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MORAL TALES,

BY

M. MARMONTEL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOLUME THE SECOND.

Annete and Lubin.-----A true Story.

IF it be dangerous to tell every thing to children, it is more dangerous still to leave them in ignorance of every thing. There are grievous crimes according to the laws, which are not so in the eyes of Nature; and we are now going to see into what an abyss the latter leads innocence when she has a fillet over the eyes.

Annete and Lubin were the children of two sisters. These strict ties of blood ought to be incompatible with those of marriage: but Annete and Lubin had no suspicion that there were in the world other laws than the simple laws of nature. From the age of eight years they kept sheep together on the smiling banks of the Seine. They now touched on their sixteenth; but their youth differed not from infancy but by a warmer sentiment and mutual friendship.

Annete, beneath a plain country coif, bound back negligently her ebon hair. Two large blue eyes sparkled beneath her long eye-lashes, and expressed most innocently every thing which the dull eyes of our old coquettes endeavour to express. Her rosy lips seemed to solicit to be kissed. Her complexion, tanned by the sun, was enlivened by that light shade of purple which colours the down of the peach. Every part of her, which the veil of modesty concealed from the rays of the sun, effaced the whiteness of the lily: we thought we saw the head of a lively Brunette on the shoulders of a beautiful Blonde.

Lubin had that decisive, open, and joyous air, which proclaims a free and contented mind. His look was that of desire, his laugh the laugh of joy. When he smiled out, he displayed teeth whiter than ivory. The roundness of his round cheeks invited the hand to pat them. Add to all this a nose in the air, a dimple in the cheek, the

the chin, white silver locks curled by the hand of Nature, a genteel make, a deliberate pace, the frankness of the golden age, which suspects and blushes at nothing. This was the portrait of Annete's cousin.

Philosophy brings man back nearer to Nature; and it is for this reason that instinct sometimes resembles it. I should not be surprized, then, if my shepherds should be imagined to be somewhat philosophical; but I forewarn my readers that it is without their knowing it.

As they both went frequently to sell fruits and milk in the city, and as people were glad to see them, they had an opportunity of observing what passed in the world, and of giving an account to each other of their little reflections. They compared their lot to that of the most opulent citizens, and found themselves happier and wiser. 'The senseless creatures!' said Lubin; 'during the finest part of the year they shut themselves up in quarries! Is it not true Annete, that our hut is preferable to those magnificent prisons which they call palaces? When the thatch that covers us is burnt up by the sun, I go to the neighbouring forest, and in less than an hour make you a new house, more cheerful than the former. The air and the light are ours. A branch less gives us the freshness of the east or the north; a branch more defends us from the heats of the south, and the rains of the west: that is not very dear, Annete?'

'No, truly,' said she: 'and I cannot think why, in the fine weather, they do not come all, two and two, to live in a pretty hut. Have you seen, Lubin, those tapestries of which they are so vain? What comparison between them and our beds of verdure? How we sleep on them! how we wake!--' 'And you, Annete, have you remarked what trouble they take to give a rural air to the walls which shut them up? Those landscapes which they endeavour to imitate, Nature has made for us: it is for us that the sun shines; it is for us that the seasons delight to vary themselves.'--'Right,' said Annete; 'I carried the other day some strawberries to
a lady

lady of quality; they were entertaining her with music. Ah, Lubin! "what a terrible noise!" I said to myself: "why does she not come to-morrow, and hear our nightingales?" The unhappy woman was laid down upon cushions; and she yawned in such a manner as to move pity. I asked what ailed her ladyship; they told me that she had the vapours. Do you know, Lubin, what the vapours are?"---"No, not I; but I am afraid they are one of those distempers which one gets in the city, and which take away from persons of quality the use of their legs. That is very sad; is it not, Annete? And if they were to hinder you from running upon the grass, you would be very sorry, I believe!"---"O, very sorry; for I love to run; especially, Lubin, when I run after you."

Such was pretty nearly the philosophy of Lubin and Annete. Free from envy and ambition, their life had nothing humiliating to them, nothing painful. They passed the fine weather in that green hut, the master-piece of Lubin's heart. In the evening they were obliged to lead back their flocks to the village; but the fatigue and pleasures of the day prepared them a tranquil repose. The morning recalled them to the fields, more earnest to see each other again. Sleep effected in their lives nothing but the moment of absence: it preserved them from dulness. Nevertheless, a happiness so pure was not unalterable. The slender waist of Annete insensibly became rounder. She knew not the cause of it; Lubin himself did not suspect it.

The bailiff of the village was the first who perceived it. "God defend you, Annete," said he to her one day, "you seem to be very round!"---"True," said she, dropping a curtesey. "But, Annete, what has happened to this handsome shape? Have you had any love affair?"---"Any love affair? Not that I know."---"Ah, child! nothing is more certain; you have listened to some of your young fellows."---"Yes, truly, I do listen to them: does that spoil the shape?"---"No, not that, but some of them have a kindness for you."

---' Kindness for me? Aye, Lubin and I are kind to each other all the day long.'---' And you have granted him every thing, is it not so?'---' Oh, lord, yes: Lubin and I have nothing to refuse one another.'---' How, nothing to refuse one another?'---' Oh, nothing at all! I should be very sorry if he kept any thing to himself, and more sorry still to have him believe that I have any thing which is not his. Are we not cousins?'---' Cousins!'---' Cousins german, I tell you.'---' O Heaven!' cried the bailiff, 'there is an adventure!'---' Aye, or else do you think we should have been every day together? that we should have had but one and the same hut? I have heard it said, indeed, that the shepherds are to be dreaded; but a cousin is not dangerous.' The judge continued to interrogate; Annetre continued to reply; inasmuch that it was clearer than the day that she would shortly be a mother. Become a mother before marriage! that was a riddle to Annetre. The bailiff explained it to her. 'What,' said he to her, 'the first time that this misfortune happened, did not the sun hide himself? did not the heavens thunder upon you?'---' No,' replied Annetre; 'I remember it was the finest weather in the world.'---' Did not the earth shake! did it not open itself?'---' Alas, no?' said Annetre again, 'I saw it covered with flowers.'---' And do you know what a crime you have committed?'---' I know not what a crime is; but all that we have done, I swear to you, was in good friendship, and without any ill design. You think that I am big with child; I should never have thought it; but if it be so, I am very glad of it: I shall have a little Lubin, perhaps.'---' No,' replied the man of law, 'you will bring into the world a child, which will own neither its father nor mother, which will be ashamed of its birth, and will reproach you for it. What have you done, unhappy girl! what have you done! How I pity you, and how I pity that innocent!' These last words made Annetre grow pale and tremble. Lubin found her all in tears. 'Here!' said she to him with terror,

'do you know what has happened? I am big with child.'----'With child! and by whom?'---'By you.'---'You joke. And how has that happened?'---'The bailiff has just explained it to me.'---'Well?'---'Well! when we thought we were only shewing kindnesses to each other, we were making love.'----'That is droll!' said Lubin: 'only see how we come into the world. But you are in tears, my dear Annete! Is it this that makes you uneasy?'----'Yes, the bailiff has made me tremble: my child, he said, will own neither its father nor mother; he will reproach us with it's birth.'----'Why?'---'Because we are cousins, and have committed a crime. Do you know, Lubin, what a crime is?'---'Yes, it is a wicked thing. For example, it is a crime to take away life from any one; but it is not to give it. The bailiff does not know what he says.'---'Ah, my dear Lubin! go and find him out, I beseech thee: I am all of a tremble. He has put I know not what into my soul, which imbitters all the pleasure I had in loving thee.'

Lubin ran to the bailiff. 'A word, if you please, Mr. Judge,' said he, accosting him; 'you will have it that I am not to be the father of my own child, and that Annete is not to be its mother?'---'Ah, wretch! dare you shew yourself,' said the bailiff, 'after ruining this young innocent?'---'You are a wretch yourself,' replied Lubin. 'I have not ruined Annete; she waits me now in our hut. But it is you, wicked man, that (she says) have put I know not what into her soul, that grieves her; and it is very ill done to afflict Annete.'---'You young villain! it is you that have stolen from her her chief good.'---'And what is that?'---'Innocence and honour.'---'I love her more than my life,' said the shepherd, 'and if I have done her any injury, I am here to repair it. Marry us; who hinders you? We ask no better.'---'That is impossible.' 'Impossible! And why? The most difficult part, in my opinion, is over, seeing we are now father and mother.'---'And there is the crime,' cried the judge;

‘you must separate, you must fly each other.’—‘Fly each other! And have you the heart to propose it to me, Mr. Bailiff? And who is to take care of Annete and my child? Quit them! I would sooner die.’—‘The law obliges thee to it,’ said the bailiff. ‘There is no law that holds good there,’ replied Lubin clapping on his hat; ‘we have a child without you; and if it please heaven we will have more, and we will love for ever.’—‘Ah, the audacious young knave; what rebel against the law!’—‘Ah, the wicked man, the bad heart, that wants me to abandon Annete! Let me go and find out our parson,’ said he to himself; ‘he is a good man and will have pity on us.’ The priest was sadder than the judge; and Lubin retired, confounded at having offended Heaven without knowing it. ‘For, after all,’ said he still, ‘we have done nobody any harm.’

‘My dear Annete,’ cried Lubin, on seeing her again, ‘every body condemns us; but no matter: I will never leave you.’—‘I am big with child,’ said Annete, reclining her face on her two hands, which she bathed with tears; ‘and I cannot be your wife! Leave me, I am distressed; I have no longer any pleasure in seeing you. Alas! I am ashamed of myself, and I reproach myself for all the moments that I have passed with you.’—‘Ah, the cursed bailiff,’ said Lubin: ‘but for him we were so happy!’

From that moment, Annete, a prey to grief, could not endure the light. If Lubin wanted to console her, he saw her tears stream afresh; she replied to his caresses only by pushing him off with horror. ‘What, my dear Annete!’ said he to her, ‘am I no longer the Lubin you loved so much?’—‘Alas! no; you are no longer the same. I tremble the moment you come near me; my child, who moves in my womb, and whom I should have had so much joy in feeling, seems already to complain that I have given him my cousin for a father.’—‘You will hate my child, then?’ said Lubin to her sobbing. ‘Oh, no, no; I shall love it with all my soul!’ said she. ‘At least they will not forbid

bid me to love my child, to give him my milk and my life. But that child will hate its mother: the judge has foretold it to me.'---'Do not mention that old devil,' said Lubin, clasping her in his arms, and bathing her with tears; 'your child shall love you, my dear Annete; he will love you, for I am his father.'

Lubin in despair employed all the eloquence of nature and love to dissipate Annete's fear and grief. 'Let us see,' said he, 'what have we done to anger Heaven? We have led out our flocks to feed in the same meadows; there is no harm in that. I have built a hut, you have taken pleasure in reposing in it; there is no harm in that. You slept upon my knees: I drew in your breath, and that I might not lose one gasp, I drew gently near you; there was no harm yet. It is true, that sometimes, awakened by my caresses-----'---'Alas!' said she, sighing, 'there was no harm in that.'

It was in vain that they recalled to memory all that had passed in the hut; they saw nothing but what was natural and innocent, nothing of which any body had any right to complain, nothing at which Heaven could be incensed. 'Yet that is all,' said the shepherd; 'where then is the crime? We are cousins, so much the worse; but if that does not hinder our loving, why ought it to hinder our marrying? Am I on that account less the father of my child, and you less its mother? Mark me, Annete! let them talk on: you depend on nobody; I am my own master; let us dispose of ourselves; every one does what he pleases with his own property. We shall have a child: so much the better. If it be a daughter, she will be genteel and amiable, like yourself; if it be a boy, he will be alert and joyous, like his father. It will be a treasure to us both. We will try who can love him best; and say what they will, he will know his father and mother by the tender care we shall take of him.' It was in vain that Lubin talked sense and reason; Annete was not at ease, and her uneasiness redoubled every day.

She did not comprehend the discourse of the bailiff, and this very obscurity rendered his reproaches and menaces more terrible.

Lubin, who saw her consuming herself with sorrow, said to her one morning, 'My dear Annete, your grief will kill me; return to yourself, I beseech you. I have this night thought of an expedient which may relieve us. The parson told me, that if we were rich, the evil would be but half so great, and that by means of a good deal of money cousins drew themselves out of trouble! let us go and find out the lord of the manor: he is rich, and not proud; he is a father to us all; with him a shepherd is a man, and I have heard it said in the village, that he likes that they should get children. We will relate our adventure to him, and beg him to assist us in repairing the evil, if there be any.'---'What would you dare?' said the shepherdes. 'Why not?' replied Lubin: 'my lord is goodness itself, and we should be the first unfortunate creatures whom he would have left without succour.'

Behold, then, Annete and Lubin directing their way towards the castle. They ask to speak with his lordship, and are permitted to appear. Annete, with her eyes fixed on the ground, and her hands placed one in another over her round little waist, makes a modest curtesy. Lubin makes a leg, and pulls off his hat, with the simple grace of Nature. 'My lord,' said he, 'here is Annete, big with child, saving your presence, and it is I alone who have done her that injury. Our judge says that we ought to be married, in order to get children; I desire him to marry us, he says that is impossible because we are cousins; but I think the thing may be done, seeing that Annete is big with child, and that it is not more difficult to be a husband than a father. The bailiff sends us to the devil, and we recommend ourselves to you.' The good man had much ado to with-hold laughing at Lubin's harangue. 'Children,' says he, 'the bailiff is right. But take courage, and tell me how the affair happened.' Annete,

nete, who had not thought Lubin's manner sufficiently touching; (for Nature teaches women the art of softening and gaining upon men, and Cicero is but a novice to a young female petitioner.) Annete then spoke. 'Alas, my lord,' said she, 'nothing is more plain or more natural than all that has happened to us. Lubin and I from our infancy kept sheep together: we caressed one another while infants; and when we see one another continually, we grow up without perceiving it. Our parents are dead: we were alone in the world.' 'If we love not one another,' said I, 'who will love us?' Lubin said the same. Leisure, curiosity, and I know not what besides, made us try every method of testifying that we loved one another; and you see what has befallen us. If I have done ill I shall die with sorrow. All that I desire is, to bring my child into the world, in order to console him when I shall be no more.'----'Ah, my lord,' said Lubin, bursting into tears, 'prevent Annete from dying. I should die too, and that would be a pity. If you knew how we lived together--you should have seen us before this old bailiff struck terror into our souls! it was then who should be gayest. See, now, how pale and sorrowful she is; she whose complexion could have defied all the flowers of the spring. What disheartens her most is, that they threaten her that her child will reproach her with its birth.' At these last words, Annete was not able to contain her sobs. 'He will come, then,' said she, to reproach me in my grave. I only ask of Heaven to live long enough to give him suck; and may I die the instant he has no need of his mother!' At these words she covered her face with her apron, to hide the tears which overflowed it.

The wise and virtuous mortal, whose succour they implored, had too much sensibility not to be touched with this affecting scene. 'Go, children,' said he, 'your innocence and love are equally respectable. If you were rich, you would obtain the permission of loving one another, and of being united. It is not
just

just that your misfortune should be deemed a crime. He disdained not to write to Rome in their favour, and Benedict XIV. consented with pleasure that these lovers should be made man and wife.

The Samnite Marriages.----An ancient Anecdote.

LET every legislator, who would assure himself of the hearts of men, begin by ranging the women on the side of the laws and manners; let him put virtue and glory under the guard of beauty, under the tutelage of love; without this agreement he is sure of nothing.

Such was the policy of the Samnites, that warlike republic which made Rome pass under the yoke, and was a long time her rival. What made a Samnite a warrior, a patriot, a man virtuous against every trial, was the care they took to attach to all these qualities the most valuable prize of love.

The ceremony of their marriages was celebrated every year in a wide place, destined for military exercises. All the youth, who were of a sufficient age to give citizens to the republic, assembled on a solemn day. There the young men chose their wives, according to the rank which their virtues and their exploits had given them in the annals of their country. We may easily conceive what a triumph this must be to those women who had the glory of being chosen by the conquerors; and how pride and love, those two springs of the human passions, gave force to virtues on which all their success depended. They expected every year the ceremony of their marriages with a timid impatience: till then the young men and maidens of the Samnites never saw one another but in the temple, under the eyes of their mothers and prudent old men, with a modesty equally inviolable to both sexes. Indeed, this austere confinement was no restraint to the desires: the eyes and heart made a choice; but it was to the children a religious and sacred duty to confide their inclination to the authors of their days; a secret of this sort divulged

was

was the shame of a family. This intimate communication of the dearest sentiment of their soul, this tender disclosure, which it was not permitted them to give to their desires, their regrets, their fears, but in the respectable bosom of nature, rendered a father and mother the friends, the consolers, the support of their children. The glory of some, the happiness of others, connected all the members of a family by the warmest interests of the human heart; and this society of pleasure and pain cemented by habitude, and consecrated by duty, lasted till the grave. If the event did not answer their desires, an inclination which had not manifested itself abandoned its object so much the easier, as it would have been in vain to have pursued it with obstinacy, and there was a necessity for its giving place to the object of a new choice: for marriage was an act of duty in a citizen. The legislator had wisely considered, that he who would not take a wife himself, depended in some measure on the wives of others: and in making a crime of adultery, he had made a duty of marriage. There was a necessity, therefore, of presenting themselves to the assembly as soon as they had attained the age pointed out by the laws, and of making a choice according to their rank, though it were not also according to their desires.

Among a warlike people, beauty, even in the weaker sex, has something fierce and noble, which favours of their manners. The chase was the most familiar amusement of the Samnite maidens; their skill in drawing the bow, their nimbleness in the race, are talents unknown among us. These exercises gave their person a wonderful ease, and their action a freedom full of graces. Unarmed, modesty was painted on their countenances; as soon as they had fastened on their quivers, their head was erected with a warlike assurance, and courage sparkled in their eyes. The beauty of the men had a majestic and serious character; and the image of battles, for ever present to the imagination, gave to their looks a grave, commanding, and savage boldness.

Amidst

Amidst this warlike youth was distinguished, by the delicacy of his features, his sensible and tender air, the son of the brave Telephon, one of the old Samnites who had fought best for liberty. This old man in resigning up his arms to his son, had said to him, 'My son, I hear sometimes the old men, with an ill-natured raillery, telling me that I ought to clothe you like a woman, and that you would have made a pretty huntress. These railleries afflict your father; but he consoles himself in the hope that Nature has at least made no mistake in the heart which she has given you.'—

'Take courage, my father,' replied the young man, piqued with emulation; 'these old men will, perhaps, be glad one day that their children follow my example: let them take me for a girl here, the Romans shall not be mistaken in me.' Agatis kept his word with his father, and displayed in his first campaigns an intrepidity, an ardour, which changed their railleries into encomiums. His companions said one to another with astonishment, 'Who would have thought this effeminate body was filled with so manly a courage? Cold, hunger, fatigue, nothing daunts him: with his touching and modest air he braves death full as well as we.'

One day, in presence of the enemy, Agatis seeing with composure a shower of arrows falling around him; 'You who are so handsome, how are you so brave?' said one of his companions, who was remarkable for his ugliness. At these words the signal for the attack was given. 'And you, who are so ugly,' replied Agatis, 'will you now see which of us two shall carry off the standard of the battalion we are going to charge?' He said: both of them spring forward; and, in the midst of the carnage, Agatis appears with the standard in his hand. However, he now approached the age wherein he was to enter himself in the number of married persons; and, in the quality of father to obtain that of citizen. The young damsels, who heard of his valour with esteem, and saw his beauty with a

lost

soft emotion, envied each other his looks. One alone at last attracted them, the beautiful Cephalis.

In her were assembled in the highest degree, that modesty and boldness, those noble and touching graces, which characterize the Samnite beauties. The laws, as I have said, had not forbid the eyes to speak; and the eyes of love are very eloquent, when it has no other language. If you have sometimes seen lovers constrained by the presence of a severe witness, do not you admire with what rapidity the whole soul unfolds itself in the lightning of one fugitive glance? A look of Agatis declared his trouble, his fears, his hope, and the emulation of virtue and glory with which love had just enflamed his heart. Cephalis seemed to forbid her eyes to meet those of Agatis; but her eyes were sometimes a little slow in obeying her, and were not cast downwards till after they had been answered. One day especially, and it was that which decided the triumph of her lover; one day her looks being fixed upon him, after remaining for some time immoveable, were turned up towards Heaven with the most tender expression. 'Ah! I understand that wish,' said the young man to himself; 'I understand it, and I will accomplish it. Charming maiden, have I flattered myself too much? Did not your eyes, raised up to Heaven, beseech it to render me deserving of chusing you? Well, Heaven has listened to you; I feel it by the emotions of my soul. But, alas! all my rivals (and I shall have rivals without number) will dispute with me this honour: a brilliant action depends upon circumstances; should any one happier than I attain it, he has the honour of the first choice; and the first choice, beautiful Cephalis, cannot but fall upon you.'

These ideas engaged his attention without remission: they engaged also the attention of his mistress. 'If Agatis had to chuse,' said she, 'he would fix upon me; I dare believe it: I have observed him well, I have thoroughly read his soul. Whether he presents himself to my companions, or whether he speaks to
them,

them, he has not with them that complaisance, that sweet earnestness, which he betrays on seeing me. I perceive also that his voice, naturally soft and tender, has something still more sensible when he speaks to me. His eyes especially Oh! his eyes have said to me what they say to no one else: and would it had pleased the gods that he were the only one who distinguished me from the crowd! Yes, my dear Agatis, it would be a misfortune to seem handsome to any other than thee. What comparison between him and those youths who terrify me while they seek me out with their eyes? Their murderous air frightens me. Agatis is valiant, but has nothing ferocious in him; even under arms we see in him I know not what that is moving. He will perform prodigies of valour, I am sure; but after all, if fortune betrays love, and if some other has the advantage that thought chills me with terror.'

Cephalis dissembled not her fears to her mother. 'Put up vows,' said she to her, 'put up vows for Agatis's glory; you will put them up for the happiness of your daughter, I think. I am sure he loves me; and can I not adore him? You know that he has the esteem of our elders; he is the idol of all my companions: I see their confusion, their blushes, their emotion at his approach; one word from his mouth fills them with pride.'—'Very well,' said her mother smiling, 'if he loves you, he will chuse you.'—'He would chuse me, without doubt, if he had the right of chusing; but my mother—' 'But my daughter, he will have his turn.'—'His turn, alas! it will be a pretty time,' replied Cephalis, fixing her eyes on the ground. 'How, my daughter? Methinks to hear you—the word is, who shall have you! You flatter yourself a little.'—'I do not flatter myself; I tremble; happy if I had known to please only him whom I shall always love!'

Agatis, on his side, the evening of the day on which he took the field, said to his father, embracing him,

him, 'Adieu, dear author of my life; either you see me for the last time, or you shall see me again the most glorious of all the sons of the Samnites.'---'Well said, my boy: thus it is that a well-born son ought to take leave of his father. In reality, I see thee animated with an ardour that astonishes even myself; what propitious deities inspire thee?'---'What deities, my father? Nature and Love; the desire of imitating you, and of meriting Cephalis.'-----'Oh! I understand; love is concerned in it: there is no harm in that. Come, tell me a little: I think I have sometimes distinguished your Cephalis among her companions.'-----'Yes, my father, she is easily distinguished.'---'But do you know that she is very beautiful?'---'Beautiful! beautiful as glory.'---'I think I see her,' continued the old man, who took a delight in animating him; 'I see in her the figure of a nymph.'-----'Ah, my father!' cried Agatis, 'you do a great deal of honour to the nymphs.'-----'An elegant gait?'---'And still more noble.'-----'A fresh complexion?'---'The rose itself.'---'Long tresses braided with grace?'---'And her eyes, my father, her eyes? Oh! that you had seen them, when lifted up to Heaven after being fixed on me, they prayed for victory.'-----'You are right, she is all charming; but you will have rivals.'-----'Rivals! I have undoubtedly a thousand.'-----'They will carry her off from you.'---'They will carry her off from me?'-----'To say the truth I am afraid of it; these Samnites are very brave young fellows!'---'Oh! let them be as brave as you please; that is not what disturbs me. Let them but give me an opportunity of meriting Cephalis, you shall hear of me.' Telespon, who till then had taken a delight in stimulating him, could no longer contain his tears. 'Ah! the rare present that Heaven makes us,' said he, embracing him, 'when he gives us a sensible heart! It is the principle of all the virtues. My dear child, you overwhelm me with joy. There remains still in my veins sufficient to make one campaign; and you promise me

such fine things, that I will make this along with you.'

The day of departure, according to custom, the whole army filed off before the young maidens, who were ranged on the spot, to animate the warriors. The good old Telephon marched by his son's side. 'Ah, ah!' said the other old men, 'see Telephon is grown young again; where is he going then at his age?'--- 'To a wedding,' replied the good man; 'to a wedding.' Agatis made him remark Cephalis from afar, who towered above her companions with a grace perfectly celestial. His father who had his eyes upon him, perceived, that in passing before her, that sweet and serene countenance was inflamed with a martial ardour, and became terrible as the countenance of Mars. 'Courage, my son!' said he to him; 'indulge thy passion, it becomes thee well.'

Part of the campaign passed between the Samnites and the Romans in observing each other, without coming to any decisive action. The strength of the two states consisted in their armies; and the generals on both sides acted like able officers. However, the young Samnites who were to marry, burned with impatience of coming to blows. 'I have done nothing yet,' said one, worthy to be inscribed in the annals of the republic; I shall have the shame of hearing myself named without any eulogy to distinguish me.—'What pity,' said another, 'that they vouchsafe not to offer us an opportunity of signalizing ourselves! I should have done wonders this campaign.'—'Our general,' said the greater part, 'will dishonour us in the eyes of our elders and wives. If he leads us back without fighting, they will have room to think that he mistrusted our valour.'

But the sage warrior, who was at their head, heard them unmoved. From his slowness and delays, he promised himself two advantages: one was to persuade the enemy that he was weak or fearful, and to engage him, in this confidence, to an imprudent attack; the other,

other, to suffer the impatience of his warriors to encrease, and to carry their ardour to excels before he risked a battle. Both these stratagems succeeded. The Roman general, haranguing his troops, pointed out to them the Samnites wavering, and ready to fly before them. 'The genius of Rome triumphs,' said he to them; that of our enemies trembles, and is not able to sustain our approach. Come on brave Romans; if we have not the advantage of ground, that of valour makes it up to us; it is ours; let us march.'—'There they are,' said the Samnite general to his impatient youth; 'let us suffer them to approach within bow-shot, and you shall then have all the liberty imaginable to deserve your wives.'

The Romans advance: the Samnites wait them with firmness. 'Let us fall upon them,' said the Roman general; a still body cannot sustain the impetuosity of that which runs upon them.' On a sudden the Samnites themselves spring forward, with the rapidity of coursers when the barrier is opened to them. The Romans halt; they receive the shock without being broken or disordered; and the skilfulness of their chief changes on a sudden the attack to a defence. They fought a long time with incredible obstinacy: to conceive it, we must picture to ourselves men who had no other passions than love, nature, country, liberty, glory, defending in those decisive moments all those interests at once. In one of the redoubted attacks of the Samnites, old Telephon was dangerously wounded, as he fought by the side of his son. The youth, full of love for his father, seeing the Romans giving way in all parts, and thinking the battle won, pursued the invincible movement of nature, and drawing his father out of the tumult, helped him to drag himself to some distance from the place of combat. There, at the foot of a tree, he dressed, with tears the deep wound of the venerable old man. While he was drawing the dart out of it, he heard near him the noise of a troop of Samnites, who had been repulsed. 'Whither are you going, my friends?' said

to them, quitting his father. 'You fly, this is your way,' and perceiving the left wing of the Romans uncovered; 'Come on,' said he, 'let us attack their flank: they are vanquished, if you but follow me.' This rapid evolution struck terror into that wing of the Roman army; and Agatis, seeing them put to the rout, 'Pursue,' said he, 'my friends, the road is open: I quit you for a moment, to go and assist my father.' Victory at last decided for the Samnites, and the Romans, too much enfeebled by their losses, were obliged to retire within their walls.

Telephon had fainted away through pain. The cares of his son re-animated him. 'Are they beaten?' demanded the old man. 'They are putting the finishing stroke to it,' said the young one; 'things are in a good posture.'---'If so,' said the old man smiling, 'endeavour to recal me to life: it is sweet to conquerors; and I would see thee married.' The good man, for a long time, had not strength to say more; for the blood which had flowed from his wound, had reduced him to extremity.

The Samnites, after their victory, busied themselves the whole night in succouring the wounded: they spared no pains to save the worthy father of Agatis; and he recovered, though with some difficulty, of his weakness.

The return from the campaign was the time of their marriages, for two reasons; one, that the reward of services done their country might follow them close, and that the example might thence have more force; the other, that during the winter, the young husbands might have time to give life to new citizens, before they went to expose their own. As the deeds of this glowing youth had been more brilliant than ever, they thought proper to give more pomp and splendour to the feast, which was to be their triumph.

There were few maidens in the state, who had not, like Cephalis, some communication of sentiments and desires with some one of the young men; and each of
them

them put up vows for him whose choice she hoped to fix, if he should have it in his power to chuse.

The place in which they were to assemble, was a vast amphitheatre, entered by triumphal arches, on which were seen hung up the spoils of the Romans. The young warriors were to repair there armed at all points; the young maidens with their bow and quiver, and as well clad as the simplicity of a state, in which luxury was unknown, permitted. 'Come daughters,' said the mothers, eager to adorn them, 'you must present yourselves at this august feast, with all the charms that Heaven has been pleased to grant you. The glory of men is to conquer, that of women to please. Happy those who shall merit the wishes of these young and valiant citizens, who are now going to be adjudged the most worthy of giving defenders to the state! the palm of merit will shelter their habitation, the public esteem will surround it. Their children will be the elder sons of their country, and its most precious hope. While they spoke thus, these tender mothers interweaved with vine-leaves and myrtle the beautiful tresses of these young virgins, and gave to the foldings of their veil that air and turn which was most favourable to the character of their beauty. From the knots of the girdle beneath the bosom, they created waves of the most elegant drapery; fixed the quiver on their shoulders; instructed them to present themselves with grace, leaning on the bow; and threw back their light robe negligently, above one of their knees, in order to give their gait more ease and majesty. This industry of the Samnite mothers was an act of piety; and gallantry itself, employed in the triumph of virtue, assumed the sacred character of it. The maidens, admiring themselves in the chrystal of the pure wave, never thought themselves sufficiently handsome; each of them exaggerated the advantages of her rivals, and dared no longer reckon upon her own.

