

~~MS. B. 1. 1. 1.~~
A TALE

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WITHOUT A TITLE:

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GIVE IT WHAT YOU PLEASE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

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ESSAYS ON THE ART OF BEING HAPPY, THE MICROCOSM, &c.

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TALE WITHOUT A TITLE.

CHAP. I.

The Vow of Allegiance.

Truth is inflexible in her principles; yet she sometimes kindly consents to wear a veil, lest her most piercing rays, too suddenly displayed, should dazzle the eyes of her weak votaries.

“PRAY, Monsieur,” said I, for the man had so much the appearance of a Frenchman, at least of the figure which, so denominated, dances in the vision of such old-fashioned Englishmen as compose our fraternity, that I was impelled

to bestow upon him that appellation—
“pray what is your motive for endeavouring to dissuade us from presenting to the world the anecdotes of which we are possessed?”

“Why, my very good and dear friend,” he replied—an address which still farther confirmed my idea of his Gallic origin, “I have a prodigious regard for your posthumous reputation, and cannot help saying that, inimitable as are the touches of your pen—(‘A Frenchman, beyond doubt!’ said I, in a mental soliloquy)—there is a certain acid in which it is sometimes dipped, that cuts as it goes down *the intellectual throat*, and creates you many bitter foes. If you *will* write—if I *cannot* prevail with you to sheath your quill, take my friendly advice in *this* point. Write soberly; leave every one to mend his own faults. Of what consequence is it to you, whether the rising generation do well or ill? Speak smoothly

smoothly to all, flatter all, and every one will praise your productions."

"No," said I, excited to indignation by such pusillanimity and dishonesty, "no, Sir, we do not write for fame, though we are not such cynics as to despise the good opinion of our contemporaries. Our first motive was emolument, accompanied with a wish by which it ought to have been preceded, that of aiding the cause of Morality, Christianity, and Piety. Our own amusement was an abettor not unattended to; but amusement only would not have determined us to spoil so many quires of paper.—Fame is such a phantom—such a breath of the moment, that a wise man will never make it a primary object of pursuit. Like aameleon, it changes its colour with the day, and nothing can fix it, till an author is beyond the reach of its effects."

My adviser, who had very unceremoniously obtruded himself into my apart-

ment, now seemed to be *at his wits' end*; but at length assuming an appearance of kindness and sincerity, he advanced such arguments in favour of *blandishment*, that I began to suspect his character; and, to silence him by an avowal of our design at large, talked to him in the following peremptory language.

“ I have condescended, Sir, to inform you of the extraordinary means by which we were furnished with materials to commence author; and, like authors in general, shall take the liberty of imagining from their conduct, not only the private conversations, but even the sentiments of our actors. For have we not on these occasions a right to be arbitrary? Are we not more absolutely master of the world before us, than any potentate, whose head was ever warmed by the sun's beams, ought to be of any tract of earth between the Poles? And pray where did we ever cast a shade upon virtue, or varnish a vice? When—ever oppress the oppressed,

or exalt the oppressor! When—ever pained the delicacy of an ingenuous mind, or deepened the pink upon the cheek of modesty?

“ Did we ever attempt to eclipse the dignity of a Monarch, whose character we revere, and for whose virtues we have even a filial affection?

“ No.

“ Did we ever, by the most distant allusion, depreciate the country in which he reigns beloved, and which, from an association of early ideas, we prefer to every other upon the habitable globe?

“ No.

“ Did we ever endeavour to weaken its Constitution, or to betray its interests?

“ No.

“ Did we ever undermine its instituted religion, or tarnish the brightness of its glory?

“ No.—And we defy the utmost stretch of either malice, or envy, or folly, three formidable opponents, to exhibit a line in

any of our productions which, by their most distant tendency, can invalidate the strength of our positive negative to the preceding interrogations.

“ Neither have we any existing originals for our portraits. If fancy decorate what may appear to us to be nature, and any man perceive himself resembled by the image, let him claim his likeness. We will not put a rein upon our imagination because there are knaves, and fools, and pedants in the world.

- “ All private slander we detest,
- “ We judge not of our neighbour's breast.
- “ Party and prejudice we hate,
- “ And write no libels on the State.
- “ Shall not our pages censure vice,
- “ Because a knave is over nice?
- “ And lest the guilty hear and dread,
- “ Shall not the decalogue be read?
- “ If we lash vice in gen'ral fiction,
- “ Is't we apply—or self-conviction?”

As I repeated the above lines from *the gentle bard*, I perceived the countenance of my visitor to undergo a striking alteration ;

ration; and turning my eye to that part of the room to which his was directed, observed an unusual brightness, in the midst of which, after a few moments, a lovely form was visible. My companion was dismayed, and the Divinity, for such it was, assuming a look of severity, said—"Thou thing without a name—descendant of Cowardice and Falseness! Policy is thy plea; dissimulation and deceit thy principles! Begone from my presence, and from the presence of this my faithful votary! Dare no more to aim at infusing into his mind thy pernicious precepts; for though vain will be the endeavour, a certain punishment awaits thy audacity if thou persist in the attempt after this warning."

At this denunciation the spectre, for such it now stood evinced, turned from the radiant being which pronounced it, and moved to the door, through which it seemed to pass, and was seen no more. I now raised my eyes to my deliverer

from the fiend; and from an instantaneous conviction, was sensible of standing in the presence of TRUTH, who smiled benignly upon me, and spoke to the following purpose; for her language, though perfectly intelligible to those she addresses, is too sublime to be rendered into that of any nation under heaven.

“ The reverence in which thou hast ever held my precepts, deserves my acknowledgment and patronage. *Nurtured in thy early years by my agents*, thou hast imbibed a love for my counsel, and under the attire of imagery, hast exerted thyself to promote my interest with thy species; and so just hast thou been—so impartial thy strictures, that thou hast not drawn, nor shalt thou ever draw, enmity upon thyself, but from those who are conscious of the vices, or of the wilful folly, which thou reprobatest. Every sincere lover of virtue will be thy friend: he will permit thy motive, to overbalance the faults of thy manner; giving due
applause

“applause to thy endeavour of promoting the great interests, and the best happiness of society.”

She spake—she looked divine. Mild radiance played around her brow—not dazzling, but delightful to the view. Pellucid were her flowing robes of snowy white, and on her head she wore a tiara. Perceiving me to seem surprised at seeing her arrayed in vestments, she spake once more.

“The beauties of my form and substance defy all censure ; but the full refulgence of my glory, all at once disclosed, would dazzle the weak sight of those whom most I wish to lead into my paths.—*Give milk to babes*, and when they stronger grow, give stronger meat—*Give truth to all*; but let my mildest rays first rest upon the eye, which, strengthened by beholding, soon will bear to see displayed my fullest blaze of brightness.”

She ceased. I prostrate fell, resolved her dictates to obey, and made my vow. Whatever, therefore, in the ensuing pages shall, by its plainness, pain the conscious mind, let TRUTH be blamed. The vow in view, we cannot temporize beyond the given limits, which are to dress, in Fiction's gay attire, the precepts of our patroness.

CHAP. II.

Conjectures and Preliminaries.

The greatest consequences frequently originate in most trifling causes.

THE manuscripts from which we collected the subsequent particulars, were entirely void of date: we therefore can only guess, from the appropriate characters of the individuals most conspicuous in the transactions at the era in which they were written; yet from that circumstance, a conjecture may be formed of its being previous to the memory of any existing creature, as it was a period in which there were dishonest lawyers,
B 6 immoral

immoral Clergy, and interested relations; when English merchants were considered as beings of a different species from nobility; when the affections of women were given to the highest bidder; when religion was worn as a mask, and piety in youth, though accompanied by every amiable quality, and adorned by loveliness of person, ridiculed by those amongst whom it ought to have been held in the highest estimation. If any of our readers can conjecture the time in which this extraordinary peculiarity of character prevailed in the British dominions, they may form an accurate idea of the period in which Mr Warburton, an East India merchant of considerable eminence, married Miss Harland, the only child of a gentleman who had acquired a handsome fortune in the iron trade.

Mr Warburton was calculated to promote the happiness of every one with whom he was connected, and his lady had all the qualifications requisite to
complete

complete his own. At the end of the first twelvemonth, Mrs. Warburton was delivered of a daughter, soon after which period Mr. Warburton was obliged to make a voyage to Madras, where his business detained him near three years. Upon his return he found his little Ellen a lovely child in her person, and giving promises of excellence in both disposition and understanding. In process of time the lady produced a son, when her husband was again summoned to the East Indies. A sister of his father's was left a widow at Bombay, with the sole disposal of a property to the amount of a hundred thousand pounds. This gentlewoman, though she was herself very illiterate, was a great admirer of wit; had a strong predilection for fine sounding names and high titles; but, above all, a violent attachment to riches and rich men, to indulge which, she subdued her other propensities, and, at the age of twenty, consented to be married to Mr. Cullum, a Nabob

a Nabob with a sordid mind, without any thing to recommend him to the lady's approbation but his gold. With him she lived a life of miserable affluence upwards of forty years; and upon his death sent for Mr. Warburton to regulate her affairs, promising to return with him to England, and to make one of his children her heir, as she was determined to raise a noble family to her maiden name, that of Cullum being held by her in high contempt.

After the second return of Mr. Warburton, nothing of more than common consequence occurred in his family for several years. Mrs. Cullum fixed herself in the neighbourhood of her nephew, who resided in a genteel part of London, and seemed much pleased with his lady, whom she had not before seen, having left England about a twelvemonth previous to the celebration of their nuptials.

In

In the period of sixteen years, Mr. Warburton was father to two sons and seven daughters, but only five of his children arrived to maturity; both his boys, and two of his girls, being carried off by infantile diseases. Ellen, the first-born, was eleven years older than her youngest surviving sister, who was named Mary; the second was Hannah; the third, Lydia; the fourth, Penelope.

And now, having given the necessary preliminaries of our tale, we will rest at a period where our readers likewise may pause, without an improper interruption to their ideas.

CHAP. III.

A Wedding—A Birth—Two Funerals—and a Dissertation upon Trifles.

If persons of low birth and fortune, suddenly raised to riches and honours, remember their origin, others forget it. If it be forgotten by themselves, it will be remembered by the world.

DISAPPOINTED in her intention of purchasing a title for a son of her nephew, Mrs. Cullum determined to unite her niece Ellen to a nobleman, who she projected should take the name of Warburton, and used great pains to select one who would accede to her proposals, but was
for

for a considerable time unsuccessful; at length chance, as it is termed, promoted her wishes more than any sedulity of her own. The air and water of Tunbridge were recommended, after a slight indisposition, to Miss Warburton, who at that place was seen with partiality by the Earl of Rushbrooke. Matters were soon in a train: his Lordship hesitated not to change his name, nor Mrs. Cullum to settle her fortune on Ellen; but in case *she* should die without heirs, it was to be divided, in equal proportions, between her other nieces.

Mrs. Cullum now saw herself the great aunt of a Countess, whose name was still Warburton, and this was her *summum bonum*. The young couple were very happy in each other, but their happiness continued only a short period; for Lord Rushbrooke received a fall from his horse, which fractured his scull, and in a few minutes occasioned his death, at the time of his Lady's confinement on the birth of her first child:

child: and the event being too abruptly communicated, a fever ensued, that terminated her existence before she had been three weeks a mother. The little orphan, which was a daughter, was named Laura Elizabeth, and was now the care of Mr. and Mrs. Warburton, Lord Rushbrooke having made a will soon after his marriage, which constituted the father of his Lady, for whom he had imbibed the high esteem his virtues merited, his sole executor.

The four surviving daughters of Mr. Warburton, the eldest of whom was now fifteen, the youngest eleven, saw their niece with envy, both on account of her fortune and title. The sound of Lady Laura disgusted them; and though they were given to understand that the marriage writings of her mother, in consideration of Mrs. Cullam's munificence, excluded her from any portion of her grandfather's property, yet she was much richer
than

than any one of them would be; and the thought rivetted their hatred.

The chief part of Lord Rushbrooke's estate was entailed upon the title; all he could dispose of, was about seven hundred a year, which, added to Mrs. Cullum's property, constituted a fortune of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds. Mr. Warburton's estate was considerably more than that; but then it was to be divided amongst four: and had it been four times doubled, it could not, in the estimation of his daughters, have compensated for the want of title.

As we wrote the word **TITLE**, we laid down the pen to ruminate on the wonderful advantages resulting from the privilege of being addressed by epithets superior to those of *Sir* and *Madam*; and feeling no small degree of chagrin at being debarred by partial Fortune from such splendid distinction, we uttered a peevish *Pish!* and indulged an inclination to lose the sence of our primeval *plebeianism* in

in the realms of that Monarch who frequently confers titular honours on those who sigh for the envied happiness which they confer. But we slept, and dreamed in vain. No coronet met our vision; no ribbon beamed upon our breast; no mitre graced our brow! We awoke, and found ourselves only simple sovereigns of our own domains; endued, indeed, with the power of ennobling others, but not with that of conferring titles of eminence upon ourselves.

Summoning our philosophy to enable us to endure our inferiority, and turning to our manuscript, we perceived a letter, apparently recently written, at our elbow. Its singular address was

From

From COMMON SENSE, Senior,
*Residing in the Dominions of His Majesty of
Britain,*

To COMMON SENSE, Junior,
*Sub-Governor on the Continent of North
America.*

“ MY DEAR SON,

“ You have so long resided in a country where titular honours are entirely disregarded, that you will at your return be puzzled duly to appreciate those airy distinctions to which the mightiest amongst us bow the head; and, indeed, they are in themselves so truly ridiculous, that in contemplating the reverence which is usually paid to those who claim them, I have caught myself in a fit of soliloquizing laughter. What, have I asked, should we think of the wisdom of those people who honoured individuals according to the names which
their

their parents chose to bestow upon them at their birth? Suppose a man to have been ushered into this world by the mighty sound of HOLOTHRUMBORIUM, and a woman by that of BOMBARDISTINIA, in consequence of which those with the names, and perchance with the qualities, of Numa, Cato, Dido, &c. shrink before them, should we not smile at the mockery of greatness assumed by these beings of many syllables? Doubtless we should.— Yet is—‘*your Honour!*’—‘*your Eminence!*’—‘*your Lordship!*’—or ‘*your Grace!*’—one whit, duly considered, less ridiculous? Certainly not; only the ideas we have been habituated to annex to them, mix with, and vitiate our judgment. When I have thought seriously on the subject, I have actually been astonished how beings possessed of a common portion of reason, can help feeling themselves ridiculous when they are addressed in such bombast language; much more that they can imagine themselves
elevated

elevated by phrases to which no meaning is annexed, and which are only used from habit.

“ You will, perhaps, imagine that I have imbibed the fashionable spirit of equality, which is said to be so rapidly infusing itself into the minds of the people in these kingdoms. If you do, you are mistaken. I have not. I know, and I teach others, that rich and poor, high and low, are positively requisite to the existence of every community; and whoever thinks otherwise, must be greatly deficient in that quantum of understanding allotted to the generality of the human race: but in all things under the sun there is a just medium. Happy are the people of that nation, the laws of which prescribe extremes.

“ I am, my dear son,

“ Your’s affectionately,

“ C. S.”

After

After duly wondering at the extraordinary appearance of this extraordinary letter, we began to animadvert upon its contents, when the clerk of our closet announced the Marquis of Highcastle, with whom we have the honour of being in habits of intimacy.

As we cannot deny having been in some degree biassed in our sentiments by a perusal of the preceding epistle, we were not disposed to receive our noble friend with that obsequious complaisance with which we had heretofore ushered him into our apartment; but the instant he appeared, our new resolves were shaken. His manner was so expressive of urbanity, his countenance of philanthropy, and his language of friendship, that our respect for the *Peer* still accompanied our regard
for

for the *man*; and having a high opinion of his judgment, we shewed him the letter, and desired his sentiments upon the subject.

After perusing the scrip with attention, he smilingly replied—"The manner in which this letter reached your hands is perhaps extraordinary, but that particular we will not now investigate. That the contents are consonant to common sense, cannot be disowned; but common sense in its crude state, and common sense polished or refined, exhibits, though the principle remains the same, somewhat a different appearance. It cannot be denied that the pride of mere title is not only contemptible, but ridiculous, and can only exist in a weak mind, on a recent creation. A long line of ennobled ancestry (allow me the boast of speaking from experience) will set a man *above* being proud of his quality, if his mind does not completely disgrace his degree.

That there must be different orders of individuals, the most *common* common sense must allow; and the sound of '*your Ladyship*,' to a woman born to the distinction, is not half so flattering to female vanity, as that of *Miss* to the daughter of a rising tradesman, after she has several years answered to the call of Molly.

“ A Bachelor of Law, Physic, or Divinity, who has taken a higher degree; a Lieutenant in the Army, promoted to the next rank; a London Merchant, knighted for presenting a City Address, would be as tenacious of the *Doctor*, the *Captain*, or the *Sir*, as a Duke of '*your Grace*;' a Prince of '*your Highness*;' or a King of '*your Majesty*.' Novelty, in all cases, will attach little minds, and produce instances as farcical as that which was exhibited by Lady —, when Mr. — was created a Baron, in ordering all their horse-cloths, rubbing-cloths, and dish-

'dish-cloths, to be marked with a coronet :''
upon which this truly great Peer broke
into a hearty fit of laughter, and recon-
vinced us that a man *may have* both rank
and rationality.

CHAP. IV.

*The Niece of Quality.—The envious Aunts.—
Paternal Advice —Deaths.—Marriages.—
And the Guardian.—A period of
Twelve Years.*

“The erroneous opinions which we form concerning happiness and misery, give rise to all the mistakes and dangerous passions that embroil our lives.”

THE exquisite beauty of the infant Lady was a theme of admiration with every one who beheld her, the aunts excepted; the *great* aunt holding her up as an idol of worship, which she constantly addressed and mentioned by the title, in its

utmost

utmost magnitude, of Lady Laura Elizabeth Warburton, while the sisters of her mother as invariably called her "*little Bet.*"

Miss Hannah, or as she was now denominated, Miss Warburton, was of a disposition particularly rancorous, with a vast deal of cunning, and a capability of veiling the most iniquitous intentions under the appearance of rectitude; and while her sisters permitted their malevolence to appear, she put on an air of kindness for her orphan niece, in the moment that she was projecting a thousand schemes for her destruction, scarce shrinking from the rising idea of accelerating her release from mortality.—Mr. Warburton, who was "*a man of many virtues,*" and of great penetration in other matters, was blinded, by parental prejudice, from perceiving the malignancy of his daughter's heart. He saw, indeed, that neither she nor her sisters appeared to have any real affection for the child,

c 3

which

which he attributed to a kind of trifling envy of the advantages she received from birth and fortune, that would subside when they were convinced she would not diminish their patrimony: but he was mistaken—their inveteracy was rivetted. The more beautiful, the more engaging the little Laura appeared, the more her aunts increased in hatred towards her, and all their wishes centered in her death.

“This little d-v-l,” would one of them say, “not only robs us of our share of Mrs. Cullum’s fortune, but will supplant us in the affection of both father and mother.”

“True,” would another reply; “they dote upon the brat as much as if she came from heaven, where I wish she now was.”

“A good wish,” says a third; “it would be almost charity to send her on the road, while she would be sure of a welcome reception at her journey’s end.”

At

At which they would all burst into a laugh, and the fourth would repeat a line from the fable of the rats in council—
“But who shall fasten on the bell?”

With such conversation as this, the four Misses frequently indulged themselves; and so often dwelt on the pleasure they should receive from her death, that from what ensued, it may fairly be presumed the familiarity of the idea of “sending her on the road to heaven,” though probably spoke as a piece of unmeaning wit, abated the horror that such a thought could not, at first, fail to create.

And is it not thus with every approach to vice? At first we tread fearfully in the path of error, for few are so hardened as to plunge rapidly into the commission of great crimes; then we turn round, and view the presented dangers with affright; perhaps retreat, and at some future period again venture to advance; the thought of danger lessens, till at length it
c 4
vanishes,

vanishes, and we trample without scruple on all the obstacles which mercy raises to oppose our progress.

“ My mother,” said Lydia once to her sister Mary, “ is as great a fool as my aunt Cullum, and dotes as much upon this little brute.”

“ This *Lady* you mean,” replied the other. “ *Lady Laura!* child!—LADY LAURA ELIZABETH WARBURTON!! Oh what a noble sound! What majestic syllables for our old crazy aunt to drivel over!”

“ Curse upon her *Ladyship!*” said the passionate Mary, worked to a fury by Lydia’s cool sarcasms; “ I hope this hooping-cough will give her a passport to the other world.”

“ Amen!”

“ Amen!” said Hannah and Penelope, as they at that instant entered the room; the first declaring she thought the little wretch had breathed her last five minutes back.

“ And

“ And may I die,” said Penelope, “ if Hannah did not squeeze out a tear !” At which they all laughed, and Hannah replied—“ Yes, because my father was present. I thought of my poor little white bitch who died with a bone in her throat, and the tear came readily enough ;” —when they all again laughed very heartily, and “ *Poor little Bet !*” from Miss Warburton, closed the conversation.

From the above specimen of the sentiments entertained by the aunts of Lady Laura, it may be conjectured that she was not likely to find her future situation a pleasant one ; but during the life of Mr. and Mrs. Warburton, they were restrained from an open avowal of their inveteracy, and Miss Warburton, as we before observed, assumed even the semblance of kindness.

As Lady Laura increased in age, she improved in every great and good quality. Her understanding was brilliant, her disposition sweetness itself ; her person and

manner elegant and fascinating: the winning softness, united with animation, which always appeared in her address, captivated at a first interview every beholder, upon whom she still continued, on an increased intimacy, to rise in excellence, which is not invariably the case with those who stamp an instantaneous impression. The mildness and diffidence of her appearance led every one to imagine she wished to be taught; while the sparkling intelligence of her eye evinced her being capable of teaching what it is requisite all her sex should understand.

“Lady Laura Elizabeth Warburton,” said Mrs. Cullum to her niece Hannah, “is a perfect model for every young person of quality. She is a great honour to our house.”

“Little Bet is a pretty girl enough,” replied Miss Warburton, carelessly; “but our house has honour enough without her.”

“*Little*

“ *Little Bet!*” repeated the old lady, with scorn. “What do you mean, young woman, by speaking with such indecent familiarity of the daughter of the Earl of Rushbrooke? Do you know, Miss, that she is greatly superior to yourself both in rank and fortune?”

By such imprudent distinctions, Mrs. Cullum rivetted the hatred of the Misses Warburton to the little orphan girl, who was the delight of both her grandfather and grandmother; but they were too good and wise to permit their partiality to be evident, being convinced that every expression of their affection would decrease that of their daughters.

When Lady Laura was about nine years of age, Mrs. Cullum, who was then very infirm, desired she might accompany her to a house she had taken in Windsor for an occasional residence. During her stay in that place, she wrote the following letter to Mr. Warburton, who had desired to hear from her frequently.

“ MY DEAR GRANDPAPA,

“ It is with a very great pleasure that I obey your command of often writing to you, because it is next to talking to you; and you are so good to your little Laura, that she would be very ungrateful not to love you dearly. My next letter shall be to my grandmamma, to whom I must write the same as I do to you; because you are both alike good to me, and because I love you both the same. My aunt Cullum says I must tell you that she cannot spare me yet. I wish she could; for though Windsor is a fine place, I like Bloomsbury-square much better: but, perhaps, that is because you and my grandmamma live there, for I verily think if you lived here, I should like Windsor better than London. But we never laugh here, for aunt Cullum is so grave and so stately, that I am afraid to speak; and she

she always calls me Lady Laura Elizabeth Warburton, which seems so strange—does it not, grandpapa, to be called by such a long name? I do not like to be Lady—I had rather by half be Laura, as you and grandmamma call me ; or little Bet, as my aunts say. But I am afraid you will think this is sad nonsense to write about.

“ I am very diligent—ask my aunt Cullum else—at my music and drawing ; and I am sure I could draw your picture, for I can see you when I shut my eyes. I love my geography dearly ; it is so pretty, you know, to find where every body lives ; and to think that some people stand upon their heads, and that we all turn round and round, is so funny. But I do not love work much ; I wish my governess would not let me sit so long at my needle : I verily think she kept me at it yesterday one whole half hour !

