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THE

WARD OF DELAMERE.

A TALE.

THE

WARD OF DELAMERE,

A Tale.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PINCHARD,

Author of "Mystery and Confidence, the Blind Child, &c."

Inscribed, by Permission, to

MRS. G. A. ROBINSON.

"Then gently scan your brother man,
"Still gentler sister woman,
"Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
"To step aside is human;
"One point must still be greatly dark;
"The moving, why they do it,
"And just as lamely can we mark
"How far, perhaps, they rue it.
"Who made the heart, 'tis he alone
"Decidedly can try us;
"He knows each chord, its various tone;
"Each spring, its various bias;
"Then at the balance let be mute,
"We never can adjust it;
"What's done we partly may compute,
"But know not what's resisted."—BURNS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR BLACK, PARRY, & CO.
Booksellers to the East India Company,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

1813.

605.

TO

MRS. GEORGE ABERCROMBIE ROBINSON,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

Are, with the highest Respect and Esteem,

MOST GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

HER SINCERELY OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT

FRIEND AND SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Taunton, 1815.

THE

WARD OF DELAMERE.

CHAP. I.

IN one of the most picturesque parts of Cumberland, stood an ancient mansion, belonging to the Delamere family. Its extensive and castellated walls rose with majestic grandeur on the acclivity of a hill, commanding a view of varied beauty and sublimity; through the valley below the river Eden rolled its transparent waters, sometimes rapid and with difficulty pent within its banks; in other places spreading itself into a calm expanse; now its beautiful banks fringed with alders, or surmounted by lofty elms; now foaming over broken rocks or losing itself behind romantic mountains, whence again

emerging it pursued its accelerated course towards the sea. From the windows of the mansion the Solway Frith was discernible, and in clear weather the white sails on its surface gave new life to the picture.

The house was surrounded by an extensive park, where trees, which for centuries had remained untouched by the axe, stood in fine clumps near the house, and on the outskirts of the park assumed the character of noble woods.

Every thing here was on a grand scale, but every thing was solitary; no chearful cottages arose within the precincts of the proud domain; no right of way through the park permitted the accidental passenger to enjoy its beauties; and even the husbandmen, whose actual employments on the estate obliged them to pass through it, ceased their accustomed song, and scarcely daring to lift an eye towards the proud walls of the castle, hastened on as quickly as possible, as if its silent grandeur in-

spired an awe that was even oppressive.

The interior of this abode was equally grand, and equally cheerless; its inhabitants, at the time this narrative begins, consisted of its Lord, a little girl, and her governess, attended by a numerous train of old servants; the men (except Lord Ennersdale's own gentleman) all wearing the ancient livery of the Delamere family, with the old-fashioned shoulder-knot, and coloured lace, marking the length of time which had elapsed since it was chosen; and the females in the same costume as they had worn in their youth, which, joined to their faded countenances and solemn steps, made them look like so many antique portraits walked out of their frames, and gliding about the house under the influence of enchantment. The governess had indeed been permitted to continue the mode of dress which she wore when she first entered the walls of Delamere castle, about ten

years before, when she had been recommended to Lord Ennersdale, to superintend the management, and afterwards the education of the little girl above-mentioned, (at that time not quite two years old,) who was considered as an orphan, his ward and relation, but in what degree, no one appeared to know, for her birth had been attended by circumstances of mystery and distress, and those circumstances the servants who remembered them had been strictly prohibited from ever mentioning, or, if possible, even thinking of; tremendous, however, as was the frown of Lord Ennersdale, absolute as his power over his household seemed to be, "th' illimitable mind" was still beyond his reach; his servants dared to remember, dared to think, and the effect of those remembrances, of those thoughts, shewed itself in the most respectful observance, the most affectionate, though silent attentions towards the lovely little Magdalena.

Lord Ennersdale's family name was Delamere, the title had descended to him about ten years before from a distant branch. He was now a man on the verge of seventy; his grey hair shaded his majestic forehead,—a forehead designed by nature to mark the possessor of a great mind; but by the influence of temper long indulged, of power, not to say tyranny, long unrestrained, it was furrowed by lines, which though they destroyed not its commanding character, gave it a semblance of harshness and severity, which almost made the beholder tremble; his large bright grey eyes, full of fire, whose every glance seemed to penetrate the beholder's inmost thoughts; his acquiline nose, and a mouth never seen to smile, (except with bitterness and contempt,) "*as if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit, that could be moved to smile at any thing,*" completed the imposing cast of his countenance; his complexion, from the extreme tempe-

rance and regularity of his life, retained the freshness of youth, and his colour varied with the varying changes of his powerful mind; his person was tall and large, and scarcely the slightest bend shewed the influence of age.

Magdalena, however remotely related to Lord Ennersdale, possessed, like him, a fine and varying complexion, which changed with every emotion; her hair of the brightest chesnut, fell in redundant ringlets round a forehead, fair, open and majestic like his, but softer and more feminine in its character; her eyes were of the brightest hazel: once, one of the old servants had whispered in her hearing that *they were the colour of her mother's;* but from whom had Magdalena stolen that smile of mingled sweetness and spirit which animated her lovely mouth, and lighted up every feature? That smile seldom indeed displayed in Lord Ennersdale's presence, and if ever daring to shew itself, soon shut in by the encreased

peevishness and haughty rejection which it always seemed to provoke in him. Her figure was of fairy lightness, and when absent from her guardian, every motion was agile, elastic, and graceful; when with him the grace indeed remained, but the little creature's movements were gentle and measured, rather by what she knew of his wishes than by the sudden impulses of youthful spirit, in a mind quick in its decisions and naturally prompt in action. Hours did she spend sitting on a low stool at the feet of Lord Ennersdale, either learning her lessons or employed with her needle, at which, from a very early age, he had insisted on her being taught to be expert; during these hours not a word escaped the lips of either; Magdalena was early taught not to speak to Lord Ennersdale unless he spoke to her; sometimes indeed, he would ask her questions respecting her studies, and her sensible answers, conveyed in the softest and most harmonious tone

of voice, would induce him to unbend a little from his usual gloomy majesty; but, if during the conversation she looked up at him with that smile of sweet and singular expression, he spoke no more, except in a harsh voice to bid her cease chattering; or, when she spoke to him, to be serious and not smile, for *he hated smiling conceited children.* Any one would have thought that the unvarying sweetness with which the affectionate little creature bore all the changes of his humour; the patience with which she endured hours of stillness and silence, (so little suited to her age and character) might have won his tenderest affections; but the affections of Lord Ennersdale (even if they were excited) went not out in words of love or actions of kindness; no tender kiss, no playful moment ever told Magdalena that she was dear to him, but if in the slightest instance she offended, severe indeed were her punishments; and days would pass in

which he would not even speak to her, although sometimes she knew not, or could guess in what she had offended.

The masters who came from Carlisle to teach Magdalena those accomplishments in which Lord Ennersdale wished her to excel, gave their lessons in his lordships presence, and she was always either with him or Mrs. Dennis, often with both, except at those hours, when in wet weather she was allowed to amuse herself in a large apartment appropriated to her own use, or in fine, (and oh! how ardently did Magdalena long for fine weather!) in the pleasure-grounds adjacent to the castle; there she was permitted to run and play alone, for her governess whose health was infirm was not able to attend her, and the servants were never suffered to approach, or speak to her. Once in the open air, the birds alone, whom her quick motions startled from the branches, could outstrip her almost winged

speed, or the alacrity with which she bounded from walk to walk.

Her own garden, her aviary occupied the time so delightfully, that she hardly could suppose half her play hours were elapsed when the signal of recall was given. This signal partook of the singularity which characterized every circumstance appertaining to Magdalena. To avoid the necessity of sending a servant to her, three distinct strokes on the great dinner-bell, announced either that Lord Ennersdale chose she should return to the house, or that the time allotted for her amusement was elapsed; instantly, though with regret, she obeyed the summons, and during the silent hours which succeeded, her memory was employed, and her lively fancy engaged, in retracing the happy moments just past, or anticipating new plans of joy and liberty for the next day.

Often, as she advanced in age, it occurred to Magdalena, that she had never heard who her father and mother were,

and as her mind opened it struck her as extraordinary that she was never called by any other name than that of Magdalena; she observed, that the few persons whom she saw, and all of whom she read, had at least two names; one of these she knew was given in baptism, how the other was obtained she did not clearly understand; she reflected much on this subject, for Magdalena was accustomed to reflect long without asking questions. Lord Ennersdale seldom would answer her, Mrs. Dennis often could not. Mrs. Dennis was a worthy woman, her person plain, her manners gentle, her language moderately correct, her mind indifferently cultivated, but her principles were excellent, and her heart tender and affectionate; she was only calculated to have the care of Magdalena's personal accommodations, and to teach her needle-work; in fact, she was that something between a nurse and a governess, for which the English have no

name, but which the French call *la bonne*, and by that appellation Lord Ennersdale in moments of peevishness often called her, nothing however offended her so grievously; for generally she endured his lordship's ill-humour with silent patience, or at most, only murmured when she had left his presence, at the dullness and ennui every one who inhabited Delamere must experience.

It may perhaps appear extraordinary, that Magdalena should be uninformed of a circumstance so universally known, as the manner in which family names are derived from one generation to another; but of how many things in the insulated situation in which she lived, must she have been unavoidably ignorant? Many things are learnt and familiarly known in an intercourse with the world, of which we ourselves cannot ascertain the first attainment, or by what means we acquired them. Magdalena was called by Lord Ennersdale

simply by that name; by Mrs. Dennis, Miss Magdalena; by the servants, in speaking of her, their young lady, and by her masters, Ma'am, or Mademoiselle; till she was twelve or thirteen, she scarcely observed that she was never called by any surname, and would still have imagined it was nothing extraordinary, if she had not accidentally heard her governess say, that before her marriage she was called Miss Parslow, and prevailed on her to explain that before marriage girls were called by their father's surname, and afterwards by that of their husband's. "And what," said Magdalena, "was my father's name, for I never heard it?" "Indeed, Miss, I do not know," answered Mrs. Dennis, with some confusion; but this "*I do not know*," was so often Mrs. Dennis's reply to the puzzling questions of Magdalena, that it did not strike her as extraordinary. Lord Ennersdale never said "*I do not know*;" indeed there were very few subjects on

which he could with truth have made that answer; when he did not choose to explain the few questions which she ventured to ask, he always said "that is nothing to you, or I shall not tell you." Magdalena thought however he could not say the name of her father was nothing to her, and one day finding him in a humour so singularly good, that he had occupied at least two hours in explaining some historical prints to her, with a clearness and perspicuity that delighted her, she said in a low soft voice, as was usual with her when she was very anxious to obtain any favour, "My lord, may I ask you a few more questions?" "Yes, if they are proper and sensible questions." "I do not know, but I suppose they are."

A moments pause encouraged her to proceed.

"Pray is not your name Lord Ennersdale?"

"That is my title, child; my name is Hugh Marmaduke Delamere."

"Hugh and Marmaduke are then, I suppose, the names given in baptism."

"Yes, certainly."

"And Delamere."

"Delamere, girl," raising himself more erectly, as he with a look of proud dignity said, "Delamere is the name derived from my ancestors, handed down from father to son from time immemorial, till now it rests in me the last possessor, and is sunk, not in my estimation, ennobled, in the title of Earl of Ennersdale."

"And pray, my Lord, what is my name?"

"Your name! Your name! you know it is Magdalena."

His changing countenance, the frown which began to gather on his brow, and the mounting vermilion of his complexion, were indications of an approaching storm, which Magdalena had long learned to consider with terror, and precipitately to shun; but now deeply interested in the subject of discourse,

these appearances passed unnoticed, or so slightly observed as not to silence her, and she proceeded thus:

"Yes, my Lord, I know my name is Magdalena, but have I no other?"

Lord Ennersdale seemed a moment to struggle with himself, and though he could not wholly quench the fire which began to lighten in his eagle eyes, he half veiled them in their deep fringed lids, while in a tone of suppressed emotion, he replied, "Yes, you are named Magdalena Melrose."

"Oh, then," exclaimed Magdalena, with sparkling eyes and features lighted up with smiling joy, "Melrose was the name of MY FATHER!"

"Of YOUR FATHER!" exclaimed Lord Ennersdale, rising from his seat with passion no longer restrained, and closing the book before him with violence which made her start. "No! No! No! Who has taught you this insolence; how dare you name him to me? . . . . . His name!—Accursed be his name!—

Never shall you be called by it, never shall it be repeated in my hearing!—Never but once in your whole life shall you assume it, nor even then, unless my will, my *whole will* be obeyed!—Else, you are and shall be *nothing*,—be nobody,—have no name! Beggary and infamy shall be your portion!"

"Begone girl!" he continued with increased violence, and with a mien and countenance distorted by rage,—"begone, before I hate! before I curse you! and come not into my presence again until I send for you!"

The pale, affrighted, trembling Magdalena needed no second bidding; she fled from his terrific glances, from the thunder of his voice, a thousand terrors, a thousand painful emotions clinging to her heart. A closet, which had long been appropriated to her as a play-room, became her asylum, there a violent burst of tears restored in some degree her composure, and quieted her trembling frame. She sat down to reflect

on what had passed; the more she reflected the less could she understand it, and from that hour an ardent desire to know the cause of the hatred, avowed by Lord Ennersdale for her father's name, and all the particulars of her situation, took full possession of her mind.

Almost immediately after this conversation, Mrs. Dennis was summoned to Lord Ennersdale, and at the conclusion of a short conference, she joined the still weeping Magdalena, looking half frightened and half angry. "So Miss!" said she, "you have made a fine piece of work! My Lord has been accusing me of exciting your curiosity, or leaving you with the servants to learn something of them! I am sure I never said a word to you about ..... about, any thing in particular; indeed I could not tell what I did not know. I am sure one might as well be buried alive between four walls, as the nuns sometimes are, and better too, for then

one should not be scolded and frightened to death for things one never did, and should, I am sure, see as much to amuse one, as in this old solitary place; I wish I had never entered it!"

An harangue so unusually long, (for in general Lord Ennersdale himself could scarcely exceed Mrs. Dennis in taciturnity) surprized Magdalena; she answered with gentleness, that she was very sorry her guardian was angry with Mrs. Dennis; that she had no idea of his being displeased with what she said; nor could she imagine the reason of his excessive anger! A fresh burst of tears softened Mrs. Dennis, who loved Magdalena with maternal tenderness; she pressed the weeping girl to her bosom, involuntarily exclaiming, "poor dear child!" then bidding her be comforted, she said, "this storm will soon blow over; do nothing more my dear to offend your guardian; ask him no questions; he loves you I believe, though he will not shew it; and you must pre-

pare yourself, *on all occasions*, to obey him implicitly." "To be sure I shall," answered Magdalena with quickness, "when I know what his wishes are, but why should he be so angry, when I did not, could not know I was saying any thing wrong?" "Well, well," replied Mrs. Dennis, "say no more on the subject; above all things never attempt to speak to the servants out of his lordship's presence, if you do I cannot answer for the consequences."

At the expiration of two days Magdalena was again admitted to Lord Ennersdale's presence. His countenance seemed even then lowering and overcast, his brow had not yet entirely dismissed the traces of anger; he might have been compared to a rock which over-hangs the sea, and which, after a storm, though no longer illuminated by the lightning, or echoing the thunder, s still enveloped in the clouds which produce them.

Magdalena, whose tender affections

having few objects to excite them, clung to her guardian in spite of his severity, entered pale, trembling, and dismayed; her eyes humid with tears, cast down, and the whole contour of her face and figure so touching and imploring, that even the heart of Lord Ennersdale was moved. A strange feeling seemed to shake his frame, and Magdalena glancing her timid eyes towards him, beheld him pale and agitated; his looks full of unusual softness, and his lip quivering with suppressed emotion.

Magdalena with a low curtesy stood before him, her head bent forward, and the glossy ringlets of her hair shading her countenance. Whenever she had before excited his displeasure, he never suffered her to speak on the subject afterwards, but gradually (sometimes very slowly) returned to his usual manner of living with her; but he had never before been so violent, so terrific in his anger, and Magdalena doubted whether she ought not to offer some apology,

some assurance of future submission to his will; but the words died on her lips, and while she hesitated he suddenly exclaimed, in a voice of stifled feeling, "Look up child! look up! it is too much! Oh, that face! ..... No! sit down, sit down, there! in that chair!"

He pointed to one which stood at a table with its back towards him; she obeyed.

For an instant he leaned his head on the high frame of the chair she sat in; she felt it shake beneath his pressure! she heard a suppressed groan! she dared not turn her head, dared not glance an enquiring eye towards him! A minute,—an age it appeared to her, past; and then with his usual calm impressive voice, he said, "Magdalena take up that book and read to me!"

Magdalena placed the book before her, for a moment; the letters swam before her sight, her mind was all confusion; the agitation, the anguish she had

witnessed in Lord Ennersdale, filled her heart with wonder and with love; she longed to turn round to throw her arms around his neck and weep upon his bosom! but she dared not! she had never dared to do so, and checking her emotions, she with a low and half-choaked voice began to read; by degrees her attention became more fixed, and her voice more firm; yet occasionally she faltered as she heard a deep sigh from her guardian, who still sat behind her; and before half the time was elapsed which she usually employed in reading to him, he told her to put away the book and go into the garden. "My head aches," said he, as if he would, if possible, have led himself to believe his distress had arisen from indisposition; "My head aches, I believe I am going to have the gout; I shall order the carriage and take an airing, possibly I may dine out; you may play till dinner time, the air perhaps may make you look more healthy;

—'tis a strange thing you should look so pale;—I cannot endure to see people so pale!—but what I most dislike always happens! Well, go child, another day you shall take an airing with me."

This was a promise of peculiar favour; in her whole life Magdalena had never gone beyond the park-gates more than three times, then Lord Ennersdale had taken her with him in the carriage; they had never stopped at any house, and if by accident they met any of the neighbouring gentleman, Lord Ennersdale never permitted the coachman to stop for an instant; he returned their salutations as they past, and Magdalena was not only enveloped in a large bonnet, but strictly charged not to look at any one they met.

Sometimes parties came to see the castle, which contained many fine pictures and valuable statues, and was indeed, what is called a *shew-house*. Lord Ennersdale always permitted the state-rooms, which he very seldom in-

habited, to be shewn; and if the visitors came with any one that he knew, or with a note of introduction, often attended them himself with a dignified courtesy which charmed them. On such occasions, Magdalena was carefully secluded, as she also was when Lord Ennersdale gave those occasional formal entertainments, with which he returned the civilities of the neighbourhood; and so large was the mansion, that scarcely the sound of strange voices reached the ears of Magdalena, yet she listened for them often, and sighed with regret that she was so entirely shut from society. Once or twice when these parties met in the summer, Magdalena saw from her little casement (for her apartment was on the second floor of the most ancient part of the castle) ladies walking in the gardens, from which she was shut out. "And my aviary," she said to Mrs. Dennis, with tears in her eyes, "and my dear little birds, they will see! but the pretty

creatures will not fly to them as they do to me; they will not eat out of their hands as they do out of mine!—Well! —to-morrow, when this long tedious day is over, I shall go and see them again; I wish I might go now!—Those ladies would like to see my birds so tame; and I have some beautiful flowers in my own garden; I wish I could gather them for those ladies!"

To all this Mrs. Dennis only replied, by requesting Miss Magdalena would not lean so far out of the window, for she would be seen, and then they should both incur Lord Ennersdale's displeasure; and finally, by shutting the window and putting her young charge to bed, while the declining sun yet shone through the painted glass of the casement, and drew many a sigh from the sleepless Magdalena, who would gladly have enjoyed his last beams, and the fresh evening air in her garden or avairy.

CHAP. II.

THUS, or with little variation, passed two more years of the life of Magdalena. In all the accomplishments which her masters taught she became a proficient; her reading, directed by Lord Ennersdale, and assisted by the vast powers of his capacious mind, had furnished her with an extensive and copious store of information. No works of fiction were ever permitted to come within her view, at least not any novels, tales, or romances. History, biography, travels, a few poems and plays, were all that Lord Ennersdale would suffer her to read, exclusively of those books of science, which were necessary for the attainment of astronomy, botany, &c. Her manners were simple, gentle, and naturally graceful; to the

polish of high breeding, and the observances of society, she was a stranger, except in those particulars which Lord Ennersdale could teach, and of her customary habits he was particularly careful. She spoke not only most accurately, but most elegantly, and her language, drawn more from books than conversation, was spirited and original; her expressions had sometimes a singularity which was striking, but never displeasing; for while they forcibly delineated her own sentiments, the gentleness of her heart and the sweetness of her temper, never suffered her to say a word that could wound the feelings of another; indeed the constant dread in which she lived of displeasing Lord Ennersdale, had given her a habit of weighing every word and action, and moderated the natural vivacity of her character, which, untaught as she was, might otherwise have become excessive. Poetry and music were to her never failing sources of delight; her memory

retained every superior passage in the best poets; she performed admirably on the harp, and her voice was so full, so clear, so melodious, that even her guardian often hung delighted on the entrancing strain. She grew tall and exquisitely beautiful, and every movement, though unstudied, was full of grace.

About this time, when Magdalena was nearly sixteen, Mrs. Dennis, who never was very strong, complained one day of encreased indisposition, and in the course of the night became so much worse, that Magdalena was alarmed, uneasy, and totally at a loss how to proceed. She dared not ring the bell, lest Lord Ennersdale, who had been for two or three days confined to his room with the gout, should be alarmed; for never but at the hours for meals, &c. was the bell in their apartment permitted to be rung, or any servant allowed to enter the rooms. At length, finding Mrs. Dennis still getting worse,

Magdalena asked her if she should endeavour to find her way to the chamber where Agnes, the old house-keeper, slept. For Magdalena yet knew not half the rooms in the castle, and to many parts of it was a total stranger. Perplexed, harassed, and too seriously ill to consider much what was best to be done, Mrs. Dennis gave a reluctant consent, directing Magdalena to descend a small staircase at the end of the gallery where they slept, and the third door in the passage below, on the right hand side was that of Agnes's room. Magdalena dressed in haste, and lighting a candle at the lamp which stood in the chimney, prepared, not without tremour, to obey these directions, and explore her way to a part of the house in which she had never been before. Cautiously, and shading her light with her hand, lest the air should extinguish it, she descended the narrow staircase. It was a dark and stormy night towards the end of February; the

wind howled fearfully around, as Magdalena with light and timid steps advanced. At the bottom of the staircase she looked around her to recall the directions she had received; the gallery in which she stood branched off on the left hand, towards the grand marble staircase, which led from the great hall of entrance; a passage somewhat narrower wound towards the right hand, and led, as Magdalena imagined, to the apartments of the servants; down this passage she quickly turned, but there were doors she found on both sides of it, leading she supposed to chambers, but whose she knew not. Mrs. Dennis had said the third door on the right hand; did she mean the right hand passage into which she had turned, or the right hand of that passage? Awhile Magdalena stood in anxious suspense, half inclined to go back to her own apartment and enquire farther; but unwilling to return without having obtained any assistance for

her suffering governess, she listened at the different doors, no sound, no voice met her ear;—again she hesitated, again she listened, but all was so silent, the quick throbbing of her heart and the low moaning of the wind alone were audible; at last an indistinct or fancied sound from the third door on the right hand determined her; a key was in the door on the outside, the lock was not turned, and the handle yielded to her touch, as slowly and carefully she opened the door; she found herself in a small anti-chamber covered with India matting; another door was immediately opposite to that by which she had entered; she advanced, and opening the second door, found herself in a spacious bed-chamber; the bed of pale blue velvet, the rich hangings, a fine Japan cabinet, and an elegant toilette, proved at once this was not the apartment of Agnes. Cold, pale, and affrighted, Magdalena, cast a timid glance around; fortunately, as she thought, the room

was totally uninhabited, and the chill with which it struck her, proved that it had long remained so; yet all was in perfect order; the curtains of the bed and windows folded and inclosed in paper, the furniture exactly in its proper place. Convinced that this was not the room she sought, as well as that it was one she had never seen before, Magdalena turned to leave it, when her eyes fell upon an object, which instantly and powerfully rivetted her attention; this was a small cradle, standing by the side of the bed; involuntarily she moved towards it, struck with a strange and indiscribable sensation, more powerful than mere curiosity ever could inspire; a vague suspicion began to press upon her mind; she had, though she herself hardly knew by what means, obtained the knowledge, that she was born in the castle, and that her mother had died there. The endless questions with which she had for years assailed the patient and guarded Mrs. Dennis,

had by degrees obtained for her this slight degree of information. Was this then the room?—Was that the cradle which had first received her?—which had been the scene of a mother's tender care?—"Of a mother," she mentally exclaimed. "Oh dear and cherished name! Perhaps for the first time since I became conscious of my own existence I behold the spot, where I first saw the light; for the first time view the only memorials which remain of her who gave me being!—Never more may either chance or permission lead me hither!" She bent and lingered over the cradle with irresistible anxiety; its quilt and lining were tarnished by time, though carefully preserved from dust or decay. With strong emotions she turned her eyes to the bed, half shuddering at the fearful images her fancy conjured up. "Yet what, she thought, have I to fear? Were it possible the dead could revisit the place of their mortal residence, and my departed

mother could this instant stand before me, her errand would be to soothe and not affright, to bless and not injure her child!" Yet with nameless dread, she gazed around; the passing shadows which her faint light threw on distant objects, becoming each in turn a new cause of dismay; her thoughts became bewildered, and her raised imagination fancied a groan in every sobbing of the wind. "Let me begone," she said, "this scene is too much for me." But as she softly spoke, again her eye was attracted by an object of strong interest; partly concealed by the hangings of the bed, she saw a large picture, or what appeared to be such, for the face was towards the wall, and on the frame of that alone the dust of time had gathered, though from every other piece of furniture, it was accurately and carefully removed. "Ah!" thought Magdalena, "why has this been left untouched? What sentiment of tenderness or aversion has forbidden its removal?"

Impelled by the overwhelming interest of the moment, Magdalena carefully withdrew it from its place, and with the shawl, which on leaving her chamber she had thrown round her shoulders, wiped away the dust which obscured it.

It was the portrait of a lady in the bloom of youth and beauty; her bright chesnut ringlets (bound with strings of pearl,) and the soft lustre of the hazel eyes, which seemed full of animation and intelligence, gave back to Magdalena the lovely likeness of herself, although the lower part of the face was differently formed from hers; the drapery was of rich white sattin; one fair arm hung carelessly by her side, the other rested on a small table, with a book half open in her hand. The table, the objects around, were familiar to the eyes of Magdalena; they were those which stood constantly in Lord Ennersdale's study.

