own would be quite certain of producing two thousand pounds; and after that, as she was "dreadfully poor just then," she " really could do no more."

The natural rising of a young heart while perusing this coarse proposal may be imagined, and might not be undeserving of pardon. There is a decent pride which is not inconsistent with Christian humility: it protects the spirit of independence; and urges both to the practice of self-denial, and of honest industry. It belongs to the noblest natures; and is often called into exercise by unwilling-

ness to owe obligation where gratitude cannot be coupled with esteem.

Alicia could not find in Lady Donnington's letter either the language of friendship, or of a more generalised sensibility: - the projected mode of assistance was proposed as unceremoniously as the writer would have thrown alms to a vagrant beggar; and coming in this early season of their pecuniary want, only roused Mrs. Barry's latent capacity of resentment. - She was amazed and indignant. Flora's keen feelings made her look upon the whole thing as an insult. Alicia knew Lady Donnington better: it was the same cold matter-of-fact character she had so often shrunk from, under different circumstances; and she could not wonder that her former intimate should at once treat her with the ungentle patronage she had more than once seen her displaying towards others of equal pretensions, and greater distresses. Lady Donnington gave no ideal value to any thing or any body: - she would always have seen in the exiled Bourbons, only a set of poor, wretched

emigrants. Her letter, of course, was answered as it merited; yet without deceit or disrespect. Alicia knew how to thank for a kind intention, even while declining to draw upon her late chaperon's friendship for a single word of advice, or to enter into any farther statement of their family affairs than that they must necessarily remain entangled until her brother appeared. To his return, indeed, her thoughts were turned invariably whenever she looked to human aid. Although the secret of his numerous English debts was now unveiled to her, marking his past imprudence, she fondly trusted he was awakened to a sense of such dishonourable indifference to character, and would repair its evils by future anxiety for the family welfare. Yet, alas! he was far away; his returning at all was doubtful. Several months must pass before he could arrive; and she must either have sunk under, or struggled through many a wave, long ere that wished-for period.

Convinced from Lady Donnington's

epistle that the whisper of Colonel Barry's involved circumstances was no longer a whisper, Alicia could scarcely doubt that it had reached Lady Anne Aubrey, and, through her, Lord St. Lawrence. Although she would have refused the help of either, it must be owned she felt with distempered sensibility their utter neglect. At times she fancied it would be wise in her to accept it as a proof that, whether or not cleared in his reputation, Lord St. Lawrence meant not to seek a renewal of their engagement. Yet she feared to injure both him and herself by acting upon such an imagination. It was probable, that if determined to break with her, whether from resentment or a consciousness of guilt, he might have forbidden all mention of her name in the letters of his correspondents; or his high-minded aunt, mortally offended by a second act of hesitation on Miss Barry's part, or doubtful herself of her nephew's truth, might resolve to remain quiescent. Alicia was just enough to admit that there was sufficient mystery in this second break

between her and Lord St. Lawrence to authorize Lady Anne in a dread of interference; especially as the involved circumstances of the Barry family might render the reality of her attachment and their disinterestedness very suspicious. She strove, therefore, to forget every thing in England except Lord St. Lawrence himself. His image, indeed, could not be banished, even though it no longer came in that brightness which ensures a heart-welcome. His total silence, however accordant with his character of impetuous determination, and with her own injunction, appeared ominous of change or unworthiness. In every way she was tortured with apprehension and disappointment. The newspapers announced the loss of the packet from Rio Janeiro, by which she had expected Mrs. Beresford's second letter, leaving now no other hope than the slender one of the same details having been sent by some aftermail. She herself had long ago transmitted to her friend abroad the story of Lorenza Castelli, as Lord St. Lawrence

had required her to do; and until she should receive some satisfactory notice of this communication, she refrained from pouring out her present afflictions, for fear of giving Mrs. Beresford the useless pang of knowing the calamitous state in which they were left, and the consequent misery from which a fortunate marriage must have saved them all.

Six or seven months would terminate the five years of Mr. Beresford's official exile. With him would return his wife, his children, and the excellent Mr. McManus; and Mount Pleasant would again be inhabited by the friends of other days. Alicia often talked with Flora of this coming period, endeavouring cheer each other with the hope, that, at the worst, perhaps they might be enabled to take a smaller house in the neighbourhood of Castle Barry and of those beloved persons. Of brighter hopes connected with Lord St. Lawrence, or with Flora's anticipated restoration of some link with Jocelyn Hastings, she would not suffer herself to discourse; dreading the

agitation such subjects roused; afraid of indulging, and afraid of attempting wholly to extinguish, that exclusive preference for the former, which he might hereafter re-appear to claim and to hallow.

At present, however, her business was to prevent a public exposure of the family ruin, by quieting violent claimants, and providing a sufficient fund for her mother to go abroad until the period of Mr. Barry's return. The first part of this task in some degree depended upon Alicia's individual exertions; the latter, upon the success of a speculative bargain entered into by Colonel Barry when he was quitting Jamaica. If the scheme had turned out a prize, Mrs. Barry might at least expect a remittance large enough to release her diamonds for after sale. Indeed, Mr. Boyle thought this good fortune so probable (being a sanguine man of shallow understanding), that Alicia's heart opened to something of the same confidence; and she went about her first labour with grateful alacrity.

All the persons with whom she had to act, felt that she was sincere and honest; they neither met with insolence nor abjectness from her; she was abashed, indeed, and sorrowful: but it was because her modest beauty could ill brook the unmeasured gaze of so many strange eyes, and because she lamented the pecuniary difficulty to which her very suit for indulgence might subject another. She appealed to their justice, when she asked them to delay until her father's affairs could be taken out of such incompetent hands as those of his widow and daughters, and placed in that of his male heir. No one could long continue resisting such a petitioner; and every creditor, except only a wine-merchant, then in London, on his way from Bourdeaux, gave the consent desired. He was indeed a creditor to a large amount; but as a tenant offered for Castle Barry, by which some sort of income would be derived to the various claimants, it was not possible to imagine that this person would throw any obstacle in the

way, by refusing to join the general agreement of forbearance.

Every feeling which would otherwise have arisen to tear the hearts of Alicia and Flora at the contemplation of leaving their beloved home to strangers was overcome by anxiety to get away, when they learnt from Mr. Boyle, that if the wine-merchant continued relentless, their mother's personal liberty might be endangered. Such a catastrophe must have given the death-blow to family respectability; and, Flora thought, to all hope of her sister's marriage with Lord St. Lawrence. After such disgrace, could he be expected to seek a re-union with them? Both sisters, therefore, exceeded their mother in perturbed watching for the Jamaica packet. It came, and the desired letter, together with others, appeared on the same day. The Jamaica letter brought expressions of condolence and concern to the widow, but no remittance; nor could any be promised by a succeeding mail. Mrs. Barry could

not, then, get out of Ireland to avoid their vindictive creditor. If he should refuse to wait for a future arrangement - if he should resort to harsh measures - what would become of them? Even a single hundred pounds would in this extremity have been a blessing. To suffer shame and loss for want of that small sum, was like going down within sight of shore. Alicia instantly thought of Sir Luke Ponsonby's offered kindness: there was a throb of bitter anguish in her heart as she did so, but she felt it ought to be conquered; and, faintly smiling as she cheered her lamenting mother with the mention of his name, she turned to the other letters.

The last cruel disappointment, together with every apprehension consequent upon it, was swallowed up in the shock they were now to receive. Misery crowded upon misery. Marcus Barry was no longer in life! He had fallen in a battle with the Burmese, long before he could hear of his father's death; and the letter which communicated this sad event gave

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a tribute to his gallant conduct in the

Such repeated blows of misfortune are not uncommon. Every one's experience must remind him that a wise Providence often deals thus with his creatures; emptying the quiver of our appointed trials at once, and so giving the latest arrows to strike us, only when former ones have exhausted the sense of pain. The one deal

Mrs. Barry was now stricken indeedstruck to the earth. All her springing hopes had rested upon her son's return, both for her own sake, and for Alicia's future fate with Lord St. Lawrence. Frivolous selfishness was for the time annihilated, and the mother did convulse both her features and her heart. Her distracted daughters wound their arms round her with an agony of filial tenderness never felt by them before to such excess: they stifled their own grief to soothe hers; and if they could not forbear mingling tears and sobs with their pathetic entreaties that she would try to live for their sakes, they yet strove to speak principally of trust in the ultimate goodness of Him who afflicted them.

Mrs. Barry did not show any impatience of such consolations, as she was wont to do upon other occasions; although she seemed long incapable of deriving benefit from them. Her spirit she avowed to be completely broken, so that she cared not what became of herself, nor whether she were doomed to remain at Castle Barry, and take the fate that was ordained her. Light and sanguine tempers always seem completely crushed under the weight of sudden disappointment: they may and do recover from the effects of the blow sooner than spirits of firm endurance, who strive to act while suffering; but for the time their whole faculties appear stunned for ever. Mrs. Barry's was of that nature; and for many days her afflicted children were solely engrossed by the hopeless task of rousing her into any interest for them or for herself. she that she flerred for

The sisters' tears streamed, for their brother's loss and their own forlornness,

in silence and solitude; yet had they scarcely leisure to conjecture whether he had begun to live as worthily as he had fallen; for one, at least, had much to do; and both had more causes for secret sorrow than they chose to overwhelm their mother with.

The news of Mr. Barry's death in India threw confusion into every previous arrangement; tradesmen and bondholders, who would have abided faithfully by their first engagement, now became alarmed lest their lenity should injure themselves, without benefiting the family of Colonel One resolute claimant might sweep off every remnant of property. The dreaded wine-merchant had indeed written from England the most decided refusal of uniting in the humane measures of his fellow-creditors; and as Mr. Boyle had succeeded in letting Castle Barry to a general officer's family who were coming from England, he urged the departure of Mrs. Barry as quickly as possible.

Alicia found it very difficult to rouse her mother out of her listless sadness without hazarding new violence of feeling by telling her the risk she ran of forfeiting her personal liberty. She therefore tried to win her into fixing a day for their journey to Cork, whence they meant to sail (for cheapness) direct to a French port. Mrs. Barry's draft upon Sir Luke Ponsonby's banker had been instantly honoured, and that duly, gratefully acknowledged, Alicia became impatient to agony of any further delay. Her own spirits had been in a degree cheered by a letter from Lady Lilias Vavasour; which, though it contained only such expressions of true sympathy in her friend's reported reverses as might be offered by a kind heart incapable of offering other comfort, was balsamic to Alicia's, bruised and bleeding as it was from many others' unkindness. She understood from certain passages in this letter, that her generous friend had many battles to fight for her on account of her disunion with Lord St. Lawrence. and that she did not comprehend the extent of their family ruin. She felt also

that Lady Lilias's parents did not wish a continuance of their intercourse; and, sighing deeply at the thought, she put the letter by, grieving that she might not, with honour to Lord St. Lawrence, give the explanation her friend had earnestly and confidently requested.

Mrs. Barry had just given her consent to set out for Cork, and wait the sailing of a vessel there destined for Bourdeaux, when every plan was defeated, every hope blasted, by the seizure of Castle Barry itself, and an execution upon its furniture. The first seizure was made in right of the mortgage; the latter by way of equivalent for the arrears.

The scene consequent upon this shock was too grievous for long description. Mrs. Barry and Flora heard for the first time the name of the ungrateful serpent (as the former called him) to whom her husband's property was forfeited: Flora loudly persisted in disbelieving it, until her sister's gasping assurance of its being too true struck her speechless. Mrs. Barry's feelings and senses were all alive

again. Indignation had roused her; and never before had she so powerfully and continuously exhaled irritated imaginations in words of equal energy. She raved of past deception or present revengeful malice as exerted by Jocelyn Hastings; referring to her former knowledge of his attachment to Alicia, yet with such incoherency and wildness, that, if her children heard it, they set the accusation down to temporary delirium.

One of them certainly affixed no rational meaning to her mother's words. Alicia, who alone had borne up under every preceding shock, sunk under the present, not from any remnant of that early prepossession for Jocelyn Hastings which had once lurked within her, unknown to herself, and which another affection had entirely effaced; but from horror of the ruins she saw round her, fancying her hand had pulled them down. In the distempered agony of the moment, it seemed to her that every thing she had meant for the best had turned out ill. Whenever she had striven to conceal one

trouble from her mother, for the sake of shielding her feebler spirit, another had grown out of the very concealment, as if to teach her that, in some awful cases, Providence wills his judgments to fall unobstructed upon certain heads fated to receive them; and that there may be something of impiety in attempting to interpose between the bolt and the victim. She had tried to spare both her mother and sister the useless pang (presumptuous indeed that term) of knowing their early friend's probable mercenariness, and now they were overwhelmed with a discovery of his ruthlessness in addition. She had struggled against her own inclination, and obeyed conscience, when she refused to treat Lord St. Lawrence either as a lover or a friend until he returned free from the foul charge against him; and directly after such selfconquest, her family fortunes had fallen into that destruction which only his generous love could repair.

In the immediate grasp of such feelings as these, Alicia could not remember that

the severest calamities may be trials rather than chastisements; warnings of mercy, instead of punishments. In this desolate hour, she fancied herself Heaven-condemned and deserted; her reason clouded, and she saw every thing dark, because inward light was withdrawn.

Since her brother's death, she had more than once meditated appealing to Mr. Hastings's former regard, for counsel as a friend, and forbearance as a creditor; but she had as often shrunk from the humiliating task with a mixture of pride and delicacy. Now she felt the consequences of her cowardice. Had she obeyed that right suggestion of unbiassed judgment, Mr. Hastings might have at least consented to what others did. She felt all the horror of his sordidness as thus displayed; but even the pang of bitter conviction that he was base-minded, was trifling in comparison of what she endured while arraigning herself. For some time she sate motionless and torpid where the shock had first found her; then upon some rousing attempt by Mr. Boyle to make her comprehend that she must rise and remove from the house, she fell to the ground, recovering from successive fainting fits only to feel with a sensation of relief that she was again losing the sense of suffering in blessed oblivion.

Mrs. Barry was perforce stopped in her loud grief, both by Mr. Boyle's presence (who had been hastily summoned) and by her daughter's incapacity to act. The sight of that daughter utterly bereft of power, alarmed her maternal as well as personal fears: the disgrace and misery of their actual situation was lost in terror lest she should never recover her intellect. And when at length she saw her unhappy child standing and breathing, though for a long time with as little semblance of life as a marble image, her entreaties that she would not abandon herself to despair, were mixed with promises of struggling henceforwards against her own weakness deingnitze s'aioil A

Flora, tearless and aghast, glided in ghost-like silence and swiftness in every

direction, as Mr. Boyle prompted, for their quicker removal: sorrow for her sister's state was bound up in the amazement of their principal grief: every faculty she possessed was intent upon the one great object of getting from this scene of distress and shame. Mr. Boyle continued talking of the effect a public seizure of property would produce upon the other creditors, stimulating both mother and daughters to shelter themselves from further mischief by flying to the Isle of Man, to which a vessel was providentially going to sail from the port of Wexford almost immediately. There was no alternative: delay might risk every thing. It was known that Mrs. Barry meant to embark at Cork for France; and if any creditor wished to arrest her person, by taking a different course, and going to the sanctuary island, their merciless scheme would be frusmises of struggling henceforwards, batartt

Alicia's extinguishing faculties blazed up for a moment, as if only to comprehend and assent to this proposal, when repeated

by her mother, then sank again into frightful stillness. She made no opposition to any movement or any minor proposal; while her poor sister, now tasked to act as she had done heretofore, went about stifling those appeals against Lord St. Lawrence and Jocelyn Hastings, which her impassioned nature longed to utter.

The world, indeed, seemed altogether odious; and since Jocelyn Hastings was proved vile, false, hollow, and hateful,—he whom she had always thought so excellent,— criminal as Lord St. Lawrence had been, his worst-reputed act appeared white, when compared with the blackness of their early favourite's! The one had the excess of ordinary passions to plead in his excuse; the other sinned in cold blood against every principle he professed and taught.

Flora's tongue did not utter these sentiments; but her distractedly-expressive eyes, her convulsed lips, her hurried voice and wild movements, while hastening on the preparations for quitting a home

whence they were driven, proved that she too, like her sister, had received a shock never to be forgotten.

Mr. Boyle did not slacken his efforts, until he had taken the unfortunate family, as if by force, from the midst of old servants and poor dependents gathered in haste to deprecate their departure. Alicia sate still tearless in the sorry chaise which was to carry them, most likely, for ever from the home of her infancy. She vielded her hand to the kisses and clasps of many an aged pensioner, scarcely sensible to the tears which accompanied their prayers over that death-cold hand. Flora threw herself back in the carriage, unable to bear the sight of what she was leaving. Mrs. Barry sobbed hysterically, mingling lamentations for herself with kind farewells to the people around. was evening when they left Castle Barry, and when one of them looked back to catch a last glimpse of the place which she had refused to look at while driving from its door, the twilight, deepened by a rising mist from the lake, blotted out

all its features. "So cloud our fortunes!" the poor girl said to herself, as she fell back once more into the corner of the chaise with the sigh of hopeless resignation.