“ And now I think I will finish ; for I have not any thing more to say, only that I love every body, and I hope every body loves

loves me. Pray give my duty and my love too to my grandmamma, and my love to all my aunts, and remember me to poor Sal; and pray do not forget my myrtle-tree and my little bird; and give poor old Johnson something for me if he call before I go home, and I will give it you again.

“And now, my dear, dear grandpapa, I will subscribe myself,

“Your dutiful granddaughter,

“LAURA E. WARBURTON.”

This juvenile performance, which exhibits our little Lady in her native colours, gave much pleasure to Mr. Warburton, who perceived in the artless composition the goodness of her heart, and he replied to it as follows:

“MY

“ MY DEAR LITTLE LAURA,

“The cheerful obedience you shew to my injunctions, affords me much pleasure, as it evinces that readiness to oblige, which through every stage of life, particularly in the early ones, form one of the most amiable traits in the human character ; it is a foundation for every virtue—nevertheless, it is possible to carry it to excess. For instance, if we are required to do any thing that would detriment society, injure an individual, or be in any degree inconsistent with the duty we owe to ourselves, compliance is then not only a weakness, but a vice ; and a steady, a dignified refusal must be given and adhered to, without any consideration about displeasing the requester, who *ought* to feel a disappointment to expectations which, in the cases I have stated, must be improper, if not criminal : but
when

when we are asked a favour, the grant of which will only occasion a temporary inconvenience to ourselves, or deprive us of some trivial pleasure, the sacrifice becomes a duty to friendship, or good neighbourhood, and the desire of obliging rendered an amiable virtue. I think it requisite, my dear child, to endeavour to stamp upon your judgment proper sentiments respecting the propensity to please, as it is a quality which nature seems to have mixed with your vital powers, and which, as I have said in other words, will, if duly restricted, render you a blessing as well as an ornament to your species.—Your grandmother, who sees with pleasure every thing you do, is apprehensive I should guard you too strongly against this bias; but what I have said, if you give that attention to the subject which your mind is capable of affording it, will not have an improper effect. I only wish, my Laura, to secure you against falling
into

into the error of habitual, and perhaps criminal concessions.

“ To your aunt Cullum I request you to conduct yourself with all possible complaisance; first, on account of her years, and next, because you owe her much gratitude for the extreme solicitude she has ever shewn for your welfare. You judge perfectly right on the subject of titular distinctions. I have frequently wished you had been only Laura Warburton; at least, that the title of *Lady* had been suspended till your arrival at maturity: but so long as you hold it in its due estimation, so long it will be a perfectly harmless epithet.

“ Your grandmother sends you her blessing, and hopes you will incessantly remember that the situation in which it seems to be the intention of Providence you should be placed, will demand the performance of many duties from which the generality of people are, from their circumstances, exempt. She requires
that

that you will constantly pray to Him *who giveth all things, and without whom we are nothing*, that you may be endued with true Christian humility; not elevated by any outward advantages; willing to part with what you possess, to those who require assistance; not merely because you find a pleasure in so doing, but from a consideration that your abilities are expressly lent you for that purpose, and that, as it is your *duty* to dispense, it will consequently be criminal to withhold those means of benefiting society, of which you will probably be possessed.

“ Old Johnson called yesterday; he enquired for his young Lady. According to your desire, I gave him a crown, which I shall place to your account.

“ Your aunts all send their love to little Bet. Penelope went this morning to Gravesend with Lady Dilworth, who is going to Hamburgh to visit her son.

“ Your

“ Your bird and myrtle are attended to by little Sal, who says she hopes you will soon return to London.

“ Present our due remembrance to Mrs. Cullum. We think she will now find Bloomsbury-square agreeable.

“ There are several particulars in your letter which merit observation, but I will not now enlarge.

“ Give our compliments to your governess; and ever consider me, my dear little girl, as a parent most affectionately devoted to your best interest.

“ PHILIP WARBURTON.”

Under such a tutor as her grandfather, it would have been wonderful if the docile mind of Lady Laura had not been indelibly stamped with the most excellent impressions of which human nature is susceptible. After saying this, it would
be

be an anticlimax to observe that she was likewise endued with every exterior charm, and that the fascinating beauty of her face and form was a theme with every one who saw her, while she was totally unconscious of both her outward attractions, and internal excellence.

Thus lived the little Laura, beloved by every individual but the four daughters of Mr. Warburton (whose envy was sharpened by the progression of their niece's admirable qualities), till the death of her grandmother and aunt Cullum; after which events she began to experience affliction, as Miss Warburton, in whom the management of domestic affairs was then vested, had sufficient art to render her situation extremely irksome, without the observation of Mr. Warburton, to whom Laura was too noble to complain. For two or three years she was a silent sufferer; and the vivacity of her temper precluded all ideas of her being treated with unkindness, even from the

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the minds of those who were intimate in the family.

Mrs. Cullum constituted Mr. Warburton her sole executor, and trustee to her great-grand-niece, to whom (five thousand pounds to each of the Misses Warburton, and remembrances to her domestics excepted) she bequeathed the whole of her immense property, with an injunction to her nephew to establish his grand-daughter in Clarendon Castle (the mansion of her father, which, with the unentailed estate, had been settled on her mother), as soon as she arrived at the age of thirteen, with a retinue suitable to her quality and fortune. Whether Mr. Warburton would have complied with this request is uncertain, as he was carried off by a sudden stroke soon after Laura had reached her twelfth year, at which period Miss Warburton was twenty-seven, and Mary, her youngest sister, near twenty-three.

An intimate friend of Mr. Warburton's, whose name was Jervois, was joined in the executorship with the four sisters, upon whom, of course, the guardianship of Lady Laura devolved.

The gentleman above mentioned was possessed of eminent abilities, uncorrupt integrity, and a benevolent heart. His attention to the trust reposed in him was unremitted; and though Lady Laura's grief for the loss of her grandfather, of whom she was enthusiastically fond, was immoderate, Mr. Jervois amply supplied the loss in every particular respecting her fortune and education. Contrary to the wishes of her aunts, first-rate masters in every branch of *female* science continued to attend her, under whom her proficiency was almost unexampled. She danced, she sang, she played to admiration; the pencil she used with the utmost facility, and her skill in sketching likenesses was equal to that of our most celebrated artists. Her writing was swift and genteel; her style

style at once lively, delicate, and energetic. Of grammar and geography she was, at an early age, perfect mistress; and as her voice was one of the sweetest in the world, her reading was particularly just and melodious. But what more than any other quality recommended her to the love of those whose good opinion is most estimable, was her early and animated piety. For this she was greatly indebted to her grandfather and grandmother, whose principles were fixed and untainted. Mr. Warburton was a man of letters as well as commerce; he sought for truth with earnestness and sincerity; and after perusing much controversy on the subject, FOUND IT IN HIS OWN HEART.—It was *there* that the law was imprinted in indelible characters; it was *there* that Christianity shone in its purest lustre; it was *THERE* that his duty to his species and to his Creator was engraved in a language not to be misinterpreted. To his granddaughter he recommended a

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frequent

frequent perusal of the Sacred Writings, particularly of the ancient prophecies, and the testimony of the four Evangelists (not, however, excluding the other parts, which he thought she would better understand as her judgment strengthened); and often inculcated the practice of retiring from the bustle of life, and listening in silence and humility to “*the still, small voice.*”

Soon after the death of Mr. Warburton, Miss Lydia shewed symptoms of a decline, which increased so rapidly, that there was only six months between the funerals of the father and daughter.—During her illness her sisters were urgent with her to make a will; but she was so averse to all thoughts of dying, that the subject threw her into convulsions. They were therefore obliged to desist; and Lady Laura consequently shared Lydia's fortune with Miss Warburton, Penelope, and Mary—a circumstance which increased their inveteracy to their orphan niece,

but

but they were cautious to conceal it from Mr. Jervois.

In about two years after this event, the gentleman last mentioned, found it impossible to settle the affairs of his deceased friend to his satisfaction, without making a voyage to Madras; and some business of his own requiring his presence in that country, *he* likewise being an East India merchant, he resolved to conquer his dislike to the sea, and to sail with the next fleet, which he did: but before his departure saw Miss Warburton married to Mr. Catchpole, and Mary to Mr. Mullins. The gentlemen were neither of them favourites with Mr. Jervois; but as the ladies were evidently determined, he forbore to offer even his advice. Mr. and Mrs. Mullins removed to a house in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury Square, which Mr. and Mrs. Catchpole chose for their residence; Penelope and Lady Laura continuing in the family.

CHAP. V.

Clarendon Castle. — A Soliloquy. — Clarissa Melville. — Friendship ; — with a View of the West Indies — and a patient Wife rewarded.

“ The man who thinks lightly of the female sex in general, has either a corrupt heart, or an understanding which nothing can improve.”

FOR a short space of time Mrs. Catchpole treated her lovely niece with some show of affection, and often talked of her being established in Clarendon Castle upon the return of Mr. Jervois, Penelope agreeing to reside with her there as her chaperon.

Clarendon

Clarendon Castle was perhaps one of the most beautiful spots in the three kingdoms. With all the loveliness of the most romantic situation in the Principality of Wales, it had the advantage of being in a populous vicinity; several gentlemen's seats were scattered around, and the country was celebrated for hospitality and good neighbourhood. The Castle, which was not merely a nominal one, surrounded rather more than an acre of ground; its form a complete octagon.—At the corner of every tower was a window which filled the angular vacancy, and gave light to the passage that wound round the Castle between the front and interior rooms. Both within and without was a handsome balustrade, and at some distance from the building, which stood upon an eminence, was an encircling canal, supplied by a cataract from a prodigious high hill fronting the western tower, which at sun-rising dazzled the eye by its brilliancy, as it fell from one

height to another on a rocky surface. The ground within the Castle was beautifully diversified with gravel, grass, and plats of flowers, and was almost the only level within view; for all without was hill or vale, yet perfectly free from damp.—The gardens were extensive, and the most romantic ever beheld. One minute a wanderer would have been encompassed by the gayest parterres, and in a few steps have found himself in the midst of an Abyssinian forest, from whence, in divers places, he might see the walls, windows, and turrets of the Castle through the openings of the ivy, by which it was completely entwined. The windows, the only parts of the structure that had a modern appearance, were large, and in the Venetian form; yet not so light in architecture as to be inconsistent with the Gothic style of the building. They were originally very small, and a considerable height above the floors:—the father of
the

the late Lord Rushbrooke altered them to a more fashionable taste.

Such was Clarendon Castle and its environs, which Lady Laura with the greatest pleasure used to visit once in a year with her grandfather, who was always charmed with the rural beauty of the place. The last time he was there, which was just before his death, Mr. Jervois accompanied him; and as they were walking on the top of the walls, Mr. Warburton, after surveying the prospect around with evident adoration, broke into the following soliloquy.

—“ These are thy works, Parent of Good! Almighty Father! Universal King! Thy hand is seen in all that's visible!—Whatever we behold complete, shews the perfection of the architect; and what unfinished seems, proclaims design. The grand outlines are given, and MAN endued with skill and power to render all most beauteous and most useful;—lands to unite with barring seas between,

and by the navigator's art, to make the inhabitants of North and South poles neighbours.

“ Say, could not He who thus invested man, have perfected the work without his aid ! Would He have left aught for his forming hand, had He not willed it should be his employ or his amusement to cultivate, and prune, and smooth the surface of the teeming earth, which He had stored with every seed of future produce ? Who gave the wisdom, and who gave the means, but He who gave the whole ? Did man, from self-willed sapience, raise his art, and gather knowledge how to till the ground ? It follows next—who gave to man himself !

“ And can there be within this fair creation one nook or spot on which the Omniscient looks with pleasure more peculiar, or abhorrence ! Is *this*, or *that*, stored with his favourite sons ? Or *here*, or *there*, his presence more confessed ?—No ; He views all with equalized regard,
and

and wills the individual good of every creature. Nor *clime*, nor *race*, nor *sect*, nor aught peculiar to the *state* of man, attracts His favour, or precludes His love !”

Mr. Jervois often spoke in raptures on the circumstances of this period, in which he said Mr. Warburton seemed almost inspired, and Laura remembered it with such reverence, that she considered the place as nearly sacred ; no wonder, therefore, that she looked forward with delight to the time which was to put her into possession of such a situation. Already she formed a thousand benevolent plans, and dwelt with a rapture that pressed the crystalline fluid from her eye, on the happiness she should read in the countenances of those whom she meditated to remove from distress.

A letter which she wrote to the friend to whom from infancy she was fervently attached, but whom, as the family had of late resided on their estate in Barbadoes,

she had not seen for some time, will express the pure felicity which the contemplation of future beneficence afforded to her heart.

“Mr. Melville, my dear Clarissa, informs me that he sails to-morrow, and promises you shall attend him in his next voyage to England, which he thinks will be in eighteen months, at which time I hope I shall be fixed in Clarendon Castle.

“None but those capable of the purest and most fervent friendship, in which number it is my greatest pride to be reckoned, can form any idea of the exquisite pleasure I promise myself with you in that place, which I hope you never will leave till my negligent treatment gives you reason to believe yourself an unwelcome inhabitant. Shall I not then *always* be happy in your presence!—for can Laura Warburton ever treat Clarissa Melville
with

with neglect? ! Never, till she lose her sense of the delights of friendship.

“ My grandfather often and often told me that the fortune with which it was probable I should be invested, was not given me for myself alone, but that all who were in necessity, had claims upon it. And can I ever forget *his* injunctions? No; both his person and his precepts are ever present to my mind, and were I *not* convinced, as I firmly am, that distribution is a *duty*, the reverential affection I bear to his memory would impel me to pay implicit obedience to his opinion.

“ Come, my dear Clarissa, and teach your Laura to practise the precepts she has imbibed. Come and assist me to find objects fitted to receive the superabundance of my patrimony. Oh! how I shall delight to see smiles, instead of sorrow, in the faces of those modest and silent sufferers, which such as are called the great, too often pass by contemptuously!

ously ! And how happy will you be in advising and assisting me !

“ I told you in my last that my good Mr. Jervois had sailed for India. We are rather surprised at not having heard from him. I hope he is well, and that he will return at the destined period.

“ I leave it to your father to inform you of the marriages of my aunts, and of all the other matters of fact in which you are interested. It would be folly to write two or three sheets upon occurrences, which in two or three minutes he could communicate. Besides, one would not wish to deprive him of the pleasure which results from conveying intelligence, after a return from such a voyage.

“ You know my heart, Clarissa—you know it truly ; therefore present from *that* such remembrances to your brothers and sisters as are their due, and as they will accept, with the little box of toys and other trifles directed to your care. The two pieces of Indian manufacture you must

must wear, and excuse me for sending.—The patterns appeared so beautiful, that I could not forbear purchasing them; and not wanting them myself, should have been puzzled to dispose of them to my satisfaction, had I not presumed upon your acceptance. The locket I will not apologize for; I *know* that will be dear to you, and am happy in my belief.

“And now, my dearest friend—friend of my heart, adieu! But adieus are painful; I will therefore make no other addition to this, than the name of

“LAURA ELIZABETH WARBURTON.”

It may perhaps appear extraordinary that we have not given some previous account of the family of the Melvilles. The reason of our forbearance originated in the dignified friendship subsisting between Laura and Clarissa, which, though it commenced at an early period

of their lives, was of too much importance to be mentioned as a childish attachment. We chose, therefore, to postpone its introduction till we could usher it into these memoirs with due advantage.

Never were two human hearts more firmly, more *congenially* united, than those of our two amiable young friends. If one was in sorrow, the other sighed; if one was pleased, the other smiled; if one was ill, the other was in pain; what one knew, whether trivial or important, the other was told; neither could enjoy happiness, of which the other did not participate, nor was their grief unqualified when communicated:—in a few more words, their affection sprang from consent of minds, and friendship, in its genuine sense, inhabited their bosoms.

Mr. Melville was originally a gay man of fortune. At the age of twenty-five he married the only child of a gentleman, whose sole property lay in the West Indies.

His

His own estate was in England, where they lived several years in a magnificence that daily decreased their finances.— Mrs. Melville, in process of time mother to three sons and two daughters, wished to retrench unnecessary expences; but her husband disdained the advice, and continued to live in the same style till Mr. Melville, upon the death of his Lady's father, went to take possession of his property in Barbadoes; in which place he remained so much longer than was necessary, that Mrs. Melville grew alarmed, and writing to an old acquaintance on the subject of her husband's absence, received the piercing intelligence of his residing on the estate in high festivity, with a beautiful young woman of the name of Walton.

An affectionate wife, and a wife only, can conjecture what the sensations were which Mrs. Melville experienced on the receipt of this letter. She was a woman of piety, of great tenderness, and the truest

truest sensibility, yet possessed considerable fortitude; and, after writing to her husband on domestic affairs, without acknowledging that she had received any information on the subject, asked his excuse for permitting her solicitude for his return to dictate to her pen the ensuing lines.

“ ———Why then, fond, foolish heart, so sad!

“ Think not to pass uncloudedly thy days,

“ Though mated to the object of thy choice.

“ Delusive is the hope of joy entire,

“ While “pent beneath the moon.” Yet if on earth

“ True happiness can semblance find—if not

“ With wedded love, where dwells the wished-for bliss!

“ Be hushed, my soul!—be still—and calm thy tide,

“ Which rolls impetuous to sublimer joys

“ Than are on this side Heaven. So great thy gust

“ For happiness—so soft, so fond thy mind—

“ It might thy shipwreck prove, wert thou indulg’d

“ With what thy wishes lead to. Let patience

“ Be thy guide. Submissively receive the

“ Chequering ills of life; and if thou canst, look

“ Cheerful, though thy bosom bleeds. The truly

“ Tender heart must feel innumerable

“ Woes a harder ‘scapes—must feel, and hide them

“ Too, would it its master bind. Are his thoughts

“ Ruffled? Smile thou, and smooth them. Forget thy

“ Own, and mitigate his grief. Divided

“ Sorrow

- " Sorrow dies. Is he unkind? Be thou—hard
" Task!—still kinder. Invite him to unite
" His mind with thine, and shew him the bright view
" Of love with duty. And if by some gay fair,
" Who boasts of beauty, with a heart impure,
" He is decoyed—be patient still, nor call
" This hard advice. Her fondness soon shall cause
" His sure disgust. Compar'd with love that's chaste—
" How gross the wanton shews! Be not severe,
" Nor doubt of his return. Chide not, but sooth
" Him to confession, to make his reformation sure.
" Thus bids my reason, and my heart accords.
" For can resentment long with love unite?
" Alonzo, hear! And leave me not thus sad,
" While I for thee—and thee alone exist.
" Unkind! ungrateful man!—But I'll upbraid
" Thee not. Return, and take my pardon.
" Sole arbiter of my terrestrial fate!
" My happiness through life depends on thee.
" On thee!—Dear as I love thee—no; that I
" Recall. On nought beneath Omnipotence
" Itself—or *there*—or *here*—my bliss can e'er
" Depend. Yet that I love thee fervently
" It is my glory to confess. And if
" In this low world no more we meet, yet shall
" Bright hope give me anticipated joy,
" By whisp'ring that, in realms of light, *thy* bliss
" Will make a part of *mine*."
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The preceding little piece, which was written off hand upon the affecting intelligence, will shew what kind of education

Clarissa

Clarissa Melville probably received in the early part of her life. But education has not the same effect on different minds. Her elder sister, though taught by the same preceptress, was totally opposite to this friend of Lady Laura.

The exemplary conduct of Mrs. Melville had a happy effect. In a few weeks she saw her husband return; but his finances were so disordered, that his friends urged him to sell his English estate (that in Barbadoes being settled on his children) to pay the demands of his creditors. With this he at length complied; and upon his intimation that it would sometimes be necessary for him to inspect the plantations, Mrs. Melville proposed making Barbadoes their future residence, with which he agreed; and, three of the children excepted, the family soon sailed for the Western Isles. Clarissa, with two of her brothers, remained at schools near London to finish their education; that of the eldest son and daughter being completed,

completed, and the last born too young to commence his studies.

During the vacations, Clarissa, only one year older than Lady Laura, was constantly at Mr. Warburton's; and it was in these periods that the infant attachment ripened into the most perfect friendship. Never were two souls set in more complete unison. "As intimate as Lady Laura Warburton and Clarissa Melville," was a frequent phrase at the school, where the former was often a visitor. Yet these friends appeared totally different in the eyes of a common observer, Laura being extremely vivacious, and Clarissa rather to be denominated mild; but the principles of both were the same, and the same their sentiments upon every circumstance.

It has been observed that opposite tempers form the firmest connections.—In some respects we believe this to be true; but the opposition must not extend to *opinion*, either in material or trivial cases.

cases. Friends must *think*, though they do not always *act*, alike; different tempers, a different flow of animal spirits, will prevent a similar conduct, even where there is a similitude of sentiment. A steady mind acts in conformity with its judgment; a vivacious one warps judgment to its inclination. The last errs without due consideration; the other loses an opportunity by considering too long.

CHAP. VI.

*Orlando Addington.—A tyrannical Father.—
A Stepmother.—An envious Sister ; and
the Transportation of Clarissa.*

A rigorous exaction of duty destroys the pleasure of payment, which can only be delightful when voluntary.

THE period at length arrived which was to separate our lovely friends, who had so long been in the habit of communicating to each other every circumstance which affected them, that the separation was exquisitely painful to them both, and their only consolation was the hope of a future meeting, with the mutual promise of
of

of corresponding as frequently as possible.

When Clarissa left England, the happiness of seeing her mother, whom she loved with a truly filial affection, appeared in glowing colours. Already she imagined herself upon her knees before her, and was sensible of the maternal embrace, while tears of fondness bedewed the face of each. She then arranged the circumstances of intelligence with which she intended to amuse and surprise her mother, respecting her old acquaintance in England. What then must be the distress of the amiable girl, upon arriving at Barbadoes, to find not only this beloved mother dead, but her father married to Peggy Walton, an artful coquette, with not one quality to recommend her but beauty.

Soon after the mandate was issued for Clarissa's return, Mrs. Melville was suddenly taken ill, and died in three days; and Miss Walton, at the end of one month,

month, was united to the widower. Clarissa's answer to Lady Laura will still farther unfold the situation of the family. But it is proper to observe that, in addition to the particulars mentioned, her Ladyship had enclosed an elegant pocket-book, the private slip in which was furnished with bank-notes, as she was convinced Clarissa was sparingly supplied with the article of pocket-money.

The ensuing letter will probably suit the bias of some of our friend's sentiments.

“ Were I possessed of Peruvian riches, and surrounded by a profusion of what the world terms pleasures, instances of your friendship would, in my estimation, exceed all other temporal felicity :—what then must be the sensations they occasion in my present situation ?—a situation which I hardly wish

wish you to know, yet have not sufficient magnanimity to conceal. I afflict you to relieve myself. Can this be the produce of affection?—It is : for if I did not love you, I would not grieve you by communicating my sorrows.

“ But, my dear Laura, do not destroy the *equality* of our *congeniality*—do not make me so much to look up to you. I think I am oppressed by such a weight of obligation as I cannot return. But you will be angry with me, and indeed I am not pleased with myself.

“ Had you spared me the *pocket book*, the pressure would not have been so heavy.

“ Was it, *indeed*, my hand that guided my pen in the last sentence? I hope not, for I am ashamed of it. Were you as Clarissa Melville, and I in the situation of Laura Warburton, would I not pursue a similar conduct? I know nothing of my own heart, if I cannot reply in an unequivocal affirmative. Shall I then praise

my own sentiments in your actions?—I will not, but receive, without envying you the pleasure of conferring, the kindness of friendship—exalting myself, not on the gifts, but in the giver.—

“ My father arrived in safety last Saturday. His presence has a little relieved the gloom in our habitation, but not on the countenance of Mrs. Melville; she appears still melancholy, and impenetrably reserved. My sister alone, who is extremely unkind, and even harsh to me, is of her council. What can have induced her to fall in with the measures of our mother-in law, I cannot conjecture. I believe I am a particular object of detestation to both.