But of all the wishes formed in that great day, there were none more ardent than those of the beautiful Cephalis,

phalis. 'May the gods grant us our prayers,' said her mother to her, embracing her; 'but, my daughter, wait their will with the submission of an humble heart! if they have given you some charms, they know what value to set upon them. It is for you to crown their gifts with the graces of modesty. Without modesty beauty may dazzle, but will never touch the heart. It is by this that it inspires a tender veneration, and obtains a kind of worship. Let this amiable modesty serve as a veil to desires, which, perhaps, may become extinct before the day closes, and give place to a new inclination.' Cephalis was not able to bear this idea without letting fall some tears. 'These tears,' said her mother to her, 'are unworthy a Samnite maiden. Learn, that of all the young warriors now about to assemble, there is not one but has lavished his blood for our defence, and our liberty; that there is not one of them but merits you, and towards whom you ought to be proud of paying the debt due from your country. Think of that, dry up your tears, and follow me.'

On his side, the good old Telephon conducted his son to the assembly. 'Well,' said he, 'how goes thy heart? I have been sufficiently pleased with you this campaign, and I hope they will speak well of it.'—'Alas!' said the tender and modest Agatis, 'I had but a moment for myself, I should perhaps have done something; but you were wounded. I owed all my attention to you. I do not reproach myself for having sacrificed my glory to you: I should be inconsolable for having betrayed my country; but I should have been no less so for having abandoned my father. Thank Heaven! my duties were not incompatible; the rest is in the hands of the gods.'—'How religious we are, when we are afraid!' said the old man, smiling. 'Confess that you were more resolute, when you went out to charge the Romans; but take courage, all will go well: I promise you a handsome wife.'

They repair to the assembly, where several generations of citizens, ranged in amphitheatre, formed a most
awful

awful sight. The circuit rounded off into an oval. On one side were seen the daughters at the feet of their mothers; on the other side, the fathers ranged above their sons: at one end sat the council of old men; at the other the youth not yet marriageable, placed according to the degrees of their age. The new married pairs of the preceding years crowned the circle. Respect, modesty, and silence, reigned throughout. This silence was suddenly interrupted by the noise of warlike instruments, and the Samnite general was seen to enter environed with heroes who commanded under him. His presence made all the assembly look down. He traverses the circuit, and goes to place himself with his retinue in the midst of the sages.

The annals of the republic are opened, and a herald reads with a loud voice, according to the order of time, the testimony which the magistrates and generals had paid to the young warriors. He, who by any cowardice or baseness had set a blot upon his name, was condemned by the laws to the infamous punishment of celibacy, till he had redeemed his honour by some brave action: but nothing was more rare than such examples. A plain honesty, an irreproachable bravery, was the least praise that could be given a young Samnite; and it was a kind of shame to have done only one's duty. The greater part amongst them had given proofs of a courage, a virtue, which every where else would be deemed heroic, but which in the manners of that people were hardly to be distinguished, so familiar were they. Some of them raised themselves above their rivals by actions that were striking; but the judgment of the spectators became more severe in proportion as they received the report of virtues still more worthy of commendation: and those which had at first struck them, were effaced by greater strokes. The first campaigns of Agatis were of this number; but when they came to the recital of the last battle, and it was related how he had abandoned his father to rally his companions, and lead them back to the fight; this sacrifice of nature to his

country carried all their suffrages: the tears ran from the eyes of the old men; those who surrounded Telephon embraced him with joy, those at a greater distance congratulated him by gesture and look. The good man smiled, and burst into tears; the very rivals of his son viewed him with respect; and the mothers pressing their daughters in their arms, wished them Agatis for their husband. Cephalis, pale and trembling, dares not lift up her eyes: her heart filled with joy and fear, had suspended its motion; her mother, who supported her on her knees, dares not speak to her, for fear of betraying her, and thinks she sees all eyes fixed upon her.

As soon as the murmur of the universal applause was appeased, the herald names Parmeno, and relates, that in the last battle, the courser of the Samnite general being thrown down under him, transfixd by a deadly shaft, and the hero in his fall being for a moment defenceless, a Roman soldier was on the point of piercing him with his javelin; when Parmeno, to save the chief's life, had exposed his own, by throwing himself before the blow, from which he had received a deep wound. 'It is certain,' said the general, addressing himself to the assembly, 'that this brave citizen made a buckler for me with his body; and if my life be of service to my country, it is a gift of Parmeno's.' At these words, the assembly less moved, but not less astonished, at Parmeno's courage than that of Agatis, bestowed upon him the same eulogies; and the suffrages and good wishes were now divided between those two rivals. The herald, by order of the elders, commands silence; and those venerable judges get up to deliberate. Their opinions are opposed to each other for a long time with equal advantage. Some of them pretended, that Agatis ought not to have quitted his post to assist his father, and that he had done nothing but repair this fault by abandoning his father to rally his companions: but this unnatural sentiment was espoused by very few. The most aged of the elders then spoke and said. 'Is it not virtue that we are to recompense. The point, then,

is only to know which of these two emotions is the most virtuous; to abandon a dying father, or to expose one's own life. Our young warriors have both of them performed an action decisive with respect to the victory: it is for you, virtuous citizens, to judge which of the two it must have cost most. Of two examples equally serviceable, the most painful is that which must be most encouraged.

Will it be believed of the manners of this people? It was decided with one voice, that it was braver to tear one's self from the arms of a dying father, whom we could succour, than to expose one's self to death, even though it were inevitable; and all the suffrages concurred in decreeing to Agatis, the honour of the first choice. But the contest about to arise will appear still less probable. Their deliberations were carried on aloud; and Agatis had heard that the principles of generosity alone made the balance incline in his favour. There arose in his soul a reproach which made him ashamed. 'No,' said he to himself, 'it is a surprize, I ought not to make an ill use of it.' He asks leave to speak; they attend in silence. 'A triumph which I have not merited,' said he, 'would be the torment of my life; and in the arms of my virtuous spouse, my happiness would be embittered by the crime of having obtained her unjustly. You think you crown in me the person who has done most for his country: ye wise Samnites. I must confess, that what I did, was not entirely done for that alone. I love, I longed to merit what I love; and if there is any glory redounds to me from a conduct which you vouchsafe to commend, love divides it with virtue. Let my rival judge himself, and let him receive the prize which I yield to him, if he has been more generous than I.' How is it possible to express the emotion which this confession caused in all hearts! On one side it tarnished the lustre of the actions of this young man; and on the other it gave to the character of his virtue something more heroic, more surprizing, more uncommon, than the most noble devotion of life.

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This stroke of frankness and candour produced, with regard to these young rivals, two very opposite effects. Some admiring them with an undisguised joy, seemed to testify, by a noble assurance, that this example raised them above themselves; others, lost and confused, appeared to be overwhelmed, as by a weight above their strength. The matrons and virgins, in their hearts, unanimously gave the prize of virtue to him who had the magnanimity to declare, that he was not worthy of it; and the elders had their eyes fixed on Parmenor, who, with a composed countenance, waited till they should deign to hear him. 'I know not,' said he at last, addressing himself to Agatis, 'I know not to what degree the actions of men ought to be disinterested in order to be virtuous. There is nothing, strictly speaking, but is done for our own satisfaction; but what I should not have done for mine, is the confession I have just heard; and even supposing that there may have been hitherto something more brave in my conduct than in yours, which is a point yet undecided, the severity with which you have just now judged yourself, raises you above me.'

Here the elders, confounded, knew not which side to take: they had not even recourse to voices; in order to determine to whom to give the prize. It was decided by acclamation, that both of them merited it, and the honour of the second choice was now unworthy either of one or the other. The most aged of the judges spoke again. 'Why delay,' said he, 'by our irresolutions, the happiness of our young people? Their choice is made in the bottom of their hearts; let them be permitted to communicate one to the other the secret of their desires; if the object of them be different, each, without precedence, will obtain the wife he loves; if it happen that they are rivals; the law of chance shall decide it; and there is no Samnite maiden but may glory in consoling the less successful of these two warriors.' Thus spoke the venerable Androgeus, and all the assembly applauded. They

They cause Agatis and Parmeno to advance to the middle of the circus. They begin by embracing each other, and all eyes are bedewed with tears. Trembling each, they hesitate: they are afraid to name the wife of their desires; neither of them thinks it possible that the other can have made a choice different from his own. 'I love,' said Parmeno, 'the most accomplished of Heaven's works; grace and beauty itself.'—'Alas!' replied Agatis, 'you love her whom I adore: it is naming her to paint her thus; the nobleness of her features, the gentle fire of her looks, I know not what of divinity in her shape and gait, sufficiently distinguish her from the crowd of Samnite maidens. How unhappy will one of us be reduced to another choice!'—'You say true,' replied Parmeno, 'there is no happiness without Eliana.'—'Eliana, say you! What,' cried Agatis, 'is it the daughter of the wife Androgeus, Eliana, whom you love?'—'And who then should I love?' said Parmeno, astonished at the joy of his rival. 'Eliana; not Cephalis!' resumed Agatis with transport. 'Ah! if so, we are happy: embrace me; you restore me to life.' By their embraces it was easy to judge that they were reconciled about their love. The elders ordered them to draw near; and, if their choice was not the same to declare it aloud. At the names of Eliana and Cephalis, the whole amphitheatre resounded with shouts of applause. Androgeus and Telephon, the brave Eumenes, father of Cephalis, Parmeno's father, Melante, felicitated each other with that melting tenderness which mingles in the joy of old men. 'My friends,' said Telephon, 'we have brave children there: with what ardour are they going to begot others! When I think of it, I still imagine myself still to be in the flower of my age. Paternal weakness apart, the day of marriages is a festival to me: I think it is I who marry all the virgins of the common-wealth.' While he spoke thus, the good man leaped with joy; and as he was a widower, they advised him to put himself again into the ranks. 'No raillery,' said he; 'if

‘ if I were always as young I might yet do something to speak of.’

They repaired to the temple to consecrate at the foot of the altar the ceremony of their marriages. Parmeno and Agatis were conducted together in triumph; and there was ordered a solemn sacrifice to return thanks to the gods for having given to the republic two such virtuous citizens.

THE GOOD HUSBAND.

FELISONDE, one of those good fathers of a family who recall the golden age to our minds, had married his only daughter, Hortensia, to the Baron de Valsain; and his niece, Amelia, to the President de Lusane.

Valsain, gallant without assiduity, sufficiently tender without jealousy, too much taken up about his own glory and advancement to make himself the guardian of his wife, had left her, upon the strength of her own virtue, to deliver herself up to the dissipations of a world: in which being launched himself, he took a delight in seeing her shine. Lusane, more retired, more assiduous, breathed only for Amelia; who, on her side, lived but for him. The mutual care of pleasing was their constant employment, and to them the most sacred of duties was the sweetest of pleasures.

Old Felisonde was enjoying the union of his family, when the deaths of Amelia and Valsain diffused sorrow and mourning over it. Lusane in his grief had not even the consolation of being a father: Valsain left Hortensia two children with very little to support them. The first sorrows of the young widow were only her husband; but we forget ourselves in vain, we return thither insensibly. The time of mourning was that of reflection.

At Paris, a young woman, resigned to dissipation, is exempt from censure as long as she is in the power of a husband: they suppose that the person most interested ought to be the most rigid, and what he approves they dare

dare not blame; but, delivered up to herself, she falls again under the tutelage of a severe and jealous public, and it is not at twenty-two that widowhood is a free state. Hortensia then saw clearly that she was too young to depend only on herself, and Felisonde saw it still clearer. One day this good father communicated his fears to his nephew Lufane. 'My friend,' said he, 'you are much to be pitied, but I am still more so. I have but one daughter; you know how I love her, and you see the dangers that she runs. The world, which has seduced her, invites her back again; her mourning over, she will resign herself to it; and I am afraid, old as I am, I may live long enough to have occasion to be ashamed.' My daughter has a fund of virtue; but our virtue is within ourselves, and our honour, that honour so dear, is placed in the opinion of others.—'I understand you, Sir; and to say the truth, I share your uneasiness. But can we not engage Hortensia to a new match?'—'Ha, my friend! what reasons she has to oppose me! two children, two children without fortune; for you know I am not rich, and that their father was ruined.'—'No matter, Sir; consult Hortensia: I know a man, if it should be agreeable to her, who thinks justly enough, who has a heart good enough to serve as a father to her children.' The good old man thought he understood him. 'O, you,' said he to him, 'who formed the happiness of my niece Amelia, you whom I love as my own son; Lufane! Heaven reads in my heart—' But tell me, does the husband whom you propose know my daughter? Is not he afraid of her youth, her levity, the flight she has taken in the world?'—'He knows her as well as you do, and he esteems her no less.' Felisonde delayed not to speak to his daughter. 'Yes, my father, I agree,' said she, that my situation is delicate. To be observant of one's self, to be afraid of one's self without ceasing, to be in the world as before one's judge, is the lot of a widow at my age: it is painful and dangerous.—'Well, then, daughter, Lufane has talked

to me of a husband who would suit you.'—'Lufane my father? Ah, if it be possible, let him give me one like himself! Happy as I was myself with Vallain, I could not help envying sometimes the lot of his wife.' The father transported with her answer, went to give an account of it to his nephew. 'If you do not flatter me,' said Lufane, 'to-morrow we shall all be happy.'—'What, my friend, is it you?'—'I myself.'—'Alas! my heart had told me so.'—'Yes, it is I, Sir, who would console your old age, by bringing back to her duty a daughter worthy of you. Without giving into indecent extravagancies, I see that Hortensia has assumed all the airs, all the follies of a woman of fashion. Vivacity, caprice, the desire of pleasing and of amusements, have engaged her in the labyrinth of a noisy and frivolous acquaintance; the point is to withdraw her from it. To do that, I have occasion for a little courage and resolution: I shall have tears perhaps to contend with, and that is much for a heart so sensible as mine; nevertheless, I can answer for myself. But you, Sir, you are a father; and if Hortensia should come to complain to you-----' 'Fear nothing; dispose of my daughter: I confide her to thy virtue; and if the authority of a husband be not enough, I resign to you that of a father.'

Lufane was received by Hortensia with the most touching graces. 'Think that you see in me,' said she to him, the wife that you have lost; if I take her place in your heart, I have nothing to regret.'

When they came to draw up the articles; 'Sir,' said Lufane to Felisonde, 'let us not forget that we have two orphans. Their father's estate has not permitted him to leave them a large inheritance; let us not deprive them of their mother's, nor let the birth of my children be a misfortune to them.' The old man was moved even to weeping with the generosity of his nephew, whom he called from that moment his son. Hortensia was not less sensible to the proceedings of her new husband. The most elegant equipage, the richest cloaths,

cloaths, the most precious trinkets, a house in which every thing breathed taste, elegance, wealth, proclaimed to this young lady a husband attentive to all her pleasures. But the joy she felt was not of long duration.

As soon as a calm had succeeded to the tumult of the wedding, Lufane thought it his duty to come to an explanation with her on the plan of life which he wanted to trace out to her. He took for this serious discourse the peaceful moment of her waking; that moment in which the silence of the senses leaves the reason its perfect freedom, wherein the soul herself, lulled by the trance of sleep, seems to revive with pure ideas, and being wholly mistress of herself, contemplates herself, and reads in her own bosom, as we see to the bottom of a clear and smooth water.

‘My dear Hortensia,’ said he to her, ‘I want you to be happy, and to be always so. But it will cost you some slight sacrifices, and I had much rather ask them plainly of you, than engage you to them by indirect methods, which would shew distrust.’

‘You have passed with the Baron De Valsain some agreeable years. Made for the world, and for pleasures, young, brilliant, and dissipated himself, he inspired you with all his tastes. My character is more serious, my condition more modest, my temper a little more severe; it is not possible for me to assume his manners, and I believe it is the better for you. The path you have yet followed is strewed with flowers and snares; that which we are going to pursue has fewer attractions and fewer dangers. The charm which surrounded you would have been dissipated with youth; the serene days I prepare for you will be the same in all seasons. It is not in the midst of the world that an honest woman finds happiness; it is in the midst of her own family, in the love of her duties, the care of her children, and the intimate commerce of a worthy set of acquaintance.’

The preamble gave Hortensia some surprize; above

all, the word *family* startled her ear: but assuming a tone of raillery, 'I shall become, perhaps, some day or other,' said she, 'an excellent manager of a family; at present I know nothing of it. My duty is to love you, I fulfil it; my children do not yet want me: as to my acquaintance, you know that I see none but genteel people.'—'Let us not confound, my dear, genteel people with good people.'—'I understand your distinction; but in point of acquaintances, we ought not to be so difficult. The world, such as it is, amuses me; and the way of living in it has nothing incompatible with the decency of your condition: it is not I who wear the robe, and I do not see why Madame Lufane should be more obliged to be a mope than Madam de Valsain. Be, then, my dear president, as grave as you please; but do not take it amiss that your wife be giddy a few years longer: every age will bring its likings along with it.'—'It is pity,' replied Lufane, 'to bring you back to seriousness, for you are a charming trifler. There is a necessity, however, for talking reason to you. In the world, do you love without distinction every thing that composes it?'—'Not separately; but the medley pleases me well enough altogether.'—'What of the dealers in scandal, for instance?'—'The scandal-mongers have their charms.'—'They give a ridiculous turn to the plainest things, a criminal air to the most innocent, and publish, with exaggeration, the foibles or irregularities of those whom they have just flattered.'—'It is true, that at the first glance we are frightened at these characters, but at bottom they are very little dangerous: from the moment that we rail at all the world, railing does no harm: it is a species of contagion which weakens in proportion as it extends itself.'—'And those fops, whose very looks are an insult to a virtuous woman, and whose conversation dishonours her, what say you to them?'—'One never believes them.'—'I would not imitate them in speaking ill of your sex: there are many valuable women, I know, but there are-----'

'Just

‘Just as it is amongst you, a mixture of virtues and vices.’----‘Very well; and what prevents our making a choice in this mixture?’----‘We *do* make one intimacy, but in the world we live with the world.’----‘But I, my dear, I would live only with people, who by their manners and character are deserving to be my friends.’----‘Your friends, Sir, your friends! and how many of them have we in life?’----‘A great many, when we are worthy, and know how to cultivate them. I speak not of that generous friendship, the devotion of which proceeds almost to heroism; I call those friends who come to me with the desire of finding joy and peace, disposed to pardon my foibles, to conceal them from the eyes of the public, to treat me when present with frankness, when absent with tenderness. Such friends are not so rare; and I presume to hope, that I shall have such.’----‘With all my heart; we will introduce our several acquaintance to each other.’----‘I will not have two sets of acquaintance.’----‘What, Sir, will not your door be open?’----‘Open to my friends, always: to every comer, never, I give you my word.’----‘No, Sir, I will not suffer you to revolt against the public by odious distinctions. We may not love the world, but we ought to fear it, and not offend it.’----‘Oh, be easy, my dear, that is my concern: they will say that I am a brute; jealous, perhaps; that signifies little to me.’----‘It signifies to me. I would have my husband be respected, and not have cause to reproach me with having made him the town talk. Form your own company as you shall think proper, but leave me to cultivate my old acquaintance, and prevent the court and town from letting their tongues loose upon you.’

Lusane admired the address of a young woman in defending her liberty. ‘My dear Hortensia,’ said he to her, ‘it is not, as a whim, that I have taken my resolution: it is upon thorough consideration, you may believe me, and nothing in the world can change it. Chuse, among the persons whom you see, such a num-

ber of decent women and prudent men as you shall think proper, my house shall be theirs; but that choice made, take leave of the rest. I will join my friends to yours: our two lists united shall be deposited with my porter for his constant rule; and if he deviates from it, he shall be discharged. This is the plan I propose to myself, and which I wanted to communicate to you.'

Hortensia remained confounded at seeing all her fine projects vanish in a moment. She could not believe that it was Lusane, that gentle and complaisant man, who had just been talking to her. 'After this,' said she, 'who can trust men? see the tone this man assumes! with what composure he dictates his will to me! To see only virtuous women, and accomplished men! a fine chimera! And then the amusing society which this circle of respectable friends must afford! *Such is my plan*, said he, as if there was nothing but to obey when he had said it. See how we spoil them. My cousin was a good little woman, who moped as much as he pleased. She was as happy as a queen the moment her husband deigned to smile upon her, and quite transported with one caress, she would come to me and boast of him as a divinity. He believes, without doubt, that according to her example I shall have nothing else to do but to please him: he is mistaken, and if he intends to put me in leading-strings, I will let him see that I am no longer a child.'

From that moment, to the joyous, free, and endearing manner which she had observed with Lusane, succeeded a cold and reserved air, which he saw plain enough, but took no notice of it to her. She had not failed to make her marriage known to that swarm of slight acquaintances, who are called friends. They came in crowds to congratulate her, and Lusane could not decline returning with her those visits of ceremony; but he infused into his politeness such striking distinctions, that it was not difficult for Hortensia to discern those whom he wished to see again.

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In this number was not included one Olympia, who, with a sovereign contempt for the opinion of the public, pretends that every thing which pleases is right, and joins the example to the precept; nor one Climene, who does not know why a woman should make any scruple to change her lovers when she is tired of the man she has taken, and thinks the timid precautions of secrecy too much beneath her quality. In this number were not included those smart toilette and scene hunters, who leading in Paris a life of idleness and inutility, (*grubs in the morning, and butterflies in the evening**) pass one half of their time in having nothing to do, and the other half in doing nothing; nor those obliging gentry by profession, who having no personal existence in the world, attach themselves to a handsome woman to pass for one of her dangles, and who ruin her in order to support themselves.

Hortensia retired to her own apartment uneasy and pensive. She thought she saw herself on the point of being deprived of every thing that makes life agreeable: vanity, a taste for pleasure, the love of liberty, every thing revolted against the empire which her husband wanted to assume. However, having armed herself with resolution, she thought it her duty to dissemble for a time, the better to chuse the moment of breaking out.

The next day Lusane asked her if she had made out her list. 'No, Sir,' said she, 'I have not, and shall not make any.'—'Here is mine,' continued he, without any discomposure; 'see, if in the number of your friends and of mine I have forgot any one you like, and that is fit us.'—'I have told you, Sir, that I shall not meddle in your arrangements, and I beg of you, once for all, not to interfere in mine. If our acquaintance do not suit, let us do like all the rest of the

* Grubs in the morning and butterflies in the evening.] Chenilles le matin, et papillons le soir. The humour of this passage, being in some degree local cannot be entirely preserved in the translation. It is an allusion to dress, en chenille being at Paris a common cant phrase for a morning dishabille.

world: let us divide them without constraining ourselves. Have those whom you like to dinner; I will have those whom I like to supper.'-----'Ah, my dear Hortensia! what you propose to me is far from my principles. Do not think of it: never in my house shall such a custom take place. I will make it as agreeable as I can to you; but no distinction, if you please, between your friends and mine. This evening all whom this list contains are invited to sup with you. Receive them well, I beseech you, and prepare yourself to live with them.' At these words he retired, leaving the list for Hortensia to peruse. 'There,' said she, 'his law is laid down!' And running it over, she was encouraging herself not to submit to it, when the Countess de Fierville, Valsain's aunt, came to see her, and found her with tears in her eyes. This haughty woman had taken Hortensia into her friendship, and as she flattered her inclinations, had gained her confidence. The young lady, whose heart stood in need of consolation told her the cause of her chagrin. 'How! what!' cried the countess, 'after having had the folly to dispose of yourself so unsuitably, will you also be so weak as to degrade yourself? You a slave! and to whom? a man of the robe! Remember that you have had the honour to be Madam De Valsain.' Hortensia was now ashamed of having had the weakness to expose her husband. 'Though he might be in the wrong,' said she, 'that should not hinder me from respecting him: he is the honestest man in the world, and what he has done for my children-----' 'An honest man! and who is not so? That is a merit to be met with in every street. And what has this honest man done so wonderful for your children? He has not robbed them of their fortune. To be sure it would have been worth while to have abused your father's weakness! No, Madam, he has not acquired the right of talking so magisterially. Let him preside in his own court, but leave you to command at home.' At these words Lusane entered. 'In my house, Madam, it is
neither

neither my wife nor I that commands, it is reason; and probably it is not you that she may chuse for an arbitress.'---'No, Sir!' replied the countess, with a commanding tone, 'it is not for you to make laws for this lady. You have heard me, and I am glad of it: you know my opinion of the absurdity of your proceedings.'---'Madam,' replied Lufane, 'if I were as wrong as you suppose me, I am not to be corrected by affronts. Gentleness and modesty are the arms of your sex, and Hortensia by herself is much more powerful than with your assistance. Leave our agreements to ourselves, since we are the persons who must live together. Though you should have rendered her duties odious to her, you could not have dispensed with her fulfilling them; though you should have made her lose the confidence and friendship of her husband, you could not have made her amends for them. Spare her that advice which she neither will or ought to follow. To another they might have been dangerous; to her, thank Heaven! they are only useless. Hortensia,' added he, going, 'you have not desired to give me uneasiness, but let this serve you as a lesson.'---'See how you defend yourself!' said Madam de Fierville to Hortensia, who had not even dared to lift up her eyes. 'Obey, my dear, obey! It is the portion of weak souls. Good Heaven!' said she going out, 'I am the gentlest, the most virtuous woman on the face of the earth; but if a husband had dared to treat me thus, I should have taken a handsome revenge of him!' Hortensia had scarce strength enough to get up to attend Madam de Fierville, so great was her terror and confusion. She perceived the advantage that her imprudence gave her husband; but far from availing himself of it, he did not even so much as reproach her with it; and his delicacy punished her more than his resentment would have done.

• In the evening the visitors being assembled, Lufane seized the moment when his wife was yet in her own apartment. 'Here,' said he to them, 'is the rendez-

vous

vous of friendship: if you like it, come often, and let us pass our life together.' They all replied with one voice that they desired nothing better. 'There,' continued he, presenting to them the good Felisonde, 'there is our worthy and tender father, who will be the soul of our pleasures. At his age, joy has something more sensible and tender in it than youth, and nothing is more amiable than amiable old man. He has a daughter, whom I love, and whom I would make happy. Assist me, my friends, to keep her among us; and let love, nature and friendship, conspire to render her house every day more agreeable to her. She entertains for the world the prepossessions of her age; but when we shall have tasted the charms of a virtuous society, this vain world will touch her but little.' While Lufane spoke thus, old Felisonde could not refrain letting fall some tears. 'O, my friend!' said he clasping him in his arms; 'happy the father who at his death can leave his daughter in such good hands!'

The instant after arrived Madam de Lufane. All hearts flew out to meet her; but her own was not easy. She disguised her ill temper under the reserved air of ceremony; and her politeness, though grave, still appeared amiable and touching; such a gift have the natural graces of embellishing every thing.

They played. Lufane made Hortensia observe that all his company played low. 'It is,' said he, 'the way to maintain union and joy. High play prepossesses and alienates our minds; it afflicts those who lose; it imposes on those who win the duty of being grave, and I think it incompatible with the openness of friendship.' The supper was delicious: transport and good humour were diffused round the table. The heart and the mind were at ease; the gallantry was such as modesty might smile at, and neither decency nor liberty were under restraint.

Hortensia in another situation would have relished these tranquil pleasures; but the idea of constraint which

which she attached to them, embittered their sweetness. The day after, Lufane was surprised to find her of a freer and pleasanter air; he suspected she had taken some new resolution. 'What shall we do to-day?' said he. 'I am going to the play,' said she, 'and I shall come home to supper.'—'Very well; and who are the ladies you are going with?'—'Two of Valfain's friends, Olympia and Artenice.'—'It is cruel to me,' said the husband, 'to be obliged to give you uneasiness continually; but why, Hortensia, will you expose me to it? Do you think me so inconsistent in the principles I have laid down, as to consent that you should be seen in public with those women?'—'To be sure you must consent to it, for the party is settled, and I shall certainly not fail in it.'—'Pardon me, Madam; you shall fail in it, that you may not fail in the regard due to yourself.'—'Is it failing in regard to myself to see women whom all the world sees?'—'Yes, it is to expose yourself to be confounded with them in the opinion of the public.'—'The public, Sir, is not unjust; and in the world all persons answer for themselves.'—'The public, Madam, supposes with reason, that those who are allied in pleasures are allied in manners, and you ought not to have any thing in common with Olympia and Artenice. If you would not break off with them too abruptly, there is a way; excuse yourself only from the play, and invite them to supper: my door shall be shut against all my friends, and we will be alone with them.'—'No, Sir! no!' said she to him with ill humour; 'I will not abuse your complaisance.' And she writ to disengage herself. Nothing had cost her so much as this billet: tears of anger bedewed it. 'To be sure,' said she, 'I care very little for these women; the play interests me still less: but to see one's self opposed in every thing; never to have a will of one's own! to be subjected to that of another, to hear him dictating his laws to me with an insulting tranquility! that is what drives me mad, and what will make capable of every thing.'

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It was certain, however, that the tranquility of Lufane was far from having an insulting air, and it was easy to see that he did violence to himself. His father-in-law, who came to sup with him, perceived the melancholy into which he was plunged. 'Ah, Sir!' said Lufane to him, 'I see that I have entered into an engagement with you very painful to fulfil!' He told him what happened. 'Courage, my friend,' said this good father to him, 'let us not be discouraged; it pleases Heaven, you will render her worthy your cares and love. In pity to me, in pity to my daughter, maintain your resolution. I am going to see her, and if she complain----' 'If she complain, console her, Sir, and appear sensible to her grief: her reason will be more tractable when her heart is comforted. Let her hate me just at present; I expected it, and am not surprized at it; but if the bitterness of her temper should alter the sentiments of nature in her soul, if her confidence in you should be weakened, all would be lost. The goodness of her heart is my only resource, and it is only by an unalterable gentleness that we can prevent her being exasperated. After all, the trials to which I put her are grievous at her time of life, and you must be her support.'

These precautions were useless; whether from vanity or delicacy, Hortensia had the power to conceal her chagrin from the eyes of her father. 'A good sign,' said Lufane; 'she knows how to subdue herself; and there are none but weak souls of whom we ought to despair.' The day following they dined together alone, and in the most profound silence. At their getting up from table, Hortensia ordered the horses to be put to. 'Where are you going?' said her husband. 'To make an excuse, Sir, for the rudeness I was guilty of yesterday.'----'Go, Hortensia, since you will have it so; but if my repose be dear to you, take your last leave of those women.'