The Manks trader did not sail before daybreak; Mrs. Barry had therefore time to refresh herself and her daughters at a secondary inn, ere they embarked on their distressful voyage. Ghosts, entering the ferry-boat of Charon, could not have looked more abandoned of human aid and human hopes. Only one servant accompanied them, - a faithful drudge, hitherto little regarded by Mrs. Barry, except as a supernumerary remnant of the nursery establishment; one of those affectionate creatures, who, from mere attachment and lively gratitude, are as impossible to be beaten away as an attached dog, and who are as sure of receiving many a fond caress from the children they have seen grow into men and of the coarse merchandize in winemow

With something of cruel caution, Mr. Boyle had maintained the propriety of

choosing an attendant incapable of transmitting intelligence of their abode to creditors, who might be painfully troublesome by application, though aware nothing more efficient was left to them; and old Lettice was therefore chosen, because she could neither read nor write. Her joys at this preference was animated enough to overpower, for a while, her sorrow at witnessing the desolation of her master's family; and her active services during a tempestuous passage of some days, while beating about from contrary winds, were of a nature to warm those young hearts which the base desertion of others had chilled. But, except at moments, not one of that exiled family could yet feel any thing like pleasure. They were in a small fishing-smack, crowded with the worst sort of passengers; persons flying from their creditors, surrounded by noise and noisome smells, and cumbered even in their sleeping-cabin with parcels of the coarse merchandize in which the little vessel oecasionally traded. It was not until they were settled in a poor lodging (for which they paid extravagantly dear), near the town of Douglas, where Mr. Boyle recommended them to go, that any one of them could recover that undistracted state of mind which enables us to see clearly what we have lost.

The residence they had fallen upon was, in truth, not calculated to gladden thoughts previously saddened. It was a low, coarse, stone cottage, bare without of any embellishment afforded by trees, and destitute of decent accommodation within. It was taken by Mrs. Barry because it was the only vacant one out of the town, and because it could not contain other lodgers than herself and daughters.

When Flora first looked out from its shutterless windows upon the hazy stretch of sea in front, and the dim line of English coast beyond, covered with a veil of drizzling rain—then turned and looked towards the bleak Snafield in the centre of this joyless island—her home, her dear and different home, pressed with an agony of recollection upon her heart:

she withdrew her eyes from the outward scene only to find her mother entirely overcome by the internal discomfort of

their two miserable apartments.

Lettice was hastily trying to kindle a fire in the cold grate, with wet coal of the very worst sort (charged at the highest rate): a clumsy ill-cleaned table stood in the middle of the parlour, covered with their packages and sea-cloaks. Alicia was passively sitting upon one of the trunks, as if instinctively shunning the tattered horse-hair chairs. Mrs. Barry, with clasped and lifted hands, stood speechless. Rushing from the window, poor Flora dropped upon her knees by her mother's side, suffocating her sobs and sighs in the latter's garments. Alicia turned her heavy eyes towards her sister, and seeing her attitude, said, with fearful composure, "That is right!—Pray, Flora, pray!-I cannot."

Flora started up at her voice, and quitting the place she was in, hastened to her; she flung her arms round her waist; and her own grief burst forth in repeated passions of tears, while calling upon her mother to join with her in imploring Heaven to restore their dear Alicia's strength of mind and submission of soul.

Alicia as repeatedly sealed her lips upon the bent head of Flora, who continued lying sobbing on her neck, not unwilling to rouse, by her own unrestrained sorrow, the dormant sensibility of her sister. But Alicia could neither weep nor speak, yet was her capacity of keenest suffering awakening fast: she was thinking that they were now cut off, perhaps eternally, from every former tie, hope, and possession: they were all of the helpless sex; their natural protectors were removed from them by death - other friends by alienation: they were hurried from their country into degrading exile by a mere man of business, who might cease to exert himself for their restoration when he could no longer look for profit, or even for remuneration. Who now was to stand for them, contend for them, see justice done to them? Alicia's reason almost gave way before such direful reflections, heightened as each was in its power of agonizing by the contrast of what their fates might have been, had she never been taught to doubt the professed principles of Lord St. Lawrence. In sorrowing for her family, better hopes and a higher trust faded in her soul; and without one watchful friend to refresh their blessed images, or exhort her to seek peace in perfect submission, from this afflictive hour she brooded over the dark future with a distempered intensity which, all at once, relaxed into complete deadness. During great domestic calamities, one heart is sometimes left a while to its own natural workings and weakness, as if to make others turn with greater humbleness to the Providence that afflicts them. In the present awful benumbing of Alicia's heart and mind, and sorrowful darkening of every internal consolation, even Mrs. Barry learned to feel that she and Flora had hitherto depended too entirely upon a frail creature like themselves. Flora was brought by such conviction to look for succour to a higher hand, and Mrs.

Barry to see the necessity of doing so. Both were beneficially affected. Who then shall say, their misfortunes were not blessings?

Mrs. Barry, who had formerly been aggrieved when any one spoke to her of resignation, now began to talk of submitting patiently to their present cruel banishment, trusting to Providence for some happy change hereafter. " At present," she said, "they were secured from every-day care, as far as concerned their mere subsistence in the island, by Sir Luke Ponsonby's kind loan: she was more and more thankful for it every hour. If her dear Alicia would but make an effort to recover her fortitude, so that they might all consult together, perhaps something might occur to them likely to expedite the settlement of their ruined affairs; and she meanwhile, for one, would undertake to complain as little as possible of the many dreadful hardships she was obliged to suffer; she, that had all her life been used to every luxury!"

Flora, with deeper tenderness and more enlightened affection, did not verbally join in these supplications, but beguiling her sister daily into air and exercise, and devoting herself to her service, appealed more effectually to her best feelings for a contest with mental and

bodily debility.

It was the beginning of October when the reduced Barry family settled in the neighbourhood of Douglas. As the autumn begins early in that unsheltered island, its principal decoration, the beauty of its productive orchards and fertile pastures, was over. The sisters were rarely tempted to prolong their walk by the stream of the White Water river further than to the ruined convent yet remaining on its bank. There they generally sate down to rest upon one of its moss-grown stones, looking upon the moist grass-lands, yellow, not white, with the coloured sheep of the island. Sometimes they watched the whirling leaves of the low fruit-trees eddying in the shrill autumnal blast, or listened in dejected silence to the monotonous of sea-fowl, the dull washing of waves, and the remote cries of boatmen far out on the waste of waters. More frequently Flora, intent upon rousing her sister by any likely method, would sketch groups of fishers on the sands as they rolled along their barrels of salted herrings, or hoisted the sails of their dark skiffs. Even Collins might not have scorned the incipient genius of sketches which the youthful artist no longer drew for amusement, but with the pious idea of accumulating saleable articles, in case her mother's cruise should never be refilled by other means. Flora often looked at the objects she was drawing, through blinding tears; for if her eye had rested upon Alicia's altered person, the pang was almost beyond endurance.

Beauty ought not to be over-valued

Beauty ought not to be over-valued nor dear for its own sake; but it has its charms, and when it has belonged to a face we love from worthier motives, it cannot be missed there without regret. It is a part of what we fondly prize gone—taken away; its departure tells of suffering and decay; it seems to say, that the being we have admired is changed more widely. Alicia was positively ill, as well as heart-stricken; and as Flora had never before seen any one she loved under the weight of two such evils, nor ever had experience of the buoyant quality of youthful beauty, she believed her sister's blighted for ever. beauty was another trapping of life rent away. The poor girl's awed and dis-ciplined thoughts did not presume to murmur at its loss; she merely mourned that she should behold it no more. the affecting interest inspired by her sister's situation, Flora would, perhaps, have soon forgotten to think she was altered, had she not often been reminded of it by the single circumstance of their being generally passed by, unnoticed by persons of the other sex. Alicia noticed, who had never moved in Ireland or England without following crowds!

In truth, the sisters walked out in large wrapping cloaks and shading bon-

nets, colour gone from their cheeks, light from their eyes, fancy from their dress; their heads inclined, their steps listless, and nothing, in short, about either, to attract attention to the still exquisite beauty of the elder's form and features. It was well, however; for they had their solitudes to themselves.

Every day, therefore, they went to the ruined convent when their mother was laid down, as was her custom, for an hour after their frugal dinner, and every day Flora flattered herself her sister's palsied feelings were recovering sensation and action. A change of expression was perceptible in her countenance at times, whilst her anxious companion was speaking, and once or twice she had sighed with startling heaviness. Any sign of reviving emotion, or rather comprehension of grief, was better than such unnatural torpor as that which had now lasted nearly two months.

They had been thus long on the island,

They had been thus long on the island, when the arrival of a mail-boat without any communication from Mr. Boyle,

from whom alone they could now look for good or bad news of any sort, depressed Flora's spirits to a degree which made her evening walk with her sister an object of unusual desire. She seemed to breathe freer when out of her mother's presence, whose imperfect self-command was not always preserved even before Alicia.

The sisters took their way to their accustomed romantic and ruinous haunt, where, seated upon the trunk of an old tree fallen among the cloisters, in the centre of which it had grown, Flora indulged her sad mood, by repeating to her sister a tale of sorrow, to which she had herself been listening in the morning from old Lettice. It was a story frequent in such places as those; it told of a father, husband, and son all lost to one woman in one night in the same storm. The boat had gone down in her sight, the very night before the Barry family landed. They had escaped that night's tempest, and were peaceably settled in a competent, though humble, home; while this poor widow, oppressed both by calamity and illness, was obliged to labour for her own maintenance.

As Flora pointed out the bereaved mourner upon the sands, calling her sister's attention first to their own merciful preservation, then to that lot of harder trial, Alicia's trembling frame gave token that she was beginning to feel the awful difference of their destinies; to acknowledge with grateful contrition that, if she herself had lost much, she had not lost all; nor was she obliged to toil for her daily bread with a breaking heart, perhaps loathing the very life thus conscientiously supported. Flora, after having narrated this sad history, and sighed at their straitened means of relieving, was looking at her sister with that sorrowful fixedness which tells of such torturing interest in the object gazed upon, when she saw Alicia's eyes gradually suffuse, then flood over entirely, and finally flow down a tide of unburthening tears. She clasped her in her arms at the welcome sight, with an

ejaculation of thanks to God. They wept together some moments without speaking, unconscious what eyes were observing them from a short distance, and what heart's impulse had been checked by their impetuous emotion. Flora's ear was first awakened by the sound of steps among the ruins: she whispered her fear or fancy to her sister, and exciting her apprehension, also, of being invaded by some uncivil stranger, hurried with her out of the place. Even while hastening homewards, Alicia's unlocked soul flowed out in confessions of her late sinful unresistance to the despair which had seized her at Castle Barry, and in assurances that she would, from this hour, be unwearied in asking for strength to contend against such infirmity for the future. The sight of that poor widow had been a volume of admonition to her. How many offences of impatience and rebellion would be avoided if we habituated ourselves to think more of what we have than of what we have not! Alicia had now turned her mental eye

upon the blessings yet left to her; and whispering Flora that she was one of the dearest, hung upon her firmer arm with faintness of strong emotion,

The early autumnal evening was coming on, and the air was so chilly, that the sight of the fire seen through the low windows of the room in which their mother sate was both cheering and welcome to the sisters, as they discerned it from a distance. Every trifling thing left to cheer them was at this moment a cause of gratitude; and Flora noticed this, while expressing with deeper thankfulness her joy at Alicia's re-awakened consciousness to outward objects. Whilst affectionately stopping to fold the cloak closer round her sister's now-fragile form, she heard again the sound of steps; they paused as hers paused; but on her looking back to see who was behind them, some one stepped out from under the shade of a solitary tree by the wayside, and by the uncertain light of the sky, she thought she saw the face of a friend. Instantly recollecting, that, if

she were right, he was not a friend, she gave a shiver of abhorrence, and at-

tempted to hurry Alicia forward.

But Hastings, for it was he who had followed them from the ruin, as rapidly arrested her movement, by exclaiming in a tone of irresistible supplication, "Do not fly from an old friend, Flora, come here purposely to seek you. I know what you think me; but I can explain every thing. I bring a packet from Mr. Boyle."

The enfeebled Alicia, at once consternated and thrilled by the sound of a voice so long unheard, and once fancied to have been heard in a scene never to be forgotten, tottered and sunk against her sister, whom the name of Mr. Boyle had again stopped in her progress. She kept faintly repeating, "Take me away, O take me away!" although neither her own limbs nor Flora's young arm could support her further.

Some logs of wood lay at a short distance, and to these Hastings ventured to lead her in respectful silence. They

sate down, but he remained standing. Without waiting for any question, he directly entered upon his vindication.

A true story rarely requires much telling. The principal circumstances of the one now related, were, that having while abroad given full power to his friendly agent in London to act at his own discretion, in whatever way might hereafter seem best for Colonel Barry's family, in the business of the secured property, Mr. - had resorted to the apparent violence of seizing Castle Barry and its valuables, for the mortgage and the arrears, solely to forestall that dreaded creditor, whom he learnt to a certainty was immediately going from England for the same purpose. The debt to Hastings being of much larger amount than that to any other claimant, he had a right to seize by warrant or execution the forfeited security; and he trusted, without unfairness to others, to dispose of it as feeling and friendship dictated. Something he tried to say, of henceforth retaining it only in ward for its first

possessors, until other creditors had signed those terms of compromise and forbearance which had been suggested to him to propose, and which he believed would surely, though slowly, clear off every incumbrance; but he became agitated by the fear of distressing his equallyagitated auditors, and his embarrassment stopped his utterance.

Who may long question the confusion of a delicate and generous nature, when wishing to help, yet dreading to humiliate? Truth and tenderness came in every tone of that subduing voice; and could the countenance of the speaker have been seen, its undisguised expression of respectful, deep interest, would at once have banished all fear of his sin-cerity. But, alas! Alicia's confidence either in her fate, or her fellow-creatures, had received too severe a wound for sudden alteration. She kept shrinking from him towards her sister, yet preserving her eyes fixed in one direction, as if she could discern his countenance through the gloom, attempted to breathe an enquiry into the circumstances which could have brought her father and him into a business-connection with each other, unknown to the former's family.

Hastings replied to the tone rather than to the broken sentence, when he briefly stated his sight of her in Kensington Gardens, and his subsequent enquiries after the welfare of his early friends ere he embarked for the Continent. He evaded any confession of his private feelings upon the first occasion, which a frank question of Flora's en-dangered, by saying mildly, "I was in every way so unfitted to mix with such society as I saw your sister surrounded by, that I would not claim her acquaintance." All that he might safely tell, he did unreservedly; and as, at the worst, his silence upon one subject only left him chargeable of transiently neglecting the Barrys during their prosperity, this proof that he came to them in their adversity, with an offer of the most efficient friendship, could not but convince one, at least, that he was sterling. Flora,

always precipitate in good or ill, stretched out her hand, and, seizing his, would have kissed it, exclaiming, "Dear, dear Mr. Hastings! I thought you could not be so changed. O do let us hasten to

Alicia, unable to speak from a variety of feelings, occasioned by Hastings's allusion to that memorable day on which he had last seen her, rose with difficulty, in obedience to her ardent sister's movement: her unsteady footing authorized their friend in gently drawing her arm through his, and supporting her onward. She did not resist the action, for the shadows were dispersing in her mind; and the simple question to herself, of why should he seek us in our poverty, if he were mercenary and pitiless? being answered again and again with the same reviving confidence, she began to yield without alarm to the influence of a voice, a touch, a step, which, like the music of former years, restored a thousand sweet remembrances.

When Hastings saw that he had ef-

faced the frightful impression made by the unexplained act of his prompt agent, his own manner tranquillised, while, with a re-assured spirit, he ventured to take the best privilege of friendship, - that which allows us to identify our interests with the fortunes of another. He spoke cheerfully of affairs, which, he said, could only want one male friend to sift the characters of their men of business, to render prosperous; and reverting to his sacred profession, which bound him to the service of every bereaved family, entreated to be henceforth considered as he had been treated during their childhood, - as one of themselves.

Flora's young and yet-unbroken heart bounded to his words. —What gratitude, —what gladness,—what better thankfulness did they not awaken! — What sunshine had burst out upon their darkened family! They that seemed abandoned of every one, and left as if cast ashore on some desert rock! They were spoken to in their wilderness, of hope, comfort, protection — and it was the friend of

days past that came with tidings of peace! Hastings felt by the trembling grasp of Flora's hand as she hung upon his arm, that she welcomed him back to her affections with the warmth of a sister .- What thrills he had to quench at that thought, and what pang to suffocate, need not be told. The object of his deepest, yet most guarded interest, gave no such token of joyful confidence. Alicia clung, indeed, to his arm, because otherwise she could not have proceeded; but it was passively, heavily, like a lifeless thing. Her emotion meanwhile was greater, and less definable to herself, than Flora's: for if Hastings were, in truth, the faithful and disinterested friend he was proving himself, he would be all, nay more, than she had ever thought him. Something within her made her fear to yield unreservedly to bsuch an overpowering sentiment. As they happroached the house, she raised her head for the first time, and putting her hand ointo his, said, in low, faltering accents, Forgive my strange deadness all this time - dear Mr. Hastings. We have

suffered so much lately! — I know I cannot warm into all the joy and gratitude I ought to feel — but I am thankful to you — and to Heaven!"