‘ It is my opinion,’ said Mrs. Melville to Fanny, yesterday after dinner, ‘ that Clary thinks herself handsome.’

‘ If she does,’ replied my sister, ‘ I think her *blind*.’

‘ In this instance,’ said I, ‘ you, sister, are right, and Mrs. Melville mistaken.

mistaken. Yet I am as handsome as I wish to be.'

'Or you would be very unreasonable,' said Edward, who you know always favours me. 'If you had only your eyes and complexion to boast, you would——'

'My dear brother,' interrupted I, 'spare me the effects of your kindness, of which I am truly sensible, without such instances of it as really distress me.'—On saying which, finding an officious tear springing to my eye, I arose to go; but, detained a moment by the hand of Edward, while even Robert looked concerned, I could not reach the bottom of the dining-room without hearing my father say—'Fanny, you are less kind to your sister than she is to you; and I am sure, my dear,'—to Mrs. Melville,—'she wishes to shew you all imaginable respect.'

'What have I said to offend her, Sir?' returned she haughtily. 'I only supposed she fancied herself a beauty:' at which instant the door closed after me,
when,

when, hearing the voice of Edward higher than the rest, I was apprehensive that the warmth of his temper would produce a quarrel; but the arrival of my father's friend, Major Addington, silenced the disputants.

"I give you this specimen of our *dis-harmony*, as it will at once convey our present situation, the cause of which remains to be explained.

"My mother, you know, was heiress to a large estate, which by marriage articles was settled on her children, with a double portion to her eldest son. The deeds are now said to be deficient in form, and Mrs. Melville presses my father to set them aside, that *her* children may share with the rest. Robert, whose temper you have often observed to be very morose, opposes what he calls the injustice of this demand, and says, had we one maternal relation, nobody would dare to propose such a measure. My sister coincides with Mrs. Melville, to the
VOL. I. E astonishment

astonishment of every one, as she is too much distinguished for an attachment to self-interest.—The native generosity of Edward renders him careless about pecuniary matters, and I am silent.

“ But to leave this subject for one in which your friend is more exclusively concerned, I must revert to the Major, who retired, as I have told you, from pique and disappointment, to his estate adjoining my father's, to which he has given the whimsical name of Captain's College. The Major lost his wife about two years back, and has no other family than his son Orlando, of whom he certainly is extremely fond; but the despotism of his temper, acquired, perhaps, from a long habit of commanding in the army, mixes such severity with his affection, as renders the situation of Mr. Addington very unpleasant. When I tell you that this young man is allowed to be genteel in person, elegant in manner, sweet in disposition, and brilliant in understanding,

understanding, you, my dear Laura, will want no other information respecting the subject in which I just now professed myself to be particularly concerned. Your conjectures, the idea once given, were ever beforehand with elucidation; and you are already convinced that your *Clarissa* has permitted esteem and gratitude to lead her into—I start, my dear friend, at the name of *love*, yet know no other expression, consistent with *truth*, that will denominate my regard for Orlando Addington.

“In my next I will give you the rise and progress of an attachment that I hesitate not to pronounce is mutual. In a few days he intends to solicit the approbation of *his* father and *mine* to our at present secret predilection, and has not, I think, any reason to apprehend a refusal from either.

“Clarendon Castle!”—Ah, my Laura! it grieves me to cast the least shadow over the lovely picture you have delineated.

ated. But should what to you I may own are my wishes, be completed, I should often, I hope very often, be your visiter, though not your constant resident.

“ The Major, who at his first settlement upon his estate commenced merchant, yesterday told Orlando that it would be requisite he should spend a considerable part of every year in England. This he communicated to me with a sparkling eye, as he well knew the idea of being with you would induce me to accompany him, should duty be superadded to inclination. He moreover suggested a probability of his connections in the mercantile line being so extended, as to render it necessary for one in the firm to reside in England entirely ; and that if it was my wish, he should certainly make that department his election.

“ Do you think I was not delighted with this prospect ! Do you believe I could assume a distant air, and repel the generosity

generosity of his determination, by affect-
edly saying—*‘it would be time enough to
talk of these circumstances some time hence.’*

Ah, Laura! Clarissa Melville was not
formed for what is deemed such prudence.
Her eye would betray, should her lips
deny, the emotion of her heart. A tear
started. Mr. Addington saw it, and
asked no other acknowledgment of his
acceptable proposal.

“I am here interrupted by a command
to appear in the breakfast-room; and, ex-
pecting the Captain to call for our letters
this morning, will conclude mine without
any other ceremony, than a request that
you will duly dispose of my affectionate
remembrance, and that you will ever
think of me as

“Your’s, most faithfully and fervently,

“CL. MELVILLE.”

The foregoing letter had not been delivered to Lady Laura more than fifteen days, the vessel having been detained by contrary winds, when she received another from her friend, of a very different tendency. Fanny Melville, who was altogether as unamiable as Clarissa was charming, had long formed an attachment to Orlando Addington; and the promise of her stepmother to promote her wishes, was the circumstance which chained Fanny to the interest of Mrs. Melville, in opposition to that of her brothers and sisters. Mr. Melville was entirely governed by his wife, who had sufficient art to compass every design she projected. Clarissa was her aversion, chiefly because she excelled in those graces of figure which she prided herself on possessing.

Mrs. Melville had entirely arranged the preliminaries of the union between Fanny and Orlando. The Major was delighted with the proposal of his friend; and telling his son he had an affair of importance to communicate,

communicate, carried him into his closet, where he expressed his wishes for an alliance with the Melvilles. Orlando, transported with these sentiments, candidly unfolded his situation with Clarissa, which instantly changed the scene. The face of the father exhibited the appearance of a gathering storm, and after an awful suspension, lightning issued from his eyes, and thunder from his tongue.

“ Sirrah ! how dare you besiege any fortress without my licence and command ! How dare you take upon yourself to make any advances ?—to regulate any motions within my garrison ! Do you know, Sir, that I am your Commander in Chief, your Captain, your Colonel, your General, all in one, and that you are nothing more than a subaltern puppy ? You dog ! you deserve to *drill*, and be *picketed*. But *march*, you scoundrel ! *march in a retrograde direction—withdraw your forces—raise the siege this moment*, or I will order you to be shot through the head without

a court-martial, and your trull shall be drummed out of her father's regiment!"

During this tyrannical speech, Mr. Addington continued silent, well knowing that when his father began to storm in martial language, no truce could be expected till his fire was exhausted. But his soul was undaunted; and when his father ceased speaking, he retired without uttering a syllable, though entirely unable to account for his anger.

Had the Major been left unbiassed, he would have been as well, if not better pleased with Clarissa than with Fanny for a daughter-in-law; but Mrs. Melville, who conducted the treaty, had poisoned his mind by representing the ladies in colours contrasted to their dispositions, exhibiting the youngest as a girl vain of her beauty, who, instead of endeavouring to render his life comfortable in the absence of his son, would never be easy without visitors and visiting, without continual amusements, and a round of expensive

expensive entertainments : whereas the other, who was several years older, was a domestic, managing woman ; would study *his* happiness equally with that of her husband, and would moreover have an addition to her fortune, from a considerable legacy left to her by a god-mother.

Had *not* Mrs. Melville given this varnish to Fanny, and prejudiced him against Clarissa, the Major would have been enraged with his son for daring to *capitulate*, as he termed it, without his previous permission. He now swore to disinherit, and drive him from the island, unless he would direct his battery to another fort ; telling him that it was Fanny, and not the *handsome minx*, that he had determined upon for a daughter-in-law.

With the above particulars Lady Laura was minutely made acquainted.

And now, without giving any more of his military invective, suffice it that the

Major, after having explained to his son, raised a storm in the family of Mr. Melville, who, persuaded by his wife, prohibited Clarissa from holding any correspondence with Mr. Addington. The lovers therefore agreed to an apparent submission ; but, immoveable in their affection, determined never to enter into engagements incompatible with the happiness of each other, which Mrs. Melville suspecting, prevailed with the Major to send his son to the Brazils, where he had concerns of some consequence.

After his departure, she dispatched Clarissa to Bermuda, in which place she had a sister of her own disposition, who lived with a Mr. Basil, and passed for his wife. Mrs. Basil, as she was called, had full instructions respecting Clarissa, who was sent off suddenly and secretly ; and it was given out that she herself had withdrawn from the protection of her family, having eloped, it was supposed, with a Captain of a ship, with whom, it
was

was insinuated, she had entered into a precipitate connection.

Soon after these events, her favourite brother Edward was seized with a fever, which in a few days terminated his existence; and the youngest child of the late Mrs. Melville died likewise at an early age, to the great joy of the stepmother, who gave a yearly increase to the family; with which information we will leave the West Indians, and return to our native island.

CHAP. VII.

*An Accident.—The Death of Penelope.—A
Lawyer.—A Contractor.—A forged
Will, and a Letter.*

Those fathers who initiate their children into their own vices, are accountable for the crimes of the third generation.

THE house of Mrs. Catchpole was still the residence of Lady Laura, who continued to anticipate the happiness of living with her beloved Clarissa at Clarendon Castle, till an accident happened in the family, which caused a total alteration in the arrangements.

Laura was invited one fine morning by
her

her aunt Penelope, to take an airing in a phaeton round Hyde Park; she accepted the invitation, which nearly proved fatal to both. The horses took fright, the carriage was overturned, and the ladies thrown out. Penelope received a contusion on her head, Lady Laura had her arm broken, and was otherwise very much bruised. The young Marquis of Capleston, who was riding in the Park at the time of the accident, flew to their assistance. A carriage was immediately procured, and he attended the ladies to Bloomsbury Square, where physicians and surgeons were instantly summoned. In the period of a few days Laura was pronounced to be in a state of convalescence; but Penelope grew worse, and died within the week.

As soon as the funeral was over, the distribution of the fortune of the deceased, who died intestate, was the subject of conversation between her two sisters and their respective partners, of whose characters we will here give a slight sketch.

Mr.

Mr. Richard Catchpole was descended from a country practitioner in law, whose maxim it was to get money *at any rate*. He had two other sons, Arnold and Humphrey—the first a Clergyman, the last a Captain of a trading vessel. Mr. Catchpole, the father, had the good luck, as he termed it, to get himself into the office of assistant to the steward of a Nobleman; and by vilifying his employer, who was very kind to him, procured his discharge with unmerited disgrace, and raised himself upon his ruin, being appointed to the stewardship as a reward for his treachery to his benefactor. In this situation he continued a considerable period, and enriched himself at the expence of his patron; when being detected in a capital piece of roguery, he was obliged to abscond, and never appeared till the death of the gentleman, whose confidence he had so notoriously abused. Some years after he established himself in London, and by the most subtle chicanery

nery wormed himself into offices of trust, being nominated executor and guardian to several people of large property, whose wealth, according to *his* arithmetic, soon became a part of his own. Mr. Catchpole instructed all his children in the same science; but his son Richard was more particularly initiated into the mysteries of the law.

The father of Mr. John Mullins was a contractor for the navy, in which department he accumulated immense wealth, at the expence of his reputation. His son John was his assistant and favourite; and, in despite of some younger brothers and several sisters, inherited the chief part of his father's property, notwithstanding its consisting principally in what is denominated personal estate.

At the death of Lydia, it was the desire of her surviving sisters to divide her fortune exclusive of Lady Laura; but Mr. Jervois was then in the kingdom, and crushed the inequitable idea in its infancy. They urged

urged that the marriage settlement of Laura's mother exempted her from any share of their father's property, and were unwilling to allow her any right to contingent advantages. However, as we before mentioned, they were obliged to submit, and Laura received her due proportion of Lydia's fortune. We revive the recollection of this circumstance, that we may account for the acrimony of their sentiments on the prospect of Lady Laura's being again a sharer of the paternal property.

"Is there no way," asked Mrs. Mullins, "to exclude this little d-v-l, who lives to our injury, from robbing us of our inheritance?"

"None, Madam, none," replied the crafty Catchpole. "Laura Warburton has a *legal*, though not an *equitable* title to whatever comes by *collateral* contingency to you and your sister."

Catchpole, who had a plan in embryo to defraud the niece of his wife, wanted

to inflame the mind of Mary, without appearing to enter too hastily into her views. On most occasions the law was his Gospel; but when it better suited his purpose, he held up the Gospel as his law. Hence his frequent changes upon the words equity and legality, giving first to one, then to the other, a decided preference.

“Lady Laura,” said Mr. Mullins, “does not at present seem to understand the value of property. I dare say she might easily be persuaded to sign a renunciation.”

“No doubt of that,” replied Mrs. Catchpole; “but Mr. Jervois will soon be coming home, and what would he—”

“Mr. Jervois’s interference,” interrupted her husband, “would not be of consequence, were Lady Laura of age to dispossess herself; but were Mr. Jervois *not* to take the matter up, her husband, should she marry before the age of twenty-one, might come upon us. There is no way,

way, my good brother—no method, my dear sister, to invest us with what is questionless our equitable property, unless we could make—pho! find,” said he with a smile, as if he had made a mistake, “a will of Miss Penelope’s.”

The three auditors, whose hearts were cultivated to receive the first indications of fraudulence, immediately imbibed the meaning of the smile in its fullest extent. The idea expanded, and Penelope’s patrimony was in imagination divided between them. A silence ensued; for some moments they looked upon each other with countenances composed of divers sentiments; the prevailing one—complaisancy.

“Why, to be sure,” at length uttered Mrs. Catchpole, “wills are not very hard things to *make*; and as to the equity of the thing, Mary and I both know what Penelope’s wishes were.”

“To be sure we do,” replied Mrs. Mullins. “Did she not in that short
lucid

lucid interval, the only one she had after the accident, lament to both Mr. Arnold Catchpole and Doctor Lettsome, that she had not settled her worldly affairs? And what was that but expressing her sorrow that her fortune should be disposed of, according to the direction of the law?"

"A very just observation, my good sister," answered Mr. Catchpole; "and had she not mentioned the circumstance in the hearing of the Doctor, all might have been managed easily enough, for my *brother* is a Minister of the Gospel, and the *Gospel* is his law; therefore persuaded, as upon a proper representation of the business he immediately would be, of the perfect *equity* of the thing, he would not scruple—nay his *conscience*, which he always abides by, would *impel* him to assist our proper, our laudable, because *just*, undertaking. With regard to the Doctor, he is a man of a peculiar mode of thinking, and will be so far from aiding us in the affair, that he would be active
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in frustrating our design. I could wish he had not heard the words of our dear departed relation."

"But as he did not see her for two days previous to her decease," said Mrs. Catchpole, "may it not be presumed she made a will in that period?"

"And was that the case?" asked her husband.

"Certainly. Soon after you and Mr. Mullins set off for Ingatestone, the Doctor came to inform me that he was sent for to the wife of a poor Clergyman near St. Albans, from whom, by the bye, he will never be able to get a shilling; and that if any alteration appeared, it was his wish to be sent to express at that place."

"And when did he return?"

"About half an hour after she breathed her last."

"Did he ask any questions about her departure?"

"No,

“No, he did not alight; nor has he been here since.”

“Then all is safe, and we have only to consult upon an equitable distribution of her property.”

The preceding dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Catchpole quieted the apprehensions of the interested couples; and in reply to the last assertion of the *equitable* gentleman, Mr. Mullins said—
“There cannot be much need of consultation, brother. Who has any right to her money but ourselves?”

“We certainly, my dear friend, have a *right* to *all*, or this consultation should not have had an advocate in me: but there is such a thing as *prudence*, brother—as *policy*. Miss Penelope Warburton shared ten thousand pounds of her sister Lydia’s fortune, which, added to the forty thousand she inherited from her father, and her accumulations since his death, makes her property upwards of fifty thousand pounds. Now, no lady
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of fifty thousand pounds would be so *ungenteel* as not to give some few legacies to servants, &c. and *Lady Laura* must be *mentioned*, to make the thing *feasible*; besides which, I think it would stamp *authority* upon the 'proceeding, to give *something* to the *Magdalen Chapel*, an institution, it may be said, that she always greatly admired; and a sum to the overseers of the parish, to be distributed amongst a stated number of poor housekeepers. *Lady Laura* cannot with decency be named for less than five hundred guineas, and five hundred more would answer the rest of my proposals in a handsome, plausible manner."

"A thousand guineas, Sir! Would you throw away a thousand guineas, merely to make the thing look handsome!" asked the more *meanly* avaricious Mullins, who had been educated in the habits of saving farthings, which the bolder roguery of *Catchpole's* father had
 appeared

appeared to despise, and his well-tutored son accordingly replied—

“ My dear Sir, consider the alternative! Is it not good policy to give one thousand, in order to save near twenty? I grant that your maxims respecting small things ought generally to be attended to; but where economy is *dangerous*, we must prefer *liberality*.”

Mullins still grudged the thousand guineas, but he was over-ruled, and the items were settled; but Mrs. Catchpole asked if it would not be prudent to name a present for the Doctor. Her husband said—“ No, let us keep him at a distance. Money has no charms for *him*, and it might lead him to suspect our management.”

“ Well then, brother,” said Mrs. Mullins, “ you will make this will immediately; but who is to witness it?”

“ Oh! that is a point easily to be managed. I could procure half a dozen
sufficient

sufficient attestators in half an hour, were so many requisite."

"Or I could supply you," said Mr. Mullins. "But you will not write the will yourself?"

"Not in my usual hand," replied the Lawyer. "Poor Tom Daken, who, luckily for our purpose, was found dead yesterday morning, will not prosecute me for forgery, if upon this occasion I make free with his characters and signature."

"Poor Tom!" exclaimed his Lady, with a smile. "We found him very useful when alive; but little did I think he would be still more serviceable after death!"

"I should have imagined," said Mrs. Mullins, "that it would be better to have it written by a stranger, and was thinking of those gentlemen, one from Suffolk, the other from Staffordshire, who came to town to attend Sir James Haylen's trial."

Mr.

“ Mr. Kelby and Mr. Barrett, you mean,” replied Mr. Catchpole. “ Of all men in the world, Madam, the most unfit for our purpose. The pleasantness of their manner leads you into a mistake. I know the gentlemen well. Quick in perception, and inflexible in what is termed principle, they would either of them blow us up in a second. No, no, these are not people to suit our present circumstances: I would as readily send for Lord Thurlow himself!”

“ Do as you please, Sir,” said the Contractor. “ You certainly must be the best judge in these affairs.”

The conference ended. The deed was executed, and the sisters divided the fortune of the deceased Penelope.

After this transaction, the conversation of Lady Laura's establishment at Clarendon Castle was renewed; but a difficulty arose respecting a proper person to reside with her, the office of chaperon having been rendered vacant by the death of

Penelope. Miss Melville, indeed, was expected ; but she was too young to protect the reputation of her friend. However, Laura, rather against the advice of Mr. Catchpole, wrote to press her coming to England as speedily as possible. The letter was opened by Fanny, who with the concurrence of Mrs. Melville, replied to it as follows :—

“ MADAM,

“ In great grief of heart at being obliged to convey the afflicting intelligence, I am necessitated to inform you that we lost my sister Clary just before the receipt of your very flattering letter, directed to her.

“ I will not make any comments on this distressing event, but leave it to your own feelings to conjecture the sorrow it has occasioned to all our family.

“ I am,

“ I am, Madam, with all due acknowledgment for your friendly proposal,

“ Your very obedient servant,

“ FRANCES MELVILLE.”

This letter conveyed to Lady Laura a conviction of the death of her beloved friend. It was Mrs. Melville's policy that dictated to Fanny's pen the word *lost*, which, should elucidation become necessary, could be construed into a sense of elopement. Had Fanny been married to Orlando, Lady Laura might have been happy in the presence of her friend; but till the completion of that projected event, Clarissa's seclusion was deemed absolutely necessary: more especially as Laura had intimated in her letter a wish to see her, united to the man of her choice, at the Castle.

It would be almost impossible to convey by description an idea of the extreme grief which seized the heart of Lady Laura, upon the information apparent in the letter of Fanny Melville; it seemed as if she "was going to be plunged into an almost boundless ocean of sorrow." We use her own expression. Every prospect she had viewed with fondness, was vanished, and the most dreary scene presented to her imagination. To the power of love her young mind was a stranger; the charms of friendship seemed to constitute every thing that was dear in existence. Clarissa Melville was gone, and Laura Warburton wandered the seeming shade of her former self. The effect upon her constitution was obvious;—physicians prescribed her removal into country air; in consequence of which, Mr. and Mrs. Catchpole accompanied her to Clarendon Castle.

CHAP. VIII.

A villanous Conspiracy, with consequent Forgeries; interspersed with obsolete Opinions.

One vice draws another in its chain. Happy are those who snap the first link, and thereby break the fatal connection.

ABOUT the period at which we finished our last chapter, serious alarms began to be entertained about Mr. Jervois, of whom no account had been received since he left England; but his friends were soon relieved from *suspense*, by information of the loss of the ship, with all its crew, in which he went to India. This news, first received by a Merchant in London, was

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confirmed

confirmed by an official account from the Captain of the Herald, who saw the Argyle sink at the distance of half a league, without being able to afford her the smallest assistance. This was a fresh stroke to Lady Laura, whose health seemed gradually to decline.

We have mentioned that the Marquis of Capleston assisted Miss Warburton and her niece when the accident happened in Hyde Park, at which time the beauty of our heroine raised his admiration, which an enquiry into her circumstances did not decrease. He therefore addressed a letter to Mrs. Catchpole, requesting permission to wait upon her lovely niece, which the lady answered by telling him that Lady Laura would not on any account listen to professions of attachment at so early an age, and entreated his Lordship to suppress all ideas of such a connection, as other prospects were entertained for the young lady at a future period.

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The Marquis, by no means satisfied with this reply, hazarded an address to Laura herself, whom he hoped to dazzle by the brilliancy of his title and connections; but the crisis was unfavourable to love. Her mind was enveloped by a cloud, which she could neither dissipate nor penetrate. The beauties of Clarendon presented in lively colours the image of her grandfather, and in every avenue she saw Clarissa Melville. Mr. Jervois likewise, whom next to the two last mentioned, she loved and revered, arose continually to her remembrance, and increased the weight upon her spirits.

Under what sect shall we be enrolled, if we profess our sacred observance of the presentiments which frequently press upon the minds of mortals? Those who would make us mere machines, affirm it to be the state of our health which presents the cloudy or enlivening prospect. How then comes it to pass that, in the midst of gaiety and mirth, without the slightest

indisposition, either corporeal or mental, we are often sensible of approaching heaviness? And, what is perhaps still more extraordinary, that when surrounded by distress, which we cannot remove—when increasing woes threaten to overwhelm us, and constitution gives way to conflicts of the mind, we are cheered by a gleam through the gloomy atmosphere which encircles us, and hope, annihilated by reason, is new born from its rays?

We cannot but believe there are intellectual beings, of different orders, superior to ourselves, and that they have all their offices allotted by the Great Supreme. Is it then inconsistent with simple reason to suppose that such a creature as man, whose conscious faculties evince his consequence, and who is environed by dangers he has not power to avert, should be an object of attention to some of these “Ministering Spirits,” whose obedience, benevolence, charity, mercy,

mèrey, ever in progress, because ever finite, are exercised and increased by their constant guardianship of the inhabitants of this lower creation? And is it not highly probable that the beings chosen for this office, are those who, having passed their first probation on this terrestrial globe, are experimentally endued with skill to superintend the temporal concerns of their quondam fellows, for whom the remembrance of their own former failings excite their tenderest compassion, which, superadded to their universal love, renders their task at once important and delightful?—We ourselves have experienced this silent monition so frequently, and have so often been assured of the experience of others, that we hesitate not to affirm it might universally be witnessed, would every one pay that attention to it, which the pride of what is falsely termed *philosophy* refuses to every thing above the power of its solution.

The period, as has been mentioned, in which Lady Laura received the letter of the Marquis of Capleston, was unpropitious to the cause of love. She therefore hesitated not to carry it immediately to Mrs. Catchpole, and request her returning an answer, with a decided negative to his proposal.