What words can describe the min-

gled sentiments of love, reverence, and sorrow, with which Magdalena contemplated this enchanting picture? Years she thought she could have spent in gazing, and still remained untired. Tears streamed from her eyes, and her heart apostrophized with soft emotion, the dear mother whose image she felt convinced now stood before her! At length the recollection of her suffering governess flashed suddenly upon her! She reproached herself with ingratitude and hardness of heart, and however reluctantly, prepared to replace the picture, hoping, that if her visit remained undiscovered, she might again by some happy chance, be permitted to explore an apartment, which the belief that it had been her mother's, made sacred to her feelings. Repeatedly she kissed the cold and lifeless image of a parent she had never known, and cautiously removed it to its former station. Behind the place where it had stood, her eager eyes discovered a pair of

tablets, covered with dust as the picture had been; she instantly snatched them up and concealed them in her bosom; then hastily turning to begone, her foot struck against the cradle, she fell, and in falling overturned a chair; the noise of which resounded through the lofty apartment; fortunately she had placed her light upon a table while she examined and replaced the picture. She rose unhurt, but not undismayed, for she feared the noise must have disturbed some of the servants; nor was she mistaken, for before she could quit the bed-room she heard voices in the anti-chamber. "There!" said the first who entered, "I told you so, Judith; you left the keys in the doors after cleaning these rooms to-day, and here is the anti-chamber door open!—I dare say you left the windows open too, and the wind has blown down something in the bed-chamber,—I hope my Lord did not hear the noise!" "Lord, Agnes," replied the other, "I tell you I did not

leave the windows open!—For God's-sake do not go into that dismal room by night!—I know we shall see some dreadful thing or other; my poor young lady perhaps, or the young man that they say," . . . . . "Hold your foolish tongue," replied Agnes; "my dear young lady would never wish to hurt us, and as to the poor gentleman, God knows,"—"But, Agnes," interrupted Judith, "do you think it is true that his blood was seen." "Hold your tongue, once more," repeated Agnes; "if my Lord were to hear you!—But bless me, Judith, the door is ajar, and sure I see a light!" "Oh, yes, that there certainly is," replied Judith; "Spirits no doubt, walking in blue flames! Oh Lord, Agnes, don't let us disturb them, let us lock the door and leave them to themselves!" "What nonsense you talk," replied Agnes, "suppose thieves should be got in with your leaving the doors all open!—We had better call the men." Magdalena, who had listen-

ed to this little dialogue with a thousand complicated feelings, and found that to escape undiscovered was no longer possible, at that moment softly opened the bed-room door, with her light in her hand, her cheeks pale as the gown in which she was wrapped, and in a low voice said, "Stay Agnes, stay, it is I, do not be frightened;" instantly both the women uttered a piercing shriek, and poor old Agnes exclaimed, "Oh! heavenly powers, it is, it is my dear lady! .... Oh, Madam! Oh, my dear lady, I never did any thing to hurt you! Oh, why do you come out of your cold tomb to terrify your poor old servant!" She sunk on her knees shaking with terror, while Judith fell on the ground in a swoon. "It is I, Agnes, it is I," repeated the trembling and terrified Magdalena, "it is Magdalena; Mrs. Dennis is ill, she wants you, I mistook the way." Again and again she repeated these words, before she could make Agnes sensible of her

meaning. At length, gazing on her with eyes full of horror, the poor old woman said, "Oh, Miss! Oh, my dear Miss; is it you, is it you indeed!—Oh, lord help me; seeing you come out of *that room*, so pale, all in white, I thought it was your poor Mamma's ghost, just as I saw her when she died, in that very room! Oh, you are so like her; and your voice too! . . . . But what shall I do with poor Judith, I believe she is dead with the fright." "No, no," answered Magdalena, "I hope not, she has only fainted away;—Oh, how frightened my poor governess will be at my staying so long, and she is very ill too; dear Agnes, make haste and go to her." "Yes, Miss, that I will when Judith is recovered; there, I think she is coming to herself; come, Judith, rouse up, it is only" . . . . but Judith casting her fearful eyes upon Magdalena, who leant over her, uttered another loud scream, and seemed to be relapsing into her swoon; at the same instant

a bell rang violently, and echoed through the wide galleries with a startling sound. "There! there!" exclaimed Agnes, "that is my lord's bell; what in the world shall we do now, Judith! For pity's sake get up and try to recover yourself, it is only Miss Magdalena!" Again the bell rung with encreased violence; "I must go! I must go!" cried the terrified Agnes; "I know not which way to turn!—Oh, if my Lord knows you have been into that room, he will turn us all out of doors; aye, Miss, you and all!" Judith was now enough recovered to crawl back, by the aid of Magdalena and Agnes, to her own room, and the bell continuing to sound almost incessantly, the poor old housekeeper hastened to obey the summons; she took the light which Magdalena had brought, and dismayed, confounded by all that had passed, the trembling girl involuntarily followed her footsteps, unable in the dark to explore the way to her own room; and unwilling, though

half ashamed to own it, even to herself, to remain without light alone, or with the simple and frightened Judith. The instant Agnes had opened the door of the room where Lord Ennersdale slept, and which was only three or four from that Magdalena had accidentally entered, his voice, angry and vehement, broke upon her ear. "What infernal noises are those I have been disturbed by for the last half hour?" he exclaimed, "is the house on fire? or have you all conspired to distract my brains with intolerable confusion?—Doors opening and shutting!—furniture falling!—and then half the fools, who live but to torment me, assembled in the galleries, screaming as if they were put to the torture?—what in the name of all the furies do you mean by it?—but I need not ask?—it is done doubtless on purpose to disturb me?—it is like every thing else that happens to me, just contrary to my wishes?" "Indeed, my Lord," answered Agnes, in the hum-

blest tone. "Come in, can't you, and shut the door?—am I to lie here with the wind blowing upon me, while you stand there with the door open?—and who is that behind you?" continued the angry Earl, half unclosing his curtain, while Magdalena shrunk aside, dreading the violence of his anger, should he know she was there. "My Lord!" again began the trembling Agnes, "it is only Miss, came down to call me to Mrs. Dennis, who is very ill; and Judith and I, hearing some one moving, for Miss did not know the way to my room, we got up, my Lord, and seeing Miss so unawares, Judith was frightened, so we screamed; that is all, my Lord." "Miss?" exclaimed Lord Ennersdale, "Miss?—who do you mean?" Then suddenly rising in his bed, and opening his curtain, he saw by the uncertain light which Agnes held, the pale and shivering Magdalena! Instantly he covered his face with his hands, crying in a smothered voice,

"Take her away?—take her away?—why do you let her come to me?—Oh! disobedient girl?—did'st thou not enough distress me whilst yet alive?" His whole form, nay the bed beneath him, shook with strong emotion; Magdalena threw herself on her knees beside him, exclaiming, "My Lord, it is only I, Magdalena; I came to call Agnes to Mrs. Dennis, who is very ill!—I meant no harm, I did not know my way; pray do not be angry with me?" Calming himself with a powerful effort, he replied, "But why do you look so pale?—I cannot bear to see you look so pale?"

"The night air, my Lord; the fear of your displeasure?" "True, true, I was a fool to regard it!—and so Mrs. Dennis is ill?—very well!—that is right,—it is of a piece with the rest! every thing that can happen to torment me, does! and you have been chattering to those cursed fools this half hour, I suppose! they took you *for a ghost*, of

course!" A peevish laugh, discordant and shocking, finished his speech; then sighing deeply, he said, "Go Agnes! go to Mrs. Dennis, light my lamp and leave Magdalena here; you are not afraid of getting cold, Magdalena? I believe there is still some fire in the grate; stir it up, sit down in the great chair, and stay with me till Agnes brings us word how your governess is." "Most willingly, my Lord," replied Magdalena, cheered and delighted with the unusual kindness of his manner; she gently added a few sticks to the fire, and sat down quietly by its side. Lord Ennersdale sighed heavily; some minutes of silence followed, during which, Magdalena endeavoured to recover her scattered thoughts, and calm her trembling frame. All that had passed seemed like a dream, wild and tumultuous; yet in fancy she still saw the little cradle, the interesting portrait, and pressing really on her heart she

felt the tablets, which imagination hallowed as a relic of her mother.

"What noises were those I heard, Magdalena," said Lord Ennersdale, "before those intolerable fools began to scream!" "I missed my way to Agnes' room, my Lord, to which I had only the imperfect direction of Mrs. Dennis, who was in great pain. I—I— opened a wrong door, and fell over a chair, the noise disturbed the servants, and seeing me so unexpectedly, they were frightened."

"No doubt, superstitious blockheads! —so Mrs. Dennis is very ill!—I wonder why people who have such wretched health, will undertake situations they are so unfit for!—what am I to do with you now!—and I have been fool enough to have you bred a fine lady too; so that I suppose you can neither dress nor undress yourself, nor do any thing without assistance!"

"Pardon me, my Lord, I have for these last three years accustomed my-

self to be independent of Mrs. Dennis's help; she was so many years older than me, and often so ill, I could not bear to trouble her; I saw she did every thing for herself, and I concluded that I could do the same, so that I always dress and undress myself."

"Well, that is better than I expected!—I think then, I will in the morning have the little room within mine aired, and put in order for you to sleep in, and let one of those stupid animals, Agnes, or Judith, or some of the tribe, sit up in Mrs. Dennis's room; you can go to her by day; but remember, Magdalena, remember you are not to exchange a word more than is necessary with those women; I will have no questions asked, no telling old stories, no gossiping of any kind!—you have nothing to do with them, but to require their assistance, and to inform yourself of the state of Mrs. Dennis's health."

"Your will, my Lord, shall be a law to me."

"You say well, see that you *do* as well, and let me not be again cheated by false pretences!—I hope,—I hope, I am too well warned ever to trust again to professions!—no!—my affections,—I hate the word!—affections!—I will have none!"

These last sentences were scarcely articulate; broken and interrupted, as if they forced their way, rather than were uttered voluntarily. He now again became silent, and in a few minutes Agnes returned, with the intelligence, that Mrs. Dennis was somewhat better, and that Miss could, if she pleased, return to her own bed again. "Well, child, well," said Lord Ennersdale, "for the remainder of this night do so, and to-morrow morning, Agnes, I will have the room within mine properly aired for the child, and you or Judith shall sleep in Mrs. Dennis's till she is quite well; for I will not run the risk of any more of these night wanderings and alarms; the child must be fatigued

to death, and will catch cold; go Magdalena, go to your bed, take care of her, Agnes." "That I shall to be sure, my Lord," answered Agnes, cheared and delighted by the unusual kindness of his manner; "but would not your lordship take something before we go away, you have been sadly disturbed?" "Shall *I* get you any thing, my Lord?" eagerly asked the affectionate Magdalena, whose warm heart was enchanted by the kindness with which her guardian spoke of, and to her. "I am grieved indeed, to think how your night's rest has been broken! can I not do any thing for you?"

"No, child, no!" answered Lord Ennersdale, in a low tone of stifled feeling; "go to your bed, and let me see you again in the morning. I will try to sleep.—'To sleep! perchance to dream!'" he added in a still lower voice, and as if speaking to himself.

Softly closing his curtain, Magdalena departed; she followed Agnes without

speaking, to the door of Mrs. Dennis's room; then the good old woman turned and said, "I hope, my dear young lady, I hope you did not tell his lordship you had been into *that* room." "No, Agnes," answered Magdalena, "my guardian did not ask me, and I was glad after what you had said to avoid the subject." Then, (though a prey to the most ardent curiosity, and burning with desire to question Agnes, who she felt assured was thoroughly informed on the interesting subject, of which her thoughts were full,) she forced herself away, and went immediately to the bed side of Mrs. Dennis.

CHAP. III.

MAGDALENA found her governess better; she had been told by Agnes what caused the long absence of her pupil,

though not into what particular apartment accident had led her; she now earnestly requested the pale and shuddering girl, who, chilled with the night air, and agitated by the singular occurrences of the last hour, felt really indisposed, to go to bed; she made Agnes wrap her carefully up, and prepare immediately a glass of wine and water, which, united with the fatigue she had undergone, soon threw her into a sweet slumber.

Mrs. Dennis also slept, and all remained quiet, till the sun shining with animating beams into the room, awakened Magdalena. At first, hurried and confused, she could hardly disentangle her thoughts, or determine what of the occurrences of the past night had been real, what the dreams which her agitated mind had since presented to her fancy. Amidst the last, she recollected having dreamt of a lady like the picture she had seen, pressing kisses of affection on her cheeks and lips; of

Lord Ennersdale's having forced them apart, and said with a voice of thunder, "Dare not to touch this child! she is mine, she shall never own you for her mother;" then she thought the lady knelt and wept, saying, "Oh! my Lord, do not punish her for my fault; she is my child;—kill me, but spare my child." The violent rage into which she imagined Lord Ennersdale thrown by these words, was, she thought, suddenly ended by the entrance of an indistinct and mysterious figure, of which she could discern nothing more than a sort of wrapping mantle spotted with blood, which flitted by him and tried to catch her in its arms. These and other wild images had employed her sleeping hours; originating, doubtless in the sight of her mother's picture, (if such it were) and the broken hints of Judith, whose words had deeply impressed her imagination. At length she opened her curtain, and seeing Mrs. Dennis still

asleep, she thought this the best time to examine her precious tablets.

They were of tortoise-shell, richly mounted in chased gold, with clasps of the same. At the top of the first leaf was written, in a very small hand,

"The gift of Eustace to Horatia."

In the next leaf two or three short sentences in French and Italian, all expressive of heavy grief; and in the three last, written very small, the following

STANZAS.

While yet thy roses, youth, around me bloom,
While yet my heart each touch of pity feels,
Ere age the tear of sympathy congeals,
Say why does fate involve my soul in gloom?

Why do the horrid visions of the night,
Revive the mem'ry of each direful hour?
Ah, why my tortured bosom thus affright,
Why, anger, do thy frowns on that stern visage lour?

Ah, tyrant Love, 'tis here thy hand I trace,
It is thy touch which fades each opening flower,
Thy sad remembrance Time can ne'er efface,
Thy voice recalls each melancholy hour!

Thine are the horrid visions of my soul,
Not such were they when first thy power I knew;
Then o'er my eyes bright Hope her mantle drew,
And Fancy from my mind each painful image stole.

Oh, let in kinder dreams thy influence rise,
Since Fate has robbed me of each real joy,
Let fairer visions my sad thoughts employ,
Oh, bring the form I love before mine eyes!

Recall the traces of my happier days,
Bid lingering time and distance disappear;
Ah, check this mournful sigh, this bursting tear,
Bid Hope enliven these desponding lays?

Yet no! this aching heart no more shall dare,
Idly to yield to Hope's bewitching strain;
Oh, wherefore court renewal of its pain,
Fixst is my grief, and constant my despair.

Does Fortune shed on me a beam more kind,
Than when at first she crossed my ill-starred love?
Does *that stern mind* my wishes more approve?
Is it to Love less harsh, more to ambition blind?

Ah, no! yet still to thee my heart I yield,
Sweet power of Love, nor would thy influence lose;
The gifts of cold indifference I refuse,
Nor wish her chilling ice my soul from pain to shield!

Deeply was Magdalena impressed with these stanzas, which, however imperfect, seemed to express the feelings

of a heart deeply wounded: the "*horrid visions of the night*," and that "*stern visage*," were as applicable to herself, as she doubted not they had been to the unfortunate writer. Magdalena had never read any of those interesting fictions, in which the passion of love is so minutely delineated, and its powerful effects so amply displayed; the poems she had been permitted to read, and even the songs selected for her, were not those which turn upon the influence of that passion. The plays Lord Ennersdale had chosen for her, were those of Shakespeare, which are formed on fables, where love, except as displayed in the conjugal relation, forms little or no part; and even in Macbeth, Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar, &c., many passages were marked with his pencil, which as she always read with him, he had ordered her to omit. Of love therefore, simply so called, Magdalena had scarcely an idea; these lines seemed to develope to her a new feeling, a new

principle of human action; a feeling, a principle, which appeared to have been fatal to the happiness, to the repose of her mother, and to which therefore, Magdalena hoped she should ever remain a stranger.

But Eustace! was that the name so long sought, so eagerly enquired for? was it the name of her father? was it her own name? was it, in a word, that name which Lord Ennersdale had said, "*she should never but once in her whole life assume, nor then, unless his will were implicitly obeyed?*" Vainly did Magdalena seek to solve this question; in fact, the name of Eustace might be either a baptismal, or family designation; vainly did she turn the tablets on every side, in search of a farther elucidation of her doubts; at length, on the inside of the tortoise-shell cover, scratched with the point of a needle, or some other sharp instrument, she found a minute cypher of the initials H. D. and D. O., encircled with a little wreath of

flowers and leaves; but even this decided nothing, and she remained in as great perplexity as ever. She now heard the great clock of the castle strike ten, and jumping up, was dressed before Mrs. Dennis awoke; she had the pleasure of learning her governess was better, and explaining to her Lord Ennersdale's directions, Magdalena, for the first morning in her life, left her apartment alone. On the outside of the door she met Agnes, who seemed waiting for her appearance; but much as she wished to converse with Magdalena, too well recollected Lord Ennersdale's injunctions, to disobey them.

"Ah, Miss!" said Agnes, stopping her, and producing the shawl, with which, the night before, Magdalena had wiped the dust off the picture in her late mother's room; "ah, Miss! if his lordship were to know *where* I found this, and to what use it had been applied! Pray, my dear young lady, do not tell him that the keys were left in

the doors; if you do, poor Judith and I shall be turned out in our old age to seek a resting place; and I have lived with my Lord from my youth, have seen so many pleasant, and so many heart-breaking scenes here, that I cannot bear to go amongst strangers; it was very careless in Judith, but knowing my Lord was ill, and would not come that way, made her think less about it. I hope it was a good providence that led your steps, and not one of those ill spirits, which one would think was sometimes permitted to mislead us; and that no evil will come of your having been into that chamber, and seen that dear picture, which no hand has touched before for nearly sixteen years; for I could not bear to look upon the sweet face, and see it disgraced, as I may say, from its station! Oh! my dear young lady," continued she, bathing with tears the hand of Magdalena, "for heaven's sake, for your own sake, obey my Lord in every

thing; all depends on your obedience to his will, even the fame and honour of . . . . . Oh! never provoke him to sully the name of *your mother?*"

"Oh! Agnes," replied the pale and gasping Magdalena, "what words are those! but I know not even, if at this moment, I am not risking every dreadful consequence, of which you warn me!—I am forbidden to talk to you, or hear you; I dare not ask a single question, though my heart is bursting with the deep interest your words inspire! but I dare not, I will not be disobedient! Good Agnes, put that shawl into my room, say not a word to Mrs. Dennis, to any one, and least of all to me!" She pressed with kindness the hand which held hers, and then tore herself away.

At the entrance of Lord Ennersdale's chamber, she paused a moment to recover her breath, and compose the fluttering emotions of her heart; then gently opened the door and solicited

permission to enter. His lordship seemed even pleased to see her, and learning she was but just up, granted her the unusual favour of making breakfast at his bed-side; he detained her with him most part of the day, and appeared inclined to be gratified by her attentions. Yet at times the sun-shine of his countenance was shut in; some painful thought seemed to ruffle the unusual tranquillity of his manner, and he appeared to struggle against his growing affection for his lovely and innocent ward; as if he mentally repeated the words, which impetuous emotion had the night before made audible; "*My* affections?—I hate the word?—*I will have none?*"

In a few days Lord Ennersdale was perfectly recovered, and Mrs. Dennis was also as well as usual. During the confinement of both, Magdalena had frequently tried if the key were again in the door of the apartment, so interesting to her feelings; but never could

she find it, and she was so determined not to disobey her guardian, that she would not ask Agnes for it, though almost sure she would have yielded to her wishes; but the words of that faithful old servant yet sounded in her ears, "For heaven's sake, obey my Lord in all things; oh, never provoke him to sully the name of your mother!" Strange, inexplicable expression! was it possible that any thing could lead to a termination so horrible! was there not every reason to suppose, this unfortunate mother was once dear to him, probably his near relation; and could any provocation from another, lead him to destroy her fame, even if it were in his power!" Endless, incessant were the reflections of Magdalena; in vain she thought, in vain she reasoned, no clue could she find to lead her from the labyrinth of her entangled ideas! the tablets were again and again examined, again and again kissed, and returned to her bosom.

Soon after the recovery of Lord Ennersdale, a new train of circumstances encreased the perplexity of Magdalena. One evening when she was sitting with him in his study, her eyes and thoughts fixed upon the little inlaid table, and her fancy engaged in tracing the figure of her mother, (as she had seen it represented in the memorable portrait,) sitting beside it, the butler entered with a large packet, which he said had just been delivered by the carrier from Carlisle. Unconscious of Magdalena's presence, or willing to let her remain, contrary to his usual custom, when letters or parcels were delivered to him, his lordship did not tell her to withdraw. Once or twice he turned over the packet in silence, at length he said, "It is his hand; but there is more than letters, what is all this?" As he unfolded the paper coverings, of which there were many, he so entangled the strings, that with his usual irritability he became quite angry, and began, as he often did,

to denounce the whole packet, as being like all other things, intended to torment him. "Come here, child;" at length he exclaimed to Magdalena, whose work lay by her side. "bring me those scissars, cut this abominable string!" She obeyed; a large packet of letters, and a separate parcel became visible; in Lord Ennersdale's impatience to examine them the latter was thrown down. "Pshaw!" he peevishly exclaimed, "pick it up girl." She did so, and casting her eyes accidentally upon it, she saw it was thus directed; "For Magdalena." A pleasing sensation rushed into her bosom, her cheeks were crimsoned! There existed then, some being without side the walls of Delamere, who cared for, who remembered her!—perhaps some near relation,—perhaps the brother of her mother!—perhaps . . . .

"What now, girl," exclaimed Lord Ennersdale, whose piercing eyes accidentally met hers, "what is there in

that parcel to make you colour in this manner!" Then snatching it from her, he uttered another peevish and half suppressed "phaw," and tearing open the parcel, discovered a quantity of very fine muslin, beautifully worked with silver. "So! this is for you, child!" he said, while his features absolutely relaxed into something like a smile. "One day or other you shall have it; at present it would be of no use to you; did you ever see any thing so fine in your life?"

"It is beautiful indeed, my Lord; may I ask who is so kind as to think of me?"

"You shall know sometime or other, in the meanwhile learn, it is one for whom I bespeak your respect and affection."

"Surely," again thought Magdalena, "this must be some near and valuable relation!"

Lord Ennersdale unfolded a long letter, which he read with evident inte-

terest and pleasure. "Thank God," he exclaimed, "soon my cares will be over! so far all is well! best of men! most ill-used of human beings! May the precautions I have taken to secure us from disappointment, ensure thy happiness! recompence thee for thy unmerited sufferings!"

Then looking up and seeing Magdalena, whose presence he seemed to have forgotten, he started and said, "I did not recollect you were here, child; but no matter, all will soon be explained: fold up that muslin; in a short time it shall be yours, since of your prompt obedience to my wishes, there can now, I trust, be little doubt." "There can be none, my Lord," said Magdalena; "whom have I to obey, whom to love but you in the whole world?"

Lord Ennersdale seemed affected, his eyes rested for a moment, with a softened expression, on the speaking countenance of Magdalena. "There is one in the world, Magdalena," he

said, "who will hereafter claim your love, to whom I shall gladly delegate my right to your obedience! happy shall I be when . . . ."

There he stopped, and left Magdalena more and more convinced that this nameless being must be some near and dear connection of her mother's, coming to claim her; to explain all that seemed mysterious in her fate; to soften the harsh demeanour of Lord Ennersdale, and to cherish her with that affection, which she felt her own warm heart so capable of returning.

Her eager busy fancy, soon delineated scenes of tenderness, and hours of felicity; while with the happy facility of youth, she shut her eyes to all that militated against her wishes, and believed the little romance her imagination had formed, simply because she wished it to be true.

ROMANCE! was then Magdalena, who never had read any thing bearing that title, was she *romantic?* Let us

for a moment enquire what is meant by a word so generally used, and frequently so ill understood. If we mean an affectation, or inflation of sentiment; an expectation of great and extraordinary adventures, or a pre-disposition to indulge extravagant passions; from all these Magdalena was perfectly exempt: the surface of the calmest lake was not more unruffled than her gentle bosom; its clear waters not more free from any lurking taint, than her heart from every evil thought: but if we mean (as the world too often applies the mis-used word,) a superior nobility of sentiment, an ardent love of the beauties of nature, combined with every tender feeling, every affectionate and unworldly disposition, then Magdalena was romantic. Indeed the uncommon circumstances of her situation, had been well calculated, to form and develope a soul and character, extremely different from those the world produces.

It was now early in April, and the bursting spring began to spread a thousand delicate and vivid tints on the soft herbage, and to spangle the trees with leaves and blossoms; Lord Ennersdale was unusually well, and unusually kind; the day after this parcel had been received, he proposed to Magdalena to take an airing; willingly she complied; for though in general she preferred her own unrestrained rambles, to those solemn and measured airings, to which Lord Ennersdale sometimes invited her, she yet always hailed with chearfulness and delight, every instance of kindness and attention he seemed inclined to shew her.

The handsome, though old fashioned carriage, was soon at the door, with four fine black horses; for Lord Ennersdale never went even a mile with less, or unattended by two servants in livery, with horses to match. He ordered the coachman to drive to West-hay, a road Magdalena never remembered to have

heard mentioned before; she found it however much more agreeable, and the views more beautiful than any she had before seen. A part of this road lay under a rocky hill, bare almost to the top, except where mosses, ferns, and lichens varied its bold masses of grey stone; the other side of the road fell by a precipitous descent, to the finest and most beautiful meadows, watered by the river Eden, and fields whose tender green, gave promise of a future luxuriant harvest. Farther on, a grand reach of the river spread itself in calm repose, into a broad and tranquil surface, skirted by a hill, covered with a noble wood. After slowly advancing three or four hundred yards, it was suddenly broken by a projecting crag, starting with grotesque boldness from a rocky mountain, round which the river wound; the force of its current, encreased by the momentary interruption; for awhile the mountain concealed it from the sight; but at a distance the eye caught an-

other view of this beautiful river, under a very different aspect; for, rushing from a considerable height, it now assumed the appearance of a cataract; and its foaming waters rolled impetuously over broken, but immoveable rocks, which whirled it into eddies as it passed. A distant mill and rustic bridge, completed the picturesque beauty of this charming prospect.

The scent of trees in blossom, the song of innumerable birds, and the lively gambols of young lambs, gave a sort of joyous animation to the scene; enlivened as it was by the bright beams of a clear, but not oppressive sun, which inspired the heart of Magdalena with a sense of joy and pleasure, of which she had rarely, if ever before, been sensible. She looked forward with hope, for all that was gloomy and mysterious in her situation, seemed clearing away, and she imagined a thousand sources of happiness, from the arrival of a

friend, whom Lord Ennersdale had designated as the *best of men.*

She gazed with chearfulness and delight on all around her; and felt that bounding elasticity of the heart, which, as some one says, "makes in youth the mere sense of existence, felicity!" Turning her bright and speaking eyes on Lord Ennersdale, she softly exclaimed, "Oh, my Lord, how charming is this scene! how beautiful is the world!"

He sighed, and regarding her without displeasure, said in accents unusually gentle, "The world, as well as the season is in its spring to you, Magdalena; may no stormy passions have so deformed its surface, as to make its winter odious!" His changing complexion, the varying expression of his fine countenance, shewed that deep and contending recollections pressed hard upon his heart; but of late he seemed to have acquired rather more dominion over his irritable feelings, and his treat-

ment of Magdalena since his illness, had been softer and more gentle than it used to be: perhaps her approach towards woman-hood, with the winning graces of her lovely person, had much to do with this. A man educated in the habits of a gentleman, however roughened by circumstances, generally retains so much respect for the female character, as to induce a degree of polite attention, even to those most dependant on his power.

The carriage slowly proceeded, (for though always travelling with four horses, Lord Ennersdale never permitted himself to be driven quickly,) till a turning in the road, presented to the eyes of Magdalena, the entrance gates of a fine park; these gates were of iron, of the lightest and most beautiful workmanship, with a porter's lodge on each side, of simple but elegant architecture. The gates were, on the drawing up of the carriage, immediately thrown open, and the porter's deep re-

spect, shewed that Lord Ennersdale was well known to him. The carriage, by a noble coach-road, through grounds of great extent and beauty, where every thing seemed light, chearful, and full of taste, approached a grand mansion of Grecian architecture, whose fine Corinthian pillars and airy colonades, contrasted in the most striking manner with the heavy walls and high turrets of Delamere castle. To Magdalena's surprise, the carriage stopped before a fine portico, the door of which being open, discovered a noble hall ornamented with statues, and a superb organ. Never before had Lord Ennersdale's carriage, when Magdalena was in it, stopped for an instant at the door of any house; but all in her destiny seemed changing; all, however unaccountably to her, to be assuming a new and more desirable character.

An old servant came to the door of the carriage, and asked, "If his lordship would be pleased to alight." "No,"

replied Lord Ennersdale, "but beg the house-keeper to come to me for an instant." The man immediately obeyed, and a respectable middle-aged woman made her appearance; with many curtsies and much respect, she renewed the invitation, "Would not his lordship and the young lady alight; she would have chocolate, or some fruit from the hot-house immediately prepared; or perhaps the young lady would like to see the house." "Not now, Mrs. Lawson," Lord Ennersdale replied, and a shade of displeasure, at what he seemed to think officiousness, crossed his countenance. Much as Magdalena certainly wished to take a nearer view of this noble mansion, she dared not ask him to change his determination. "I only stopped for a minute, Mrs. Lawson," said his lordship, "to tell you I had a letter from your master last night; he is well, and desires every thing may be put into the nicest order here; as he hopes to be at home the beginning of

July. You will arrange every thing to his wishes, I know. Sir Eustace talks of bringing his sister and her family with him; have every thing therefore prepared in the best manner, good Mrs. Lawson." Mrs. Lawson again curtsied, professed her joy at hearing such good news, and promised to obey his lordship's directions. Her eyes in the mean time, seeking eagerly to catch a view of Magdalena's face; but, besides its being shaded by her large bonnet, Lord Ennersdale sat forward in the carriage, and Magdalena thought, strove as much as possible, to prevent her from being seen. "*Sir Eustace!*" the sound struck upon her ear; ah! certainly this was the same Eustace, whose name appeared in her mother's tablets. But since the friend of Lord Ennersdale, certainly not her father! who then? perhaps her mother's brother? undoubtedly some relation, whose return she ought to hail as the presage of coming happiness.

The carriage moved on, both were silent; and Magdalena's reverie was scarcely interrupted, by the sight of fine hot-houses and conservatories, stretching to a considerable distance from the house; or of beautiful ornamental buildings, and fine cascades, which in different places enlivened the scene. At length, Lord Ennersdale said, "Is not this a noble place, Magdalena? should you like to live here?" "It is indeed, my Lord," answered Magdalena, "a beautiful place; and with those I love, I should, no doubt, be pleased to live here." "With those you love, Magdalena! and who are they?" asked Lord Ennersdale, with eyes which sought to penetrate her inmost thoughts.