As her voice extinguished, they were passing the windows of the low parlour in which the sisters had left their mother sleeping: the fire seen through them threw its light upon the party without: in that brief instant Jocelyn Hastings beheld the altered face and figure of Alicia. That colourless face, that depressed figure, that neglected dress, that air of desolation - how did they match with her bloom and brightness when he saw and heard of her in London! - Hastings knew the outline of all that had happened to her; and if he believed her parted for ever from Lord St. Lawrence, it may be affirmed that sorrow was in his gaze, not triumph; - the tenderest commiseration for her - no joy, no hope for himself. He believed she loved Lord St. Lawrence; and he would have poured out his life's blood at that moment, could it have procured for her his return in freedom and honour, and unchanged affections. — If the thought crossed Hastings, that so young, and lovely, and admired a creature was withering, in some degree, from weak regret for the loss of minor sources of pleasure, the thought only deepened his sad pity, and increased his anxiety to restore her, if possible, to that blissful disregard of such vanities as had formerly led him to believe her actuated by unfailing principle:

The motive of the startling sigh, which had burst from him as he saw her in the gleam, was not to be mistaken. Alicia's eye caught the expression of his by the same light; she read in it all that he was feeling; and at that instant, had he been of her own sex, she would have fallen upon the neck of the friend, and wept out her heart, when she saw she was under-

stood and commiserated.

"O Mr. Hastings!" she said, tremulously, as they entered the house together,
"I have been quite deserted — I have thought ill of you too!" books and and the said.

Hastings comprehended of what deser-

tion she spoke: and his earnest answer, breathing that very spirit of charity which she lamented, penetrated a heart already softened with a deeper consciousness of having wronged him, and refused inward consolation.

Afraid of surprising her mother, Flora hastily suggested the propriety of going in first, to communicate the joyful tidings of a friend's arrival, and the motive of his visit: — without waiting reply, she vanished into the small parlour. Alicia and Hastings were left standing in the passage: they were silent a moment or two; at length the former said faintly, with some embarrassment from lingering pride, "You must have the goodness to stay here a few minutes. — We have no other sitting-room than ——"

Hastings suffered the pang of that humbling confession in silence, for it was a pang, even to him:—then telling her that he had previously been to the house, when, finding Mrs. Barry laid down, he followed her daughters, by old Lettice's direction, observed that she

would, from that circumstance, be partly prepared for his appearance; he therefore prayed Alicia to retire and compose her own spirits, while he waited for his summons.

Advancing to the open door as he spoke, he looked out upon the solemn twilight scene, of sea and sky, with their successive and different lights:—stars glimmering in the one, and dull shiplanterns on the other. In another mood, he would have felt the sublimity of a few small objects thus united with immensity:—now his thoughts were intent upon other things; he saw nothing but the vision of Alicia's altered person, when she herself was gone from him: he did not, however, remain long alone, for Flora opened the door of the parlour, and beckoned him in.

Mrs. Barry, the once fine Mrs. Barry, met him with open arms. As he had hoped, the message he had left for her with Lettice, to whom he had endeared himself during childhood, had prepared the way for this interview. Plentiful

tears, of course, were given by the widow and mother to the memories of her husband and son, at sight of a former friend: but present affliction pressed too heavily upon her to be forgotten in what was past. — Thanking Mr. Hastings for not deserting them as others did, she first confessed the cruel effect his supposed severe exaction had produced upon herself and daughters; then poured out a history of all she had endured since, in consequence of Alicia's disjointed engagement and weakened mind.

The detail of what her poor girl had undertaken and attempted for the reduction of their family difficulties, was heard by Hastings with feelings of bleeding tenderness: he had to remind himself, that to another than him belonged the office of taking that wounded lamb to his bosom, and guarding it henceforth from injury and fatigue. Mrs. Barry acknowledged that she might not say why Alicia had sent Lord St. Lawrence from her, or kept him ignorant of their distresses; but as she maintained with re-

viving hopes that the engagement was merely suspended, not dissolved, the heart that had so long combated every struggle of ardent passion, felt the superior necessity of resisting the surer subjugation of

enfeebling tenderness.

Though he listened with patient gen tleness to Mrs. Barry's desultory narrative, frequently grieving at her blindness to the true causes of their misfortunes, he was sometimes consoled by marking the glimmerings of true light, through the darkness of a wayward heart and an unsubdued will. He trusted that adversity had begun the work of improvement in her; but the picture she drew of Alicia's shattered mind and heart, corroborated by the weeping testimony of Flora, smote him to the soul. The wreck of that lovely mortal frame he could bear, fondly as he had delighted to look on it; but any injury to the precious inward principle which had once enjoyed happiness itself, and imparted it to others, was a grief indeed. He said little in the way of comment: saddened looks and deep sighs were the only vouchers of his measureless sympathy.

His own share in this interview was simply that of encouraging Mrs. Barry to rely upon him as a friend upon whom she had an undeniable claim, from various kindnesses shown to him in boyhood. Perhaps Hastings would have been at a loss to say what these kindnesses were, had he been tasked to particularise them: but knowing that he had tasted much happiness in his early years, and that Castle Barry was always prominent in their happiest remembrances, he did not sift himself further: and the person he addressed was well inclined to soften present humiliation, by believing herself accepting in his services a debt of gratitude. In last and listed or oredict

He told her that when he saw by chance in a paper the notice of Colonel Barry's death, he had believed that long ere that event, the family must have gained an affectionate and efficient friend, and Alicia herself a protector for life, in the person of Lord St. Lawrence; that he heard

otherwise only in the letter from his friendly banker, who wrote to ask how he should act with the heirs in regard to the mortgages. Hastings confessed that at such intelligence he foresaw much of what had really occurred, and hastily writing to beg his kind agent would act in the best way for the Barry family, and forget his individual interest, he had gladly accepted his young companion's offer (who was then turning back for England) of speeding forward, and allowing him to part from him at his father's door for any length of time which might be found necessary. What he felt when he learnt the measures into which his acting friend was forced, to save any thing to those he wished succoured, he forbore to dwell on: the agitation with which he briefly noted the circumstance said enough. At Waterford, Mr. Boyle soon directed him where to find persons whom it was evident he then came to serve, not oppress; and to the obvious honesty and zeal of Mr. Boyle, though not to his ability, he now gave merited praise. He further stated, that having legally cancelled his claim to the accumulated arrears of the original amuitant, he retained now only such (that is, the mortgage claim alone) as would enable him rightfully to preserve nominal possession of Castle Barry. In this case, he proposed dividing the income arising from letting it furnished as it stood, between its original owners and the interest due yearly to creditors. Thus the first would have a scanty independence, and the latter a pledge of being wholly paid hereafter.

To effect this last serious object, Hastings ventured to enquire whether, since Marcus's untimely death had left Mrs. Barry full power, she would consent to the sale of all the West Indian property, and some of the extra-ornamental land round their Irish residence, should these sacrifices be indispensable for the sure settlement of her affairs? Other advice than his own, he said, must be resorted to, and for that he would pledge his credit, should his funds not reach. Meanwhile,

he offered the last drops of his present cruise (a few hundred pounds remaining of the 12,000l.) to redeem the diamonds which Mr. Boyle mentioned, and which, if sold completely, would afford a dividend to creditors. Mrs. Barry's natural frivolity spoke in her altered countenance: her profuse and sincere bursts of thankfulness were stopped. She looked down, slowly articulating a sighing ---"Of course - certainly!" Not that she had determinately contemplated the idea of retaining those gauds, which in her blackest hour of misery she had admitted it would be a duty to immolate; but to have the sacrifice again suggested to her, just at the moment in which her light nature had sprung up with rash anticipation of future fortune, was too severe a disappointment. Hastings saw the change, and guessed its cause: he was sorry for herself; but he knew his duty too well to palter with such unworthy selfishness; and in a tone of gentle authority, maintained the necessity for such a proshould his funda not reach. Mesgnibes Flora, who had stayed through this discussion at her mother's desire, no sooner found its main subject brought to a conclusion, than she flew to seek her sister, and to pour into her bosom all that was swelling over in her own. Affection, gratitude, admiration of Jocelyn Hastings, who seemed to her little short of Heaven's commissioned and visible angel, were all there. Again and again she embraced Alicia, calling upon her to join in thanking Providence with every faculty of their souls, both for their preservation from utter ruin, and for the joy of being saved by a once-loved friend! Alicia's deeper, because more comprehensive gratitude to Heaven, had already been pouring out in her solitude, even while imperfectly acquainted with the extent of their obligations to the man whom she had long thought of only to shudder at: she wept out her joy and her contrition upon the neck of her sister; beseeching Flora to let the present blessed change in their situation and their feelings teach her, as she hoped it would do herself,

never to despair of providential interposition. Flora, assenting to the lesson, ventured to whisper, that since one darkened character had been thus miraculously shown to be as bright as ever, another might have the same happy destiny; so that, after every suffering, she might yet see her beloved sister the wife of Lord St. Lawrence. Alicia's hand, as it gave Flora's a convulsive pressure, answered for her. A deep sigh accompanied it.

"Dear, dear sister!" exclaimed the affectionate girl, "oh, what a sigh! I wish I had not named him: — but surely we may hope ——"

"Hope nothing for me, Flora!" Alicia said hurryingly, and in a low voice: hope only for him, that he may deserve the regret with which I shall give him up, if he is proved guiltless. You would not have me take him from the deceived woman who believed herself his wedded wife?" Alicia looked up as she spoke in her sister's face with an expression of firm determination in her fixed eye. The

pang and agitation with which she had spoken at first were gone, and there was a holy calm in her look which awed while it re-assured Flora. Alicia resumed. "The picture of that poor Lorenza has too often pleaded with me against myself not to make me almost wish that she may have been slandered; indeed, without that, I see not how he can be cleared. I admit that it is possible he may re-appear privileged to claim me - but will he claim me? In short, I dare not let myself think of him as I have done: perhaps, now he does not wish it." She turned away her head to hide the tears which began to trickle down her cheeks; but Flora had seen them ere they fell, and tenderly kissing them off, she proposed terminating their agitating conversation by joining their mother and their benefactor. That animating title was not ineffectual: Alicia hastened with brightened looks and a beating heart to seek and thank him to whom it was given. Nature led her first to her mother, from whose extended arms she stretched out

a hand to Hastings, as, smiling through showering tears of many meanings, she called him by every name dear to friendship, and blessed him for renewing her failing confidence in Heaven.

How he took that hand, what he said over it, and whether he did or did not return its animated pressures, he knew not then, or ever. Hastings was no longer himself: he was suddenly awakened to the consciousness that he deceived himself when he called his passion a thing past,—that he ought not to have seen Alicia again under her present circumstances; and he felt alarmed at the temptation to which he had thus exposed his principled resolution.

Some hurried sentences of a happy character were addressed to him by the sisters, which having reference to his late travelling companion and his own progress on the Continent, helped him to recover self-possession. He was replying to these, in the sweet flowing tones so well remembered, and with that intense expressiveness of eye which formed so in-

teresting a contrast to their tempered flow, when Mrs. Barry broke in upon him, by putting an open letter into the hand of her eldest daughter; at the same time sliding the remainder of Mr. Boyle's packet into her pocket, declaring the other letters there should wait till next day, when it would be soon enough for business.

Poor, vain Mrs. Barry! her features were dilated with a pleasure which certainly was not all owing to Hastings. If he guessed this, it was too grievous to him, for many reasons, to be witnessed unmoved: his dark and deeply-speaking eyes, fixed downwards, when called upon to give his testimony to the good heart and great delicacy manifested by the epistle in question.

Alicia ran it over quickly. The sweet surprise which suddenly coloured her cheek, was as delightful as the colouring itself was beautiful; but whatever the emotion was, it did not amount to an overcoming one. Hastings however could not know how this letter affected her at first, for he kept his eyes down, nor raised them until he had mastered his own agitation: by that time her cheeks had faded that face was a waste of snow again.

Whatever new disappointment in the future, apprehensive love had then shaped to itself, need not be enquired into: a moment quenched the fancy. Alicia, with just sufficient sensibility, named Sir Edgar Trevor as one of her few London acquaintance, whose kind remembrance was a pleasure to her; rejoicing now that he should give another proof that the world she had too hastily deemed all composed of heartless crowds, contained many as kind and generous: a tearful, yet timidly-affectionate glance at Hastings, finished what her tongue refused to utter. His whole being was disordered by that look: yet was he the next moment sane enough to know, that it was not the expression of her eyes, but his own emancipating desires, which were thus giving power and meaning to every movement of her face and feelings. He looked

down again; his thrilled blood fixed for the time in every visible vein and artery. Had the world been offered to him for a single word, he could not have spoken one. He felt his folly and weakness; but the present was not the moment for combating them successfully. The fluctuating complexion, sighing voice, and faint, yet agitating smiles of Alicia, were more dangerous to such a heart as Hastings than her meridian of health, happiness, and "But was her beauty gone?" he now questioned himself, recalling the shock he had received when catching a glimpse of her person by the fire-gleam from the parlour window. He could not answer in the affirmative: changed as she was, it was beauty still, though of a different character; to his devoted thoughts, beauty of a finer cast. The youthful cheek, through which every variety of roseate hues had almost sparkled when he last saw it, was now indeed colourless, but as clear as crystal: its stainless transparency seemed only a purer medium for the spirit to shine through: there was a

soft haze also of abiding sorrowfulness over those deep blue eyes, which gave them a tenderer charm. Her figure, certainly, had lost its rounded perfection: but could its grace be diminished, —its lovely outline be destroyed, —its air of virgin modesty be impaired? Hastings felt that he must not look too often upon a face and form which seemed emerging from their ruins, even while he gazed sadly upon them; and resolutely averting his head, he resumed particular attention to Mrs. Barry.

Flora meanwhile, to whom the letter from Sir Edgar Trevor had been transferred by her sister, was now pondering upon its contents. In after years, when events had given her the happiest interest in its writer, that imaginative and ardent heart loved to fancy, that her feeling and her happiness might be dated from this moment. Sir Edgar wrote from a remote quarter in Scotland, where he was with his regiment, and having, after hearing of the Barry-family's temporary difficulties, discovered who was their acting agent,

wrote at once to Mr. Boyle, first profess ing his disinterested interest in Miss Barry from the circumstances under which he had the honour of knowing her; then confessing that, being yet a minor, he could not offer a more substantial proof of friendly purpose towards ther family, than that of freely tendering his credit to guarantee any arrangements made for the settlement of entangled affairs. He had however, he said, 500 pounds at his banker's, which he hoped Mr. Boyle would prevail upon Mrs. Barry to use, either as gift or loan, at her own pleasure: and as he was going upon leave for the next six months to his mother's at Brussels, he prayed that Mr. Boyle's answer might be speedy, if any more efficient way of being useful could be suggested to him. The young hussar, in spite of a little awkwardness of style when he wished to offer the most assistance, and feared to fail in doing it respectfully, had certainly produced a letter highly honourable to his head and heart. The notice of his intended removal abroad,

and the mention of his mother, strengthened the effect of his evident anxiety not to be misunderstood by the person to whom the epistle was addressed; and even Flora, though barely fourteen, could not escape a lively sense of the writer's propriety as well as warm-heartedness. Her flooded eyes, when she laid aside the letter, were reflected by the moistened ones of Jocelyn Hastings, in which generous admiration oftener started a tear than sorrow did. Mr. Boyle having only just received this letter when Hastings first went to him, without imparting its contents, of course, to him, had simply forwarded it by his means to the person most interested in its proposals. In the hurry of gratification and surprise, Mrs. Barry had read it aloud to Hastings, who, had he been consulted then, might not perhaps have placed an epistle of such a nature hastily before Alicia. However, it did not become him to dictate to one he had so powerfully obliged; and Mrs. Barry's delighted impulse had been obeyed. Invoined removal she obtain Animatedly as she admired the strain of Sir Edgar Trevor's letter, Flora confessed herself rejoiced that they were no longer necessitated to accept a stranger's generous help. She was always more grateful, she feared, for an offered benefit than for an accepted one: unless the bestowing hand belonged to a friend like Mr. Hastings, almost thought a brother from the first hour she could remember,

"You shall not bribe me by this pretty flattery out of my old admonitory office, Flora," said Hastings, in a half-serious tone, which the grieved expression of his eyes made wholly so: "you are not to expect me to let such a sentiment as this pass unnoticed. Pride dictated it; that tyrannical sin which has commanded us all, at one time or other. Whenever you give yourself time to examine your own sentiment, you will be ashamed of having mistaken it, perhaps, for a noble one."

Poor Flora coloured scarlet. If there were some mortification, there was more conviction in the glow; and the speaker's instantly-expanding smile vanquished her

momentary displeasure. With intentional revival of her natural vivacity, she then asked whether he chose to transfer his kind right of being their sole friend to Sir Edgar Trevor, or would be content with associating him in the office? Buoyant spirit of youth, which so soon rises to the touch of joy! Hastings answered in the same tone, that he thought the antiquity of his friendship, together with the respectable addition of reverend to his name, was ground enough for him to maintain his station (if possible), keeping a smart, titled young officer quite out of sight.

He looked towards Mrs. Barry as he spoke, and her instant assurance that she would gladly owe all obligation to him, at once decided his future relation to them. She added, that she was particularly desirous of having Sir Edgar Trevor's kind intention acknowledged with the utmost show of consideration for him, in consequence; and that she would, therefore, commission Mr. Hastings with the agreeable duty, declining the young baronet's interference, while taking care not to shut the door ungraciously against future acquaintance, should prosperity ever be theirs again.

That Hastings, having accepted this commission, afterwards executed it faithfully and willingly, may not be doubted; nor may it be amiss to say here, commenced from that moment a correspondence and subsequent intimacy with the amiably-disposed young man, to which the latter mainly owed his best happiness in after life.