Artenice and Olympia, to whom Madam de Fier-ville

ville had related the scene she had had with Lusane, suspected that it was he who had hindered Hortensia from going to the play with them. 'Yes,' said they to her, 'it was he; we saw him but for a minute, but we have formed our opinion of him: he is a morose absolute man, and one who will make you unhappy.'—'He has hitherto talked to me only in the style of friendship. It is true, that he has his particular principles, and a way of living but little compatible with the customs of the world, but--' 'But let him live by himself,' replied Olympia; 'and let him leave us to amuse ourselves in peace. Do you ask him to follow you? A husband is the man in the world we can best spare, and I do not see why you have occasion for his advice to receive whomsoever you think proper, and to go and see whom you please.'----'No, Madam,' said Hortensia to her, 'it is not so easy as you imagine, to put one's self, at my age, above the will of a husband who has behaved so well to me.'—'She gives way; see she is quite tamed,' replied Artenice. 'Ah, my dear! you do not know what it is to yield once to a man, with whom one is to pass one's life. Our husbands are our tyrants if they are not our slaves. Their authority is a torrent which swells as it runs; we can stop it only at its source; and I speak from experience: for having been guilty of an unfortunate complaisance to my husband twice, I have been for six months together obliged to struggle with him for the ascendancy which my weakness had given him; and but for an unparalled effort of courage it would have been all over with me, I was a gone woman.'—'That depends upon tempers,' said Hortensia; 'and my husband is not one of those who are to be brought down by obstinacy.'—'Undeceive yourself,' replied Olympia; 'there is not one whom gentleness ever reconciles; it is by opposing them that we rule them; it is by the dread of ridicule and shame that we hold them: what are you afraid of? We are very strong when we are handsome; and have nothing to reproach ourselves. Your cause is that of all the

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women;

women; and the men themselves, the men who know how to live, will be on your side.' Hortensia objected the example of her cousin whom Lusane had made happy. They replied that her cousin was a weak woman; that if the life which she had led was a good one to her, it was because she knew no better; but that a woman, launched into the great world, who had tasted the charms of it, and formed its ornament, was not made to bury herself in the solitude of her own house, and the narrow circle of an obscure acquaintance. They talked to her of a superb ball which the Dutchess of ----- was to give the next day. 'All the handsome women will be invited there,' said they to her: 'if your husband prevents your going, it is a stroke that will cry out for vengeance; and we advise you as friends, to seize that occasion to make a noise, and to part.'

Though Hortensia was very far from wishing to follow these violent counsels, she still retained a bitterness in her soul, at seeing that her unhappiness was going to be known in the world, and that they would look for her in vain at those feasts where but for this she would have seen herself adored. On her return home, a card was put into her hands; she read it with impatience; and sighed after having read it. Her trembling hand still held it, when her husband accosted her. 'It is,' said she to him carelessly, 'a card of invitation to the Dutchess of ----'s ball.'—'Well, Madam!'—'Well, Sir, I shall not go: be easy.'—'Why, then, Hortensia, deprive yourself of decent pleasures? Have I forbid them you? The honour that is done you pleases me as much, and more than it does yourself, go to the ball: eclipse every thing there that is most lovely; that will be a triumph to me.' Hortensia was not able to dissimble her surprise and joy. 'Ah, Lusane!' said she to him, 'why are you not always the same? There now is the husband I promised myself. I recover him now; but is it for a long time?' Lusane's company assembled in the evening, and Hortensia was adorable. They proposed suppers, parties to the play;
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she engaged herself to them with the best grace. Cheerful with the men, engaging with the women, she charmed them all. Lufane alone dared not yet deliver himself up to the joy which she inspired; he foresaw that this good humour would not continue long without clouds. In the mean time he said just one word to his valet de chambre; and the next day, when his wife asked for her domino, it was like a surprize in a play. They presented her with a dress for the ball, which the hand of Flora seemed to have varied with the most beautiful colours of the spring; those flowers in which the art of Italy equals nature, and deceives the ravished eyes, those flowers ran in garlands over the light waves of a silk tissue of the most brilliant freshness. Hortensia, in love with her dress, her husband, and herself, could not conceal her transport. Her glass being consulted, promised her the most striking successes, and that oracle never deceived her: accordingly, on appearing at the assembly, she enjoyed the flattering emotions occasioned by unanimous admiration; and to a young woman this ebb and flow, this murmur, have altogether something so touching! It is easy to judge that at her return Lufane was pretty well treated; it seemed as if she wanted to paint all the transports which she had raised. At first he received her caresses without reflection, for the wisest sometimes forget themselves; but when he recollected himself---‘A ball,’ said he, ‘a domino, turns this young head! Ah! what conflicts have I yet to sustain before I see her such as I could wish her!’

Hortensia had seen at the ball all those giddy young people, from whom her husband wanted to detach her. ‘He does right,’ said they to her, ‘to grow reasonable, and to restore you to your friends: he was going to become the public jest, and we had made a league to distress him wherever he appeared; tell him then for his own ease to vouchsafe to let us see you. If we have the unhappiness to displease him, we give him

leave to put himself under no restraint; but let him be contented with rendering himself inviolable, without requiring that his wife should be so. Intimidated by these menaces, Hortensia gave her husband to understand, that they took it ill that his door was shut against them; that people of fashion complained of it, and proposed to remonstrate even to him upon it. 'If they do,' said he, 'I will teach them how to take their revenge on me: let each of them marry a handsome woman, live at home with their friends, and shut their doors in my face every time that I go to trouble them.'

Some days after, two of these young fellows piqued at not having been able to introduce themselves to Hortensia, saw Luciane at the opera, and went up to him, in order to ask him the reason of the rude behaviour of his Swiss. 'Sir,' said the Chevalier De St. Placide to him, 'have they told you that the Marquis De Cirval and myself have been twice at your house?'—'Yes, gentlemen, I know that you have given yourselves that trouble.'—'Neither yourself nor your lady were to be seen.'—'That is very often the case.'—'Yet you see company.'—'Only friends.'—'We are Hortensia's friends, and in Valfain's time we always saw her. Ah, Sir! what an agreeable man was Valfain! she has not lost by the exchange; but he was the gentlest, the most complaisant of all husbands.'—'I know it.'—'He, for example, was not jealous.'—'Happy man!'—'You speak as if you envied him; can it be true, as they say, that you are not so easy?'—'Ah, gentlemen, if ever you marry, take care you do not love your wives; it is a cruel thing, this jealousy!'—'What, are you really come to that?'—'Alas, yes, for my sins.'—'But Hortensia is so virtuous!'—'I know it.'—'She lived like an angel with Valfain.'—'I hope she will live the same with me too.'—'Why, then, do her the injustice of being jealous?'—'It is an involuntary emotion, which I cannot account for.'—'You confess, then, it is a folly?'—'To such a degree, that I can-

I cannot see near my wife any man of handsome figure, or distinguished merit, but my head turns; and this is the reason that my gate is shut against the most amiable people in the world.—‘The marquis and I,’ said the chevalier, ‘are not dangerous, and we hope—’ ‘You, gentlemen, you are among those who would make me unhappy all my life. I know you too well not to fear you: and since I must confess it, I have myself required of my wife that she should never see you again.’—‘But, Mr. President, that is but a sorry kind of a compliment.’—‘Ah, gentlemen, it is the most agreeable one that a jealous husband can make you.’—‘Chevalier,’ said the marquis, when Lufane had quitted them, ‘we wanted, I thought, to make a jest of this man.’—‘That was my design.’—‘I am afraid, God forgive me, that he makes a jest of us.’—‘I have some suspicion of it; but I will take my revenge on him.’—‘How?’—‘As men revenge themselves on a husband.’

The same evening, at supper, at the Marchioness of Bellune’s, they represented Lufane as the most odious of men. ‘And the little woman,’ said the marchioness, ‘has the meanness to suffer him to restrain her? Ah! I will give her a lesson.’ Madam de Bellune’s house was the rendezvous of all the giddy people both of city and court, and her secret for drawing them together was to assemble the handsomest women. Hortensia was invited to a ball which she gave. There was a necessity of acquainting Lufane with it before hand; but without having any appearance of asking his consent, she just dropped a word *en passant*. ‘No, my dear,’ said Lufane to Hortensia, ‘Madam de Bellune’s house is in a style that does not suit you. Her ball is a rendezvous at which you ought not to be. The public is not obliged to believe you more infallible than another, and in order to prevent all suspicion of miscarriage, the surest way is to avoid the hazard of it.’ The young woman, so much the more irritated at this refusal, as she did not expect it, burst into complaints and reproaches. ‘You abuse,’ said she to him,

‘the authority which I have confided to you; but beware of driving me to extremities.’—‘I understand you, Madam,’ replied Lufane, in a firmer and graver tone; ‘but as long as I esteem you, I shall not fear this menace, and I should fear it still less, if I were to cease to esteem you.’ Hortensia, who had annexed no idea to the words that had just escaped her, blushed at the meaning they seemed to carry with them, and replied only by tears. Lufane seized the moment when resentment yielded to confusion. ‘I grow odious, to you,’ said he, ‘yet what is my crime? that of saving your youth from the dangers which surround it, of detaching you from that which might cast a blemish—I do not lay on your innocence, but on your reputation; of wanting to make you love soon what it is necessary that you must love always.’—‘Yes, Sir, your intentions are good; but you have a bad method of carrying them into execution. You want to make me love my duty, and you make a slavery of it; there may be some ill-consequences to be foreseen in my connections; but I must dissolve instead of breaking them, and detach myself insensibly from the people who displease you, without making you an object of ridicule, by imprisoning me in my own house.’—‘When the ridicule is without foundation,’ replied Lufane, ‘it recoils on those who give it. The prison of which you complain is the asylum of virtue, and will also be that of peace and happiness, whenever you shall think proper to make it so. You upraid me with not having used a little delicacy towards these people and yourself; I have had my reasons for cutting to the quick. I know that at your time of life, the contagion of fashion, example, and habitude, make new progress every day: and that without cutting off all communication, there is no way of guarding against it. It gives me inexpressible uneasiness to talk to you in an absolute tone; but it is my affection for you that gives me the courage; a friend ought to know on occasion how to contradict a friend. Be well assured then, that as long as I love you, I shall have the strength to resist you;

you; and woe to you, if I abandon you!"—"Woe to me! you esteem me very little, if you think me lost the moment you cease to lead me in a string. No, Sir, I knew how to conduct myself long ago? and Valsain, who did me justice, never had occasion to repent of his confidence. I own to you, that in my husband I did not intend to create myself a tyrant. In order to submit to your will, one ought to have a strength or a weakness which I have not; all the denials you impose on me are grievous, and I will never accustom myself to them."

Lufane, left alone to himself, reproached himself for the tears he had made her shed. "What have I undertaken?" said he, "and what a trial to my soul! I her tyrant! I, who love her more than my life, and whose heart is torn in pieces with her complaints! if I persist, I drive her to distraction, and if I give way one single moment, I lose the fruit of my perseverance. One step into this round of company, which she loves, will engage her in it a-new. I must support this cruel character, this character so much more cruel to myself than to her."

Hortensia passed the night in the greatest trouble: all violent measures presented themselves to her mind: but the probity of her mind shuddered at them. "Why discourage myself?" said she, when her wrath was a little appeased: "this man commands himself and rules me because he does not love me; but if he should ever come to love me, I should soon reign in my turn. Let me use the only arms Nature has given us, gentleness and seduction."

Lufane, who had not closed his eyes, came to ask her in the morning, with an air of friendship, how she had passed the night. "You know how," said she to him: "you who take a pleasure in disturbing my repose. Ah! Lufane! was it for you to be the cause of my unhappiness; who could have told me that I should have repented of a choice which I made with such a good will, and such good intentions?" In pronouncing these words, she

she had stretched out her hand to him; and two eyes, the most eloquent that love ever yet made speak, reproached him for his ingratitude. 'My better half,' said he to her, embracing her, 'believe that I have placed all my glory and happiness in making you happy. I would have your life strewed with flowers; but permit me to pluck away the thorns. Wish for what may never cost you any regret, and be assured it shall be fulfilled in my soul, as soon as formed in thine. The law which I impose upon you is only your own will; not that of a moment, which is a whim, a caprice; but that which will arise from reflection and experience, that which you will have ten years hence. I entertain for you the tenderness of a lover, the frankness of a friend, and the uneasy vigilance of a father: there is my heart; it is worthy of you; and if you are still unjust enough to complain of it, you shall not long have occasion to do so.' This discourse was accompanied with the most touching marks of a passionate love, and Hortensia appeared sensible of them. Eight days past away in the best understanding, in the most intimate union that could reign between two married people. To the charms of beauty, of youth, Hortensia joined the enchantment of those timid caresses, which love, in conjunction with duty, seems to steal from modesty. It is the finest of all toils to emmesh a tender heart. But was all this really sincere? Lusane thought so; I think so too. After all, she would not be the first woman who should have made her inclination agree with her views, and her policy with her pleasures.

In the mean time, they approach those days consecrated to folly and joy, during which we are as foolish, but much less joyous than our fathers. Hortensia gave some intimation to Lusane of her desire to give an entertainment, in which music should precede a supper, which should be followed by a dance. Lusane consented with the best grace in the world, but not without precaution; he agreed with his wife on the choice and
number

number of persons whom she should invite; and according to this arrangement the cards were distributed.

The day arrives, and every thing is prepared with the attention of a magnificent lover; but that very morning the Swiss asks to speak to his master. 'Besides those who shall come with cards, it is my lady's pleasure,' said he to him, 'that I admit all who come to the ball. Is that your intention, Sir?'—'To be sure,' said Lusane, concealing his surprize, 'and you ought not to doubt but I approve what your lady orders.' He then went directly to her, and having told her what had just happened: 'You have exposed yourself,' said he, 'to be put to shame before your servants; you have hazarded what a woman cannot too much conciliate, the confidence of your husband. Is it for you, Hortensia, to make use of surprize towards me? Were I less persuaded of the probity of your soul, what an opinion would you give me of it, and what would have been the consequence of this imprudence? The pleasure of afflicting me for a moment, and of making me more mistrustful of you than I would wish to be. Ah! suffer me to esteem you for ever, and respect yourself as much as I respect you! I will not humble you by revoking the order you have given, but you will give me unspeakable uneasiness if you do not revoke it yourself, and your conduct this day shall be my rule all my life.'—'I have committed a fault,' said she, 'I see it, and I will repair it. I will send word that I shall have neither music, nor supper, nor ball to-night; I would not wear an appearance of joy when I have a deadly grief in my heart. The public shall know that I am unhappy, for I am weary of dissembling.' Lusane then falling at her feet; 'If I loved you less,' said he; 'I should yield to your reproaches; but I adore you: I will subdue myself: I shall die of grief to be hated by my wife, but I cannot live in the shame of having betrayed her by abandoning her. I took a sensible pleasure in giving you an entertainment; you refuse it, because I exclude what is not worthy to approach you; you

you declare to me from thence, that a frivolous world is dearer to you than your husband: it is enough; I will go and give notice that the entertainment will not take place.' Hortensia, moved to the bottom of her soul with what she had just heard, and more touched still with the tears that she had seen trickle from his eyes, recollected herself. 'What am I going to persist in?' said she; 'Are the people whom he wants me to detach myself from, my friends? Would they sacrifice the slightest of their interests to me? and yet for them I lose the quiet of my life? I trouble it; I embitter it. I renounce every thing that can form its happiness. It is spite, it is vanity that inspire me. Have I even chosen to examine whether my husband was right? I have seen nothing but the humiliation of obeying. But who shall command, if it be not the wisest? I am a slave; and who is not so, or who ought not to be so to their duties? I call an honest man a tyrant, who conjures me with tears in his eyes, to take care of my reputation! where then is that pride with which I reproach him? Ah! I should perhaps be much to be pitied if he were weak as I. I afflict him in the very moment that he had shewn the most delicate attention to spare me! These are injuries, these are real ones, and not those which I attribute to him—Go,' said she to one of her women; 'go and tell your master that I would speak to him.' Scarce had she sent this message, when a sudden qualm seized her. 'I am going, then,' said she, 'to consent to mope all my life: for I cannot conceal it from myself, but that one has amusements only in the great world; and all those good folks among whom he wants me to live, have not the charms of Valsain's friends.' As this reflection had a little changed the disposition of her soul, she contented herself with telling Lufane, that she would willingly give way to him for this once. She excused herself to the people who had asked to be admitted to her ball; and the entertainment, which was as brilliant as possible, had all the vivacity of joy, without tumult and confusion.

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‘Tell me then, my dear, if any thing has been wanting to our amusement?’ said Lufane to Hortensia. ‘You disguise sometimes,’ said she to him, ‘the constraint you put upon me; but entertainments do not come every day. It is in the void and silence of her house that a woman of my age draws in the poison of dulness; and if you would see that slow poison consume my youth, you will have all the pleasure of it.’ ‘No, Madam,’ said he to her, penetrated with grief; ‘I have ~~not~~ that deliberate cruelty of which you suspect me. If I must renounce the care of making you happy, that dear, that pleasing care, which ought to take up my whole life, at least I will not have to reproach myself with having poisoned the happiness of your days. Neither I, nor the virtuous friends I have chosen for you, have sufficient to make you amends for the denials I occasion you; without that crowd that surrounded you, my house seems a dreadful solitude to you; you have the cruelty to tell me so yourself: I must restore you then to that liberty, without which you like nothing; I ask of you but one more act of complaisance: to-morrow I shall bring you a new set of company; and if you do not judge them worthy to employ your leisure, if they do not take place of this world, which is so dear to you, all is over, and I give you up to yourself.’ Hortensia had not much difficulty in granting him what he asked: she was very sure that he had nothing to present her which was equivalent to her liberty: but it was not purchasing it too dear to submit to this slight trial.

The next day, on her waking, she saw her husband enter with a shining countenance, in which sparkled love and joy. ‘Here,’ said he, ‘is the new company which I propose to you; if you are not satisfied with this, I no longer know how to amuse you. Imagine the surprize of this sensible mother on seeing before her the two children whom she had by Valsain. ‘Children,’ said Lufane, taking them in his arms, in order to lift them to Hortensia’s bed, ‘embrace your mother, and pre-

vail on her tenderness to vouchsafe to share the cares which I shall take to bring you up.' Hortensia pressed them to her bosom, and bathed them with her tears. 'Till Nature,' continued Lufane, 'grant me the title of father, love and friendship give it me, and I am going to fulfil its duties.'——'Come, my love,' said Hortensia, 'this is to me the dearest and tenderest of all your lessons. I had forgot that I was a mother; I was going to forget that I was a wife. You recal me to those duties; and those two bands united bind me for all my life.'

THE CONNOISSEUR.

CELICOUR, from the age of fifteen had been in the country what is called a little prodigy. He made the most gallant verses in the world. There was no one handsome woman in the neighbourhood whom he had not celebrated, and who had not discovered that his eyes had still more spirit than his verses. It was pity to suffer such great talents to lie buried in a little country-town: Paris ought to be their theatre, and he managed so well that his father resolved to send him there. This father was an honest man, who loved wit, without having any himself, and who admired without knowing why, every thing that came from the capital; he had even some literary relations there, and in the number of his correspondents was a Connoisseur called M. de Fintac. It was particularly to him that Celicour was recommended.

Fintac received the son of his friend with the kindness of one who takes persons under his protection. 'Sir,' said he, 'I have heard of you: I know that you have had success in the country; but in the country, believe me, arts and letters are yet in their infancy. Without taste, wit and genius produce nothing but what is deformed, and there is no taste but at Paris. Begin, then, by persuading yourself that you are but just born, and by forgetting all that you have learned.'——'What would I not forget?' said Celicour, casting his eyes on

a piece

a niece of eighteen, whom the Connoisseur had with him : ' Yes, Sir, it is to-day that I begin to live. I know not what charm breathes in these places ; but it unfolds in me faculties unknown to me before : I seem to myself to have acquired new senses, a new soul.'—' Good,' cried Fintac ; ' there now is enthusiasm : he is born a poet, and from this single stroke I warrant him one.'—' There is no poetry in that,' replied Celicour ; ' it is plain and simple nature.'—' So much the better, there is the true talent. And at what age did you feel yourself animated with this divine fire?'—' Alas, Sir ! I have had some sparks of it in the country, but I never experienced there this lively and sudden heat which penetrates me at this instant.'—' It is the air of Paris,' said Fintac. ' It is the air of your house,' said Celicour : ' I am in the temple of the muses.' The Connoisseur found that this young man had happy dispositions.

Agathe, the most beautiful little wag that love ever formed, lost not one word of this conversation ; and certainly looks, a certain smile which played on her lips, gave Celicour to understand, that she did not mistake the double meaning of his replies. ' I am greatly pleased with your father,' added the Connoisseur, ' for having sent you hither at an age when the mind is docile enough to receive right impressions ; but guard yourself against bad. You will find at Paris more false connoisseurs than good judges. Do not go and consult every body, but stick close to the instruction of a man who has never been mistaken in any thing.' Celicour, who did not imagine that one might praise one's self with so much openness, had the simplicity to ask who that infallible man was. ' It is I, Sir,' replied Fintac, with a tone of confidence ; ' I, who have passed my life with all the artists and *litterati* of greatest consideration ; I, who for these forty years have exercised myself in distinguishing in things both of fancy and of taste, the real and permanent beauties, the beauties of mode and of convention. I say it, because it is well known ; and there is no vanity in agreeing to a known fact.'

Extra-

Extraordinary as this language was, Celicour hardly paid any attention to it, which was engaged by an object more interesting. Agathe had sometimes deigned to lift up her eyes upon him, and those eyes seemed to tell him the most obliging things in the world; but was it their natural vivacity, or the pleasure of seeing their triumph, that animated them? That was a point to be cleared up. Celicour therefore begged the Connoisseur to allow him the honour of visiting him often, and Fintac himself pressed him to it.

On his second visit, the young man was obliged to wait till the Connoisseur was visible, and to pass a quarter of an hour *tête à tête* with the lovely niece. She made him many excuses; and he replied, that there was no occasion for them. 'Sir,' said Agathe to him, 'my uncle is charmed with you.'—'That is a very pleasing piece of success to me; but, Madam, there is one which would touch me still more.'—'My uncle says you are formed to succeed in every thing.'—'Ah! why do not you think the same?'—'I am pretty often of my uncle's opinion.'—'Assist me, then, to merit his kindness.'—'You seem to me to want no assistance.'—'Pardon me; I know that great men have, almost all of them, their singularities, sometimes even weaknesses. To flatter their tastes, their opinions, their temper, one must know them; to know them, one must study them; and, if you please, beautiful Agathe, you can abridge that study for me. After all, what is the point? To gain the good-will of your uncle! Nothing in the world is more innocent.'—'Is it the custom, then, in the country, to come to an understanding with the nieces, in order to succeed with the uncles? That is very dexterous indeed!'—'Nothing in it but what is very natural.'—'But if my uncle had, as you say, singularities and foibles, must I tell you of them?'—'Why not? would you suspect me of wanting to make an ill use of them?'—'No; but his niece—' 'Very well; his niece ought to wish that one should endeavour to please him. He is past the time of
life

life in which we correct ourselves; nothing remains then but to manage him.'---'An admirable remover of scruples!'-----'Ah! you would not have any if you knew me better; but no, you have dissembled.'-----'Truly I see the gentleman for the second time; how can I have any secrets from him?'---'I am indiscreet, I confess, and I ask your pardon.'---'No, it is I who have been wrong, to let you fancy the thing more serious than it is. The fact is this: my uncle is a good man, and would never have pretended to any thing more, if they had not put it into his head to know every thing, to judge of arts and letters, to be the guide, estimator, and arbiter of talents. That hurts nobody; but it draws a crowd of blockheads to our house, whom my uncle protects, and with whom he shares the ridicule of being a wit. It were much to be wished, for his own ease, that he would abandon this chimera; for the public seem to have made it their business never to be of his opinion, and we have every day some new scene.'---'You afflict me.'---'You are now in possession of all the secrets of the family, and we have nothing more to conceal from you.' Just as the finished, word was brought to Celicour that the Connoisseur was visible.

The study, into which he was introduced, announced the multiplicity of his studies and the variety of his knowledge: the floor was covered with folios, piled up on one another in the utmost confusion; rolls of prints, maps lying open, and manuscripts jumbled together; on a table, a Tacitus open near a sepulchral lamp surrounded by antique medals; farther off, a telescope on its carriage, the sketch of a picture on the easel, a model of bas-relief in wax, scraps of natural history; and in the fret-work of the ceiling, a representation of books picturesquely overturned. The young man knew not where to set his foot, and his embarrassment gave the Connoisseur infinite pleasure. 'Forgive,' said he to him, 'the confusion in which you find me: this is my study;

I have occasion for all these things at hand; but do not imagine that the same disorder reigns in my head; every thing there is in its place; the variety, nay, the number itself, causes no confusion there.'---'Wonderful!' said Celicour, who knew not what he said, for his thoughts were still on Agathe. 'Oh, very wonderful!' replied Fintac, 'and I am often surprized myself when I reflect on the mechanism of the memory, and the manner in which the ideas class and arrange themselves as fast as they arise: it seems as if there were drawers for every different kind of knowledge. For example, across that multitude of things which had passed through my imagination, who will explain to me how I came to retrace in my memory, to a given point, what I had read formerly on the return of the comet? for you are to know, that it was I who gave the watch-word to our astronomers.'---'You, Sir?---' 'They never thought of it; and but for me, the comet had passed incognito over our horizon. I have not boasted of it, as you may plainly see: I tell it you in confidence.'---'And why suffer yourself to be deprived of the glory of so important a piece of intelligence?'---'Good! I should never have done if I were to lay claim to all that they steal from me. In general, my lad, take it for granted, that a solution, a discovery, a piece of poetry, of painting, or of eloquence, belong not, so much as it is imagined, to the person who takes the credit of it to himself. But what is the object of a connoisseur? To encourage talents at the same time that he enlightens them. Whether the thought of this bas relief, the disposition of this picture, the beauties of the parts, or the whole of this play, be the artist's or mine, is matter of indifference to the progress of the art; now that is all my concern. They come, I tell them my thought: they listen to me, they make their advantage of it. It is excellent. I am recompensed when they have succeeded.'---'Nothing finer,' said Celicour: 'the Arts ought to regard you as their Apollo. And does Mademoiselle Agathe condescend to

to be also their muse?---' No, my niece is a madcap, whom I wanted to bring up with care; but she has no taste for study. I had engaged her to cast her eye over history; she returned me my books, saying that it was not worth while to read, for the sake of seeing in all ages illustrious madmen and rogues sporting with a crowd of fools. I wanted to try if she had a greater taste for eloquence: she pretended that Cicero, Demosthenes, &c. were only dexterous jugglers; and when one had good reasons, there was no need of so many words. For morality, she maintains that she knows it all by heart, and that Lucas, her foster-father, is as wise as Socrates. There is nothing, therefore, but poetry that amuses her sometimes; and then she prefers fables to the more sublime poems, and tells you plainly that she had rather hear Fontaine's animals speak, than the heroes of Virgil and Homer. In a word, she is at eighteen as much a child as at twelve: and in the midst of the most serious, the most interesting conversations, you would be surprized to see her amusing herself with a trifle, or growing dull the moment one would captivate her attention.' Celicour, laughing within himself, took leave of M. De Fintac, who did him the favour to invite him to dine with him the next day.

The young man was so transported, that he slept not that night. To dine with Agathe! it was the happiest day of his life. He arrives, and by his beauty, by his youth, by the air of serenity diffused over his countenance, one might have imagined they saw Apollo, if Fintac's Parnassus had been better composed; but as he wanted none but dependents and flatterers, he drew to his house only such persons as were fit to be so.

He introduced Celicour to them as a young poet of the greatest expectation, and made him take his place at table at his right hand. From that moment, behold all the eyes of envy fixed upon him. Each of the guests thought he saw his own place usurped, and swore in the bottom of their souls to take revenge on him by decrying the first work he should publish. In the mean

time Celicour was graciously received, careſſed by all theſe gentlemen, and took them from that inſtant for the moſt honeſt people in the world. A new comer excited emulation; Wit hoisted all her ſails: they judged the republic of letters; and as it is juſt to mingle commendation with criticiſm, they praized generously all the dead, and tore in pieces the living; the preſent company always excepted. All the new works which had ſucceeded without paſſing under the inſpection of Fintac, could but have their day, and that a more one; all thoſe to which he had given the ſeal of his approbation, were to attain to immortality, whatever the preſent age thought of them. They ran through all kinds of literature; and in order to give more ſcope to erudition and criticiſm, they brought on the carpet this entirely new queſtion, viz. 'Which merited the preference, Corneille or Racine?' They ſaid alſo on the ſubject the fineſt things in the world; when the little niece, who had not ſpoken a word, took it into her head to aſk ſimply which of the two fruits, the orange or the peach, had the moſt exquisite taſte, and merited the moſt commendation. Her uncle bluſhed at her ſimplicity, and the gueſts all looked down, without deigning to reply to this idle foolery. 'Niece,' ſaid Fintac, 'at your age one ſhould hear and hold one's tongue.' Agathe, with an imperceptible half-ſmile, looked at Celicour, who had underſtood her perfectly well, and whoſe glance conſoled her for the contempt of the company. I forgot to mention that he was placed oppoſite to her, and you may eaſily imagine that he liſtened very little to what was ſaid around him. But the Connoiſſeur, who examined his countenance, perceived in it a very extraordinary fire. 'See,' ſaid he to his geniſſes, 'ſee how talent pierces.'—'Yes,' replied one of them, 'we ſee it tranſpire like water through the pores of an eolipyle.' Fintac, taking Celicour by the hand, ſaid to him, 'There is a comparison now! Poetry and philoſophy blended together! It is thus that the talents border on each other, and that the
Muses

Muses join hands. Confess,' continued he, 'that such dinners are not found in your country-towns; and you see nothing: there are days, when these gentlemen have even a hundred times more wit.'—'It would be hard not to have it, said one of them; we are at the fountain head, *et purpureo bibimus ore nectar*.'—'Ah! *purpureo*!' replied Fintac modestly, you do me a great deal of honour.'—'Hark, young man, learn to quote.' The young man was all the while very attentive to catch Agathe's looks, who on her side thought him very handsome.