"Yon, my Lord, and Mrs. Dennis," replied Magdalena, with that readiness of speech, yet affectionate look and accent, which shewed her words arose from the most guileless of human hearts. Lord Ennersdale seemed struck, sur-

prised, yet pleased; pleased in spite of himself; for must not his heart at that moment have reproached him with the hours of cold austerity, of harsh unkindness, with which he had often punished this gentle and most unoffending creature! His lip quivered, his complexion changed, he made a motion, as if he would have caught her in his arms; but some stern and inauspicious recollection crossed his mind, his brow clouded, and throwing himself back into the corner of the carriage, he murmured in a low and broken accent, "Again?—again, shall I be the dupe of that voice!—of that look!—deceitful!—delusive!" He paused, and Magdalena dared not speak; though her heart prompted the warmest protestations of her sincerity. Ah! why did he cast from him, the love of this affectionate young creature? Why

"Like the tyrannous breathings of the North,
Shake all her buds from blowing!"

An hour of confidence, a word of

kindness, would now have moulded her to all his wishes; would have ensured to him his most earnest desires; to her a fate, at least exempt from those cruel conflicts, she was too soon doomed to encounter.

Checked, hurt, and every budding hope blasted by his renewed and unmerited severity; Magdalena now remained silent, and they shortly afterwards arrived at home: at that home, which seemed to her unusually cold and gloomy, when contrasted with the bright sun-shine through which she had travelled, and the transient glimpse she had caught of the light and elegant mansion at West-hay.

CHAP. IV.

NO new or remarkable incident happened during the month of April. Mag-

dalena continued to improve both in mind and person; every week added something to her stature, which already rose rather above the middle height, and to its fine and graceful proportions. Every week added some new treasure to the store, which ornamented her cultivated mind. The unvarying sameness of her life, might have wearied her; but having never known one different, her occupations, and the resources she possessed within herself, prevented the hours from hanging heavily upon her. Now and then she sighed for society more congenial to her age, and looked forward, with a vague and indistinct hope, to the time, which, by bringing Sir Eustace, whose other name she knew not, would, she flattered herself, change the manner of her life! Soon, all was to change for Magdalena; soon, although she knew it not, the soft quiet of her heart was to be relinquished, for those tumultuous hopes and fears,

which attend the empire of a powerful passion.

One day early in May, the weather being unusually warm for the season, Lord Ennersdale, contrary to his general custom, had ordered Magdalena's work table, harp, and drawing materials, to be placed in the saloon; which, as one of the state rooms, he very seldom inhabited. It opened into the great hall, and to remove from it to the usual family sitting rooms, it was necessary to cross the hall, and ascend the grand staircase; the other apartments on that side the castle, being state rooms also; and full of fine pictures, and other works of art; which were amongst the chief objects of those strangers who visited the castle.

The coolness of this large and lofty room, had induced Lord Ennersdale to select it for his morning retreat; and Magdalena, was as usual, his companion; to play, read, or be silent, as his humour directed. An hour or two

had passed, when two or three handsome carriages stopped at the door; and the butler brought in a card, which Lord Ennersdale impatiently received. "Pshaw!" said he peevishly, "here is a great party come to see the house, and Lord Milbank with them; now I must give up all my morning to them, as I am known to be at home. I wish I might be permitted to have my house to myself?" Then turning to Magdalena, he hastily exclaimed, "What do you stand there for, girl; get away quickly, before these people come in; I will not have you seen; where are they all, Joseph?"

"In the carriages, my Lord; they will not alight till they know if you permit them to see the house."

"To be sure I must!—have I any choice?—go away, Magdalena?—and I must happen to be in this room too! from whence you cannot go except through the hall, where you will be seen; and I shall have all sorts of non-

sensical questions asked! no one is ever tormented as I am! Why don't you go, girl?" he repeated in an angry tone; seeing her stand suspended, for she hardly knew whether he meant her to go, or stay. She hesitated however no longer, but hastily crossed the hall, without turning her head towards the carriages which stood at the door; and ran up the great staircase; eager through timidity, to be beyond the gaze of several gentleman and ladies, of whom she unavoidably caught a glimpse as she passed. At the top of the stairs she rested a moment; strongly impelled by a natural curiosity, to obtain a more distinct view, herself unseen of the strangers; of dresses and manners, of which she could form so very imperfect a conception. Magdalena was really almost as "skill-less how faces were abroad," as Miranda, in her desert isle; soon she beheld, one of which, like her she might have said,

"I would not wish to look on one more noble!
There's nothing ill can dwell in such a Temple!"

The servant returned to the carriages, with Lord Ennersdale's polite invitation to Lord Milbank and his friends, to alight. His lordship followed from the saloon; all traces of his hasty displeasure effaced from his fine countenance; his noble person appearing to great advantage, as the owner of so magnificent a mansion, of which he did the honours with superior dignity. First Magdalena (who with a palpitating heart, stood undiscovered at the top of the marble staircase, to observe the scene,) saw a man of middle age, whose countenance and manners seemed animated and good-humoured; he advanced, and receiving the hand Lord Ennersdale offered, mutual bows and compliments passed between them. This she concluded was Lord Milbank; he with politeness, introduced to Lord Ennersdale's notice, three ladies; the first tall, and of a commanding figure,

her air and actions dignified and graceful, a lace veil over her face, prevented her features from being seen; the second was a little woman, with a sharp and haughty countenance; both these ladies appeared to be between forty and fifty. The third, Magdalena guessed to be about her own age; tall, fair, and blooming, with a profusion of fine light brown hair; she had a countenance full of animation, and an arch and playful smile, which softened into an expression of marked respect, as she curtsied to Lord Ennersdale's courteous bow. Magdalena observed, that this young person's eyes, turned quickly round the hall and up the staircase, as if looking for something she anxiously expected to see; towards the foot of the staircase, she now indeed approached so closely, that Magdalena shrunk back dismayed, and fearing she should be discovered; soon however, the young lady on whom her eyes were rivetted, removed from that spot, as the party all were passing

it, to go into the suite of rooms opposite to the saloon; which composed an armoury, full of different kinds of warlike implements, and suits of antique armour, disposed in regular order; which took up the whole of that wing, and was generally first shewn to strangers. A young man now advanced from the entrance door, where he had hitherto stood, giving his groom some directions respecting his curricle and horses, and drew the young lady's arm within his own. He was young, apparently not more than twenty; and never had Magdalena seen in form or face, any thing so attractive! His dress and manner were those of a perfect gentleman; his hair of a bright brown, curled slightly round his temples; for with respectful attention to the age and dignified demeanour of Lord Ennersdale, he stood without his hat, while Lord Milbank presented him to the noble owner of the castle: by that means, affording to the eyes of Magdalena, the finest counte-

nance, and the most expressive eyes imaginable.

"She might have called him a thing divine,
For nothing natural, she e'er had seen so noble!"

He stopped a moment, while the young lady rested on his arm, at the foot of the staircase; examining a statue which stood in a niche close to it; and then, with the rest of the party, for whom Magdalena had no eyes, was hastening on. A sigh stole from her bosom, a sudden and painful thought seemed to press upon her heart! "Never! oh, never more shall I behold them!"

She leaned forward to catch one more glimpse of persons who had so deeply interested her feelings; and forgetting, in the emotion of the moment, the position in which she stood, she suddenly lost her balance; her feet slipped, and she fell with violence to the first landing-place! Stunned, terrified, and breathless, she knew not for some minutes what became of her; but recover-

ing her recollection, she found herself seated in one of the hall chairs, supported with the kindest attention, by the young lady, whose figure she had remarked, and surrounded by all the party. Raising her timid and half-clouded eyes, the first object that met them, was the young man; his looks, fixed on her, were full of anxiety and alarm; their eyes met, blushes deep and vivid overspread the face of Magdalena. But ah! Again she looked up, and now she saw a countenance and figure, which inspired far different emotions. They were those of Lord Ennersdale; who, stern, confused, and angry, viewed her with looks of gloomy indignation, scarcely smothered by the presence of so many witnesses! Terrified at the recollection of what she had done, of the rage her disobedience would have excited in his mind, (for so she knew, he would consider her having lingered on the stairs, however natural, however innocent the action,)

the trembling girl attempted to rise, attempted to say something to deprecate his anger; but the pain she endured in one of her arms, joined to the excessive terror of her mind, entirely overcame her, and she thought she was dying. She stretched out one hand to her guardian, exclaiming with difficulty, "Oh, my Lord! forgive me! I am dying!" and fainted quite away.

Once more she recovered, but all the objects which before presented themselves to her eyes, had vanished; she awoke, as from an uneasy dream, and found herself on a couch in Lord Ennersdale's study; her collar, and the rest of her clothes were loosened, her face and bosom deluged with water; and Mrs. Dennis, Agnes, and two or three more of the female servants hanging over her, with restoratives of different kinds. The dreadful sensations which attend a recovery from fainting, yet hung about her; but when the rushing noise which sounds in the ears,

when the dark mists which swim before the eyes began to dissipate, fancy restored to her the soft voice, which had before so kindly asked her how she felt herself; the graceful form which had before met her recovered sense of vision. "Where am I?" she said; "what has happened! what have I done!" "Thank God, my dear," replied Mrs. Dennis, "you are revived at last; I began to think you were really quite gone! Martha, run and tell my Lord, Miss is better! How is your arm, my dear child." "My arm!" repeated Magdalena, attempting to move it, but instantly screaming with the pain; "Oh! it is very bad; what have I done to it?" "Oh, Miss! oh, my dear Miss," said Agnes, "how came you to stop upon the stairs? how came you to fall down?" "Ask no questions, Agnes," interrupted Mrs. Dennis, "you and the maids may go now; I believe your young lady has only strained her wrist, but I suppose the surgeon will be here presently."

"Oh, yes!" replied Agnes, in a low voice, "for that fine young gentleman took one of the servants horses, which stood saddled at the door, and saying he could ride faster than any body, galloped off instantly." "A fine confusion," said Mrs. Dennis, in the same low tones which Magdalena's apparent stupor led them to suppose she could not hear; "a fine confusion this unlucky accident has made! All the party, though too much alarmed to see the house, are waiting to know the event of Miss's illness, and the return of the gentleman, who is gone for the surgeon!" "I was frightened," resumed Agnes, "when I cast a glance upon my Lord!" then in a still lower tone, she added, "Oh, Mrs. Dennis! God grant a strained arm may be the worst of this day's work!" A stifled groan from Magdalena interrupted them; overcome with anguish and terror, the poor girl began to weep abundantly; her tears in some degree relieved her, and

restored her to a fuller recollection of all that had befallen her. "Oh, Mrs. Dennis! oh, Agnes!" she said, in trembling accents, "is my Lord so very angry!—will he ever forgive me!—oh! why did I yield to my curiosity, and stay on the staircase!—but could I have thought of such an accident!—and I wished so much to get a glimpse of those strangers, a nearer view of that sweet-looking girl."

She stopped and blushed; nor could her ingenuous mind account, even to itself, why she should hesitate; why only name the young female she had seen, and involuntarily omit her equally interesting companion.

"Indeed, my dear," answered Mrs. Dennis, "I am sorry you did not come instantly hither, or to our apartment, when Lord Ennersdale dismissed you; but I hope he will not think it a very great fault; I hope he will soon forgive you!" The anxious eyes of Magdalena, saw Agnes shake her head, with

a look of doubt and concern, that threw her into fresh agitations. "Keep yourself as quiet as possible, my dear child," said Mrs. Dennis, "I dare say Lord Ennersdale will consider your present sufferings, as a sufficient punishment for so small a fault;" then in a low voice she added, speaking to Agnes, "I am afraid of a fever from the agitation she is in."

A few minutes of silence followed, and then the servant, who had been sent to inform Lord Ennersdale of Magdalena's recovery, returned. "Well, Martha," said Mrs. Dennis, "is your Lord . . . ." But Martha interrupted her by a motion, requesting silence, or at least caution in her speech; and to Mrs. Dennis's utter surprise, she saw, that the woman had been softly followed into the room, by the young lady who had witnessed Magdalena's fall, and supported her when she recovered her senses in the hall. A half suppressed exclamation from Mrs. Dennis,

drew the attention of Magdalena; she looked up! Her pale cheeks were instantly suffused by a blush of pleasure, and her eyes sparkled with new life. The young lady hastily approached her, and kneeling by the couch on which she lay, softly took her hand, and said in gentle accents, "I so earnestly entreated permission to see you for a moment, that, though Lord Ennersdale pleaded the fear of disturbing you, he could not refuse me: yet I believe he thought me somewhat intrusive, and would rather I had not come; I hope you are not of his opinion."

"No, indeed, indeed!" answered, in a low voice, the timid but delighted Magdalena; "I did not think there had been any body so kind and so amiable, in the whole world." The young lady looked at her with surprise, yet pleasure; she readily perceived her young acquaintance was new to the world she spoke of, and had been kept secluded from it; but how could she imagine

that Magdalena had actually never spoken to more than three persons, except her masters, in her life; and had never been in company for a moment, with any female of her own apparent rank in life, or who was not at least thirty years older than herself. Magdalena forgot the pain of her arm, the terror of Lord Ennersdale's resentment, and every uneasy thought, in gazing on her new friend; in admiring the beauty of her countenance, and the soft waving curls of her hair, and an elegance of dress, such as she had never seen; for her own, though neat, was always extremely plain, and little indebted to fashion for form; so that the fine muslin morning robe of her young companion, and the ornaments she wore, though in reality simple, and proper for an undress, seemed to Magdalena the extreme of all that was elegant and costly. But still more was she charmed with the soft affectionate voice, and kind expressive glances of the fair

stranger; who made the tenderest enquiries respecting her injured arm; and with ingenious readiness, speedily formed a sling for it, and suspended it from her neck, in such a manner, as to give it immediate ease; mingling the soft attention, with caresses still softer and more endearing, which the enchanted Magdalena received and returned, in a manner at once modest, graceful, and affecting. "My brother," said the stranger, "strained his wrist very much, about three months ago; and we love each other so well, he fancies nobody does any thing so much to his satisfaction as I do; this has made me tolerably expert on such occasions. He rode off the instant he perceived you were hurt, and will, I dare say, return with a surgeon very soon. "I think," she added, turning to the confused and silent Mrs. Dennis, "I think, Ma'am, the young lady has only strained her wrist?" "I dare say not, Ma'am,"

answered Mrs. Dennis, "Miss will soon be quite well again, I hope."

"Miss,—and Miss only!—no name! The young lady looked disappointed; but turning with all the easy grace of high-breeding to Magdalena, she said, "Will you not tell me what to call you? my name is Isabella Aubrey; as we have no one to introduce us properly to each other, let us perform that ceremony for ourselves." Magdalena hardly understood her meaning; she knew nothing of introductions, or the ceremonials of making acquaintance; she knew, however, that her name was asked; and she sighed, blushed, turned pale, and trembled, in recollecting she had no name to give, except that by which she was baptized. "I am called Magdalena," she answered, casting down her speaking eyes, and again colouring like crimson." Magdalena!—that is a sweet name!—and your other?—is it Delamere? or . . . . ." "Not Delamere!" answered Magdalena faint-

ly; and distressed beyond her powers of endurance, she withdrew the hand her new friend held, and throwing it with graceful simplicity round her neck, burst into a flood of tears, and wept upon her bosom with unrestrained emotion. "Good heavens!" exclaimed the fair stranger, "have my impertinent questions done this mischief; or is it pain; or . . . . " "Lean on me, my dear," said Mrs. Dennis; "I fear you are troublesome to the young lady; you had better go to your own room." "Troublesome!" exclaimed again the warm-hearted Isabella; "sweet creature! that is impossible!" and she tenderly clasped her to her heart, and kissed the glowing cheek of the mortified Magdalena. The surgeon was now announced, and at the same time a request was sent from Lord Millbank and Lady Montaubery, that Lady Isabella would come immediately, as the party was instantly going. "Let me only hear what this gentleman says," she

replied; "my brother will be anxious to know; pray tell Mamma, and Lord Milbank, I cannot come directly." How surprised was Magdalena to find, that a request from a mother could be thus carelessly answered, and remain unattended to. Mr. Mansfield, the surgeon, now examined the arm, said it was much strained and bruised; recommended some embrocation, and that the patient should be immediately put to bed, and kept quiet, as there was some danger of fever. Agnes's medicine chest, furnished the ingredients of all he prescribed; and while he prepared them, a second message to Lady Isabella, compelled her to depart. With a kind embrace, she took her leave of Magdalena, telling her, she should call on her again soon, as she should stay some weeks at Lord Milbank's, which was only two miles off; and hoped to introduce her mother and brother to her. Magdalena sighed; for well she foresaw the visit would not be per-

mitted; and that when the attractive stranger left her, she should, in all probability, lose sight of her for ever. Repeating a thousand good wishes, Lady Isabella departed; leaving Magdalena penetrated with her kindness, and charmed with her beauty and sweetness. Mr. Mansfield having now bound up the injured wrist, and prepared some medicine for his patient, reiterated his commands for quiet, and the retirement of her chamber; commands which Magdalena gladly obeyed, knowing that she should there be secure from the presence of her guardian, whose anger and reproaches she anticipated with the most uneasy apprehensions.

For three days she remained totally secluded, her medical attendant alone visiting her, as her fever encreased, and she was considerably indisposed.

The curiosity of Mr. Mansfield seemed much excited, by this view of his young and lovely patient; it had for some years been known in the neigh-

bourhood, that there was in the castle a child, whom Lord Ennersdale had brought up from her infancy; and the report of her masters had lately declared, that she was now become a very beautiful young woman. Some there were, who, recollecting times passed, guessed, or believed they guessed, what was her origin; but there were circumstances, over which a mysterious veil had been thrown, and such was the imposing majesty of Lord Ennersdale's demeanour, that into what he chose to keep secret, not even the few who were best acquainted with him, presumed to enquire: indeed, Magdalena had hitherto been kept so studiously concealed, and the intercourse between Delamere castle and the neighbouring houses, was so little, that her very existence was sometimes forgotten. The masters who attended her, formed different opinions respecting her; and there were persons, who fancying themselves better informed than any body,

insisted upon it, that Lord Ennersdale was educating a wife for himself; but by those who knew his age, the unbending austerity of his manners towards his family, and his strong unyielding mind, this idea was held in derision. Now, however, that Magdalena had accidentally been exposed to the view of so large a party, who all were struck both by her extraordinary beauty, and the no less extraordinary fear, she had manifested of Lord Ennersdale's displeasure, (even when so severely suffering from the effects of her fall,) she was suddenly become an object of no small curiosity in the neighbourhood; and Mr. Mansfield found, that any intelligence he could gain of her, would be extremely acceptable at the different houses where he visited. He was a young man, not long established in his profession; and one of those busy, prying characters, who love better to investigate the affairs of others, than attend to their own; thus then, it was

easier to him to please, by indulging his patients with whatever gossip he could collect, than by studious research, and scientific attainment, to render himself an ornament of a noble profession, and a desirable companion for minds of superior comprehension.

To his artful and leading questions however, Mrs. Dennis answered in the most guarded manner; and when in addressing his young patient, he naturally enough hesitated for her name, and then turning to her governess, added "Miss Delamere, I believe?" Mrs. Dennis, with a slight bow, only answered, "Lord Ennersdale, Sir, chooses the young lady should be called Miss Magdalena." Foiled in his attempts to discover any thing from her, he next tried Magdalena herself; imagining that one so young and artless, would be easily induced to give him some information; but of herself, Magdalena knew nothing; and the dread of still farther displeasing Lord Ennersdale, led her to

discourage Mr. Mansfield's desire of conversing with her. In truth, his forward and intrusive manners disgusted her, and the intuitive delicacy of her mind, shrunk from the pert tone which he assumed in speaking to her. The last time he visited her, after examining the arm, he said, "Well, young lady, I have great pleasure in pronouncing you convalescent; you may, if you please, leave your room to-morrow; and a little airing, or the chearful conversation of any friend you wish to see, may now be safely resorted to; you are still rather too languid; any thing that raises the spirits will now be serviceable.

"Alas!" thought Magdalena, "I have little to look forward to, likely to produce such an effect." "I shall have great pleasure," continued Mr. Mansfield, "in assuring your fair friend, Lady Isabella Aubrey, of your recovery, young lady; and that she may now repeat the visit to Delamere castle,

which yesterday and the day before she made, without the pleasure of seeing you." "Lady Isabella!" exclaimed Magdalena, roused by the name to a more pleased attention. "Ah! has she been so very good!—did she call!—did she wish to see me!" "Oh, yes, Ma'am!" replied Mr. Mansfield, with affected surprise; "bless me; I wonder your servants have not delivered the cards, I know she left for you! You, Ma'am, I suppose, (turning to Mrs. Dennis,) knew of her ladyship's having called?" "No, Sir," answered Mrs. Dennis; "all visitors are announced to Lord Ennersdale only; Miss Magdalena has hitherto been so very young, and so much engaged in her studies, that she has not been in the habit of seeing any company."

"Oh! but such a young lady as Lady Isabella Aubrey; so accomplished!—so amiable!—to be sure, Lord Ennersdale will joyfully consent to her visiting his ward; his *niece*, or *grand-daugh-*

ter, I believe I should say?" he added in a questioning tone, and with a look of eager curiosity; but not one word did Mrs. Dennis reply; and Magdalena was so taken up with thinking of Lady Isabella, and whether she should be allowed to see her, that she scarcely heard what he was talking about. What followed however, rivetted her attention.

"Don't you think Lady Isabella very beautiful, Miss Magdalena?"

"She is lovely, indeed," answered Magdalena, colouring with animated pleasure, "and so good, so kind, so unlike any body I ever saw."

"And her brother! my Lord Montaubrey, did you see him, young lady?"

"I don't know,—I believe,—I saw a a gentleman," answered Magdalena.

"Yes, a young gentleman, very handsome," replied Mr. Mansfield; "he saw *you* however, I am *quite* certain! He talked to me about you, when he came to fetch me in such haste. Poor young

gentleman, I never saw any one so frightened; I am afraid the slight view he had of you, will cost his lordship dear!"

"You must excuse me, Sir," said the provoked Mrs. Dennis, "but now Miss Magdalena is quite well, I am obliged to tell you, that Lord Ennersdale does not approve of her entering into so free a conversation with any one, much less with a stranger. My dear child, I will beg you to wish Mr. Mansfield a good morning, and retire into the other room."

Magdalena instantly obeyed, and Mr. Mansfield departed, mortified at having succeeded so ill in his attempts to discover what related to her.

CHAP. V.

THE words of Mr. Mansfield still sounded in the ears of Magdalena,

What could he mean by saying, he feared the slight view Lord Montaubrey had of her, would cost him dear? These words, so common-place, so easily understood, by any one who has been accustomed to the slight badinâge of mixed company, were to Magdalena unintelligible, yet important; this expression, and the rest of his conversation, served to employ her mind till the next day; when at her usual hour, she prepared to attend Lord Ennersdale in his study. Her arm was still in a sling, and she turned pale, and trembled as she opened the study door. His eyes, as she expected, were "full of anger," and his stern brow overspread with frowns. To her humble and silent curtsey, he made no return; no kind enquiry after her injured arm, met her ears; no sorrow expressed or implied for her indisposition, greeted her. The moments of kindness and tenderness she had spent with Lady Isabella, recurred to her memory with

all the force of contrast, and her sighing heart ejaculated, "Oh! that I had some one to love and soothe me!"

"Well, girl," at last exclaimed Lord Ennersdale, "you have shewn me how much I may depend on your promises, to obey me in all things. It was well for me, that I had so guarded my heart by the remembrance of the past, as to save me from being again deluded and deceived by promises, into an expectation of any thing wise, prudent, or dutiful, in one of your sex. A momentary fit of childish curiosity, had, it seems, sufficient power over you, to make you forget my orders, and your own promises; and to expose me to vexations, such as I can but ill endure. You have suffered for your folly; but when did either warning or suffering teach a woman to be wise? A woman I suppose you will henceforth fancy yourself, with your officious friend to instruct you, and her impetuous . . . . but no more; of them you have seen

the last." Magdalena wept bitterly, and vainly attempted to articulate a supplication for his forgiveness. "That prating fool, Mansfield too," he went on with increased anger, "has been amusing himself and his gossiping patients, with the suggestions of his own imagination: he too must be fetched hither to torment me; as if Mrs. Dennis and Agnes, though good for little else, could not have bound up a strained arm; every ailment no doubt exaggerated, in hopes of working on my credulity." "Oh, Sir," replied the heart-wounded Magdalena, "I knew not; I did not wish him to be sent for." "And I was to have the power taken out of my hands, in my own house, by those intruding people; and if a surgeon were necessary, was not allowed to send for my own medical attendant, Parry, whose prudence, judgment, and propriety of conduct, render him an honour to an honourable profession; and who, though practising as a physi-

cian, would for me, have willingly exerted his surgical knowledge; but must have this chattering fellow forced upon me by the unheard-of officiousness of your sympathizing friends. Friends at first sight!—ridiculous romance!—am I for ever to be the sufferer from such intolerable folly?" Out of breath with rage, he now paused, and Magdalena once more attempted, in the humblest manner to deprecate his resentment. He rose from his chair, and walked once or twice about the room, as if endeavouring to obtain a degree of calmness; then stopping opposite to her as she leaned for support against the back of a chair, he said, in a tone less full of rage, but yet stern and impressive, "Take care, take care, Magdalena; for this once I will endeavour to pardon the past; but you know not, it is impossible you can imagine, half the evils you will bring on yourself, if henceforth my will be not implicitly obeyed." My charge will soon be at an end; then if

you behave well, all rumours will be put a stop to, by your being placed in the most desirable situation; if ill, as I once told you before, beggary shall be your portion, and infamy shall attach itself to your very being." Trembling, weeping, almost fainting, Magdalena heard this dreadful sentence; at the end of which, Lord Ennersdale turned from her and left the room. In a few minutes he returned again, and taking no farther notice of what had passed, he gradually resumed his usual manner of treating her; and endeavoured to appear, as if nothing uncommon had happened. But oh! how often did the full mind and aching heart of Magdalena, retrace the past; how often did she ardently wish, again to embrace the amiable Isabella; how often recall the form and features of Lord Montaubrey, who had, with uncommon kindness, gone himself to summon the nearest medical assistance; how often wish to know whether Lady

Isabella had again attempted to see her. "But alas," thought the sighing girl, "disgusted no doubt, by the rude repulses she has met with, she gives me up, and fancies perhaps, that the ungrateful Magdalena acquiesces in the refusal, and willingly relinquishes all farther acquaintance with either herself or her noble brother. Ah! sweetest Isabella, think not so ill of the favoured Magdalena; her heart, her whole heart would be your own, did she dare to seek or to receive you; for who besides, in her whole life, ever attracted her with such sweetness, ever won her by such love!" Two or three days passed heavily with the sad-hearted Magdalena; no airing, no lively conversation renovated those spirits, which Mr. Mansfield had declared too low! or confirmed that health, which he seemed to think depended upon them. In Lord Ennersdale's presence she suppressed her sighs; but in the night, while Mrs. Dennis slept, Magdalena

was now commonly wakeful, and her memory retraced all that was afflictive in her destiny, and fancy suggested sorrows yet to come. Her usual occupations became insipid, and she pined for the sweet society, of which she had had so transient, yet so enchanting a glimpse. Till then the dull and monotonous life she led, had not been distasteful to her; but now that she saw the manners, and the charms of youthful society, she felt a degree of languor and ennui, which weakened her consitution, and impaired her bloom. Mrs. Dennis urged her to walk out; and as the weather was now delightful, she again attempted to find pleasure in her accustomed amusements in her garden and aviary; but she was weak, and it was not till the third or fourth time of her going out, that she found strength to reach a little alcove, at the end of the pleasure-garden, and separated from a little copse, only by a small paled gate, which was always locked, and through which Mag-

dalena never even thought of passing. This was her favourite retreat, for it was remarkably retired and quiet; and here Magdalena loved to read or think. The gardeners knew her usual hours of walking, and had orders from Lord Ennersdale, never to approach that part of the pleasure-grounds, more particularly appropriated to her use, when she was likely to be there. Thus this little domain seemed peculiarly her own, and flattered her with an appearance of liberty, the reality of which she had never known. Here then, the solitary girl sat down to rest; it was a bright serene evening, about the middle of May; the country was covered with a fine verdure, and the later apples were all in full blossom; while the woodbines which entwined round the little alcove, filled the air with a soft perfume; and the song of innumerable birds resounded through the little copse, which afforded so desirable a shelter for their nests and young ones. The

alcove, raised by a few steps above the level of the walk which fronted it, was perfectly free from damp, and commanded, on the side opposite to the copse, a pleasing view. One of the small lakes, so common in Cumberland, glittered through the trees, and bold mountains skirted the prospect; in which two or three gentlemen's seats were visible, though at a considerable distance. Magdalena knew not which, or whether either of them was Lord Milbank's; yet she thought of her new friend with a sigh, and after some moments of reflection, she opened the book she held in her hand; it was Beattie's Beautiful Minstrel; one of the very few poems Lord Ennersdale permitted her to read alone. At every re-perusal, she felt more and more enchanted with this charming poem; and after reading a few stanzas to herself, the delight she felt, impelled her to repeat aloud,