As Mrs. Barry's liberty could not be certain, even now, until all the creditors had subscribed to the terms meant to be offered for insuring their future payment, Hastings reluctantly advised her remaining in the Isle of Man, though in a better abode. Alicia exclaimed, that a bare heath, with their altered feelings, would be a paradise; and her mother, naturally indolent, confessing that she cared not to move, only should like their present residence to themselves, satisfied her friend, that the kindest thing he could

do would be to procure another servant to assist old Lettice, and then negotiate with the owners for giving their cottage wholly up for awhile.

An interview with the persons in question soon completed this arrangement. Hastings had only to speak; -Mrs. Barry was already provided with funds to disburse whatever sum was required, so that the most distressing office of generous friendship was spared to the former, that of actually giving money to those it dreads humiliating. He had resolved to return the next day to Ireland, in prosecution of the task he had taken in hand; and amply provided now with information and credentials, had nothing farther to do at Man than delicately urging Mrs. Barry not to deny herself or her daughters a single comfort during their exile. He pressed the necessity of medical advice for Alicia, whose over-excited sensibility was beginning to show its effects in languor of movement, and fitful cheek-glows; and, having received permission to send the only practitioner which the small town of Douglas contained, he departed for a sorry chamber at an inn.

At parting, he had promised to see them on the morrow; yet when the door closed upon him, each of the friends he had left felt as if their vision of comfort had vanished with him. Flora began to question if it had indeed been; and Mrs. Barry to dread that some accident might happen on his short passage back, and so reduce them to a worse state than he had found them in. She, that had once never thought beyond the present, now looked to coming events with that apprehensiveness which cares or calamities are sure to create; and which leads at last, both to general sympathy, and to an abiding sense of human dependence.

Alicia's heart was almost too full for speech; but gratitude and gladness spoke in her countenance; and while confessing an extreme of bodily exhaustion, insisted that instead of damping existing happiness by dwelling upon her indisposition, or the chance of evil to their friend, they

ought to unite in reliance upon the Providence which had thus raised them from the depths of desolation. She was, however, ready to admit the medical man, who was not long of presenting himself; and being pronounced by him only suffering from nervous debility, thankfully promised obedience to all his commands, making her first act of the sort, instant retirement to rest.

Whether the tranquil repose of her head upon the pillow she shared with Flora were accompanied with equal stillness of the heart, need hardly be asked. She could not sleep, and her spirit could not. She was grateful, fervently grateful, for the unexpected benefits just conferred upon her, in common with her mother and sister - even more thankful for their sakes than for her own; but she had other cares, peculiar to herself, - other objects of hope, and fear, and doubt, - other memories to agitate her; and, if she ventured to look forward, imagination recoiled again, from rat heartradus

an instant apparition of sorrowful sacrifice to come.

The next morning Hastings was at the cottage, and far on the beach with Flora, long ere Alicia was permitted to leave her bed, or the habitually-late Mrs. Barry had risen for breakfast. A sunny autumnal morning, rendered more shining by the gauzy haze spread over sea and sky, banished all misgivings about storm and boat-wreck.

Hastings was not to embark till eleven o'clock, and he could not resist his wish of giving Flora what he knew would be a pleasure to her, — the gratification of a ramble with him alone. He knew her ardent thirst for sympathy of old, and her confiding habits; and he was not unwilling to make them subservient to his own purposes, while permitting her their indulgence.

In their long and exhilarating walk, he was delighted to remark the evident improvement of her mind and temper, and to observe how surely good feelings and cultivated capacities embellish where they are found. Flora's girlish figure already promised to rival her sister's: her features, however, were not handsome, nor her vivid colour stationary; but her countenance was pregnant with what painters call character; and there was a fervour of manner about her, which, if amounting even to romantic singularity, was rather racy than otherwise.

Hastings loved Flora as brothers love their sisters: he was completely at his ease with her; he was desirous of encouraging her best sensibilities, and pruning her wilder ones, and he could talk to her of Alicia. Not that he wished to pry into the mystery of the latter's suspended engagement; — he sought only to ascertain covertly from her that it still existed, for until quite sure of this, he knew hope would linger about his heart.

Flora naturally told him, without urging, all she might and could tell of Alicia's English visit, sighingly owning that what followed she had no warrant for communicating. In return, she learnt as much of his history as he chose to relate, by which she found, that as young Mr. West meant to resume his tour shortly after his favourite sister's marriage, Hastings would most likely be summoned to rejoin him in less than a month's time.

Flora's lamentations at this probable recall were uttered with her usual unreflecting frankness; but she was little more than a child in years, however ripened in heart; and the person to whom she addressed that undisguised regret, although young, interesting, and tremblingly full of feeling, was neither weak enough nor vain enough to misconstrue that vivid gratitude; far less, cruel enough to flatter allowable enthusiasm into a sentiment which he would not repay in kind.

Flora's vermillioned cheeks, and a finer polish upon the white forehead of Hastings, when they returned, proclaimed the healthful effect of early exercise. Alicia's dimmed looks were an affecting contrast with theirs, which Mrs. Barry observed with a piteous tone, but she

herself with a cheerful one; prophesying her complexion's restoration, whenever she could share in such far-stretching rambles.

The look, the tone, the smile with which she said this, evidenced her sincerity; yet tears starting in her eyes the next moment, Hastings fancied she was weakly thinking health valueless without happiness and Lord St. Lawrence. Quelling a wringing sigh, he hurried his thoughts to other things. More general conversation ensued therefore. Hastings spoke at large of his residence in Madeira, and then of Mr. McManus's unexpected appearance there; passing thence to the deserted state of pretty Mount Pleasant, now tenantless, but soon, he hoped, to receive back its early inmates. There were painful associations now with the names of these beloved friends, and Alicia falteringly naming the probable time of their return in the next year, abruptly broke up the theme by pleading sudden faintness, and rising all pale and trembling from the breakfast-table.

Every one followed — all anxiously — one, the deeply-grieving Hastings, in silent sorrowfulness, for he concluded the overcoming indisposition to be truly alarming illness; and not even the after report of her medical attendant could wholly satisfy him of its inconsequence.

The little party of friends were not long together after Alicia's recovery. A favourable breeze had sprung up, clearing away the mists from the opposite coast, where the Lancashire sands and the far Cumberland hills were seen glittering in the sunshine. Every heart went with him to the boat, although none ventured to see him actually on board. They watched him down to the beach, and when the poor smack he was in was seen bending and flying before the wind, Alicia unlocking the clasped hands with which she had stood looking after him in silent benediction, first embraced her mother in the same silence of voice, not feelings, then called upon Flora to go with her to the widow they had seen the evening before one that berings aid A

"O the happiness of being able to give again!" exclaimed the ecstatic Flora, comprehending now that they were privileged in bestowing more than tears.

"If we are so happy just now, what must be Jocelyn Hastings's feelings!"

Alicia asked whisperingly.

Flora returned the expressive pressure of her sister's hand as she spoke with answering expression; and their mother avowing a desire to partake in the benevolent pleasure of relieving distress—"to show that she felt how much they owed to a friend,"—for the first time in her heedless life, set forward upon a determinately-charitable errand.

In the evening after Hastings's departure, Mrs. Barry, urged by her own impatience, ventured to give her daughter two letters she had not hitherto re-produced, through fear of clouding sudden sunshine. Flora, who had taught her to dread their probable contents and effect, was commissioned to prepare her sister for such renewed agitation,

Alicia, apprised that one of these letters

came from Mrs. Beresford, and that the other had the Aubrey arms on the seal, was in a manner warned that one at least would contain her fate: she begged, therefore, with great emotion, to read them alone in the sleeping chamber, now assigned entirely to herself. Her request was granted; after which it may be supposed, until the hour of rest, little of that happy and free conversation was pursued which the providences of the day had set at flow. Alicia returned her mother's fluttered "good night" at her chamber door with a trembling kiss of deeper meaning; answering the anxious and commiserating look of her sister by a hurried assurance that her spirit was braced to the encounter of whatever she might have to sustain; that precious hour of inward thought not having been spent she felt in vain. and hadely ode

Flora left the packet in her hand, with a smothered sigh and a whispered benediction; retiring to her own small chamber, not to sleep, but with restless affection to watch and pray for the dear heart which she justly believed was contending with mortal pangs alone. Sometimes she threw herself upon her low bed, then rose and stole to Alicia's door, to hear if she were still up.

It was long, long past midnight, when, unable longer to endure the feeling with which she had been standing listening to the murmurs of her sister's voice struggling between natural suffering and affecting efforts at submission, she gently shook the door, praying for admittance, on the score of her great uneasiness. Alicia, roused to recollection of the time and her sister's suspense, rose with a selfupbraiding heart from her prostrate attitude, and, unfastening the door, admitted Flora. She did not speak, but placing the opened letters in the latter's hand, pressed both with her own, as if to say she wished them read elsewhere. Flora guessed their contents. She would not ask a single question: her kind arms folded round her sister, and pressing her closely against her breast, were eloquent of sympathy. Alicia lay on her shoulder in silence. Flora wept convulsively. Neither of them spoke for many, many minutes. At length the former said, "Do not afflict yourself for me, my Flora: I am not all unhappy: — he is cleared!" Her own tears flowed out at this half-sorrowful, half-joyful expression, while Flora's replied to them, but not like hers, with gratitude softening bitterness. She could think only of her sister at such a moment, and for once the best interests of another became nothing in her thoughts.

In the hasty and distracted questioning which she could now no longer restrain, Flora's passionate nature poured forth its loaded feelings—the hopes, the fears, the regrets which she had cherished or combated for her beloved Alicia and Lord St. Lawrence. The prime sufferer had not strength to overcome this roused nature, or to endure its impetuous display; but urging her to seek calmness where she must seek it, or sink through utter weakness, besought her to retire and read the momentous packet alone. At the same time, she delegated Flora to

impart the contents cautiously to her mother, beseeching her to let the agitating subject rest until the shattered family strength should again recover.

Recalled to self-command and self-blame by this adjuration, Flora reined in her vehement regrets, and promising all her sister asked, would not quit her before she had seen her head laid on her pillow with the sad composure of settled resignation. Yet Flora lingered, affection in her being far stronger than the desire of terminating her own anxiety: but Alicia renewed her gentle assurance that the pang was over (for shock she could not call what had been long anticipated), and maintaining that her spirit would become quieter in total solitude, tenderly smiled her away.

The next moment Flora was in her own little chamber, where she sate down (pulse all over) to read what she already knew by anticipation. The first packet she examined was a letter from Lady Anne Aubrey, used as an envelope to one from Lord St. Lawrence. It proved that

Lady Anne was even then wholly ignorant of the Barry family's misfortunes having written solely to express the most gratifying regret at the deplorable circumstances which were thus terminating her most pleasing expectation. Flora scarcely took time to read what the noble spinster said of her nephew's epistle to herself, but hurried to that addressed by him to Alicia.

The important matter of this communication may be summed up in brief, although it was given by the writer in a strain of passionate emotion, little likely to make any details succinctly or regularly. All, in short, was agitation and contrariety of feeling then. In some parts the blotted illegible characters of the letters bore witness to the starts of anguish suffered by the writer; and its date at sea, within sight of Madeira, after a tedious passage, showed how long it was before Lord St. Lawrence could determine upon a full surrender of hopes once fondly dear to him.

His traverses of the Continent, under

an assumed name, for the sake of privacy, had confirmed the suggestion of Alicia. Signor Manzoni, whom he had first sought, and latest found, satisfied him that what he had previously elicited by minuter enquiries at Monaco, and at the conservatorio at which Lorenza Castelli had received her musical education, was true. Another Lorenza, the daughter of ordinary peasants, had been the object of Manzoni's early attachment. His frank testimony, together with other proofs, such as baptismal registers, &c. proved the slandered Lorenza really born of a gallant race, pure herself from reproach, and not unworthy of alliance, therefore, with the best and noblest. Although Lord St. Lawrence saw no reason for wishing to fathom the motives or the ways of the Marchesa in her atrocious villany, he lost no time in seeking out her evident associate, that he might learn from her whither the forlorn one had gone from the casino. Bianca, his former confidant, was no sooner discovered than she avowed her share in

the cruel scheme from conscientious motives. She confessed that the Marchesa, having tempted her into betraying the secret of the married lovers, had insured her aid in separating them, by representing the great merit of so rescuing a soul from the danger of apostasy; and did, she knew, work also upon the religious fears of Lorenza herself, eventually getting her to put herself into the hands of an aged French missionary, who was going to Brazil with a sister as pious as himself. Thither Bianca believed she had actually gone, not only resenting the deception practised upon her in the false marriage, but (from certain commiserating insinua ations of her patroness's) believing her faithless destroyer employed in attempting to subdue the honour of the Marchesa herself. forgotten every other thing.

Whatever Bianca now thought of her former lady's motives, to Lord Sto Lawrence they could no longer be doubtful: he felt that disappointed passion, either thirsting for vengeances or hoping all it wished from the removal

of a happy rival, had been the moving spring of the Marchesa's conduct. Lorenza was innocent; she had been twice injured by him,—first in her honour, lastly, in her peace. She was in exile, dependence, and sorrow. She had borne to him a child in sorrow and disgrace. What did mere justice and conscience dictate? Reparation.—What human sympathies? Reparation.—What love—long-buried, reviving love? More than reparation: life-bleeding penitence, and all of devotedness that might be bestowed upon a mortal.

Lord St. Lawrence owned that, in the first transports of the joy consequent upon a discovery which at once restored to him the feelings and the object cherished in years long past, he had forgotten every other thing. Time, events, new affections, new ties, new opinions, were all obliterated: he saw nothing beyond Lorenza; he thought only of hastening to implore her forgiveness of the mighty injuries and misery he had heaped upon her innocent head.

But other and later memories too soon came over him, creating a war of regrets and wishes which he knew not how to describe or define. The image of Alicia, in her blushing beauty and shaded tenderness, frequently came to oppose itself to the remembrance of Lorenza's intenselyexpressive looks; her voice, the voice of every profound sensibility; and ther language, the vivid representation of a wholly absorbed heart: -but upon the first image he refused to dwell. He was then hastening, he said, to the new world, to offer his hand and heart again to her who had an undoubted right to them. Alicia herself had pointed out his path, and taught him that in her heart passion could not vanquish principle. Should Lorenza, however, have quenched her vivid nature; should absence and remembered wrongs have justly banished him from her affection; or, what he most dreaded, should her zealous associates urge her to refuse the reparation he went to offer, on the score of religious scruples, -then he must return to a sad and solitary home, since he durst no longer

imagine that Alicia would again accept a heart no longer all her own, but broken by remorse, and shaken by recollections and regrets of which another must for ever be the object. Strange as was the declaration, it seemed to him that, disappointed in his present hope, his very desire of happiness on earth would be crushed, and that he would resign himself to a life of public duties with melancholy acquiescence. Here, then, he relieved Alicia from that conditional engagement which, though they had parted in temporary displeasure, he believed it would be in harmony with her nobleness of character to consider binding, should he return unfettered. Hereafter, when she had made some other man happy, he might pretend to her friendship. In imagining the joyful probability of finding Lorenza unchanged towards him, he did not show himself insensible to the pain of having his heart separate from that of his wife in the great bond of wedded hearts, - religious agreemental He noticed this with deep regret, and solitary home, Enve he durst no longer

now that the knew the value and the comfort of such union; yet maintained that, under his circumstances, not even the most rigid Protestant could advance that plea as an argument against reparation. Other painful feelings due to his former faults he knew must long be his; perhaps the greatest, that of too agitating a recollection of the days passed with Alicia; but all would be welcome to him (convinced as he was of past error), might he but believe himself the only sufferer: could he now feel as sure, as he had often fancied himself in moments of irritation, that the dear rival of Lorenza had not loved him with all her capacity of exclusive attachment, he believed he should be calm. He conjured her, therefore, to forget him, save as a friend unto death; and to let no generous waiting for the knowledge of his refusal or acceptance by Lorenza close her ear to the suit of one worthy to could only pray, therefor brisdaud rail ads The letter closed with a farewell at

each of Alicia's near relations by name in terms of generous regard. Flora's young heart almost broke over the blotted letters of her own name, as he had coupled it with some endearing appellation, and dizzy with excessive sympathy, she found herself uttering aloud wild complaints against this hardest dispensation. Shocked and alarmed at her own impiety, she turned from the dangerous letter, and took up that of Mrs. Beresford; aware that its contents would prove decisive commentaries upon the other.

Her expectations were fulfilled. Mrs. Beresford wrote after receiving the first notification of her friend's intended marriage. Her distress and consternation may be imagined. She could not recall what she had already written, she said, by two former mails; nay, with reference to Alicia's true happiness, she knew not that she ought to wish it recalled. She could only pray, therefore, that her friends at Castle Barry might have been influenced to what was best for their child.