After this transaction, Mr. Catchpole appeared absorbed in contemplation. He was continually walking by himself in some sequestered grove or avenue, and scarce ever spoke to any body. In a few days his lady received a letter from Mrs. Mullins, which, amongst other articles of intelligence, mentioned the death of the Rector of St. George's, the parish Church of Bloomsbury, which benefice was in the gift of the King. The deceased Rector, who had been particularly attached to Mr. Warburton, had himself always done the duty of the Church; but the new incumbent, a gentleman of the name of Grey, to whom it had long been

been promised, intended to put in a Curate.

This was the account from Mrs. Mullins.

“ And is the old Rector dead?—and does Grey succeed him? Then the affair is concluded,” cries Catchpole, with an enlivened countenance; and immediately ordering his carriage to be got in readiness, set off in half an hour for London, when, summoning his brother Arnold, who had purchased a living within a few miles of the metropolis, they waited upon Mr. Grey, and secured to the Reverend Mr. Catchpole the Curacy of St. George’s. That business settled, the reverend gentleman returned home, and the lawyer, with Mr. and Mrs. Mullins, were conveyed to Clarendon Castle.

Not to carry our readers through an odious detail of the subtle workings of villany, suffice it that the total ruin of the beautiful and unoffending Lady Laura Warburton was in a short space of time

resolved upon by Mr. and Mrs. Catchpole, and Mr. and Mrs. Mullins; the three last coinciding with the proposal of the first, in terms expressive of the highest applause. The design which was to produce this horrible effect, was far from being complicated. It was simply to prove that the daughter of Mr. Warburton was never married to the Earl of Rushbrooke; that the father and mother, indeed, as well as Mrs. Cullum, were made to believe the ceremony had been performed at Tunbridge; but that the truth of the story was, that the young lady, desperately in love with his Lordship, who disdained the shackles of matrimony, had agreed to live with him upon his own terms. It was a strong wish of the aunts to retain Clarendon Castle, but that was impossible; as the non-marriage of Lord and Lady Rushbrooke must render that estate the property of his heirs at law. On this occasion the policy of Catchpole, and the avarice of Mullins, were again in contest;

contest; but the former carried every thing before him. He had well digested his plan, having long had it in contemplation; and the moment his brother was secure in the office which gave him possession of the Bloomsbury parish-register, he entered upon his preconcerted measures.

For the honour of the Clergy, we will not examine into the confidence which Richard reposed in Arnold Catchpole.— Let it be imagined that he was not in the depth of the secret; yet it cannot be denied that the apprehension of an attestation from the register appearing to render his scheme abortive, never again obtruded on the lawyer's idea.

Mrs. Catchpole, who it may be recollected was only a girl when Lord Rushbrooke married her sister, remembered that Mrs. Cullum wished to have had the ceremony performed at her house; but that Mr. Warburton insisted upon going to Church, and that he and Mrs. Cullum, she

she knew not who else, were present at the marriage.

Mrs. Mullins, still younger, recollected but little of the circumstance, as in consequence of the death of the parties, it had never been made a subject of conversation; therefore it was highly probable that Lady Laura herself did not remember to have heard where, or in whose presence, her mother was married.

The writings respecting the affairs of the Warburton family were, at the departure of Mr. Jervois, secured in a strong iron chest at the house in Bloomsbury Square, and by universal consent sealed with several seals. Upon confirmation of the death of the gentleman above mentioned, these seals were broken, and some of the writings, about which the sisters had expressed different opinions, perused by Mr. Catchpole.

Had Lady Laura had one friend remaining, her relations would not have dared to harbour a thought to her injury; but

but the loss of her guardian left her destitute, as her father's family, who thought the late Earl had dishonoured his lineage by uniting himself to trade, never condescended to any acquaintance with his daughter.

The two gentlemen and their ladies were now employed in writing several letters that were to be produced in the course of the fraudulent procedure, to all of which they gave the proper marks of age, by sealing, rumpling, and a little soiling their outsides. The style and subject of these forgeries were varied with the most consummate art. We have many of them now by us, which we read with equal astonishment and indignation. One of them appears to have been written by Lord Rushbrooke to a supposed friend of his, then abroad, of which we will here give a transcript.

“Faith, my dear Frank, I am half sorry at having drawn this lovely girl from
from

from the path of rectitude. She is now far advanced in pregnancy; and under other circumstances I should anticipate the delight of being a father. Yet what can be done at this crisis? She cannot be moved from the house of her parents, where she is to continue till after her confinement, or I verily believe I should be almost tempted to conquer my dislike to these fetters of priestcraft, and give my Ellen a right to my title. Yet the state is hateful to me. If she brings me a girl, my regrets will not be so strong; but if a boy stares me in the face, I shall run wild; because I so faithfully love Miss Warburton, that I am unalterably resolved never to marry any other woman: and how could I endure, should I solemnize upon her recovery, that my dear first-born should be deprived of my title and estate! Upon my soul, Frank! I have made a most cursed hand of this affair, with a girl, too, whose beauty, character, fortune, every thing but birth, merit any distinction to which I could elevate

elevate her. Yet, to be for ever bound!—aye, there's the rub!

“ You will think I have lost my reason. At times I think so myself. Poor old Warburton too! I have a great respect for that good man, and hate myself for having deceived him, which without your assistance (I say it to load you with some of my burthen), I never could have done, at least not with respect to my change of name. I was thinking the other day of the possibility (as there is no one privy to the deception but yourself) of bribing the Parson of the Church at Tunbridge, where you know it is supposed we were married, to solemnize the nuptials, and antedate the register. If I continue in the sentiments I now entertain, I would freely give a thousand pounds for his compliance. And why should he refuse? The deed would be worthy of his function. I should not be so uneasy on this subject, as I doubt not your everlasting secrecy, were I not apprehensive

apprehensive that scrutinizing, avaricious rascal, Bob Clarendon, who, if I die without lawful issue, must inevitably inherit my title and estate, has imbibed some suspicion of our non marriage.

“ Excuse my plaguing you so long with my own concerns. My soul is oppressed, and I must relieve it by breathing my vexation to the only man in existence whom I dare trust.

“ Your old friend Holderness decamped last week with his Banker’s wife. The affair is certain to produce fatal consequences.

“ Pretty Miss Catherine Waterman is married to her dancing-master, and the Knight swears to disinherit her ; so that she must probably dance for her future livelihood.

“ Johnson has wedded the widow at last. The bait was a legacy of five thousand from her uncle, the iron-monger.

“ I am

* * * * *

" I am sent for to Bloomsbury Square:

* * * * *

" Frank, give me joy ! But I have it. My Ellen has produced a girl. We have named her Laura Elizabeth, to please the great-aunt Cullum. She is beautiful as an angel, and revives my regrets ; for when I smile upon her, I think *she looks* me reproach for being illegitimate.

" Let me hear something of you soon, and believe me, cordially your's,
" RUSHBROOKE."

From the natural style of the fabricated letter, it was impossible for the poor Laura, not then quite sixteen, to detect, or even to suspect, the treacherous league her plotting relations had entered into against her. Several other letters were equally artful and detestable : the purport of them may be collected from their effect.

effect. To elucidate one part of their proceedings, it is necessary to observe that the Bob Clarendon, mentioned in the foregoing forgery, inherited the title and estate of Lord Rushbrooke, which he enjoyed eight years, leaving an only son, then thirteen, who of course, as Lady Laura's father had at this crisis been dead near sixteen years, was just of age.

After the proceedings had been properly arranged, a messenger arrived at the gates of the Castle, demanding to speak with Mr. Catchpole, who, as had been concerted, was seated with the ladies in the drawing-room, with his foot upon a stool, under pretence of having sprained his ankle. The messenger was therefore ordered to attend Mr. Catchpole, who he was informed could not walk without pain. When he appeared, he assumed a solemn air, and said he was deputed to wait on the guardians of Laura Elizabeth Warburton, by command of the present Earl of Rushbrooke, who had now completed

pleted his twenty-first year ; that he had brought a letter from that nobleman, but presumed his business was too important to be discussed before the ladies.

Catchpole affected great surprise, and with much apology asked Mrs. Catchpole, Mrs. Mullins, and Lady Laura to be so obliging as to step into the next room, from whence, in about an hour's time, they were again summoned into the drawing-room by Mr. Mullins ; and after abundant preparation, and assurance of protection from both the gentlemen, should Lord Rushbrooke's claim be well-founded, all which infused into the trembling Laura the greatest surprise and apprehension, Catchpole asked his wife if she remembered any circumstances relative to the marriage of her late sister, the Countess of Rushbrooke.

The lady, with her eyes enlarged, and as if out of breath with wonder, said—no, she was very young when that event
took

took place: all she knew of the circumstance was, that she was married at Tunbridge.

“*At Tunbridge!*” repeated her husband, with an expression of concern, looking upon Mr. Mullins with a melancholy air, and shaking his head.

“I fear, I fear,” exclaimed Mr. Mullins, “the case is too clear! What can be done!”

“Do not let us conclude too hastily!” said Mr. Catchpole with a deep sigh; “perhaps *Mrs. Mullins* can assist our endeavours. Do you, Madam, remember any thing of your sister’s marriage?”

“I, Sir! Bless me, not the least! I was, you know, several years still younger, and never in my life, that I can recollect, heard the circumstance mentioned.”

“Did you, my dear Laura,” asked the artful gentleman, “never hear your good grandfather, grandmother, or aunt Cullum

talk about the wedding of your mother? Recollect yourself, my dear, and do not be discomposed. Small lights may be of service in arduous cases."

The trembling girl, still unable to comprehend the tenor of the conversation, replied, with wonder and affright—

"No, indeed, that I can remember; and yet I think——But what can all this mean?" and burst into tears.

After much soothing, many promises of protection, and other empty blandishments, Catchpole unfolded the business of the messenger, and read to the almost fainting Laura the following composition :—

“ THE EARL OF RUSHBROOKE

TO

“ RICHARD CATCHPOLE, ESQ;

“ SENIOR SURVIVING GUARDIAN,

“ *In Right of his Wife,*

“ TO LAURA ELIZABETH WARBURTON,

“ *Supposititious Daughter to Frederic,*

“ FIFTH EARL OF RUSHBROOKE,

“ *And rightful Owner of Clarendon Castle.*

“ SIR,

“ Soon after the death of the Nobleman from whom my late father inherited his title, an intimation was given in an anonymous letter, that the report of his having contracted a marriage with Ellen, daughter of the late Mr. Warburton, was entirely void, and without foundation, he having only engaged himself to her by a temporary connexion. In consequence of this intelligence, my father, as it was incumbent upon him so to do, employed secret means to investigate the truth

truth of an affair so important in its consequences to both *our* family and *your's*; but the distant residence of Mr. Wimpole, the friend and confidant of Lord Rushbrooke, rendered it impossible to collect sufficient proof for several years. At length every thing was arranged for the proper commencement of a suit in Chancery, at which juncture my father was taken ill, and died. I was then only thirteen years of age. Lord Abercorn, my mother's brother, was my guardian; who, being a peaceable, and indeed an indolent man, suffered the business to lay dormant, saying it would be soon enough, as I could at any period demand the arrearage, to revive it upon my arrival at adulthood. That period, Sir, is now past, and JUSTICE *impels* me to address the guardians of Laura Elizabeth Warburton on the subject; which, that I may spare the delicacy of the family, I chuse to do in this private manner, leaving it to the option of those individuals most concerned, whether it

shall or not be a public transaction—my probable, though not legal relationship to the young lady—the respectability of the family of her mother (on whose *inexpedient* conduct I leave it to others to comment)—and the amiable character of *herself*, combining to urge my treating her with all the tenderness the case will admit; for which reason, contrary to the advice of my lawyer, I enclose you a copy of a few of the many evidences we have of the illegitimacy of your young ward. The most consequential, as your knowledge of law will lead you to observe, are Lord Rushbrooke's letters to Mr. Wimpole, with copies of some of his replies, in which he earnestly entreats him to solemnize before Miss Warburton's delivery, and encloses him a letter from that lady, requesting him to use his interest with his Lordship in her favour. In the parcel marked with number (3), is an attestation from the Reverend Daniel Calthorpe, Rector of the Church at Tunbridge, where

it

it was affirmed Lord Rushbrooke was married, and from other Ministers in the vicinity, that no such nuptials were celebrated there.

“ The fourth parcel are letters from the supposed Countess to her confidential friend, Mrs. Carrington, expressing her hope that her Lord will give her a legal right to his title immediately upon her being able to travel as far as Gretna Green, where she says the marriage is to be celebrated, that it may be antedated—a circumstance, she observed, easily to be effected by a bribe to the Minister. This unhappy lady, who had imbibed the pernicious sentiments of the fashionable philosophy, affirms that her only desire for *legality* arises from a wish that her children may be secure of their *rightful* inheritance.”

“ You see, Sir, I treat you with all possible candour, and invite you to come to my house, and peruse the originals, of which I send you copies ; after which, I leave it to your option either to settle the

matter in secrecy, or proclaim to the world the bastardy of Laura E. Warburton, which you cannot but be convinced can be proved incontestably.

“ If your ward is of age to chuse a new guardian, perhaps an indifferent man, should you determine upon a public investigation of the business, would pursue the affair with less pain to personal delicacy than any of your family can do. By an exposure of particulars, her title to her mother's fortune, as well as to that of her father, must certainly be forfeited ; and indeed I must needs own that it cannot be expected you should invest with such an immense and partially given property, one who has no legal right to a shilling ; therefore, as her *natural* relationship is equal to both families, I shall not scruple to advance a *proportionable* sum for her future maintenance ; but as a degradation from a *lady of quality*, to a *Nobleman's bastard*, must be very piquant to a young person well educated, I cannot forbear to observe
that

that I should think it a happy circumstance *for us all*, if she could be prevailed upon to chuse her future residence in one of our colonies, where she might live in comfort, though not in splendour. But this is a concern more immediately her's and your's, than mine.

"I am, Sir, with compassion for the nice feelings of your family on this unhappy occasion,

"Your obedient servant,

"RUSHBROOKE."

We are strangers to any language capable of conveying a sense of the emotions which agitated the breast of Lady Laura during the time of Catchpole's reading, with an emphatic tone, the infamous fabrications. Her understanding being quick, strong, and above her years, she comprehended at once the whole effect of the *discovery*; for it was not morally possible

possible she could suspect the fraudulency of the proceeding. With a handkerchief thrown over her face, leaning her forehead against the side of the bow-window in which she sat, she spoke not one syllable during a considerable period, in which the Catchpoles and the Mullins sat looking upon each other in wonder, not knowing how to proceed. At length, the truly heroic girl started from her position, and laying one hand upon her breast, while with the other she seemed to put away her former state, said—"It is over!! Yet, Oh that my Clarissa Melville was in being!!"

She then folded her hands as if in supplication; her eyes, which now streamed with tears, were lifted up, and her lips moved; but her voice was inarticulate, till she at last pronounced, in an emphatic tone, the word "*Grandfather!*"—Upon which, she burst afresh into tears; and again resting against the window, seemed as if sinking into a fainting fit. One of
the

the ladies rang for attendants; and the lovely Laura was carried to her own apartment, where she was put into bed with scarce any appearance of life.

"The worst is over," said Mrs. Catchpole, as soon as her niece was out of the room.

"Yes, yes," replied Mrs. Mullins, "the girl, young as she is, has some sense of piety, and will soon reconcile herself to necessity. But I wish Clary Melville was alive; for I think, by the few words she dropped, she would in that case have gone over to Barbadoes."

"That she would," returned her sister, "I am convinced; and it is a d-v-l sh misfortune that the girl is dead!"

"Can no other plan," said Mr. Mullins—

"Patience, my good brother," interrupted the lawyer. "We must proceed as contingency shall direct. Methods may be thought upon by-and-by which will render every thing complete."

At this juncture Mrs. Downing, whom Mrs. Mullins *spared* to attend Lady Laura in the room of one of her own women, who, fortunately for the Catchpolean plan, had married Mullins's butler, hastily entered the room, and announced her apprehensions that the young lady was dying. This carried them all to her apartment; but the aunts only approached the bed-room.

"Laura!" said Mrs. Catchpole, in the tenderest and most compassionating accent, "Laura, my dear girl, how are you?"

Laura spoke not. A deathlike paleness sat upon her face; her lips were of a livid hue, her eyes closed, and her whole frame convulsed.

"The girl will die!" said Mrs. Mullins.

"Not yet," replied Mrs. Catchpole; "she is only in hysterics."

The temper of the first was sanguine: what she wished, she believed. The other, more phlegmatic, apprehended the realization of her fears.

Mrs.

Mrs. Catchpole was right. Lady Laura was in hysterics. Her constitution at length conquered her disorder. A stupor succeeded, which, assisted by a few drops of laudanum, continued several hours. The sisters with their husbands returned to the drawing-room, where ensuing circumstances were the sole subject of conversation. They all united in wishes for her leaving the kingdom, but were apprehensive that, now Clarissa Melville was, as they supposed, dead, she would not consent to live in any other country.

The result of their consultation was, that she must be amused, and kept quiet in obscurity, till her arrival at age, when, under pretence of securing to her a provision for life, she should be drawn in to sign deeds which would render it impossible for her, or any husband she might chuse, to reclaim any part of her inheritance. They even proceeded so far in their arrangements, as to determine upon a foreign tour for two or three years, through which they concluded she would gladly agree to

take an assumed name, in order to hide her disgrace, which they intended to insinuate could not fail of being made public. With regard to Clarendon Castle, it was settled that Catchpole should pretend to negotiate with Lord Rushbrooke for either a lease or a purchase, as it was not probable that Nobleman, who had a magnificent seat in a distant part of the island, should want to keep it for a residence. This proceeding, it was not doubted, would effectually blind the lovely orphan respecting a particular which had at first caused them some embarrassment.

CHAP. IX.

*The Christian Fortitude of our Heroine, with
a well-attested Instance of Memory.*

A fool who thinks himself wise, will seldom credit what he cannot comprehend.

THE torpid state in which Lady Laura had continued through the night, rendered her almost insensible, at the moment of waking, to the change in her situation. She felt a pressure upon her spirits that was afflictive, but could not imagine from whence it originated. The incidents of the preceding evening were faintly remembered, and appeared more like a dream than a reality, till the mists that

hovered over her reason dispersed, and the truth of her circumstances stood evinced.

“ And is it *indeed* so !” exclaimed she with a sigh. “ It is. Then *be* it so ! I once fancied I was born to make many happy, and I was happy in the idea ; but my views are all closed. Oh that my dear Clarissa were alive, that she might alleviate by participating my griefs ! My friends will not now look upon me. And why ? Because I am poor, and because I am——”

She blushed, and felt degraded ; not on account of the loss of her fortune, for to that she had begun to reconcile herself ; not because of the deprivation of her title, for in that she never had any gratification : the dignity of virtue had been tarnished by the conduct of her parents, and she had often heard expressions of contempt bestowed upon children of an illicit amour.

But from whom could these expressions be derived ? She did not ask herself the question, or the reply would have been—

“From the weak or the vicious, and from none beside.” For it cannot be that any adventitious circumstance, in which the individual is totally unconcerned, can either degrade or aggrandize him in the eye of the judicious, or in the opinion of the virtuous. Nay, unmerited misfortune would assuredly *exalt* him in the esteem of all those whose esteem is estimable; and thus, young as she was, would our Laura have reasoned, had she contemplated the situation of any other being under similar circumstances; but she felt herself a subject of disdain amongst such of her companions as had coveted her advantages of fortune, or envied the fascinating sound of “Lady Laura;” and her feelings were too strong to be subdued by her reason.—“Ah, my mother!” would she exclaim, “how could you suffer such a perversion of principle; but Oh *my father!* how could *you* seduce from the paths of rectitude *the woman you loved!!!* Gracious Heaven! had my grandfather lived——”

Generosity, united with filial affection, diffused a gleam of complacency over her mind, and arrested the progress of her wailings. She was instantly thankful that the life of her grandfather had not been prolonged till the disclosure of a circumstance which would have overwhelmed him with distress. Her grief was solitary; for who but herself would be a sufferer? Her aunts, however much they might feel themselves degraded by their consanguinity to her mother, would, she was convinced, think themselves well requited by inheriting her fortune, which she doubted not they would divide between them. Her heroism was now awake: she thought she knew the worst, and determined not to live dependant on the favour of her relations, from whom she never experienced any real tenderness. She prayed for instruction, and she received it; she prayed for fortitude, and her mind was strengthened. Thus doubly armed, she appeared in the breakfast-room with

with a dignity and composure that surprised every one ; and sat nearly silent, till Mr. Catchpole, half awed by the superiority of her manner, opened the business of the preceding evening.

We will not lead through the turnings and windings of the artful lawyer and his colleagues. It was long before he unfolded all his design ; but Laura was soon convinced—how could she doubt?—of her not having any legal right to either the title or estate of her father's family, or to the property of her mother's relations. Mr. Catchpole, who was speaker to the honourable community, told her it should be left to her choice either to go abroad, and be fixed with some respectable family ; or, if she could brave the neglect—not to say insults—of her former equals, to continue with them, and receive in every respect the same treatment she had before experienced.

“ Think me not ungrateful, Sir,” replied her Ladyship, with a bow, “ that I
reject

reject both these proposals. I am dependant only on myself, on what I have been taught, and on my own diligence. I belong to nobody, and therefore am resolved not to be an encumbrance to any one while the Almighty gives me health, strength, and spirits. It is not probable that so young a person should be thought capable of directing even the first studies of children; but perhaps some of those who have known me, will admit me as an under teacher, either in a private family, or a public seminary: the former I prefer. Should this situation be denied me, it is probable I may hear of some young lady who wants an attendant not meanly educated. I can stoop to my situation, and hope I never shall unduly repine at a degradation (however, on many accounts, severely afflictive), to which I have not been accessory. With respect to going abroad, for several reasons I determine against it, and know not one strong enough to occasion my hesitation. A
wish

wish to hide myself in obscurity, can only arise from a false pride or an unjust shame. Were Clarissa Melville living, a residence in the West Indies would be my election ; but as I am deprived of the inestimable blessing of her friendship, which would render all countries equal, England has my decided preference."

She stopped, but might have continued without interruption a longer time, the hearers being too much astonished to make any attempt at a reply till she ceased speaking, when, after a few moments' interval, Mrs. Mullins, who was particularly solicitous for Laura's leaving the kingdom, said—

" I am amazed, *Miss Warburton*, that you should wish to continue in this island, where your own disgrace cannot be concealed, and where you must live to disgrace all your friends and relations !"

" It ill becomes so young a creature—indeed any creature—to presume upon her own sufficiency," replied Lady Laura ;
 " but

“but I trust, Madam, that neither my friends nor my relations will feel my conduct a reproach to them; and as to the disgrace independent of myself, which you say cannot but be made public, how will my removal from my native country avert it from my family? Will it not rather confirm the truth of the unhappy circumstance, by giving cause for the probable conjecture of my having fled, to escape the insults I had not sufficient strength of mind to contemn?”

This reasoning from a girl not sixteen, was as wonderful as unanswerable. They were all confounded; even Mr. Catchpole seemed at a loss for expedients for several minutes, while she sat absorbed in reflection, feeling, as she afterwards confessed, exalted above herself. Her grandfather was so strongly present to her intellectual senses, that it seemed as if he had inspired her with sentiments and resolution; and she declared she never knew a happier moment. Every surrounding circumstance,

stance, indeed, appeared dark and distressing; but she saw beyond, a prospect bright and cheering, which irresistibly carried her eye from the encircling horrors of her situation.

There are people—people, too, who have acquired the reputation of being wise—that do not chuse to believe any thing they cannot experience or comprehend, however strongly attested by men of sense and veracity; because they do not chuse to allow that any human beings have faculties which they themselves do not possess. Admitting—what yet these wise people will *not* admit—that all men are equally endued by nature, it must be granted that the exercise of a particular quality will increase its native strength, till it arrives at all possible perfection; and that, on the contrary, a talent suffered to lie dormant, will lose its energy beyond revival.

Memory, for instance, may be rendered
more

more or less tenacious by the proper use which is made of the faculty.