"O! how can'st thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms, that Nature to her votary yields?
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even;
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven.
O——"

"How cans't thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven?" added a soft voice at the foot of the steps; and instantly the startled, the amazed Magdalena, was clasped in the arms of the warm-hearted Lady Isabella. For a few minutes Magdalena could not speak; but her soft caresses, and the glowing cheek, and animated eye, expressed her delight at this unexpected meeting. "Dear girl," said Lady Isabella, "I hope I have not alarmed you too much; I would not have surprised you so, could I have seen you in any other way; but that cross Lord Ennersdale constantly turned me back from the door; and I, with great difficulty, discovered your

usual walks, by means of one of the gardeners, whom we met the last time we called at the castle, and who gave me such information about you, as his limited knowledge afforded; chiefly at what hour, and whither you generally walked; and here we have waited and watched two evenings, walking up and down the coppice, till a quarter of an hour ago, we saw and eagerly hastened to join you; for I was determined to see you again, and feared you would think my professions insincere, as I concluded you did not know I had called, though I desired Mansfield to give you a hint of it, and he assured me he had done so." "Oh, no! indeed, indeed," answered Magdalena, "I never doubted the sincerity of your kindness, and feared on my side, that you would think me ungrateful, for not flying to receive you when you came to the castle, as Mr. Mansfield told me you had done; but ah! it was not my fault; and now, even now; oh! Lady Isabella, I know

not what may be the consequence of my seeing you, even thus accidentally." She trembled and turned pale, gazing eagerly around, lest any one should be within sight or hearing, who might relate this meeting to Lord Ennersdale. "What is the tie," said the astonished Lady Isabella, "by which this extraordinary man holds not only your actions, but even your mind, captive? That thus, even in the most innocent transactions, you dread his displeasure to a degree, that; as I lately witnessed, almost deprived you of life; for such a fainting, any thing so deep, so deadly, I never saw; and you were before recovering, till your eye caught his stern countenance, and then, I never shall forget the plaintive voice which begged his forgiveness, the speaking countenance, which betrayed the most exquisite terror; and all for what? for an accident, by which you were suffering so severely." "Oh, but I lingered on the stairs, and he had told me to go instant-

ly to my room, for he would not have me seen. And, alas, dearest Lady Isabella, you know not half the reasons I have to dread his displeasure; he has just forgiven me, and warned me not again to disobey him, with words so terrific, as make me tremble to remember them!" "Well, but," said Lady Isabella, "has he forbidden you to see me again?" "Not precisely; but I am sure, too sure, he would be greatly offended at my doing so, if he were to know it." "But he never will, never can know it, sweet Magdalena; and I cannot endure that you must yield to his tyrannical whims, a pleasure so innocent as your meeting us here occasionally might give you." "Us, and we, you have several times repeated; whom do you mean? who is with you, Lady Isabella?" "Why, my dear, you know I could not walk from Millbank-park alone, though the distance is only two miles, and as I am a great walker, I do not mind it; but I would not take

a servant, lest our interview, innocent as it is, should be discovered to your harsh guardian; so Reginald and I," "Reginald! who is that?" asked the confused and wondering Magdalena. "My brother, Lord Montaubrey; the same who was with me when your accident happened; he walked hither with me, and . . . ." "And where is he now? Oh, Lady Isabella, I am no judge of what is right or wrong; but my heart misgives me, that all this will end in misery to me." "Do not think so," said Lady Isabella, embracing her; "my brother is the best young man in the world, and would not do the least thing that was wrong, on any account; but, good heavens, my dear, has Lord Ennersdale bought you for a slave, or by what authority does he hold you in a captivity so rigid, as to deny you an hour's society of young persons of your own age, and surely of a rank in life, that might at least claim a degree of respect he has hitherto omitted; and

convince you that you do not, by associating with them, degrade yourself." An air of wounded pride, as well as tenderness, was visible in Lady Isabella as she spoke; and Magdalena, the timid Magdalena, (never allowed to have a will of her own, and judge for herself,) was so afraid of offending her, that she struggled against that intuitive sense of right, which would otherwise have led her to put an end, however unwillingly, to this scene, and suffered herself to be directed by Lady Isabella; who, however well intending and affectionately disposed, was naturally too romantic, too fond of any thing uncommon, and too much accustomed to have her own way, to be a safe guide for the young, and totally inexperienced Magdalena. She, stifling her fears as well as she could, and charmed indeed with the soft caresses and kind looks, of her impetuous friend, suffered her, without farther remonstrance, to make a signal for her brother, who waited

impatiently in the coppice, for permission to join them; and in an instant she saw him spring over the little gate, which divided it from the pleasure-grounds, and over which it seemed, he had before (unseen by Magdalena, whose seat in the alcove, did not command a view of it,) lifted his sister. Magdalena, covered with blushes, and painfully sensible of her own ignorance of the usual observances of the world, received his graceful compliments; and by degrees assuming more courage, and casting off her fears, she felt only alive to the enchanting pleasure, of conversing with two of the most attractive and amiable young people in the world. The respectful, yet animated manners of Lord Montaubrey, by degrees familiarized her, and in a very short time, she felt more at her ease, than she could have supposed possible, with a total stranger. To this the perfect innocence, and guileless simplicity, of her own heart, in a great measure contri-

buted; for entirely free from design herself, she knew not how to impute it to others; and her total ignorance of the world, and of all worldly arts, led her to imagine every one else, as free from deception as herself. Seated between her friends, Isabella holding one of her hands, she seemed to herself in a state of felicity, beyond her warmest conceptions of happiness; and she studiously repressed all uneasy thoughts and reflections, which might have tarnished her present joy. Secure, as she imagined, in the superior knowledge of her new friends, she could not believe it possible they would suffer her to do wrong; and if in their meeting thus, there was nothing really improper, and Lord Ennersdale never could know it, why should she deny herself a pleasure so supreme? By this sophistical mode of reasoning, she stifled every uneasy foreboding, and set her heart as much as possible at rest. By degrees, Lady Isabella drew from her all she knew of

herself; yet not with intended art, or by taking advantage of Magdalena's simplicity; but with genuine warmth of feeling, and by displaying the natural tenderness of her heart, exciting perfect confidence in her young companion. From her confession, that Lord Ennersdale had never acknowledged her as being any near relation, nor explained the means from which his power over her was derived; both Lord Montaubrey and his sister inferred, that he stretched that power to tyranny, and that if she had parents living, they never would have delegated so total a jurisdiction over the very thoughts and feelings of their child to any one; and if dead, he could not have a right, thus totally to exclude her from society; nay even from the exercise of social and benevolent propensities. The strongest and most alarming of his expressions, Magdalena involuntarily withheld; she could not bear to let her new friends suppose, that with his choice alone it

rested, to "consign her to beggary, and attach infamy to her very being." The words themselves were, as applied to her, so totally unintelligible to her mind, that she often imagined it was a vain threat, to induce her compliance with his will: of beggary, she knew but by report that such a state existed; for though nature had given her a "tear for pity, and a heart, open as day, to melting charity," those graces had hitherto been vainly granted; for from the exercise of either, her secluded state had almost entirely withheld her; and as to infamy, Magdalena had no idea of any that did not arise from guilt; and of what had she been, or could she be, guilty, to deserve it? Charmed and delighted with her companions, Magdalena forgot the lapse of time, forgot the dangers of her situation; forgot, for the first moment of her life, the dread of offending her stern and irritable guardian. Her young friends enquired the mode of her life, the dis-

tribution of her time, and the nature of her amusements; they recounted in their turn, some circumstances of their own situation, and informed Magdalena that their father had been dead some years; that the tall lady she had seen with them, was their mother, and Lord Milbank their uncle and guardian. "But Reginald," said Lady Isabella, "will be of age next month, and we are now come to Milbank park, to stay till after that period, and that my mother may be present at the winding up of accounts, &c.; soon after that, my brother will go to his own seat, Mount Aubrey, (from which, in former times, the title was taken,) in Derbyshire, which he will make his country residence for the future; and he wants Mamma to give me up to him for a while, to manage his house; and I assure you, whatever you may think, I should make a capital housekeeper for him; but I don't think I shall indulge him, even if my mother would, for I

have a notion," half laughing, and casting a sly glance at her brother, "I have a notion he will not be long before he chooses a more pleasing head for his household than I should be." Magdalena's eyes followed the direction of Lady Isabella's, in whose face, while she spoke, she was attentively gazing; and caught the eyes of Lord Montaubrey, rivetted on her own soft expressive countenance, with a look of so much admiration and delight, as covered her with blushes. Their confusion was mutual, for his lordship cast down his eyes, and a bright colour spread itself over his cheeks; Lady Isabella laughed with an archness of expression, which, though Magdalena did not comprehend it, yet increased her confusion. A momentary silence ensued, when the loud stroke of the castle bell, made Magdalena start from her thoughtful attitude. "Hark," she exclaimed, "I am summoned, I must this instant leave you!" "Summoned!" repeated Isa-

bella, "is that a signal for you?" "Yes," replied Magdalena, "it is the signal by which I am always called to the house; it will sound three times, at the distance of five minutes between each stroke; and if I am at the farthest part of the pleasure-ground, as this is, I am expected to be in the castle in less than five minutes after the last." "But if you are near the house, I suppose a servant calls you?" "No, never, I am not permitted even to speak to the servants, except in my guardian's, or Mrs. Dennis's presence." "How extraordinary," said Lady Isabella; "every word you say fills me with new surprise." "I am," replied Magdalena, "so ignorant of every thing beyond these walls, that I dare say there are a thousand strange circumstances appertaining to me, which have never struck me as such; yet from all I have read, and all I have been able to draw from Mrs. Dennis, I know I am treated differently from other young people; but

now I must go; this very instant I must go." "Promise me, then," said Lady Isabella, detaining her, "to be here again, somewhat earlier to-morrow." "Oh, I must not indeed; I must not; I know it is wrong; dear, dear, Lady Isabella, do not ask me; do not detain me." She was breathless with contending emotions. "Come," said Lady Isabella, "we will walk with you as far as the trees shade us; give her your arm, Reginald, for the dear girl quite trembles." Lord Montaubrey gently drew her arm through his own, and said "Lean on me, my sweet friend, (for so I must call you,) compose yourself, you shall not be urged to join us against your inclination." "Ah! my inclination, my Lord, but too decidedly prompts me to comply with your sister's kind wishes; but I fear, my heart tells me I am doing wrong; am virtually, though not literally, disobeying my guardian; and perhaps entailing on myself, punishment beyond my present

power to imagine." Again Lady Isabella reasoned, again entreated; till Magdalena overcome, afraid to stay longer, and unable to bear the idea of seeing her no more, promised, with mingled reluctance and pleasure, to meet them in the alcove the next evening, at an hour somewhat earlier; and then, receiving and returning the kind embrace of Lady Isabella, while Lord Montaubrey kissed the hand he held, she ran from them, and with all possible speed crossed the open lawn in sight of the house; for some minutes had elapsed since the last stroke of the bell had sounded, and the shades of evening were gathering thickly around. Breathless, trembling with mingled fear and pleasure, Magdalena entered the hall, where to her surprise and alarm, she met Mrs. Dennis. "Bless me, Miss," said she, "why did you stay out so late? The bell sounded the last time, more than ten minutes ago, and Lord Ennersdale was so uneasy

and so angry, that I was coming myself to see for you, though it is so nearly night; how could you do so? and after being so ill too!" "I went,—I walked further than I intended," answered the half-breathless girl, "and I sat some time in the alcove near the coppice, reading; and indeed I came away as soon,—as soon as I heard the first bell: but is my guardian angry, is he indeed." "Yes, indeed he is, and you must go to him this moment; do, child, recover your breath, and look a little more composed; has any thing frightened you?" Magdalena made no answer, and struggling with her emotions, she, with all the composure she could assume, went to Lord Ennersdale's study; but ah! unfortunate girl, already she began to feel, how dearly those who engage in any forbidden or clandestine intercourse, pay for their transient pleasures. The eyes of Lord Ennersdale, though filled with no more sternness of expression than she had

often seen, now seemed to her unusually severe; and she almost fancied their penetrating glances could read the very inmost folds of her heart. Hitherto she had never had any thing to conceal from him, but those accidental errors in which her will had no part; and which nothing but the uncertainty of what would, or would not offend him, would have induced her to conceal at all; but now she had done, and promised again to do, what she was well convinced he would most seriously disapprove; and her conscience, naturally delicate and discriminating, reproached her with duplicity and deceit. Poor Magdalena! her punishment was already began; for however innocent the action in itself, however natural her yielding to an intercourse, so sweet and so desirable, in one who had never before felt the balm of one sweet, one tender word, or affectionate caress; still she could not "hush a voice," that murmured in her heart, and told her

she was acting improperly. Lord Ennersdale spoke to her with some degree of displeasure, and told her, if she again extended her stay abroad to so late an hour, he would not allow her to go beyond the lawn; to all which she was silent, as indeed she generally was while he was angry; and now she dreaded to speak, as she dared not reveal the truth, and could not bear the idea of making false excuses; but she promised not to stay out so late again, and he said no more.

Few young persons would perhaps have felt so much reluctance, and so many scruples to keep her appointment, as Magdalena did; several times she half determined not to go; how earnestly did she long for, how much did she want some tender and affectionate friend, to whom she could have disclosed the event of the preceding evening, and have requested advice and direction; but no fond mother, no kind and soothing sister had Magdalena; no

confidence had ever been placed in her by her guardian; all her education had been conducted on the plan of severity and coercion; was it therefore to be expected, that so young a girl, with a heart so capable of warm and affectionate emotions, could relinquish a delightful intercourse with two amiable young persons, the first she had ever known, and whose rank in life, and elegance of manners, were her security against every thing degrading and improper; if such perfection could be found in human nature, our youthful heroine possessed it not: she was no "*faultless monster that the world ne'er saw*," and we must, such as she was, "*take her for all in all.*"

CHAP. VI.

FOR the two following evenings Magdalena again met her new friends, and finding that she did so with safety,

her fears abated, and she flattered herself, no evil could arise to her from the indulgence. On the last of these evenings, the conversation turned on the memorable day, when Lord Montaubrey and his sister, had come with their mother, &c. to visit Delamere castle; and Lady Isabella told her, that they caught a glimpse of her as she crossed the hall; and curiosity to see more of one whose figure was so pleasing, led her to linger near the staircase, and try if she could not obtain another sight of her. "I was beginning, however, my dear," she continued, "to give up the hope, when your sudden fall precipitated you half down the staircase, to our great surprise and dismay. My brother and another gentleman, instantly ran to you, and brought you senseless as you were, down the remaining stairs. We expected to see Lord Ennersdale overcome with alarm, as we had previously understood from Lord Milbank, there

was reason to suppose, the young person he educated was a *very near* relation; but we saw in him much more anger, than grief or alarm; and his chief care seemed, to hurry you from our sight; though when you were actually gone, he treated us with the greatest politeness; nothing but an importunity, which I believe he thought extremely impertinent, could have induced him, I am persuaded, to let me again make my personal enquiries for you; and I believe he was heartily glad when he got us all out of his house." The truth of this, Magdalena could not deny; but there was a hint in Lady Isabella's speech, which she earnestly desired to have explained. Did Lord Milbank then, know her origin; did he know in what degree she was related to Lord Ennersdale? "Why, my sweet girl," answered Lady Isabella, "not exactly so, but Lord Milbank (whose family have been perhaps for some ages inhabitants of this county,) recollects per-

fectly well, nay, was well acquainted, seventeen or eighteen years ago, with the only daughter of Lord Ennersdale. They did not at that time entirely reside here, but at another still more ancient seat he has in Berwickshire, though they often spent many months here. Miss Delamere was, he says, one of the most beautiful girls he ever beheld; her father doated on her, and was also extremely proud of her, as the acknowledged heiress of all his immense property; the young lady was said to be engaged to a gentleman in this neighbourhood; but unfortunately on a visit to a young friend near Lord Ennersdale's seat in Scotland, she saw and became attached to a young man, whom she met there, and on her father's pressing her to marry the gentleman of his choice, she refused. Some time elapsed, and then, whether her father treated her with harshness, or whatever was the cause, she fled with her lover; the father pursued them;

many contradictory reports prevailed; some said they were married; others that they were not; certain it seems that the lady was brought back to this castle; what became of her lover or husband, is not known. All afterwards was shrouded in mystery; the lady was reported to be kept in close confinement; her death and funeral were shortly after made public. And as Lord Ennersdale, for years entirely secluded himself, and even his servants were forbidden any intercourse with others, nothing could be known of what passed at the castle, yet rumours were not wanting. Till you must have been six or seven years old, your very existence was not known; but the masters then called in to assist in your education, and your appearance in the chapel on Sundays, then discovered you were an inmate in the castle, and gave rise to new reports. A striking resemblance to Miss Delamere!" she paused; the fluctuating colour in Magdalena's cheek,

her tearful eyes, and sighing bosom, shewed how deeply this little sketch of a melancholy story affected her. "You are too abrupt, Isabella," said Lord Montaubrey, "you might have spared some of this distressing detail; so lately a stranger, a little time should have been given, to induce a yet more friendly intimacy, before you had hinted at this sad tale; a tale probably so interesting to your sweet young friend." "Oh, do not reproach her," said Magdalena, "my own eager curiosity led my dear Lady Isabella to give me these particulars; but is it supposed, is it thought! yes, too surely I am the child of that unhappy mother! I am that unfortunate orphan! oh! what became of my father? the very marriage doubted too; oh! leave me, leave me; I am not worthy to be your friend."

The words of Agnes respecting "her mother's fame," the threats of Lord Ennersdale, all seemed now too fatally explained; yet her heart acquitted her

unfortunate mother, of all but indiscretion; but her brain seemed confused, her thoughts too active and too impetuous, to be endured with composure. The tenderest and most gentle soothings from both her companions, tranquillized in some measure, her trembling emotions; and they believed, with some appearance of reason, that it could hardly be supposed Lord Ennersdale would have educated her so highly, or brought her up so carefully, had he not been well convinced himself of his daughter's marriage; although, for reasons unknown to them, he had not hitherto declared his conviction to her, or to the world; this however was a topic of such extreme delicacy, that they ventured but lightly to touch upon it; but confined themselves to assurances, that whatever Lord Ennersdale might hereafter choose to make Magdalena's fate, no change of station should shake the tender friendship, each in turn promised ever to preserve

for her. "Permit me, in particular," said Lord Montaubrey, "to declare, that every effort in my power, shall, if you allow it, be exerted to secure you the possession of those rights, to which *I* am fully convinced you have a legal claim. In a very few weeks I shall be of age, and then, sweet Magdalena, my time, my fortune, every thing, should your situation require it, shall be at your disposal; nor will we suffer Lord Ennersdale, to give or withhold your very name at his pleasure; at least he shall be obliged to prove his rights in you, before we will relinquish your claims to a proper distinction." "A thousand thanks," replied the trembling Magdalena, "to you, dear Lady Isabella, and to you, my Lord, for your kind, your soothing promises of regard and protection; nothing however, can I think, ever induce me to employ any means with Lord Ennersdale, except those of persuasion and obedience, to obtain from him a declaration of my

birth and real situation; with hope and consolation however, I shall now look forward, knowing, in case of my being so unfortunate as to incur my guardian's anger, that I have kind friends, who will not let me be quite a wretched cast-away! But a likeness, a striking resemblance to this unfortunate Miss Delamere, you seemed to hint had been observed. Ah! I am convinced there is one; that picture, that dear interesting portrait; I knew it was my mother."

"The resemblance is so remarkable," replied Lord Montaubrey, "that Lord Milbank was excessively struck with it when he saw you, and hinted it as delicately as possible to Lord Ennersdale; but he wrapt himself in a cloak of reserve, even thicker than ordinary, and completely checked, Lord Milbank says, all approach to the subject; but tell me, what is the picture to which you allude?" Magdalena now related all that had befallen her on the night of Mrs. Dennis's illness. Lord Mont-

aubrey and his sister looked on each other, as if their thoughts led them to accuse Lord Ennersdale, at least of cruelty to his unfortunate daughter, and tyranny to her unoffending child; for such they doubted not Magdalena was, and the words she reported to have heard from Agnes, convinced them he intended to answer some essential purpose, by leaving her claims unestablished.

Many more ideas crossed their minds, all of which, prudence and delicacy forbade their revealing to Magdalena. Warning her however, not to be terrified at any future time, into measures inimical to her happiness, but to rely on their friendship, to support and assist her; they gradually dropped the subject for one more chearful, and the evening closed, with a promise of meeting again the next, should the weather prove favourable; of which they doubted, as some clouds seemed rising that threatened rain.

A rough wind began to rustle amongst the trees, and a few drops of rain fell, as Magdalena ascended the steps into the hall; a deeper gloom than usual seemed to enwrap its massy pillars, and she sighed as she gazed around her. "To-morrow will not, I fear, be fine," she said to herself; "and oh, how doubly melancholy will this vast mansion appear to me, if I am long detained within, after those gleams of happiness I have so lately enjoyed, without its dreary walls."

The wind and rain encreased as the night drew on; Magdalena, restless and impatient, longed for morning, hoping the rising sun would dispel the clouds; but that day and the next proved wet; there was no going abroad, and the hours seemed endless.

"With what a leaden and retarding weight,
Does Expectation load the wing of Time!"

While in Lord Ennersdale's presence, habit restrained her actions, and she remained apparently as quiet as usual;

but what power could limit her thoughts? How, as the usual hour of meeting approached, did her heart sadden, nay sicken with depression, so deep, as scarcely to be concealed. "What is the matter, child?" said Lord Ennersdale to her, as, the second evening, she sat by him at work; "why do you sigh so often, are you ill?" "No, my Lord," she replied with a crimson blush; for at the slightest appearance of tenderness in him, her conscience reproached her with encreased force, for disobeying his wishes. "No, my Lord; but the weather is so dismal, there is no walking out." "And what then," he replied with some asperity, "are you so without resource, that you cannot pass two days in the house, without being unhappy? Cannot your books, your work, your drawing, or music, amuse you in those intervals, when the weather or other circumstances prevent your walking out? If so, ill indeed are my cares in your education repaid;

and the mere insipid fine lady, who knows nothing but how to dress herself, or receive visitors, is as well informed as you are; the rustic cottager much better, for she can always find something to do." "*A thousand crimson shames burnt on her cheek;*" a thousand reproaches, started to, and clung about her heart; and she forced herself to her various employments, with an appearance of alacrity her mind was yet far from feeling. Yet to Lord Ennersdale's penetrating eye, she still seemed different from her usual self; he found her answers less animated, her attentions less complete than they used to be; and at last said, somewhat angrily, "Get along, girl; I don't know what is the matter with you, perhaps the remains of your late illness. Go, walk in the hall, and see if the exercise will rouse you; go for an hour, and return to me at supper-time, a little more like what I wish you to be." Magdalena readily obeyed, and walking a

quick pace up and down the immense hall, she found, as he had said, the exercise rouse her. Her thoughts too had a freer flow, and to think without interruption or restraint, is often in itself felicity. Yet while Magdalena retraced her first meeting in that very spot, with those who now employed her every thought, while she recollected all the endearing words, and kind sentiments she had since heard from them both; why did Montaubrey's figure, Montaubrey's expressions, recur to her memory, with a degree of force and precision, before which the fainter portrait of Isabella faded away! Why, when both were so affectionate and kind, did her heart throb, and her blood circulate with an encreased rapidity, which dyed her cheeks with vermilion, as she recollected the kindness, the tenderness of Reginald; while, though softened and pleased, she contemplated the words and actions of Isabella, with calmness and self-possession? Magda-

lena knew not why, but she was sensible of a gratification in the new sensation to which she involuntarily rendered up her heart.

Twenty times she went to the windows, watching the course of the clouds; and at last, as the sun set, with joy she observed a light streak in the western sky; a softer breeze rolled aside the floating vapours, and soon after the bright moon, long

> ——— In a noyous cloud enveloped,
> Where she might find the substance thin and light,
> Broke forth her silver beams, and her bright head
> Discovered to the world discomforted;
> With thousand blessings."

Magdalena welcomed her, and in the quarter of an hour which yet remained of her allotted stay, she saw these prognostics of favourable weather confirmed; and heard the distant song of the nightingale, whose sweet notes she had not heard since she parted from Reginald and Isabella, at the gate of the copse. "To-morrow," said she, "sure-

ly to-morrow will be fine, and once more I shall listen to those delightful notes, with Montaubrey and Isabella by my side."

Full of delight, of joyful anticipation, she bounded with juvenile lightness across the hall, and re-entered the study, with an air so changed, a countenance so lighted up, that Lord Ennersdale's observing eye instantly saw the alteration, and smiling, half in kindness, half in contempt, he said "What trifles affect youthful minds! a day of wet weather depresses, an hour of exercise revives them!—'tis well!—happy those so easily excited!"

The following day rose with replendent brightness; a light wind, and a warm sun, dried up the superfluous moisture, and the country, refreshed by the late rain, appeared in renovated verdure. Lord Ennersdale proposed a short airing to Magdalena, to which she readily consented. "As you like

being out of doors so much, it will do you good."

Magdalena had employed a part of the rainy two days, in altering one or two of her dresses, and pleased herself with making them as nearly as possible, like those she had seen Lady Isabella wear. She had also changed the disposition of her hair, and placed it so, as to shew her fair forehead and temples to great advantage; the large bonnet had been a little reduced, and a new pale blue ribbon, from Mrs. Dennis's stores, tied it under the chin. Magdalena, though her glass shewed her how much her appearance was improved, by the alteration in her dress, yet flattered herself Lord Ennersdale, who in general scarcely looked at her, would not notice it; she was however deceived, for looking at her when she joined him, with some surprize, he said, in a low voice, "True woman, *an animal that delights in finery;*" then raising his tone, he added, "Magdalena, what

bonnet is that?" "The same, my Lord, which I have worn since Christmas." "Then you have altered it?"

"Yes, my Lord, a little; it kept me so very warm, and the ribbon was shabby; Mrs. Dennis therefore gave me this."

"That bonnet will not do to go out with me, Miss; get another."

"I have no other, my Lord."

"Then get a mask, or a veil, or some thing or other, or stay at home."

"A veil!" thought Magdalena, "I wish I had one like dear Isabella's."

"Go to Mrs. Dennis," he added, "tell her to give you some gauze, or some muslin, or whatever stuff such things are made of; the thicker the better."

Magdalena did not think so; who would like to be stifled such a warm fine day, with a great thick veil? She went however to Mrs. Dennis, and from her stores selected some clear muslin, of which they contrived to make a veil,

and with this Lord Ennersdale was tolerably well satisfied. While they drove through the neighbouring village, he made Magdalena keep this muslin close over her face; but when they were farther in the country, as she complained of the heat, he permitted her to throw it back. They had proceeded about two miles, in a very pleasant, but unfrequented road; Lord Ennersdale sometimes looking in a book, as was his general custom in a carriage, sometimes talking to Magdalena of what he read, or on other subjects, when she saw some persons coming towards them on horseback; her heart fluttered; she thought she recognized those most dear to her; Lord Ennersdale saw them not, for he happened to be reading. A short turning in the road concealed them from her sight, and she thought perhaps she had been mistaken; but the next minute, both Lord Ennersdale and herself were startled by the sudden stopping of the carriage; to the

doors of which, rode up Lord Milbank, Lord Montaubrey, and Lady Isabella; "How do you do, my good Lord?" said Lord Milbank; "I rejoice to see you out; it is quite a wonder," offering as he spoke, his hand; for the warmth of the day, had obliged them to keep down the glasses. Lord Ennersdale accepted his hand, but with an air of stiffness and constraint, and would have gone on, but Lord Milbank still kept his hand on the edge of the carriage door; and bowing with a smiling air to Magdalena, exclaimed, "and you, young lady, I am delighted to see you look so well; that fine colour, and those bright eyes, assure me you have quite recovered the effects of your fall, which alarmed us all so much." Magdalena blushed, bowed, and in a low voice, thanked him. In the mean time, Isabella at the other door, had seized one of her hands, and tenderly pressing it, spoke to her with an air of interest and affection; while Montaubrey's eyes

were fixed on her with a look of delight, to which her heart responded, but which dyed her cheeks with redoubled blushes.