It behoved Mrs. Beresford, she added, not to conceal what her exiled acquaint ance urged in Lord St. Lawrence's behalf. This generous young creature seemed only anxious to secure happiness and thorough reformation to him by finding excuses for him, and accusations against herself. She maintained his total ignorance of the situation she merely suspected herself to be in when she left him; therefore acquitted him of wilfully abandoning their unborn infant. She not only blamed herself for having, by her precipitate removal to a distant land, put it out of his power to make her atonement, but confessed a deep and increasing sense of her own reprehensible conduct in have ing consented to what she believed a marriage, unsanctioned by his father. school

Different passages in this letter, alluding to the lost explanatory one, sealed the truth of Lord St. Lawrence's, proving that the Marchesa had successfully duped both her victims; leading Lorenza to be lieve her a miracle of kindness and for giveness, when, affecting tenderly to warn

her of Lord Aubrey's designing attentions and faithless habits, she drew from her the story of her marriage, and unveiled its illegality. It was further evident, that Lorenza, although yet unsuspicious of the interest in herself which the other assumed, began now to hope that her patroness's representation of Lord Aubrey's addresses to herself was but one of those sanctified deceptions which some persons imagine allowable for the attainment of a worthy aim, and had been used to detach her more effectually from her forbidden attachment.

Mrs. Beresford admitted the probability of this idea; since even the venerable missionary and his sister (a nun of the Order of Mercy) had, while associating Lorenza in their truly Christian labours, untruly spoken of her as their widowed niece. They believed themselves rescuing a soul from sin and apostasy; and she considered herself performing an acceptable penance under their guardianship. Pierced by a sense of unmerited dishonour, and tremblingly conscious of her

own devoted heart, she had, with noble resolution, removed herself at once from all temptation to see Lord Aubrey again; believing that by such a bitter sacrifice, in the holy offices of charity, and in future dedication of her child to the service of her church, she would be making so many expiatory offerings for her seducer's soul as well as for her own. Thus thinking, she had continued living in Brazil, sorrowfully indeed, yet unmurmuring; for she ministered to others, and lived in her child. It was by the sick beds of many a poor Brazilian, and poorer adventurer, that Mrs. Beresford, led by the same spirit, first became acquainted with Sister Laure, as her companions called Lorenza. The affecting mode of their meeting, their frequent companionship in such scenes, the subsequent death of Lorenza's angel-like boy, and the interesting disclosure made during her own previous illness, had finally obtained her a place in Mrs. Beresford's most honouring affection. She wrote with evident sadness at the effect which this revival of

former days had produced in her new friend; giving it as her opinion, that she would ultimately sink into one of those rapid consumptions which have their origin in violent emotion suddenly acting upon an enfeebled frame. If so, and Alicia's heart were deeply engaged to Lord St. Lawrence, Mrs. Beresford would endeavour to hope that he was a reformed man, and that he might have been actuated by a conscientious motive —(however preposterous such an union between conscience and crime) - in having hesitated to marry the woman he had betrayed, because she professed a different creed from his own. In such case, Mrs. Beresford owned that it would not surprise her to find her friend then adhered to her engagement. One thing, however, she must add, or her conscience would accuse her for life; - that Lorenza's mental eye was already partly opened to the errors of her own creed; she was beginning to perceive that she might think and examine for herself; and having turned to the sacred volume, till now

denied her, had given a proof of its awakening effect, by suspending the purpose she had meditated ever since the death of her child, -that of retiring into excited by the numerited sources as a second

The conclusion of this long epistle was devoted to such expressions of sympathy and anxiety as the truest friendship might be supposed to dictate, and Flora laid it down with an awed sense of her sister's still-doubtful destiny. Alicia evidently had considered both letters as conclusive against her union with Lord St. Lawrence; but Flora justly believed it was from a generous hope that her rival should be restored to happiness, not from the mistaken notion of determining to refuse Lord St. Lawrence's hand, should the untimely death of the former restore him to unknown foreigner, since the lattemobasri

This expected brother had been endeared to Flora's thoughts by the details of his generosity, disinterestedness, and devotedness, during the period of his engagement with her sister; and since then had been interesting from his sufferings,

whether deserved or not deserved: she could not then easily relinquish a distant hope of acquiring such a relation. Yet was her youthful sympathy so powerfully excited by the unmerited sorrows of that Lorenza whom Mrs. Beresford pictured as bending like a ministering angel over the beds of the sick and dying, that she dared not make that hope the subject of a single prayer. She bounded her artless addresses to Heaven to petitions for Alicia's happiness, by whatever means were best calculated to insure it; and to expressions of earnest gratitude for the restoration of Lord St. Lawrence's charestored to happiness, not from threater

Her task the next morning was not enviable: she did not find her mother inclined to admit much sympathy with an unknown foreigner, since the latter's happiness must be grounded upon her child's disappointment. Many of Mrs. Barry's slumbering infirmities were awakened by this communication; and Flora could only continue pressing upon her the necessity of thankfulness to Providence for

having decreed this new trial at a time when recent blessing had strengthened them to submit without murmuring. Mrs. Barry did murmur, however, nor were her weak complainings hushed until the sound of Alicia's step in the passage reminded her, that, for a time at least, the subject must be stifled. The thoughts and feelings of that long night's watching were stamped upon Alicia's brow. She had, in truth, suffered all that human heart can feel of sad passion; but she was now calmed and strengthened. Her stricken soul found support in obedience to trial, and consolation in the conviction that the man whom at this moment she loved more fervently than she had ever done, was earning her esteem and admiration by the very act which must divorce their lives, of my and sains has hard and

It may not be denied that, however tender her sympathies were, she could not, without many a relapse of tears, recall the days in which she had believed herself certain of the lot now opening before Lorenza Castelli. Time and reflection, combined with more distracting interests, had indeed already greatly weakened their impression; but their memory abided, however faded.

Alicia had never coveted such a destiny as Lord St. Lawrence's rank and station held out, and when it seemed assuredly hers, had wished it less garish; nay more, since she had fallen into family distress and temporary desertion, the remembrance of a hollow and heartless world (as human infirmity called it) had become wholly distressful to her. Still, however, Lord St. Lawrence himself was dear to memory and to hope; and perhaps had never been so entirely valued for his own charm of character alone, as when she ventured to believe him slandered, and fancied his return to reclaim her hand, and raise her sunken family. Now since Jocelyn Hastings's redemption of her esteem, and Sir Edgar Trevor's claim upon their gratitude, had taken off the interdict from her heart, she felt inclined to fancy ignorance or misapprehension, when she had hitherto imagined

herself wilfully abandoned; and could therefore have contemplated a return even to Lord St. Lawrence's world with complacent, though not careless acquiescence. But that was passed; and the future for her and hers lay in humble privacy, using straitened means of kindness and benevolence. After their late appalling prospects and misery of positive destitution, such a future was a subject of too much gratitude for the wilful indulgence of any regrets, however legitimate; and from the hour in which Alicia had poured out her whole soul in solitude, into the only ear we need not fear to weary or afflict, she became resolute in flying to useful occupation as a shield against depressing trances of thought. The only conversation she dared have with her mother upon the subject of Lord St. Lawrence, was briefly requesting her to make Mr. Hastings acquainted with this story. One passage in the Earl's letter gave Colonel Barry's family privilege to tell it to any one whose real interest in their welfare authorized such a

wish. He had avowed himself ready to meet the self-humbling consequences of such an explanation, both to her friends and to his own: although, for his Lorenza's sake, he should not consider himself bound to let more be known to the general world, than that he had married her when under age; that she had quitted him upon discovering that it would not be a valid marriage; and that Miss Barry's noble conduct had given him back, heart and hand, to the woman of his first affections.

Convinced that Hastings, in common with all who regarded her with particular esteem, must inwardly shape some story to themselves, in which the blame would be imputed solely to her lover, Alicia earnestly desired to have him know Lord St. Lawrence's character as it really was. She knew that, in Hastings's eyes, his one grievous offence would be more than balanced by his after-sufferings, thorough repentance, and generous, because entire, renunciation of her. She could not bear to have him undervalued, nay unknown,

to the only person on earth whose excellencies could exceed the value of his noble candour, and redeeming self-abasement; and if she felt that to have her own disinterested affection justified, by thus proving her lover's worthiness, was necessary to her peace, the weakness might be pardoned, since it was Jocelyn Hastings's good opinion she coveted. After having hastily told, and as hurryingly received her mother's promise of complying with the wishes thus expressed, Alicia, with a tearful smile, requested that from that hour Lord St. Lawrence might be named amongst them only as their friend; and having done so, broke off the agitating topic. The show to use

The fortnight which elapsed after their benefactor's departure was devoted to thankful use of their recovered means to minister to each other's wants, and to those of others. Even yet, justice, a delicate sense of obligation, and the wish to preserve independence as much as possible, limited their charities: but they could give their mite, and they were now, therefore,

more liberal of the best charity, after all—sympathy with want and sorrow, and personal help. Alicia's health recovered with her power of usefulness: and as she and Flora walked upon the beach, or wandered about the ruined convent, endeared by one remembrance, they confessed the wizard effect of inward feeling, which makes the paradise or the wilderness out of the same scenes.

The wide stretch of waters before and around them; the island-landscapes, saddened by the fall of the leaf; the variety of sea sounds loading the air, so that even in sleep the ear was haunted by the cries of mariners and birds, mixed with the roar of winds and waves, and wave-washed caverns - these things, which at first had been almost maddening to Flora's fearfully-excited sensibility, and deeply depressing to Alicia's, were now felt and acknowledged to be both picturesque and poetical. They trod the matted orchard paths, sometimes soberizing brighter discourse by speaking of those who lay sleeping in the grave; then cheering each

other by remarking that if their path of life were leaf-strewn, they yet trod it together. Thus did past sorrow brighten present gratitude, and present objects. The sanctuary island was no more to their affrighted souls a dark prison-house, a rock on which they were shipwrecked, but an ark of refuge, floating upon many waters indeed, yet from which they were assured of going forth ere long to gladness and the green earth again. Their dove with the olive branch soon returned: Hastings came instead of writing. The impossibility of seizing Mrs. Barry's person (nothing else being left to seize) had obliged the only hard creditor to hear reason. The dividends which Mr. Boyle could now offer from the redeemed diamonds, when transmitted, together with the punctual payment of interest, insured by the Castle Barry rent and Hastings's generous sacrifice of half his own income, were heaven-sends to creditors: every one agreed to the terms proposed. General Euston had abided by his first agreement, and had taken Castle Barry,-

upon one half of the yearly sum obtained thereon, Mrs. Barry found she must subsist herself and daughters until better times dawned; and these depended upon the after-sale of deeply-involved properties. Her own wishes had pointed to the Continent as a residence, both for cheerfulness and cheapness; but as circumstances required her to be near enough for frequent communication with Mr. Boyle (Hastings being soon to quit Ireland), she was reluctantly entreated to think whether she could make up her mind to temporary retirement and reduction in their former neighbourhood. Mount Pleasant, having lately lost its tenants, was not to be let again, as its owners were expected by the summer of the ensuing year; but Mr. McManus's old steward had offered it for Mrs. Barry's use, confident that such would be his master's wish, were there time to consult him: that if she did not like to accept the kindness from his master, she might settle with the latter after his return any way she liked best; that meanwhile her being in it would keep the house aired through the winter.

Much discussion followed this proposition. Mrs. Barry showed herself painfully unwilling to return to such an altered style of living, in the immediate vicinity of her own gay home; Floral shrunk from the pang of seeing that beloved home occupied by strangers; Alicia was distressfully divided between tenderness for her mother's weakness, her sister's natural feelings, and that quick comprehension of the many sacrifices now making for them by this generous friend, which called loudly upon them to make some sacrifice themselves in concert with his. She had been long in the habit of quelling self upon occasions like the present; and, however sympathising much with Flora's sorrow, and a little with Mrs. Barry's infirmity, her gently-expressed sentiments decided the question for acceptance of a borrowed home. 10ths

The last day of the second month, on which they had come to Man, was closing, when Alicia gave her hand to

Jocelyn Hastings to assist her out of the little vessel which was landing them upon their own dear shores. She looked back in the direction of the island, now covered by the grey of twilight; it stood solemn and dim in the midst of the plain of waters, like some vast tumulus rising amid solitary steppes. At another time she might have thought of the grave, and the battle-field, and the heroes who had fought on the one and slept in the other; but at this moment her heart was upon other things, and her eyes full of sweet and grateful tears. "You have given us dear associations with that island!" she said to her companion as he relinquished the hand he never durst trust himself with retaining for a single moment. She wondered, perhaps, that he did not answer her affectionate remark. She guessed not why he did not. Alicia believed herself in a dream when, after some hours' travelling, she found herself occupying Mount Pleasant as a home, and, glancing through the trees, saw her real home standing in its familiar beauty, other voices echoing from its wood walks, and all as unapproachable to her as if a fiery sword were guarding them. Strangers were living in that dear home!

There are some feelings which, when strong emotions are scarce with us, we love to indulge, and we do indulge: but after we have endured a variety of cares and afflictions, we refuse ourselves all voluntary grief; we bind ourselves to the stake of life; we bear, and we are still.

Flora had her bursts of agony; but they were yielded to, sorrowing, self-ashamed, therefore in solitude. Mrs. Barry for some days suffered grievously from anticipated mortifications; but when, instead of these, she found her acquaintance courteously claimed by General and Lady Frances Euston; her return cordially welcomed by light-hearted neighbours, accustomed to consider moneymatters as a mighty bother, and gentlemanly difficulties as no disgrace; and when she saw every cabin emptied of

17 .3174

its inhabitants, bringing love-gifts, as they called them, to the dare family, and prophesying "the uprise of Castle Barry before a man could turn round," the feeling of consequence was repaired, and, but for the want of liveried lacqueys and elegant equipages, she might have imagined herself the great lady again.

Pride and straitened means, however, compelled her to act as if retirement would be her choice, until the perfect settlement of their affairs might enable her to ascertain the scale upon which she might construct her future plan of life. Her children, therefore, were privileged in confining themselves nearly wholly to companionship with their early playmate, whom they loved to look on as a brother, and who, forced to frequent intercourse with Mrs. Barry upon business, could not escape from many a walk and many a conversation dangerous to his highest resolves.

Hastings was avowedly staying under Mr. Boyle's roof; but he spent many hours every day at Mount Pleasant,

perhaps the less reluctantly, because he believed himself convinced he could never hope to be more than a brother to Alicia, and because he was so soon to leave Ireland. Mrs. Barry, in making the proposed confidence to him, after their transfer from Man, had done it after her own fashion of clinging hope, inviting him to join her in believing it probable that Lord St. Lawrence would either find the Italian lady too higoted to marry a Protestant, or too just to take him from a virtuous girl like her Alicia, of his own religion, too, and approved by his relations.

While she spoke, Hastings felt the bitterness which must always mix in Lord St. Lawrence's cup, by similar misapprehension in the world with which the guiltless Lorenza must mingle, if he were eventually to bring her back to it as his wife; and he did not let the injurious sentiment pass from Mrs. Barry's lips without gentle explanation. What other emotions were excited in him while she was narrating facts and showing

letters, in which the lovely heart and sensitive conscience of her child were shown without a veil under every aspect of joy or sorrow, may be conceived by those who have loved as Jocelyn Hastings did, with the purest, yet fondest passion, long repressed, and awakening to hope only at rapturous, evanescent instants.

This affecting confidence being made at Alicia's request, and prefaced by the avowal of her anxiety to obtain by such means his due esteem for Lord St. Lawrence, not only led him to see the deep interest she still took in the latter's honour. but taught him not to hope that such a man could be soon forgotten, or ever replaced by one of humbler pretensions. Even to Hastings's clear-sighted mind there was something dazzling in his rival's splendid penitence; - something heroic, to him (who, loving Alicia, felt as if no other could be loved after her)something martyr-like in this decisive renunciation of all claim on her love; something, too, so deeply interesting in

his situation altogether, that they blotted out the sad muser's own higher acquirements, and harder, because unwitnessed and unimagined, sacrifices. fervently grateful for having been the instrument employed to rescue Alicia from a gulf of family misery; yet he could not help seeing that, by this very act, a bar was placed between her and himself; for how could he urge any suit either to the mother or the daughter, when a sense of obligation would almost enforce compliance - and when suit must be purely selfish - when, if granted, it must destroy Mrs. Barry's pardonable wishes for her favourite child, and place Alicia's rare beauty and enchanting accomplishments for ever in a shade? It was in vain that Jocelyn's unfettered principle maintained the superior peace and safety of such a shaded life, for one so gifted: he could say that there were commissions of danger as of glory in the wide world-field; and his own heart had too great a stake in the debated question to decide it fairly. He knew he

ought not to encourage hopes and wishes, and he determined not to do so: first, because it would be ungenerous; secondly, because, until he acquired the living promised by Sir Richard West, he had nothing to offer any woman, except the liberal stipend he received for accompanying Mr. West abroad, and which even now was partly pledged to make up deficiencies, and pay law expences to Mr. Boyle.

Hastings, indeed, felt at this agitating moment, that he had done too much, ever to ask any thing for himself of the Barry family: his "virtues" were literally "sanctified and holy traitors" to him. But he had other witnessing and animating feelings within him, which, if turned from in frail human joylessness at the time, were capable of overpaying him in the future for every pain and pri-

Perhaps, at the present instant, he felt a little conscious to a grieved sense of Mrs. Barry's deadness towards him. Although she never reverted to his early

attachment for Alicia, he thought she must have been told of it by her husband; and she was either, therefore, so careless in her notice of one in whom she ought to have taken a kinder interest as not to see that his heart's wound was not cured; or she was purposely convincing him that his affection would never be encouraged by her for the daughter who was so near being a countess.