A gentleman, upon whose veracity we can depend, informed us of an author that had completed a pamphlet for the press, and was going to send it to London, when a friend appeared just in time to look it over; after which it was dispatched according to his intention, but was lost on its journey. The writer, having no copy, was extremely grieved at the accident, and lamented the loss to his friend, who, appearing absorbed in contemplation, suddenly quitted his presence, and in a few days carried him a transcript of his performance, which, knowing the other had only perused it in his presence, he received with amazement, scarce crediting the evidence of the sense that presented his work entire. At first he suspected his friend had by some means obtained possession of the manuscript, on purpose to magnify his own powers of retention;

retention ; but this idea was removed by his again finding the original.

Determined not to trust his treasure a second time out of his hands, he set off with it for the metropolis ; and stopping at an inn on the road, saw a parcel lying on the window which had been picked up by the hostler, so much dirtied, and otherwise defaced, that the direction could not be deciphered. He immediately recognised his property, and by giving sufficient proofs of the justice of his claim, again became its possessor ; and upon comparing it with the transcript given by his friend, found no other difference between them, than a slight alteration in a few connecting parts of speech.

Will any man of common sense deny the possibility of another's being possessed of these abilities, merely because he himself is not so endued ? As well might a person whose sight is defective, refuse to believe that his friend distinctly perceives objects which he cannot discern ; or one
who

who is deaf, discredit the reality of the melodious sounds that vibrate upon the ear of another ! Some degree of memory is the gift of nature to every one ; and, as we have said, its powers may be diminished or increased according to its being, or being not properly exercised ; which is likewise true with respect to several other qualities of the human mind, particularly to that which opened to Lady Laura a prospect beyond the dismal ones presented to her by her relations. Yet the conceit and arrogance of man are such, that without experiencing what that very conceit and arrogance have incapacitated him to comprehend, he will not admit its verity ; but, in the haughtiness of *the folly of wisdom*, term it, in scoff, “ enthusiasm, or superstition.” And why ? Because it is a power superior to his mighty fund of reason. We have *some* charity, with a considerable quantum of contempt, in our composition. If these superficial gentry would lay aside a little of their self-sufficiency

sufficiency, and be teachably humble, we would let the *first* prevail, and endeavour to point the path that leads to the acquisition of this faculty ; but as we know the incorrigibleness of “ *a prodigious sensible man !* ” we decline the task, and permit the *other* quality to take its turn of exercise, reaffirming that our Laura was tranquillized by an *infusion* which often illumines the minds of mortals who will admit its soothing and enlivening rays.

CHAP. X.

*Different Schemes of Policy.—The baneful Drug.
—An unexpected Letter.—The Conspiracy
deepened.—A Voyage.—An Offer of
Marriage.—Pensylvania.*

Who that is sitting upon the edge of a precipice, can, if he suffers himself to slide down a little way, say—"so far will I go, and no farther," without being in danger of falling to the bottom?

The body of a man is inclined to gravitate. The mind is no less prone to degenerate, when reason, prudence, and religion lie dormant.

CATCHPOLE, confounded as he was for a few moments by the cool and collected manner in which Lady Laura had expressed her sentiments, was too consummate

summate a politician, to be long without an expedient. Recollecting himself as quick as possible, he declared his admiration of her conduct, and his perfect concurrence with her opinion, only protesting against her leaving his family, and repeating that the change in her situation would be only ideal, as it was the determination of himself and Mr. Mullins to secure to her an ample future provision; adding so many reasons for her acceptance of the proposals, that, as she could not persist in refusing without an appearance of unjustifiable obstinacy and ingratitude, she promised to continue with Mrs. Catchpole till she should find her situation unpleasant.

When Lady Laura retired, Mr. and Mrs. Mullins immediately expressed their astonishment and disapprobation of Catchpole's promise to secure to the unhappy orphan an asylum and independence; and were so vociferous, that for some minutes they prevented his explaining himself, while

his lady, who would with equal acrimony have inveighed against the measure, had she believed it to have been proposed with sincerity, laughed at their credulity. At length, with a smile which beggars the most expressive language, Mr. Catchpole explained, to general satisfaction, the extent of his design. He observed that the young lady was possessed of such wonderful abilities, her years considered, and seemed so determined to render herself independent, that it would be extremely dangerous to trust her out of their own protection; that she must be *amused* till she was of age to sign *releases* and *renunciations*; that he should be sorry to injure the *health* of the child, but that there *were* such things as drugs that would only occasion a temporary inconvenience to the constitution, which, if properly administered, would render it eligible for her to reside in some distant watering-place, perhaps make a sea-voyage necessary. At any rate, the indisposition it

was

was their tendency to effect, would preclude all such ideas of removing from their controul, as florid health, co-operating with a sanguine temper, and romantic sentiments, might revive and strengthen; and that if all these measures failed, the completion of the business would pay the expence of a tour, even were it to be undertaken by the whole family.

“The circle grinned applause;” and the lady of the last speaker, who was a proficient in that fashionable science of conveying by an innuendo, an extensive meaning in half a sentence, said—

“Yes, it would be a pity to injure the girl’s health, certainly; yet as her constitution is good, and would soon overgrow a slight shock—but I think the sea-voyage would be the best remedy for all our complaints.”

“Infinitely the best,” replied Mrs. Mullins, who was prepared to meet any design the man of the law might have proposed to ease Lady Laura of the load of

existence under which she laboured, and who felt disappointed that he had not, *in jest*, given a hint of that nature—"infinitely the best; but I do not see the necessity of our accompanying her."

"Nor I," rejoined her husband: "she might be entrusted to the care of some discreet and proper person, who, if any accident was to happen, might exonerate our intention."

"No person, my dear friend," returned Catchpole, "is more discreet, nor can be more proper for the trust you mention, than my brother Humphrey, who you know is soon expected to return to England; and on such an occasion, he would make it convenient to steer his vessel to any shore we on mature consideration might prefer."

They all assented; and Mrs. Catchpole, who read the workings of her sister's soul, said, with a countenance perfectly composed—"As to the accident alluded to by Mr. Mullins, care must be taken to
guard

guard against it; but I think the girl would have more fortitude than to form any horrid designs upon her own life."

In saying this, she arose, not deeming it expedient that any farther elucidation of their sentiments should take place at that period, and retired to her dressing-room.

When this precious group separately revolved all circumstances, they every one wished the death of Lady Laura; and had those circumstances more pressingly required the sacrifice, would soon have conquered every rising objection to its acceleration, as they already allowed themselves to consider that event with complacency, even though it were to be the effect of their own measures. But as her degradation, and absence from her native country, would sufficiently answer all their purposes, they complimented themselves with believing that they would not on any consideration be guilty of such a crime as actually to plan the termination of her existence.

Dangerous and specious sophistry! Where is the difference—in *that eye which sees beyond the surface*—between an instant injury to our neighbour, and the prosecution of such measures as will inevitably, though slowly produce the same effect! If the balance turns on *either* side, it will be in favour of the sudden crime, which, though highly reprehensible, may have a title to extenuations that the more deliberate progress cannot claim. A man who dreads the consequence to his life, liberty, or reputation, which an open robbery would produce, detests, he thinks from his *heart*, the injustice of the daring and the flagrant act. Would he equally abhor to take such an advantage of his neighbour as the law does not reach, nor men termed honest, blame, but which would no less benefit himself at the expence of his neighbour's welfare?—Before he gives his negative, let him ask himself if he never defrauded another by over-reaching him

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in a bargain—if he would not boast of having bought an article for half its worth, or of having sold any thing of which he was possessed, for twice its value? whether, if he and his friend had the same commodities to dispose of, he would not endeavour to enhance the worth of those which he himself possessed, by depreciating the property of the other? and whether he never attempted to exalt his own fame, by mangling the reputation of some of his acquaintance? If his heart cannot give a firm, unequivocal denial to all these interrogatories, let him not fancy himself greatly superior to the wretch who perhaps suffers for not having been so cautious a criminal? If he *can* give the negative to the enquiries above, *even then* let him unite pity with his condemnation of the miserable being, who has deprived himself of that consciousness of rectitude which constitutes his own felicity. Let him compare situations and consequent temptations: let him remember—OMNISCIENCE

judges not by the event ; AND let him take care that no future enticement draw him from his elevation and supposed security.

A small crime, deliberately commenced, and systematically pursued, is probably much more heinous *in the sight of Him who judges not as man judges*, than one of greater magnitude, which is the effect of a stimulus of the moment.

There *are* people whose undeviating strictness of justice would declaim that we are arguing in defence of offenders of the law. There are others who deem every man honest that keeps within the limits of legality. But these pages are not written for the eye of men of either of these descriptions. The good and the liberal are those whom we address, and while we court the conscious Publican to *consider and be wise*, we reject the commentaries of the Pharisee.

A tasteless, baneful drug, with which Mr. Catchpole was well acquainted, was now procured, and administered, without
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the shadow of suspicion, to Lady Laura. Its usual effect was produced. She lost her appetite, was constantly sick, and had frequent fits of giddiness. These complaints of consequence altered her complexion and countenance, and rendered her weak and low-spirited. Several eminent physicians were consulted, who, not being able to remove her malady, prescribed frequent change of air, declaring it to be their united opinion that she was going into a decline, which opinion was universally adopted; and Mesdames Catchpole and Mullins, who scarcely trusted her from their sight, attended her to several of the towns upon the coast; but her disease baffled the skill of every medical professor, and the salubrity of the sea breezes. At one period, for a few days, she found herself materially amended. The ladies had left a part of their luggage at a town where they had resided several days. The drug was in the forgotten trunk, which by

mistake was taken up by the driver of a stage-coach, and conveyed many miles across the country.

Soon after its reconveyance to its owners, Lady Laura was again very ill. Mrs. Mullins, who was less *cautious* than Mrs. Catchpole, had administered the dose, which was so ample, that it had nearly terminated all trouble on poor Laura's account. What would have been their ultimate proceedings, had no circumstance intervened to counteract their intentions, we do not pretend to determine, as they were suddenly instigated to alter their measures by what the violent Mrs. Mullins termed "a d—d unfortunate piece of business!" which threatened destruction to all their designs.

Mr. Catchpole and Mr. Mullins were arranging their future plans at Clarendon Castle, when they were interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Humphrey—or, as he was usually termed, Captain Catchpole. He was just returned from a voyage to the
East

East Indies, and brought with him the following letter, directed to

Lady Laura Elizabeth Warburton.

“ My dear young ward has long since heard of, and I well know lamented my death, which I understand was currently reported in England. It is surprising to me that none of the letters I have written since I left my native shore, have reached the persons to whom they were directed. This, with several others, I entrust to the care of Captain Catchpole, on whose punctuality I can depend. The first information I received respecting my own decease, was conveyed in a letter from Mr. Catchpole to my nephew at Candy. I shall write to thank him for the kindness to myself expressed therein, and for his care and conduct relative to the writings I left in his possession.

“ It is now proper that I inform you of the accident which gave rise to the

idea of my having left this state of existence.

“ When we were within a few leagues of the island of Ceylon, a sudden gale arose, and drove us considerably out of our way to the south-east. During the violence of the storm, I ventured to go upon the deck; and in returning, the vessel being in violent motion, fell down the stairs, broke my leg, and was otherwise much bruised by some large pieces of iron that lay upon the floor. Steering backward after the storm ceased, we were soon in view of Trinquimale; and being in great pain, and hearing the ship was in a shattered condition, I requested to be conveyed in a boat to the town before us; with which request the Captain obligingly complied, and the next day the vessel went to the bottom.—Whenever I retrospect this circumstance, my mind is too full to make any comments; I will therefore leave it to the contemplation of
my

my dear child, who will feel gratitude for the escape of her friend.

“Upon my arrival at Trinquinale, I procured the best medical assistance the place afforded, and dispatched a messenger for my nephew, who, upon his arrival, wrote to Mr. Catchpole and Mr. Clements; which letters, it seems, were thrown overboard with some dispatches to Government, upon the Captain’s perceiving they were chased by a privateer. After that, I wrote by a Portuguese merchant, who promised to convey my letters by the Lisbon mail. Of the fate of these I never have heard one syllable, but I am convinced, by Mr. Catchpole’s letter to my nephew, that they have never reached England.

“I am still in a very weak state. The bones of my leg are, I believe, well knit, but the wounds are far from having a favourable appearance. As soon as I can travel with safety, I mean to be removed
to

to Madras, being impatient to settle the business which detains me from England.

“ Let me hear from you, my dear. Tell me you are well and happy, and that you believe me to be

“ Your’s, with the affection of a father,
EDMUND JERVOIS.”

The astonishment with which Mr. Catchpole perused this letter, and one to himself from the same gentleman, convinced the Captain that something extraordinary was in agitation. He knew the principles of his brother; and immediately conjecturing that this revival of Mr. Jervois was destructive to some plan of interest, it was not long before his ideas turned upon Lady Laura, with whose circumstances he was well acquainted; but he suppressed his sentiments in the presence of Mr. Mullins, who was struck speechless

speechless by amazement and terror; and to conceal his sensations, arose, and walked out of the room. When the brothers were by themselves, the business was gradually developed, and the design, which subsequently was in part executed, conceived by both, but not mentioned in express terms by either.

As soon as Mullins saw Catchpole alone, he repeated Mrs. Deborah Wilkins's exclamation to Mr. Alworthy—" *My good Sir, what is to be done!!!*"

Catchpole, who was absorbed in projection, was still sufficiently collected to reply with a smile—

"We are not yet, my dear friend, at our *ne plus ultra*. Give me time to consider. But first let me ask if you have any objection to confide in the *prudence* and *in—integrity* of my brother Humphrey."

The word *integrity* trembled upon the lips of Catchpole, as if they were conscious it ought not on that occasion to
escape

escape their confines. As soon as he had uttered the sentence, his eyes were involuntarily fixed on the floor, which yet he did not perceive. Big with a fatal purpose, the functions of his *senses* seemed suspended. The *mind* at that time entirely occupied the man. But the mind was dark : it brooded a diabolical purpose, and it brought its sable embryo into existence.

Mullins was again struck with terror. The idea of trusting an *uninterested* person, appeared to him to be very dangerous, but he was soon convinced there was no safe alternative ; and when Catchpole unfolded his design, proposed to secure the Captain, by charging one of Lady Laura's estates with an annuity for his life, his petty economy giving way, on this occasion, to a more unbounded prospect of advantage.

Preliminaries were soon settled between the gentlemen, and Mr. Catchpole set off express to the ladies, to regulate the
 necessary

necessary movements. Mr. Jervois's letter and existence were, of course, concealed from Lady Laura, who was at this crisis labouring under the effect of a potent dose.

When Mrs. Catchpole and Mrs. Mullins were first informed of the particulars last recited, they stood aghast. A spectre issuing from the wall, could not have created greater horrors than were raised by the idea of Mr. Jervois being still alive. They saw the necessity of resolving upon some "hardy deed:" and the force of their conscience having been greatly weakened by the frequent depredations made upon it, soon yielded to what they termed the unavoidable alternative of sending the daughter of their sister into another world, yet pretended much reluctance to be actually assisting in the black transaction, without seeming to consider there is not the least degree of difference between consent to a crime, and perpetration. After some conversation on the subject, their
scruples

scruples gave way, and they prepared to execute the following plan, to which we will not annex any epithet, because language has no one sufficiently expressive of its atrocity.

From Cromar, the place of her abode at that time, Lady Laura was to be carried through the towns upon the coast till her arrival at Harwich; from whence, upon pretence of airing and otherwise preparing her apartments, the female attendants were to be dispatched to the Castle; after which, she was to be conveyed on board the vessel of which Humphrey Catchpole was master, *because, it was given out, the physicians had pronounced a sea voyage to be absolutely necessary to the establishment of her health;* and about the middle of the Atlantic—*horrid to relate!!!*—the Captain, that disgrace to British Tars, was to launch the devoted victim into the bosom of the deep!!!

It was our intention to have led progressively to the result of the conferences between the Catchpoles and the Mullins'; but our abhorrence of their proceedings precipitated us to relate the meditated catastrophe.

Upon their arrival at Harwich, Lady Laura was extremely ill, and her reluctance to go on board a ship seemed insuperable. Contrary, therefore, to their intentions, they proceeded by land to London, where, stopping two or three days, they gave out they were going to consult a celebrated physician who lived at Canterbury; and pretending their own coach wanted to be repaired, took post-chaises from stage to stage till their arrival—not at Canterbury, but at Dover, where the vessel was lying ready to receive them.

For two or three days the wind was against them; but for several reasons they chose to live on board, where Laura soon regained her health, strength, and complexion,

plexion, the ladies not having deemed it necessary to administer any more of the debilitating potion.

Finding herself thus restored, as she imagined, by the sea-breezes, her reluctance to the voyage was considerably abated : she forgot the disagreeableness of her circumstances, and was all gaiety.

In the evening of the third day of their residence on ship board, the Captain pronounced a favourable change in the wind, and declared his intention of weighing anchor that night. Accordingly, about an hour after Laura had retired to rest, the ladies were rowed to land, and the ship put in motion ; but to prevent her being so much alarmed at being deserted, as to create suspicion amongst the sailors, a letter, and a small box filled with gold, were the first objects that met her sight upon awakening in the morning.

The letter was as follows.

“ Dear

“ Dear Laura,

“ The solicitude of your friends for your welfare has determined them to pursue a measure which, upon hasty consideration, may appear extraordinary ; but as it is impossible for you to continue in England with reputation, we will endeavour to render you as happy as circumstances will admit, by fixing you, at the discretion of Mr. Humphrey Catchpole, with some respectable family in the province of Pensylvania, where the manners of the inhabitants are congenial to your rural sentiments. Your figure and understanding are such as will assuredly recommend you to some worthy American gentleman, who shall find your fortune exceed his expectations, as Mr. H. Catchpole, whose future voyages will purposely be directed to the western Continent, will be empowered to negotiate with any proposer to your future advantage ; and after you shall have changed
your

your name in reality, we shall be happy to receive you and your husband as visitors for any length of time that will be agreeable to you.

“ The money you will find in your cabin, is an earnest of our future kindness; use it freely, and demand a supply whenever you find occasion.

“ To spare you and ourselves the affliction of a formal separation, we leave you asleep, being, as you will ever experience, your truly affectionate aunts,

“ HANNAH CATCHPOLE,
“ MARY MULLINS.”

The box and its contents surprised our lovely orphan : the letter, when half perused, deprived her of sensation. When her recollection returned, she gave an audible sigh, which was caught by the listening Catchpole, who immediately

advanced to the side of her bed, and asked how she had rested.

"Oh Captain!" she exclaimed, "how have I merited this treacherous treatment!"

"What is the matter, my dear young lady? Of what do you complain?"

"Of *what*, Sir!! Do you ask that question without dissimulation? Do you believe I am a willing exile from my native country? No; you must be privy, you must be instrumental to my projected banishment!!"

The Captain, who, since the departure of the ladies, had conceived a design which, if compassed, would turn the full stream of advantage to his own channel, put on an air of the most lively astonishment, mixed with a due appearance of indignation, and exclaimed—

"Is it possible, Lady Laura, that Mrs. Catchpole and Mrs. Mullins left the ship without your knowledge? And have
you

you any reluctance to the voyage upon which we are entered !”

“ To both your questions,” replied the weeping Laura, “ I answer in the affirmative. I imagined we were only to sail a few miles along the coast, and that I was to return to land with my aunts.”

Humphrey, whose face, person, and manners were genteel, and not unpleasing, and whose address could be varied to suit all circumstances, found it no difficult matter to persuade the poor Laura that he was made to believe her future residence in Pennsylvania had been her own determination. Perceiving the tear which this practised deceiver had pressed into the service of villany, to glitter in his eye, she folded her hands, rejoiced in his apparent compassion, and rested herself in his protection, while a variety of passions, amongst which gratitude was not the least, overpowered her once more, and she sunk upon the breast of him she deemed

deemed her only friend. Unused to any sentiment that merited the name of love, Captain Catchpole fancied he was now inspired with real tenderness, and caught Lady Laura in his arms with rapture, assuring her, the moment she recovered, that every action of his future existence should be employed in promoting her felicity. She received his assurances with complacency, and seemed consoled; but she wished, without knowing why, that his expressions had been less fervid.

The first determination of Mr. Humphrey Catchpole was, punctually to fulfil the wishes of his brother and Mr. Mullins; thereby to secure a handsome annuity for life. This resolve was succeeded by an intention to frustrate their measures, by marrying his fair prisoner, and possessing himself of the whole of her lawful property, well knowing they would not dare to dispute his claim. This was still his intention, but he fancied his *motive* was changed; what he termed affection, seemed

to have taken root in his mind; and this, mixed with some particles of pity, determined him to counteract the atrocious designs of his employers. He instantly fancied himself an honest man, assumed a character of integrity, and even veiled from his consciousness his former villany.

Lady Laura Warburton was indeed sufficiently endued by nature to effect the greatest reformation the mind of man is capable of experiencing from any second cause; but a sudden transition from systematic vice to determinate virtue, is above the work of any human power. Self-interest was still the ruling passion of our worthy Captain; the beauty of Lady Laura had awakened his warmer sentiments, but it was her fortune that fixed his resolution to save her from destruction.

During the remainder of the voyage, nothing material occurred of sufficient consequence to be related. The gentleman was all tenderness and respect—the lady, gratitude. He was too politic to make a
direct

direct avowal of his design, and she too much obliged to suspect any sinister intention. He swore to protect her through every stage of life, to carry her back to England, and to fix her in a situation perfectly independent, till her aunts and their husbands should be brought to do her that justice which every equitable mind would pronounce was her due, in right of her *mother*, though it could not be secured to her by a legal process.

Mr. Humphrey did not undeceive her respecting Lady Rushbrooke's marriage. This was a discovery reserved, till he should be empowered to demand her estates in his own name.

They were now arrived at Philadelphia, where Lady Laura was fixed in the family of Mr. Belcroft, and, the Captain having agreed to pay handsomely for her board, treated with much respect.

Mr. and Mrs. Belcroft were termed people of respectability. Their family consisted of a son and three daughters;

the first, a booby lad of nineteen, spoiled by the admiration of his parents ;—the daughters, pert misses, whom the mother had taught to prize the beauty with which she informed them they were adorned, beyond any possession but that of riches—a valuable which this imaginary beauty, for it was no more, was to be their means of acquiring :—their names, Thomas, Martha, Ann, and Sarah.

Mr. Belcroft was a merchant, whose traffic was chiefly with the Portuguese. The motive of the lady for accommodating *the arrivals at Philadelphia*, was to procure husbands for her daughters. She was not desirous to entertain ladies, because she conjectured, perhaps truly, that no unmarried ones, with fortunes adequate to her views, were likely to visit the fraternal shore. Captain Catchpole appeared to be a man of fashion ; and, to prevent unfavourable conclusions, he affirmed the young lady to be his niece. But lest she should be deemed an object of

of attraction to some one who might steal upon her affection, he intimated her being entirely dependant on his bounty.

Fixed, as he supposed, in her opinion and esteem, he now began to talk to her of love. She started at the idea, and entreated him to desist from such conversation; but the subject once entered upon, he proceeded with fervour, assured her there was no method of preserving her, if she rejected his proposal, which, greatly as he admired, and ardently as he loved her, was made as much in consideration of her happiness, as of his own; that if she returned to England in any other character than in that of his wife, her safety would doubtless be hazarded; as, since he knew she was conveyed on board his ship against her wishes, and left there without her knowledge, he had been convinced, by comparing some circumstances with others, she would be continually persecuted by Mr. Mullins and the man he was ashamed to call brother; and

13

perhaps

perhaps transported by means of some obdurate, avaricious wretch, to a quarter of the globe, from whence there would scarce be a possibility of her return.

These arguments to a young woman in a foreign country, deprived of every protection but that now offered her from a man to whom she owed the highest obligation, could hardly be answered by a negative. She hesitated—she blushed; but her heart shrunk from compliance. Captain Catchpole, as a friend, was now always an object welcome to her sight; but Captain Catchpole, as a lover, was viewed with a repugnance unconquerable: yet gratitude forbade expressions of abhorrence. She deeply sighed; and her sighs, her blushes, and her hesitation gave rise to a hope that she would yield to the offer. He doubled the ardour of his address, and she was compelled to be explicit in her refusal; but her words were accompanied with such sweetness, and such acknowledgment of respect and
grati-

gratitude, that the Captain was convinced he should eventually succeed. He therefore determined upon returning with his ship to England, and again visiting Philadelphia as soon as possible in some other vessel; persuaded she would then receive him with gladness, and consent to his wishes.