Lord Ennersdale's countenance betrayed a mixture of vexation and impatience; he broke up the conference, Lord Milbank seemed inclined to hold, and the more silent greetings of Magdalena and her friends, in a manner repulsive, if not rude; and with a stiff bow, ordered his coachman to drive on. A stifled smile from Lord Milbank, who seemed to enjoy the Earl's annoyance, and the kindest glances from Montaubrey and Isabella, were visible to Magdalena, as she bowed to bid them farewell; and she dared not, as her heart prompted, lean out and kiss her hand to them all, as they did to her, as long as she could see them.

The instant they had passed, Lord Ennersdale drew up both glasses, pulled down Magdalena's veil with his own hands, and seemed with difficulty to

refrain from execrating the whole party. The bonnet, the heat, their insufferable impertinence, her foolish confusion, and look of pleasure, all were in turns anathematized. "Such things never happened but to him; every thing that could torment him, always did! No doubt it would be always so! He saw those officious young people were determined to force themselves upon her acquaintance; but he would take care she should never go beyond the grounds again, while they remained in the country!" For once Magdalena found courage to answer him, though in trembling accents. One effort she thought might smooth all her difficulties, might convince him of his unkindness, in denying her the innocent pleasure of society, so suitable to her age and inclinations, as that of Lady Isabella; or, if he still persisted in his severity, might justify her to herself for seeking it unknown to him. "May I, my Lord," she said, "may I, without offence ask, if you do

not think Lady Isabella Aubrey very kind, in wishing for the acquaintance, for a farther knowledge of a girl like me, who can, I imagine, have nothing to attract her notice? it must be only, that she thinks me solitary, and in want of a companion of my own age!" She paused, for ill could words express the rage which seemed struggling in Lord Ennersdale's bosom. "What is all this?" at length he exclaimed; "what is come to you, girl? this is a boldness unheard of before? Solitary! In want of a companion? Is this your devotion to my will? this your obedience to my wishes? Dare to speak to me another word of this sort, and I will now, this very instant, spurn you from me, and leave you to the mercy of the world, and your new friends! You shall have *no companion*, but of my choosing; and *solitary* indeed you will be, when I turn you out to the beggary and disgrace I begin to believe you merit! Rebellious sex! The first attractive face, the first

soothing word, draws you from your duty, and your obedience! How much more of this bitter conviction is to fall to my lot! Am I for ever to be defied?"

"Gracious heaven!" thought Magdalena, whose indignation at the cruel contumely with which her guardian treated her innocent appeal, began to raise a spirit in her bosom, of whose existence she had before been insensible. "Gracious heaven! if such was the treatment my unhappy mother experienced; if her soft pleadings, her breaking heart, met with no greater indulgence, who can wonder at her being driven to a harsh step, she would not otherwise have though of! Oh, Isabella! Oh, Reginald! it is well you are not here at this moment! I might perhaps, determine to seek those rights, which nature denies not to her meanest children, and under your protection——" She checked the thought; her guardian's former threats recurred to

her memory, and the words of Agnes still sounded in her ears.

To Lord Ennersdale she spoke no more on the former subject; she dared not, dreading a positive command never to speak to Lady Isabella again; and her heart was too full, to allow of her conversing on any other. A few tears stole down her glowing cheeks, which Lord Ennersdale attributing to perverseness, were a fresh subject for his severity. At length this miserable airing had an end, and Magdalena gladly withdrew to her own apartment, to quiet, if possible, the tumultuous throbbings of her heart, and compose her spirits, to meet Lord Ennersdale at dinner; for she had for the last six months, taken all her meals, and spent almost all her time with him. The meal was silent and unsociable.

"The angry spot did glow on Cæsar's brow!"

And Magdalena and the servants,

"Look'd like a chidden train!"

They usually dined at three, and the tea and coffee were brought in exactly at six; at a quarter before seven, (and oh! how long she thought the interval!) Magdalena rose, intending to go to the alcove.

"Where now, Magdalena?" asked her stern guardian.

"Only, my Lord,—only to take a turn in the grounds; the evening is delightful."

"You have had exercise enough for one day; the walks are damp; I do not choose you to go."

"I have not seen my birds these three days, my Lord; I believe, I am sure, they want feeding."

"They will not be hurt, if they stay till to-morrow; if you think they will, ring the bell, and I will send one of the servants to feed them. But you shall not go!"

Again, with a sighing heart, the disappointed girl sat down; what would Isabella, what would Reginald think?

She hoped they would not venture too near the house, nor suppose it her fault, that she did not meet them. The ideas of sending a servant to the aviary was worse than any thing; it was so near the alcove. She muttered therefore, that she supposed the birds had food enough to last till the next day; that she knew they would be frightened at a stranger; and if it were fine she could go to them in the morning. To all which, Lord Ennersdale returned no answer; he had gratified his ill-humour, by keeping her at home, when he saw she wished to go abroad; and as to the next day, he did not care whether she went or not.

The evening seemed to Magdalena endless, and Lord Ennersdale's perpetual peevishness, and finding fault with every thing she did, rendered it still more tedious. Her singing he declared was out of tune; he had never heard her play so ill; and when, by his continual thwarting, he had so overcome

her spirits, that scarcely for a moment she could refrain from shedding tears, he ordered her to read, and then found fault that her voice was broken, and her articulation imperfect. Harrassed, exhausted, and subdued, she at last pleaded a severe head-ache, and requested permission to go to bed. Then with some shew of involuntary tenderness, he wished her good night, and desired she would take care of herself; nay, he even requested Mrs. Dennis might be sent to him, and telling her Magdalena was not quite well, he begged she would be particularly careful of her, and if the morning were damp, not allow her to go out.

"What an extraordinary man," thought Magdalena; "how strange, how inexplicable a mixture!" With affection however, which the smallest word of kindness from him always renewed in her bosom, she returned Lord Ennersdale's good night, and said, she had no doubt she should be quite well in the morning.

CHAP. VII.

THE complete weariness of Magdalena's spirits threw her into a profound sleep, which lasted several hours. She arose very early, and greeted a bright morning with rapturous joy. Soon dressed, she tied on her newly altered bonnet, and radiant in youthful beauty, which now no thick veil shaded from observation, she hastened into the pleasure-grounds.

The gardeners were busy, mowing and rolling the lawn before the house, the only part of the grounds respecting which Lord Ennersdale was in the least particular; that, as every window in the house commanded a view of it, was always in the nicest order; and stages of flowering shrubs, were at this season, placed at distances around it.

The green-house and hot-house were but little attended to; Lord Ennersdale never went into them; and Magdalena was not permitted to give directions of any kind to the servants. The walks were occasionally swept, but no great attention was paid to any thing; and no walk in the direction which Magdalena took, was ever approached, except at such hours as the servants knew she was not there.

As she passed, the gardeners bowed to her with silent respect; she returned their civilities; and with the little basket, containing her bird's seed on her arm, tripped lightly on. Before she had proceeded many steps, she heard one of them say to the other, "Robert, we must leave the alcove walk, which wants sweeping very much, till noon, my young lady is going there now." In her childish days, Magdalena had often regretted, that she was not permitted to superintend and direct the pleasant labours of the gardeners; and to wish

she might order such alterations as her youthful fancy suggested, in her walks and aviary; but now she rejoiced in a custom, which secured her from interruption, and a discovery of her intercourse with Reginald and Isabella.

At this hour she thought indeed there was but little chance of meeting with them, yet it was possible, the morning was so fine. Though she endeavoured to persuade herself, they should not meet, yet it was plain, a latent hope of seeing them directed her actions, else wherefore did she seek the alcove, rather than the aviary; though the necessities of her little pensioners was the ostensible reason of her early walk?

The alcove was empty, but on the little table lay a beautiful nosegay of hot-house flowers, such as Magdalena had never seen before, and whose scent perfumed the air to a considerable distance. Eagerly she snatched them to her bosom, to her lips, murmuring, "Dear Isabella, kind Reginald, this is

a sweet attention from you! But, ah! how imprudent! had the gardeners come instead of me, what would they have thought? what would have been the consequence?"

Again she covered the leaves and flowers with tender kisses, while a thousand soft emotions crowded to her heart. "Could these," she said, "have been left here last evening, and remain still so fresh? Ah, lovely flowers, the tears I shed last night were more abundant than the dew which has so charmingly preserved you; but ah! not so sweet, and so refreshing!"

"Why," said the voice of Montaubrey, at her shoulder, "why, sweetest Magdalena, are you fated to shed tears, except the delightful ones of tenderness and pity?" Hastily she turned round, (for engaged with her flowers, she had been standing with her back to the entrance,) and starting, had almost fallen into the arms of Reginald; they seemed to expand with involuntary emotion,

as if, had he dared, he would for a moment have clasped her within them; but instantly, with an air of deep respect, he checked himself, and taking her hand bowed, and gently pressed it to his lips. "Oh, my Lord," she exclaimed, "how you startled me! I had no idea you were near me! but where is your sister? where is dear Isabella?" "I have been watching this hour in the little copse," he said, "hoping this lovely morning might induce you to walk; especially as you were prevented from coming hither last night. Isabella sends her best love, and bids me say, that could her wishes have been written on those flowers, you would have found the most affectionate on every leaf." "Is she not come, then?" asked Magdalena, in a voice of regret. "No, my fair friend, she rode and walked too much yesterday, for we stayed here till eight o'clock, and walked back to Milbank too hastily for her strength; she has a terrible head-ache. To-day we

are engaged to dine at Sir William Selwyn's, where we shall meet Lord Ennersdale, the only circumstance which mitigates our regret, for not being able to meet you this evening; we hope, by every attention, to win a little on your strange capricious guardian; and if possible, dissipate his dislike to our visiting you without disguise or restraint, and to-morrow morning very early, Isabella hopes to greet her fair friend once more, and communicate the result of our mutual endeavour to please Lord Ennersdale."

A sense of impropriety, stole uneasily over the mind of Magdalena; Mrs. Dennis's general lessons, and the observations she had made in her reading, (though her studies had been purposely directed to any thing rather than a knowledge of the manners of society, of those proprieties of conduct, expected from young women,) convinced her that to be thus alone, thus at a distance from all others, with a young man so

iately a stranger, was not perfectly correct. She thanked Lord Montaubrey for bringing the flowers, and Isabella's message, and begged him to say, that she hoped nothing would prevent their meeting the next morning at the same hour. She would then have hastily quitted him, but with a look of extreme disappointment, he said, "Will you leave me so immediately, fair Magdalena? are you determined to convince me, that Isabella alone possesses any share of your regard, and that you but tolerate my society as a means of ensuring hers?" "Not so, my Lord," she answered, covered with blushes; "I hope you do not think me so ungrateful! But why should I detain you? why break in upon your time?" "My time!" he replied, with an air of animation, "of what worth is my time, or any thing else I possess, but as you partake and give it value?"

"And do you think I have not a thousand questions to ask, of all that

happened yesterday, when apostrophizing those cherished, those enviable flowers you acknowledged that you had wept? Oh, too lovely Magdalena, why is it not in my power to chase every sorrow from your bosom, every tear from those eyes? Those eyes, which . . . . ." He paused abruptly, but his words, and the warmth of his manner, overwhelmed her with confusion. Often in their daily intercourse, a thousand soft and tender expressions had stolen from him, and his looks alone might have convinced one more experienced than Magdalena, that he loved her; but never before had so much impetuosity, mingled with the usual softness of his manner, and the new, and to her unaccountable sensation it excited in her heart, made her tremble, and shrink from his observation. Recovering himself, he added, in a calmer tone, "Forgive me, Magdalena, I did not intend thus abruptly to have disclosed my feelings; but thrown off my guard, by

seeing you again, after such a tedious absence, I am perhaps too warm! Believe, however, that although my heart prompts me to assume a softer character, I will not for an instant lose sight of that profound respect which the sacred name of *friend* demands."

He relinquished the hand, which he had eagerly caught to detain her, and she stood a moment hesitating, confused, not knowing what she ought to say, whether to go or stay, and indeed scarcely comprehending the full meaning of his animated expressions.

Gently seating her, he drew a chair by her side, and in the most respectful, yet affectionate manner, entreated her to tell him, all that had passed after their accidental meeting the day before. Composing as well as she could her agitated spirits, she related the whole, while tears again streamed down her cheeks, as she repeated the bitter and angry reproaches of Lord Ennersdale.

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed the

indignant Montaubrey, "can there be in nature a being so cruel, as to treat with such contempt and severity this gentle, this most unoffending creature? Hear me, Magdalena, for I can no longer be silent! That I love, that I adore you, you must surely have perceived. I can no longer endure to see you suffering under the capricious unkindness of this inexplicable man; give me but hope, that your affection for my sister may be extended to me; that as her sister, her friend, and the *wife of Montaubrey*, Magdalena could be happy, and I will at all hazards, free you from this insupportable slavery, and oblige this harsh guardian to act at least with justice, if not with kindness!" To this impassioned address Magdalena made no answer, save that which her tears, her blushes, and the involuntary tremor of her frame returned. "You answer me not, Magdalena!" replied Montaubrey; "I will not ask you to answer, nor was it my intention

so soon to have declared the ardent feelings of my soul; I wished to have won upon you by affectionate tenderness; to have made myself more worthy of your regard by longer acquaintance; but I can no longer endure the unprecedented hardships of your situation, no longer see you the sport of caprice, so insufferable, of tyranny so insupportable! Generously then, my Magdalena, forget the shortness of the time in which we have been known to each other, and tell me if indeed your devoted Montaubrey could ever hope to be nearer to you, than as the brother of Isabella?"

"Oh, my Lord," replied Magdalena, overwhelmed with confusion, oppressed by a thousand feelings for which she had no name, "how can I answer you? I am so ignorant! so unworthy of the high regard you profess! what can induce you to bestow a thought on the poor uninformed Magdalena? How unlike am I to your charming sister;

how unpolished my manners; how uninstructed my mind! How unlike also, I doubt not, to a thousand other young persons, amiable, beautiful, and of a rank equal to your own, on whom, doubtless, but for the tender regret my situation awakens in your kind heart, your choice would fall!" With hesitation, with blushes, she spoke thus far, and then again was silent.

"Ah, how unlike indeed!" answered Montaubrey, "how far superior to all I ever saw, ever could have imagined of fairest and most attractive! To Isabella, your tender heart and affectionate disposition, give you indeed some resemblance; but to whom else could I compare you, without doing that lovely person, those enchanting manners, the highest injustice? Yet, Magdalena, yet, I must allow, there are a thousand others *you* might prefer to *me*; you have yet seen no other of your own age or mine, and I feel alarmed at the idea of soliciting your favour, lest hereafter,

you might repent of having granted it."

"I repent! ah, my Lord! impossible!" These few words, which the impulse of her artless heart drew from her, were decisive, and Montaubrey desisted, not from his tender suit till Magdalena's undisguised account of her own sentiments and feelings respecting him, sufficiently convinced him, he was beloved with tenderness, which precluded all apprehension of any future rival.

After a long conference on this most interesting topic, Montaubrey added, in a calmer tone, "In one fortnight, Magdalena, I shall be of age; my fortune will then be wholly at my own disposal, and no one will have a right to controul me; in the course of this time, I will seek some fortunate opportunity of becoming better known to Lord Ennersdale; perhaps our meeting of to-day may lead to it. If I can see you with his knowledge once or twice, the proposals I intend to make

to him, will appear less extraordinary, than if I should address him now, when he supposes I have scarcely seen you."

"My fortune, which a long minority has greatly encreased, my rank in life, and let me without vanity say, the unimpeached character, I hope I have deserved, will, I trust, render a refusal on his side impossible; but if, for reasons or caprices, of which we cannot judge, his decision, should be against me, will Magdalena then submit, will she consent to yield up all the social joys of life, her affectionate Isabella, and her devoted Montaubrey, to the senseless or unreasonable whims of one who has treated her with cruel severity, and cold distrust?"

"Ah, my Lord, do not tempt me with the contrast! I know not yet, by what means, the authority of Lord Ennersdale was delegated to him; from whom he derived the power which he holds over all which concerns me! But if, indeed, my mother's fame be in-

volved in my obedience to his will; ah, my Lord! should I be worthy to be your wife, could I refuse to clear her honour? Oh, could I give you, in myself, a wretch disgraced and nameless?"

"Here let us drop the subject; heaven, I hope, will proportion my strength to whatever duty may demand. I know not, if in this conference, I have been unduly free; if I have departed from the rules, which custom has imposed upon my sex. Ignorant of every point of female conduct, do not, my Lord, condemn me, if I have acted with impropriety! My heart is naturally sincere, and I am so unused to such confiding kindness, that . . . . it is too much for me."

She wept with tender emotion, while the grateful Montaubrey assured her, that her native delicacy and intuitive sense of propriety, were her best guides and instructors.

The sun, which now shone full upon their seat, convinced them that it was

time to part. At Magdalena's request, Montaubrey looked at his watch, and to the surprise of both, they found that it wanted but half an hour of Lord Ennersdale's breakfast-time. "Oh, my poor little birds!" said Magdalena, I have sadly neglected you; I must hasten to give them some food, and then borrow a pair of their wings I believe, to fly to the house. Montaubrey attended her to the aviary, where she hastily deposited the seeds, and obliging him instantly to leave her, she returned to the house.

Magdalena carefully placed the cherished flowers in her little basket, and hastened, with all possible celerity, to the house. With pleasure she found Lord Ennersdale was not yet in the breakfast-room. In her own little closet, where in her childish days she had kept her favourite play-things, she deposited her flowers; and as she had a key, and was in the habit of keeping the door locked, she was sure they would escape obser-

vation; and anticipated with pleasure, the power of visiting them, and preserving them as long as possible free from observation. Then hastily throwing off her bonnet, she ran to the breakfast-room, where she found Mrs. Dennis ready to receive her; for she also breakfasted with Lord Ennersdale.

"Why, my dear, you seem quite in spirits this morning," said Mrs. Dennis; "I should fancy by your looks, that you had met with something remarkably agreeable, only one never does see any thing new or pleasant here." Magdalena only smiled, but she coloured still more highly than before. Lord Ennersdale now entered; her brilliant eyes, the rich bloom on her cheeks, the becoming disorder of her shining hair, with the unusual animation of her manner, struck even Lord Ennersdale with admiration. It was evident, that "*her bosom's lord sat lightly on his throne.*" The interesting explanation which had taken place, had filled her heart with

delight; she felt all the pleasure enchanting, however transitory, of beginning love; and considering Montaubrey as the man, who was to be her affianced Lord, her conscience felt more at ease in meeting him, than it had ever yet done. For that Lord Ennersdale could object to the connection, she could not believe; all, therefore, combined to fill her heart with a sense of happiness, so new, so unexpected, that she could not prevent her expressive countenance, from revealing a part of what she felt. Yet, when Lord Ennersdale's piercing eyes were fixed upon her, her own fell, and she composed, as much as possible, her air and features.

"I need not ask you, Magdalena," he said, "if you are quite recovered, since last night, you look both well and happy." The words in themselves expressed nothing particular, but they seemed pointed, by the accent in which he spoke, or more probably by Magdalena's alarmed imagination, and she fan-

cied all was discovered: her cheek became pale, and all the hilarity which had marked her countenance faded before his penetrating glances.

"Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all!", And dearly are those gratifications purchased, in pursuit of which we abandon the line of strict duty and integrity. If Magdalena felt this, whose heart had never been subdued by tenderness, whose confidence had never been engaged by unsuspicious trust; whom severity and unkindness had driven to seek an amelioration of an unpleasant state of restraint; what ought those young persons to suffer; what, if they have one generous principle, must they feel, who allow themselves to be led into a clandestine intercourse, against the will of affectionate friends, who repay confidence with deceit, and kindness with duplicity?

In the present instance, it appeared, that Magdalena was mistaken, for attributing her changing complexion, to

having walked too much, Lord Ennersdale, with unwonted kindness, desired her to sit down. "You have waited too long for your breakfast," said he; "I was later than usual; I did not sleep well; I have thought much of you, Magdalena! of——of your future happiness!"

He paused, and glanced at Mrs. Dennis, before whom he never hinted one word of his intentions. Again Magdalena's heart reproached her. He had then been passing his sleepless hours in thoughts of her; perhaps in planning schemes for her future happiness. And might not she have been acting in direct contradiction to his wishes?

"Yet," she thought, "if he would make me happy, when he knows the noble Montaubrey, and sees our mutual affection, he will not surely deny his consent to our union! Yet to be the sister of Isabella, the wife of Reginald! could such felicity ever be for her allotted!" Every passing emotion of

her heart, was marked in her expressive countenance; and Lord Ennersdale saw with wonder, the continual changes in her complexion. His tenderness seemed unusually excited, by the idea of her, being indisposed; and he gave Mrs. Dennis many kind charges to be attentive to her, and not to let her walk too much. "I must have you well, Magdalena, and look so," he added, with a half smile; "the beginning of July will soon be here!"

"*The beginning of July!*" Magdalena had not thought of that period for a long time; she now recollected it, as having been marked for the arrival of one whom she was to love, to whom Lord Ennersdale was to delegate his powers over her; she recollected also, that the earl had told the house-keeper at West-hay, that *Sir Eustace* would arrive at that time. The name in the tablets pressed also on her recollection; how was she to account for all these circumstances? Would this Sir

Eustace, promote, or prevent, her connection with Montaubrey and Isabella? alas! all these questions she had no mode of answering, nor dared she hazard one to Lord Ennersdale. She was, therefore, obliged to leave the discovery of every thing to time, and the direction of providence; of that providence, in whom her innocent heart implicitly trusted, and of whom Mrs. Dennis had early impressed her mind with pious reverence.

On religious topics Lord Ennersdale never spoke to her; contented with supposing her governess instructed her, or perhaps, himself indifferent or careless, he left her to gain on these important points, what information the limited powers of Mrs. Dennis could give, assisted by the plain, but useful sermons of Mr. Malcolm; who, twice every Sunday, and on the great holidays of the church, performed divine service, and preached in the little chapel belonging to the castle. But the

mind of Magdalena, pure, unworldly, and affectionate, was well disposed to receive, with eagerness and love, the amiable doctrines of christianity; her faith was sincere, and her gentle heart frequently poured out its griefs and its prayers, in simple, but energetic language, to its heavenly FATHER! The only parent it had ever known.

CHAP. VIII.

MAGDALENA passed the whole morning with Lord Ennersdale, during which he was uncommonly kind and pleasant; opening all the rich stores of his capacious mind for her amusement and information, explaining with eloquence and precision, various points of history; and drawing with admirable acuteness and discrimination, animated portraits of the great men of his early

days. Lord Bute, Lord Chatham, Lord Holland, and many others, he exquisitely delineated, in all the great outlines, and in all the nicer turnings and windings of their mighty minds; mingling at intervals, striking illustrative anecdotes, in a style so impressive and engaging, that Magdalena thought, had he been always thus, her wishes would never have strayed to seek any companion but himself.

He told her he was going out to dinner that day, and the next day but one, and indeed, two or three times a week for the next three weeks, after which, he should give several great dinners.

"The next month will be a busy period, Magdalena," said he; "who knows what it may produce?" "Ah," sighed Magdalena, "who indeed!" "Perhaps before its expiration, I may see your felicity determined!—Perhaps—but I will not anticipate evil! Go now to your own apartment, dine there with Mrs. Dennis, and do not walk too

much; I shall be at home by supper-time." Magdalena chearfully promised obedience to injunctions so kindly given, and thought, in the warmth of her heart, that would he be always like this, she could willingly give up every wish, every pursuit, that would militate against his will. By love, by confidence, he might have moulded her to any thing; but where is the spirit so abject as not to revolt at tyranny and oppression?

Knowing that she was not to meet her friends that evening, Magdalena contented herself with strolling on the lawn, and visiting her own little garden, which was not far from the house; there, having watered and tied up some of the plants, and gathered the best flowers for Mrs. Dennis, who was fond of them, she returned to the house, and amused herself with a book till Lord Ennersdale's return. Chearfully, from the pleasing recollections of the morning, she prepared to welcome him; but in-

stantly she perceived, that all the sunshine of his countenance was shut in, and a deep gloom had succeeded. To her salutation, he returned a peevish answer, and silently placing himself at the table, where the lights stood, he forbade all conversation, by taking up a book. The cloth was immediately laid, and supper put down, for modern customs had in nothing altered the manners of Lord Ennersdale's household; and supper, though little was eaten, still continued to be a formal meal. Magdalena, whom for the last few months he had ordered to sit at the head, and act as mistress of the table, asked him to what she should help him.

"Nothing."

"Will you permit me to give you a bit of chicken, my Lord?"

"No."

"A jelly?"

"No! I tell you," in a loud and angry tone; "don't teaze me, girl!"

Then he muttered to himself, something about forward officiousness, and that they were all alike.

After a minute's consideration, his brow seemed to clear a little, and he suddenly said, "Give me a jelly, I think I *will* eat one." Magdalena willingly obeyed, and anxious to say something, to break the painful silence, she said, without consideration, yet perhaps impelled by a latent wish of hearing something of Montaubrey and Isabella, "Have you passed a pleasant day, my Lord?"

"Pleasant! What, with a collection of all the inquisitive impertinents, all the frivolous gossips, and all the *forward boys and girls* in the neighbourhood? Then, such a mixture! no rank, no distinction kept up in these days! Yet I thought Sir William Selwyn had possessed more discrimination, and known how to assort his parties better. What, I wonder, could induce him to invite that chattering Mansfield, my

aversion and my constant torment, with his impertinent questions? I wish *none of them* had ever come within these walls."

Magdalena thought she could but too well imagine the meaning of this *tirade*; she doubted not he was displeased at meeting Montaubrey and Lady Isabella, whose evident wish of promoting an acquaintance with her seemed to have incurred his dislike. Enquiries for her from Lord Milbank and Mr. Mansfield she supposed had also annoyed him; but she asked no questions, and was rejoiced when the hour for retiring arrived.

The next morning was propitious to her wishes; once more she was folded in the arms of Isabella, who in soft whispers hailed her with the fond endearing name of "loved and cherished sister;" while Reginald's expressive eyes declared, that the kiss he imprinted on her hand was accompanied by a sentiment still more tender.

The account they gave her of what had passed the day before, convinced her she had not misconstrued Lord Ennersdale's moody humour on his return. "We sought by every possible mode to please and win upon his regard," said Isabella, "but the greater attention we shewed, the more his gloomy countenance was overshaded. Lord Milbank said as much of you as he could, consistently with politeness; admired and praised your beauty, and wondered Lord Ennersdale could deny himself the pleasure of introducing his charming ward to the world; while Mansfield, with less refinement, assailed him on the same subject. But what seemed most of all to annoy him, was a sort of rallying remark that incessant chatterer made on my brother's admiration of you, and the anxiety he evinced by riding in such haste to summon assistance for you! Then indeed Lord Ennersdale shewed us all

"The thunder of his *brow*, and light'ning of his eyes."

"Indeed, my dearest Magdalena, I cannot imagine, when he puts on his terrific majesty of mien and awful severity of countenance, how this little timid trembling frame can endure it! No wonder the fear of it almost killed you the day we first met. As to poor little Mansfield, he shrunk before Lord Ennerdale, and looked as if he were about to be annihilated.

In such conversation they passed the hours which Magdalena dared remain with them, and for several days their meeting continued as usual. Sweet was the confidence with which Magdalena yielded her tenderest affections to the ingenuous and noble Montaubrey; sweet the hope with which she looked forward to the time when without disguise he might openly seek her society; for that Lord Ennersdale would ultimately consent to their union, they did not allow themselves to doubt; or, if

sometimes, when her guardian had been usually severe, fear and apprehension would cross the mind of Magdalena, Montaubrey eagerly chased them away, by reasonings, which she believed to be convincing, and by soothings which she felt to be irresistible. He waited only till he could contrive some plan, to see her once more in her guardian's presence, that his attachment might appear less romantic and extraordinary, to make such proposals, as could not, he thought, be rejected; but such was the strictness, with which Lord Ennersdale kept his resolution, of not letting Magdalena go without-side the park paling, that at present they could contrive no scheme by which Montaubrey could meet her with her guardian.

Vainly he attempted to draw from her a positive promise, that she would be his, whether or not, he could obtain Lord Ennersdale's consent; although with disinterested generosity, he would

allow no weight to the representation she made, that she should be poor and disgraced, if in any thing she dared to disobey her guardian. "Your want of wealth, my Magdalena," he replied, "stands with me as nothing in the account; my own is amply sufficient for both, and more than our moderate desires would ever wish for. As to the threat Lord Ennersdale holds out, of attaching disgrace to your name, I look upon it as nugatory and vain, the mere effusion of caprice and ill-temper. Your mother, I doubt not, was his daughter; can we suppose him so barbarous, so lost to all sense of his own honour, as willingly to leave a spot upon her fame, which his word could efface? Even, if he will not be prevailed on openly to declare your rights, he cannot refuse, at least to be silent, and allow the world to conclude his daughter's marriage certain, though perhaps deficient in some legal formality."