On rising from table, they went to walk in the garden, where the Connoisseur had taken care to get together the rare plants from all quarters. He had, among other wonders, a parti-coloured cabbage, which drew the admiration of naturalists. Its folds, its festoon, the mixture of its colours, was the most astonishing thing in the world. 'Let them shew,' said Fintac, 'a foreign plant, which Nature has taken the trouble to form with more labour and delicacy. It is for the sake of avenging Europe on the prejudice of certain *virtuosi*, in favour of every thing that comes from the Indies and the new world, that I have preserved this fine cabbage.'

While they were admiring this prodigy, Agathe and Celicour had joined each other, as it were, without intending it, in a neighbouring walk. 'Beautiful Agathe!' said the young man, shewing her a rose, 'would you let this flower die on the stalk?'—'Where then would you have it die?'—'Where I would die myself.' Agathe blushed at this answer; and in that instant her uncle, with two wits, came and seated themselves in an adjacent arbour, from whence, without being perceived, he could over-hear them. If it is true,' continued Celicour, 'that souls pass from one body into another, I wish after my death to be such a rose as that. If any profane hand advances to gather me, I will conceal myself amid the prickles; but if some charming nymph deign to cast her eyes on me, I will

will lean towards her, expand my bosom, exhale my perfumes, mingle them with her breath; and the desire of pleasing her shall animate my colours.'—'Very well; you will do so much that you will be plucked off your stalk, and the moment after you will be no more.'---'Ah, Madam! do you consider as nothing the happiness of being one moment----' His eyes finished saying what his mouth had began. 'And I,' said Agathe, disguising her confusion, 'if I had my choice, would wish to be changed into a dove, which is gentleness and innocence itself.'---'Add to these, tenderness and fidelity: yes, beautiful Agathe, the choice is worthy of you. The dove is the bird of Venus; Venus would distinguish you among your fellows; you would be the ornament of her car; Love would repose himself on your wings, or rather, he would cherish you in his bosom. It would be from his divine mouth that your bill would take ambrosia.' Agathe, interrupted him, saying, that he carried his fictions too far. 'One word more,' said Celicour: 'a dove has a mate; if it depended on you to chuse yours, what kind of a soul would you give him?'---'That of a she-friend,' replied she. At these words Celicour looked on her with two eyes, in which were painted love, reproach, and grief.

'Very well!' said the uncle, getting up: 'very well! there, now, is fine and good poetry for you. The image of this rose is of a freshness worthy Vanhuysum; that of the dove is a little picture of Boucher, the freshest, the most gallant in the world, *ut pictura poesis*. Courage, my lad, courage! the allegory is extremely well supported; we shall make something of you. Agathe, I have been pretty well pleased with your dialogue, and here is M. de Lexergue, who is as much surpris'd at it as I.'---'It is certain,' said M. de Lexergue, 'that there is in Mifs's language something Anacreontic: it is the impression of her uncle's taste; he says nothing which is not stamped with the mark of sound antiquity.' M. Lucide found in Celicour's fictions the *molle atque facetum*. 'We must conclude
this

this little scene,' said Fintac; 'we must put it into verse; it will be one of the prettiest things we have ever seen.' Celicour said, that in order to complete it, he stood in need of Agathe's assistance; and, that the dialogue might have more ease and freedom in it, they thought it right to leave them alone. 'To the dove, your mate, *the soul of a she friend!*' resumed Celicour. 'Ah, beautiful Agathe! is your heart made only for friendship? Is it for that Love has delighted to assemble in you so many charms?'---'There, now,' said Agathe, smiling, 'is the dialogue excellently renewed. I have but to take the reply: there is matter enough to carry us a great way.'---'If you please,' said Celicour, 'it is easy to abridge it.'---'Let us talk of something else,' interrupted she. 'Did the dinner amuse you?'---'I heard there but one single word full of sense and refinement, which they had the folly to take for a simple question; all the rest escaped me. My soul was not at my ear.'---'It was very happy!'---'Ah, very happy! for it was in my eyes.'---'If I pleased, I might pretend not to hear, or not to understand you; but I never put on disguise. I think it very natural, then, under favour of our wits, for you to take more pleasure in looking at me than in listening to them; and I confess to you, in my turn, that I am not sorry at having one to speak to me, though it were only by his eyes, in order to save me from the spleen that they give me. Now, then, we are come to a right understanding, and we shall amuse ourselves, for we have originals entertaining enough in their kind. For example, this M. Lucide thinks he always sees in things what nobody else has perceived in them. He seems as if Nature had told her secret in his ear; but every body is not worthy to know what he thinks. He chuses in a circle a privileged confident. This is commonly the most distinguished person; he leans mysteriously towards that person, and whispers his opinion. As for M. de Lexergue, he is a scholar of the first class: full of contempt for every thing modern, he esteems things
by

by the number of ages. He would chuse even that a young woman should have the air of antiquity, and he honours me with his attention, because he thinks I have the profile of the empress Poppæa. In the groupe which you see below there, is an upright starch man, who makes pretty little nothings; but does not know what he means by them. He demands a day for reading; he names his auditory himself; he requires that the gate should be shut against every profane person; he arrives on his tip-toes, places himself before a table between two flambeaus; draws mysteriously out of his pocket a rose-coloured porte-folio; throws around him a gracious look, which demands silence; announces a little romance of his own making which has had the good fortune to please some persons of consideration; reads it deliberately, in order to be the better tasted; and goes quite to the end without perceiving that every body yawns at him. That little fidgeting man near him, so full of gesticulation, excites a pity in me which I am not able to express. Wit is to him like those sneezings which are going to come but which never do come. We see him dying with the desire of saying fine things: he has them at his tongue's end; but they seem to escape him the moment he is going to catch them. Ah, he is much to be pitied! That dry and tall man, who walks alone apart from them, is the most thoughtful and most empty person I know: because he has a bob-wig, and the vapours, he thinks himself an English philosopher; he grows heavy on the wing of a fly, and is so obscure in his ideas, that one is sometimes tempted to think him profound.

While Agathe's wit was exercising itself on these characters, Celicour had his eyes fixed on her's. 'Ah!' said he, 'that your uncle, who knows so many things, should know so little of his niece's understanding! he represents you as a child!'—'Oh, to be sure! and all these gentlemen consider me as such. Accordingly they put no restraint upon themselves, and the absurdity of wit is with me quite at its ease. Do not go and betray
me

me now.'----'Never fear; but we must, beautiful Agathe, cement our understanding by stricter ties than those of friendship.'----'You do injustice to friendship,' replied Agathe; 'there is something sweeter, perhaps; but there is nothing more solid.'

At these words they came to interrupt them, and the Connoisseur walking along with Celicour, asked him if the dialogue with his niece had been cleverly resumed. 'It is not precisely what I wanted,' said the young man: 'but I will endeavour to supply it.'----'I am sorry,' says Fintac, 'that we interrupted you. Nothing is so difficult as to recover the natural thread, when once we let it escape. This giddy girl has not caught your idea. She has sometimes lights; but all on a sudden they vanish. I hope, at least, that marriage will form her.'----'You think, then, of marrying her?' demanded Celicour, with a faltering voice. 'Yes,' replied Fintac, 'and I depend upon you for the worthy celebration of that festival. You have seen M. de Lexergue; he is a man of great sense and profound erudition. It is to him that I give my niece.' If Fintac had observed Celicour's countenance, he would have seen it grow pale at this news. 'A man so serious, and so full of application, has need,' continued he, 'of something to dissipate him. He is rich; he has taken a liking to this girl, and in a week's time he is to marry her; but he exacts the greatest secrecy, and my niece herself knows nothing of it yet. As for you, it is highly necessary that you should be initiated into the mystery of an union which you are to celebrate. *O Hymen! ô Hymenæe!* you understand me. It is an epithalamium that I ask of you; and here, now, is an opportunity to signalize yourself.'----'Ah, Sir!----'----'No modesty; it smothers all talents.'----'Excuse me.'----'You shall execute it: it is a piece in your own way, and which will do you a great deal of honour. My niece is young and handsome, and with an imagination and soul, one is not exhausted on such a subject. With respect to the husband, I have already told

told you he is an extraordinary man. Nobody so knowing in antiques. He has a cabinet of medals which he values at forty thousand crowns. He was even going to see the ruins of Herculanæum, and was very near making a voyage to Palmyra. You see how many images all this presents to poetry. But you are ruminating upon it already; yes, I see on your countenance that profound meditation which hatches the buds of genius, and disposes them to fruitfulness. Go, then; go, and profit of such precious moments. I am going also to bury myself in study.'

Seized with consternation at what he had just heard, Celicour burned with impatience to see Agathe again. The next day he made a pretence to go and consult the Connoisseur; and before he went into his study, he asked if she was to be seen. 'Ah, Mademoiselle!' said he to her, 'you see a man driven to despair.'--- 'What ails you?'--- 'I am undone; you are to marry M. de Lexergue.'--- 'Who has told you that story?'--- 'Who! M. De Fintac himself.'--- 'Seriously?'--- 'He has charged me to write your epithalamium.'--- 'Very well, will it be a pretty one?'--- 'You laugh! you think it charming to have M. de Lexergue for a husband!'--- 'Oh, very charming!'--- 'Ah! at least, cruel maid, in pity to me who adore you, and who am to lose you!'--- Agathe interrupted him as he fell on his knees. 'Confess,' said she to him, 'that these moments of distraction are convenient for a declaration: as the person that makes it is not himself, so she who hears him dares not complain; and, by favour of this disorder, love thinks it may risk every thing. But, softly, moderate yourself, and let us see what distracts you.'--- 'Your tranquility, cruel as you are.'--- 'You would have me afflict myself, then, at a misfortune which I am not afraid of?'--- 'I tell you, that it is determined that you shall marry M. de Lexergue.'--- 'How would you have them determine, without me, on that which, without me, cannot be put into execution?'--- 'But if your uncle has given his word?'--- 'If he has given
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it, he shall retract it.'---'How, would you have the courage!'---'The courage of not saying *Yes!* a fine effort of resolution!'---'Ah, I am at the summit of joy!'---'And your joy is as folly as well as your grief.'---'You will not be M. de Lexergue's!'---'Very well; what then?'---'You will be mine.'---'O, to be sure! there is no medium; and every woman who will not be his wife will be yours, that is clear! Indeed you argue like a country poet. Go, go see my uncle; and take care that he has no suspicion of the information that you have given me.'

'Well, is the epithalamium in forwardness?' said the Connoisseur to him, as soon as he came into his presence. 'I have the plan in my head.'---'Let us see!'---'I have taken the allegory of Time espousing Truth.'---'The thought is beautiful; but it is gloomy; and, besides, Time is very old.'---'M. de Lexergue is an antiquary.'---'True; but we do not love to be told that we are as old as Time.'---'Would you like the nuptials of Venus and Vulcan?'---'Vulcan! on account of bronzes and medals. No: the adventure of Mars is too disagreeable. You will find out, on consideration, some thought still more happy---But *à propos* of Vulcan, will you come this evening with us to see the essay of an artificer whom I protect? It is some Chinese rockets, of which I have given him the composition: I have even added something to it; for I must always put in something of my own.' Celicour doubted not but Agathe would be of the party, and repaired thither with eagerness.

The spectators were seated; Fintac and his niece took up one window, and there remained on Agathe's side a small space, which she had contrived to leave vacant. Celicour stole timorously into it, and leaped with joy on seeing himself so near Agathe. The uncle's eyes were attentive to follow the flight of the rockets; Celicour's were fixed upon the niece. The stars might have fallen from the heavens, and not have disturbed

him. His hand met on the side of the window a hand softer than the down of flowers; a trembling seized him, which Agathe must have perceived. The hand he touched scarce made a motion to withdraw itself; his made one to retain it: Agathe's eyes turned upon him, and met his, which asked for pardon. She perceived that she should afflict him by withdrawing that dear hand, and whether through weakness or pity, she thought proper to leave it immoveable. This was a great deal, but not quite enough; Agathe's hand was shut, and Celicour's could not clasp it. Love inspired him with the courage to open it. Gods! what was his surprise and joy, when he found her yield insensibly to this soft violence! He holds Agathe's hand open in his---he presses it amorously---conceive his felicity! It is not yet perfect: the hand he presses replies not to his; he draws it towards him, inclines towards her, and dares to rest it on his heart, which advances to meet it. 'It wants to get from him, he stops it, he holds it captive; and love knows with what rapidity his heart beats under this timid hand. This was a loadstone to her. O triumph! O rapture! It is no longer Celicour that presses it; it is the hand itself that answers the beatings of Celicour's heart. Those who have never loved have never known this emotion; and even those who have loved have never tasted it but once. Their looks were mingled with that touching languor which is the sweetest of all declarations, when the branch of the fire-works displayed itself in the air. Then Agathe's hand made a new effort to impress itself on the heart of Celicour; and while around them they applauded the glittering beauty of the rockets, our lovers, taken up with themselves, expressed by burning sighs, the regret of separation. Such was this dumb scene, worthy to be cited among the examples of eloquent silence.

From this moment their hearts understanding each other, there was no longer any secret between them: both tasted, for the first time, the pleasure of loving; and
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this blossom of sensibility is the purest essence of the soul. But love, which takes the complexion of characters, was timid and serious in Celicour; lively, joyous, and waggish, in Agathe.

However, the day appointed for informing her of her marriage with M. de Lexergue arrives. The antiquary comes to see her, finds her alone, and makes her a declaration of his love founded on the consent of her uncle. 'I know,' said she, raillyng, 'that you love me in profile; but for me, I should like a husband that I could love in front; and, to speak frankly, you are not the thing for me. You have, you say, my uncle's consent, but you shall not marry me without my own; and I believe I may assure you that you will not have it as long as I live.' In vain did Lexergue protest to her that she united in her eyes more charms than the Venus de Medicis: Agathe wished him antique Venuses, and assured him that she was not one. 'You have your choice,' said she to him, 'to expose me to displease my uncle, or to spare me that chagrin. You will afflict me in charging me with the rupture, you will oblige me by taking it upon yourself; and the best thing we can do when we are not loved, is to endeavour not to be hated. And so your very humble servant.'

The antiquary was mortally offended at Agathe's refusal; but out of pride he would have concealed it, if the reproach cast upon him of failing in his word had not extorted the confession from him. Fintac, whose authority and consideration were now brought into question, was enraged at the opposition of his niece, and did all that was possible to conquer it; but he never could draw from her any other answer but that she was no medal, and he concluded by telling her in a passion that she should never have any other husband. This was not the only obstacle to the happiness of our lovers. Celicour could hope for only part of a small inheritance; and Agathe was entirely dependent on her uncle, who was now less than ever disposed to strip himself of his wealth for her. In happier times he

might have taken upon him their little family affairs; but after this refusal of Agathe's, it required a little miracle to engage him to it; and it was love himself that wrought it.

'Flatter my uncle,' said Agathe to Celicour; 'intoxicate him with encomiums, and carefully conceal from him our love. For that purpose let us diligently avoid being found together, and content yourself with informing me of your conduct *en passant*.' Fintac dissimulated not to Celicour his resentment against his niece. 'Can she have,' said he, 'any secret inclination? If I knew it--But, no! she is a little fool, who loves nothing, and feels nothing. Ah! if she reckons upon my inheritance, she is mistaken: I know better how to dispose of my favours.' The young man, terrified at the menaces of the uncle, took the first opportunity to inform the niece of it. She only raillied upon the occasion. 'He is raving mad against you, my dear Agathe.'—'That is quite indifferent to me.'—'He says he will disinherit you.'—'Say as he says; gain his confidence, and leave the rest to love and time.' Celicour followed Agathe's advice, and at every commendation that he bestowed on Fintac, Fintac thought he discovered in him a new degree of merit. 'The justness of understanding, the penetration of this young man, is without example at his age,' said he to his friends. At last, the confidence he placed in him was such, that he thought he could trust to him what he called the secret of his life; this was a dramatic piece which he had composed, and which he had not had the resolution to read to any one, for fear of risking his reputation. After demanding an inviolable secrecy, he appointed the time for reading it. At this news Agathe was transported with joy. 'That is well,' said she; 'courage! Redouble the dose of incense; good or bad, in your eyes this piece has no equal.'

Fintac, *tête à tête* with the young man, after double locking his study door, drew out of a casket this precious manuscript, and read with enthusiasm the coldest,
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the most insipid comedy that ever was written. It cost the young man a deal of mortification to applaud such flat stuff; but Agathe had recommended it to him. He applauded it therefore, and the Connoisseur was transported. 'Confess,' said he to him, after reading it, 'confess that this is fine.'—'Oh, very fine!'—'Very well, it is time to tell you, then, why I have chosen you for my only confident. I have burned with desire this great while to see this piece on the stage, but I would not have it go under my name.' Celicour trembled at these words. 'I was unwilling to trust any body; but, in short, I think you worthy of this mark of my friendship: you shall present my work as your own; I will have nothing but the pleasure of success, and I leave the glory of it to you.' The thought of imposing upon the public would alone have terrified the young man, but that of seeing appear and being damned under his name so contemptible a work, shocked him still more. Confounded at the proposal he withstood it a long time; but his opposition was to no purpose. 'My secret being confided,' said Fintac, 'engages you in honour to grant me what I ask. It is indifferent to the public whether the piece be yours or mine, and this friendly imposition can hurt nobody. My piece is my treasure; I make you a present of it: the very remotest posterity will know nothing of it. Here, then, your delicacy is spared every way: if, after this you refuse to present this work as your own, I shall think that you do not like it, that you only deceive me in praising it, and that you are equally unworthy of my friendship and esteem. What would not Agathe's lover resolve upon rather than incur the hatred of her uncle? He assured him that he was only restrained by laudable motives, and asked twenty-four hours to determine. 'He has read it to me,' said he to Agathe. 'Well?'—'Well, it is execrable.'—'I thought so.'—'He wants me to bring it on the stage in my name.'—'What?'—'To have it pass for mine.'—'Ah,

----' Ah, Celicour, Heaven be praised ! have you accepted it ?'---' Not yet, but I shall be forced to it,'---
 ' So much the better !'---' I tell you it is detestable,'---
 ' So much the better,'---' It will be damned,'---' So much the better, I tell you ; we must submit to every thing.' Celicour did not sleep that night, for vexation, and the next day, went to the uncle, and told him, that there was nothing which he would not sooner resolve upon than to displease him. ' I would not expose you rashly,' said the Connoisseur ; ' copy out the piece with your own hand ; you shall read it to our friends, who are excellent judges, and if they do not think the success infallible, you shall not be bound to any thing. I require only one thing of you ; and that is to study it in order to read it well.' This precaution gave the young man some hope. ' I am,' said he to Agathe, ' to read the piece to his friends ; if they think it bad, he excuses me from bringing it out.'---' They will think it good, and so much the better : we should be undone if they were to dislike it.'---' Explain yourself.'---' Get thee gone ! they must not see us together.' What she had foreseen came to pass. The judges being assembled, the Connoisseur announced this piece as a prodigy, and especially in a young poet. The young poet read his best, and, after Fintac's example, they were in extasies at every line, and applauded every scene. At the conclusion they clapped and huzzaed ; they discovered in it the delicacy of Aristophanes, the elegance of Plautus, the comic force of Terence, and they knew no piece of Moliere fit to be set in competition with this. After this trial, there was no room to hesitate. The players were not of the same opinion with the wits ; for they knew before-hand that these good people had no taste, but there was an order to perform the piece. Agathe, who had assisted at the reading, had applauded with all her might ; there were even pathetic passages at which she appeared to be moved, and her enthusiasm for the work had a little reconciled her with the author, ' Could it be possible,'
said

said Celicour to her, 'that you should have thought that good?'---'Excellent!' said she: 'excellent for us!' and at these words she left him. While the piece was in rehearsal, Fintac ran from house to house to dispose the wits in favour of a young poet of such great expectation. At last the great day arrives, and the Connoisseur assembles his friends to dinner. 'Let us go gentlemen,' said he, 'to support your own performance. You have judged the piece admirable, you have warranted the success, and your honour is concerned. As to me, you know how great my weakness is: I have the bowels of a father for all rising geniuses, and I feel in as lively a manner as themselves the uneasinesses they suffer in those terrible moments.'

After dinner, the good friends of the Connoisseur tenderly embraced Celicour; and told him that they were going into the pit to be the witnesses rather than instruments of his triumph. They repaired thither; the piece was played; it did not go through, and the first mark of impatience was given by these good friends.

Fintac was in the house, trembling and pale as death; but all the time that the play lasted, this unhappy and tender father made incredible efforts to encourage the spectators to succour his child. In short, he saw it expire, and then sinking beneath his grief, dragged himself to his coach, confounded, dejected, and murmuring against Heaven for having been born in so barbarous an age. And where was poor Celicour? Alas! they had granted him the honours of a latticed box, where, sitting on thorns, he had seen what they called his piece, tottering in the first act, stumbling in the second, and tumbling in the third. Fintac had promised to go and take him up, but had forgot it. What was now to become of him? How escape through that multitude who would not fail to know him again, and to point him out with the finger? At last, seeing the front of the house empty, he took courage and descended; but the stove-rooms, the galleries, the stairs,

stairs, were yet full; his consternation made him be taken notice of, and he heard on all sides, 'It is he without doubt! yes, there he is; that is he! Poor wretch! It is pity! he will do better another time.' He perceived in a corner a groupe of damned authors cracking jests on their companions. He saw also the good friends of Fintac, who triumphed in his fall, and on seeing him, turned their backs upon him. Overwhelmed with confusion and grief, he repaired to the true author's, and his first care was to ask for Agathe: he had entire liberty of seeing her, for her uncle had shut himself up in his closet. 'I forewarned you of it: it is fallen, and fallen shamefully,' said Celicour, throwing himself into a chair. 'So much the better,' said Agathe. 'What, so much the better! when your lover is covered with shame, and makes himself, in order to please you, the talk and ridicule of all Paris? Ah! it is too much. No, Mademoiselle, it is no longer time to jest. I love you more than my life; but in the state of humiliation in which you now see me, I am capable of renouncing both life and yourself. I do not know how it has happened that the secret has not escaped me. It is but little to expose myself to the contempt of the public; your cruel uncle will abandon me! I know him, he will be the first to blush at seeing me again; and what I have done to obtain you, perhaps, cuts off my hope for ever. Let him prepare, however, to resume his piece, or to give me your hand. There is but one way to console me, and to oblige me to silence. Heaven is my witness, that if through an impossibility, his work had succeeded, I should have given to him the honour of it; it is fallen, and I bear the shame; but it is an effort of love, for which you alone can be the recompence.'—'It must be confessed,' said the wicked Agathe, in order to irritate him still more, 'that it is a cruel thing to see one's self hissed for another.'—'Cruel to such a degree, that I would not play such a part for my own father.'—'With what an air of contempt they see a wretch pass along whose play

play is damned!'—'The contempt is unjust, that is one comfort; but insolent pity, there is the mortification!'—'I suppose you were greatly confused in coming down stairs! Did you salute the ladies?'—'I could have wished to annihilate myself.'—'Poor boy! and how will you dare to appear in the world again?'—'I will never appear again, I swear to you, but with the name of your husband, or till after I have retorted on M. de Fintac the humiliation of this failure.'—'You are resolved then to drive him to the wall?'—'Fully resolved, do not doubt it. Let him determine this very evening. If he refuses me your hand, all the newspapers shall publish that he is the author of the damned piece.'—'And that is what I wanted,' said Agathe with triumph; 'there is the object of all those *so much the better*s which put you so much out of patience. Go to my uncle; hold firm, and be assured that we shall be happy.'

'Well, Sir, and what say you to it?' demanded Celicour of the Connoisseur. 'I say, my friend, that the public is a stupid animal, and that we must renounce all labour for it. But console yourself; your work does you honour in the opinion of men of taste.'—'My work! it is all yours.'—'Talk lower, I beseech you, my dear lad: talk lower!'—'It is very easy for you to moderate yourself, Sir? you, who have prudently saved yourself from the fall of your piece; but I whom it crushes-----' 'Ah! do not think that such a fall does you any injury. The more enlightened persons have discerned in this work strokes that proclaim genius.'—'No, Sir, I do not flatter myself; the piece is bad: I have purchased the right of speaking of it with freedom, and all the world are of the same opinion. If it had succeeded, I should have declared that it was yours; if it had been but partly condemned, I should have taken it upon myself; but so thorough a damnation is above my strength, and I beg of you to take the burden upon yourself.'—'I, child! I, on my decline, incur this ridicule! To lose in one day a respect

spect which is the work of forty years, and which forms the hope of my old age! would you have the cruelty to require it?'---'Have not you the cruelty to render me the victim of my complaisance? You know how much it has cost me.'---'I know all that I owe to you; but, my dear Celicour, you are young, you have time enough to take your revenge, and there needs but one instance of success to make you forget this misfortune: in the name of friendship support it with constancy; I conjure you with tears in my eyes!'---'I consent, Sir; but I perceive too well the consequences of this first essay, to expose myself to the prejudice which it leaves behind it: I renounce the theatre, poetry, the belles lettres'-----

'Well, you are in the right: for a young man of your age there are many other objects of ambition.'-----

'There is but one for me, Sir, and that depends on you.'---'Speak; there is no service which I would not do you: what do you require?'---'Your niece's hand.'

---'Agathe's hand!'---'Yes, I adore her, and it was she, who to please you, made me consent to every thing that you desired.'---'My niece in the secret?'---'Yes, Sir.'-----'Ah! her giddiness will perhaps'-----

Hola! somebody; run to my niece, and bid her come here.'

---'Compose yourself: Agathe is less a child, less giddy, than she appears.'---'Ah! you make me tremble.'---'My dear Agathe, you know what has passed,

and the misfortune which has just happened.'-----

'Yes, uncle.'---'Have you revealed this fatal secret to any one?'---'To nobody in the world.'---'Can I thoroughly depend upon it?'---'Yes, I swear to you.'

---'Well, then, my children, let it die with us three: I ask it of you as I would ask my life.'-----

Agathe, Celicour loves you; he renounces, out of friendship to me, the theatre, poetry, letters, and I owe him your hand as the price of so great a sacrifice.'---'He is too well paid,' cried Celicour, seizing Agathe's hand. 'I marry an unsuccessful author!' said she smiling; 'but I engage to console him for his misfortune. The worst

of the matter is, that they deny him wit, and so many

honest

honest people are contented without it! And now, my dear uncle, while Celicour renounces the glory of being a poet, had not you as well renounce that of being a Connoisseur? You will be a great deal the easier.' Agathe was interrupted by the arrival of Clément, the faithful valet of her uncle. 'Ah, Sir,' said he quite out of breath, 'your friends! your good friends!----' 'Well, Clément?'----'I was in the pit, they were all there.'----'I know it. Did they applaud?'----'Applaud! the traitors! If you had seen with what fury they mangled this unfortunate young man. I beg, Sir, you would discharge me, if such people are ever to enter your house again.'----'Ah! the rascals! scoundrels!' said Fintac. 'Yes, it is done, I will burn my books, and break off all commerce with these men of letters.'----'Keep your books for your amusement,' said Agathe, embracing her uncle; 'and with respect to men of letters, wish to have none but your friends, and you will find some worthy of esteem.'

THE SCHOOL OF FATHERS.

THE misfortune incident to a father, employed in raising a fortune for his children, is not to be able to watch himself over their education, a point of still more consequence than their fortune. The young Timantes called M. De Volny, had received from Nature an agreeable figure, an easy temper, a good heart; but, thanks to the cares of the good lady his mother, this happy disposition was soon spoiled, and the most agreeable child in the world at six years old became a little coxcomb at fifteen. They gave him all the frivolous accomplishments, and not one of the useful: useful knowledge might be well enough for a man like his father, who had been obliged to labour to enrich himself; but he who found his fortune made, need only know how to enjoy it nobly. They had laid it down to him as a maxim, that he was never to live with his equals; accordingly, he saw none but young people, who being superior to him in birth, pardoned his being
richer

richer than they, provided he paid for their pleasures. His father would not have had the complaisance to furnish supplies to his liberalities; but his mother did honour to them all. She was not ignorant, that at the age of nineteen he had, according to the genteel custom, a little house and a handsome mistress: one should pass over some things in him. She required only that he should observe a little secrecy, for fear that Timantes, who did not *know the world*, should take it ill that his son amused himself. If in the intervals of his labour the father shewed any uneasiness on account of the dissipated life which the young man led, the mother was at hand to justify him, and complaisant falsehoods were never wanting on occasion. Timantes had the pleasure to hear it said, that nobody at the ball had danced like his son. 'It is a great comfort,' said the good man, 'to have given one's self so much trouble for a son who dances well!' He did not conceive the necessity of his little seignior's having lacqueys so finely dressed, and such a brilliant equipage; but his good lady wife represented to him, that respect depended on it, and that in order to succeed in the world, one must be on a certain footing. If he asked why his son came home so late, 'It was,' she told him, 'because women of quality do not go to bed sooner.' He did not think these reasons very good; but for the sake of peace, he was obliged to be contented with them. However, his son gave a loose to himself in the dissipations of his age till love seemed to take pity of him, and to undertake his reformation.

His sister Lucy had had, for some little time past, in her convent, a charming companion. Angelica had lost her mother; and being too young to keep house, she had prevailed upon her father to dispense with her, till he should dispose of her hand.

Conformity of age and condition, and still more that of tempers, soon united Angelica and Lucy. The latter, on wiping away the tears of her companion, appeared so sensible of her loss, that Angelica no longer
observed

observed any reserve in the effusion of her grief. 'I have lost,' said she to her, 'the best mother that ever lived. Since I have had the use of my reason, I have found in her a friend; and a friend so intimate, that if my heart and her virtues had not continually recalled to my mind the respect which I owed her, her familiarity would have made me forget it. She always disguised her instructions under an air of merriment; and what instructions, my dear Lucy! those of wisdom itself. With what strokes was this world, in which I was to live, painted to my astonished eyes! What charms did she give to the pure and modest manners, of which she was a living example! Ah, under her enchanting pencil all the Virtues became Graces!' Thus did this amiable daughter, speaking of her mother, continually mingle with the most tender regret the most touching eulogies; but her understanding and her soul praised still more worthily the person who had formed them. If any one about her wanted those comforts which affluence bestows, Angelica deprived herself of them with joy; the sacrifice cost her only the trouble of concealing them, and the want of obliging was the only want she knew. 'Do you think, like me?' said she sometimes to Lucy; 'being more happy than our companions, that inequality mortifies me, and I blush for fortune, who has distributed her gifts so ill. If any thing makes the unhappy amends, it is that they are pitied and beloved; whereas to us, whom they might envy, they make it a favour if they do not hate us. We ought, therefore, to be very attentive to make our companions forget, by beneficence and modesty, this dangerous advantage which we have over them.