CHAP. XI.

The Departure of Captain Catchpole from Philadelphia.—Lady Laura in the Family of Mr. Belcroft.—Reasons for Toleration.

It is an important truth that the religion of the heart is the most powerful auxiliary of reason in waging war with the passions, and promoting that sweet composure which constitutes the peace of God.

WHEN Humphrey Catchpole first landed on the banks of the Delawar, he perceived a vessel ready for sailing to the port of London, and used the opportunity to convey a letter to his brother Richard, with the following account of his commission.

“ DEAR

“ DEAR DICK,

“ I have this instant disembarked, and accept the offer of a Mr. Williams, who is going passenger in the Lynx, to tell you so, and to congratulate you and Mr. Mullins on the completion of your wishes. Nothing was ever done more cleverly, nor was ever any thing more apparently accidental. She was standing—but suffice it that *she is properly disposed of*, and that you never will have any future trouble on account of Lady L. E. W.—to whom—*an everlasting adieu!*

“ I cannot precisely determine the time of my return. Perhaps it will be speedy—perhaps not. I have a presentiment that my voyage will be a very profitable one, and that I shall return a rich man, a part of my cargo being of a scarce commodity, and consequently of increasing value.

“Commend me to your lady, and to Mr. and Mrs. Mullins.

“Tell Arnold I expect to dispose of his venture to advantage.

“My goods and chattels demand attention: I must therefore conclude with assuring you that I am, in much sincerity,

“Your affectionate brother,

“HUMPHREY CATCHPOLE.”

This artful composition was duly delivered, and produced the intended effect. But our present scene does not lie in England.

After the commander had dispatched the above, he conveyed Lady Laura to the house of Mr. Belcroft, where he introduced *his niece*, by the appellation of Miss Eliza Howard. When he first intimated his intention of returning to England without her, she seemed startled, and wished to accompany him.

“*Would*

“Would she then consent to his proposal, and go as his wife?”

“Oh no, no! She could not think of it!—indeed she could not!”—But her countenance was not severe; her native sweetness, co-operating with her grateful spirit, counteracted her negative, and made it appear like consent. It was in vain she said no, to his request; he was convinced he should ultimately be successful, and rested his hope in her solemn promise to continue under the protection of Mr. Belcroft till his return to Philadelphia.

Captain Catchpole was too much of a Machiavel to leave any considerable sum of money in the hands of Lady Laura; but he paid for several months of her board, per advance, and told Mr. Belcroft nothing but adverse winds could detain him from the western Continent for *more* than half a year, and that if his affairs in England permitted, he should return considerably within that period.

When he departed, Laura expressed so much artless concern, though she could not be prevailed upon to give him verbal hope, that he thought himself as perfectly secure of her and her fortune, as if he had had them both in his possession. When he sailed, she attended him to Chester, accompanied by the young people of the family, and stood upon the margin of the river till the vessel could no longer be distinguished. When she returned to Philadelphia, she was extremely pensive; but her native vivacity, aided by the endeavours of the Misses Belcroft to amuse her, soon restored her tranquillity, and she enjoyed the comfort of her present situation, without much painful anticipation of her future destiny.

Mr. Belcroft, whose situation in Philadelphia warranted such a confidence, had been authorized by Captain Catchpole to guard *his niece* against any improper addresses, informing him that if she should engage herself with his approbation, he
would

would make her, in point of fortune, an object worthy the acceptance of a man of property; but that if she married without his express consent, her person would be all her husband would have to expect. This he particularly enforced, lest Master Tommy, as he was usually termed, should be encouraged by his parents to deem her deserving his pursuit. Of the young man's own influence with Laura, he was not apprehensive; he knew that her judgment and her taste were both superior to Master Tommy's endowments.

To strengthen his interest with the temporary guardians of the devoted fair, Catchpole had permitted a shew of admiration for Miss Belcroft to appear, with which the young lady, as well as her mamma, was mightily delighted. To perceive if there were any latent sparks of affection for himself in the breast of Lady Laura, he had mentioned Miss Belcroft to her in terms of peculiar approbation, no less to *her* satisfaction, than to that of
the

the family ; as his union with that young lady would not only have relieved her from his distressing importunities, but would probably have secured to herself a permanent friend of her own sex.

About three weeks after Catchpole left the Continent, a messenger arrived from Chester, with information of his having left in the warehouse, a box which had not before been observed, and a demand to know whether it should be forwarded to London by a vessel then lying in the river, or reconveyed to Philadelphia. A consultation was held upon the circumstance, which, as the Captain was soon expected to return, and as, by the description, it was supposed to contain little else than apparel, ended with its being returned to the care of Lady Laura, now distinguished by the name of Eliza Howard.

For several months Lady Laura passed her time as pleasantly as it was possible she could do under the circumstances which at times oppressed her spirits. The
loss

loss of her grandfather, he being her last remaining parent (for as parents she always considered Mr. and Mrs. Warburton), was the first heavy affliction she experienced; but though her remembrance of him was ever lively, it was now mellowed into the pleasing melancholy. The supposed death of Mr. Jervois had been a source of grief, which, on account of the ensuing circumstances, was unabated. She was persuaded, had he been living, she should not have witnessed such a change of scene. But of all her deprivations, that of Clarissa Melville was the most intimately grievous to her heart. In *her* society she believed she could have supported any reverse of fortune. Friendship was the balm most genial to the wounds of her mind, and nothing but friendship could render existence pleasing. Her soul was formed for harmony and attachment, but no one object within her knowledge was endued with the essentials to fix her affection, to create sentiments of

of either friendship, or the more fervent, and not less pure passion of love.

Mr. Belcroft kept a cabriolet for the accommodation of his lady and daughters;—in this Miss Belcroft and Lady Laura often made evening's excursions to Grey's gardens, where to indulge—the first, an idea of her future consequence as Mrs. Catchpole, several circumstances having evinced the Captain to be a man of fortune—the other, contemplation—they frequently wandered in separate avenues by mutual consent. On such occasions—“Clarissa! my dear Clarissa!” would Laura exclaim, “in what region is thy spirit now exulting! I have often fancied I could almost hold converse with my grandfather since he left me; but thou, whom I no less loved, seemest quite to have deserted me! Oh, wert thou with me, wandering in these pleasant glades, what should I care for the advantages I once possessed! Thy counsel would direct,
thy

thy sympathy console me! But, ah! my Clarissa is gone!"

She would then dissolve in tears; from which finding some relief, she would yield to the suggestions of that piety she had so early imbibed from the instructions of Mr. and Mrs. Warburton, and say—

"But who can tell what is, or is not good for mortals! Prosperity might have been my bane; and a few years hence it will not be of consequence whether I wander here an exile, or live in affluence in England. In a few years—a very few, young as I am, I shall be reunited to those whom I have loved, and still do love better than any who remain in this lower creation!"

Our heroine, my dear friends, would not be a favourite with the belles and beaux of the present day. Piety is a very *outré* accomplishment for a young woman of fashion. *Religion* indeed, which is the vehicle of piety, is become a common topic of conversation amongst all ranks of people;

people, every individual contending for the exclusive excellence of that mode in which he himself has been educated, or has adopted.

Is it not a strange circumstance that people do not consider, and allow that, if there were but one form of adoration acceptable to the universal Father of all created beings, that One would be evident to every rational creature under Heaven? If the Almighty did not look with complacency upon every sect of worshippers, could he not, by persuading the heart, by convincing the judgment, or by various other methods (for does Infinite Power want means to effect his purposes?) annihilate every mode which displeases Him, and gather every son of mankind to a unison of prayer! Would he suffer any sincere heart that wishes to perform his will, to persist, through a blameless ignorance, in offering him a sacrifice with which he is offended. If He teaches us all other things—and from whence can we
derive

derive knowledge but from Him?—will He not instruct us in what is so essential to the very end of our existence!! Will he leave us in ignorance of what it most imports us to know, and throw us for refuge upon Reason, in the only point in which Reason is insufficient to decide, *if there be one only Religion in the universe that can secure his favour!!!* In almost—indeed in *all* other things necessary for us to know, our lights are 'clear; and are we in this Great Essential left in darkness, to stumble upon the rocks of destruction, if such there be within the world of worship!!! All the attributes of the SUPREME forbid this conclusion, which arraigns His WISDOM, His MERCY, His POWER, His LOVE, AND HIS JUSTICE! Rather let us not hesitate to affirm that sincerity of heart, which he discerns through an infallible medium, will please Him in every offering; that an incontestable proof of there being many modes by which he can be acceptably adored, is, that no ONE is made to stand

stand confessedly supreme over all, as being absolutely necessary to salvation; that whether we speak, or are silent—whether we pray, or praise—whether we sit, stand, or kneel; He will equally receive the aspirations of Hope, Faith, Trust, Love, and Gratitude: and let us, in imitation of Him who came to assure to us eternal life, “give the hand of fellowship to every brother of mortality!”

CHAP. XII.

*Female Jealousy ; Affectation ; Art, and Vanity ;
with the Introduction of Mr. Lloyd.*

Affection is more weakened by trifling acts of unkindness, frequently committed, than by great offences seldom given.

ONE great source of amusement to Lady Laura during her residence with Mr. Belcroft, was from her pencil. She delighted to trace, in a small book devoted to that purpose, sketches of her dearest friends, which she preserved through all subsequent changes of situations. Her grandfather and grandmother adorned the first leaves, Clarissa Melville
the

the next, and Mr. Jervois, as in due order of affection, the fourth in her remembrance.

Music employed a portion of her time—a science in which she performed with such excellence, that Miss Nancy Belcroft, who thought herself a proficient, heard her with the ears of envy, and began to hate her for her numberless perfections of mind and person; but there were causes for her inveteracy which merited a small degree of excuse—love and jealousy.

Mr. Belcroft, who was engaged in various avocations, had several very gay young men in his offices and warehouse, which Laura was one day observing to the ladies, when Miss Nancy exclaimed—

“ Oh Miss Howard ! you have not yet seen Mr. Lloyd : he is gone to Virginia. When *he* appears, you will think the rest not worth notice.”

“ What do you mean, Nancy,” said Miss Sarah, with significance in her manner

manner, "by thus extolling a young fellow for his person ! I do not believe he has any considerable property, though Mr. Warder recommended him so strongly, and talked of his family and fortune. If Mr. Jackson had not lost so many of his teeth, I am sure he would be the handsomer man of the two ; and we all know he is likely to be heir to a great estate."

"Yes, when half a score of his uncle's children are dead," replied the other. "But pray did not Mr. Warder say that Mr. Lloyd's father was a man of high rank ?"

"It is not very probable, Nancy," interfered Miss Belcroft, "that the son of a man of rank should engage as a clerk to a merchant ; and it is by no means decent for you to speak in such terms of a young fellow, who, at best, is but a servant to your father."

The contest grew high, and the sisters separated in displeasure ; but a bevy of
young

young people appearing at the gates, their good humour returned, and the rest of the day was spent in gaiety.

In a few weeks Miss Nancy's favourite appeared; and, in Laura's opinion, justified the young lady's highest encomiums; Mr. Lloyd being not only handsome in his person, but agreeable in his manners, and his understanding was in high estimation.

"Well, Miss Howard," asked Nancy, "what do you think of Mr. Lloyd?"

"He appears to be a very agreeable young man," replied Laura, cautiously, lest her opinion, if retailed, should occasion another contest between the sisters.

"*A very agreeable man*, Miss Howard!" repeated Nancy, in a tone expressive of surprise, displeasure, and contempt.

"Can any thing in nature be more handsome, more genteel, more sensible, more polite, more pleasing?!! Oh, he is most charming, and he knows that I think him so."

"Then

“Then I hope, my dear Miss Nancy, he returns *his* good opinion for *your's*,” said Lady Laura.

“Oh yes, to be sure,” replied the vain girl, “he thinks me all that I think him. He cannot do otherwise, you know, though he has not yet told me so.”

“I have heard it observed,” said Laura, “that it is incumbent upon a gentleman to put a lady out of suspense as early as possible.”

“Suspense, Miss Howard! I am not in any suspense. I am confident Mr. Lloyd sees my—my *respect* for him; and I am sure he has no ingratitude in his nature!”

At this instant Mr. Lloyd appeared; and Miss Nancy was so absorbed in contemplating his image, that Lady Laura left her unperceived, not being desirous of her confidence on a subject which she had cause to suppose might create displeasure from her parents.

Lady Laura was far from being possessed of that superabundant degree of propriety

propriety and precision which characterizes some of our modern misses; who, with hearts which are the habitations of impurity, are ever ready to censure the lively sallies of innocent gaiety, and who look offendedly grave at those freedoms in conversation which, though extremely reprehensible, it would appear better for them to smile at, as not understanding, than to resent, as being acquainted with their latent meaning. Lady Laura, I repeat, was far removed from this character; she was by nature open, artless, unguarded; and probably, had not circumstances already taught her the necessity of circumspection, would by the prudent ones have been termed a wild, unthinking girl: for this is the censure which the conscious, guileful heart is ever ready to bestow upon that lovely luxuriance of temper which is the result of perfect innocence.

Mr. Lloyd, who, with the rest of the gentlemen-assistants, was always admitted to breakfast and dine with Mr. Belcroft,

saw

saw Lady Laura with admiration; but when he heard her speak, he forgot the beauty of her person:—her sentiments were congenial with his own, and the inexpressible sweetness which played upon her countenance, evinced the benevolence of her disposition, which indeed was visible in every action. The easy gracefulness of her form and manners, the beauty of her complexion and features, the rose of health which adorned her cheeks, and the soft brilliancy of her eyes, wanted not the thousand other charms that distinguished her, to render her an irresistible object of attraction to every beholder, not steeled by apathy or envy against her powers of pleasing.

The more Laura saw of Mr. Lloyd, the more she esteemed him. She was convinced he had not always lived in dependence, and wished to know the particulars of his life; but delicacy of situation prevented the gratification of her curiosity. The deference they paid each other, was visible to a scrutinizing eye; consequently,

quently, Miss Nancy Belcroft was soon alive to suspicion. She saw, or rather fancied she saw, symptoms of a mutual attachment; and it was not long ere she pronounced Mr. Lloyd and Miss Howard to be violently in love with each other.

“And suppose they are, Nancy?” asked Miss Belcroft, who always joined Laura’s side of a question, to strengthen her interest with Captain Catchpole; “Miss Howard has nobody’s leave to ask but that of her uncle.”

“Do you think her uncle will give her a fortune worth Mr. Lloyd’s acceptance!” cried Nancy.

“It will be easy for such a man as the Captain,” returned Miss Belcroft, “to put them into a situation without much expence to himself; and if ever *I* should have any influence with him, I am sure I shall promote Eliza’s interest.”

This was essence of wormwood to Miss Nancy, who left the room with saying—

“You are not yet, child, secure on your own account.”

Irritated

Irritated to the highest degree, Miss Belcroft sought Lady Laura; and with very little preparation, commenced the following dialogue.

Miss B.—Heigh-ho! It is a sad thing to be in love, is it not, my dear Miss Howard?

Lady L.—I really cannot speak from experience; but I should suppose it to be extremely pleasant. Oblige me with your real opinion (*smiling as she spoke*), for I fancy *you* are sufficiently experienced to give lectures on the subject.

Miss B. with affectation.—Oh you censorious thing you! What business have you to imagine I know about love-matters?

Lady L.—I have frequently heard you sigh, and I cannot suppose you have any other cause for the heigh-ho! with which you began this conversation.

Miss B.—And who, pray, do you fancy to be the object of my affection?

Lady L.—That I am not authorized to declare.

Miss B.—But cannot you guess for once?

Lady L.—No ; but if it depended upon me, I would almost venture to direct your choice.

Miss B.—To whom? Dear creature, do tell me to whom you would guide my affection. Yet (*with a sigh, and after that, a blush*) I am afraid your guidance would now be too late.

Lady L.—Then it is not worth my endeavouring—

Miss B. interrupting.—Yes, you ought to—to assist me ; because if you had never come to Philadelphia, I should not yet—

Lady L.—Have been in love. Then I am right, and I very sincerely and very heartily wish you success.

Miss B.—And do you indeed ! My dear Eliza, do you indeed wish me to—

Lady L.—Be Mrs. Catchpole ! Yes ; and I speak with the utmost truth when
I aver

I aver that I cannot, under my present circumstances, contemplate an event that would afford me more sincere satisfaction.

Miss B.—Well then I will own that I often anticipate the time of the Captain's return.

Lady L. with a sigh.—Heaven grant it may be propitious to us all!

Miss B.—Oh, my dear Miss Howard! I know the motive of that sigh. Nay, do not look alarmed. I know why you are apprehensive of seeing your uncle; but leave matters to *my* management. If ever I am Mrs. Catchpole, you shall be Mrs. Lloyd.

Lady L.—Mrs. Lloyd, Miss Belcroft! How, in the name of wonder, did ever such an idea enter your mind!

Miss B.—Very naturally, to be sure. It is easy to see that he adores you; and it is not very difficult to perceive that you think him a very charming young man.

Lady L.—That I think Mr. Lloyd extremely agreeable in every respect, I make

no hesitation to acknowledge ; but he never was presented to my imagination in the light of either a husband or a lover ; nor did he, I dare aver, ever distinguish me in his idea from any of the young people who visit in this family.

Miss B.—Ah, Eliza ! Eliza ! you will not confide in me. Where had you and Mr. Lloyd been walking last Tuesday evening ? Mr. Montgomery said he saw you together in the suburbs.

Lady L.—It was mere chance, or rather good fortune on my side, that brought us together at the time you mention. I had been walking on the banks of the School-kill ; and the darkness, which in this climate increases much faster after the sun is below the horizon, than it does in England, surprised me at a considerable distance from the city ; at which juncture, the appearance of Mr. Lloyd at the corner of Cyprus hill, gave me much pleasure. He walked with me till we arrived at the post-office, where he stopped to
give

give in some letters, and I pursued my way home.

Miss B.—This appears to be an artless account: but (*with an arch look*) what did you talk about?

Lady L.—Of various matters—chiefly sentimental; and Mr. Lloyd spoke well on all subjects. His understanding is good; and his education must have been good likewise, as many of his observations, advanced without the least appearance of pedantry, confessed the scholar.

Miss B.—Ah, my friend! this opinion shews more than friendship! Depend upon it your heart is in danger.

Lady L.—I should be extremely sorry not to think you mistaken; for I am convinced Mr. Lloyd has no one sentiment for me which leads to love. So far from his intending to give me his heart, he has not, I think, a heart to give.

Miss B.—What induces you to form that opinion?

Lady L.—His whole conduct—his looks, his words, his manner.

Miss B.—My dear Miss Howard, this shews your total ignorance of even the appearance of the passion. Whenever you are in company, Mr. Lloyd is more than usually animated, and he views you with admiration.

Lady L.—Then I am sorry for *that*; for much as I esteem his merits, my approbation is not allied to love.

Much more was said on both sides, Lady Laura would not acknowledge the affection Miss Belcroft wished to persuade her she entertained for Mr. Lloyd; nor would Miss Belcroft give up the idea she had imbibed, and was desirous of retaining, because she imagined it might, if properly managed, be a means of accelerating her own union with Captain Catchpole.

CHAP. XIII.

*Suspense.—Quakers.—The Return of the Ship.—
The Equity of Mr. Belcroft.—An Apostrophe
to the British Fair.*

Whoever will be happy, must bend his mind to his condition, and preserve an indifference for what is more than sufficient.

FOR several successive months, the days of Lady Laura passed with scarce any variation. In the city of Philadelphia she found many congenial minds, but none in so high a degree as to supersede the remembrance of Clarissa Melville, for whom she grieved every day still more,

as an increased knowledge of the world convinced her that friendship such as their's had been, was not frequently experienced during a state of sublunary existence.

The most valuable connexions our Laura formed in Pensylvania, were amongst those respectable sectarians denominated Quakers. In *their* company and conversation she generally found her mind tranquillized; the simplicity of their habits was a pleasing relief to the bustle which constantly prevailed in the house of Mr. Belcroft, where it was erroneously believed that happiness could only be produced by a tumult of what is mistermmed pleasure.

It is a principle strictly adhered to by people of the above-mentioned persuasion, never to be officious in making proselytes to their own opinion, alledging that it was not their province to decide in what manner such or such individuals shall worship the Almighty Ruler, who may perhaps chuse it should thus stand evinced that it is not the LETTER, but the SPIRIT which giveth

giveth life; and that the effusions of *true piety* are equally acceptable, under every appearance, from every position, and in every language. Yet, notwithstanding this forbearance, they are consciously confirmed of the superior spirituality of their own religion, *in its primitive principles*; not so much contending for the conformity of their *appearance*, as for the pure simplicity of their addresses to THE THRONE OF MERCY.

About the period to which we are advanced, Mr. Lloyd's friend, Mr. Warder, returned from a journey to the Northern States; and in a conversation with Mr. Belcroft, affirmed Mr. Lloyd's being a young man of fashion and fortune, which raised a wish in the breasts of the parents that one of the daughters might secure his affection; and his attention to *Miss Howard* was consequently a subject for jealousy, but Miss Belcroft still continued her professions of attachment to our lovely exile.

The

The return of Captain Catchpole was now daily expected, but expected in vain for several weeks. Lady Laura, though she dreaded a renewal of his solicitations, began to be uneasy at his delay, as the period for which he had paid Mr. Belcroft for her board, was more than half expired; and she, whose heart was the seat of munificence, was not now possessed of an abundance of that ore which many people value above all other beauties in either the natural or the moral world.

Miss Belcroft walked every evening on the banks of the Delaware with our heroine, in the hope of seeing, on the deck of some one of the numerous ships which are continually sailing up that beautiful river, the friend for whose appearance they were both impatient; but how different were the sentiments by which the two ladies were actuated! Laura wished, yet dreaded his arrival. As a protector, she revered him; and while as such she considered him, gratitude flushed her cheek, and brightened

brightened her eye; but when reflection presented him as a lover, she shuddered, and not all her obligation to him could preclude disgust. On the contrary, Miss Belcroft anticipated the tenderness of his address, the expressive glance of his eye, and all the affectionate indications that usually precede a declaration of attachment. Numberless were the disappointments our two ladies experienced; every ship they saw, enlivened their hope; which sickened when it passed them, without presenting the object of pursuit.

At length a vessel appeared, which Miss Belcroft announced to be the one in which Captain Catchpole had sailed from Philadelphia. She knew it from the curious figure painted upon the head. Laura, who had not so particularly noticed it, expressed her apprehension of her being mistaken, as the Captain did not present himself to their view. In great anxiety, they followed the vessel till she reached the quay, when Miss Belcroft asked one
of

of the sailors if Captain Catchpole was on board.

“ *Captain Catchpole is dead!*” was the reply, which transfixed the ladies to the spot in amazement and distress, while the intelligencer continued—

“ He died on his passage from Philadelphia to England, and the vessel is now the property of Captain Handsworth, who stands yonder ;” pointing to a gentleman upon the deck.

Of him Miss Belcroft, after she was in some measure recovered from her surprise, enquired respecting the fate of her admirer ; and received a confirmation of his having died of a fever within three weeks after his leaving the shores of America.

The chagrin of Miss Belcroft may easily be imagined by ladies who, from an unlucky stroke of fortune, have been suddenly disappointed in their expectations of securing the heart of a handsome partner at a ball, or of conquering some gay man of fortune, for whom all the Misses in the vicinity

vicinity were spreading their allurements, determining, if they succeed in their design of taking him captive, to marry him on account of his situation, without one particle of affection for the man himself. If they are disappointed, they fancy themselves to have been really in love, merely because the attainment of their wishes was not within their power.