In fact, Mrs. Barry had thought so slightly of his avowed affection for Alicia above two years before, that she concluded it quite got over, and had not, perhaps, remembered its existence, until the shock of a cruel act in his name, roused every possible ground of aversion to himself. Now she was completely deceived by his high-principled self-command; forgetting the past entirely, and seeing in him only a real friend, who might enter into her views, and so urge her daughter not to give up all expectation of becoming Lady St. Lawrence.

Not even Hastings's generous excess of self-denying purposes could so far

conquer the delicacy of his sensibility, as to make him the coadjutor Mrs. Barry wished: - he could not insinuate even to Alicia, that patient waiting might obtain for her the hand once almost her own: his whole ability was bounded to meeting her embarrassed efforts at speaking of Lord St. Lawrence as a friend worthy of frequent and full remembrance. When she first talked of the Earl in that tone to her earlier friend, she was painfully agitated, and he was yet more so, seeing how much it cost her. His excess of sympathy surprised and affected her for whom it was felt; she guessed not its deep and despairing source, - pity for her, - pity for himself. She saw in it only another proof that Jocelyn was more than a brother to her, and that his heart was a treasure-house of tender, as well as noble feelings. That heart now was nearly overtasked: the perpetual watch he was obliged to keep over himself was becoming so insupportable, that when his letter of recall arrived from England, he received it with momentary joy. Mr. West was advised to spend one more winter in a warmer climate, and having chosen a six months' residence and tour amongst the Pyrenees, wrote to request the society of his former beloved companion; yet kindly offering to defer his departure to any period necessary for the latter's friendly interest in the concerns of the Barrys.

When, during the last evening he spent at Mount Pleasant, Hastings saw Flora's unchecked tears, and heard Mrs. Barry's audible declarations, that "she felt as if they never could go on without him by their side," it may be imagined by what emotions he was agitated. He felt their intoxicating effect; for while Alicia sate employed at work at a distance, with trembling hands, his eyes rested upon her, addressing her alone, full of her alone. She was rising to glide away unperceived, that she might give vent to natural sorrow for his departure in solitude, when their eyes met: he recalled his with an instant suffusion of face, perhaps more expressive of its cause

than the look itself, while she faltering out, "God bless you, Mr. Hastings!" hurried from the room.

It may not be denied, that this look remained stationary before her for many minutes after it was seen. In days past, Lord St. Lawrence's eyes had taught her the meaning of what Jocelyn Hastings's now expressed; and the remembrance dismayed her. Although she scarcely permitted herself to imagine what extent of feeling that surprised look had told, she could not but fear that it went much beyond friendship, and was the consequence of too generous a concern in her strange destiny. Perhaps, she wished at the moment, that he had looked thus upon her, ere she learnt to love another. But Hastings went, and his brief letters at distant intervals, always upon business, to Mrs. Barry, by degrees obliterated an impression which no other remembrance united to strengthen or support. Hastings did not return, nor see Alicia again, until many months and many events were face, perhaps more expressive of its careyo

Late in the February of the ensuing year, Lord St. Lawrence re-appeared in the English world with a wife, whom his aunt's sanction, and his own resolute defence of, from the slightest impertinence, soon admitted amongst the best, if not the most fashionable of their own rank. By the very act of keeping back from the public gaze, curiosity was stimulated, and every one became wild to see the unknown foreigner who seemed to live solely for her lord, and with her lord; whose story was involved in such poignant mystery, but whose noble bearing, whenever she did appear, silenced even an imagination against her claim to respect. s'notgains (I the I nees sew

Lady Anne Aubrey's joy at finding her dreaded niece was now united by the bond of one faith, as well as of one heart, with her husband, wholly overbalanced her mortifications upon other subjects connected with their history; she, therefore, made the extraordinary effort of going to London, where she had not been for years, and receiving the con-

gratulatory visits of all the curious world, by the side of the newly-married pair.

By this wise method, the previous irreproachableness of Lady St. Lawrence was attested, and Lady Donnington's patronage was avoided without apparent ingratitude for past services; but it was an offence never forgiven: especially as it laid the foundation stone of that fashionable leader's ruin as a perpetual dictator. Lady St. Lawrence, without her aid, by the mere effect of a romantic history, and the figure of a heroine in romance, became the sole object of attention; and as the new peeress went out very little, whenever her carriage was seen, Lady Donnington's was deserted, that another glimpse might be caught of that singular and magical countenance. Every one who valued a character for taste, declared that Lord St. Lawrence's dark-browed nun was quite equal to his bright-haired shepherdess. Nay, many asserted, that the sunny lustre and rosy blushes of his fair Eucharis were not half so interesting as the alternate stillness and waking up of a face, still the the visits, and higher or three latters of high rank and higher

Where all that's dark, and all that's bright, when a Met in the aspect and the eyes."

Lord Lewis Rivers went about, listlessly professing himself stupefied at people's folly in running after such a person, when in reality he could have torn his old rival's star down, for destining him to such strange fortune, as this of presenting to society two of the loveliest women breathing, engaged to him by mutual vows.

Lord and Lady St. Lawrence themselves, absorbed in their own agitated happiness, and the concerns of her who was truly dear to both, though unknown to one, for some time did not regard the hum of the world; reckless whether it praised or blamed, ridiculed or admired; but the former, keenly sensible to the opinion of the society in which his birth placed him, soon roused to it; and anxious to fix the present gratifying impression made by his long-suffering Lorenza, bespoke for her the visits of two or three ladies of high rank and higher qualities, when they should be settled at Grey Friars, meaning henceforth to make that ancient residence a true English nobleman's home; a centre of hospitality, usefulness, benevolence, and elegant domestic joy.

He did realise those views afterwards; but even then temporary mortifications were permitted to revive a salutary remembrance of former offences in the young Earl's breast, causing him to see that there were some persons who refused to believe his injured Lorenza spotless in heart and life; some who feared to believe it. Such deep mortifications were the unavoidable consequences of his own past conduct; and, since his was the fault, his was the punishment: he bore it alone; never suffering his happy Countess to suspect that when, many months subsequent, he printed a father's first passionate and sacred kiss upon the brow of his infant heir, the tear he left

there dropped from the pang of knowing its mother's honour was not unsuspected. Such feelings, however, when compared with the force and frequency of happier ones, were but rain drops of an instant through long summer days: he was reconciled to himself; he was re-united to the earliest object of his love; and he saw that his voice had almost superhuman power; it had called her back from the tomb, when on its very brink. Who dare ask for greater felicity on earth? The moment Lord St. Lawrence had secured the proper station for his wife, both in his aunt's estimation and that of their circle, his whole thoughts turned to Ireland, whither, he justly believed, gratitude and inclination ought to lead him own I as most nogo sked adult

It would occupy too much space to describe his consternation and self-blame when made acquainted with the history of the Barry family's distresses. He felt that he ought not to have parted from Alicia with so vague a notion of her father's circumstances; that even to the

last he had proved that fatal absorption in selfish anxieties, which, hurrying him on to the one great object of disproving the calumnies against him, had left the very object of his tenderness undefended and desolate. What he did, and what more he would have done of most generous and most kind, may be imagined: he certainly wrote on the instant to Mr. Boyle, the heart of his noble-minded Lorenza going along with his in every offer and every sympathy: she knew that she owed her earthly felicity to Alicia Barry; and she thirsted even to fainting, until she could express her feelings, and claim acceptance of them. Mr. Boyle's answer briefly related what had already been done by another friend; and if a sudden light broke upon Lord St. Lawrence's mind when he read of Hastings's unbounded generosity, it may not be doubted that it was also a joyful one. He was fain to believe that no friendship bestowed upon Colonel Barry while in life, would have thus influenced a man almost to beggar himself for his widow and children. He now knew (for he had learnt his mistake from the McManuses), that Jocelyn Hastings was young and interesting. He had not certainly heard of any exclusive attachment between him and Alicia in early years; but he justly thought, that if concealed passion were the source of such prodigal benevolence, the love of such a man could not long remain unvalued.

Animated with the generous hope of seeing that her benefactor's virtues were already, though unconsciously, effacing Alicia's regrets for himself, Lord St. Lawrence crossed over to Ireland about the time Mr. Hastings was expected from the Continent; professedly on a tour with his Countess, but making their head quarters a hired residence within a short drive of Mount Pleasant. Anniversaries are often saddening things. By one of those trying ordinations not uncommon in this world, the first meeting between two persons parted by such agitating circumstances as had separated Alicia and Lord St. Lawrence, took place on the

return of that very day in April which, twelvemenths before, had engaged them to each other in London.

It was impossible that a nature so easily excited as that of the Earl's could be calm under such a recollection. He went, therefore, to the interview nervously agitated: dreading himself, — yet sure of himself: — hoping to find that he had not been too fondly regretted; yet ashamed of bringing before one whose life he might have laid waste, a heart so full of joy and pride in another as he felt his to be.

It is certain that neither he nor Alicia saw each other distinctly, when, after meeting Mrs. Barry and Flora, he led his Lorenza into an inner room where Alicia was tremblingly awaiting them alone, and, having joined their hands, abruptly left them together.

The first act of Lady St. Lawrence was to press the hand she held, fervently to her lips and to her heart. She did not speak; but her quivering lip, and the throbbing pulsation of her heart, were eloquent. For some moments her face was concealed by her bending attitude and the fall of her hair. She was evidently trying to master an excess of emotion. At length she raised her head, and revealed that countenance, at once noble and touching, which had so often been contemplated in silence and solitude by Alicia in her picture. It was neither its faultless beauty, nor yet its splendid paleness, which, for the instant, suspended every painful feeling; it was that resistless look of unmeasured, apprehensive gratitude, -that expression of deep and tender interest in the person gazed on,which announced a heart generously ready to become a very bond-slave to the joyful consciousness of inestimable benefits received.

The countenance, the matured nobleness of form, the fine brow from which the dark tresses fell back upon the rounded marble throat as Lorenza raised her head, were all familiar to Alicia's eye: the voice alone was yet to be learned: she spoke, and every other charm was for the while forgotten. They were tones of balm: so softly sweet, yet so expressively varied, that even common-place words, spoken in such accents, must have penetrated to the heart. What then was their effect while summing up years of hopelessness and misery in a few affecting sentences, and naming Alicia's earliest friend as the benefactress of the speaker's soul, the primary cause of her happiness both in the present and the future world! The emotion thus excited was too intense for long endurance. It was grief-it was joy: both acute-both ungovernable. Might not our young heroine be pardoned for something of pride or pleasure in the consciousness that she could embrace a happy rival, not only without reluctance, sincere acquiescence in her but with superior right to the hand resigned? She did not give herself the glory for such ascendancy over human passion, though perhaps she did feel too much elation. It is true she shed many weak tears, and was painfully overcome: for her heart was desolate: Lord St. Lawrence's place

there was void—in her present mood, she fancied for ever void. Yet, believing her feelings respected as well as understood, she suffered her tears to flow over her new friend's shoulder, that, so relieved, she might be able to restrain them wholly in the presence of another.

When, after long delay, Lord St. Lawrence rejoined them, her tears were dried, and a bright glow of willing sacrifice was fixed in her lovely cheeks. That glittering smile which had so often welcomed him in London assemblies, where all else wearied her, parted her lips as it was wont then, and with sweeter expression: she stretched out her hand to him, and as he took it, returned the pressure of his in animated silence.

Lord St. Lawrence's person bore greater marks of past suffering than did those of his fellow-sufferers: in fact, his misery had been more acute and continued; self-condemning thoughts never being wholly absent. Although his sober convictions testified that his peace with Heaven was made by that true repent-

ance which his after-conduct had proved, he could not at once do away the sad consequences of past faults. He knew that his innocent Lorenza did not come with an unsullied fame into the illustrious line of the Aubreys; and that Alicia, whom he had wooed so earnestly to bless his love and share his fortune, was left desolate, portionless, perhaps wretched.

These impressions were too strongly upon him at the present moment not to aggravate their previous effect; so that when Alicia's trembling eye ventured to rest upon him, she withdrew it in sorrow at seeing him so changed. He addressed her, and she had to turn aside to quell the rising emotion. The sight of a beloved face is overcoming; but what equals the sound of a well-known voice? - At the first tones of Lord St. Lawrence's, such a rush of subduing remembrances came over her, that she was long of regaining the power to answer him. She felt to distress the too-expressive changes of her complexion meanwhile; yet resolute in conquering herself, not from pride,

but generous concern for him, returned to assiduous notice of his wife; obviously courting that feeling of interest in her, which could alone give stability to her desire of forgetting the past.

Lord St. Lawrence was touched and embarrassed by her manner. Now that he himself was dispassionate in his view of all she said or did, he felt that her timid affection for him had been sincere, and generously cherished, even when little likely to be rewarded by his return free and blameless. He saw this with disinterested regret; inwardly praying that he might not, through life, have so heavy a weight laid upon his own happiness, as that of knowing her to be lonely and joyless.

Mrs. Barry's looks, when she had received him, and afterwards, when they were all collected together, were cold enough to show how ill she was inclined to welcome any other Lady St. Lawrence than her own daughter. The Earl pardoned the feeling; while, with his accustomed forbearance towards inferior minds,

he applied himself to recover her confidence by attentions of the most gratifying, nay, submissive kind.

Flora's young heart had poured itself out at first in a frank confession of her sorrow for her sister, and her sympathy with his circumstances; and that confession made, she hastened to share with Alicia in learning to love his interesting Lorenza.

From that day, during nearly eight weeks' stay in Ireland, Lord and Lady St. Lawrence were in constant intercourse with the family at Mount Pleasant. Flora was always their companion in their short excursions to other parts of the country, while Alicia was their dearer one in many a sweet and confidential walk round the romantic solitudes nearer her former home. Inseparable now from her husband, Lady St. Lawrence, even without design, contrived to associate herself in her gentle friend's mind with his idea; destroying thus, former associations, and gradually habituating the latter to behold without extreme emotion those tender

cares and that heart's worship lavished upon another, which had once been solely her own.

It is a strange and saddening feeling, to find ourselves secondary where we have once been first. Time alone can quite undo the habit of expectation, or screen us against the pang of disappointment.

To some persons Lord St. Lawrence's conduct may appear indelicate or inconsiderate: it was not so, however: he had a generous aim in trying to remove as quickly as possible, any bar to another attachment in Alicia's modest bosom, by accustoming her to think of him as devoted to a different object. He sought also, by his frequent conversations about Mr. Hastings, to deepen her sentiments of admiration and gratitude towards him, of whom every thing he collected from the unsuspecting Flora, seemed more demonstrative of a strong individual interest in her sister; and to see whom, he purposely lingered in Ireland.

Lord St. Lawrence's ostensible motive for desiring such a meeting, was to join

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him in winding up the affairs of the Castle Barry property. Mrs. Barry had gladly consented to allow the Earl to show his gratitude for all he owed her matchless daughter, by taking an active interest in their family honour, and he had lost no time in claiming such a privilege in a long conference with Mr. Boyle.

From this interview he learned, that all the West India estates were sold, and creditors were to be satisfied to the full amount of their proceeds, nothing more remaining to be sold; Miss Barry having vehemently protested against any allotment of income to themselves unless her father's and brother's just debts were paid. Every claimant having come in to these unavoidable conditions, they were, indeed, satisfied; but the family case was deplorable. Every hope of future competence was cut off, nay, of common comfort, unless the Castle Barry estate could be relieved from its burthens; and, restored to its original owner, secure Mrs. Barry an income of some hundreds annually, by the product of its few farms,

and by letting the house itself. How to do this, occupied Lord St. Lawrence's mind daily; for Alicia's unsubdued delicacy convinced him she would shrink from receiving too much kindness at his hands in this early stage of their altered relations to each other; yet he felt that common justice made it his duty to act as if he were indeed the son of her mother. He saw but one way of effecting his wish, which was, to purchase Castle Barry himself, at his own surveyor's valuation (tutored of course to over-value it at twice its amount), and after having by that method afforded Mrs. Barry the means of repaying Jocelyn Hastings the sums he had lent upon the mortgage, leave her in possession of an overplus, of which the interest might be sufficient for elegant privacy of life. This proposition he made; but Mr. Boyle would neither be surprised nor flattered into acting singly and precipitately. Since he found Miss Barry excluded from the confidence, Mr. Hastings must be waited for. He had first undertaken the extrication of Colonel

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Barry's family; he had been first applied to upon every subsequent difficulty, and the worthy man maintained, ought to have the compliment paid him of consultation now.

Lord St. Lawrence, though somewhat doubtful of Mr. Hastings's willingness to share the gratification with him of befriending Alicia, was obliged to yield; and a letter was despatched by Mr. Boyle, to meet his arrival in England, rendering it impossible for him to refuse crossing to Ireland, by stating the resolution of all parties to wait his coming before any important step was taken for Mrs. Barry.

Mrs. Barry herself was impatient for his coming; hoping to obtain his support of her wish to go abroad, where she secretly anticipated a return of her daughter's triumphs, and of her own consequence.

Recent misfortune had increased Mrs. Barry's capacity of sympathy, and awakened her at times to glows of gratitude never known before: but it had neither destroyed the levity of her character, nor

rooted out her pernicious passion for the world. Misfortune, indeed, can only suspend such dispositions, as bodily pain does the natural desire of joyous exercises: the pressure gone, the inclination rises again. Mrs. Barry, however, was improved: she began to have some glimmerings of better feelings towards her Creator and her fellow-creatures; in short, she thought occasionally of her duty to both. After years, and more blessed influences, were ordained to give her character deeper and more abiding impressions. At present, the aggrandizement of her children still seemed a laudable object in her opinion; and the question of an union with Lord St. Lawrence being now entirely set at rest, she seized with avidity certain prospective modes of reproducing her beautiful Alicia in new scenes, with the interest now, of a most romantic story added to her beauty.