Lucy charmed with the disposition of Angelica, could have wished to attach herself to her by all the bands of affection. 'My dear friend,' said she to her one day, 'we touch, perhaps on the moment when we may be separated for ever: this reflection is the sole unhappiness of my life; but I have one, if you did but approve of it—I want to shew you my brother; he is

beautiful as the day, a very picture, and well accomplished.'—'He is very young,' said Angelica, 'and very much in the world for his age! I am afraid your mother has been too fond of him.'

Volny being come to see Lucy, she prevailed upon her friend to accompany her to the parlour. 'Ah, my sister, what charms!' cried the young coxcomb. 'Never was so much beauty; what features, what a figure, what eyes! You in a convent, Mademoiselle! It is robbery, treason!'—'I foresaw,' said Lucy, 'that you would be transported; and yet her soul is a thousand times more beautiful.'—'Sister, she has the look of the Marchioness of Alcine, whom I handed yesterday out of the opera. They cry up the figure of the Countess of Flavell, whom I am to sup with this evening: but there is no comparison between her person and this lady's; and though I am the intimate friend of the young Madam de Blanes, who passes for the beauty of the day, I will lay a thousand to one that your friend will eclipse her when she comes out into the world.'

While Volny spoke thus, Angelica viewed him with eyes of pity. 'Sir,' said she to him, 'you can have no doubt but your praises are insults: for know, that the first sentiment that a virtuous woman ought to inspire is, the fear of wounding her modesty, and that it is not permitted to praise without reserve any but persons without shame.'—'There are transports of surprise which we cannot master,' replied Volny, a little confused. 'When respect accompanies them, it prevents them from breaking out. But I see that I afflict my friend in appearing offended with your address to me: I will console her, and put you at your ease. Beautiful or not, I am so little vain of an endowment with which we are very often contemptible, that I give you leave to say whatever you please before me; I will not have the vanity to blush at your praises.'—'One must be well accustomed,' said Volny, 'to be beautiful, and greatly superior to that advantage, to speak of it with so much negligence. As for me, I cannot persuade my-

self

self that beauty is so contemptible; but since you take the homages that are paid it so ill, we must adore it in silence.' From that moment he talked of nothing but himself, his horses, his friends, his suppers and his intrigues. Lucy, who had her eyes on Angelica, saw with grief that all this prejudiced Volny in her opinion.

'It is pity,' said Angelica, when he was withdrawn, 'it is a great pity that they have spoiled him so early!' 'Confess, however,' said Lucy, 'that he is made up of grasses.'—'And of follies, my dear friend.'---'He will correct them.'---'No, for that absurdity succeeds at his age, and we are never disposed to correct ourselves of a fault which pleases.'---'But he has seen you, he will love you: and if he loves you, he will become wise.'---'You do not doubt that I wish it; but I am far from hoping it.'

Volny did not doubt that he had made a compleat conquest. 'My sister was right,' said he, 'her friend is handsome! a little singular, but her disposition is only the more lively for it. The only thing wanting in her is birth: my mother will have me marry some young woman of quality. Let us visit her, however; this girl resembles nothing that we have in the great world, and she has at least sufficient charms to amuse one.'

He went, therefore, to see his sister again, and with her he again saw Angelica. 'What have I done to you,' said he to Lucy, 'that you have disturbed my repose? I was so easy! I amused myself so cleverly before I saw your dangerous friend!---Ah, Mademoiselle, how insipid is the world, and its amusements, how cold to a heart taken up with you! Who would have told me that I should have been jealous of my sister? Mixed with the most brilliant company, solicited by all the pleasures, who could believe it? Yes, I wish to be in her place; she sees you continually, tells you that she loves you, and hears you say that you love her.'---'You have reason to envy my happiness; but, Volny, if you pleased, yours would be still more deserving of envy.' At these words Angelica blushed. 'O Heaven, sister! what do I hear?'

‘I have said too much.’—‘No, my dear Lucy, in virtuous sentiments there is nothing to be concealed. Your sister wishes that Heaven may have destined us for each other, and I cannot but be obliged to her. Nay, more; I flatter myself with being born to make a good man happy, and you *might* be such a man as my husband ought to be: you need only resemble your sister.’—‘If that be all, I am happy; for they flatter me that I am very like her.’---‘True, they flatter you; but I, who never flatter, assure you it is no such thing.’ ‘My Lucy is not vain either of the graces of her understanding, or her figure.’---‘Ah! I protest, now, that nobody in the world is less vain than I; and if I have merit, I know nothing of it.’---‘Nothing is more simple than Lucy’s manners; she is Nature itself in all her candour. See if in her behaviour, her language, her gesture, there is any thing affected, any thing studied.’---‘She is like me: for the sake of avoiding affectation, I often fall into negligence; I am told of it every day.’---‘Lucy makes no pretensions to any thing: wholly taken up with the recommendation of others, herself is the only person she forgets.’---‘And I, whatever talents Nature may have given me, do they see me vain of them, or presume upon them? All the world says, that I excel in every circumstance of the agreeable; I alone never mention it. Ah, if it be modesty and simplicity which you love in my sister, I am very sure that you will love me: these are my favourite virtues.’ ‘Would they were,’ said Angelica. ‘However, if you have any design of ever pleasing me, I advise you to examine yourself more closely.’

‘You have given him,’ said Lucy, ‘a lesson which he will not forget.’---‘No; for he has forgot it already.’ Angelica was in the right. All that he had drawn from their conversation was, that she liked him, and that she would be very glad to be his wife. ‘With what frankness,’ said he, ‘did she make the declaration to me! how well that candour becomes beauty!’ Whether vanity or passion, he was really moved by it; but this growing passion,

sion, if it was one, had no effect upon his manners. Intoxicated with the incense of his flatterers, agreeably deceived by a young enchantress, he forgot that they sold him the pains which they took to please him; and his vanity, caressed by the Pleasures, smiled carelessly upon them. This voluptuous softness is the most fatal languor into which a young man can be plunged. Every thing, except that, is painful to him; the slightest duties are fatiguing; decorums the least austere, dull and troublesome; he is not at his ease, but in that state of indolence and liberty, where every thing obeys him, nothing constrains him.

Sometimes the image of Angelica presented itself to him like a dream. 'She is charming,' said he; 'but what shall I do with her? Nothing is more inconvenient than a delicate and faithful wife to a husband who is not so. My father would expect that I should live only for my wife. There would be love, jealousy, reproaches, tears; horrible! However, I will see her again.' Lucy came alone this time. 'Well, how does she like me?'—'A great deal too well.'—'I thought so.'—'Too well as to figure. That advantage makes you neglect, she says, more amiable qualities, which you would stand in need of without it.'—'This Angelica of yours moralizes a little, and it is pity. Tell her that nothing is more dull, and that so pretty a mouth as her's is not made to talk reason.'—'It is not she,' said Lucy, 'it is you whom I would correct.'—'And of what, pray; of loving pleasure, and every thing that inspires it?'—'Pleasure! is there one more pure than that of possessing the heart of a virtuous and beautiful woman; of loving, and being loved? I believe that you are affectionate. Angelica has sensibility; every thing that belongs to me is dear to her, but——' 'But she is very difficult, and what is it she requires?'—'Morals.'—'Morals at my age, and who has told her that I have none?'—'I don't know, but she has conceived a prejudice against you that grieves me.'—'Ah, I will bring her to herself again. Bring her

her to me sister! bring her to me the first time that I come to see you. It is to no purpose that men are discreet,' said he, as he was going away; 'women cannot be silent; and with whatever care I conceal my intrigues, the secret will out. But what hurt does that do me? If Angelica will have a husband who has always been chaste, she has nothing to do but to marry a fool or a child. Am I obliged to be faithful to a wife that is to be? Oh! I will make her see the folly of her notions.' She appeared, and he was himself very much humbled, very much confounded, when he heard her speak with the eloquence of virtue and reason on the shame and danger of vice. 'Can you think, Sir,' said she to him, after having let him treat as slightly as he pleased the principles of good morals; 'can you think without blushing, on the union of a pure and chaste soul with one tarnished and profaned by the most unworthy of all inclinations? Of what value in your eyes would a heart be, debased by the vices of which you are vain? and do you think us less sensible than yourself to the charms of virtue, modesty, and innocence? You have given yourself a dispensation from those laws which you have imposed upon us; but Nature and Reason are more equitable than you. For me, I will never believe that a man can dare to love me while he loves things that are scandalous; and if he has had the misfortune to be unworthy of me before knowing me, it is by the pains he shall take to wipe away that blemish that I shall see whether I ought to forget it.' Volny wanted to make her understand, that by changing condition we changed our conduct; that love, virtue, beauty had numberless rights over a soul: and that the frivolous and transient pleasures which had before occupied that indolent soul, would disappear before an object more dear and more worthy to possess it. 'Have you faith, Sir,' said she, 'in these sudden revolutions: do you know that they suppose a soul naturally delicate and noble? that there are very few of this temper, and that it is not a good presage of the change which you promise,

promise, to wait in the very bosom of vice, the moment of becoming virtuous all on a sudden.'

Volny, surprized and confounded at this serious language, contented himself with telling her, that in all this he flattered himself there was nothing personal. 'Pardon me,' said Angelica, 'I have heard much talk of you; I am besides pretty well acquainted with the way of life of the young men of fashion: you are rich, of very extensive acquaintance; and, unless by a kind of prodigy, you must be more irregular than another. But the opinion which I have of you ought not to discourage you. You think you love me; I wish it: that perhaps will give you resolution and force to become a valuable man. You have a fine example; a father, who, without all the accomplishments which you are set off with, has acquired, by talents useful to his country and himself, the highest reputation. There, now, is what I call an uncommon man; and when you shall become worthy of him, I shall be proud of being worthy of you.'

This discourse had thrown Volny into serious reflections; but his friends came to draw him out of them. He was expected at a delicious supper, at which Fatime, Doris, and Chloe, were to assist. Their merriment was lively and brilliant, and if Volny's heart did not give itself up to it, at least his senses did.

We may easily judge, that in this polite circle a serious engagement passed for the highest extravagance. 'When a person's fortune is concerned,' said they, 'it is time enough, we resolve on it; but can a young man, born to a great fortune; can such a one be fool enough, or mad enough to forge himself a chain? if he does not love his wife, she is a burden which he wantonly imposes upon himself; and if he loves her, what a sad method of pleasing himself is that of being her husband? Is there in all the world a more ridiculous creature than a loving husband? Suppose, also, that this should succeed, what then? They are pleased for six months, to be dull all their lives. Ah, my dear Volny! no marriage: you would

would be a lost man. If you have a fancy for any honest girl, wait till another marries her; they always come round to us sooner or later, and you will be happy in your turn.' Would one believe that this unthinking young man thought these reflections very wise. 'And yet only see,' said he, 'what empire virtue and beauty have over a soul, since they make it forget the care of its repose, and the value of its liberty.'

He would fain not have seen Angelica again; but he was not well with himself, when he had passed a few days without seeing her. Such, nevertheless is the attraction of libertinism, that on quitting that adorable young lady, penetrated, ravished, enchanted with her wisdom and her charms, he plunged himself again into the dissipations of which she had made him ashamed.

It is possible that it can be a happiness to a son to lose his mother. Volny, at the death of his, thought he saw the source of all his foolish expences dried up; but it did not even come into his head to renounce those things which had engaged him in them; and the only care with which he was taken up, was to supply the means which he had lost to support them. Being the only son of so rich a father, he could not fail to be rich in his turn; and a young man finds at Paris a pernicious facility of anticipating his fortune. Timantes, now on his decline, wanted to repose himself from his long fatigues, and to engage his son to take his place. 'Sir,' said the young man to him, 'I do not think myself born for that.—' Well, my son, would you rather take the profession of arms?'—'My inclination is not that way, and my birth does not oblige me to it.'—'The law, without doubt, pleases you better.'—'Oh, not at all! I have an invincible aversion for the law.'—'What will you be then?'—'My mother had views of an office which confers nobility, which requires no duty, and might be discharged at Paris.'—'I understand you, my son; I will think of it: an excellent vocation!—Oh, I see,' said the good man in himself, 'that you would live an idle life; but I will hinder you if I can.'

can. An office which confers nobility, and requires no duty! very convenient. And why should I still wear myself out with labour and inquietude? Let me repose, let me have no other care than that which I have taken up rather too late, the care of observing the conduct of a son who promises me nothing but sorrow; for he who loves idleness, loves the vices of which idleness is the mother.'

But what was the affliction of Timantes, when he learned that his son, intoxicated with pride, and plunged in libertinism, gave into all kinds of irregularities; that he had mistresses and flatterers; that he gave shews and entertainments, and that he played at a rate sufficient to ruin him. 'It is my fault,' said Timantes, 'and I must repair it; but how? the habit is contracted: the relish for vice has made great progress. Shall I constrain this young man? He will escape me. Shall I disavow his expences and debts? That would be dishonouring myself; it would be extinguishing in his abased soul the very seeds of honesty. To shut him up is still worse: thank Heaven! he is not come to that pass, as to merit that the laws should deprive him of the natural right of freedom; and there are none but unnatural parents who would be severer towards their children than the laws. In the mean time he is running on to his ruin; what shall I do to draw him from the precipice on which I see him? Let us go back to the source of the evil. My riches have turned his head; born of a father without fortune, he had been like another, modest, laborious, and prudent: the remedy is easy, and my course is taken.'

Timantes began from that time to settle his wealth in such a manner as that it should be detached, independent, and free. Excepting his estate of Volny and his town-house, his fortune was all in his porte-folio, and he took care to adjust matters with all his correspondents. Things being thus disposed, he returns home one day in consternation. His son and his friends who waited his coming, to seat themselves at table, were

were struck with his dejection. One of them could not refrain from asking him the cause. 'You shall know it,' said he: 'let us make a little haste, if you please, to dine; I am taken up with serious affairs.' They dined in profound silence; and Timantes, at their getting up from table, having taken leave of his guests, shut himself up with his son. 'Volny,' said he to him, 'I have bad news to tell you, but you must support your misfortune with courage. My child, I am ruined! Two-thirds of my fortune are just taken on board two vessels; and the dishonesty of a person whom I trusted has deprived me of half the rest. The desire of leaving you a large fortune has undone me; happily, I owe but little, and out of the remains of my fortune I shall save my estate of Volny, which is worth twenty thousand livres a year: on that we shall be able to live. It is a terrible blow, but you are young, and you may rise under it. I have not rendered myself unworthy the confidence of my correspondents; my name will perhaps still retain some credit in Europe; but I am too old to begin anew, and you must repair the misfortunes of your father. I set out in greater difficulties than you will do; and with probity, labour, and my instructions, it is easy for you to go farther than I have done.'

The situation of a traveller, at whose feet the thunder has just fallen, is not to be compared to that of Volny. 'What, my father, ruined without resource?' — 'You, my son, are the only resource left me, and I have no longer any hope but in you. Go, consult yourself, and leave me to take the measures suitable to our misfortune.'

The news was soon made public. The house at Paris was let; the equipages sold; a plain coach, a decent lodging, a frugal table, a family of servants suitable to the necessities of a prudent way of living; every thing proclaimed this reverse of fortune, and it is unnecessary to say that the number of Timantes's friends diminished considerably.

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Those of Volny were touched with his accident. 'What is the matter?' said one; 'they tell me your father is ruined!'---'It is too true.'---'What a folly! You have your little box, then, no longer?'---'Alas! no.'---'I am very sorry for it; I reckoned to have gone there to supper to-morrow.' Another accosted him, and said, 'Tell me a little how this is; your fortune is entirely ruined?'---'It is at least reduced to a very small matter.'---'You have a very silly father of your own! Why the devil did he meddle? you would have been ruined yourself well enough without him.'---'I am quite distracted,' said a third; 'they tell me that you have sold your fine horses?'---'Alas! yes.'---'If I had known it, I would have bought them. What a fellow you are! you never think of your friends.'---'I was taken up with more serious affairs.'---'With your little mistress, was not it? You will have her no longer on your own account; but you will always be good friends: take comfort, I know she loves you; she will behave well.' Some of them said to him as they went along, 'Adieu, Volny!' and all the rest shunned him.

As to his mistress, whom he had enriched, she was so afflicted that she had not the courage to see him again. 'Spare me,' writ she to him; 'you know my sensibility; the sight of you would make too grievous an impression on me: I find myself unable to support it.' It was then, his soul pierced both by the cold slights of his friends, and the unworthy desertion of his mistress, that Volny, for the first time, saw the veil fall which he had over his eyes. 'Where have I been?' said he; 'what have I done? how was I going to spend my life? Ah! what reproaches have I not merited; what wrongs have I not to repair? Let me go and see my sister,' added he; for he had not the courage to say, 'Let me go and see Angelica.'

Lucy was overwhelmed with the news which her father had told just her. 'It is not for myself,' said she; 'I am content; and to be happy far from the world,
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but little is necessary; but you, my father, but Volny! --- 'What would you have, daughter? I was not born in the opulence wherein I have seen myself. If my son is prudent, he will still have riches enough; if not, he will have too much.' Lucy's grief redoubled on seeing her brother. 'I have not the courage to console you,' said she; 'but I go to call to my assistance our wise and affectionate Angelica.' --- 'Oh! no, sister; I have not deserved her interesting herself in my sorrow! when I might have done her honour by sacrifice; it was then that I should have rendered myself worthy of her esteem and pity: now, that every one abandons me, my return, though humiliating to me, has nothing flattering in it for her.' While he was speaking thus, Angelica came of her own accord, and with the most touching air testified to him all her sensibility for his loss. 'It is a great misfortune for your father,' added she; 'it is so too for this dear girl; but it is perhaps a happiness for you. It would be cruel to afflict you by reproaches, when we owe you consolations; but you may draw from the loss of your wealth blessings more valuable than that wealth itself.' --- 'I abused it, Heaven punishes me for it, but punishes me too cruelly in depriving me of the hope of being hers whom I love. I was young; and I dare believe that, without this desperate lesson, time, love, and reason, would have rendered me less unworthy of you.' --- 'I see you dejected,' said she to him; 'it is no longer from presumption, it is from despondency that we must preserve you, and what would have been dangerous to confess to you in prosperity, you stand in need of knowing in adversity. Whether it was not possible for me to think ill of the brother of my friend, or whether it was that you yourself had inspired me with that prepossession which does not listen to reason, I thought I discerned in you, amidst all the errors and vices of your age, a disposition at bottom naturally good. Happily your past errors have nothing shameful in the eyes of the world: the path of honour and virtue is open to you, and it is

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more easy for you than ever to become such as I wish. As to fortune, the reverse which you have experienced is overwhelming. I shall not make you a panegyrick upon mediocrity: when we have known ourselves rich, it is humiliating, it is hard, to cease to be so: but the evil is not without remedy. Conform yourself to your present situation; emerge out of that indolent softness in which you have been plunged; let the love of labour take place of the taste for dissipation; do all that depends on yourself, if you love me, in order to re-establish between us that equality of fortune required in marriage. My father, who loves me, and who would not have me unhappy, will allow me, I hope the liberty of waiting for you. If in six years your fortune is re-established, or on the point of being re-established, all the obstacles will be smoothed; if, with prudence, frugality, and labour, you have the misfortune not to succeed, I require then of you, in the room of all riches, only to have consideration of your condition. I am an only daughter very rich myself; I will cast myself at my father's feet, and obtain his permission to indemnify a valuable man for the injustice of Fortune.' Lucy could no longer refrain from embracing Angelica. 'Ah, how justly art thou named!' said she to her; 'there is nothing but a heavenly spirit that could be capable of so much virtue.' Volny, on his side, in the tenderness and respect with which he was seized, applied his mouth, as he threw himself down, on the bar of the grate which Angelica's hand had touched. 'Mademoiselle,' said he to her, 'you render my misfortune dear to me; and I am going to employ my whole life to merit, if it be possible, the favours with which you overwhelm me. Permit me to come often, to derive from you the courage, the prudence, and the virtue, which I have need of in order to deserve you.'

He retired, not such as heretofore, vain and full of himself; but humbled, confounded, at having so little known the value of the most noble heart that Heaven had ever formed. He enters his father's closet. 'Your

fortune is changed,' said he, 'but your son is still more so; and I hope that one day you will bless Heaven for the reverse which restores me to my duty and to myself. Condescend to instruct and to direct me: diligent, laborious, and docile, I am going to be the support and consolation of your old age, and you may dispose of me.' The good man, transported, dissimulated his joy, and contented himself with commending such good dispositions. He presented his son to his correspondents, and demanded in his behalf their friendship and confidence. We pity, above all, unfortunate persons whom we esteem; and each of them, touched with the misfortunes of this gallant man, made it a point to console him.

Volny, who resumed the name of Timantes, had but few difficulties to encounter in his first operations: his dexterity, which at first was purely his father's, but which soon after became actually his own, made his credit visibly increase. The moments of relaxation, which his father obliged him to take, he passed with Angelica, and he felt a sensible pleasure in telling her his progress. Angelica, who attributed partly to herself the wonderful change in her lover, enjoyed her own influence with the double satisfaction of love and friendship. Lucy was in adoration of her, and ceased not to give her thanks for the happiness which she had procured them.

One day that her father came to see her, and testified his satisfaction at the consolation which his son gave him, 'Do you know,' said Lucy, 'to whom we are indebted for this reformation? to the most beautiful, and most virtuous person breathing, to the only daughter of Alcimon, my companion and friend.' She then related to him all that had passed. 'You melt me,' said the good man; 'I must know this charming girl.' Angelica came, and received the commendations of Timantes with a modesty which still heightened her beauty. 'Sir,' said she to him, 'I depend on a father; but it is true, that if he has the goodness to allow me to dispose of myself, and that you are satisfied with
your

your son, I shall take a pride in becoming your daughter. My friendship for Lucy inspired me with the first desire of it; my respect for yourself still adds to it: your very misfortunes have only made me interest myself more in every thing that could make you amends for them; and if the conduct of your son is such as you wish, and I desire, whether he be rich or not, the most honourable and the most agreeable use I can make of my fortune, is to share it with him.' At this discourse the old man was very near letting his secret escape him; but he had the prudence to contain himself. 'I did not think, Madam,' said he, 'that it was possible to increase, in the soul of a father, the desire of seeing his son a wise and virtuous man; but you add a new interest to that of paternal love: I do not know what Heaven will do with us; but in all the situations of life, and till my last breath, be assured of my gratitude!'

'That you should not have confided to me,' said he on seeing his son again, 'the follies of your youth, I am but little surprized, and I pardon you for it; but why conceal from me a virtuous inclination? Why not confess to your father your love for Angelica, the daughter of my old friend?'—'Alas!' said the young man, 'have you not misfortunes enough of your own, without afflicting you with my sorrows? And who has revealed my secret to you?'—'Your sister; Angelica herself: I am charmed with her, I am in love with her, and I wish she was my daughter.'—'Ah, I wish so too! but how superior is her fortune to mine!'—'In time you may come near it. Visit this lovely girl often.'—'I visit only her; and I have no other ambition in the world, than to be worthy of her and of you.'

Timantes felt an inexpressible satisfaction at seeing daily the success of the trial which he had put him to. He had the firmness to let him apply himself for five whole years, without relaxation, to the re-establishing of his fortune, detached from the world, and dividing

his life between his counting-house and Angelica's parlour. At length, seeing his reformation become habit, and all the old seeds of vice extirpated, he went to visit Alcimon. 'My old friend,' said he, 'you have, they tell me, a charming daughter; I come to propose for her an agreeable partner in point of condition, and advantageous in point of fortune.'---'I am obliged to you,' said Alcimon; 'but I tell you beforehand, that I would have a person of the same condition with myself, and who would take a pride in calling me his father; I have not laboured all my life to give my daughter a husband who may be ashamed of me.'-----'The person I propose,' said Timantes, 'is precisely such a one as you like. He is rich, he is honest, he will always respect you.'---'What is he?'---'I cannot tell you but at my own house, where I invite you to come and renew, over a bottle, a friendship of forty years. Do me the favour to bring Angelica there, My daughter who is her companion in the convent, shall have the honour of accompanying her; you shall both of you see the young man who demands her; and to put you more at your ease, he shall not know himself that I have spoken to you about him.' The day appointed, Alcimon and Timantes go and fetch Angelica and Lucy; they arrive, they prepare to sit down at table; they send word to the son, who, busied in his office, expected nothing less than the happiness which was preparing for him. He enters; what is his surprise! Angelica there! Angelica with her father! What was he to think, what to hope, from this unforeseen rendezvous! Why had they made a secret of it to him? Every thing seems to proclaim his happiness to him, but his happiness is not probable. In this confusion of thoughts he lost the use of his senses. A sudden giddiness spread a cloud over his eyes; he wanted to speak, his voice failed him; and a low bow alone expressed to the father and the daughter how much he was moved with the honour his father and he received. His sister, who came to throw herself into his arms,
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gave him time to recover from his confusion. Never was embrace so tender. He thought he held in his bosom Angelica with Lucy, and he could not separate himself from her.

At table, Timantes displayed an alacrity at which all the company were surprized. Alcimon, prepossessed with the demand which he had made him, and impatient to see the young man whom he proposed arrive, freely gave himself up to the pleasure of finding himself again with his old friend; he had even the kindness to enter into conversation with the young Timantes. 'I see,' said he to him, 'that you are the comfort of your father. People talk of your application to business and your talents with great commendations; and such is the advantage of your condition, that a sensible and honest man cannot fail of success.'—'Ah, my friend,' replied the old Timantes, 'it requires a great deal of time to make one's fortune, and very little to ruin it! What a pity not to have mine to offer you! Instead of proposing to you a stranger as a husband to this amiable young lady, I should have solicited that happiness for my son.'—'I should have preferred him to every body else,' said Alcimon.-----'Indeed!'—'Aye, indeed. But you know where one is liable to have a numerous family, there should be wherewithal to support it.'—'If it depends only on that,' said Timantes, 'the case is not desperate, and we may come to an agreement.' On saying these words he rose from table, and returning the moment after, 'There,' said he, 'see, there is my porte-folio; it is yet pretty well furnished:' and observing Alcimon's surprize; 'know,' added he, 'that my ruin is all a fiction. This young man had been spoiled by the notion that he was born rich: I knew no better method to reform him, than to make him believe that I was ruined. This feint has succeeded: he is now in a good way; I am even certain that he has no desire to relapse again into the errors of his youth, and it is time to trust him,---Yes, my son, I have all the wealth

I had, augmented by five years savings, and the fruit of your labour.----It is for him, therefore,' said he to his friend, 'that I demand Angelica; and if there be occasion for any new motive to engage you to grant her to me, I will confess to you that he has seen her at the convent, that he has conceived for her the most tender love, and that this love has done more than ill fortune itself towards attaching him to his duties.' While Timantes did but sound the disposition of Angelica's father, she herself, her friend, and her lover, had felt only the emotion and anxiety of hope and fear; but at sight of the port-folio, at the news that Timantes's ruin was but a feint, at the demand which he made himself of Angelica's hand for his son, Lucy, all wild and beside herself, flew into the arms of her father; the young Timantes, still more confused, fell at Alcimon's knees; and Angelica, her countenance overspread with paleness, had not the power to lift up her eyes. Alcimon raised the young man with his embraces; and turning towards the old Timantes, 'My friend,' said he to him, 'when we would contrive an agreeable surprize, we must take instruction from you. Come, you are a good father; and your son deserves to be happy.'

THE SYLPH-HUSBAND.

'**A**VOID the snares of men,' we are perpetually saying to young women. 'Avoid the seductions of women,' we are perpetually saying to young men. Do we think we are following the plan of Nature, by making one sex the enemy of the other? Are they formed only to hurt each other? Are they destined to fly one another? And what would be the fruits of these lessons if both sexes should take them literally?

When Elisa quitted the convent to go to the altar to espouse the Marquis De Volange, she was thoroughly persuaded that, next to a lover, the most dangerous being in nature was a husband. Brought up by one of those reclusé devotees, whose melancholy imagination
paints

painted to itself all objects in black, she saw nothing for her in the world but rocks, and nothing but snares in marriage. Her soul, naturally delicate and timid, was immediately blasted by fear; and age had not yet given to her senses the happy power of conquering the ascendant of opinion. Thus every thing in marriage was to her humiliating and painful. The first assiduities of her husband, far from encouraging her, alarmed her the more. 'It is thus,' said she, 'that the men cover with flowers the chains of our slavery. Flattery crowns the victim; Pride soon prepares to sacrifice it. He consults my desires now, in order to oppose them eternally hereafter. He would penetrate into my heart, in order to unfold all its recesses; and if he discovers any foible in me, it is by that very foible that he will take care to humble me with more advantage. Let us guard ourselves well against the snares which they spread for us!'

It is easy to foresee the bitterness and coldness which this unhappy prejudice created on the side of Elisa in their most intimate commerce. Volange perceived the repugnance which she had for him. He would have endeavoured to have conquered it, had he guessed the cause; but the persuasion that he was hated discouraged him; and in losing the hope of pleasing, it was natural enough for him to lose the endeavour.

His situation was the more painful, as it was quite opposite to his character. Volange was gaiety, gallantry, complaisance itself. He had considered his marriage as a jolly festival, rather than a serious affair. He had taken a wife young and handsome, as we chuse a divinity, in order to raise altars to her. 'The world will adore her,' said he; 'I shall lead her thither in triumph. I shall have a thousand rivals; so much the better! I shall eclipse them all by my assiduities, my vows, and my homages; and the inquietude ever attached to jealousy, delicate and timid, shall preserve the lover of Elisa, from the negligencies of the husband.'

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The impatient and disdainful coldness of his wife destroyed this illusion. The more he was in love with her, the more he was hurt by the distance which she observed towards him; and that love so tender and so pure, which would have formed his happiness, was likely to be his torment. But an innocent artifice, of which chance gave him the first idea, re-established him in all his rights.

The sensibility of the soul must exert itself; and if it has not a real object, it creates a fantastic one. Elisa's repugnance was founded in a settled notion, that there was nothing in nature worthy to attach her. But she had found in fiction something to engage, to move, to melt her. The fable of the Sylphs was in vogue. Some of those romances, in which is represented the delicious commerce of those spirits with mortals, had fallen into her hands; and these brilliant chimeras had in her eyes all the charms of truth.