"Ah, Montaubrey, you know not

how determined is the character of Lord Ennersdale! You cannot guess to what lengths he will carry his resentment, if once I disobey! Nor, indeed, can I; but terrible I know it has been, for faults trivial and unintended; think then ——. But no more, I will not give a daughter to your mother,—a sister to your sister,—a wife . . . . Ah, Reginald!" Blushes and tender confusion impeded her words; her eyes bathed in tears, her soft ingenuous countenance, excited a thousand sweet emotions in his heart; he would have vowed, that nothing ever should prevail on him to relinquish her, but she refused to hear him, and again repeated her determination, not to be his wife, unless all mystery could be cleared, and the clouds which overshadowed her origin be removed.

Montaubrey however, built much on the influence of his sister, should such a case occur; and with all the fervency of youth and a first passion, resolved,

that the opinions of the world should not sway him; yet even he shrunk a little from the contest he foresaw with his mother, on this subject, should Lord Ennersdale prove unfavourable.

The countess dowager of Montaubrey was perhaps one of the proudest women in England; she was by no means avaricious; but her son well knew she would never consent to his marriage with any woman, whose birth (if not illustrious) was not at least unimpeached; and had not passion blinded him, possibly Montaubrey himself would not have felt quite satisfied, to marry the un-owned child of nameless parents. All the pride of high birth, however, faded before his ardent love for Magdalena,—before the soft sensations with which her beauty, her sweetness, and the enchanting tenderness of her whole character, raised in his bosom. Unknown by all but him, unsheltered from those storms of passion, with which her severe guardian too fre-

quently assailed her, she appeared like a lovely flower of the desert, bending and shrinking from the rough wind of the north. To raise that fair, that timid blossom, to place it where its beauties might be duly appreciated, and its soft leaves expand to gentler gales, and more congenial skies, appeared to Renald the very summit of human ambition; never, had he met her surrounded by pomp, and all the joys of life, could he have loved Magdalena with a passion at once so pure and so ardent; her beauty, however perfect, her mind, however elevated, had less charms for him, than that tender, that sensitive heart, which now, for the first time felt, and with sweet confidence declared the soft affection, with which nature had endowed it. That touching, that endearing confidence, added to his love a sentiment of deep respect, and threw around her a sacred influence, so pure, so hallowed, that Montaubrey would have thought it sacrilege, to regard her

for an instant but with the truest veneration, as well as the most ardent love.

Thus passed a week, in the course of which Lord Ennersdale had twice dined out, and met in both places the family from Milbank park. To Montaubrey, Magdalena heard with joy, his manners became more conciliating, and a man of Lord Ennersdale's fine understanding and cultivated mind, could hardly fail of being won by a young man so informed, so graceful, and so free from fashionable follies as Montaubrey was; in a word, one, who, like himself, was a perfect gentleman; for such, in spite of his caprices, when he chose to let his genuine manners prevail, Lord Ennersdale undoubtedly must be acknowledged.

The gradual relaxation of that coldness with which he had at first treated Montaubrey, Magdalena heard with delight, and hope and felicity at this period, seemed to give her a new sense of existence; every day her beauty be-

came more brilliant, and the expression of her countenance more striking and animated. Her whole figure seemed expanded into new grace, and her language, and style of conversation, became easier and more expressive. Lord Ennersdale was struck with the change; he could not help contemplating her with silent delight; nay, once or twice something very like approbation and praise, burst as it were spontaneously from his lips.

One evening when Lord Ennersdale dined from home, at a party where Lord Milbank's family were not invited, Magdalena went as usual to meet her friends; she remained however, at least half an hour in the alcove, without seeing any thing of them. It was early certainly, but they knew she would be there, and had promised to come the instant they could get away from dinner. Her eyes were constantly turned towards the gate of the copse, and her anxiety began to be great,

when she suddenly saw Montaubrey, running as fast as possible through a path in the copse, exactly opposite from that he usually took, and which, as being much exposed to observation, she had requested him to avoid; indeed by the road he usually came, no one in the alcove or garden could see him, till through the thick branches he had ascertained, that none was near but Magdalena. Instantly he sprang over the gate, and was at her side. "Oh, Reginald!" she exclaimed, seeing him heated and breathless, "why have you run in this manner, so warm as it is, and why did you come by the open path? Is not Isabella with you?"

Pausing a moment for breath, he said, "Come to the aviary, my dearest Magdalena; this alcove is too open, too much exposed to observation; and I do not know that even yet . . . . that impertinent, presuming fellow—"

"What fellow? Of whom are you talking, Montaubrey? What is the

matter? Have you met any body?" "Yes, my love, yes, but for heaven's sake come into the avairy, there we shall be less liable to observation, for I fear . . . . yet surely, he could not have the insolence to follow me!"

"To follow you! Oh, Montaubrey! who? We shall too certainly be betrayed, all will be known!" "Well, well, if it should be so," said Montaubrey, as he impatiently led her towards the aviary, "I cannot help, nor but for you, my dearest Magdalena, should I at all regard it. I almost wish any thing might lead to an explanation with Lord Ennersdale; for your terrors,—these dangerous meetings—"

"Are wrong, Reginald; are disgraceful to us both! Alas, I know it; I said so from the first! Oh, why did I ever listen to your pleadings, or rather to my own too willing heart?"

"Nay, my love, be not thus distressed! All will, all *shall* be well; most gladly would *I* this moment pro-

claim to the whole world, my devotion to you, my determination never to relinquish you. For your sake, and yours only, do I temporize. Tell me only that you can bear the scene, and I will to-morrow morning present myself before Lord Ennersdale, acknowledge all, and claim this dear hand as my own."

"Oh, Reginald, how wildly you talk! You know I never could assume courage for all this! But will you not tell me what happened, whom you have met, and what of detection or danger may yet await us?" "None of either, I believe, for I shook off the intruder before I entered the park, and I think it impossible he could have traced my steps through the circuitous path I was obliged to take hither, though at the risk of meeting the under-gardeners, whose way home lies, I know, in the road I came."

"Oh, why then do you tell me, we have nothing of detection or danger to

fear? Too soon, I am too fatally convinced, all will be revealed to my guardian." "Be calm, my dearest Magdalena, nor thus give way to unavailing terrors; I will leave you soon, and cautiously return by a different way, to Milbank. The intruder I met to-night, was no other than that inquisitive being, Mansfield; I know not whither he was going, or to what purpose he fastened himself upon me, but I unfortunately met him, just as I had crossed the first field between Milbank park and Delamere; Isabella was so engaged she could not accompany me; he took upon himself to interrogate me, as to the motive of my solitary ramble, and even to rally me, to mention ——"

"My name!" exclaimed the dismayed Magdalena. "Why, ah, why did I ever see him, why does he presume." "His presumption is indeed," said Montaubrey, "unbounded; he is said to be clever in his profession, undoubtedly a very honourable one, and in conse-

quence, he is received into the first circles in the neighbourhood, where he contrasts the modest merit and gentlemanly manners of Parry. What there could have been in my conduct, the day I unfortunately called him to Delamere, when I had scarcely seen you, to lead him to suppose I particularly admired you, or what he has since learned, to point his suspicions, I cannot imagine; but every time we have met, he has taken the liberty of hinting, that there was a secret attachment between us, or at least on my side; drawing back, however, if he saw me look serious, and passing all off as a jest, a jest which, however, I would not have endured, but that I feared by noticing, I should make it appear of consequence; to-night all my coldness, amounting to incivility, could not get rid of him, and I was obliged to return to Milbank, and to pretend an urgent engagement there, ere I could prevail upon him to quit me. If he afterwards caught an-

other glimpse of me, I fear his impertinent curiosity would lead him to follow me; but he will not surely presume to enter the confines of Delamere park, which seems to be considered as an enchanted circle, and here we are safe from all casual observation from the copse, or even from the distant high ground beyond it." Alarmed, anxious, and uneasy, Magdalena entreated him to leave her, and to take another and more intricate path to Milbank; but he so confidently assured her, there could be no danger in his remaining with her a little while, that she could not after all the fatigue he had gone through, absolutely insist on his returning immediately. And after passing a few minutes without seeing any thing to alarm them, her fears began to subside, and the mutual pleasure they felt in conversing together without interruption, began to efface every uneasy apprehension. They sat down on a rustic bench, in the porch of the aviary,

round which a honeysuckle and clematis climbed in wild profusion. The sun was now approaching to the west, and the melody of a thousand birds hailed his departing beams; the minds of Montaubrey and Magdalena were gradually calmed and softened, by the gentle quiet which surrounded them; when the branches of the creeping shrubs which half formed a curtain to the porch, were rudely pulled aside, and, to their astonishment and dismay, Mansfield stood suddenly before them.

CHAP. IX.

MAGDALENA started with a half suppressed scream, and Montaubrey hastily arose, his cheeks crimsoned, and his eyes flashing with indignation. "Ha! my Lord Montaubrey," exclaim-

ed the intruder, "this is an unexpected pleasure; I thought your lordship was engaged at Milbank this evening! Your most obedient, young lady; I rejoice to see you so well recovered! Pray don't let me interrupt you, I really beg pardon for intruding!" "And pray, Sir," answered the enraged Montaubrey, "by what permission or authority have you presumed to enter the enclosed grounds of Lord Ennersdale?"

"Nay, my Lord, I meant no offence, but when I parted from your lordship, I just sauntered about by way of diversion, between Milbank park and this place; and so, as I was going through the copse, just to the village—" "Through the copse to the village, Sir! why you know the direction is precisely opposite."

"Yes, my Lord, yes, it is opposite, in one sense, but somebody told me it was a pleasant walk through the copse; and somehow I had a sort of a curiosity, just to peep over the fence of the

pleasure-grounds belonging to Delamere park; and so, seeing a person at a distance running along, I waited to see where they would go, and all of a sudden I lost sight of the gentleman, and just then I came to the little green gate, and I thought perhaps, the *person had no more right to enter the grounds than I had*, and I would just see who it was, *to oblige my friend, Lord Ennersdale*, who is known to be very particular about his grounds; for though I thought the person looked like your lordship, yet I could not suppose it could be you, as you told me you were so *particularly engaged!*" The pointed hints in this speech, and the impertinent sneer at the end of it were too much for the patience of Montaubrey; he advanced towards the intruder with an impetuosity of action, which seemed to threaten him with instant punishment for his presumption. Mansfield, not liking the turn of Montaubrey's countenance, withdrew a step or two,

saying, "I beg pardon, my Lord, I would not for the world have intruded, had I known you were here; I am going this instant; I wish your lordship, and you, Ma'am, a good night!" "Hark ye, Sir!" answered Montaubrey, stepping after him, and seizing him somewhat roughly by the arm; "whatever ill-founded notions you may form, from seeing me here with this lady, let me advise you not to give yourself the smallest licence of speech respecting either of us! Dare not, for your life, to repeat the circumstances of this evening, or name this lady, but with the distant respect you owe her! Assure yourself, you shall most dearly pay the breach of these injunctions; and as you value your existence, presume not again to watch my motions, or intrude upon my privacy! Begone, Sir, and recollect what I have said to you."

"To be sure, my Lord, I shall," replied Mansfield; "I would not offend

your lordship, on any account whatever; I meant only a little innocent pleasantry by what I said. No doubt your lordship met the lady entirely by accident, as I did; droll enough, that we should all happen to stroll this way to-night, for the first time in our lives!"

"You are right," said Montaubrey; "but remember, Mr. Mansfield, you make me your friend or your enemy, as you forget or observe, what I have said to you; it is in my power to be decidedly and materially either; you understand me!"

"Perfectly, perfectly, my good Lord; there is no man living I would prefer for my friend to your lordship; you may rely on my concealing all the circumstances of our odd meeting entirely."

"All that seems strange in those circumstances will soon be explained, Mr. Mansfield, in the mean time I will see you to-morrow, and convince you I am disposed, if you oblige me, to be *essen-*

tially your friend." Mansfield now, with many bows departed, anticipating great advantages from the promised friendship of Montaubrey, who hoped, by engaging him on the side of his interest, to procure the intruder's secrecy, at least for the present.

In the mean time, Magdalena, pale, trembling, and oppressed by sensations, beneath which her heart seemed shrinking almost to dissolution, scarcely heard any part of this conversation; yet, the loud tone of Montaubrey's voice at the commencement, had awakened her to new terrors, lest a decided quarrel should ensue; for Magdalena was not enough acquainted with the human heart, to know that the mean and prying propensities of such men as Mansfield, are rarely accompanied by courage to support the offence they give, especially against their superiors in rank and fortune.

Reginald now returned to the half fainting object of his heart's devotion,

and by the tenderest soothings, the most affectionate attentions, endeavoured to quiet the tumultuous terror which overwhelmed her.

"Dearest of human beings!" he said, "why! ah, why! this excessive alarm? Fear nothing; I will make it so much the interest of Mansfield to be silent, that I am certain from him we shall have nothing to fear. And even if he should mention the circumstance of seeing us here together, it is wholly unlikely that Lord Ennersdale, who mixes so little with the world, and so totally discourages all advances towards familiar conversation, especially with this Mansfield, to whom he has taken a decided aversion, should ever hear the rumour! At all events, my Magdalena, what does it signify whether he does or not; soon, very soon, my devotion to you shall be avowed to him, and then it will be of no moment, whether or not he learns that we have occasionally met here."

"Ah, Reginald!" replied the weeping Magdalena, "my heart has always foreboded what would be the end of all this, and now I see nothing but wretchedness awaiting me! To be in the power of such a man as Mansfield! who, though a gentleman by education and profession, yet seems not to have one gentlemanly sentiment! Oh, Montaubrey, how can I bear a mortification so cruel, so degrading! I am besides convinced your reasoning is false. Should Lord Ennersdale hear of our meeting here, (and how can I hope he will not?) however he might otherwise be disposed to listen to your proposals, that circumstance alone I feel, would determine him against them; and all the train of misery so long threatened will fall on my devoted head! Leave me, my Lord, leave me! Let me, while yet I have strength, return to the castle, from which I almost wish never more to move!"

"Good heaven, Magdalena," replied

Montaubrey, hurt beyond conception at her words and manner, "what means this despair! nay, this apparent anger against me! Am I, am I to blame! Did I not take every possible means to shake off this impertinent intruder? Am I not willing to part with half my fortune, if necessary, to ensure his secrecy and restore your peace? Why then, oh, best beloved of my soul, why these reproaches?" "Reproaches! ah, Reginald! I meant them not to you! my own erring heart alone misled me, and if I reproach any one, it must be only myself. But let us part;—let me return to the house, and try if reflection will calm the intolerable anguish of my mind! But no,—oh, no,—reflection will only augment it, and fearful anticipations yet more horrible, will crowd upon me,—when you are gone, when I no longer hear your voice—"

She sunk in silent grief upon his shoulder; tenderly clasping her in his arms, he renewed his affectionate sooth-

ings; and in the most energetic manner, vowed that the whole world combined, should never force him to relinquish her; and that nothing but her own wish to the contrary, should prevent him from making her his wife.

"All the poverty and disgrace with which Lord Ennersdale threatens you, my dearest Magdalena, could it be in his power to encrease it ten thousand fold, should never induce me to abandon you, or to look on the gift of this dear hand, as any thing but the most precious boon of heaven."

Soothed and comforted by his tender assurances, Magdalena gradually became more composed; he attended her as far as he dared, on her way to the castle, and making her promise to meet him and Isabella the next evening, he took leave of her, and she hurried as fast as possible into the house. She found Mrs. Dennis waiting her return, and displeased at her long absence. The pale countenance and red eyes of

Magdalena, for she had, in spite of her efforts, never ceased weeping from the moment Montaubrey left her, seemed to strike the good lady with surprize. "Indeed, Miss," she said, "I do not understand all this; your walking so late and so early, and returning sometimes in such excellent spirits, sometimes so low! There is more in all this than usual, I am sure! I assure you if this goes on, I shall think it my duty to speak to my Lord about it."

"Dear Mrs. Dennis," answered the distressed Magdalena, in a faint voice, "do not talk so; why should you wish to deprive me of my only pleasure! It is hard indeed, if I may not walk out as I have done ever since I can remember, and you never objected to it before."

"No, Miss, nor should I now, if you merely took a walk in a common way as you used to do; but here, you are gone hours together, and as I said before, come home either sparkling

with joy, or as pale as a ghost and crying your eyes out! Then when you are at home you are full of thought; and in the night almost always awake; or if asleep, sighing and talking to yourself. I am sure you have something on your mind, and, as dull as you may think me, I can recollect when all this began; nay, I heard you in your sleep calling on *Isabella*, and some other odd name, which I cannot remember; and you shall never make me believe all these things mean nothing."

Hardly could Magdalena speak to be understood; she seemed choaking with distress and confusion; at last she murmured some faint excuse, which vainly attempting to render articulate, she burst into a fresh flood of tears, which softened Mrs. Dennis, who now soothed and comforted her, as well as she was able: just then Judith came to the door, saying, her Lord was returned, and asked for Miss. "Oh! I cannot go down!" exclaimed the harrassed girl; "for pity's

sake, dear Mrs. Dennis, go to Lord Ennersdale, and tell him, I am not well, and wish to go to bed directly; I shall do so, for indeed, I can sit up no longer!" "I will, I will, my dear!" answered Mrs. Dennis; "be easy, go to bed, and for heaven's sake, go to sleep, for you really wear yourself to death by these long walks, and worrying your spirits so. Go to bed; I will make your excuses to my Lord." And she hastily departed, full of kind regret for having so distrest Magdalena; who now, hastily undrest and went to bed, glad to draw her curtains, and hide her perturbations, and her grief, beneath their friendly shade.

Mrs. Dennis soon returned, and said, that Lord Ennersdale was in a remarkably pleasant humour, and received Magdalena's excuses very kindly, desiring she would take care of herself, and let him see her quite well at breakfast.

"And now, my dear," said the good woman, "compose yourself, and don't

let me hear you sigh so; you know I will not thwart or vex you in any way.—Poor child!—You have had confinement enough!—And if——But no matter!—I am sure you will not do any thing wrong."

It was easy to see that Mrs. Dennis's suspicions pointed the right way, and that she imagined, Magdalena had some secret connection with Lady Isabella, though of her brother probably she thought nothing. Magdalena was on the point of confessing the truth of her conjectures, but recollecting that the crisis of her fate seemed to be at hand, and knowing that her governess's mind was not sufficiently enlightened to give her any maternal advantage in directing her future conduct, and that it would only make her uneasy, (as between her love for her pupil, and her sense of duty towards Lord Ennersdale, the poor woman would not know how to act,) she determined to be silent, at least, for the present.

Calming as much as possible, the

excessive agitation of her spirits, Magdalena now reviewed all the painful circumstances of this eventful evening, and a thousand uneasy forebodings kept her long awake; at length, "sleep, that knits up the ravel'd sleeve of care," came to her aid, and closed her wearied eyes.

In the morning, she found Lord Ennersdale uncommonly chearful and good-humoured; he seemed pleased to see her so well recovered, tho' he remarked that she still looked pale and heavy. He kept her with him the whole day, which he spent at home. He intended, he said, to dine the next day, at Sir Jerome Macartney's, where all the families of the next neighbourhood were to assembled. "It is farther from home than I like to go," said he, "and farther than any other house where I visit; but Sir Jerome is so good a man, that I should be sorry not to pay him every attention! This day fortnight, Magdalena, I mean to have my first dinner party! By that time perhaps"—Here he

stopped, how he filled up the sentence she could not guess, but her imagination finished it, with vivid sketches of good or evil.

Kind as Lord Ennersdale was, during the whole of this day, at intervals Magdalena suffered the most uneasy sensations; nay, his very kindness made her more deeply repent the duplicity with which she perpetually reproached herself. Twice he received notes of business or compliment, but to Magdalena's terrified fancy, they assumed the shape of letters from the busy Mansfield, and she trembled while her guardian read them. Once he was called out of the room to speak to some one. "Oh!" thought Magdalena, "if this should be Mansfield!" nay, so deeply was her imagination impressed, that she fancied the voice of the person who conversed with Lord Ennersdale, was the voice of Mansfield; and when his Lordship returned, she thought the glance of his eye and the turn of his countenance had

assumed an angry expression, and she shrunk before him, a self convicted criminal.

The day at length passed; and in spite of all the reproaches she had made herself, she still found it impossible voluntarily to relinquish the only balm of her existence, and with some difficulty stole an hour to go with all haste to the alcove, where she found Reginald and Isabella waiting. The latter expressed the highest indignation at the impertinence of Mansfield, whom Montaubrey had seen in the morning, and from whom, by irresistible arguments, he had obtained the most solemn promises of secrecy, respecting the events of the preceding evening. Magdalena fancied however, she could read in Montaubrey's countenance and manner that he was not thoroughly satisfied, and she was the more convinced of it, because both he and Isabella absolutely assailed her with entreaties to admit of his immediate application to Lord Ennersdale, without

waiting for any circumstance which might improve their apparent acquaintance. Her timidity and the excessive dread she felt of her guardian, alone withheld her consent to the only measure that could decide her real situation, and remove the vexation and impropriety of these clandestine meetings. At last she promised to consider of it, and try to obtain courage to end this painful suspence and anxiety in a few days. "We are to meet Lord Ennersdale," said Isabella, "to-morrow, at Hurstham, the seat of Sir Jerome Macartney, and believe me, my sweet Magdalena, we will exert ourselves to the utmost to win his good opinion. He has admirable qualities, and no one can help being charmed with his noble manners and cultivated mind. I am convinced if he will but be kind to you, and propitious to our wishes, I shall quite love the dear old man; and when you are gone, Magdalena, who knows, as my brother will not want me at Mountaubrey, but I may

console his Lordship for your loss? Don't you think I should make a very pretty Countess of Ennersdale? But it would be odd enough to be grandmamma to my brother."

"Dear Isabella, how you rattle," said Magdalena, blushing, "but now I must leave you; to-morrow we shall not meet; indeed I shall be obliged henceforth to come with more caution, and not stay so long, both on account of Mansfield, and of Mrs. Dennis, whose suspicions, tho' her love for me makes her conceal them, are I am certain, but too much awakened. Thursday, early in the morning, however, I hope we shall meet again." "And then, Magdalena, you will have wrought up your courage, to permit my application to your guardian?" answered Montaubrey. "I will think about it," she replied, and then affectionately wishing them good night, she hastily returned to the castle. Mrs. Dennis met her in the hall; she surveyed Magdalena with a scrutinizing look,

which covered her cheeks with blushes. She said nothing however, and Magdalena went instantly to the study, where she found Lord Ennersdale still remarkably pleasant. He requested her to play on the harp, with which she readily complied; and the evening closed with unusual ease and satisfaction.

The next day, before Lord Ennersdale left home, he told Magdalena, he should probably not return till a later hour than usual. "But," said he, "I shall certainly be at home by supper time, so, child, if you are not tired, wait for me, and practice once or twice that little air on your harp I was so much pleased with last evening; you were not quite correct in the latter part, and I should like to hear it again to-night."

"I will endeavour to learn it quite perfectly in the course of the day, my Lord," replied Magdalena, delighted at this continuance of good humour, which she did not remember ever to have known so lasting. "The weather

is so extremely warm to day, I shall not go out till quite the evening; indeed I think we shall have a thunder-storm." "Not unlikely," said Lord Ennersdale; "you had better therefore not venture beyond the lawn." Soon after the carriage came round, and he went away. Magdalena sighed as he departed. "Ah!" thought she, "that I could but acompany him! How happy he will be! to meet Reginald and Isabella without restraint! Will such happines ever be mine?" She now retreated to Mrs. Dennis's apartment, as usual in Lord Ennersdale's absence, and after dinner the heat encreasing with a sort of gloomy atmosphere uncommonly oppressive, they removed to the saloon. Magdalena ordered her harp to be brought, and recollected with a sigh, her flight from that room on the day Lord Milbank's party visited the castle.

Her fingers ran over the strings, but her thoughts reverted to all that had happened since that memorible hour. She

practised however the air Lord Ennersdale had recommended to her notice, and was soon so engaged in perfecting herself in the performance, that she hardly noticed the still encreasing gloom, though now she could hardly see the notes, when suddenly a flash of lightning, and immediately afterwards a loud burst of thunder, made her start from her seat. Vivid lightning, tremendous thunder, and heavy rain succeeded; and for some time the storm continued to rage with unabating violence. The loud roaring of the thunder, the hollow wind, and torrents of rain, echoed by the immense hall and high turrets of the castle, formed a concert so dismal, that Magdalena crept closer to Mrs. Dennis, and they both gladly left the large room they were sitting in, for Lord Ennersdale's study, where, closing the shutters and ordering candles, for it was now quite dark, they heard and saw less of the tempest which was raging without. At length the thunder and wind abated,

but the rain continued to pour down as if the whole force of the storm had centered in that immediate neighbourhood. Just before nine o'clock, the servants brought in the tray for supper, attended as usual by the old butler, Joseph. Magdalena really longed to vary the dismal scene by speaking to him, but dared not; Mrs. Dennis however, glad at heart, to have some one to talk to, said, "Joseph, your Lord desired Miss Magdalena to wait supper for him." "My Lord will hardly come home to-night, Madam!" was the reply. "Do you think so, Joseph! Why, to be sure, the weather is dreadful."

"Bad enough, madam! But that is not all; Ralph is just come in through it, and he says, the brooks and rivulets are so swelled, that if he had not come as he did, he must have stopped all night; and Mosscroft Water, which my Lord must cross to come from Sir Jerome Macartney's, is like a sea, and quite up over the bridge, so that of

course his Lordship won't think of coming home to-night."

"God forbid!—And guard——every one from harm!" ejaculated Magdalena, involuntarily clasping her hands, and mingling with her prayer for her guardian, a sigh for Reginald and Isabella. The old man turned at the tender and energetic tone of her voice, and said, "The Lord help me!—that voice!—and that face!" "Joseph!" exclaimed Mrs Dennis. "I beg pardon, Madam; I beg pardon; I am old and forgetful, but some things I remember too well." He passed his hand across his eyes and left the room. Magdalena struck by his manner, and softened by his apparently tender recollection of her unfortunate mother, shed a few tears, and wished she dared to hold a little conversation with the good old man, who every time he came into the room with the different articles for laying the cloth, fixed his eyes upon her with a mournful expres-

sion, which powerfully affected her feelings.

"Well! said Mrs. Dennis, "my Lord will not come home to night, I believe, but we will wait till ten o'clock before we sup, least he should come, and be displeased; so, Joseph, fetch Miss Magdalena's harp from the saloon, or bid Thomas do so, if it is too heavy for you; and, my dear, do give me a lively tune or two."

"I will play to you with all my heart," said Magdalena, while Joseph went for the harp; "but I will not promise it shall be a lively tune, for my spirits are depressed, and my heart is heavy."

"No wonder, I am sure," replied Mrs Dennis, "for what with the dismal weather, and this melancholy place, it is enough to kill any one. I do believe there is not such another disagreeable place in the whole world! In other houses one may at least speak to a servant, or send for the housekeeper to chat with a little, when one is tired to death of

being alone; but here, when you are out, or with my Lord, I have not a soul to open my lips to; and if I had, one's afraid of speaking, for fear his Lordship should be angry! Then such long galleries! Such a noise with the wind and rain!—Such"—

Magdalena knew that when once Mrs. Dennis began to express her abhorrence of the melancholy grandeur of Delamere Castle, there was little hope of her finishing the detail of its several annoyances, she therefore put an end to the *tirade*, by striking a few chords on her harp, and as Mrs. Dennis listened, with pleased attention, she proceeded to accompany its sounds with her soft melodious voice, in Handel's fine air of "'Tis Liberty alone;" a song of which, from a natural association of ideas, she was extremely fond, though at this time her feelings would have led her to prefer one more expressive of tender sentiment, had such a one been within her knowledge; but every song, of which the subject was

love, or even friendship, however unexceptionable in the expression, had been carefully excluded from her collection; yet Magdalena, whom nature had endowed with some share of poetical talent, had, in two or three instances, adapted the airs she had been permitted to learn, to words more suitable to her present turn of mind; but these she sung only when quite alone, except once or twice, at the request of Reginald and Isabella, she had performed them in their hearing. Both delighted in listening to her sweet natural voice, which was remarkably melodious; and although not a finished singer, she sung every thing with an appropriate taste and expression, which were extremely pleasing.

She continued playing some time, and the clock struck ten while she was once more practising the little air to which Lord Ennersdale had requested her to attend. The sound of the harp and her voice prevented them from hearing any thing which passed without, till a sort of

indistinct noise and bustle in the anti-chamber, reached their ears, when Magdalena instantly stopped, and made a sign to Mrs. Dennis to listen.

CHAP. X.