Lady Lilias Vavasour was going to be married to a Scotch nobleman, to whom her affections had been partly engaged before she went abroad. They had met

again at the German court where her father was envoy, and purposing to return to their own country immediately after their marriage, had given Alicia the warmest invitation to join them in England, and accompany them to their magnificent residence near Edinburgh. A yet wider prospect of brilliant display was held out by a charming letter from the Princess Azorinski, in which she expressed such an earnest desire of renewing her acquaintance with Miss Barry, that she trusted if the family arrangements brought her upon the Continent, she would induce her mother to make Poland one of their objects. and in tooido

Prince and Princess Azorinski were first amongst the distinguished few whom Lord St. Lawrence had engaged to visit Grey Friars that summer; as they were the first to whom he had written the history of his painful situation, and its happy conclusion. They were amiably forward, therefore, to mark their admiration of Miss Barry's conduct, as well as their interest in her happy rival; and having

heard confusedly of her altered fortunes, knew no better way of evincing their undiminished esteem for herself, than by following their national fashion of inviting a whole family at once, for a whole season. They proposed claiming Mrs. Barry and her daughters when they themselves should have finished their visit to Grey Friars, and so conveying them in their suite to Poland; after which their English friends might go to Brussels; to which Mrs. Barry was tempted, by reports of its cheapness and pleasurableness, and by its being the temporary residence of Sir Edgar Treyor's mother and sisters.

Much and cordially as Alicia regarded Lady Lilias Vavasour, and fascinated as she had been by the Princess Azorinski, she was not inclined to accept either invitation at present. Not that she was yielding to a melancholy sense of bereavement, while every day more sensible to the brighter character of the man she had loved sincerely when less worthy of affection. Such sinful weakness was impossible to her; feeling, as she did, increas-

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ing happiness in witnessing his happiness, and growing into the tenderest friendship with his nobly confiding wife: but an awful sense of the mighty ruin from which her family were rescued, was still upon her; rendering peace and privacy more precious than all the pleasures in existence, and awakening in her that lively gratitude to Providence which constrains the heart to acts of joyful obedience.

At a future day, she felt she could better relish the renewal of her intimacy with the one, and her attraction to the other: for the immediate future she looked to the arrival of Jocelyn Hastings, the return of her beloved friends from Brazil, and the cultivation of her dearer Flora's best qualities. She felt that it was not for a bankrupt family to appear thus immediately upon the glittering scene of exalted life. They were relieved from difficulty, and removed from the probability of want hereafter; but this was effected for them by benevolent friendship and lenient creditors. They were still,

then, obliged and dependent people. In her opinion, it became such, to avoid every temptation to incur new expences and new obligations. There is a squandering of others' means, even more disgraceful and dishonest than wasting our own, since it more surely defrauds other sufferers of the relief we misuse: and impressed with that conviction, she and Flora agreed in sacrificing even the allowable wish of seeing foreign countries and dearer friends, rather than offend against this law, or expose themselves to the cruel suspicion of seeking to rebuild their fortunes by their own attractions.

Under this impression, their joint entreaty to their mother was to remain at Mount Pleasant until the summer, when its former occupants were expected; then to remove to the only place they could now call their own, an old substantial farm-house belonging to the Castle Barry property, which, by good luck and whim, had been formerly given to Flora by her father upon one of her birthdays, and which she and Alicia undertook to make

as comfortable within by their ingenuity, as its draperies of woodbines and bowers of wild roses rendered it romantic without.

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This proposal having been early made by them, Lady St. Lawrence became acquainted with it, and her earnest petition for leave to fit it up as her present of affection to its young mistress, could not after a time be resisted. So little alteration was necessary in the exterior of the picturesquely-rambling mansion, and Mrs. Barry went so seldom out in its direction, that she never heard of its great changes: even Alicia was not quite in the secret, when, all being finished, and Flora privately gone to take possession, Mrs. Barry and her eldest daughter were called for by Lady St. Lawrence in her carriage, and transported to the metamorphosed place, a sold the won

It was a lovely May evening, when, alighting at a rural wicket, they passed through an abundant orchard and sunny garden, then under a rude porch, constructed of old thorns matted with pen-

dant ivies, into a large cottage parlour, of which the pastoral plainness was evidently the effect of taste, not lack of means. Rural bouquets filled the widely-open casements and summer hearth; while at a table spread with wicker baskets of early fruits, and bowls of cream, stood Flora panting with pleasurable expectation.

Mrs. Barry was permitted to see and admire every thing up stairs and down stairs, in the dairy and out in the poultry-yard, and to return in a state of agreeable wonder to the first apartment, ere she was told that all was Flora's; and Flora on her knees had added, it was from that hour her mother's.

Mrs. Barry's heart was taken by surprise: she dropped upon a chair in a state of new and delightful emotion, quite melted; while her agitated, happy child's arms were twining round her, and Alicia's hasty kiss of Lady St. Lawrence's hand, was returned by the latter's full and fervent pressure to her more grateful heart.

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Lord St. Lawrence's share in the brief but touching scene was to look on, and feel that a whole life of amusement is not worth a single throb of conscious will to benefit another — to bless God, that he had not been left vainly wandering after enjoyment in scenes where his nature could not rest, but had thus early learned what to value, and how to seek it.

Mrs. Barry's present complacency and maternal tenderness, by entering upon their common motives for having turned Flora's farm-house into an Arcadia. She spoke of it as a mere homestead; prepared for temporary occasions whenever accident or inclination should make her friends wish to be near Mount Pleasant after its right owners returned, or to Castle Barry, when she and her lord should come there. Thus represented, Mrs. Barry delivered herself up to admiration of all the comforts, conveniences, nay, beauties around her.

She partook of Flora's sylvan feast with revived spirits, pledging Lord St. Law-

rence in a glass of syllabub, and afterwards strolling out with him into the little garden; where the stumps of some pollard trees scattered about under the shade of several lilac bushes, offering seats and a sort of arbour, invited the party to sit down and watch the sunset.

There, for some time their attention was mutually challenged to approve things already done, and observe the capacity of the place for future improvement. The garden sloped prettily down to a rapid little stream of the clearest water, and though a bridle-road passed close by one side of it, was otherwise sweetly secluded. At present, its gayest ornaments were the apple blossoms of the orchard bordering it on one hand, and the hawthorn hedge on the other; but there were plenty of June roses ready to blow after the fruit blossoms and spring tulips were over; and the space which had once been devoted to kitchen vegetables was now in training for a fairy lawn. Mrs. Barry owned it was a sweet

spot. Flora animatedly echoed her sentiment.

Alicia had seated herself between Lord and Lady St. Lawrence, gazing round upon every object, and then at them, with a blessed stillness of personal feeling which surprised herself. For she was reflecting that so bloomed tulips and apple trees—so smelt lilacs and sweetbriar—such was the very month, when, a year before, she had gone (expecting to be its mistress) to see Grey Friars with him who now sate by her side the husband of another.

What a difference between the two places! What a changed destiny! From a palace, almost to a shed in comparison! From a splendid and joyful marriage, to singleness and seclusion!

A few weeks before, the comparison might have suffused her eyes with sorrowful tears. It had no such power now: she was alive only to a deep and enduring sense of Heaven's mercies in every dispensation. She felt convinced, that,

however saddened at present, her lot would eventually be happier: she saw that Providence was restoring her to her earliest objects of desire, and so taking away that painful dread both of herself and her situation, which threatened to embitter even the purest enjoyments promised by an union with Lord St. Lawrence. Gratitude, present gratitude, silenced regret for withered affections. She could even look forward to the time, when memory, like melancholy music, would have its sweetness; when the sacred conviction of having by a bounden act of duty made two beloved persons happy, would be unalloyed by a single frail regret. val ne seine vm to anO "

As these thoughts were passing through her mind, Lord St. Lawrence was looking with pure admiration at her and at his wife. They were sitting together with hands clasped in each other's, presenting to the eye of taste the loveliest specimens of dark and fair beauty; to the heart's eye, the most perfect models

been so much interior. Her dovelike

of embodied virtue; realising some poet or sculptor's vision, of day's and night's twin-genii.

As Lady St. Lawrence's eyes eloquently settled upon the evening star where it trembled through a fleece of clouds, her husband whispered her to sing: it was the first time since their arrival in Waterford that he had done so; and no other person having presumed to make such a request, her boasted voice was yet to be heard.

"What shall it be?" asked his happy wife, with a smile at once blissful and touching, for it was full of remembrances.

"One of my arias in days past? or our nightly hymn at the conservatorio?"

Alicia felt the delicacy of Lord St. Lawrence's conduct upon this occasion, and the nobleness of Lorenza's: both were eager to efface a painful sense of present inequality from the minds of their obliged companions, by reverting to a period in which one of themselves had been so much inferior. Her dove-like

eyes, like some sweet stream reflecting, and softening as it reflected, the starry heaven, returned the expressive sensibility of Lady St. Lawrence's with a smile of affecting acknowledgment, when Lord St. Lawrence decided for the hymn.

It was a still evening: neither the trees nor the water were heard to move. The very air seemed pausing to hear a

voice unequalled by human organ.

Lorenza slowly unclosed her lips, and poured forth a tide of such melodious and thrilling sounds,—so rich, so swelling, yet so soft, so tender, and subduing,—so fervidly rapturous at one moment, and so humbly suppliant the next,—that it might have been fancied the adoration of a blessed spirit on the threshold of heaven. Her voice, the strains, the sacred subject, the deepening skies, and the solitary evening star, suggested another imagination: it was impossible not to think of those who, watching their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem, beheld a brighter star and heard a heavenly host.

Earth and earthly things were, indeed,

all forgotten by the sisters, when after that sweet breath had died away (leaving them fixed in rapt and wondering gaze upon the lips whence such sounds had issued), Lord St. Lawrence, unfixing his eyes, looked forward, and met those of a stranger on horseback, from whom the low hedge bordering the bridle-path, alone divided the party in the garden. The vivid expression of admiration in the fine countenance of the horseman was immediately displaced by confusion: his very brow suffused, as he apologised for the seeming impertinence - naming Lord St. Lawrence by hazard, and announcing himself as Jocelyn Hastings, on his way to Mount Pleasant. Alicia's start of joyful surprise at the sound of his voice, and Flora's wilder cry of pleasure, increased his embarrassment by adding to his agitation, so that grateful for the sheltering excuse afforded by his mode of encountering friends he was going to seek, he went on apologising to Lady St. Lawrence for his intrusion.

A few words of animated welcome soon

made him quit his horse, and hasten round to the house. Mrs. Barry received him with childish hilarity, telling him the history of Flora's farm; and adding, with a foolish air of exultation, that it had just been settled Lord and Lady St. Lawrence were to inhabit it for the short remaining period of their visit to Ireland. The Earl instantly claimed his consequent right to invite another friend to share Flora's hospitality, and entreated Mr. Hastings would therefore become his guest while in the neighbourhood of Mount Pleasant. Hastings was not yet present to himself, and he had accepted the frank invitation, ere he had considered whether it were right or wrong to do so. Further introduction was as unnecessary as longer consideration was now impossible: the deepest interests attracted Lord St. Lawrence and him to each other; and the countenances of both, announced their mutual wish of fathoming each other's character. Jocelyn's heart was full of Alicia, without reference to himself. He was powerfully struck by the

gracefulness of Lord St. Lawrence's manner, and knew not how to believe such a man could be easily resigned; but one agitated glance satisfied him that Alicia's spirit was tranquillising; that she had nobly borne the sharp trial of seeing him daily devoted to another. The smile on her lips was somewhat tinctured with mournfulness; but her figure had regained its delicate symmetry, her complexion its fine though fainter blending of white and carnation: above all, that redundant hair, always an object of partial admiration to him, and which he had last seen neglected in sad carelessness, was now shining in braid and ringlet as it was wont in days of old. an anaro an high arow it redictive

Although Hastings looked aside the next instant, and hurryingly addressed Flora, Lord St. Lawrence required no interpreter of the unsteady colour in his cheek: he had penetrated his secret. Till now, the Earl had been harassed by the fear of finding this supposed generous lover ignoble or unpleasing in person, and, however admirable in mind, frigid or

awkward in his address. How agreeable, therefore, was his surprise, to discover, as he fancied, under the curb of an habitually-acting principle, sensibilities naturally more impetuous even than his own; — to hear tempered expressions uttered in tones which betrayed deep and various degrees of feeling; —and to see a countenance mingling the loftiest aspirations, the warmest affections, and the gentlest humility, with the look of widely-exercised intellect!

From this moment his resolution was taken to use every honest means of procuring him the heart which he knew his virtues merited; since in his hands alone Lord St. Lawrence felt he could, with a brother's joy, confidently place the heart and happiness of one now dear as a favourite sister.

It would be needless to detail at length the circumstances and confidential conversations which, in the course of something less than a fortnight, fully acquainted Lord St. Lawrence and Jocelyn Hastings with each other's characters; laying the

ndation of a friendship, amounting to brotherhood, which death only could dissolve on earth. On one subject, however, ordinary delicacy, and individual repugnance to such a theme with such a person, withheld Hastings's confidence:he never mentioned Alicia to him, except as he spoke of Flora, with guarded interest. Upon Lady St. Lawrence's character he lavished those warm sentiments of regard and admiration, which he feared to indulge towards another. He was pleased to trace her charitable ministry in remote places, where Alicia's feet could not take her, and where her hand would have been too short for efficient relief. He heard of her in the poorest cabins, where her "word in season" was often recommended by her former profession of the same religion with their ragged tenants; and where she was as tenderly helpful as when a humble Sister of Mercy. Nay more, he saw marks of her judicious benevolence, — work, with liberal recompense, for the young and able; money, clothing, and medical aid,

for the sick and old,—even little children were spinners and weavers for the bountiful and blessed English lady.

After such discoveries, Hastings always poured out his feelings upon them to Alicia, justly believing, that every testimony to Lady St. Lawrence's right use of the portion resigned to her would be grateful to her, who thus saw her self-sacrifice blessed to others. Alicia loved the subject; and while her language kindled with her heart, little suspected that when Hastings spoke of Lorenza, he was meanwhile impressed to pain, with a stronger sense of her exceeding nobleness.

He deemed it greater in the one to be without envy, than for the other to have no jealousy. Assuredly, it was a brighter proof of Christian character, to support firmly, yet meekly, loss of fortune and station, — nay, to bear the yoke of many obligations with willing gladness; — than to use the large gifts of gracious Heaven, in a spirit of generous and joyful gratitude.

To relieve Alicia from part of this

distressing weight, nay, indeed, to give stability to the present comforts of her family, he did not resist Lord St. Lawrence's proposal of purchasing Castle Barry, and so empowering Mrs. Barry to repay him the amount of the mortgages. He would willingly have beggared himself for each and all of them, so truly did he love one; but he felt that even if duty did not command him to regain the power of befriending others, delicate affection would dictate the act.

Arrangements having been previously made, and writings waiting only for Mr. Hastings's friendly sanction, business was speedily concluded; and Castle Barry became the property of one in whose hands every individual attached to it knew it would be respected. Mrs. Barry, now assured she was in possession of six hundred a year from funded property, began eagerly consulting with her familiar friend, as Hastings's indulgent mode of enforcing duties hard of exercise to her made her call him. She would fain have gone at once to Brussels, where

the residence of Sir Edgar Trevor's mother and sisters tempted her; but he said so much in favour of a settled home, of the claims of friends and country, of Flora's impressible age, the possible effect of foreign habits, if not of foreign principles, upon her young mind; above all, of a mother's duty (Mrs. Barry's especially, who had felt so bitterly the misery which the world's admiration had caused her favourite daughter), that she had not the hardihood to resist his reasonings. She agreed not to think of expatriating herself before she had tried living in her own home some months longer. She was, however, not to be deterred from accepting Lady St. Lawrence's invitation to meet Prince and Princess Azorinski at Grey Friars in the autumn, much inclined to go, if they pressed it, back to Poland in their suite, and to have the dazzling honour of spending the winter in a palace at Warsaw. At the present moment, her anticipations were clouded by those miserable vanities, which we are so apt to think as unimportant as

weeds, to find them, alas! as rapid in increase, and as difficult to extirpate. The coroneted carriage in which she had often been seen by the side of the Countess St. Lawrence was going away, leaving her to the humble accommodation of a jaunting car, with her daughters only for associates. Hastings, too, was going; he gladly seized the opportunity offered by Lord St. Lawrence of accompanying them to Dublin, and thence crossing with them to Holyhead. His duty in Ireland was done; and even his more ardent and struggling passion for Alicia could not render him rebellious to the voice of other duties. He knew that he ought not to slumber in the field he had chosen; and as the promised living was not yet vacant, he determined to take a gratuitous curacy as near his young friend Mr. West as possible.