In short, Elisa believed in Sylphs, and burned with the desire of having one. We must be able at least to form to ourselves some notion of what we desire; and it is not easy to form a notion of a spirit. Elisa had been obliged to attribute all the features of a man to the sylph which she desired. But for the mansion of a celestial soul, she had composed a body at pleasure; a shape, elegant and noble: a figure, animated, interesting, ingenious; a complexion, of a bloom and figure worthy of the sylph that presides over the morning star; eyes fine, blue, and languishing; and I know not what of ærial in all the graces of his person. To all this she had super-added a vesture, the lightest imaginable, formed of ribbands, colours the most tender, a tissue of silk, almost transparent, in which the Zephyrs sported; two wings like those of Cupid, of whom this beautiful sylph was the image: such was the chimera of Elisa; and her heart, subdued by her imagination, sighed after her own fiction.

It is natural for our most familiar and most lively
ideas

ideas to recur in sleep: and the dreams of Elisa soon persuaded her that her chimera had some reality.

Volange, very sure that he was not beloved by his wife, had in vain observed her with the eyes of jealousy; he saw her with her own sex gay and gentle, easy and affable, and sometimes even with an air of friendship; but no man had yet met with such a reception from her as could alarm him. With that sex her countenance was severe, her air disdainful, her whole behaviour cold; she spoke little, scarce vouchsafed attention to what was said, and when she did not seem tired, she appeared quite out of patience. To be, at her age, neither tender nor a coquette; inconceivable! However, at last she betrayed herself.

The opera of Zelindor, at its first appearance, had the most brilliant success. Elisa was present at the representation in her own little box, with one of her women, for whom she had a great partiality. Justina was her confidante, and nothing attaches a timid soul so much as having once surmounted the difficulty of unbosoming itself. Elisa would fain have had this confidante of her weakness perpetually with her; and her little box at the theatre was so dear to her, only on account of the liberty it afforded them of being there together and alone.

Volange, who from the opposite side of the theatre observed all the movements of Elisa, saw her several times start at the sight of Zelindor, and talk to Justina with an air of passion.

A strange uneasiness possessed him; but in the evening, having found Justina a moment alone, 'Your mistress,' said he, 'seemed highly entertained at the play?'---'Ah, Sir! she is distractedly fond of it: Zelindor is her passion. It seems to have been made on purpose for her. She is not recovered of the surprize into which she has been thrown by seeing her own dreams represented.'-----'What! does your mistress dream of such things?'---'Alas! yes, Sir; and you are much to blame to reduce her to the pleasure of dream-
ing.'

ing. Indeed, you are very happy, that, young and handsome as she is, she confines herself to the loving of sylphs.'---'Sylphs!'---'Yes, Sir, sylphs. But I am betraying her secret.'---'You jest, Justina?'---'A fine jest, indeed! Indeed, Sir, it is a shame to live with her as you do. Ah! when I see so young a lady, when she wakes, her complexion blooming, eyes languishing, with a mouth fresher than a rose, telling me, with a sigh, that she has just been happy in a dream, how I pity her, and how I hate you!'-----'What do you mean? Your mistress had in her husband an uncommon lover; but she has returned the highest tenderness of love only with a coldness, almost amounting to aversion.'---'You fancy so, you have mistaken timidity for coldness; and that is always the way with the men: they have no pity on a young woman. Why should you grow cool? Why not make use of your power over her?'---'That is what has restrained me. I was unwilling to owe any thing to constraint, and I should have been much warmer in my instances, had she been more free in her refusals.'---'Alas, poor gentleman! how good you are, with this delicacy of yours! You shall see how vastly they are obliged to you for it!'---'Hark'e, Justina, a thought has just struck me, which, if you will but assist me, may reconcile us.'---'If I'll assist you!'---'Elisa is in love with sylphs; I may personate a sylph in love with her.'-----'And how will you make yourself invisible?'---'By visiting her only by night.'---'Well, that is a good scheme enough.'---'It is not very new: more than one lover has availed himself of it; but Elisa does not expect it, and I am persuaded will be deceived. The chief difficulty is the opening the first stage of the plot; but I depend on your address to furnish me with an occasion.'

An opportunity was not long in presenting itself. 'Ah, Justina!' said Elisa, the next day on waking, 'what happiness have I just enjoyed! I dreamed that I was under an arbour of roses, where the most beautiful of the celestial spirits sighed at my knees.'-----

'How,

‘How, Madam! spirits sigh! and how was this beautiful spirit made?’---‘It would be in vain for me to endeavour to describe what has not its image among mankind. When the idea is effaced by my waking, I can scarce retrace it to myself.’---‘But I may know, at least, what passed at your conference?’---‘I do not know what; but I was transported, I heard a ravishing voice, drew in the sweetest perfumes, and at my waking all vanished.’

Volange was informed of his wife’s dream, and in her regrets he thought he saw the means of beginning to act the sylph towards her. At that time essence of roses was scarce known at Paris; Volange put into Justina’s hands a small phial of that precious elixir. ‘To-morrow,’ said he, ‘before your mistress wakes, take care to perfume her bed with it.’

‘O Heaven!’ said Elisa on waking, ‘is it still a dream? Come here, Justina; smell, and tell me what you smell!’---‘I, Madam? I smell nothing.’---‘Nothing! do you not smell roses!’---‘You grow distracted, my dear mistress; pardon me for saying so. Your dreams might be passed over; but quite awake!—Indeed I do not conceive you.’---‘You are right, nothing is more inconceivable. Leave me! draw the curtains. Ah! the smell is still more prevailing.’---

‘You alarm me!’---‘Hark’e! I told you yesterday, if I remember right, that I was sorry that the dream of the arbour was dissipated, and that I was delighted with the fragrance I had breathed there. He has heard me, my dear Justina.’---‘Who, Madam?’---‘Who! do not you know? You put me out of patience. Leave me! But he should know, as he is present, that it is not the flowers that I regret. Ah! how much sweeter was his voice! How much more did it touch my heart! And his features, his divine features! Un-availing wishes! Alas! I shall never see him.’---‘Why really, Madam, there is no great probability.’---‘You throw me into despair: is it love to envy me, even to want to destroy the most pleasing illusion? For that it

is one, I must believe; I am not a child.—And yet this fragrance of the roses!—Yes, I perceive it, nothing is more real; and it is not now the season for those flowers.’—‘What would you have me say to you, Madam? All the desire I have to please you cannot make me believe a dream to be a reality.’—‘Very well, Mademoiselle, do not believe it. Prepare my toilette, that I may dress. I am in a confusion, in an emotion at which I blush, and which I know not how to appease.’

‘Victory, Sir,’ said Justina, on seeing Volange; ‘the sylph is announced and desired: we wish for him; let him appear; and, take my word for it, he will be very well received.’

Elisa was plunged all the day in a reverie, which had the air of an enchantment; and in the evening her husband perceived that she waited with impatience the moment of going to deliver herself up to sleep. There was a communication between their apartments, according to custom, and Volange had agreed with her confidante on the method of getting, without noise to his wife’s pillow. But it was necessary, that either by a sigh, or by some words which were to escape, she should herself invite him to speak.

I forgot to mention, that Elisa would not have any light by her in the night; not without reason. The pictures of the imagination are never so lively as in profound darkness. Thus Volange, without being perceived, espied the favourable moment. He heard Elisa sigh and seek repose with inquietude. ‘Come then,’ said she, ‘happy Sleep, thou alone makest me love life.’ ‘It is for me,’ said Volange, in a voice so soft that Elisa scarce heard him, ‘it is for me to call upon Sleep? I am happy only through him; it is in his bosom that I possess you.’ He had not time to finish. Elisa gave a loud shriek, and Volange having disappeared, Justina ran up at Elisa’s voice. ‘What is the matter, Madam?’ ‘Ah! I die; I have just heard him. Recal me, if possible, to life. I am loved, I am happy. Make haste, I cannot

I cannot breathe.' Justina hastens, unties her ribbands, gives her some salts to smell, which revive her, and still supporting her part of being incredulous, reproaches her for delivering herself up to ideas which disturb her repose, and affect her health. 'Treat me as a child, as a fool!' said Elisa: 'but it is no longer a dream, nothing is so true; I heard him as plain as I hear you.' 'Very well, Madam, I will not put you out of patience; but endeavour to calm your spirits; remember that, in order to please a sylph, one must be handsome, and that we soon become otherwise without sleep.'— 'Going, Justina? How cruel! Do not you see that I tremble all over? Stay at least till I sleep, if it be possible to sleep in my present agitation.'

At last her fine eyes grew heavy, and it was resolved between Justina and Volange, that scared by the cry which Elisa had made, the sylph should in vain be wished for the next night. Accordingly she called upon him in vain.

She was afraid he would never return more. 'My cries have frightened him,' said she. 'Good Madam,' said Justina, 'is a spirit so fearful then? And ought he not to have expected the fright which he put you into? Be easy, he knows what passes in your heart as well as yourself. And perhaps at this moment he is listening.'— 'What say you? you makeme start.'— 'How! are you not very glad that your sylph reads your soul?'— 'Assuredly: nothing passes there with which he has not reason to be pleased. But there is always something of man intermingled in the idea which we form of sylphs and modesty.'— 'Modesty, in my opinion, is out of the case with spirits. Where would be the harm, for example, in engaging him to return this evening!'— 'Ah! it would be vain to dissemble; he knows very well how much I wish it.'

Elisa's wish was accomplished. She was laid down, the light put out, and Volange at her bed's head. 'Do you think he will return?' said she to Justina. 'Yes, if he be gallant, he must be here already.'— 'Ah, if he

could but hear me! '---' He hears you,' replied Volange with a soft voice; 'but remove this witness who gives me uneasiness.' '---' Justina,' said Elisa, trembling, 'get away.' '---' What now, Madam? you seem moved.' '---' 'Nothing; leave me, I say.' Justina obeyed; and as soon as they were alone, 'What then, said the sylph, 'does my voice fright you! It is not usual to fear what we love.' '---' Alas,' said she, 'can I see without emotion my dreams thus realized; and passing, by an inconceivable prodigy, from illusion to reality? Shall I believe that one of the celestial spirits deigns to quit the heavens for me, and to be familiar with a mere mortal?' '---' If you knew,' replied Volange, 'how much you efface all the charms of the nymphs of the air, you would be but little flattered with your conquest. Nor is it to vanity that I would owe the reward of my passion. That passion is pure and unalterable as the essence of my being; but it is delicate also to excess. We have only the sensations of the soul: you have them as well as we, Elisa; but in order to relish their delights, you must reserve for me that soul of which I am jealous; amuse yourself with all that the world has interesting and amiable; but love nothing in it like myself.' '---' 'Alas! it is very easy for me to obey you,' said she, in a voice still faltering. 'The world has no charms for me. My soul, even when unoccupied, could not give access to vain pleasures which would seduce it; how can it be accessible then, now that you possess it? But you, O spirit celestial and pure, how can I flatter myself with fixing you, and being able to content you?' '---' 'Learn,' replied Volange, 'what distinguishes us from all the spirits dispersed through the universe, and still more from the human species. A sylph has no happiness in himself: he is happy only in what he loves. Nature has forbid him the power of loving himself alone; and as he partakes all the pleasures which he excites, he feels also all the pains which he occasions. Fate has left me the choice of this half of myself on which my happiness is to depend; but, that choice decided, we have no longer

longer but one soul, and it is only in rendering you happy that I can hope to be so.'---'Be happy then,' said she to him with transport, for the mere idea of an union so sweet ravishes me, and lifts me above myself. What comparison between this intimate commerce, and that of dangerous mortals, whose slaves we are here? Alas! you know that I have submitted to the laws of Hymen, and that they have imposed fetters on me.'---'I know it,' said Volange; and one of my cares shall be to render them light.'---'Ah!' resumed she, 'be not jealous on that account. My husband is perhaps the man in the world who has the least tincture of the vice of his species; but they are all so conceited and so proud of their advantages, so indulgent to their own faults, and so rigorous to ours, so little scrupulous as to the means of seducing and making us slaves, that there would be as much imprudence as weakness in delivering ourselves up to them.'---'Well,' said her sylph, 'would you believe it. All that with which you reproach the men, do we reproach the sylphids. Soft, insinuating, fertile in evasions, there is no art which they do not employ to domineer over the spirits; but once sure of their power, a capricious and absolute will, an imperious pride, to which every thing must bow, take place of timidity, gentleness, and complaisance; and it is not till after having loved them, that we perceive we ought to hate them. This prevailing character, which Nature has given them, has however its exceptions: it is the same among the men. But be that as it may, my dear Elisa, both the one and the other world will be strangers to us, if you love me as I do you. Adieu, my duty and your repose oblige me to quit you. Heaven has confided to me the care of your star; I am going to direct its course. May it diffuse over you the most favourable influence!'---'Alas! going so soon!'---'Yes, in order to see you again to-morrow at the same hour.'---'Adieu! but no; one word more. May I have a confidante?'---'You have one, confine yourself to her. Justina loves you, and she is dear to me.'---

‘What name shall I give you in speaking to her about you?’—‘In heaven they call me *Valoë*, and in the sylphid language that name signifies *all Soul*.’—‘Ah! I merit the same name since I have heard you.’ The sylph then vanished. Elisa’s heart swam in joy, she was at the summit of her wishes, and in the midst of the delicious ideas which possessed her, sleep seized her senses.

Justina was informed of every thing that had passed, and had no need to repeat it to Volange. She only acquainted him that he had left his wife in an enchantment. ‘That is not enough,’ said he; ‘in the sylph’s absence I would have every thing recal his passion to her. You read her soul, you know her likings; instruct me in her wishes: the sylph will have the air of divining them.’ In the evening, Elisa, to be the more at liberty, went to walk alone with Justina, in one of those magnificent gardens which are the ornament of Paris; and though she was there wholly taken up with her sylph, an inclination, natural to young women, made her cast her eyes on the dress of an unknown lady. ‘Ah! what a pretty gown!’ cried she to herself; and Justina pretended not to hear. But the adroit attendant, having heard the name of this lady who was so well dressed, remembered it, and told it to Volange.

The hour of rendezvous being come, Elisa goes to bed, and as soon as she is alone, ‘Ah, my dear *Valoë*!’ said she, ‘have you forgot me! here am I alone, and you come not!’—‘He waited for you,’ said Volange, ‘your image has followed him into Heaven. He has seen only you in the midst of all the aerial court. But you, Elisa, in his absence, have you wished only for him?’—‘No,’ said she to him assuredly, ‘nothing but you interests me.’—‘I know, however, Elisa, that you have formed a wish that was not for me.’—‘You make me uneasy,’ said she; ‘I have examined myself in vain, I know not what that wish can be.’—‘You have forgot it, but I remember it, and far from complaining of it, I wish that you may often have the like. I have told you the sylphs are jealous, but it only renders them
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the more earnest to please. Do not be astonished to see me curious of the smallest particulars of your life: I would leave in it only the flowers, and remove the smallest thorn. For example, your husband ceases not to give me uneasiness. How are you with him?'---'Why said Elisa, a little confounded, 'I live with him as with a man; in that diffidence and fear which a sex born the enemy of ours naturally inspires. They gave me to him without consulting me; I followed my duty and not my inclination. He said he loved, and he would have pleased me; that is, have captivated me: he has not succeeded; and his vanity, which he calls delicacy, has diverted him from his design. Thus you see, we are good friends; or, if you please, both of us free.'---'Is he at least a little complaisant?'---'Why, yes, sufficiently to seduce a woman who did not know so well as I how dangerous men are.'---'You might have fallen into worse hands; and this husband is not so troublesome as his sex generally are. He does well as to the rest; and if ever you should have cause to complain of him, he shall be punished for it instantly.'---'Oh no, I conjure you,' said she trembling, 'though he should totally neglect me, never interfere in it. I owe you all my confidence; but it would be a cruel abuse of it to do him any manner of hurt. He is unhappy enough in being a man, and it is a sufficient punishment.'---'Your soul is celestial, charming Elisa; a mortal did not deserve you. Listen, I have not told you our manner of punishing the men. They know only fire and sword; but we have gentler methods of vengeance. Whenever your husband shall have displeased you, you shall inform me of it; and from that instant, regret, reproach shall seize his soul, and he shall have neither peace with me, nor with himself, till he has expiated at your knees the displeasure he has occasioned. I will do more, I will inspire into him all that you inspire into me. Thus the spirit of your sylph shall animate your husband, and shall be present to you without ceasing.'---'That,' said Elisa transported, 'is the only way of making

making me love him.' Thus passed this last conversation.

The day after, Elisa being at her toilette, Justina cast her eyes on the sofa in her closet, and sets up a cry of astonishment. Elisa turns about, and sees there displayed a gown like that which she had seen in her walk. 'Ah! see now in what manner he avenges himself of a wish not formed for him. 'Justina, will you believe me at last? Is not a sylph to be adored?' Elisa's eyes could not weary themselves in admiring this new prodigy. Volange arrives in that moment. 'There is a beautiful gown!' said he. 'Your taste, Madam, does great honour to what you love. I think,' continued he, examining the stuff nearer, 'this is made by the hands of fairies.' This familiar manner of speaking came out so *à-propos*, that Elisa blushed as if she had been betrayed, and her secret revealed.

In the evening she failed not to extol the forward gallantry of her handsome little sylph; and he in his turn said to her a thousand things, so delicate and so tender, on the happiness of embellishing what we love, and of enjoying the good which we do, that she was perpetually repeating it. 'No, never mortal knew such language: none but a celestial being can think and speak thus.'—'I acquaint you, however before hand,' said he, 'that your husband will soon become my rival. I take a pleasure in purifying his soul, in rendering it as gentle, as tender, as flexible to your desires, as his nature permits. You will be a gainer by it without doubt, Elisa, and your happiness is wholly mine: but shall I not be a loser?'—'Ah, can you doubt,' said she, 'that I shall not attribute to you all the care he shall take to please me? Is he not like a statue which you endeavour to animate?'—'Thus you will love me in him; and in thinking that it is I who animate him, you will take a pleasure in rendering him happy.'—'No, Valoë, that would be to deceive him: I hate falsehood. It is you that I love, not him; and to testify to him what I feel for you, would be to deceive both.' Volange,
not

not to engage any farther in so delicate a dispute, changed the subject, and asked her how she had amused herself all the day. 'Hey!' said she to him, 'do not you know, you who read my thoughts. The moments in which I was disengaged, I employed in tracing out a cypher, in which our two names are entwined. I draw flowers pretty well, and I never did any thing with so much taste as those which form that kind of chain.'--- 'You have also,' said he to her, 'a rare talent which you neglect, and the pleasures of which are heavenly: you have a touching voice, an exquisite ear; and the harp under your fingers, mingling its accords with your sounds, would form the delight of the inhabitants of the air.' Elisa promised to exercise herself in it, and they parted more taken, more enchanted, with each other than ever.

'I am often alone,' said she to her husband; 'music would amuse me, the harp is in fashion, and I have an inclination to try it.'--- 'Nothing so easy,' said Volange, with an air of complaisance; and that very evening she had an harp.

The sylph returned at his hour, and appeared charmed with seeing her seize and follow his ideas with so much vivacity. 'Alas!' said Elisa to him, 'you are more happy, you divine my wishes, and know how to prevent them. How precious is the gift of reading the soul of the person we love! we do not allow time to wish. Such is your advantage over me.'--- 'Console yourself,' said Valoë to her: 'complaisance has its value: I fulfil my own wishes when I prevent yours; and you, in waiting for mine, have the pleasure of telling yourself that it is my soul guides you. It is more flattering to prevent; but it is sweeter to comply. My advantage is that of self-love, yours is that of love.'

So much delicacy was to Elisa the most charming of all ties, she would fain have never ceased to hear a voice so clear; but out of tenderness to her, Volange took care to withdraw, as soon as he had gently moved her, and sleep came to calm her spirits.

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The first idea which she had at her waking was that of her sylph, and the second that of her harp. It was brought to her the evening before, quite plain, and without ornaments. She flies into her cabinet, and finds a harp decorated with a garland of flowers, which seemed freshly gathered. Her joy was equal to her astonishment. 'No!' said she, 'no! never has the pencil in the hand of a mortal produced this illusion.' And what doubt but this was a present from her sylph? Two brilliant wings crowned this harp, the same, without doubt, which Valoë played on in the celestial choir. While she was returning him thanks, the musician arrives, whom she had sent for to give her lessons.

Timotheus, instructed by Volange in the part which he was to perform, opened with an encomium on the harp. 'What fulness, what harmony, in the sounds of this fine instrument! What could be more soft, more majestic!' The harp (if we might take his word for it) would renew all the prodigies of the lyre. 'But the triumph of the harp,' added this new Orpheus, 'is when it supports with its symphonies the accents of a voice melodious and tender. Observe, too, Madam, that nothing discovers to more advantage the graces of a fine hand and arm; and when a lady knows how to give her head an air of enthusiasm, so that her features grow animated, and her eyes kindle at the sounds which she occasions, she becomes half as beautiful again.'

Elisa cut short this encomium, by asking her master whether he was a descendant of Timotheus, Alexander's musician. 'Yes, Madam,' said he, 'of the same family.' She took her first lesson. The musician appeared enchanted with the seraphic tones of the harp. 'Divine,' cried he. 'I warrant it,' said Elisa to herself. 'Come, Madam, try these harmonious strings.' Elisa applied to them a timid hand; and every note that she drew from the instrument thrilled to her very heart. 'Wonderful, Madam!' cried Timotheus, 'wonderful! I hope soon to hear you accompany

pany your touching voice, and set off my music, and my verses.'---' You make verses then too?' demanded she, smiling. ' Ah, Madam!' said Timotheus, ' that is the strangest thing in the world, and I can scarce conceive myself. I had heard that we had a genius, and I took it for a fable; but upon my word nothing is more real. I had one, I who now speak to you, and I had him without knowing it. It was but yesterday evening that I had fresh confirmation of it.'---' And how did you make this discovery?'---' How! Last night, in my sleep, my Genius appeared to me in a dream, and dictated the following verses---

The empty honour I renounce
To guide thy car, Aurora!
No more, no more, will I announce
Thy sweet return, O Flora!
Me now employs a gentler happier care;
To guard my waking, guard my sleeping fair.
In vain Aurora weeps, in vain
Would Flora bind me in her rosy chain:
With dear Elisa will I stay,
Elisa, fairer- fairer far than they.

' What!' said Elisa, with much emotion; ' what, Timotheus! did you make these verses?'---' I Madam! I never made any in my life. It was my Genius that dictated them to me. He has done more: he has set them to music, as you shall hear.---Well, Madam,' said he, after having sung them, ' how do you like them? Is it not happy to have a genius like mine?'---' But, Sir, do not you know at least who this Elisa is whom you celebrate?'---' Why, Madam, I believe it is a name like Phyllis, Chloris, or Iris. My Genius pitched upon that, because it is agreeable to the ear.'---' So, you do not pique yourself upon understanding the meaning of the verses which you sing?'---' No Madam, but that is no matter: they are melodious, and full of sensibility, and that is enough for a song.'---' Let me beg you,' resumed she, ' to repeat them to nobody else, and if your Genius should inspire any more, pray reserve them for me.'

She expected her sylph with impatience, in order to thank him for the inspiration. He denied them; but

so weakly, that she was but the more convinced. He confessed, however, that it was not without reason that those men were regarded as inspired, who, without reflection, produced fine thoughts. 'These are,' said he, 'the favourites of the sylphs, and each of them has his own particular one, whom he calls his Genius. It is no wonder, therefore, that Timotheus should have one; and if he inspires him with verses which please you, he may boast of being, next to me, the happiest of the inhabitants of the air.' The Genius of Timotheus became every day more fertile, and every day Elisa was more sensible of the praises he bestowed on her. However, Volange prepared her a new surprise, and the following was the object of it.

The reader remembers that she amused herself in tracing out a cypher, in which the name of Valoë was interwoven with her own. One day, being invited to a feast, she was preparing to put on her diamonds: she opens her casket, and what does she see! her bracelets, her necklace, her aigrette, her ear-rings, mounted after the pattern of that very cypher which she had drawn. Her first sensation was that of embarrassment and surprise. 'What will Volange think? what will he suspect?' While she was yet at her toilette, enters Volange, and casting his eyes on her jewels, 'Ah!' said he, 'nothing can be more gallant. My name and yours in the same cypher! I should be very much flattered, Madam, to suppose that this were a stroke of sentiment.' She blushed instead of feigning; but in the evening Valoë was chid. 'You have exposed me,' said she, 'to a danger at which I tremble even yet: I have seen the instant wherein there was a necessity for me either to deceive my husband, or to give him the most humiliating opinion of me; and although the advantage which the men draw from our sincerity authorizes us to use dissimulation, I perceive that in making use of that right, I should be ill at ease with myself.' Valoë failed not to commend her delicacy. 'A little lye,' said he, 'is always a little evil, and I should have been

been sorry to have been the occasion. But the resemblance of the name of Volange to mine had not escaped me, and I knew that your husband would go no farther than appearances. I have begun by rendering him discreet: that is the first good quality in a husband."

The whole winter had passed away in gallantries on the part of the sylph, and on the side of Elisa in emotions of surprize and joy, which bordered on enchantment.

The first and the most beautiful of the seasons, the time in which we enjoy nature, arrives. Volange had a country-house, 'We will set out whenever you please,' said he to his wife: and though he had said this in the handsomest manner, and in the sweetest tone of voice, she perceived very well, she said, that this invitation carried in it the imperious will of a husband. She confided her pain to Valoë. 'I do not see,' said he to her, 'any thing painful in what he has proposed to you. Nothing attaches you to the town; and the country is at present a delicious abode, especially to a soul sensible and benevolent as yours. We there see in nature the first efforts of her bounteous inclination; and the care of making mortals happy, renews itself there under a thousand forms. The forests crowned with a thick verdure, the orchards in bloom, the corn springing up, the meadows enamelled, the flocks newly recruited, and bounding with joy at the first sight of the light; all concur to present us in the country the image of bounty. In winter, Nature shews herself under an aspect threatening and horrible; in autumn she is rich and fruitful, but she groans to unburden herself, and her liberality afflicts her: even in summer she sells her gifts, and the sad image of excessive labour joins itself to that of abundance. It is in spring that Nature is gaily prodigal of her riches, and fond of the good she is doing.'--- 'Alas!' said Elisa, 'Nature is beautiful, I grant; but will she be so to me, in that very place where I connected my fortunes to those of a mortal; where I took an oath to be devoted to him; where every thing will
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recall the humiliating remembrance to my mind?"-----
'No,' replied the sylph, 'nothing, my dear Elisa, nothing in Nature is humiliating, but what is contrary to her ordinances. The perfection of a plant is to flourish and bud: the perfection of a woman is to become a wife and a mother. If you had opposed the wisdom of this design, you would not have received my vows.'---'What!' said Elisa, 'can a pure essence, a celestial spirit, love in me that which degrades me beneath him!'---'Be what you are, my dear creature: I love you as a sylph; and it is not of your senses that I am jealous. Let your soul be fair and pure, let it be devoted to me, that is sufficient. As to what are called your charms, they are submitted to the laws of mortals: one of them possesses them; let him dispose of them; far from complaining, I shall rejoice at it, for one of your duties is to render him happy.'---'Ah! give me time, at least, to accustom myself to this way of thinking. In the country we see one another oftener: I shall familiarize myself, perhaps, to that duty. But pry'thee do not abandon me?'---'I shall be there with you perpetually: I love peace and silence.'

There was at this country-house a savage and solitary place, which Elisa called her wilderness, where she used to retire to read and think at her ease. Scarce was she arrived there, when she went to it; but all was changed. Instead of her seat of moss, she found a throne of turf, interspersed with violets growing in festoons and love-knots. This throne was shaded with lilies, which over-arched the sweet-briar, formed the circuit of it, and mingled with the odour of the lilies the most delicious perfumes.

Elisa's first care, at her return, was to thank her husband for the attention which he had shewn in embellishing her little hermitage. 'It is I suppose,' said he, 'a piece of gallantry of my gardener: I am much obliged to him for having thought of it.'---'Hilary,' said Elisa, on seeing the gardener, 'I am obliged to you for having made so pretty an arbour for me.'---'Arbours,

bours, Madam!’ said the fly rustic. ‘Yes, yes, I have enough to do to think of arbours, truly! I am hardly able to go through the labour of my kitchen garden. If they would have arbours, and well kept up, they must allow me more hands.’---‘At least you have not neglected mine; and this fine bower of lilies, with that hedge of sweet briar enchants me.’---‘Oh! the lilies, the sweet briar, and all that, thank God, comes of itself, and without any trouble of mine.’---‘What in earnest, then, have not you touched it?’---‘No, Madam, but that is nothing; and if you please, after the rising of the sap, I will give it a few cuts with the pruning knife.’---‘And this turf, interspersed with violets, was it not you that cultivated it?’---‘Troth, Madam, not I; neither turf nor violets will do for your table: and my garden takes up enough of my time without all these fineries.’

Elisa, after this discourse, no longer doubted that the metamorphosis of her wilderness into a delicious arbour was the work of her sylph. ‘Ah!’ said she in her transport, ‘this shall be the temple to which I will repair to adore him, I flatter myself he will be present there; but will he be for ever invisible?’

He came in the evening according to custom. ‘Valoë,’ said she to him, ‘my arbour is charming. But, shall I tell you? to compleat its beauty, you must perform one final prodigy, and there render yourself visible to me. That alone is now wanting to my happiness.’---‘You demand of me, my dear Elisa, a thing that depends not on myself. The king of the air sometimes grants that favour to his favourites; but it is so rare! And even when he grants it, he prescribes the form which they shall take, and he generally prefers the most fantastic, in order to amuse himself.’---‘Ah!’ said Elisa, ‘so I do but see you, no matter under what form.’ He promised her, therefore, to solicit that favour with the most pressing instances.

‘At present,’ said he to her, ‘how passed your journey?’---‘Why, very well. My husband prattled with a

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gaiety that was natural enough; and I can easily discover the effect of the trouble which you take with him. But it is in vain that the natural imperiousness of the men bends a little; it still keeps its spring; one may temper, but cannot change it, at least not without long habitude.'—'Let us not despair of any thing,' said Valœ; 'I have a deal of power over his soul. What do you propose doing to-morrow, my dear Elisa?'—'I shall bathe in the morning.'—'I will come to see you bathe, if possible, and I will pass a moment with you.'