Mrs. DENNIS, alarmed by the strange sounds, which even through the thick door, appeared to her extraordinary, rose and opened it. Magdalena knowing she dared not speak to the servants, from whose voices she supposed the sounds proceeded, sat still, though wondering, and somewhat frightened, at their being assembled at such an unusual time and place. Instantly she heard Mrs. Dennis exclaim, in a voice of terror, "Oh, heavens!—What is the matter?—Oh, Joseph! Agnes!—What has happened to my Lord?" Magdalena

now started from her seat, and sprung towards the door, when her steps were arrested by a voice, which said, in answer to Mrs. Dennis, "Be not alarmed, Madam, his lordship, is not, I hope, materially hurt!"

Heavens and earth!—Was Magdalena in a dream!—Or was it really the well-known voice of Montaubrey! Incapable of advancing a step, of speaking a syllable, she caught the back of a chair, and leaning against it for support, stood still; her heart beating, her eyes covered with a sort of misty cloud, and her whole frame shaking with agitation.

The mist removing by degrees, which had for a moment obscured her sight, she saw Lord Ennersdale carried into the room by the united aid of two or three persons, and—was it possible! yes, certainly, one of them was Montaubrey.

Agnes, Judith, and two or three more female servants crowded into the room after them.

Magdalena stood gazing on this extraordinary scene like one bereft of her senses; yet she retained them sufficiently to perceive that both her guardian and Montaubrey were dripping wet, and that the former was pale and almost breathless! This sight restored her recollection and her powers; she darted instantly forward, and eagerly seizing Lord Ennersdale's hand, she exclaimed, "Tell me! Oh, tell me, what has happened."

"Be not alarmed!" Again repeated Montaubrey; but his voice was now broken by contending emotions, and his eyes dwelt with the tenderest expression on the lovely Magdalena. "Be not alarmed, I conjure you, my——" He hesitated; almost he had articulated, "my dearest Magdalena;" but checking himself, he added, "I entreat you, madam, to be composed; all will be well. The Earl has, as you see, met with an accident; but he will soon be better."

By this time they had placed Lord

Ennersdale in a chair, and Magdalena, (forgetful even of Reginald) threw herself on her knees before him. She took his cold hands, rubbed them within her own, and kissed them tenderly. "Speak to me, my dear Lord!" she exclaimed, "tell me you are not hurt!" "No, Magdalena, no! he faintly articulated, "but that I am not dead, is owing to——— Oh my Lord, what do I not owe to your courage and humanity."

"Forgive me, my good Lord, for interrupting you," said Montaubrey; (while at the sound of his voice, Magdalena started with almost as much surprise, as when she first heard it at his entrance; so much were her thoughts and feelings absorded by the apparent danger of Lord Ennersdale;) "but indeed no time ought to be lost. Permit me to request, madam," turning to Mrs. Dennis, "that you will immediately direct his lordship's bed to be prepared, and order a fire in his room; warm as the night is, in his present state, it is ne-

cessary." He then insisted on Lord Ennersdale's swallowing some brandy, and requested the men to assist in conveying him to his bed-room, which communicated by a short passage with the study, saying he must see him in his bed, before he could consent to leave him.

"But you are wet yourself, my Lord," faintly articulated the old Earl. "Mrs. Dennis, take care of Lord Montaubrey; Magdalena, go to your bed." "Oh my Lord, forgive me! I cannot, indeed I cannot go, till I hear you are better!"

Lord Ennersdale made no answer; indeed he seemed hardly to have recovered his faculties.

The servants now took him up in his chair as he sat, Mrs. Dennis carrying lights before them.

Montaubrey seized the momentary opportunity, and stepping back, he caught Magdalena's hand, pressed it to his lips, and exclaimed, though in a low voice, "My best beloved! My sweet

Magdalena! How strange! How unexpected! To find myself avowedly beneath the same roof with you!"

"Strange! Unexpected indeed!" replied the trembling girl; scarcely can I yet believe I am not the sport of some delusive dream! But, oh, Reginald, how wet you are! For pity's sake have some dry cloaths, and take care of yourself! *I* am powerless here, nor dare I speak to any servant, and at present Lord Ennersdale seems incapable; but I entreat, I implore you, to ask for every thing that may prevent your taking cold."

"Fear nothing for me, my dearest Magdalena! I am used in shooting or rowing to be often wet; and the sight of you, the soft tones of your voice, rob me of all sense of present inconvenience! But I must go to Lord Ennersdale! Do not go to bed; I will bring you word myself how he is."

He then followed the servants; and soon after Mrs. Dennis returned, full of wonder and exclamations, not unmixed

with praises of the handsome young Lord; to all of which Magdalena's thoughts were too much agitated to admit of her replying. Mrs. Dennis tried to persuade her to retire to their apartment, but when she found her determined to remain where she was, she did not insist upon it.

In a few minutes she was again summoned to Lord Ennersdale's room; and by her Magdalena sent an entreaty for admission. After a short interval, the request was granted. She entered the room; Oh, how her heart throbbed, when she saw Montaubrey, as it were domesticated by her guardian's bed-side, and paying him all the tender attentions of an affectionate son!

"Delightful, heart-soothing sight!" she thought; "Oh, that this desirable union may but be lasting! What more shall I have to ask of heaven, if Reginald win on the affections of my guardian, and become but half as dear to him, as he is to me; and can he fail of

loving one so eminently gifted with every quality to ensure regard, and who has besides, as it appears, saved him from peril the most eminent!"

As she paused a moment at the door, she heard Lord Ennersdale say, "Mrs. Dennis, dispatch instantly, a servant to Milbank Park, to apprize the family Lord Montaubrey will not return to night, and that he is safe. Direct that his servants and horses are taken care of, more particularly the man who was so active in assisting in my preservation. Any further orders, my Lord, you will be good enough to give yourself. I am weary and exhausted!" Then seeing Magdalena, who slowly approached, he added, "Good night Magdalena, I am better; go to your own apartment; the servants can do every thing that is wanted." Magdalena ventured to take his hand, and press it to her lips. "Good night, child! good night!" he again repeated; and returning the *good night* with impressive affection, she re-

turned to the study. There she still for a short time lingered, unable to go, till she knew whether Montaubrey really intended to pass the night in the Castle, and the cause of these extraordinary events. Presently Mrs. Dennis, with Agnes and Judith, came into the room. "What not gone yet, Miss!" said the former, "come, let us go to bed. Lord Montaubrey sleeps here! There's a wonder for you!" "God bless his lordship," answered Judith, "for by what I learn, he saved my Lord's life entirely!" At that moment Montaubrey entered, and Magdalena, conscious that her situation was aukward, suddenly said, "Come, Mrs. Dennis, let us go. I wish your lordship a good night."

"Stop a moment, Mrs. Dennis," said Agnes; "do you think my Lord Montaubrey had better sleep in the crimson damask room, or in the small room next my Lord's?" "Oh, the latter, by all means," said Montaubrey, "I should wish to be near Lord Ennersdale, lest he

should be ill in the night. He seems to fear an attack of the gout." "Oh, your lordship is very good," replied Agnes, curtsying; "but my Lord's own man, Mr. Smithson, sleeps within his room, so there would be no occasion for your lordship's disturbing yourself. To be sure the crimson room is the grandest, but both are well aired; for though we never have company, nor has any stranger slept here since——" She paused; then added, "but we always keep the rooms and beds well aired, and in good order." "I do not doubt it!" answered Montaubrey; who all this while, had been quietly drawing nearer to Magdalena. "So now, my good lady, if you will order the smallest room, I shall be obliged to you." "Certainly, my Lord! if you prefer it; but as I said before, the crimson chamber is the finest, and most fit for your lordship. But bless me, we are all forgetting how wet you are all this time! Judith do run to Mrs. Smithson for some of my Lord's

linen." "And will you," said Montaubrey, "be kind enough to desire the servant, who is going to Milbank, to tell my valet, to come hither in the morning with a change of cloaths for me. Lord and Lady Milbank, my mother, and sister, sleep to-night at Sir Jerome Macartney's," said he, addressing himself apparently to Mrs. Dennis, but with an expressive glance at Magdalena, "so no one will be made uneasy by my stay here; and I shall be at home to-morrow before they return. To-morrow, if I may see you, ma'am, and——the young lady before I go, I will inform you of the particulars of this accident."

"Very well, my Lord," said Mrs. Dennis; "come Miss, let us go.—With an expressive gesture, unseen by all but her, Montaubrey conveyed his adieu to Magdalena, and they then separated for the night.

Magdalena felt satisfied in the care she knew Agnes and Judith would take of Montaubrey; and, in spite of the

concern she felt for her guardian's accident, yet, as she hoped the ill effects would not be lasting, she could not resist the sensation of delight she experienced at seeing Montaubrey on such good terms with him; and, at least, for the present, established in the castle. Her buoyant fancy led her to believe, that all she most wished, would ensue from this accidental intimacy; and she felt assured, no one could see Reginald without loving him; more especially, one so capable of appreciating his talents and acquirements as Lord Ennersdale undoubtedly was; and when to this, she added the knowledge that to Montaubrey her guardian owed his life, she imagined gratitude alone would lead him to accede to every wish of his young preserver. From Mrs. Dennis, she learned the outline of the evening's adventure. It seemed that in attempting to cross Mosscroft Water, the horses had failed in drawing Lord Ennersdale's heavy carriage through what was now

become a lake, with a strong current rushing through it; the carriage filled with water, the horses vainly struggled to extricate themselves, and must, with his lordship, have been lost, had not Lord Montaubrey, whose light carriage had with some difficulty passed through just before, hastened to their assistance. His own carriage had stopped on the bank, for the horses to recover their breath, and the noise occasioned by Lord Ennersdale's, with the cries of the servants, alarmed him. Instantly he tore of his coat, threw himself into the water, and followed by one of his servants, who, as well as himself, was an excellent swimmer, swam to the place where the carriage was entangled, and by the most active exertions, extricated Lord Ennersdale from his perilous situation. The servants cut the traces, and the half exhausted horses then easily reached the bank, leaving the carriage till the receding waters should admit of its being, with less danger, brought to shore; to

which, as the distance was not great, Lord Montaubrey and his servant, with some difficulty, conveyed Lord Ennersdale.

Magdalena listened to this recital with a thankful heart. Oh! how near had she been to losing her guardian, to whom, in spite of his severity, her heart affectionately adhered. Then the danger of Reginald appalled her! A thousand tender thoughts rushed through her mind; and her reverie was only ended by Mrs. Dennis's saying, "Pray, Miss, is not this young lord the brother of the lady who came to see you the day you fell down the stair-case?—Lady Isabella Aubrey I think they called her." "Yes—I think—I believe so—" hesitated Magdalena. "Well, she was a very sweet young lady, and very agreeable, I am sure; and so is his lordship. Pray, my dear, what do you mean to do about seeing his lordship in the morning as he requested?"

"Indeed, Mrs. Dennis, "I don't—

that is—I thought—I supposed it would be proper for me to see him." "Aye, so it certainly would, if your guardian were like other people; but you know well enough, Miss, that Mr. Mansfield told us, Lady Isabella had called, and as my Lord would not let you see her, I don't suppose he would approve of your meeting the young Lord at breakfast, or indeed seeing him at all!"

A conscious pang invaded the heart of Magdalena. With difficulty she replied, "But, Mrs, Dennis, if you were to go with me, it would be so unpolite, so ungrateful, after Lord Montaubrey has hazarded so much for my guardian."

"Well, true enough; I think we may venture to go together and breakfast with him, unless Lord Ennersdale should order to the contrary."

The morning rose serene and calm; all nature seemed renewed, and to arise in fresh beauty; a light breeze agitated the branches, and the song of birds

hailed the bright sun, whose beams seemed doubly welcome, after the storm of the night.

Magdalena rose, and making her simple toilet, hastily indeed, but with uncommon attention, descended to the study. All was yet silent; she listened at her guardian's door, but hearing nothing, she retreated; presently afterwards she met Judith, and venturing on such an occasion to speak, she enquired how Lord Ennersdale had passed the night.

"Bad enough, Miss!" answered Judith, "my Lord has been in a great fever all night; and the young Lord being disturbed, got up, God bless him! though tired enough, no doubt, when he went to bed; and, he says, he was asleep when my Lord's voice, and Smithson's, who was up with him, waked his young lordship; for my Lord was in a kind of delirium; and so the young gentleman rose, and staid with my lord, and tended, and soothed

him, all one, Smithson says, as if he had been his own son; and so then, Smithson came and called me and Agnes, and my Lord was in a great ferment, raving about *you*——and——-and——-other things—and we sent off Thomas for Dr. Parry, at four this morning, and he will be here presently. My Lord seems a little better, and the young Lord is gone to his bed again, and I hope he will get a little rest, for sure none ever was so good or so kind-hearted."

Gratified as Magdalena felt by the simple praises which Judith bestowed on Montaubrey, she would not indulge herself in any farther conversation; but requesting to know what was the opinion of Dr. Parry, when he should arrive, she returned to her apartment, anxious and uneasy respecting the event of Lord Ennersdale's illness. Mrs. Dennis's conversation, though intended to divert her attention, only agitated her yet more, by the variety of prognostics and suppositions, of which it was full.

About nine o'clock Agnes knocked at the door, and informed them that Dr. Parry had seen her Lord, had desired that he might be kept perfectly quiet, and ordered him some medicines; that he intended to see his lordship again in the evening, when he hoped to find him materially better, as he apprehended no danger from his illness; and, finally, that the young Lord had consented to take his breakfast before he went away; and sent his compliments to Mrs. Dennis and Miss Magdalena, hoping for the honor of their company.

Mrs. Dennis was too much flattered by this request, to refuse; and Magdalena's readiness to comply cannot be doubted. A bright blush spread over her cheek, and her eyes sparkled with ill-concealed delight as she anticipated the meeting. She turned involuntarily to the glass, and adjusted her shining ringlets, not aware that Agnes had lingered behind Mrs. Dennis, and was carefully observing her.

As Magdalena turned and saw the good old woman, she half started, and looked ashamed of her solicitude respecting her appearance, but how was she astonished when Agnes, grasping her arm, said in a low voice, but with emotion, "Oh, dear young lady! BEWARE! BEWARE! Good, handsome as he is, it cannot, it will not be!—My Lord will be obeyed!——And oh!—Remember your mother!"

Alarmed, confounded, Magdalena articulated some indistinct words, but Mrs. Dennis called her, and Agnes slipped hastily away.

Magdalena trembling and dismayed, hardly knew how to rejoin her governess; the bright blush, the sparkling joy, were flown, and the discomposure of her hair, though Mrs. Dennis did not perceive it, alarmed Montaubrey when she entered the study. Restrained by Mrs. Dennis's presence, he dared not ask what had so obviously distresed her, but his penetrating eyes sought to discover in hers, if possible, the cause of her dis-

order. With difficulty she replied to his morning compliments, as to those of a slight acquaintance. Mrs. Dennis happening to go to a window for a few minutes, attracted by the appearance of a tree, which the storm had thrown down, and the enlargement of the distant waters, he approached Magdalena, and gently taking her hand, he whispered, "My Magdalena, why these pale and startled looks? I hoped the delight of taking a social meal together, so new and unexpected, would have been as pleasing to you as it is to me." "Oh yes!" she replied with undisguised simplicity; "I anticipated it with such pleasure!—But I have been astonished and alarmed by some extraordinary words from Agnes!—I cannot tell you now!" "Be composed," he answered, "and let us at least enjoy the present happy hour." They now sat down to breakfast, and during the meal, learned the particulars of the last evening's adventure. Montaubrey acknowledged

that his own danger in extricating Lord Ennersdale, as well as that of his servant, had, from the violence of the current, been very great. "After having with difficulty brought Lord Ennersdale to land," added Montaubrey, "I prevailed on him to get into my carriage, or rather indeed placed him in it without waiting for a consent, which, in truth, he had no power to give or with-hold, and brought him hither, where, at his lordship's request, who would not hear of my returning to Milbank Park in wet cloaths, I consented to remain, and I am happy I did so, since, *independently of other considerations,* I have been fortunate enough to be useful to him in the night. He is now much better, and will, I doubt not, soon be quite well." "What surprizes me," said Mrs. Dennis, "is that your lordship and Lord Ennersdale should have quitted Sir Jerome Macartney's at all in such a night as the last."

"Lord and Lady Milbank, Lady

Montaubrey and my sister, did consent to remain, as we were told of the danger which would attend crossing the water; and it was with difficulty Lord Ennersdale and myself were permitted to go away; his Lordship was positive, giving us to understand, that he had made a resolution, almost, if not quite, amounting to a vow, never again to pass a night out of his own castle; "As to me," he added, with a glance, and almost imperceptible smile at Magdalena, "I had a particular engagement early this morning and I was determined to fulfil it, though at the risk of my life."

Magdalena blushed, but too conscious of the nature of the engagement, to which he alluded, while the unsuspicious Mrs. Dennis said, "Dear me! how unlucky, my Lord, for I suppose you will at last be too late for it!" "Oh no," said he, hardly able to forbear laughing, "it is now of no consequence, for the paths are so wet, the friend I wished to meet would not have been able to join

me in the walk I intended to have taken." "Perhaps," said Mrs. Dennis, "your lordship is fond of fishing, for the shooting season is not come yet, and to be sure the brooks would not have been fit for fishing this morning." "Certainly not," replied Montaubrey, again half smiling, "and I hope you do me the justice to believe that no disappointment could be regretted which has given me the pleasure of breakfasting with—— in such agreeable company."

Magdalena well understood the meaning of all those speeches, and Mrs. Dennis was so delighted with the young Earl's politeness, and with the pleasure of such an addition to the usual party at Delamere, that she was in no haste to remove; shortly, however, a message from Lord Ennersdale called her to his room, and she could not help leaving Montaubrey and Magdalena together. In this short and hurried interval she repeated to him the singular expressions of Agnes, but too evidently referring

to him. A momentary shock struck upon his heart; his hopes, which the late introduction to Lord Ennersdale, had considerably augmented, now again declined, and he feared there really was some serious barrier between him and Magdalena. Repressing, however, as much as he could, these uneasy fears, he dilated largely on the exquisite pleasure he felt in seeming thus domesticated with her, and with a thousand fond and sweet anticipations of future happiness, calmed the remaining perturbations of her mind. Seated quietly by her side on the sopha, he seemed in the very state of felicity to which he had so anxiously aspired. To be actually in Delamere Castle! to have breakfasted there with Magdalena! to have been called friend by Lord Ennersdale! all seemed like a delightful vision; yet, assured of its reality, he anticipated the most desirable results, and entreated Magdalena not to suffer the hasty, and, perhaps, unfounded apprehensions of

Agnes to sully their present happiness. Suddenly, while holding her hand within his own, and with his eyes fixed on her countenance, which beamed with timid affection and delight, when they seemed to have forgotten the very existence of Mrs. Dennis, she entered the room with a haste and agitation which speedily aroused them from their delusive dream. Struck by the difference of manner which she could not help perceiving, so unlike what might have been expected from two persons apparently almost strangers to each other, she paused a moment, then catching Magdalena's hand, which Montaubrey had hastily, and with some confusion, relinquished, she exclaimed, "Come, Miss, come to your own apartment; my Lord is very angry at your breakfasting here; he desires you will go immediately; and indeed if I had known——you should not have come down at all!—A fine scolding I have had about it!—But who could have thought!—Well, go

Miss, to your room, for I am sure here one never knows whether one is doing right or wrong!

"Stay one moment, dear Mrs Dennis," said Montaubrey, who seeing that their secret was partly discovered, thought it best, and most consistent with the delicacy of both, to confide in her. "Stay, and let me speak to you without disguise." "Well, my Lord, I will stay," she answered, "but let my young Lady go." "She shall go instantly," replied Montaubrey, "only let me speak one word to her, in your presence, in your hearing, if you will,"—Mrs. Dennis was silent, and he proceeded, "Magdalena I must throw aside this unworthy deception; have I your permission to confide in Mrs. Dennis?" "Yes," she faintly replied, "I most willingly consent."

"Go then!" he cried; "go, best beloved of my soul, and let me remove, at least, one uneasy weight from your heart! Go! and be assured the whole

world combined shall not prevent me from seeing you again 'ere long!" then taking her hand, he pressed it to his lips, and with one arm round her waist, he led her to the door, for she trembled, and could with difficulty support herself; then again kissing her hand, he permitted her to depart: Mrs. Dennis, in the mean-time, gazing with surprize upon them, stood the image of silent astonishment.

Magdalena now, as hastily as her trembling limbs would let her, returned to her apartment, where, in about half an hour, Mrs. Dennis rejoined her.

"There, Miss!" she exclaimed; "there, for once in my life I have brought you a note from Lord Montaubrey, but never hope I will do the like again, unless I have Lord Ennersdale's permission; neither fear I will ever reveal your secrets, which the young Lord has confided to me; though you have acted very wrong, very wrong indeed! Happy for you, you chanced to

meet with a man of honor and principle, like Lord Montaubrey!—So young!—So ignorant of the world! Oh, Magdalena, how could you thus deceive me? Have I not always loved you, always indulged you to the very extent of my power?" Magdalena's tears fell fast; she threw herself into Mrs. Dennis's arms, and entreated her forgiveness. "If you knew," she said, "how accidental on my part was our first meeting;—how imperceptibly I have been led from one step to another——" "Yes, yes," answered Mrs. Dennis, "I know it all. I blame Lady Isabella most; she ought to have known better; you, poor thing, did not." "Oh, yes, I did, I did," replied the ingenuous Magdalena; "I felt I was doing wrong; I lamented the deceit I was practising; but I had not power to refuse Isabella—— to deny myself the delight of meeting her—of listening to——" she stopped and blushed.

"Well, well," said the good-natured Mrs. Dennis, "it was but too natural, brought up as you have been—so shut up—so much severity; but at present we will say no more on the subject; read your letter."

Magdalena obeyed; the paper was unsealed, and the contents as follow:

"I have disclosed all, my dearest Magdalena, to Mrs. Dennis. Your heart, I am sure, will be easier for this confidence. I am now going to attend Lord Emmersdale, and then shall return to Milbank. As soon as your guardian is in a state to listen to me, I shall make such proposals, as to him I hope, nay, I am sure, he will not refuse. In the mean time, be composed, and let me see you, either in the house, or at the alcove. I shall be here again in the course of the day; and if chance will not befriend me: I entreat you will be at the alcove at seven in the evening. I shall be more than ever anxious to see you, and learn whether

any thing passes when you next meet Lord E.

Ever your

MONTAURERY."

After reading this billet, which she communicated to Mrs. Dennis, they had a long conversation. Mrs. Dennis, though by no means a woman of superior understanding, had yet a rightness of mind which enabled her to judge on points of morality and conduct extremely well. She heard the detail of Magdalena's connection with Isabella and Reginald with concern, but with allowance She acknowledged, though her pupil had erred, yet brought up as she had been, the error was venial, and a different conduct could not have been expected; yet she looked forward with apprehension, and was by no means so sanguine with respect to the termination of this affair, as the young people were. Certain ideas, gathered partly from Agnes, partly from words which Lord Ennersdale had, in the course of years, let fall, floated in

her mind, and militated against the belief she wished to have indulged, that all would end happily. Yet these ideas she neither felt at liberty, nor did she risk, to disclose; a short time must now develope all. She heard the busy intrusion of Mansfield with anger and fear, and doubted whether much reliance could be placed on his secresy. Willing, however, to hope that Lord Ennersdale might consent to the wishes of the lovers, she acknowledged that Mansfield's report, if made, could then be of little consequence. The heart of Magdalena seemed relieved of an intolerable weight, by having a friend with whom she dared to discuss the circumstances of her situation, of which, while yet they were talking, Judith summoned them to the bed-side of Lord Ennersdale.

CHAP. XI.

HIS lordship's fever was abated, but he looked pale and haggard, and an angry glance he directed at Magdalena made her shrink with apprehension; she ventured, however, to approach him, and to enquire how he found himself. "I am better," he said, "and should be still more so, if I were not surrounded by fools, or worse; people who either do not know their duty, or do not find it convenient to practise it!"

How Magdalena trembled!——

"Pray Magdalena," he continued, "how came you to think of breakfasting with a stranger this morning?—Was it your folly or Mrs. Dennis's *wisdom* that suggested such a measure?"—"My Lord," stammered Magdalena, "I did not know——I did not think——

his lordship requested our company—— and I thought——we thought——no—— I mean *I* thought, it would be polite, as his lorsdship had been so kind——so useful to you——"

"Cursed nonsense!—What stuff are you talking!—*Polite* indeed!—A child like you, and an old woman!—Much pleasure your company could give a young man used to the best society!—But understand, Miss, if his lordship comes hither again, his visit is to *me* not to you, nor to *la Bonne!* and whatever obligations I have received, I am the proper person to acknowledge.—You may go to your own room."——

"Would not your lordship permit me to read to you?"—No, Miss, I expect Dr. Parry; and remember, since every thing must be stated in precise terms, and nothing can be left to the discretion of the people about me, you are not to appear either to my physician or any person who may call on me."

He then sent them both away, Mrs.

Dennis excessively mortified at the appellation by which he had distinguished her, to which she had a great aversion; and at the severity with which he had expressed his displeasure. She muttered, as they went, something about its being very hard to be treated in such a manner, and that it was enough to make people do things they never would have thought of, when doing their very best, they could not please!—Magdalena perceived by the words she dropped, that it would not be difficult, while under the influence of resentment, to induce her to favor her writing to and seeing Montaubrey, but she determined not to be instrumental to the departure from the strict obedience Mrs. Dennis had for so many years observed towards Lord Ennersdale.

"No!" said she to herself, "the punishment of my own faults, be what it may, let me endure, but let me not lead another into error, whose affection to me might perhaps induce her to do

what her conscience disapproves, and the consequence of which might, now she is no longer young, deprive her of the asylum she has so long inhabited, and which she might elsewhere seek in vain."

In the evening, without saying a word to Mrs. Dennis, either to ask her permission or to give he an opportunity of refusing, she went to the alcove, where she met Montaubrey and Isabella, to both of whom she recounted what had passed since the former left Delamere in the morning. On her return Mrs. Dennis asked her no questions, but told her Lord Ennersdale was so much recovered he meant the next day to breakfast in his study as usual.

On the following morning, therefore, she descended, according to her general custom, when Lord Ennersdale was well, to the study, where he shortly after joined her. He still looked pale, and the traces of vexation yet hung upon his brow; he said nothing however of the

past, and seemed as if he wished Magdalena not to think of it. When Dr. Parry was announced he ordered her to retire, and sent for her again when that gentleman left him.

The morning was far advanced, and Magdalena was somewhat surprised that Montaubrey had not called upon her guardian, and, though convinced if he were announced she should be sent away, yet she could not help feeling agitated at every approaching footstep. At length, all at once, the door opened, and Joseph hastily announced Lord Montaubrey; but before she could rise, or Lord Ennersdale could speak, his lordship followed the servant into the room.—Instantly advancing with an air of pleasure and cordiality, he held out his hand to Lord Ennersdale, saying, "How much I rejoice to see your lordship so well recovered!"

Embarrassed between the gratitude he felt towards his young preserver (which would not permit him to repel his ad-

vances with the coldness he would have shewed to any other person,) and his vexation that Magdalena should be present, Lord Ennersdale knew not what to say, nor how to act. An angry look at old Joseph, and the exclamation of "Block-head!" shewed his displeasure towards him for not having announced Lord Montaubrey properly; but the fact was, his lordship had followed the old man into the room so closely, hoping (as it proved) to find Magdalena with her guardian, that it was not possible for him to prevent his immediate entrance.

Lord Ennersdale, however, received Montaubrey's offered hand with much graciousness, and his lordship then turning towards Magdalena with a graceful bow, paid her the usual compliments of the day; while she, blushing and trembling, could not articulate a word. "Go, child," said Lord Ennersdale, whose brow when Montaubrey addressed her assumed a deeper shade;

" go to your own apartment." She rose to obey, but Reginald declared with so much fervency, that if he in the slightest degree deranged her, he would instantly retire, and refused so positively even to sit down if she removed in consequence of his coming, that Lord Ennersdale could not, without marked rudeness to his young friend, insist on her retiring. She sat down, therefore, again, and though she scarcely dared to look up, she saw that Montaubrey took no pains to disguise the admiration and delight with which he beheld her. He spoke to her repeatedly, and asked her opinion on the subjects which he absolutely dragged forward by way of conversation; for Lord Ennersdale growing every instant more moody and reserved, scarcely spoke at all, and Magdalena hardly went beyond a monosyllable. Once or twice, as she caught her guardian's eye, he motioned to her to quit the room, but before she could obey, Montaubrey, on the watch also, frus-

trated her intention by some new question, which she was obliged to answer. At length, seeing her harp, he earnestly entreated her to touch it. "She is a mere learner, my Lord," said Lord Ennersdale; "and her playing would by no means entertain your lordship." "Oh, I am passionately fond of the harp," answered Montaubrey, "and Mr. Maxwell, who attends my sister during her stay at Milbank Park, and who appears to be an excellent master, speaks of this young Lady as a capital performer."—"Oh, those fellows," said the Earl, "always cry up their pupils, by way of enhancing their own merit; but the fact is, Magdalena knows little of the matter, nor would she, I am sure, be able to perform at all to a stranger, never being accustomed to any society but mine and that of her governess." "Will your lordship permit me to judge for myself?" said Montaubrey, as he hastily fetched the harp and placed it before her. "Play, child, then one

air," said Lord Ennersdale with some peevishness, "and then go to your own room; where Mrs. Dennis is waiting for you."