Lady Laura's distress was of a nature far different from that which depressed the spirits of Miss Belcroft. The death of Captain Catchpole deprived her of every source of future provision, and she was in a country where she had no friends to either protect or advise her, as to the conduct it would be eligible for her to pursue, in order to procure a reputable and comfortable maintenance. Had she been in England, she would have practised her former design of offering herself as either a teacher in a gentleman's family, or an attendant upon some young woman of fashion. Elegantly as she had been educated,

cated, her mind was not above her present circumstances. She was glad she had parted with her title; which she justly judged would only have rendered her poverty contemptible in the eyes of those who would have envied the distinction. Her wishes to return to England were ardent; but she had not sufficient to defray the charges of the voyage. Mr. Belcroft, indeed, were she to leave his family at that period, would be some pounds in her debt; but he being one of those very honest gentlemen who would disdain to take any advantage of the necessities of a fellow-creature *which the laws of the land would not authorize*, might alledge that the sum he received from her uncle, was paid for her maintenance and accommodation; that therefore it would be subverting the gentleman's generous intention to apply it to a purpose so foreign as to convey her to a country from whence he thought it proper to conduct her in person.

“ Perfectly

“ Perfectly equitable !” observes the man of legal rectitude. “ We should always abide by the letter of the law.”

But as we have an idea that it is sometimes eligible to enter likewise into the spirit of it, we pronounce it would have been but simple justice in Mr. Belcroft to refund the money he had received from Mr. Humphrey Catchpole, as an equivalent for that entertainment in his family which the altered circumstances in Lady Laura's situation rendered it imprudent she should continue to accept ; for why should she waste any portion of time in a manner entirely useless, when at the termination of the given period, her finances would be still more exhausted ? Yet suppose she *could* find means—(this was her reasoning)—of being reconveyed to her natal shore, what course could she even there pursue ? Were she to apply to her aunts, they would probably send her again out of the kingdom ; but, at any rate, it was proper they should know where she was, as they now perhaps could not tell
 where

where to convey to her the promised succours. She therefore determined to write to them, and to represent her destitute situation.

In almost perfect silence, and with oppressed minds, the ladies returned to their habitation. Miss Belcroft, whose preference for the Captain solely originated in the idea of his being able to make her a gentlewoman, began already to consider against whom she should next direct her battery; and Mr. Lloyd that moment pervading her imagination, she revolved what Mr. Warder had asserted respecting his circumstances, and instantly determined upon besieging his affection, notwithstanding his supposed partiality for Lady Laura, *alias* Miss Howard, and the known attachment of her sister Nancy for the object of her assault.

Lady Laura, as soon as she entered the house, rushed into her apartment, and, throwing herself into a chair, dissolved into tears, in which she indulged till Faith represented Mercy hovering around her;

her; and she was conscious of ingratitude and infidelity in deploring what was perhaps a happy deliverance.

She acknowledged her fault. She prayed to be strengthened, and her prayer was answered. After sitting some time in perfect stillness, as it was her custom often to do, she recollected the box which Humphrey Catchpole had left in the warehouse at Chester, and which was now lodged in the care of Mr. Belcroft. This she thought she had a right to examine, and descended into the room where the family were assembled in consultation, to request Mr. Belcroft would order it to be conveyed into her chamber.

Mr. Belcroft hesitated. Mrs. Belcroft looked at her with haughtiness. Miss averted her eyes; the son left the room, and the two younger ladies viewed her with supercilious contempt.

Surprised by such an unusual reception from a family which had always treated her

her with even obsequious complaisance, she stood silent, till Mrs. Belcroft said, with a vulgarity which distinguished her character—

“ I am amazed, Miss, that you can think of looking any of us in the face after such behaviours !”

“ I really do not understand your meaning, Madam,” coolly replied Lady Laura, “ as I am not conscious of any conduct which merits your reproaches.”

“ Not conscious, Miss ! Why have you not inveigled our Tommy to be in love with you, at the same time that you in a manner *kept company* with Mr. Lloyd, who, I will assure you, Miss, was not put under our care to be thrown away upon people of *no fortune*,” said the mistress of the family, with a raised countenance, assuming the appearance of a dignity she was far from possessing.

“ I inveigle Mr. Thomas Belcroft to be in love with me !” exclaimed Laura, with
indig-

indignancy. "What circumstance can possibly have induced you to form such a conclusion, Madam?!"

"Oh! as to your fine speeches, Miss, I matter not them a straw; and as to Mr. Lloyd——"

"Well, well, Nanny, say no more now about that; let us think about other things," said Mr. Belcroft; "and first, as to the box left by the Captain at Chester, and now under my care. I do not know, Miss Howard, by what authority you demand possession of that property."

"If you know who has a greater claim to it, Sir," returned our Laura, "I will readily resign my pretensions. All my request is, to see it examined, that I may know whether or not it contains any letters, papers, or memoranda in which I am interested."

Lady Laura had not lived long enough in the world to discover that self-interest is the polar star of people in the common walks of life; she was therefore absolutely
astonished

astonished at the apparent and sudden change in the Belcrofts, which commenced with the information of the death of Captain Catchpole.

Upon her return from her walk, Miss had summoned the family to announce the event in form, and lamented her own disappointment, which she said was the greater, as she had in the interim neglected several opportunities of establishing herself in life, which might probably have proved of superior advantage. She then, without unveiling her own design, which was, when Laura should be removed, to supplant her sister Nancy, intimated her perfect conviction that their boarder had been endeavouring, she feared not without some degree of success, to ensnare the affection of Mr. Lloyd—a gentleman, she observed, that, according to Mr. Warder's assertion, which could not be questioned, no one of her father's daughters need be ashamed of seeing with a preference; and ended with saying that

Miss

Miss Howard's absence would be more eligible than her continuance in the family; as, though it was a subject of astonishment to her, the gentlemen who visited at their house, always appeared to pay more attention to her, than they did to either her sisters or herself.

"I do not know," said Master Tommy, "why that should much surprise you, Patty, as you must be convinced she has more beauty than you, and Nancy, and Sall all put together."

This assertion at once set every female tongue in motion. They all spoke in the same moment, and all to the same effect. "They were *amazed* at his assurance!"—"What did he *mean* by talking in that manner!"—"They were *ashamed* of his want of *taste*!"—"Would disown him as a brother or a son," for Mrs. Belcroft joined the clamours of her daughters—"and thought he had more regard for his *sisters*, than to talk in that *ridiculous* style!"

Mr. Belcroft, though he confessed the girl was well enough to look at, said he hoped Tommy knew better than to be caught by an empty hand.

See, my fair country-women, the difference between the American and the English ladies ! The daughters of our happy island are generous and disinterested. They unite themselves to the brave sons of their country from motives of the purest denomination—from a love of their virtuous conduct ! —from a chaste, though a personal affection ! The temperature of the climate infuses a lovely mediocrity into the minds of our youth of both sexes ; and our heroes disdain even to enquire about the fortune of the fair, whose good sense and sweetness, more than even their beauty, determine their choice in marriage, so changed are our principles since the last century ; for then, the grand question was—“ *What has she ?*” But now—“ *What is she ?*” is all the enquiry not only of our young gentlemen them-

themselves, but even of the most careful parents.

Are these lines perused by any one who, suspecting them to be sarcastic, seek for a meaning beyond that which is expressed? Take care! take care! good cavilling friend, to keep thy injurious suspicions confined within the precincts of thy own breast, lest thou givest cause for any one to conjecture that it is the feculence which soils that mansion, that raises in thy imagination the apprehension of deceit.

Ye lovely daughters of Britannia! assert your privileges, and expel from your presence the wretch who dares to intimate that ye ever consent to the legal prostitution of selling yourselves for life to the highest bidders.

CHAP. XIV.*Lady Laura in Distress.*

Misfortunes that come not by our own folly, are the trials of Heaven; and it is our own fault if they turn not to our advantage.

IT was not our intention to finish the last chapter without giving the result of the conversation which preceded our apostrophe to the lovely females of our united kingdom; but the contemplation of their superior excellencies rendered us unable, with that ease and dignity which we wish on all occasions to preserve, to descend to the daughters of America.

To

To the expressed hope of his father, at which we interrupted the conversation, Master Tommy replied—

“As to her being empty handed, that is no fault of her's : and as to being caught, I wish I could catch *her*.”

This speech was construed into an avowal of affection, and it was immediately pronounced that Eliza Howard, a girl without a shilling in the world, and, for what any one could prove to the contrary, of a bad character, had entrapped, not only Mr. Lloyd, but the son of *her benefactor* !

This was now the disrespectful language in which the Belcrofts talked of Lady Laura Elizabeth Warburton, one of the first of British females, beautiful in person, elegant in manners, angelic in disposition, brilliant in understanding, as perfectly pure in principle as any creature can be, who retains the garb of mortality ; and (a much higher recommendation to our very *solid* friends) she was not only the

legitimate daughter of an Earl, but had a legal, as well as an equitable title to an estate of many thousands *per annum*!

Our heroine is now established in the esteem of every reader of every description.

The celebrated Venessa admires her for her beauty—Junoetta, for her graces Cecilia, the gentle maid of Swandon Tower, loves the sweetness of her disposition. By Sapientia, she is valued for her intellectual endowments; by Rectitia, for her goodness. The Right Honourables and Right Nobles estimate her according to her titular aggrandizement; and the Avaros of the age adore her on account of her claim to a considerable portion of the surface of the earth, and a large share of its beloved entrails. Her beauty, her virtues, and even her illustrious descent, vanish in the opinion of these dirt-loving heroes, when contrasted with images of the precious metal they so devoutly idolize. The preference is natural, as the heads of
these

these gentry are lead, their hearts iron; consequently, according to common computation, they consider gold as far more valuable than what they imagine to be the composition of heads and hearts in general.

Such a young woman as Lady Laura Warburton would be esteemed by people for possessing what they value *themselves* upon, so long as she continued an absent character; but present her *in propria persona*, and the note would be changed. Her figure would be criticized, her qualities contemned, her ancestry depreciated, and her possessions undervalued, as she would then be an object of envy, consequently of dislike.

Just as it was determined that Laura was to be expelled the *hospitable* mansion of Mr. Belcroft, she entered the room where the consultation was held, and requested the box of the deceased Humphrey Catchpole, or at least that it might be opened in her presence; and Mr.

Belcroft at length consenting to its being put entirely into her possession, it was carried to her chamber; but before she retired, Laura reverted to Mrs. Belcroft's assertion respecting her son and Mr. Lloyd, which opened a debate, that was closed with a wish from the mistress of the family, that Lady Laura would provide herself with other lodgings, *for that there she should not be twenty-four hours longer!*

What a mandate for the amiable girl at that crisis!—Her finances nearly exhausted!—her reputation in danger!—a total stranger in a strange country, consequently entirely unprotected!—Her misfortunes at that moment appeared in their darkest colours. She sat suspended, till recollecting the box, and hoping something consolatory might be found in the contents—the human mind, when in distress, catching, like a drowning person, at every trifling appearance of relief—she started, and excusing herself from attending

ing

ing at supper, retired to her own apartment, where instantly cutting the cords which bound the box, and applying some of the keys with which she had for that purpose been furnished, soon succeeded in her wishes to examine its contents.

Light summer clothing, suited to a fervid climate, was first presented to her view. This she carefully unfolded, in expectation of meeting with something of more consequence; but disappointment attended her search, till she perceived a false bottom, the removal of which discovered a memorandum book, some letters, and other loose papers.

Humphrey Catchpole, as Lady Laura well knew, was particularly methodical; his native propensity to exactness, and an observance of minutiae having been nurtured by a seafaring life, in which journals, undiversified by any thing but change of weather, are deemed matters of great importance, and engross tiresome pages in our best publications of voyages and travels.

Were we not in haste to attend the sorrows of our Laura, we would enlarge upon the unpleasant details of this kind, in which exploring writers seldom fail to indulge. We are tired with—"Wind at north-north-east, and south by west," with threatening clouds, and squalls of no consequence. Authors of this kind, who set out with a determination of writing a history of their travels, think they cannot too soon commence their labours; and the perverse or propitious gale being a circumstance of considerable import to every one of Neptune's subjects, who have nothing else of moment to employ their faculties, relate with a serious exactness the perpetual varying of wind and weather, which they are apt to forget will be of trifling concern to their readers on *dry land*.

Cunning from childhood, cautious from education, subtle from habit, and wary from experience, Captain Catchpole constantly kept a journal of every transaction

in

in which he was concerned, whether great or small; but especially respecting such occurrences as he believed might terminate importantly. He would even, with a view to some probable self-interest, take minutes of common conversations, if anything tending to dispute arose in the company; and more than once had made his advantage of such a proceeding, by unexpectedly standing forth as a witness in a Court of Justice. With such a mind, it will readily be believed he had not failed to take exact memoranda of all the particulars respecting the intended destruction of Lady Laura. He had indeed been more exactly minute in his annotation of circumstances (which, from their tendency, excited his utmost caution) than usual; all which, with the several letters he had received upon the subject, and copies of his replies, were now before the eyes of the innocent object of the diabolical conspiracy.

As soon as Laura saw the papers, her

hope of there being some Bank or other bills, enlivened her spirits; but finding none of these, she began to peruse the manuscripts, some of which struck her motionless with astonishment, and stiffened her with horror. At first she could not believe herself right in her comprehension; yet without daring to seek for either a confirmation or removal of her apprehensions, she arose from her seat, traversed the room, and again sat down with the papers in her hand, till, summoning resolution, she once more read what manifested the black design, and fell upon the floor without sense or motion. In this situation she continued a considerable time; and when recollection returned, found herself in total darkness. For some moments she thought she must be in a dream; but the reality of the shocking circumstances which had deprived her of consciousness, soon stood confessed, and she was only prevented from returning to the condition from which she was just recovered,

recovered, by a sudden and violent gush of tears. This in some measure relieved the heavy pressure upon her breast, which a moment before seemed to threaten suffocation. She now endeavoured to find the door, that she might call, not chusing to ring her bell, for a light; but when she observed that the lamp which used to hang in the staircase, was extinguished, and that the house was in perfect stillness, she judged she must have long lain senseless; and unwilling to disturb the family, in silence and darkness returned, and reaching her bed, threw herself upon it in a state more nearly approaching to despair than any she had previously experienced. Every view on this side the grave was dismal and obscure, every prospect beyond it closed!—even Heaven itself seemed shut against her approaches; and intellectual as well as natural light extinguished!

What a darkness is this! A darkness, compared with which, the deepest midnight

is noontide brightness ! The soul mourns, and refuses comfort ; or rather, no comfort congenial to its essence, is tendered to its acceptance ! But “ *when the cloud turns forth its silver lining on the night !* ” —when rays celestial penetrate the gloom, and Christian brightness dawns upon the mind, what sun, like this, irradiates the heart !—what else on earth deserves the name of bliss !

Are our readers offended with aspirations after better things than this planet of our's can produce ? Do they, with a relish for nothing but animal food, despise the nectar and ambrosia offered at our ethereal entertainments ! Then let them treat themselves with a solid meal from the stores of modern philosophy, which are so palatable to gross appetites ; and resign their seats at our banquets, to those whose taste is more delectable.

And now our criticizers are again all up in arms. Conceit ! insolence ! arrogance ! vanity ! and insufferable pride, is the
obliging

obliging language we receive in return for our endeavours to amuse, and——let us *whisper* it in the ears of our friends, or speak it as an aside at a play——to *improve* the triflers of the nineteenth century.

But by whom are we treated in the civil style above recorded ?

By those who stand most in need of our instruction—by those who, viewing circumstances through a misleading medium, and forming thereby erroneous opinions of men and manners, fancy themselves our superiors—by those who, being possessed of what they term advantages, are of too much consequence to take lessons from any individuals who move in the common walks of life, however qualified for preceptors by long experience and close observation.

While a writer keeps in the shades, he is imagined to be a personage of importance—a being distinct from the order of his readers ; but if he once renders himself visible, his consequence is extinguished,

guished, and they are astonished that a creature like themselves, should dare to take upon him the office of a teacher.

Oppressed by misfortune, tired with retrospection, and wearied with forming and rejecting various plans for futurity, grief at length performed a kind office, and lulled our poor Laura to sleep. But it was late when she closed her eyes, and late when she awoke. The sun, reflected by the clear waters of the Delawar, had long pervaded the windows of her apartment; and at length, darting his beams across her eyes, awakened her from a happy oblivion, to a fresh sense of sorrow. Sleep, however, had composed her spirits; and though her griefs were still poignant, Patience, with Hope in her train, presented her alleviating powers; and rising with a mind somewhat tranquillized, she applied for assistance from that Source from which only it could be obtained, and descended to the breakfast-room, where she was no
sooner

sooner seated, than Mrs. Belcroft entered, and said—

“ You will not forget to provide yourself, Miss ; for you cannot sleep here any more.”

“ Mr. Belcroft, Madam,” replied Lady Laura, “ has been paid for several weeks of my board beyond the present period ; and I cannot suppose he will turn me from his house before the expiration of the term stipulated, at least not before I have procured another situation.”

“ Oh, as to that, Miss, you may have another situation this very day ; for Mrs. Grapman wants a young body to wait upon her children, and to tutor them ; and as I dare say you have not much to live upon, why how can you do better than by getting something ?” was the unfeeling woman’s answer to Laura’s modest expostulation, as the rest of the family entered the room.

The subject was now general, and our heroine

heroine was convinced that Mr. Belcroft's house was no longer an asylum for her. The gentleman, indeed, told her that as far as a few dollars would go, she might look upon him as her friend; and that, if she required it, he would give her a character.

Lady Laura thanked him for the humiliating offer, but expressed a hope that her conduct had been such as would render unnecessary the last part of his intended favour.

The bell was now rung for the gentlemen assistants to attend the breakfast table; and after one cup of tea, she returned to her apartment.

Let our stoical reader present to himself a beautiful woman in the bloom of life, tall and elegantly formed; vivacity, sweetness, modesty, spirit, and gentleness contending to denominate the most lovely set of features, which received additional beauty from a complexion admirably fair
and

and clear, and from a charming glow which evinced soundness of constitution. Her hair, her lips, her eyes,—[it was difficult to say which of these three beauties were of most advantage to her face],—all excelling.

The stoic may now imagine this lovely creature to be deserted by every human being—not only persecuted by her relations, but, in their belief, buried by their order in the bosom of the Atlantic; separated from every friend she ever loved, destitute of fortune, and uncertain where she next could sleep or eat. Mr. Lloyd, who seemed to be greatly interested in her welfare, excepted, there was not she believed in existence, one mortal who considered it of consequence whether she was happy or wretched—whether she lived or whether she died! See her sit with her head leaning against the wall, her hands folded, as in supplication, and her eyes surcharged with tears, raised to Heaven, while

while a sigh of deepest sorrow swells her lovely breast ; and if the picture does not awaken pity, and even tenderness, let him withdraw himself from the “ haunts of men,” and, repairing to the Lybian forests, herd with his brother savages, for whose society only he is calculated.

CHAP. XV.

*Transition from the Family of Mr. Belcroft to
that of Mr. Grapman.—Lady Laura's
Adieu to Mr. Lloyd.*

A man who suffers himself to tread upon the verge of the law, would not scruple to break its most sacred boundaries, if he could commit the trespass with impunity.

LADY Laura sat some time revolving the circumstances by which she was environed, and considering what line of conduct she could possibly pursue, to procure a future sustenance. At length she determined, in consequence of Mrs. Belcroft's hint, to make an application to Mrs.

Mrs. Grapman, of whom she had heard much, and had once seen.

Mrs. Grapman was a woman of low extraction, and no education. In early life she was married to a man of large property, who died when she was about forty years of age, and left her entire mistress of his possessions. In six months after his decease, she gave her hand and fortune to a very handsome young officer, by whom she had three daughters. For these daughters, the eldest eight years old, the youngest four, she now wanted an attendant. The situation was humiliating, but she had no alternative. She would not be permitted to continue at Mr. Belcroft's, nor could she return to England :—her finances were not sufficient; and if they were, to whom could she there apply ?—By the copy of Humphrey Catchpole's letter to his brother, it was evident her relations must believe her to be dead; and who would take the part of a penniless

less girl, against people of such powerful property ! Besides, it would be madness to throw herself again into the hands of those who had conspired, and doubtless would again conspire, her death, and that probably by means not fallable. To Mrs. Grapman, therefore, she determined to offer her services, and was at length accepted in a capacity very little superior to that of a waiting-maid. When she intimated her expectation to Mr. Belcroft, of receiving from him the surplus of the money that Captain Catchpole had paid for her board, the legality of the gentleman's reply was so striking, that we think it deserves to be upon record ; and as our modesty, great as it is, is not absolutely invincible, we cannot but believe that these our most profound compositions will be handed down to the latest posterity* ;
therefore,

* It will hardly be credited that people who can read, can so mistake the use of words, as to construe what is obviously ironical, into self-conceit and arrogance ; but as this was actually
the

therefore, to give to future ages one certain rule of conduct, we present Mr. Belcroft's sentiments entire.

“Why look ye, Miss Howard, this is a business which cannot be settled without due consideration. I do not refuse to acknowledge that I did receive some little trifle from Captain Catchpole, in consideration of my consenting to permit your dwelling under my roof in safety, for a certain length of time; but there never was any written agreement between us, nor was it specified in what *manner* you should be maintained. Neither have you, as I well know, any receipt for the sum he paid me on your account, as I did not give it him till we were at Chester; for as he did not ask for it, I had no business to put him in mind of it: therefore, Madam, you cannot have any proofs to

the case respecting some similar passages in the *Microcosm*, the writer thinks it a duty to conscious opposite principles, to inform these kind of critics of their misapprehension, and to request their allowance for a harmless attempt at humour.

found

found a process upon. If the law would give you any damages, I should be a very dishonest man to keep the money from you; but as that is not the case, I should much wrong my family to part with it. If every one would say as much as I do, and do as much likewise, we should not have so many rogues to cheat us of our property as we now have. The law, Miss Howard—the law is the great boundary of right and wrong: whoever steps beyond it, must be a villain; whoever keeps within its limits, is a truly honest man.”

The reply of our heroine to this legal harangue was so ineffectual, that it is useless to insert it. It was only a weak endeavour to prove, from some obsolete principles, that a man *might* perform all which the law enjoins, and yet fall very short of the duty of even a moral man, much more of that which the Great Author of Christianity enforced and exemplified.

Mr. Belcroft smiled at her folly, and

told her that if she chose to accept a couple of dollars, they were very much at her service; but that she must not expect any thing more from his bounty, for that "charity began at home."

"And with you, Sir," replied Laura, "I believe it *ends* there," turning from him with that air of dignity, devoid of pride, which results from a conscious superiority of sentiment.

When Mrs. Grapman first received Lady Laura into her service, she instructed her in the duties of her new office in words of high self-consequence—told her that the *young ladies* who were to be entrusted to her care, were not to be treated as *common children*; that they would be entitled to a large property at her death; that she insisted upon their being indulged in every thing they desired, and that she must always remember they were descended from people very different from those with whom she probably had been accustomed to converse.

For

For a few minutes we will leave Lady Laura to accommodate herself to her new employment, and take our leave of the family of Mr. Belcroft.

When the young ladies heard of her intention of going to Mrs. Grapman, they were very much displeased; said that she ought to have been sent out of the way of both their brother and Mr. Lloyd, who, they doubted not, would now openly carry on an intrigue with a girl who perhaps might be their ruin; and wondered at the *unthinkingness*, which mentioned any thing in her hearing about Mrs. Grapman.

“Well, well! what *is* done, *is* done,” replied Mr. Belcroft. “At any rate I am glad she is going from the house; and as to Tom and Mr. Lloyd, the boys have both too much sense to court a woman without any money, I’ll warrant you: so let us hear no more about the matter.”

That we may take our final leave of the Belcrofts, we will stop to say that the

sisters quarrelled for the favour of Mr. Lloyd, now known to be a man of considerable consequence, but none of them had sufficient merit to obtain it; and the contention becoming so obvious as to render his situation disagreeable, he left the office, and engaged in the firm of a gentleman in New York, for whose son he conceived what deserved the truly noble appellation of friendship. Before his departure, he visited Lady Laura at Mr. Grapman's, expressed the high esteem he entertained for her merits, made an offer of his best services, and assured her there were few incidents that would afford him greater satisfaction, than an opportunity to promote her interest and happiness.