On Elisa's waking in the morning, word was brought her that the bath was ready. She went there with the faithful Justina; but as the sylph was to come to see her, and modesty is always timid, she would have the curtains drawn, and scarce admit any light into the room.

Elisa enters the bath; and, in a pannel opposite to her, her eyes perceive some confused features. This was the portrait of Elisa painted beneath glass, and which Volange had caused to be put there instead of a looking-glass: a striking delusion, but easy to be produced, by means of a groove made in the partition, through which silently slid, by turns, the looking-glass and the picture, one after another.

In this picture, Elisa was exalted on a cloud, and surrounded with ærial spirits, who presented her with garlands of flowers. At first she took what she saw for the reflection of the opposite objects; but in proportion as, with an eye more attentive, she discovers what strikes her, surprise succeeds to mistake. 'Justina,' said she, let in some light. Either I dream, or I see—O Heaven,' cried she, as soon as a sufficient degree of light was thrown on the picture, 'my image in that glass!'—'Why, Madam, I see mine there too. Where is the wonder that one sees one's self in a looking-glass?'—'Come here yourself, then; come here, I say. Is that the effect of a looking-glass?'—'Certainly.'—'Certainly! this cloud, these flowers, these genii, and I in the midst of that celestial circle, borne in triumph through

through the air!--' 'You are not well awake yet, Madam; and no doubt but you are finishing your dream in the bath.'---'No, Justina, I do not dream; but I see that picture is not made for your eyes. O, my dear Valloë! it is you that have painted it. How ingenious is your tenderness!'

Elisa's eyes were for a whole hour fixed on the picture. She expected her sylph; but he came not. 'He has but just passed by,' said she, and in that homage has declared himself. But what will my husband say? how shall I explain this prodigy to him?'---'Ah, Madam!' said Justina, if this picture be not visible to my eyes, why should it be so to his?'---'Right; but I am so confounded-----' In saying these words, she lift up her eyes, and instead of the picture which she had seen, she finds there only the looking-glass. 'Ah, I am easy,' said she: 'the picture is vanished. My amiable sylph will not give me the slightest uneasiness. And how should I not love a spirit wholly occupied with my pleasures and repose!'

Impatient of knowing the success of her request, she pretended in the evening to be fatigued with walking, and to have need of sleep. The sylph did not make her wait. 'I know not,' said he, 'my dear Elisa, whether you will be content with what I have obtained. I am permitted to appear to you.'---'Ah, that is all that I desire!'---'But what I foresaw is come to pass. The king of the air, who reads our thoughts, has prescribed to me the form which I am to take, and that form is-----guess.'---'I cannot tell, put me quickly out of my pain.'---'Your husband's.'---'My husband's?'---'I have done every thing in the world to obtain a form which should please you more; but it was impossible. He threatened to withdraw his boon from me, if I was not content; and, reduced to this alternative, I liked that better than nothing.'---'Very well; and when shall I see you?'---'To-morrow, in your little wilderness at sun-set.'---'I shall be there, for I depend on you.'---'You may, without doubt.'---'And yet you promised

to come to see me this morning. I received the most gallant homage from you, but it was you that I expected.'---'I was not far off; but intimidated by the presence of Justina---' 'Ah! I was wrong, I ought to have sent her away. But you shall have no more reason to blame me on that account; and I shall be alone in the arbour.'

This assignation did not fail to give Volange some little uneasiness. 'She delivers herself up to me,' said he. 'Shall I avail myself, to try her, of the illusion into which I have thrown her? it would be very pleasing to me to attempt her, if I was sure that she would resist? But if I were so sure of that, I should have no need of trial. Fatal curiosity! Let me consider: let me see which is the less dangerous way. Ought I to clear it up to myself, or remain in doubt? In the first case, doubt leaves me in a cloud! and can I answer for my thoughts? Perhaps when it shall be too late to justify her, I shall do her the injury to believe, that her imagination being seduced, would have triumphed over her virtue. I shall then reproach myself in vain; and the evil will be without remedy. If, on the contrary, I try her, and she resist, I am too happy. But if she yield—Well, if she yield! I shall think that the virtue of women is not able to hold out against spirits. Yes, but that spirit is cloathed with a body; and though that body be mine, no thanks to Elisa: what a labyrinth! On entering into it, I foresaw every thing, except the means of getting out. Let me deliberate no longer; let me repair to the arbour, and the occasion shall determine me.'

Volange, without pretending to observe Elisa, did not suffer one of her movements to escape him. He saw her dress herself with a modesty full of grace, and the decency she mingled in her attire re-encouraged him a little. He remarked also, that she wore all the day an air of sweetness and serenity which announced an innocent joy.

However, the impatient eyes of Elisa measured the course

course of the sun. At last the happy moment approaches; and Volange, whom she had seen set out in a hunting-dress, repairs first to the arbour in the most elegant habit.

Elisa arrives, perceives him at a distance! and the emotion it excited in her almost makes her faint away. He flies to meet her, reaches out his hand to her; and seeing her trembling, seats her on her little throne of turf.

Elisa, recovering her spirits; finds her sylph at her knees. 'What!' said he to her, 'was it fear that the sight of me was to inspire into you? Did I not spare you the surprize of it? Did not you desire to see me? Are you sorry for it, and would you have me disappear?'—'Alas! no; punish not me for an involuntary weakness. Joy and tenderness have a greater share than terror in the disorder you now occasion.'—'I tremble,' said Volange to himself: 'she is softened, a bad beginning! Ah, my dear Elisa! why was I not free to choose among mortals him whose figure might have pleased you most; and how ill at ease is a lover under the form of a husband!'—'That is the same thing,' said she smiling. 'It would have been more agreeable to me, I confess, to have seen you under the image of one of these flowers which I love, or of one of those birds which, like you, are inhabitants of the air; but as a man, I had as lief see you under the features of my husband, as those of any other person. You seem to me even to set it off. It is, indeed, Volange that I see in you; but your soul gives to his eyes something, I know not what, that is celestial. Your voice, in passing through his mouth, communicates to it a charm perfectly divine: and in his action I perceive graces which never body animated by a mere mortal possessed.'—'Well, then if you love me, such as you now see me, I can always be the same.'—'You enchant me!'—'Shall you be happy, then?' added he, kissing her hand. Elisa blushed, and withdrew the hand which he had seized. 'You forget,' said she, 'that it is a sylph and not a man that I love in you. Valoë is to me only a spirit, as Elisa is to you only a soul; and

and if you have not been able to take the figure of a mortal, without changing the purity of your essence and of your love, quit that degrading form, and make me not blush any longer at the imprudence of my wishes.' — 'Very well,' said Volange in a low voice: 'but I now touch on the critical moment.'

'Elisa, it is no longer time to feign. I have done what you desired; but learn what it costs me. "I consent to it," said the king of the genii to me; "obey the laws of a woman, become man, but flatter not thyself with having his sensations only in appearance. Thou art now going to love like other mortals, and to feel the pleasures and pains of it. If thou art unhappy, come not groaning and troubling the air with thy complaints. I banish thee from the heavens, till the moment wherein Elisa shall have crowned thy wishes." I hoped to prevail on you,' added the sylph, 'or rather I meant to comply with you; I submitted to that severe decree. Judge then whether I love you, and whether you ought to punish me for it.'

This discourse drove Eliza to despair. 'O thou most imprudent and most cruel of ærial spirits!' cried she, 'what have you done? And to what extremity do you reduce me?' Volange quaked at seeing his wife's eyes filled with tears. 'Why did you not consult me?' added she. 'Was it for my shame, or for your punishment; that I desired to see you? And whatever that desire was, could you think that it could overcome what I owe to you, and what I owe to myself? I love you, Valcœ, I repeat it to you; and if there needed nothing but my life to repair the evils which I do you, you should no longer have cause to complain. But my virtue is dearer to me than my life and my love. Volange leaped with joy. 'I cannot blame you,' said he, 'for an excess of delicacy: but see how much I resemble Volange: it is almost he, or rather he himself, who falls at your feet, who adores you, and demands of you the reward of the most faithful and tenderest passion.' — 'No, it is in vain that you resemble him: you are not he:

he; and it is to him alone that the reward which you demand is due. Arise; depart from me; and see me not again all your life! Leave me, I say; are you mad? What is that insulting joy which I see sparkling in your eyes? Would you have the audaciousness to hope yet?'—'Yes, I hope, my dear Elisa, that thou wilt live only for me.'---'Ah, this is the height of outrage!'---'Hear me.'---'No, I will hear nothing!'---'A single word will disarm thee.'---'That word then must be an eternal farewell.'---'No, death only shall separate us; behold thy husband in thy sylph. Yes, it is Volange whom you hated, that is this Valoë whom you love.'---'O Heaven---- But no, you impose upon me by the resemblance.'---'No, I tell thee, and Justina is witness, that the whole affair is but a jest.'---'Justina, she is my confidante.'---'She has helped me to mislead you; she shall assist me to undeceive you.'---'You, my husband! can it be possible; finish, tell me how these prodigies were performed?'---'It is Love has wrought them all; and you shall know by what means.'---'Ah! if it be true----' 'If it be true, my Elisa! can you believe that there is in the world a man worthy to be loved?'---'Yes, I will believe that there is one, and that it is I who possess him.'

Justina being interrogated, confessed all, and was obliged to take her oath that Valoë was none other than Volange. 'It is now,' said Elisa, throwing herself into the arms of her husband, 'it is now that I am enchanted; and I hope that nothing but death alone will break the charm.'

LAURETTA.

IT was the festival of the village of Coulange. The Marquis of Clancé, whose seat was at no great distance, was come with his company to see this rural spectacle, and to mingle in the dances of the villagers, as it happens pretty often to those whom disgust chases from the lap of Luxury, and who are carried, in despite

spite of themselves, towards pleasures that are pure and simple.

Among the young country girls who gave new life to the joy that reigned there, and who were dancing under the elm, who would not have distinguished Lauretta, by the elegance of her figure, the regularity of her features, and that natural grace which is more touching than beauty? She eclipsed all others who assisted at the festival. Ladies of quality, who piqued themselves on being handsome, could not help owning that they had never seen any thing so ravishing. They called her up to them, and examined her as a painter does a model. 'Lift up your eyes, child,' said the ladies. 'What vivacity, what sweetness, what voluptuousness in her looks! If she did but know what they express! What havock a skilful coquette would make with those eyes! And that mouth! Can any thing be more fresh? What a vermillion on her lips! How pure an enamel on her teeth! Her face is a little brown and sun burnt; but it is the complexion of health. See how that ivory neck is rounded on those fine shoulders! How well she would look in a genteel dress! And those little budding charms which Love himself seems to have planted! Well, that is extremely pleasant! On whom is Nature going to lavish her gifts! Where is beauty going to hide herself?—Lauretta how old are you?'—'I was fifteen last month.'—'You are to be married soon without doubt?'—'My father says that there is no hurry.'—'And you, Lauretta, have you no sweetheart lurking in your heart?'—'I do not know what a sweetheart is.'—'What, is there no young man that you wish to have for a husband?'—'I never trouble my head about that: it is my father's business.'—'What does your father do?'—'He cultivates his farm.'—'Is he rich?'—'No, but he says he is happy if I am discreet.'—'And how do you employ yourself?'—'I help my father; I work with him.'—'With him! what do you cultivate the ground?'—'Yes, but the toils of the vineyards are only an amusement to me. To weed,
plant

plant vine props, bind the vine-branch to them, to thin the leaves that the grapes may ripen, and to gather them when they are ripe, all that is not very laborious.'—'Poor child, I am not surpris'd that those fine hands are tanned! What pity that she should be born in a low and obscure state!'

Lauretta, who in her village had never excited any thing but envy, was a little surpris'd at her inspiring pity. As her father had carefully concealed from her whatever might have given her uneasiness, it had never come into her head that she was an object of pity. But on casting her eyes on the dress of those ladies, she saw very well that they were in the right. What difference between their clothes and hers! What freshness and what beauty in the light silken stuffs which flowed in long folds about them! What delicate shoes! With what grace and elegance their hair was dress'd! What new lustre that fine linen, and those ribbands, gave to their half-veiled charms! Indeed, those ladies had not the lively air of high health; but could Lauretta imagine that the luxury which dazzled her was the cause of that languor, which rouge itself was not able to disguise? While she was ruminating on all this, the Count de Luzy approaches her and invites her to dance with him. He was young, well dress'd, well made, and too seducing for Lauretta.

Though she had not the most delicate taste in dancing, she could not but remark in the nobleness, the justness, and the lightness of the count's movements, a grace which was not to be found in the caperings of the young villagers. She had sometimes felt her hand pressed, but never by a hand so soft. The count in dancing followed her with his eyes. Lauretta found that his looks gave life and soul to the dance; and whether it was that she tried from emulation to give the same grace to her's, or whether the first spark of love communicated itself from her heart to her eyes, they replied to those of the count by the most natural expression of joy and sentiment.

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The dance ended, Lauretta went and seated herself at the foot of the elm, and the count at her knees. 'Let us not part any more,' said he to her, 'my pretty dear: I will dance with nobody but you.'---'That is doing me a great deal of honour,' said she; 'but it would make my companions uneasy; and in this village they are apt to be jealous.'---'And well they may, to see you so handsome; and in town they would be the same: it is a misfortune which will follow you every where. Ah, Lauretta, if in Paris, in the midst of those women so vain of beauty which is only artificial, they were to see you appear, all at once, with those natural charms of which you are so unconscious---' 'I, Sir, at Paris! alas, what should I do there?'---'Be the delight of all eyes, and make the conquest of all hearts. Hark'e, Lauretta, we have not opportunity to talk together here. But in two words; it depends only on yourself to have, instead of an obscure cottage, and a vineyard to cultivate; it depends only on yourself to have, at Paris, a little palace shining with gold and silk, a table according to your wish, the gayest furniture, the most elegant equipage, gowns for all seasons, and of all colours; in short every thing which forms the agreeableness of an easy, quiet, and delicious life; without any other care than that of enjoying them, and of loving me as I do you. Think of it at your leisure. To-morrow there is to be a ball at the castle; and all the youth of the village are invited. You will be there my sweet Lauretta, and tell me if my passion touches you, and whether you will accept my offers. To-day I ask nothing but secrecy; secrecy the most inviolable. Observe it well: if it escape you, all the happiness which now awaits you will vanish like a dream.'

Lauretta thought she had been in a dream. The brilliant lot that had been painted unto her was so far from the humble state to which she was reduced, that a passage so easy, and so rapid, from one to the other, was inconceivable. The handsome young man who had made her those offers, had not, however, the air of a
deceiver,

deceiver. He had talked to her so seriously! she had seen so much sincerity in his eyes, and in his language.

‘I should easily have perceived it,’ said she, ‘if he wanted to make a fool of me. And yet, why all this mystery which he has so strongly enjoined me? for making me happy, he requires me to love him: nothing more just; but sure he will consent that my father shall partake of his benefits; why then conceal our proceedings from my father?’ If Lauretta had had the idea of seduction and vice, she would easily have comprehended wherefore Luzy demanded secrecy; but the discretion they had infused into her, went no farther than to teach her to decline the rough liberties of the village youths; and in the honest and respectful air of the count, she saw nothing against which she was to be upon her guard.

Wholly taken up with these reflections, her head filled with the image of luxury and abundance, she returns to her humble habitation; every thing there seemed changed. Lauretta, for the first time was mortified at living under thatch. The plain moveables, which use had before made precious to her, were debased in her eyes; the domestic cares which she had charged herself with, began to be disagreeable: she found no longer the same taste in that bread to which labour gives a relish: and on that fresh straw where she slept so well; she sighed for gilded roofs and a rich down bed.

It was much worse the next day, when she was obliged to return to labour, and go on a burning hill to support the heat of the day. ‘At Paris,’ said she, ‘I would wake only to enjoy myself at my ease, without any other care than that of loving, and of pleasing: his honour the count assured me of it. How amiable the count is! Of all the girls in the village he regarded only me; he even quitted the ladies of the castle for a poor country girl. He is not proud, sweet gentleman! And yet he might very well be so! One would have thought that I did him a favour in preferring him to the young fellows of the village; he thanked me for it with looks so tender, an air so humble and touching! and
language,

language, what an amiable sweetness in his language! Though he had talked to the lady of the place, he could not have spoken more genteely. By good luck I was pretty well dressed; but if he were to see me to-day! What cloaths! what a condition am I in!

The disgust at her situation only redoubled, during three days of fatigue and heaviness, which she had still to sustain before she could again see the count.

The moment, which they both expected with impatience, arrives. All the youth of the village are assembled at the neighbouring castle: and in a bower of linden trees, the sound of instruments soon gives the signal for the dance. Lauretta advances with her companions, no longer with that deliberate air which she had at the village feast, but with an air modest and timorous. This was to Luzy a new beauty, and she appeared as one of the Graces, timid and decent, instead of a lively and wanton nymph. He distinguished her from the rest in his salute, but without any symptom of correspondence between them. He abstained even from approaching her, and delayed dancing with her till another had set him the example. This other was the Chevalier de Soligny; who, ever since the village-feast, had never ceased talking of Lauretta in a strain of rapture. Luzy imagined him a rival, and anxiously followed him with his eyes; but it was needless for Lauretta to perceive his jealousy, in order to remove it. In dancing with Soligny, her look was vague, her air indifferent, her behaviour cold and negligent. It came to Luzy's turn to dance with her, and he thought he saw, as he saluted her, all her graces animate themselves, all her charms spring up in her countenance. The precious colouring of modesty diffused itself there: a furtive and almost imperceptible smile moved her rosy lips; and the favour of a touching look transported him with joy and love. His first emotion, had they been alone, would have been to fall at Lauretta's feet, to thank her, and to adore her; but he commands his very eyes to restrain the fire of their looks; his hand alone, in pressing

pressing that of her whom his heart calls his love, expresses to her by tremblings his transports.

‘Beautiful Lauretta,’ said he to her, after the dance, ‘remove a little from your companions, I am impatient to know what you have resolved.’—‘Not to take one step without the consent of my father, and to follow his advice in every thing. If you mean me good, I would have him partake of it; if I follow you, I would have him consent to it.’—‘Ah! beware of consulting him! it is he, whom above all, I ought to fear. There are formalities among you, previous to love and union, with which my title, my condition forbid me to comply. Your father would subject me to them; he would require impossibilities of me; and on my refusal, he would accuse me of having wanted to deceive you. He knows not how much I love you; but you, Lauretta, can you think me capable of doing you an injury?’—‘Alas! no; I believe you to be goodness itself. You would be a great hypocrite if you were bad!’—‘Dare then to trust to me.’—‘It is not that I distrust you; but I cannot deal mysteriously with my father: I belong to him: I depend on him. If what you propose is proper, he will consent to it.’—‘He will never consent to it. You will destroy me; you will repent it when too late; and you will be all your life condemned to those vile labours, which to be sure you love, since you dare not abandon them. Ah, Lauretta! are these delicate hands made to cultivate the ground? Must the sun destroy the colours of that beautiful complexion? You, the charm of Nature, of all the Graces, all the Loves! you, Lauretta, will you wear yourself out in an obscure and toilsome life! to be closed in becoming the wife of some rude villager! to grow old perhaps, in indigence, without having tasted any of those pleasures which ought to follow you perpetually? This is what you prefer to the delights of ease and affluence which I promise you. And on what do you found your resolution? On the fear of giving some moments of uneasiness to your father? Yes, your flight will

will afflict him; but afterwards, what will be his joy at seeing you rich by my favours, with which he also shall be loaded? What a pleasing violence will you not do him, in obliging him to quit his cottage, and give himself repose? For, from that time, I shall no longer have his denials to fear: my happiness, yours, and his, will be assured for ever.'

Lauretta had a good deal of difficulty to withstand the temptation, but she did withstand it; and but for the fatal accident which at last threw her again into the snare, the mere instinct of innocence would have sufficed to preserve her from it.

In a storm which fell on the village of Coulange, the hail destroyed all the promised vintages and harvests. The desolation was general. During the storm, a thousand mournful cries mingled with the roaring of the winds and claps of thunder; but when the ravage was accomplished, and a light, more, dreadful than the darkness which had preceded it, let them see the vine-branches stripped and broken, the ears of corn hanging on their shattered stalks, the fruits of the trees beaten down or blasted, nothing prevailed throughout the desolated country but one vast and doleful silence; the roads were covered with a crowd of unfortunate people, pale, struck with consternation, and immovable; who, with a melancholy eye contemplating their ruin, bewailed the loss of the year, and saw nothing to come but despair, misery and death. On the thresholds of the cottages, the disconsolate mothers pressed against their bosoms their tender nurslings, exclaiming, with tears in their eyes, 'Who will give suck to you if we want bread?'

At the sight of this calamity, the first thought which occurred to Luzu, was the distress of Lauretta and her father. Impatient to fly to their relief, he veiled the tender interest he took in their fortunes, under a pretext of common pity to this multitude of wretches. 'Let us go to the village,' said he to his company; 'let us carry consolation thither. It will be but little expence to each of

us, to save twenty families from the despair into which this disaster has plunged them. We have partaken their joy, let us go and partake of their grief.

These words made an impression on their hearts, already moved by pity. The Marquis de Clancé set the example. He presented himself to the peasants, offered them assistance, promised them relief, and restored them to hope and courage. While tears of gratitude flowed around him, his company, of both sexes, dispersed themselves through the village, entered the straw huts, distributed their gifts, and tasted the rare and sensible delight of seeing themselves adored by a grateful people. In the mean time, Luzy ran like a madman, seeking the abode of Lauretta. It was shewn him; he flies thither, and sees a countryman sitting at the door, his head inclined on his knees, and covering his face with both his hands, as if he feared to see the light again. This was Lauretta's father. 'My friend,' said the count to him, 'I see you are in consternation; but do not despair: Heaven is just, and there are compassionate hearts among mankind.'—'Ah, Sir,' replied the villager, lifting up his head, 'is it for a man who, after having served his country twenty years, retired covered with wounds, and who has never since ceased to labour without relaxation; is it for him to stretch out his hand for charity? Ought not the earth, which is bedewed with my sweat, to give me subsistence? Shall I end my life by begging my bread?' A soul so lofty, and so noble, in an obscure person, astonished the count. 'You have served, then?' said he. 'Yes, Sir, I took up arms under Berwick; I made the campaigns of Maurice. My father, before an unfortunate law-suit had stripped him of his estate, had sufficient to support me in the rank to which I was arrived. But at the same time that I was reduced, he was undone. We came here to conceal ourselves; and out of the wreck of our fortune we purchased a little farm, which I cultivated with my own hands. Our former condition was unknown; and this latter,

to which I seemed born, gave me no shame. I maintained, and consoled, my father. I married; there was my misfortune; and it is now that I feel it.'—'Your father is dead?'—'Alas! yes.'—'Your wife?'—'She is happy in not having seen this dismal day.'—'Have you a family?'—'I have but one daughter, and the poor girl----Do you not hear her sighs? She hides herself, and keeps at a distance from me, that she may not distract my soul.' Luzy would fain have rushed into the cottage where Lauretta was mourning; but he restrained himself, for fear of a discovery.

'Here,' said he to the father, giving him his purse; 'this assistance is very small; but when you want, remember the Count De Luzy. I live at Paris.' On saying these words he went away, without giving Lauretta's father time to return him thanks.

What was the astonishment of the good old Bazil, on finding a considerable sum in the purse! Fifty louis, more than triple the revenue of his little vineyard! 'Come hither, my child,' cried he, 'look at him who goes yonder; it is not a man, it is an angel from Heaven. But I am deceived. It is not possible that he should intend to give me so much. Go, Lauretta, run after him, and let him see that he has committed a mistake.' Lauretta flies after Luzy; and, having overtaken him---'My father,' said she to him, 'cannot believe that you intended to make us so great a present. He sends me to return it to you.'---'Ah, Lauretta! is not all that I have at your and your father's disposal? Can I pay him too richly for having given birth to you? Carry back this poor gift; it is only an earnest of my good-will; but carefully conceal from him the motive: tell him only that I am too happy in obliging a man of worth.' Lauretta was about to return him thanks. 'To-morrow,' said he to her, 'at break of day, as I pass the end of the village, I will receive if you please, your thanks with your adieus.'---'What; do you go away to-morrow!'-----'Yes, I go away the most passionate lover, and most unhappy
of

of men.'---'At break of day?---that is about the hour when my father and I go out to work.'---'Together?'---No; he goes first; I have the care of the house upon me, and that delays me a little.'---'And do you pass my road?'---'I cross it above the village; but, were it necessary to go out of my way, it is certainly the least that I owe you for so many marks of friendship.'---'Adieu, then Lauretta, till to-morrow. Let me see you, though but for a moment: that pleasure will be the last of my life.'

Basil, at Lauretta's return, had no more doubt of Luzy's benefactions. 'Ah, the good young man! Ah, excellent heart!' cried he every instant. 'However, daughter, let us not neglect what the hail has left us. The less there is of it, the more care we must take of what is left.'

Lauretta was so touched with the count's goodness, so afflicted at being the cause of his unhappiness, that she wept all the night. 'Ah, if it were not for my father,' said she, 'what pleasure should I have had in following him!' The next day she did not put on her holiday-cloaths; but, notwithstanding the extreme simplicity of her dress, she forgot not to mingle in it a little coquetry natural to her age. 'I shall see him no more: what does it signify whether I am more or less handsome in his eyes? For one moment it is not worth the trouble.' On saying these words, she adjusted her cap and her tucker. She bethought her of carrying him some fruit in her breakfast-basket. 'He will not despise them,' said she: 'I will tell him that I have gathered them.' And while she ranged the fruit on a bed of vine-leaves, she bedewed them with her tears. Her father was already set out; and with the grey light of the dawn was already mingled that gentle tint of gold and purple diffused by Aurora, when the poor girl, with a distracted heart, arrived alone at the end of the village. The instant after, she saw the count's post-coach appear, and at that sight she was troubled. The moment that he saw her, Luzy leaped out of his

carriage; and coming towards her with an air of sorrow—‘I am penetrated, beautiful Lauretta,’ said he to her, ‘with the favour which you do me. I have, at least, the consolation to see you sensible of my pain, and I can believe that you are sorry at having made me unhappy.’—‘I am distressed at it,’ replied Lauretta, and would give all the wealth you have bestowed on us, never to have seen you.’—‘And I, Lauretta, I would give all I have never to quit you as long as I live.’—‘Alas! I should think it depended only on yourself; my father could refuse you nothing; he loves you, he reveres you.’—‘Fathers are cruel; they would have us marry; and I cannot marry you: let us think no more of it; we are going to leave each other, to bid an eternal adieu; we who never, if you had been inclined to it, would have ceased to live for one another, to love each other, to enjoy all the gifts which Fortune has bestowed on me, and all those which Love has conferred on you. Ah! you have no conception of the pleasures which awaited us. If you had any idea of them! If you knew what you renounce!’—‘Why, without knowing them, I feel them. Be assured, that ever since I have seen you, every thing that is not you, is nothing to me. At first my mind was dazzled with the fine things which you had promised me; but since, all that is vanished: I have thought of it no longer, I have thought only of you. Ah! if my father would agree to it!’—‘What occasion for his agreeing to it! Do you wait for his consent to love me! Does not our happiness depend on ourselves? Love, fidelity, Lauretta; these are your titles, and my securities. Are there any more sacred, more inviolable? Ah! believe me, when the heart is bestowed, every thing is over, and the hand has only to follow it. Give me, then, that hand, that I may kiss it a thousand times, that I may bedew it with my tears.’—‘There it is,’ said she weeping. ‘It is mine,’ cried he, ‘this dear hand is mine, I hold it of Love: to take it from me, they must take my life. Yes, Lauretta, I shall die at your feet,

feet, if we must part.' Lauretta really believed that he would literally die on losing her. 'Alas!' said she; 'and shall I be the cause?'—'Yes, cruel girl! you will be the cause. You desire my death, you do.'—'Oh, Heaven! no: I would lay down my life for you.'—'Prove it then,' said he, doing her at the same time a kind of violence, and follow me if you love me.' 'No,' said she, 'I cannot; I cannot without the consent of my father.'—'Very well; leave, leave me, then, to my despair.' At these words, Lauretta, pale and trembling, her heart pierced with sorrow and fear, dared neither to hold Luzy's hand nor let it go. Her eyes, full of tears, followed with terror the distracted looks of the count. 'Deign,' said she to him, in order to appease him, 'deign to pity me, and to see me without anger. I hoped this testimony of my gratitude would have been agreeable to you; but I dare no longer offer it to you.'—'What is it?' said he; 'fruit, and for me? Ah, you little tyrant, you insult me! Give me poison!' And throwing down the basket, he retired in a rage.

Lauretta took that emotion for hatred; and her heart, already too much softened, could not support this last attack. Scarce had she strength to get away a few paces, and faint at the foot of a tree. Luzy who followed her with his eyes, runs up and finds her bathed with tears, her bosom choaked with sobs, pale, and almost lifeless. He is distressed; he thinks at first only of recalling her to life; but, soon as he sees her spirits return, he avails himself of her weakness, and before she is well recovered of her swooning, she is already at a great distance from the village, in the count's coach, and in the arms of her ravisher. 'Where am I?' said she on opening her eyes. 'Ah, my lord count, is it you! Are you carrying me back to the village!'—'Dearest half of my soul,' said he to her, pressing her against his bosom, 'I have lived to see the moment when our adieus almost cost us both our lives. Let us

us put no more to that trial two hearts too weak to sustain it.

‘ I resign myself to thee, my dear Lauretta ; on thy lips I swear to live for thee alone.’—‘ I ask no better lot,’ said she to him, ‘ than to live also for you alone. But my father ! Shall I leave my father ? Has not he a right to dispose of me ?’—‘ Thy father, my Lauretta, shall be loaded with riches ; he shall partake the happiness of his daughter : we will be both his children. Depend on my tenderness to ease and console him. Come, let me catch those tears, let me drop my own into thy bosom : they are the tears of joy, the tears of pleasure.’ The dangerous Luzy mingled with his language all the charms of seduction, and Lauretta was not insensible : while her father, uneasy, afflicted, seeking his daughter, calling her with loud cries, asked after her through the whole village ; and not seeing her again in the evening, and retiring distressed, in despair at having lost her, that image presents itself to his mind, wholly occupies it, and troubles it without ceasing. It was necessary to beguile his grief.