Magdalena attempted to obey, but her trembling fingers refused their office. "There, I told you so," said Lord Ennersdale; "I hope your lordship is satisfied with this specimen!" "One minute's patience, my dear Lord," replied Montaubrey; "let us hope in that time your fair ward may have obtained more courage." An entreating glance she caught from him emboldened her, and, with very little effort she played, with taste and expression, a little air she had often sung to him and Isabella in their evening meetings; then rising with a graceful courtesy she retired.

Her reflections accounted to her for Montaubrey's manner; she felt convinced that he had thus persisted in attentions to her evidently unpleasant to Lord Ennersdale, by way of prelude to the proposals he intended to make,

and she trembled lest he should seize the present opportunity; for she flattered herself that time and a more mature knowledge of Montaubrey would incline her guardian to consent to his wishes.

The hour for dinner was now arrived, when, just as she expected a summons to the study, Judith announced, that her Lord desired Miss and Mrs. Dennis would dine together, as the young Lord dined with him, and he also ordered, that Miss should not leave her own apartments till he sent for her.

This did not happen till late in the evening, and Magdalena then attended her guardian's summons with as much composure as she could assume, but with a heart fluttering with latent agitation. His lordship was peevish, and dropped some apparently, involuntary words, expressive of his vexation at the events of the morning, but he did not once mention Montaubrey's name, nor did his manner indicate that any thing extraordinary had passed between them.

For the next three or four days, instead of his own study, he sat in the library, to which there was a large anti-chamber, furnished also with books and maps, but separated from the library by double doors; and another door in the library, communicated with the suite of rooms which led to Magdalena's little staircase; and by this door, when Dr. Parry was announced, he dismissed her. Joseph, it appeared, had received particular directions; for twice when Lord Milbank and Montaubrey called, he announced them, as remaining in the anti-chanber, till they knew whether his Lord was at leisure to receive their visit; and both times, before they were admitted, Magdalena was dismissed. Scarcely would Lord Ennersdale, during this time, permit her to leave him, except when he had visitors; and she could only once catch an hour, early in morning, to meet Reginald and Isabella; for she now insisted the former should never come alone to the alcove, so much

the terror she had suffered from Mansfield's intrusion, and Mrs. Dennis's representations, convinced her of the impropriety of receiving him alone.

He told her, in the short and hurried conversation they then held, that he only waited in the hope of gaining on Lord Ennersdale's good will, before he declared to him his attachment to Magdalena. At present they were, he said, on excellent terms, and their sentiments on literary subjects, as well as their political opinions, coincided very happily; on both they had conversed in the most confidential manner, and Montaubrey expressed his high admiration of Lord Ennersdale's superior abilities, and the elegance and ease of his conversational style. He concealed however from Magdalena one circumstance, which certainly impressed his own mind with uneasy forebodings, namely, that Lord Ennersdale himself, never, in the remotest manner, alluded to Magdalena, and when Montaubrey attempted to

bring forward any mention of her, a coldness of demeanor, and a clouded brow, instantly shewed him the subject was not agreeable, though, on almost every other, he was lively, pleasing, and unrestrained. All this augured ill, and combined with the inauspicious words old Agnes had let fall, led him to fear his path to happiness was not so plain, as a few days before he had fancied it would be.

A few more days passed with little variation; it was now the end of June, and Magdalena's thoughts sometimes fled to the explanation promised by Lord Ennersdale, to the arrival of that interesting person he had hinted at, which she imagined was to take place soon; but her mind had of late, been so deeply engaged in scenes of more irresistible interest, that the impression made by former events, had in comparison, become insipid. All but the remembrance of her guardian's threats, gradually faded before the impassioned

feelings of the present hour; those, as connected her with immediate hopes and fears, still retained their power; and often she repeated them with an alarm she could with difficulty control.

Still Lord Ennersdale sat constantly in the library. Dr. Parry did not now visit him, as the Earl was perfectly recovered; but Montaubrey was determined not to lose the footing he had gained, and called occasionally. Lord Ennersdale (he told Magdalena,) always received him with kindness and apparent pleasure, and had sent a large gratuity by Smithson, to that servant of Montaubrey's who had assisted in his preservation; and to theyoung Earl himself he had presented a valuable antique gem, set as a ring, which he entreated him to accept as a token of his gratitude and very high regard.

About a week after the accident, Montaubrey sent up his name when Magdalena was with her guardian; he, as usual, desired her to go to her own

apartment. She had not seen Reginald for two days, and could hardly restrain a heavy sigh when obliged to leave the room he was on the point of entering; unwillingly she gathered up the books and drawings with which she had been engaged, but so slow were her movements that the Earl noticed them, and with considerable asperity ordered her to make haste. His petulant manner encreased her confusion; the books she had piled together fell to the ground, and the drawings and papers were scattered in disorder. "Confusion!" he exclaimed, "was ever any creature so aukward, or do you purposely delay?—Leave the things!—Joseph shall pick them up," (for she was stooping to re-arrange them,) "and get out of the room this instant!" Montaubrey's voice was now heard at the door, addressing some trivial question to Joseph, and Magdalena shrinking from the gathering fury of Lord Ennersdale, hastened to the other; as she opened it,

Reginald appeared at the outer entrance, and in her haste to escape, she caught her dress in the heavy lock and was completely entangled; this had so much the appearance of intention, that she was excessively provoked, and tried, but in vain, to extricate herself; still the ponderous lock, seemed as if inspired by some fairy power to detain her. Montaubrey paying a hasty compliment to Lord Ennersdale, who, with a raised complexion and angry eyes, sat muttering anathemas against the lock, key, and door, advanced as speedily as possible towards Magdalena, saying aloud, "Permit me to assist you!" then while apparently disengaging her gown, which certainly he contrived rather more to entangle, he said in a lower voice, secure at the distance Lord Ennersdale sat, (for the room was at least, forty feet long,) that he could not distinguish a syllable, "Oh Magdalena, I thought we never should meet again! I can endure this miserable state no longer!

This hour shall ascertain my fate! I will immediately learn your guardian's decision! Tell me, oh, once more tell me, you wish it to be favourable!"

Magdalena could not speak, but her expressive countenance sufficiently revealed her sentiments. "I must see you," he added, "as soon as this conference is ended, if possible; if that be, you must meet me in the alcove this evening, between seven and eight." Then in a louder tone, he said, "there, ma'am, I have, however unwilling to part from you, extricated you from your imprisonment." He opened the door for her, and as she passed, regardless of Lord Ennersdale's presence, he gently took her hand, and with a graceful bow, touched it with his lips.

With trembling agitation, Magdalena hastened to her own apartment: in vain she strove to compose her tumultuous emotions, the cause of which she sought not to conceal from Mrs. Dennis, who largely partook of her anxiety.

Magdalena dared not to leave her apartment; but Mrs. Dennis went up and down two or three times, as if accidentally; the last time she was absent more than half an hour. Magdalena spent the tedious interval with uneasy impatience; now she she paced up and down her room, now listened on the staircase for Mrs. Dennis's return. At last the good lady arrived, but her step was slow, and her countenance seemed marked with anxiety and trouble; Magdalena changed colour repeatedly; her eyes asked a thousand questions, but her tongue was silent; she dared not interrogate Mrs. Dennis, and an innate sense of delicate propriety prevented her from expressing the emotions of which her heart was full. At length Mrs. Dennis said, "I have seen Lord Montaubrey." "Have you?" asked Magdalena, in a timid voice. "Yes, I went down stairs, and walked in the entrance hall; his lordship's groom and horses were moving about before the

door. At length the library bell rung, Joseph answered it, and presently I saw Lord Montaubrey flying down stairs, as I may call it, for he came two or three steps at once, and left the old man in the gallery above, when he was at the bottom of the staircase."

"And how——was he pale——or——or——red——did he see you Mrs. Dennis?"——stammered the agitated Magdalena.

"No, he was not pale, not at all pale, indeed he was like scarlet, and his eyes seemed to flash in such a manner, that I was almost afraid to speak to him; he saw me, and came across the hall, as if he had wings to his feet; he seized hold of both my hands; I am sure he quite made me start, for every thing here is so quiet, and every body moves so slowly, that to see any one hasty and quick, quite astonished me; I declare I had almost forgotten that people could move out of a set pace." "Well, well, Mrs. Dennis, never mind what other

people do,—did he speak to you?" "Yes, Miss, he did speak, and looked pretty much as you do now, all in a flutter like, and he said, "my dear, Mrs. Dennis, how fortunate to meet you here! Where is Magdalena?" "In her own room, my Lord." "Can I see her now this moment?" "Oh no, indeed, my Lord, unless you have Lord Ennersdale's permission." "Oh no, no, no," said he, several times together, and shaking his head, but can you not contrive it; let her come into the saloon or the study." "Impossible, my lord," said I, "impossible; it would be my ruin, if not hers." "Then tell her," said he, "to be at the alcove this evening; she must come, I must see her! If she does not come, I shall return hither and insist on seeing her. Our fate hangs upon a thread!" He looked so wild and disordered that I said you should be there. "Thank you, and heaven bless you!" he said, and instantly he took his ring from his finger and put it upon mine; I

would have refused, and said, I hoped he did not think I wanted a bribe. "A bribe!" said he, quite angry, "can you suppose I had such an idea? No, wear the trifle, my good Mrs. Dennis, for my sake; God knows when we may meet again." He wrung my hand. This this conversation had passed as quick as thought, and Joseph came in sight; his lordship darted away, beckoned his groom, sprang upon his horse, and was out of sight in a moment!—Lord bless me!—It seems to me all like a dream, for it was all in an instant as one may say, and so different from the solemn steps, and stately air of all the old walking statues about the house!"

She talked on, but Magdalena no longer heeded her words; her thoughts, her heart, were flown after Montaubrey!—From Mrs. Dennis's account of his words and looks, she augured nothing good: far different would have been the expression of joy, of happi-

ness!—No!—All was over, and the meeting of this evening would doubtless be their last!

Before she could collect her scattered thoughts, or resume her self-possession, she was told dinner was served and Lord Ennersdale waited.—Oh! how she dreaded to see him! how she feared she should betray her complicated emotions to his penetrating eyes!

As she entered the room with an uncertain step, his most searching glances fell upon her. She trembled, and dared not meet the keen inspection. Not a word, however, of any importance dropped from his tongue. He was extremely silent, and from time to time surveyed her with a piercing regard, which became more and more stern as he observed her increasing agitation.

When the desert was placed, and the servants were withdrawn, he rose from his chair, and walked two or three turns about the room, as if in deep thought. Silent and intimidated, Magdalena dared

not interrupt a meditation so important, on which, perhaps, her future fate depended. After a few minutes he stopped, and resting his arm on the back of a chair opposite to her, he said, while his eyes seemed to penetrate the inmost folds of her heart, "Magdalena, to-morrow—for to-night I am unequal to the task!—to-morrow shall disclose to you the past, and point out to you the future!—The time is come!—The load which has for years oppressed me shall be removed! Once more I repeat take care!—take care, Magdalena! MY WILL MUST BE OBEYED!—or!—YOU ARE NOTHING!—Be not misled!—Listen not to ANY VOICE which would—but why do I say this!—No voice can or shall reach you till your decision is made. To-morrow, Magdalena, to-morrow, at twelve o'clock attend me; till then I would not see you. Go; and once again I say, take care, Magdalena! take care!"

Shrinking, trembling, scarcely able

to quit the presence of this impressive, this almost awful being, Magdalena rose, and holding by the chairs to support her unsteady steps, was retiring; he watched her narrowly, and just as she reached the door, he again turned towards her, and said, "I do not understand these violent emotions, this trembling agitation; if your conscience is clear, if you are prepared to obey me, why should you tremble? But if any secret lurk in your heart; if any unknown connection——But no more!—I will not enquire into what I would not endure to know!"

He now suffered her to depart, and the closing of the door, which shut her from those eagle eyes seemed to afford a temporary relief to her heart.

True, most true, had been his parting words; her conscience could not wholly acquit her; a painful secret lurked in her heart; an unknown connection swayed her actions?

CHAP. XII.

THE interval which Lord Ennersdale had pointed out as one in which he did not wish to see her, permitted Magdalena to comply with Montaubrey's request; and, with a heart weighed down by dismal forebodings, she once more retraced her way to the alcove, but too well convinced that shortly bitter regret would be all that remained of those happy hours she had lately spent there.

Till now, when she had sought its peaceful recess, hope and love had beamed in her countenance, joy and expectation quickened her agile steps; but now, slowly she proceeded, faded was the once glowing cheek, heavy the lately brilliant eye!

The clock had not struck seven when she reached the alcove, yet found Mon-

aubrey already there, or rather in the copse, from which he came with hasty steps to meet her. He caught her hand, kissed it, and passed it through his arm, but did not speak. Timidly she glanced her eyes over his face; she saw the glow of impatience on his cheek, his eyes glittered with unusual expression, and she felt the tumultuous beating of his heart, as he pressed her trembling hand to his bosom.

"Where is Isabella," said she, in a low voice. "Not here," he replied; "be not displeased, Magdalena, but, to the conference I mean to hold with you, even her presence would have been a restraint." They now reached the alcove, and she hastened to place herself upon one of its seats, for she trembled and could hardly stand; he threw himself by her side, and after vainly attempting once or twice to speak, he at length said, "In vain, in vain, Magdalena, have I tried to quiet this beating heart, to compose this agitated frame; but so important is the crisis, so decisive

the hour, that quiet and composure are wholly unattainable." You have not denied that in that dear, that inestimable heart I possess some interest, and I will not dissemble my conviction, that my present communication will grieve, will wound it.

"Your guardian has refused my suit!—He will not hear my prayers; and now, on Magdalena, on Magdalena alone, my fate depends."

He stopped, for he saw with gratitude, yet with pain, the anguish which spoke in her expressive countenance.

"Yes, my beloved," he continued, "Lord Ennersdale, not contented with refusing my entreaties for permission to address you, has told me, with cool, impenetrable determination, has told me—that you are destined for another!—For what other!—I cried, (thrown off my guard by his declaration,) do I not know my Lord, that your ward, your *grand-daughter* has never been permitted to associate with any human being?—How then can she be destined for one

she never saw?—Lives there the man, so mean, so base, as to take advantage of your partiality, and to accept this lovely creature at your hands, when her matchless mind rejects him, when her affectionate heart cannot be his?" "I know not, my Lord," he replied with a penetrating glance, "by what means the interior regulations of my family are so well known, to one, whom a fortnight ago, I *supposed* to be a stranger to every part of it? My ward's person you certainly have seen; I believe it is one, which any man may admire, but, if she really possesses a *matchless mind*, an *affectionate heart*; permit me to ask by what means your lordship has become acquainted with either?"—He stopped, and surveyed me with looks of scrutiny and meaning. I replied as well as my emotion would permit, "A very few words of conversation, my Lord, a very slight view of your ward's intelligent countenance, would at once suffice to convince any man that it is not her person alone he

ought to admire."—"Very well," he replied, "I am ready to admit this as an answer; you are a young lover, and doubtless see charms in the fair-one your fancy has selected, which no one else can discern; at all events I wish not to enquire into what, if ascertained, I would not endure to hear. Let us then suppose Magdalena all you describe, but learn also, my Lord, that amongst her chief perfections, I consider a regard to truth, and an obedient disposition; she has promised to obey my will in all things; she must obey.—Whatever her relationship to me may be, your lordship will recollect I have never recognized it, nor lives the being who can establish her claims, even to a decent descent.—Would you then, my Lord, accept as a wife, would your mother receive as a daughter, a girl without a name, perhaps allied to crime, or descended from dishonor?"

Here he became agitated, his coolness forsook him, and I found voice to declare, that name or condition to me

signified nothing; that I was my own master, and my mother would not attempt to controul me; that for Magdalena, and Magdalena alone, I asked, and that he might without exciting one uneasy thought in me, dispose of all his fortune to another, so he would give me YOU. Certainly my Lord, I added, I am not insensible to the value of an honorable birth, and estimable connections, but these are secondary considerations; give me then only Magdalena, or, if you would be really generous, add but the declaration that her birth was legitimate, and this rather for my mother's sake than my own, and I will never ask for more. She shall continue to respect, to love you; she shall still be your Magdalena, your child, and I will be your friend, your son; your old age shall decline in peace, and every kindly, every tender attention shall soothe its calm decay!"—He interrupted me, but with someemotion. "Rise, rise, my Lord," he said, for I had involuntarily bent one knee in supplication, "you are indeed

an ardent, nay a most romantic lover; I comprehend not, how a child, in such a limited intercourse, could have so subdued a heart like yours! But I," he added in a lower and more solemn tone, "I have been the victim of romance, and will not allow its feelings to sway me. Magdalena is mine!—Mine by promise,—mine by inheritance!—her lot is fixed!—Nothing, believe me, but a determination formed by the most affecting circumstances, strengthened by years of reflection, should induce me to refuse you a boon on which your heart seems set. I fear you accuse me of ingratitude, my life I owe to you, and ask me for half my fortune, for any thing but Magdalena, and it shall be yours."

"In vain I entreated, in vain renounced with contempt every thing he could offer me, except the hand of Magdalena, he was inexorable, and I left him with indignation which would not hear his offers of personal friendship, of continual regard and gratitude."

Here Montaubrey paused, and Magdalena who had heard him with tears of grateful love, of anguished sorrow, attempted not to reply; after a moment he resumed the subject which their mingled emotions had interrupted. "And now," said he, "my Magdalena, what remains?—Must that enchanting form, that animated mind, that tender heart, be yielded like a mere automaton, without will, without choice, to one you have never seen, nay, whose very name you know not! Forbid it every principle of justice, every feeling of the heart!--The meanest slave would not be thus compelled, thus made a property, and considered as an idiot!—Mine you are in heart, mine you shall be in reality. One word, one only word I ask; exert yourself, and claim the natural rights of every created being; say but YES, nay, do but look it, and this instant, this very instant we will fly together.—Just without the park, I have a chaise in waiting, a few hours, (hours of how much importance!—let them not fleet in vain!) will take us to

that kingdom where we may be united in legal and indissoluble bands. Once my wife, Magdalena shall not fall again into the hands of this inexorable man; no *second victim* shall moan within his solitary towers, no *second victim* pine to death beneath his melancholy walls!"

This rapid allusion to her mother's imagined fate made Magdalena shudder, but the recollection was not auspicious to the cause Montaubrey pleaded. Every fear Lord Ennersdale had formerly inspired, the ruin he had threatened to herself, the infamy he had denounced upon her mother's tomb, all rose in black array before her.

"I cannot! Oh, I cannot!" she exclaimed; "I dare not brave the horrors which have so long appalled me! My mother!—If I bring down the dreadful vengeance of Lord Ennersdale upon my head, will it not be extended to her? Will not her fame be for ever destroyed? I know not the means he possesses of doing this, but the words of Agnes, his own dark hints, convince me he can, and

my knowledge of his character assures me he will do this! I dare not, oh, I dare not disobey him!"

"Detested be the arts, like those of magic," exclaimed Montaubrey, "with which this man has warped your judgment, has fettered your will! I do not, I cannot believe it!—The blackest revenge could surely never propel the heart of man to an end so dreadful, as to make the innocent daughter the instrument to blast the mother's, the departed mother's fame! Oh, Magdalena, consent to brave this visionary terror! Lord Ennersdale is not, cannot be a being so malignant! Consent this instant to hazard all, to fly with me; if once again you see him, I am convinced he will so appal your imagination, so work upon your tender heart, that, in a momentary enthusiasm, you will bind yourself by some promise of which every moment of your future life you will repent."

"Not so, my dear Montaubrey," she replied; "I cannot indeed consent to overwhelm the old age of my guardian,

perhaps my parent, by a flight which would, I am certain, render him desperate. *His I am*, he says, *by promise, his by inheritance*; till I know how far those claims, those awful claims, ought to bind me, I cannot, dare not determine on my future conduct. This alone, this alone I will promise, he may prevent my being yours, but never, Montaubrey, never will I be another's! To-morrow, he just now told me, he will reveal the past, and point out the future; but, oh, Reginald, he added, (and in what tones, just heavens!) that my lot was fixed, that I must obey!" "I know it, I foresee it all!" exclaimed Reginald, rising from his seat, and passionately striking his forehead, "I know if once again within his magic circle, you never will escape it more! This single, this only moment is our own! Let it pass—and all is over! But let it not pass unheeded, Magdalena," falling at her feet, he added, "consent, Magdalena, my only love, to follow me!—If you have scruples, I will dispatch an immediate messenger to Isabella, who shall join us

at the end of the first stage. My mother is, with all her pride, indulgent; gladly she will forgive us, gladly receive my lovely, my inimitable bride. As my wife we will force this stern guardian to do you justice, to clear the fame, the injured fame of your mother!—The kingdom shall be ransacked for proofs of her marriage!—Oh, you know not, Magdalena, what power and riches can effect in a world of which you have no idea! Be but mine, and in a very few short weeks, your mother's name shall be rescued from suspicion, your mother's marriage proved to demonstration!—Oh, do not hesitate!—Do not draw back, best beloved of my soul! If you leave me now, you leave me to despair, to desperation!" He clasped her hands he buried in them his burning forehead, and covered them with tears and kisses!

Gasping for breath, trembling and weeping, the wretched Magdalena heard this tender, this almost irresistible appeal; but as her heart softened, and she had almost yielded to his prayer, the

stern figure of Lord Ennersdale rose again to her imagination! She recollected his tremendous denunciations, his awful warnings! She recollected also his question to Montaubrey, how his mother would receive a *girl without a name, perhaps allied to crime, or descended from dishonor!* She shuddered, she repelled with determined resolution, every softer feeling; again she repeated, "I cannot, no, I dare not consent."

Eager entreaties, tender pleadings, nay, even angry remonstrances, shook, but did not destroy, her determination, and all Montaubrey could obtain was a reiterated promise never to be another's, and should she find Lord Ennersdale's power over her less obligatory than she expected, or tyrannically exerted, she would, at all events, with whatever reluctance, shake it off, and be the wife of Montaubrey. He heard her with a countenance from which every gleam of hope seemed vanished. "Never, Magdalena," said he, "never will you now be mine; often will you recollect my

prediction, that now we part to meet no more, or to meet—— Oh, heaven, can I endure to think it!——When you will be the affianced wife of another!—Perhaps some mean, some mercenary wretch, for who else would wed the hand without the heart! But this is all, all in vain! I see, too plainly, you will not hear me; an over-strained notion of duty has more weight with you than Montaubrey's supplication! Montaubrey's despair!" "Oh, unkind," replied the weeping Magdalena, "why will you say so?—Do I know how far I am bound to Lord Ennersdale?—How much my obedience is his due? If indeed he is the father of my unfortunate mother, if both my parents are no more, does not their right in me devolve on him?—May they not even expressly have delegated their power into his possession?—Dare I then, so young, so uninformed, dare I renounce these solemn ties?—Can I consent, by one decisive step, to shake off all duty, all reverence to my only parent?—Can I forget all

the years of careful anxiety he may have passed—all the trouble he had with me while yet an unconscious infant?—And now, when he expects comfort from me, shall I bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? I am ignorant, it is true, I know not a thousand things of which others at my age are well informed, but my heart, my conscience, tell me I ought not to forsake Lord Ennersdale."

Delighted as Montaubrey was with the excellence of Magdalena's heart, with the firmness of her principles, he yet saw her situation in a very different point of view; but argument and persuasion were alike in vain, and the shades of evening closing around, now warned them to separate. Hard was the task which awaited Magdalena, to tear herself from a beloved and supplicating lover; to reject all the gay visions of future bliss, he eloquently painted as waiting only her word to ensure them hers for ever! To return to a place where perhaps a fate at once miserable

and inevitable attended her; to stifle the pleadings of her own heart, swayed by the tenderest love for him she was now, too probably, renouncing for ever! Her youth, her ignorance of those relative proprieties in which young women generally are instructed, all might have been urged in her excuse, had she yielded and followed the impetuous Montaubrey! But Magdalena, though tender, was not weak; though ignorant, was blessed with a clear natural perception of right and wrong, and in vain Reginald pleaded; he "could not hush a voice that murmured" in her bosom, and told her that her first decision was correct, and ought to be immutable.

Exhausted with the conflict, and the abundant tears she had shed, hardly could she support herself, when she rose to return to the house. Montaubrey, when, at length, he saw she was determined to go, drew her hand through his arm without speaking, and walked with her towards the castle; this he had

often done before, but now the wildness of his air and the determination of his countenance alarmed her. When they came to the end of the walk, where they usually parted, she would have drawn her hand away, and articulated a faint good night. From the moment of their quitting the alcove, he had not spoken, but now grasping her hand in his, he said, "I shall walk with you to the castle!" "Oh, no, for heaven's sake, do not think of it!" she answered; "Why will you affright me thus, and to what purpose?" "I will present myself with you at once to Lord Ennersdale; I will try once more to move his stern resolution, since your's I cannot move; oh, Magdalena! a resolution doubtless inherited from himself!"

It was now Magdalena's turn to reason, to entreat, to conjure him not to attempt a scheme so wild and fruitless. The darkness of night came on while they argued on this important point; a few stars appeared, and every instant Magdalena feared that the castle gates

would be shut 'ere they she could regain them; perhaps Montaubrey hoped the same thing, and flattered himself that necessity would then compel her to listen to his proposals; almost fainting, however, with her apprehensions, she again conjured him to leave her, and, overcome by her terrors and entreaties, he had no longer power to deny; but unawares they had advanced to the entrance lawn, immediately before the castle; some tall flowering shrubs grew upon this spot, and just as Magdalena had turned to take her last farewell of her wretched lover, a slight rustling amongst the leaves alarmed them, and a figure seen indistinctly by the dim light of the stars, stood before them. It seemed to be enveloped in a large cloak, and had the appearance of a female; with a faint scream Magdalena threw herself into the protecting arms of Montaubrey.

"Oh, Miss, oh, my dear!" exclaimed the voice of Mrs. Dennis, "how could you terrify me so!—How could you stay so late! I feared a thousand things. I

could stay no longer in my room, and though I have not been out after dark these ten years, I was going to the alcove to look for you. For heaven's sake, come in directly; the servant's are at supper; in five minutes the doors will be all fastened, and every one will be retired for the night."

"Still, still, my Magdalena," said Montaubrey, "it is not too late; will not the presence of Mrs. Dennis give you courage? Oh, yet consent! Let us all go together!" "No, no, no," repeated Magdalena, "go, my dear friend! Go, instantly I conjure you! I will remember my promises, and, if possible, to-morrow night I will see you again!" She was now flying from him, but catching her hand, he pressed her for an instant to his heart, and in a voice stifled by contending emotions, exclaimed, "Farewell then, Magdalena!—Farewell, for ever!"—And rushing down the walk, was out of sight in a moment.

Magdalena thankful for the support of Mrs. Dennis's arm, hastened towards

the house; though the poor woman trembled so much that she herself required assistance. "The great hall doors are shut," she whispered, "we must pass through a little door which leads into a passage behind the servant's hall, and offices; in that passage there is a door which opens on a narrow staircase, connected with ours; through that way I came, for I found the hall doors fastened, and recollected that passage, which I have not seen for years;—follow me, and be silent!"—Magdalena obeyed, and having found the door, which was fortunately still unfastened, they opened it, and groped their way in total darkness, for the only light even in the middle of day which was afforded to this narrow and gloomy passage, came through loop-hole windows very high in the wall. They passed at the back of the servant's hall, and close by a door which opened from thence, beneath which a faint light streamed, and shewed that the servants were still assembled there, but so thick were the walls, and so heavy

the antique door, that scarcely the sound of their voices reached the ears of the wanderers. Oppressed by a thousand painful ideas, Magdalena, half unconsciously, followed Mrs. Dennis, her fear of discovery almost absorbed in sensations more overwhelming; her governess, however, trembled universally, and both were but too painfully sensible of their uncomfortable situation. A small lamp placed in a niche in the wall, now, in some measure dispelled the darkness by which they were surrounded, and shewed them a narrow winding stair, down which Mrs. Dennis hastily passed. Then pushing open a small low door, she exclaimed, "Thank heaven, this is our staircase! I could quickly and silently, there is a light in my room!"

She imperfectly advanced to the stairs which she imagined lay before her, but instantly fell, and Magdalena found herself precipitated down several steps from the top, of which she herself narrowly escaped falling also.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by W. Pople, Paternoster Row.