With a grateful heart, and cordial expressions of her gratitude, Laura returned the kindness of Mr. Lloyd; telling him, the opinion she had imbibed of him would induce her to accept, without hesitation, his offer of assistance, did she stand in need of it; but that she hoped
she

she should find her present situation tolerable. After some little conversation respecting the family of the Belcrofts, Mr. Lloyd took his leave. Lady Laura was concerned at his departure, but said, with an emphasis—"We shall meet again in happier times ; till then—farewell !"

Mr. Lloyd looked at her with admiration, and left her, with a hope that her words would be verified.

CHAP. XVI.*Belle Vue; and a lawless Libertine.*

A premeditated offence of small import, is more heinous than a crime of greater magnitude hastily committed.

WHEN Lady Laura first entered upon her office, Mr. Grapman was in Virginia, where he continued several weeks. In the interim, her time passed not unpleasantly; the lady seemed pleased with her method of instruction, and the children were good-humoured and docile.

About five miles from the city of Philadelphia, Mr. Grapman had purchased a neat little country house, in which the children

children usually passed the summer months; but Mrs. Grapman, who was extremely fond of company, disliked the retiredness of the situation, which was admired for the romantic beauties of the encircling scenery. Before the house was a sloping lawn, interspersed with irregular shaped plats of various flowers. At a little distance on the right was seen the Schoolkill falling over a broken rock into a kind of basin, from which it again flowed quietly along the bed of the river. On the left was the spacious Delawar, which was actuated by the tide at the distance of a hundred and fifty miles from the ocean; and beyond it rose, in magnificent heights, the evergreen woods of the Jerseys. From the front of the house appeared the city of *Brotherly-love*; and behind it an immense and fertile country, embosomed in forests that seemed to have been the growth of ages.

When Mr. Grapman returned from
M 4 the

the southern provinces, he saw, and seemed to see with admiration, the new attendant upon his children. At her first appearance, he supposed her to be a visitant of his Lady's, and made her a most profound reverence; but being undeceived, he endeavoured to conceal the surprise which her beauty had created, and with apparent carelessness, asked from whence she came, observing that she appeared too young to be entrusted with the little ones; but Mrs. Grapman affirmed her to be perfectly qualified for the office, and asked her husband if he did not think her very handsome.

"I did not much observe her," dissimulated he; "but I think she appeared rather awkward."

"Dear Mr. Grapman!" replied the lady, "you greatly injure my taste. I am sure there is not a woman in the province who has a genteeler set of domestics than I have; and I think Eliza does credit to my choice."

She

“She is well enough for what she is,” returned he. “I do not conceive that a servant is the better for being handsome.”

“I have a pride in having handsome maids,” said the lady, “as it shews that I am not afraid of you, my dear. I know your sense and prudence, as well as affection, will guard you against temptation of that kind; and I am too happy in my belief, and too proud of it, not to shew it to the world.”

“You are very good, my dear,” returned the gentleman, while he was meditating how he could best elude the lady’s observance of his already determined attack upon her lovely domestic, who appeared in his eyes, as indeed she must in those of every beholder, one of the most beautiful of terrestrial beings. Mr. Grapman was a connoisseur in female charms, and it was the business of his life to discover those who possessed them in the highest degree; but his consort,

whose beauty, if she ever boasted any, was vanished "without leaving a trace behind," believed him to be perfectly indifferent to the brightest allurements the sex could offer.

The north-westerly winds, which drive the icy particles over a large district of the American Continent, during the period of Sol's retiring beyond the equator, now began to abate their fury; the frozen land relaxed; the bosoms of the rivers, lately oppressed by enormous loaded waggons, were again trackless, and conveyed the treasures of foreign nations to the cities they adorned, and with a celerity that appeared almost magical, and which those who never witnessed, could scarce credit; the face of the country, which a few weeks back wore a Laplandish appearance, now discovered the beauties of Flora, and gave promises to return, with manifold interest, the riches bestowed upon it by the munificent Ceres. The increasing warmth of the atmosphere reminded the inhabitants

ants of Philadelphia of the preferable pleasures afforded by the country, to which Mr. and Mrs. Grapman were generally the latest to retire ; but at this period the gentleman seemed inclined to make an earlier removal, and at least insisted that it was highly requisite for the *children* to be carried into a purer element, to which his lady readily consented, and Laura attended her young pupils to Belle Vue.

For three days our heroine thought herself a shepherdess in Arcadia. The little ones amused themselves in playing with some sheep of the small Welch breed, which sported upon the lawn ; and Laura indulged her native bias of depicting the surrounding scenery. A small case of drawing materials, which she always carried in her pocket, was a frequent relief to her solitary hours ; and most of her landscapes were interspersed with figures, which strikingly represented some of her lost friends.

On the fourth day of her residence in the country, Mr. Grapman drove his phaeton up the avenue; and being told that the children, with their young preceptress, were straying in the woods, he alighted, and followed them, where he found Lady Laura at her usual employ, sketching the distant prospect; and she being seated with her back toward him, he approached without her hearing him, and stood astonished at her perfection in the science; but being more charmed with her person than with her accomplishments, he threw himself upon the bank on which she was sitting, and clasped her in his arms. Alarmed by the action, and not perceiving who it was that assailed her, she screamed aloud, and vainly attempted to rise, the rough libertine clasping her more closely, and stopping her mouth, almost her breath, with the rude pressure of his lips. At that instant the eldest little girl appearing in view, he hastily quitted his prey; and
approaching

approaching the children, returned with them into the house, where he afterwards found an opportunity to renew his attack upon Laura, and endeavoured to rally her out of her resentment, by ridiculing what he termed her prudery; but with gravity, and with an air of dignity, she gave him to understand that his gallantry, as he called it, was exercised upon a wrong person, and that it was not only protection, but respect which she thought herself entitled to from the husband of her mistress. Mr. Grapman, with a mixture of sarcasm and anger, desired her not to pretend to too much virtue, which he was convinced was nothing more than affectation, and that the importance she assumed, was perfectly inconsistent with her situation; then gazing upon her with an air of rapture, and again clasping her in his arms, he exclaimed—

“ But you are d-v-l-sh handsome, my dear; and I hope, by the time I return, will have better considered your duty.”

In saying which, he took several
 5 offensive

offensive liberties with her person, and imprinted half a hundred kisses upon her face and bosom.

Enraged to an exertion beyond her native strength, she tore herself from his rude embrace, sprang into an adjoining room, and locking the door, threw herself almost breathless upon a chair; but terror prevented her fainting.

Mr. Grapman, now near the age of thirty, was a tall, robust, yet handsome looking man, violent in his passions, and determined in his pursuits. The family of Belle Vue consisted of an elderly female domestic, a girl under her command, a kind of valet devoted to his master's pleasure, our lovely Laura Warburton, and the children.

Thus surrounded, no wonder that her situation appeared dreadful. She listened at the door, but heard no noise. She went to the window, saw Mr. Grapman's phaeton drawn up, and standing concealed behind the Venetian blind, heard him

him order the old woman to have all in readiness against *his coming*; and springing into the carriage, was drawn with velocity along the avenue.

“ *Against his coming!* Heavens! what do these words portend!

“ *To have all in readiness!* What can be the import? And what course ought I to pursue?”

Thus soliloquized our poor Laura as she traversed the room with hasty steps, undetermined what measure to adopt.

At length she appeared before old Sarah, who exclaimed—

“ Why, my pretty mistress, you seemed in a fearful pucker just now, when master was kind to you! Ah, I wish I had your face, and I would soon have money in my pocket.”

“ Kind to me, Sarah!” repeated Lady Laura; “ I cannot think that to be kindness, which tends to destroy my happiness.”

“ A fiddle faddle, my young Madam, for such nicety of thinking, and such coyness!

coyness ! A fine man, and a brave man, and a handsome man likes you ; and pray where is the harm in that ! If nobody is the wiser, why nobody is the worse ; and I can promise you I shall not tell tales ; master has known that, many and many a long day ago ! So, as I said, you need not be afraid of me."

Laura now trembled at the danger by which she was evidently environed. In a superior kind of distress to any she had ever experienced, she retired to her chamber, and to that counsellor, *her inmost mind*, which had never deceived her. Instantly she saw the necessity of quitting the family of Mr. Grapman, where it was now impossible she could continue with safety ; for, were she to acquaint the lady with the reproachable conduct of her husband, was it likely that that would ensure proper treatment to herself ! Certainly not : it would probably produce her dismissal with imputed dishonour. Besides, what right had she to make another person

person wretched! None. She therefore determined, rather than to sow dissension between Mr. and Mrs. Grapman, upon withdrawing from a situation which, under her present circumstances, she had considered as a comfortable asylum. Yet whither could she retire!—what pretence make for declining an office with which she had declared herself well pleased!

Unfortunate Laura Warburton!—again art thou thrown upon an unpitied world; not only exposed to the calumny which awaits thy unprotected sex and early age, but presented with a prospect of poverty and actual want!

Yet art thou not deserted. Thou art the care of Him who provides for the winged inhabitants of air, for the myriads of unseen creatures which are clothed and fed by His hand—by the hand of inexhaustible munificence! If thou abidest by His direction, He will guard thy steps—He will guard thee in perfect safety through the intricacies of this lower creation.

CHAP. XVII.

A Moonlight Night in North America.

Virtue in distress is the care of Providence.

A LIVELY faith and a bright hope illumined the mind of Laura Warburton under the heavy pressure of her present afflictions.

“ I shall not always be wretched,” said she to herself. “ My grandfather often led me to believe that happiness is more equally distributed than cursory observers are apt to imagine, and that a cloudy aspect in the life of man is usually succeeded by the brightest sky. Besides, afflic-

afflictions properly endured, will purify the mind, and teach it compassion for the woes of others ; and adversity prepares us to receive prosperity with the greater joy and gratitude."—But when her thought descended to its more accustomed level, she shrank from the horrors of her situation, and burst into a torrent of tears.

Night now advanced, and she determined to endeavour to banish all distressing ideas till the return of morning ; when, according to previous notice, she expected Mrs. Grapman to visit Belle Vue.

She now went into the apartment of the children ; and after finishing her daily instructions, put them to bed, then indulged herself, by the light of the moon, in a walk round the gardens ; after which, she retired to her sleeping-room : but the night being excessively warm, she sat down at her window, which was opposite a large piece of water, whose unruffled surface reflected the silver luminary in all its beauty.

Absorbed

Absorbed in contemplation, she continued in her situation till she heard a clock strike twelve—an hour in which most families in North America are at rest.

The night was perfectly still; not a breath of air moved the leaves of the trees, or disturbed the awful silence which reigned around, till just as she was retiring from the window, when she heard the neighing of a horse. Alarmed, though she knew not why, she started, and withdrew, and presently saw a gleam of light upon the grass before her; upon which she instantly, and with caution, dropped a green Persian curtain before the window, and stood on one side with her breath suspended, that she might catch the sound she now expected to hear; but all continued silent. Presently after, a light struck through the lock upon her door, to which she then affixed her eye; but all was dark. Again she approached

approached the window, and in a few minutes heard a whispering below. She then peeped at the edge of the curtain, and saw the dreaded figure of Mr. Grapman looking up to her apartment, as if considering upon the most eligible method of ascending to the window, old Sarah, as she was usually termed, standing at a little distance.

For a moment her senses seemed suspended by terror ; but the urgency of her situation aroused her faculties, and she hastily turned to explore a place of concealment. Upon endeavouring to open the door, she found it fastened on the other side. At first it seemed as if it was held by somebody, as it gave way about an inch, by which means she found that a cord had been fixed to the handle of the lock, and fastened to something opposite. This evident preparation confirmed her dreadful apprehensions. She expected every moment to see her enemy at the window, and was convinced
there

there was no assistance near. Running to the bed, she endeavoured to draw it from the wall; and receiving from fright an increase of strength, at length succeeded so far as to be able to force herself behind it, drawing the curtains back, and fastening them to the paper-hanging; so that without the inspection of suspicion, she could not be perceived.

In this situation, which was far from being an easy one, she continued a considerable time; and making a small opening in the cotton, kept her eye fixed upon the window, upon which the moon now shone, in almost breathless expectation of seeing Mr. Grapman. After several minutes of the most dreadful anxiety, she saw the window curtain pushed back. Her heart now beat with violence, and she was apprehensive of fainting; but every thing was again still for some time.

She repeated her prayer to Him who alone could protect her, and was bid *not to fear*. Her heart revived; and
though

though encompassed by the most dreadful evils, she encouraged the hope which offered itself to abate her terrors.

The curtain was again moved; and soon after, a light from below shone upon the face of a man who appeared at the window, and discovered the features of Grapman, who entered the room, and stole softly along to the side of the bed, where he stood astonished not to behold his destined victim. The moon, which was at the full, gave light to every corner of the room, but his eyes in vain sought the lovely Laura. His disappointment excited rage, and he thundered from the window for candles, which were instantly produced by old Sarah and his man Peter.

“What the devil is become of this girl!” cried he, the moment they appeared. “Did you not tell me she was in bed, and asleep!”

“In bed, your Honour! Yes, to be sure,”

sure," said the female pander, in a whisper, "and I dare say covered over head and ears."

To the bed they then advanced, while the fair object of their search stood trembling within a yard of her intended destroyers; and when, upon sufficient examination, they were convinced she had not been there that night, Sarah exclaimed, with spread hands—

"Where, in the name of Heaven, can the child be gone!"

Heaven had nothing to do with the exclamations of Sarah. Her invocation was fruitless, for the pure aspirations of Laura ascended to the Throne of Mercy, and she remained in safety.

Not imagining it possible she could have had cause for endeavouring to secure herself, they did not proceed to examine even the common recesses of the rooms, the closet of that in which they were in, excepted, where Sarah said it was possible she

she might be *saying her prayers*, as she fancied she was *a mighty praying young body*, *Lord help her!*

“The devil pray her!” said the wretch who ten minutes before intended to persuade her he loved her to adoration; adding, when the closet was explored, as the bed had been in vain—“Curse her squeamishness! She shall squeal for this when I catch her!” binding his asseveration with a term too sacred to be repeated.

“*That she should*, an’t please your Honour,” said Sarah, with a nod of her head, “an ungrateful good-for-naught! to serve your Honour after this fashion, when I told her in the morning, after your Honour left, that your Honour was one of the best gentlemen in the State,” curtsying and simpering at every sentence, with a view of consoling her love-lorn master, with whose temper she was perfectly acquainted.

“ And so you have been the occasion of her running away, by informing her of my design, have you?—The girl would not have had such a thought in her head, but for your cursed eternal babbling! I’ll bet a thousand dollars she is gone to the city, to acquaint her mistress with what you have informed her!” said Mr. Grapman, in an angry and sarcastic accent.

“ I informed her! Bless your Honour! *I* informed her indeed!” said Sarah, in a crying tone. “ How can your Honour think so! When did I ever betray any thing with which your Honour entrusted me! Haven’t I many and many a good time put as pretty a girl into your Honour’s hands, as any body would wish to see? And haven’t I——”

It was in vain that Grapman often attempted to stop the torrent of this declamation. Sarah was touched in the tenderest part, as she was conscious of
 having

having sacrificed her duty to her mistress, and every principle of rectitude, at the shrine of her fidelity to that master, who now accused her of having betrayed his confidence.

Thus, a great rogue will set a little rogue at work ; and after he has served him to the utmost of his power in the assigned act of villany, will reward him with the most opprobrious language, and bid him think himself happy, and be thankful that he does not deliver him to justice.

A case still more deserving deprecation. A man, whose personal and intellectual endowments (were men for figure and for sense chose Monarchs) would secure him the empire of the globe, sees and assails a lovely counterpart ; and by those arts which men excel in, lures her to destruction. His fit of fondness o'er, he leaves the erst dear partner of his guilt to infamy and woe ; and when she urges the performance of his promise, calls her

HARLOT, and wonders at her presumption in thinking she is fit to be his wife !

This is a well-known frequent crime committed, too, without delinquency; in the opinion of those who assist in forming Laws for Nations !!!

We shall be told that we have wandered from the point—that our digression is unapt, and has no connexion with our subject.

We acknowledge the truth of the remark, but we require a recognition of our sovereignty; the chain of our ideas led us to the preceding observation, which it was our pleasure to insert.

“ And haven’t I——*kept all from Madam’s knowledge?*” was the intended continuance of Sarah’s upbraiding reply; but, tired with her cant at such a crisis, and finding she would not be interrupted by his repeated desire of silence, he thundered out some tremendous oaths, and stopped at once the torrent of her words.

The

The rest of the house was now slightly explored ; for Mr. Grapman was so convinced of Laura's being gone to Philadelphia (from whence he had the whole day been absent), that he deemed search to be bootless, and sat himself down to devise means of confronting the evidence he doubted not she would pour into the ears of his wife.

CHAP. XVIII.*An heroic Attempt.—Burlington Forest.*

Terror will drive sleep from the eyelids of guilt, in a situation where innocence would slumber in peace.

AFTER standing in the most uneasy posture for upwards of an hour, not daring to stir, hardly to breathe, Lady Laura ventured to steal from the place of her confinement. The degree of horror, which defies language to describe it, that had seized upon her mind on receiving the confirmation of her fears, almost deprived her of the power of endeavouring to effect an escape; but convinced that delay would

would be destruction, she softly approached the door, which the designers of her ruin had left open, and listened to catch some sounds from below ; but nothing pervaded the stillness of the hour, except the sonorous breathings of old Sarah, who, enwrapped in the arms of Somnus, had forgotten the anger of her master, and all the other vexations of sublunary existence ; her senses being so totally suspended, that her brain was impervious to even the visions of fancy.

Laura with trembling steps glided along the passages till she was convinced all the inhabitants of the house were in bed, if not asleep, and descended the stairs with a hope of being able to get out of the house unheard ; but every door and window was so carefully barricaded, that without such a noise as must alarm the family, she could not effect an escape : she therefore determined by some means to let herself down from the window of her sleeping room ; and fortunately for her purpose, recollected having seen a

rope which she thought would be serviceable, hanging in the kitchen. This, by means of the glowing embers of hickory wood, which compose the fires in almost every dwelling-house in Pennsylvania, she easily discovered; and supplying herself with some food, in case of exigence, she reascended her chamber, where she made a parcel of some clothes, her writing and drawing instruments, her favourite manuscripts, and her book of portraits. These she always held as her dearest treasures, and valued them much more than her gold, which was reduced to a small number of guineas.

She now fastened the rope to a post of the bed; to the rope she tied one of the sheets, in the corner of which she secured her parcel, and then resolutely let herself down from the window to the ground. Only anxious to escape the present danger, she had never considered what path she should pursue when out of the house. One moment her heart bounded with joy at her deliverance; the next it was af-

affrightened at the forlornness of her circumstances. Where could she go!—to whom apply! Philadelphia was the only place of which she had any knowledge, and there she was apprehensive the Belcrofts and the Grapmans would unite in destroying her reputation: but that was not now the first object of consideration—personal safety was of still more consequence. Had her friend Mr. Lloyd, on whose integrity she seemed convinced she could confide, been still with Mr. Belcroft, wrapped in conscious innocence, she, unhesitatingly, would have thrown herself into his protection.

The outrageously virtuous of the female sex, who value themselves more upon propriety of conduct than purity of sentiment—who think no deviation from rectitude so unpardonable as that which is detected, reprobate our lovely heroine for having a thought, though in the midst of deep distress, of putting herself into the power of a handsome young man, notwithstanding she knew him to be
endued

endued in a high degree with sense, probity, and every good quality which renders a creature estimable.

“It would have been *imprudent, indelicate, against the rules of decorum,*” cries a lady, whose reputation had been saved by a timely visit to the metropolis. “I had rather have suffered any thing than voluntarily have thrown myself in the arms of a man, for whom it might have been supposed I had had an affection! Such a handsome man too!—and a man every way so agreeable! What could the world think, but that I had been in love with him, and wanted him to marry me! Shocking! I should ever after have detested myself for having rendered myself liable to such an imputation!”

This kind of reasoning is very much in fashion amongst people who want to varnish their own fame, which perhaps has been in danger of a blight, by setting in a full point of view, the *no-faults* of an amiable and an innocent offender, against
their

their own prescribed rules of a *cautious, politic* propriety; the necessity for which is suggested by the drossiness of their own hearts, which dare not permit their propensities to appear undisguised. Thus, while a fraudulent mind, arrayed in a robe of spotless white, lays claim, and, from the misjudging multitude, obtains it too, to the approbation due only to internal rectitude, the pure heart, which consciousness never taught the want of a veil, renders itself liable to the most injurious misinterpretations, by following the native lovely bias of its playfulness, sporting, without suspecting censure, in the harmless indulgence of its dictates; for, generally speaking, innocence is lively, guilt reserved, and that for the reasons before adduced—the consciousness and *un-consciousness* of the necessity of disguise.

“Always,” says Burgoyne, “suspect the virtue that does not wear a smile, and the sincerity that wears one awkwardly.”

With the innocence and unconsciousness

we have been setting in view, Laura Warburton ardently wished for the protection of Mr. Lloyd, for whom she certainly had imbibed a most sincere esteem.

Some of our readers will probably suppose she was what they call in love with this amiable young man; but this is a supposition we cannot allow. Mr. Lloyd regarded Lady Laura with the eyes of respect and admiration, and he found himself greatly interested in her welfare; but his treatment of her was not calculated to create those soft emotions, those gentle tremors which the purest breast experiences when the tender passion first pervades its serenity. No involuntary sighs, no expressive blushes marked his approach. He spoke without faltering; and though his manner evinced his respect, it never deepened the lovely pink which adorned her cheek: yet she gave him the preference to all the men she had ever seen, and was sensible of obligation for his unquestionable esteem.

Deprived of the hope of Mr. Lloyd's
assist-

assistance, Lady Laura, after a few moments' deliberation, determined to ask protection of his friend, Mr. Warder; when, turning from the house to enter the walk which led to the city, she heard a bell ring in the chamber in which she conjectured Mr. Grapman was retired. Alarmed at the circumstance, she struck across a little garden into the grove, where she stood irresolute, till she perceived lights from several of the windows. Terrified at the idea of being discovered, she hastened to the forest, and walked fast through its intricate paths, till she was quite exhausted, and sank breathless against a tree. In this situation she continued a considerable period; and when her *senses* returned, her *reason* was still so bewildered, that she knew not where she was. The transactions of the preceding night appeared like a dream indistinctly remembered. She endeavoured to move from the spot, but was utterly unable to walk. The fatigue she had undergone, had weakened her limbs, and she was likewise overpowered

powered by sleep. Looking around, and seeing nothing but wood, and not knowing, by the faint glimmering of light through the trees, whether it was the beams of the moon, or the break of day that pervaded the darkness, she determined to indulge the demands of nature for repose, till the reappearance of the diurnal orb; for could she have pursued the little winding path before her, it was impossible for her to conjecture whither it would lead her; a retrograde direction would infallibly throw her into the jaws of destruction.

With a heart lifted up beyond the spangled arch, with gratitude for her past escape, and a trust for future protection, Laura Warburton resigned herself to the kindly power which periodically suspends the sorrows of the afflicted.

Belle Vue was now a scene of confusion. Mr. Grapman, unable to rest on account of the feuds he undoubtedly concluded the fair fugitive would occasion between him and his Lady, had summoned his servant

vant to repair to Philadelphia, that he might learn from Mrs. Grapman's woman, who was entirely in his interest, the effect which the communication had upon her mistress, that he might prepare a proper antidote.

When the man passed under the apartment lately occupied by Lady Laura, the sheet hanging from the window, caught his attention. Surprised at the phenomenon, he hastened back to inform his master, who, soon convinced of the recent escape of the fair fugitive, declared, after bestowing upon her several hearty curses, that such a precise minx was not worth the search. He then fabricated a tale for the ear of his wife, in case he should be so fortunate as to find her a stranger to the preceding transactions, which was, that the girl she had sent to superintend the children, had robbed them of some valuable trinkets; that she had unlocked his escritoir, and taken upwards of fifty dollars; and that, having by some secret method

method removed her apparel, she had disappeared the evening before, which had thrown the family into the utmost confusion.

To have done with Captain Grapman for ever, this account had the intended effect :—the lady gave full credit to her beloved spouse ; and Lady Laura Elizabeth Warburton was declared in due form to be a deceitful, artful wanton, and a thief.

END OF VOL. I.