To remain in the vicinity of Mount Pleasant after his fellow-visitors were gone, when he would be so much oftener alone with Alicia, would be to tempt his fate. He felt, that to be always silent upon the subject of a virtuous passion, which no other man had a right to quell, would be impossible; yet perceiving distinctly where Mrs. Barry's wishes pointed, knowing his own limited means, and aware that he would abhor the idea of presuming upon any claim to gratitude, he saw with anguish that he must let the cup pass from his lip, or seize it at the expence of every generous and just feeling. Formerly a higher principle stood between him and his affection: now it was only a sentiment—a delicacy inseparable from genuine love: but what mighty force is there in such a sentiment!

While there had remained the shadow of engagement between Alicia and Lord St. Lawrence, Hastings had been fortified against himself, by considering it as sacred: but that tie for ever loosed,—her very affections set free,—seeing her every day,—thinking of her past trials and her brightened excellencies,—meeting looks from her of the most disordering kindness,—and conscious that her individual tastes pointed exactly to such a

life as he could share with her,—his whole frame of being was thrown into tumults, so that he felt himself rapidly falling into that bondage of heart which turns a servant of the Highest and Holiest into the slave of a frail creature.

the slave of a frail creature.

If then he frequently left Alicia's side to ramble away alone, resisting some sudden impulse to speak of his hidden feelings, it would be long ere he could still the throbbing pulses of hope and transport. Sometimes he yielded to their over-mastering power; fancying what might have been his lot, had his uncle's fortune come to him uninjured, and he able to have gained her heart, with her parents' sanction, ere they thought of Lady Donnington. It was a visionary paradise which he then shaped to himself, into which the vain world did not enter: its occupations, the enhobling offices of his sacred profession; its enjoyments, the exercised affections of two hearts yielding their first fruits to the gracious Giver, then pouring out in deeds of love and charity to friends, kindred,

neighbours. But would those hearts, thus early and blissfully joined, have yielded their first fruits where he rashly presumed they would? Was there no danger, that, flooded by happiness, those promised oblations would never spring up for offering? Was it never known that what had been ordained for sacrifice, was turned into an idol? Hastings could not but reply to such bosom questioning, that results like these were too probable. His passionate sensibilities, more devoted to their objects, perhaps less selfish than those of Lord St. Lawrence, tended to idolatry; and therefore required, he thought, the discipline of longer subjection and deeper disappointment. There were moments when Hastings found himself capable of quenching both the hopes and the pangs awakened by a casual unwitnessed meeting with Alicia, by an immediate submission to the conviction, that a solitary life was his allotted portion; and then he would return into her presence calmed and elevated; but he so much oftener bore the marks of recent suffering in his pale countenance, that

Alicia remarked it, nay, acquired the habit of waiting anxiously for his re-appearance, her thoughts meanwhile unavoidably occupied with him alone. A H S bloom with

Hastings took the opportunity of announcing his intention of going away with Lord and Lady St. Lawrence, when he was walking with Mrs. Barry and her daughters to the ferme ornée, as the former chose to call Flora's little estate. It was the last day its present occupants were to be there, and they had invited these chosen friends to spend it with them. He named his purpose to Mrs. Barry, as being the one to whom he could speak of it with the least chance of becoming affected. He tried to speak slightly of his departure; but his manner was so agitated, and the intimation so sudden, that Alicia concluded he had received some distressing letter, connected with this abrupt farewell, and she could not directly observe upon it. bes made

Mrs. Barry exclaimed at the desolation they would be left in, and Flora pathetically remonstrated against the necessity.

of such a hasty departure. As Alicia passed last through a gate he was holding open, she looked up at him with eyes completely suffused. "I cannot speak of our own loss in you, dear Mr. Hastings-I am so grieved to see you leaving us in such sad spirits. May I not claim almost a sister's privilege in saying how often I have watched your altered looks of late with sorrowful interest?" They were going through the gate as she spoke, so that he could not escape the observation of her earnest gaze. His changes of colour were as quick and startling as lightning flashes. He attempted a smile, by way of denying her penetration, but his lips only quivered. "O that tears and true hearts could help our friends when they are afflicted!" she resumed artlessly, finding he could not, or would not speak - " we have nothing else now." And her voice melted away.

Hastings was turning upon her with a disordered repetition of her own words, and with a countenance and tone which must have betrayed his secret; but suffo-

cating the forbidden avowal, he drew a long struggling breath, which might, perhaps, be construed into a sigh, and inarticulately thanking her, abruptly called Flora to assist him in getting a bouquet of field-flowers.

Again the vision of a feeling for herself crossed Alicia, as it had done just before their last parting, yet why she knew not: he had said nothing, looked nothing, she thought, which justified so vain an imagination; and crimsoning at her own presumption, without pausing to ask whether it pained or gratified her, she decided that Jocelyn Hastings did not wish for sympathy, and that his distress had, therefore, no relation to her or hers.

Under this impression, she forbore any further expression of her interest, leaving him and Flora to loiter behind, seeking wild flowers; the one still lamenting, the other trying to jest away affectionate reproaches. She went forward by the side of her mother, pensively hearkening

to her repeated wishes, that "they were all going away together."

Soon after joining their friends at the farm, the two gentlemen went out on horseback to take leave of pensioners; Lady St. Lawrence establishing her party in the garden with books, work, and guitars. They had spent an hour there in alternate conversation and occupation, Flora being Lady St. Lawrence's scholar in music, when the horsemen returned. At their going out, Alicia had observed with pleasure the brotherly ease and affection of their manner to each other; what then was her painful surprise to notice, on their re-appearance, a change in both! Hastings looked distressed and harassed, Lord St. Lawrence mortified or offended. The latter came up to the female party, as if to avoid his late companion, rather than with any purpose of seeking amusement; for even Flora's vivid questions, to which he was wont to give particular attention, were slightly noticed by him.

Alicia had seen Lord St. Lawrence in

such moods, when she herself was the object of them: they were rare even then, and she knew were always occasioned by some strong resentment of real or fancied opposition to intended kindness upon his side. Something, therefore, had gone wrong between him and the companion of his ride. She looked towards Lady St. Lawrence, and saw her speaking eyes fixed enquiringly upon her lord. Hastings was pale and silent, yet not coldly so; it was the silence of a man more than pitying and pardoning the infirmity of another, — entering into it, and grieving at having called it forth.

Every one having some slight alteration to make in their dress, Lady St. Lawrence soon proposed returning into the house for that purpose. As Hastings drew back to let Alicia pass between him and a rose-bush, she saw his generally-commanded features relaxed into an expression of extreme sadness; she even thought his eyes were suffused almost to overflowing. They were, indeed, so blinded, or his hand so tremulous, that

he could with difficulty disentangle a part of her drapery from the thorns of the bush. At sight of such emotion, a question hovered upon her lips; but something of unwonted cowardice deterred her from frankly uttering what she would have said, and she passed on:

It may not be denied, that her toilet was mechanically made; she neither saw herself nor her ornaments (flowers culled by her fond sister), so wholly were her thoughts absorbed by uneasy conjectures of what could have occurred between Lord St. Lawrence and Hastings, to disturb their former harmony. Recalling Lord St. Lawrence's evident chafe of temper, and suspecting, therefore, that his aptitude to take fire at those he loved best was yet unsubdued, she acknowledged, for the first time since their engagement had terminated, that she would have felt this infirmity to agony, had she been his wife, and would have wanted that addition of firmness to her gentleness, which seemed likely to give his Lorenza the power of controlling it.

These conclusions were strengthened at dinner, when she saw Lord St. Lawrence appear with a renewed aspect, and his admirable wife with a full sunshine in hers. The Earl spoke and looked at Hastings with a frank cordiality which testified his reliance upon the other's instant oblivion of an unkindness; and Hastings's manner showed how deeply he felt, how warmly he acknowledged the grateful tribute. Yet Hastings was not himself the whole remainder of the day; he was often lost in thought, and when he met any one's eyes, coloured and started, as if fancying he had been long looked at, and his abstraction speculated upon. Alicia was harassed by her irrepressible desire to know what had happened between the friends, since, from the manner of one, she could not help fearing it had gone to his heart, when only ruffling the temper of the other. Her surmise was confirmed, upon seeing him and Lady St. Lawrence gradually withdraw from the party after they had all wandered out into the garden, and walk far beyond

its precincts. She could see them at a distance in serious talk; they turned back, and separated in the orchard. His movements were full of emotion; for he scarcely allowed himself time to open the garden wicket for his companion, ere he hurried away.

Lady St. Lawrence made no other comment upon her own singular act of so walking with, and so parting with Mr. Hastings, than that he was going to prolong his walk; and being soon after joined by her Lord and Mrs. Barry, who had been sitting apart together, whilst Alicia and Flora were preparing a strawberry feast under the shade of a walnuttree, the usual current of conversation was attempted to be set flowing. The attempt failed; even Mrs. Barry was, as might be expected, on this last evening, thoughtful and out of spirits. Flora's were quite gone. Music was then resorted to, at once to exhaust and calm awakened feeling. Lady St. Lawrence's resistless voice once more awakened the sleeping echoes, making night's stillness

handmaid to solemn and sweet melodies, and unfettering the soul from every thought which did not tend heavenward. It ceased, and Alicia was again sensible to the prolonged absence of Hastings. He was to go on the morrow, and this willing waste of so much time, which might have been spent with grateful friends, seemed a little unkind. The idea depressed her, and she was glad to shake the impression off, by going back with Lady St. Lawrence to look at an effect of the moon on the water, to which her Lord had just taken the former for a moment after her last song.

"You will not see Mr. Hastings again," Lady St. Lawrence began, as they got beyond reach of other hearing; "he could not stand the pain of a regular parting."

"Not see him again!" Alicia repeated in a tone she was unconscious of, evidently forgetting, in her own thrill of disappointment, his implied strong feeling.

"Are you sufficiently interested in Mr. Hastings to wish I should tell you why he could not stand it?"

Alicia, awakened to strange expectation by the peculiar manner of her companion, could barely say, that every thing about such a friend was interesting to her.

Lady St. Lawrence's story was briefly, but effectively told. She had drawn Mr. Hastings's secret from him, in her purposed ramble, by her own noble frankness, and by a determined affectionateness, which would not be denied. That secret had been his only reason for refusing, during his ride with her Lord, the presentation to a fine living close to Castle Barry, which the possessor had gladly agreed to exchange for one in England in the gift of the St. Lawrence family. Her lord, the blushing Lorenza confessed, suspecting the existence of such a reason, was wounded for the moment by his friend's want of confidence in him; and being himself restrained by delicacies which Alicia would understand, had not ventured to probe him further. It was her lot, she added, to be untrammelled by circumstances, and using the privilege of

her sex and situation as the most happy of wives, had extorted from Mr. Hastings the confession of what it was he shunned, and why he shunned it. She had then undertaken to discover, first, whether Mrs. Barry would listen to such a proposal for her daughter; and, if successful there, then to lay open his heart to Alicia.

Lord St. Lawrence, she said, had spoken to Mrs. Barry that very evening, and, though vehemently prohibited by Hastings's instructions from urging as obligations upon the Barry family what he maintained to have been precious indulgences of his own selfish wishes, had finally prevailed in convincing her that, if her child's happiness were her object, nothing was so likely to insure it as an union with such an admirable person. Hastings already possessed in the sum lately repaid him, enough to settle upon a wife; he was offered a living immediately of large income; and deserved preferment was assured to him, not only by the friendship of Sir Richard West, but by the never-ending gratitude of Lord

St. Lawrence himself, who owed to him the preservation of a family with whom his interests must always remain identified. However convinced, or persuaded, or awed, certain it is that Mrs. Barry had agreed finally to sanction whatever decision her daughter might make.

Lady St. Lawrence did not pause to ask that decision then—she knew woman's heart too well—but hastened on to array every argument in her client's favour, and to make her trembling hearer sensible that her own generosity would be incomplete if she refused to think of Hastings with a wish to regard him more tenderly. While she remained unappropriated in heart to one worthy of it, Lorenza said, neither of the two she had nobly restored to each other could be perfectly happy.

Long before Lady St. Lawrence had concluded, Alicia was weeping violently. She had listened for some time in silent, increasing agitation—amazed, thrilled, penetrated, overcome by a succession of unexpected disclosures. Testimonies

crowded upon her that Hastings had loved her from childhood with deep and long-enduring passion; struggling, yet self-denying and self-conquering, giving its strongest proof of purity and intensity at the moment when she was about to bestowherself upon another; yet as resolute afterwards in subduing itself when only opposed by the delicacy of dreading to

expect any thing from obligation.

When she remembered all that had passed between them previous to his first misconceived departure from Castle Barry, at a time when, she now felt, she would joyfully have listened to his pleaded passion, her whole heart was melted. She thought of what he must have suffered then and since; drinking drop after drop of bitterness when in her company, while watching that sadness in her of which he knew another was the cause. At these times she was conscious that not even his looks had ever spoken to her of himself; her sorrow alone was in those generous eyes.

It was impossible that, under the sud-

den pressure of such thoughts, affected by the nobleness, the delicacy, and the consistent principles of her first and dearest associate, she should be alive to any minor feeling. She forgot, indeed, the short time which had elapsed since her heart had been left free by Lord St. Lawrence's marriage, and equally unmindful of Hastings's present means or future prospects,—thinking only of himself, and regretting that she had ever loved another,—she threw herself upon the neck of Lady St. Lawrence in a paroxysm of yielding and admiring tenderness.

That Hastings did not depart on the morrow after this scene, may be supposed, and that Lord St. Lawrence had the delight of putting Alicia's trembling hand into his more trembling one ere he himself bade a temporary farewell to green Erin, may further be inferred. Hastings was henceforward to live in Ireland; and, although the revival of feminine scruples made Alicia refuse to bestow herself entirely upon him ere

some months were over, his equally grateful and devoted heart was ready to serve even Jacob's term for such a wife.

The remaining part of this history is quickly summed up. pulled rottim you

After crossing to England, and resuming her bonds of intimacy with former friends under the roof of Lord St. Lawrence, Alicia finally yielded herself and her whole heart to the first object of her early unconscious preference. His residence, a delightful vicarage in a romantic country, was within easy rides of Mount Pleasant, then inhabited by the returned M° Manus family — of Castle Barry, often the resort of Lord and Lady St. Lawrence and other friends in their train,and of her mother, who was gradually beguiled to live on at Flora's farm by a succession of real gratifications, new hopes, and improving feelings.

Flora's marriage, at seventeen, with Sir Edgar Trevor, whose regiment came into quarters near there, promised Mrs. Barry an ample share of the world; but Providence had a greater blessing in

store for her than such a revival of ancient folly. An accident happened to her the very day after the ceremony, which, throwing her upon the tender care of Alicia for a long period, finally settled her at the vicarage of Roscranna for life.

The youthful Sir Edgar having amused himself long enough with the toy of the military profession (for to gallant spirits it is a toy in time of peace), quitted it upon his marriage, and established himself upon his patrimonial estate, a noble property in the county adjoining to Grey-Friars. Thus brought together by neighbourhood and connection, Lord and Lady St. Lawrence set the early-matched pair an example how to unite the pleasant with the principled: how to be at once popular and domestic.

Lady St. Lawrence was too admirable even outwardly, not to be courted much more by general society than she could endure without weariness: but she paid all the lawful penalties of her high station with cheerful, grateful submission; and her lord ever retained sufficient of his

original character, to enjoy admiration bestowed justly upon the woman he loved. Lady Donnington and Alicia never met again; for having attempted to put down Lady St. Lawrence by declining an invitation to Grey Friars because Princess Azorinski was there, Alicia paid her last tribute to former hospitalities and seeming kindness, by a letter only.

From the hour in which that happyhearted foreigner joined forces with the English peer's Italian wife, Lady Donnington's fashion declined: as every body tried to be of Lady St. Lawrence's acquaintance, partly because of her romantic history, partly because her disinclination to a large circle rendered her intimacy a distinction. Lord Lewis Rivers gave the death-blow to his former idol, by seceding from that professed disintestered dedication of himself to her alone, which had hitherto been one of her prime glories. Necessity obliged him; and after two refusals, his hand was at length accepted by the sole heiress of an enormously rich tradesman! It is but

justice to say, that the only person who gave a sincere sigh to the fall of the arbitrary Lady Donnington was her former rival, Princess Azorinski, who pitied her mortification, while contemning its cause; and whose amiable nature found the higher lessons she learned by strict friendship with such women as Lorenza and Alicia, easy as delightful. Flora's pretty ferme ornée yearly attracted herself and her husband from their finer place in England to the wilder haunts of neglected Ireland. Taste and affection led them constantly to Roscranna; finding there all that the unsophisticated heart of man can desire - all that is good for the best of men - much more than may be safely trusted to imperfect ones.

"An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven."

Such was the earthly destiny of Alicia, dearer to her than all she had resigned of pomp, place, and power: blessed to her by the full and grateful conviction, that

she never could have been so happy with any other companion of life as the one to whom many sorrows had led her; and endeared by the belief that in none could she have so joyfully fulfilled the will of Him who appoints to each their duty with their station.

If sometimes the passing visitant of sweet Roscranna marvelled at the brightness and beauty of the fair creature he found buried as it might seem in its shades and seclusion, he had only to look round on the lovely spot itself, embellished by her taste; to enter the cabins, and see what share she took in her Hastings's ministry; then to look upon that Hastings's eloquent countenance, and acknowledge that she was not buried, not wasting her youth and bloom unseen, unvalued, unprofitably; but dedicating them to what they were created for, to a husband worthy of love and obedience, and to the service of her Creator, by benefiting his creatures.

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