Luzy ran with his horses ; the blinds of his carriage were let down ; his people were sure and faithful ; and Lauretta left behind her no trace of her flight. It was even essential to Luzy to conceal his having carried her off. He detached one of his domestics, who, from a village quite out of the road, contrived to transmit to the Minister of Coulange this billet, in which Luzy had disguised his hand writing.

‘ Tell Lauretta’s father to be easy ; that she is well ; and that the lady, who has taken her with her, will have the same care of her as of her own child. In a short time he shall know what is become of her.’

This note, which was far from affording consolation to the father, sufficed to palliate the crime of elopement to the daughter. Love had penetrated into her soul ; he laid open the avenues of it to pleasure ; and from that time the clouds of grief dispersed, the tears dried up, sorrow was appeased, and a transient, but profound

profound oblivion of every thing but her lover, suffered her to taste, without remorse, the criminal happiness of being his.

The kind of delirium into which she fell on arriving at Paris, completed the dissipation of her soul. Her house was a fairy palace; every thing in it had the air of enchantment. The bath, the toilette, the supper, the delicious repose which love left her, were so many varied forms which voluptuousness assumed, to seduce her through the medium of her senses. When she waked, she thought herself still deceived by a dream. When she rose, she saw herself surrounded with women, attentive to serve her, and jealous of pleasing her. She, who had only studied to obey, had only to desire in order to be obeyed. 'You are queen here,' said her lover, 'and I am your principal slave.'

Imagine, if possible, the surprize and transport of a young and simple country-girl, at seeing her fine black hair, so negligently tied till that time, the wavy ringlets of which Nature alone had formed, now rounding into curls beneath the ply of art, and rising into a diadem, bespangled with flowers and diamonds; at seeing displayed to her eyes the most gallant ornaments, which seemed to solicit her choice; at seeing, I say, her beauty issue, radiant as from a cloud, and springing up again in the brilliant pannels which environed her, in order to multiply her charms. Nature had lavished on her all her graces; but some of those gifts had need of being cultivated, and the accomplishments came in a crowd to dispute with each other the care of instructing her and the glory of embellishing her. Luzy possessed and adored his conquest intoxicated with joy and love.

In the mean time, the good Bazil was the most unhappy of fathers. Brave, full of honour, and, above all, jealous of his daughter's reputation, he had sought her, expected her in vain, without publishing his uneasiness; and nobody in the village was made acquainted with his misfortune. The minister came to assure him of it himself, by communicating to him the note which
he

he had received. Basil gave no credit to this note; but, dissembling with the pastor——‘My daughter is discreet,’ said he to him; ‘but she is young, simple, and credulous. Some lady has had a mind to take her into her service, and has prevailed on her to prevent my denial. Let us, for fear of scandal, hush up this little imprudence of youth, and leave the people to believe that my daughter quitted me with my own consent. The secret rests with you; spare the daughter and the father.’ The minister, a prudent and worthy man, promised and kept silence. But Basil, devoured by chagrin, passed the days and nights in tears. ‘What is become of her?’ said he. ‘Is it a lady that she has followed? Is there any so mad as to rob a father of his daughter, and to undertake to carry her off? No, no! it is some ravisher who has seduced and ruined her. Ah! if I can discover him, either his blood or mine shall wash out my injury.’ He went himself to the village, whence they had brought the note. By the minister’s informations he contrived to discover the person who had been charged with the message: he examined him; but his answers only confused him the more. The very situation of the place served only to mislead him. It was six leagues out of the road which Luzy had taken, and lay quite across the country. But had Basil even combined the two circumstances of the departure of the count and his daughter’s elopement, he would never have suspected so virtuous a young man. As he confided his grief to nobody, nobody could give him any light. He groaned, therefore, within himself, in expectation of some casual gleam to clear up his suspicions. ‘Oh, Heaven!’ said he, ‘it was in your wrath that you gave her to me! and I, mad as I was, congratulated myself on seeing her grow up and improve! What formed my pride, now constitutes my shame. Oh, that she had died as soon as she was born!’

Lauretta endeavoured to persuade herself that her father was easy; and the regret of having left him, touched

touched her but faintly. Love, vanity, a taste for pleasures, a taste ever so lively in its birth, the care of cultivating her talents; in short, a thousand amusements, continually varied, divided her life, and filled her soul. Luzy, who loved her to idolatry, and who feared lest he should lose her, exposed her as little as possible in public; but he contrived her all the means which mystery has invented, of being invisible amidst the great world. This was enough for Lauretta: happy in pleasing him whom she loved, she felt not that restless desire, that want of being seen and admired, which alone brings out so many handsome women to our spectacles and gardens. Though Luzy, by the choice of a small circle of amiable men, rendered his suppers amusing, she was taken up at them only with him; and she was able to convince him of it without disobliging any body else. The art of reconciling partialities to good manners, is the secret of delicate souls: coquetry studies it; love knows it without having learned it.

Six months passed away in that union, the sweet intelligence of two hearts filled and ravished with each other, without weariness, without uneasiness, without any other jealousy than that which makes us fear that we do not please so much as we love, and which renders us desirous of combining every thing that can captivate a heart.

In this interval, Lauretta's father had twice received news of his daughter, with presents from the lady who had taken her into friendship. It was to the minister that Luzy directed. Remitted to the next post to the village by a faithful servant, the packets came to hand anonymous; Basil could not tell to whom to send them back; and then his refusals would have created doubts of what he wished to be believed, and he trembled lest the curate should have the same suspicions with himself. 'Alas!' said the good father to himself, 'my daughter is perhaps, yet virtuous. Appearances accuse her; but they are only appearances; and though my suspicions

cions should be just, I must lament, but I ought not to dishonour my child.

Heaven owed some consolation to the virtue of this worthy father; and it was Heaven without doubt, which brought about the accident I am going to relate.

The little wine trade which Basil carried on, obliged him to come to Paris. As he was travelling that immense city, he was stopped in the street by some carriages crossing each other. The voice of a lady in a fright engaged his attention. He sees—He dares not believe his eyes—Lauretta, his daughter, in a gilt-glass chariot, superbly dressed, and crowned with diamonds. Her father would not have known her, if, perceiving him herself, surprize and confusion had not made her shrink back and cover her face. At the movement which she made to hide herself, and still more at the cry which escaped her, he could not doubt but it was she. While the carriages, which were locked together were disengaging, Basil slips between the wall and his daughter's chariot, gets up to the step of the chariot-door, and, with a severe tone, says to Lauretta, 'Where do you live?' Lauretta, seized with fear and trembling, tells him her habitation. 'And what name do you go by?'—'Coulange,' replied she, looking down, 'from the place of my birth.'—'Of your birth! Ah, wretch! This evening, at dusk, be at home, and alone.' At these words he gets down and pursues his way.

The shock which Lauretta had received was not yet overcome, when she found herself at home.

Lusy supped in the country. She was left to herself at the moment when she had most need of counsel and support. She was going to appear before her father, whom she had betrayed, forsaken, and overwhelmed with grief and shame: her crime then presented itself to her in the most odious form. She began to feel the vileness of her condition. The intoxication of love, the charms of pleasure, had banished the thought; but as soon as the veil was fallen off, she saw herself such as she was in the eyes of the world, and in the eyes of her father.

father. Terrified at the examination and sentence which she was about to undergo; 'Wretch!' cried she, melting into tears, 'where can I fly? where can I hide me? My father, honesty itself, again finds me, gone astray, abandoned to vice, with a man who is nothing to me! O my father! O terrible judge! how shall I appear before you?' It came more than once into her mind to avoid him, and disappear; but vice had not yet effaced from her soul the holy laws of Nature. 'I, to reduce him to despair,' said she, and after having merited his reproaches, to draw his curse upon me! No, though unworthy the name of his daughter, I revere that sacred name. Though he came to kill me with his own hand, I ought to wait it, and to fall at his feet. But, no; a father is always a father: mine will be touched with my tears. My age, my weakness, the count's love, his favours, all plead for me; and when Luzy shall speak, I shall no longer be so culpable.'

She would have been distressed if her people had been witnesses of the humiliating scene which was preparing. By good luck she had given out that she supped with a friend, and her women had made themselves a holiday that evening. It was easy to her to get rid of two footmen who attended her, and when her father arrived, she received him herself.

'Are you alone?'—'Yes, Sir.'—He enters with emotion, and after having looked her in the face, in a sorrowful and melancholy silence, 'What business have you here?' said he. Lauretta answered by throwing herself at his feet, and bathing them with tears. 'I see,' said the father, casting his eyes around him, 'in this apartment where every thing bespeaks riches and luxury, I see that vice is at its ease in this town. May I know who has taken care to enrich you in so short a time? and from whom came this furniture, these cloaths, that fine equipage in which I saw you?'—Lauretta still replied only by tears and sighs. 'Speak to me said,' said he; 'you shall weep afterwards; you will have time enough.'

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At the recital of her story, of which she disguised nothing, Bazil passed from astonishment to indignation. 'Luzy?' said he, 'that worthy man! These, then, are the virtues of the great! The base wretch, in giving me his gold, did he think he paid me for my daughter? These proud rich folks think, that the honour of the poor is a thing of no value, and that misery sets itself to sale. He flattered himself with consoling me! He promised you to do it! Unnatural man! how little does he know the soul of the father; No, ever since I lost thee, I have not had one moment without sorrow, not one quarter of an hour of peaceful sleep. By day, the ground which I cultivated was watered with my tears; in the night, while you forgot yourself, while you were losing yourself in guilty pleasures, your father, stretched on his straw, tore his hair, and called on you with loud cries. Ah, what! Have my groans never re-echoed to thy soul? Has the image of a father distressed never presented itself to your thought, never troubled your repose?'—'Oh! Heaven is my witness,' said she, 'that if ever I had thought I had occasioned you so much sorrow, I would have quitted every thing to fly to your arms. I revere you, I love you, I love you more than ever. Alas, what a father have I afflicted! At this very instant, when I expected to find in you an inexorable judge, I hear from your own mouth, only reproaches full of gentleness. Ah, my father! when I fell at your feet, I felt only shame and fear; but now it is with affection that you see me penetrated, and to the tears of repentance are joined those of love!'—'Ah! I revive, I now find my daughter again,' cried Bazil, raising her up. 'Your daughter! Alas,' said Lauretta, 'she is no longer worthy of you!'—'No, do not discourage thyself. Honour, Lauretta, is, without doubt, a great happiness! innocence a greater still; and if I had the choice, I would rather have seen thee deprived of life. But when innocence and honour are lost, there still remains one inestimable good; virtue, which never perishes, which we never lose without return. We have only to wish for it; it springs

springs up again in the soul; and when we think it extinguished, a single touch of remorse gives birth to it anew. This will console you, daughter, for the loss of your innocence; and if your repentance be sincere, Heaven and your father are appeased. For the rest, nobody in the village knows your adventure; you may appear there again without shame.'—'Where, my father?'—'At Coulange, whither I am going to carry you.'—These words embarrassed Lauretta. 'Haste,' continued Basil, 'to strip off those ornaments of vice. Plain linen, a simple bodice, a white petticoat, these are the raiments of thy condition. Leave his envied gifts to the wretch who has seduced you, and follow me without more delay.'

One must have been possessed at this moment of the timid and tender soul of Lauretta; must have loved, like her, a father and a lover; to conceive, to feel the combat which arose in her feeble heart, between love and nature. The trouble and agitation of her spirits kept her immoveable and mute. 'Let us go,' said the father; 'moments are precious.'—'Pardon me,' cried Lauretta, falling again on her knees before him. 'pardon me, my father; be not offended if I am slow to obey you. You have read the bottom of my soul. Luzy wants the name of husband; but all the rights which the tenderest love can give him, he has over me. I would fly him, detach myself from him, follow you, though to death. But to steal away in his absence, to leave him to believe that I have betrayed him!'—'How, wretch! and what signifies to you the opinion of a vile deceiver? and what are the rights of a passion which has ruined and dishonoured you? You love him! you love your shame then! You prefer his vile favours to the innocence which he has robbed you of! You prefer to your father the most cruel of your enemies! You dare not fly him in his absence, and quit him without his consent! Ah, when you were to quit your father, to overwhelm him, to drive him to destruction, you were not then so timorous! And what

do you expect from your ravisher? That he should defend you? That he should withdraw you from paternal authority? Oh, let him come! let him dare to drive me hence; I am alone, unarmed, enfeebled by age; but they shall see me extended on the threshold of your door, calling for vengeance to God and man. Your lover himself, in order to get at thee, shall march over my body; and passers-by shall say with horror, "There is the father whom she disavows, and whom her lover tramples under his feet!"

'Ah! my father,' said Lauretta, terrified at this image, 'how little do you know the man whom you rail against so cruelly! Nothing is gentler, nothing more sensible. You will be to him respectable and sacred.'—'Dare you talk to me of the respect of one who dishonours me? Dost thou hope that he may seduce me with his perfidious gentleness? I will not see him; if you can answer for him, I cannot answer for myself?'—Well do not see him, but permit me to see him: but for a moment.'—'What do you ask? me to leave you alone with him! Ah! though he should take away my life, I would not shew him that complaisance. While he was able to keep you from me, it was his crime, it was thine, I was not answerable for it. But Heaven now puts you again under my guard, and from this moment I answer to Heaven for thee. Let us go, daughter, it is already dark; this is the instant for us to depart! Resolve: renounce thy father, or obey.'—'You pierce my heart!'—'Obey, I tell thee, or dread my curse!' At these terrible words, the trembling Lauretta had no strength to reply. She undresses herself before her father's eyes, and puts on, not without a flood of tears, the plain dress which he had prescribed to her. 'My father,' said she to him at the moment she was preparing to follow him, 'dare I ask, as the price of my obedience, one single favour? You do not wish the death of him whom I sacrifice to you. Suffer me to write him two words, to inform him it is you that I obey, and that you oblige me to follow

follow you.'—'What! that he may come to carry you off again, to steal you from me? No, I will leave no trace of you. Let him die of shame, he will do justice upon himself; but of love! never fear that; libertines never die of it.' Then, taking his daughter by the hand, he carried her out without noise; and the next morning, embarking on the Seine, they returned into their own country.

At midnight the count arrives at his own house, where he flatters himself pleasure awaits him, and finds all there in alarm and confusion.

Lauretta's people tell him with fright that they do not know what is become of her; that they have sought her in vain; that she had taken care to send them out of the way, and had seized that moment to elude their vigilance; that she did not sup at her friend's; and that on going off she had left every thing behind her, even to her diamonds, and to the gown she had worn that day.

'We must wait for her,' said Luzy, after a long silence. 'Do not go to bed; there is something incomprehensible in this affair.'

Love, which seeks to flatter itself, began by conjectures to excuse Lauretta; but finding them all destitute of probability, he delivered himself up to the most cruel suspicions. 'An involuntary accident might have detained her; but in the absence of her people to undress herself; to make her escape alone, at dusk; to leave her house in uneasiness! all this,' said he, 'clearly shews a premeditated flight. Has Heaven touched her? Is it remorse that has determined her to fly me? Ah, why can I not at least believe it! but if she had taken an honest part, she would have had pity of me; she would have written to me, though it were but two words, of consolation and adieu. Her letter would not have betrayed her; and would have spared me suspicions, grievous to me, and dishonourable to her. Lauretta! O Heaven! candour itself, innocence, truth! Lauretta unfaithful and perfidious! she, who but this very morning—No, no, it is incredible; and yet it is but too true.' Every mo-

ment, every reflection, seemed a new proof; but hope and confidence could not quit his heart. He struggled against persuasion, as an expiring man against death. If she were to return,' said he; 'if she were to return innocent and faithful! Ah, would my fortune, my life, all my love, be sufficient to repair the injury I do her! What pleasure should I have in confessing myself in fault! With what transports, with what tears, would I efface the crime of having accused her! Alas, I dare not flatter myself with being unjust: I am not so happy!'

There is nobody who, in the uneasiness and ardour of expectation, has not sometimes experienced at Paris the torment of listening to the noise of the coaches, each of which we take for that which we expect, and each of which by turns arrives, and carries away, as it passes, the hopes which it has just excited. The unhappy Luzy was till three in the morning in this cruel perplexity. Every carriage which he heard was, perhaps, that which was bringing back Lauretta; at last hope, so often deceived, gave place to despair. 'I am betrayed,' said he; 'I can no longer doubt it. It is a plot which has been concealed from me. The caresses of the perfidious creature served only the better to disguise it. They have artfully chosen the day on which I was to sup in the country. She has left every thing behind her, to let me understand that she has no farther occasion for my presents. Another, without doubt, overwhelms her with them. She would have been ashamed to have had any thing of mine. The most feeble pledge of my love would have been a perpetual reproach of her treachery and ingratitude. She would forget me, in order to deliver herself up in peace to the man she prefers. Ah, the perjured wretch! does she hope to find any one who loves her like me? I loved her too well, I gave myself too much up to it. Her desires by being perpetually prevented, became extinct. These are the ways of women. They grow tired of every thing, even of being happy. Ah, canst thou be so now, perfidious girl! Canst thou be so, and think
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of me? Of me, do I say! What signify to her my love and grief? Ah, while I can scarce restrain my cries, while I bathe her bed with my tears, another, perhaps—Horrible thought! I cannot support it. I will know this rival, and if the fire which burns in my breast has not consumed me before day, I will not die without vengeance. It is doubtless some one of those false friends whom I have imprudently introduced to her. Soligny, perhaps. He was taken with her when we saw her in her own village. She was simple and sincere then. How is she changed! He wanted to see her again; and I, poor easy fool! thinking myself beloved, believing it impossible for Lauretta to be unfaithful, brought my rival to her. I may be deceived; but, in short, it is he whom I suspect. I will be satisfied instantly.—Follow me,’ said he to one of his domestics; and it was scarce day-light, when knocking at the chevalier’s door, Luzy asked to see him. ‘He is not at home, Sir,’ said the Swift. ‘Not at home!’—‘No, Sir, he is in the country.’—‘How long since?’—‘Since yesterday evening.’—‘At what hour!’—‘About dusk.’—‘And what part of the country is he gone to?’—‘We do not know: he has taken only his valet de chambre with him.’—‘In what carriage?’—‘In his vis-a-vis.’—‘Is his absence to be long?’—‘He will not be back this fortnight, and has ordered me to take care of his letters.’—‘At his return tell him that I was here, and that I desired to see him.’

‘At last,’ said he, on going away, ‘I am convinced. Every thing agrees. Nothing remains but to discover where they have concealed themselves. I will tear her from his arms, the perfidious wretch! and I will have the pleasure of washing away with his blood my injury and her treachery!’

His researches were ineffectual. The chevalier’s journey was a mystery which he could not penetrate. Luzy was, therefore, fifteen days on the rack; and the full persuasion that Soligny was the ravisher, diverted him from every other idea.

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In his impatience he sent every morning to know if his rival was returned. At last he was told that he was just arrived. He flies to him, enflamed with anger, and the favourable reception given him by the chevalier only irritated him more. 'My dear count,' said Soligny, 'you have been very earnest in your enquiries for me; how can I serve you?'--'In ridding me,' replied Luzy, at the same time turning pale, either of a life which I desire, or of a rival whom I hate. You have carried off my mistress; nothing remains but to pluck out my heart.'--'My friend,' said the chevalier to him, 'I have as great a desire to have my throat cut as yourself, for I am quite mad with vexation; but I have no quarrel with you; if you please, let us understand each other. Lauretta has been carried off you say; I am very sorry for it; she was a charming girl; but upon my honour it was not by me! Not that I pique myself on any delicacy in that point. In love I forgive my own friends, and allow myself these little petit-larcenies; and though I heartily love you, yet if Lauretta had thought proper to deceive you for me, rather than for another, I should not have been cruel. But as to carrying them off, I don't like that, that is too serious a business for me; and if you have no other reason for killing me, I advise you to let me live, and to breakfast with me.' Though the chevalier's language had very much the air of frankness, Luzy still retained his suspicions. 'You disappeared,' said he, 'the same evening, at the same hour; and you lay hid for a fortnight; I know besides that you loved her, and that you had an inclination for her at the very time that I took her.'

'You are in luck,' said Soligny, 'that in the humour I am now in, I love you enough to come to an explanation. Lauretta went off the same evening with me; I have nothing to say to that: it is one of these critical rencounters which form the intrigue of romances. I thought Lauretta beautiful as an angel, and I had an inclination for her, it is true; but if you will cut the throats of all who are guilty of the same crime, mercy upon

upon one half of Paris! The important article, then, is the secret of my journey and absence. Very well, I will explain that matter.

‘ I was in love with Madam de Blanfon, or rather, I was in love with her riches, her birth, her credit at court; for that woman has every thing in her favour except herself. You know, that if she is neither young nor handsome, to make amends she has a deal of sensibility, and is easily set on fire. I had got into her good graces, and saw no impossibility to be, as it is called, happy, without proceeding to marriage. But marriage was my point; and under cover of that respectful timidity, inseparable from a delicate love, I eluded all opportunity of making an ill use of her weakness. So much reserve disconcerted her. She never saw, she said, a man so timorous, and so much of the novice. I was as bashful as a young girl: my modesty absolutely tantalized her. In short, not to trouble you with all the arts I employed for three months to sustain attacks without surrendering, never did coquette strive so much to kindle ineffectual desires. My conduct was a masterpiece of prudence and dexterity: but the widow was too hard for me. I am her dupe: yes, my friend, she has surprized my credulous innocence. Seeing that she must attack me regularly, she talked of marriage. Nothing was more advantageous than her proposals. Her fortune was to be entirely in my power. There remained only one bar to our happiness. I was very young, and she was not sufficiently acquainted with my character. In order to try one another, she proposed to me to pass some days together, *tête-a-tête*, in the country. “ A fortnight’s solitude and liberty,” said she, “ will give us a truer idea of each other, than two years at Paris.” I gave into the snare, and she managed so well, that I forgot my resolution. How frail is man, and how little certain of himself! Having taken up the part of a husband, I was obliged to maintain it, and gave her the best opinion of me that I possibly could; but in a short time she thought she perceived

perceived that my love abated. It was in vain that I protested it was the same; she told me that she was not to be deceived with empty words, and that she plainly saw the change in me. In short, this morning, I received my discharge in form from under her own hands, It runs in these words.

‘The slender trial which I have made of your sentiments is sufficient. Be gone, Sir, whenever you please. I would have a husband whose attentions should never relax; who loves me always, and always the same.’

‘Are you satisfied? There is my adventure. You see it is quite of a different nature from that which you attribute to me. I have been carried off as well as your Lauretta; Heaven grant that they have not done by her as they did by me! But now you are undeceived with respect to me, have you no other suspicion?—‘I am lost in them,’ said Luzy, ‘forgive my sorrow, my despair, my love, the step which I have just taken.’—‘Pshaw!’ replied Soligny, ‘nothing was more just. If I had taken away your mistress, I must have given you satisfaction. There is nothing in it; so much the better: and so we are good friends. Will you breakfast with me?’—‘I would die.’—‘That would be going rather too far. Preserve that remedy for more serious disgraces. Lauretta is a pretty girl, though a little knavish baggage: endeavour to see her again; but if you cannot get her, take another, and the sooner the better.’

While Luzy remained inconsolable, and was scattering his money with a liberal hand, in order to discover some traces of Lauretta, she was at her father’s, lamenting her error, or rather her lover.

Bazil had given out in the village, that he had not been able to live without his daughter, and that he had been to fetch her home. They found her still improved. Her graces were now blown; and that which is called the air of Paris had given her new charms, even in the eyes of the villagers. The ardour of the youths who had sought her was renewed, and became still more lively?

lively; but her father refused them all. 'You shall never marry in my life-time,' said he, 'I would not impose upon any one. Work and lament with me. I have just sent back to your unworthy lover all his presents. We owe him nothing now except our shame.'

Lauretta, humble and submissive, obeyed her father without complaining, and without daring to raise her eyes towards him. It was to her an incredible difficulty to resume the habitude of indigence and labour. Her feet grown tender were wounded; her delicate hands were made sore; but these were slight evils. 'The pains of the body are nothing,' said she, groaning, 'those of the soul are much more grievous.'

Though Luzy was perpetually present to her, and her heart was not able to detach itself from him, she had no longer either the hope or desire of returning to him. She knew what bitterness her going astray had diffused over the life of her unhappy father; and though she had been at liberty to quit him again, she would not have consented to it. But the image of the grief in which she had left her lover, pursued her, and was her torment. The right he had to accuse her of perfidy and ingratitude, was a fresh cause of anguish.---'If I could but write to him! But I have neither the liberty nor the means. Not content with obliging me to abandon him, they would have me forget him, I shall sooner forget myself; and it is as impossible for me to hate him as to forget him. If he was culpable, his love was the cause, and I cannot punish him for it. In all that he did he meant only my happiness and my father's. He deceived himself, he led me astray; but at his age one thinks only of love. Yes, I owe to him, I owe it to myself, to clear up my conduct; and in that point alone my father shall not be obeyed.' The difficulty now was only to procure the means of writing: but her father, without intending it, had spared her the trouble.

One evening Luzy, retiring more afflicted than ever, received an anonymous packet. The hand in which the direction was written was unknown to him; but
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the post-mark told him enough. He opens it with precipitation; he discovers the purse which he had given Basil, with the fifty louis which he had left in it, and two like sums which he had sent to him. 'I see the whole affair,' said he; 'I have been discovered. The father in indignation sends me back my presents. Haughty and severe, as I perceived him. As soon as he knew where his daughter was, he came to fetch her, and forced her to follow him.' That moment he assembles such of his domestics as attended Lauretta. He examines them; he asks if any one among them had not seen with her a countryman, whom he describes to them. One of them actually remembers that, the very day that she went away, a man exactly like the person he describes got up to the boot of Lauretta's coach, and spoke to her for a moment. 'Come quickly,' cried Luzy, 'put post-horses to my chaise!'

The second night, being arrived at some leagues from Coulange, he causes the servant who attended him to disguise himself like a peasant, sends him to get information, and in the mean while endeavours to take rest. Alas, there is none for a soul of a lover in so violent a situation! He counts the minutes from the departure of his emissary to his return.

'Sir,' said the servant, 'good news! Lauretta is at Coulange, at her father's.'—'I breathe again!'—'They talk even of marrying her.'—'Of marrying her! I must see her.'—'You will find her in the vineyard: she works there all day.'—'Just Heaven, what hardship! Come, I will lie concealed; and you, under that disguise, shall watch the moment when she is alone. Let us not lose an instant. Away!'

Luzy's emissary had told him truth. A rich person in his situation had offered himself as a match for Lauretta; and the minister had sent to Basil to persuade him to accept it.

In the mean time, Lauretta toiled in the vineyard, and thought of the day by Luzy. Luzy arrives, and perceives her at a distance; he advances with precaution,

tion, sees her alone, runs up, throws himself before her, and stretches out his arms. At the noise which he made across the vine-leaves, she raises her head, and turns her eyes. 'My God!' cried she. Surprise and joy took from her the use of her voice. She was in his arms, all trembling, without having been able to mention his name. 'Ah, Luzy!' said she, at last, 'is it you? This is what I asked of Heaven. I am innocent in your eyes, that is enough: I will endure the rest. Adieu, Luzy, adieu for ever! Be gone; and lament your Lauretta. She reproaches you with nothing. You will be dear to her to her last breath.'-----'I!' cried he, locking her in his arms, as if they were about to tear her from him again: 'I quit you! Thou half of myself, I live without thee! far from thee! No, there is not that power on earth that shall separate us.'---'There is one which is sacred to me; the will of my father. Ah, my lost friend! if you had known the profound grief into which my flight plunged him, sensible and good as you are, you would have restored me to his tears. To take me away from him a second time, or to plunge a dagger into his bosom, would be to me the same thing. You know me too well to require it of me; you are too humane to wish it yourself. Cast away a hope which I have lost. Adieu! Heaven grant that I may expiate my fault! But I can scarce reproach myself for it. Adieu, I say! my father is coming: it would be dreadful that he should find us together.'---'It is what I would have,' said Luzy: 'I wait for him.'---'Ah! you are now going to redouble my sorrows.'

At that instant Basil arrives; and Luzy, advancing some paces to meet him, throws himself at his feet. 'Who are you? what do you want?' said Basil, astonished at first. But as soon as he had fixed his eyes on him, 'Wretch,' cried he, drawing back, 'be gone, take yourself away from my sight!'---'No, I shall die at your feet, if you will not vouchsafe to hear me.'---'After having ruined, dishonoured the daughter, dare you present yourself to the father!'---'I am to blame,

I confess, and here are the means to punish me,' said he, presenting his sword. 'But if you will hear me, I hope that you will have compassion on me.'---'Ah!' said Basil, looking at the sword, 'if I were as base, as cruel as you---See,' said he to his daughter, 'how groveling is vice, and how great the shame of it; since it obliges a man to crouch at the feet of his fellow-creature, and to sustain his contempt.'---'If I were only vicious,' replied Luzy haughtily, 'far from imploring you, I should brave you. Attribute my humiliation only to that which is the most honest, and most noble cause in Nature: to love, to virtue itself, to the desire which I have of expiating a fault, excusable, perhaps, and with which I reproach myself so cruelly, only because I have a good heart.' Then, with all the eloquence of sentiment, he endeavoured to justify himself, attributing the whole to the warmth of youth, and the intoxication of passion.

'The world is very happy,' replied Basil, 'that your passion has not been that of money! You would have been a Cartouch.' Luzy chafed at this discourse. 'Yes, a Cartouch. And why not? Will you have the meanness to think that innocence and honour are of less value than riches and life? Have you not availed yourself of the weakness, the infirmity of this unhappy girl, in order to rob her of these two treasures? And me, her father, do you think you have done me a less injury than if you had murdered me? A Cartouch is broken on the wheel, because he steals riches, with which we may dispense; but for you, who have taken from us what a well educated girl, what a virtuous father cannot lose without dying, what have you merited? They call you noble, and you believe yourself so. These are the marks of that nobility of which you are so vain. At a time of distress, when the most wicked of mankind would have had pity on me, you accost me, you pretend to pity me, and you say in your heart, "There, now, is a wretch who has no other consolation in the world but his daughter: she is the only

only blessing Heaven has left him; and to-morrow I will carry her away from him." Yes, barbarian! yes, villain! this is what passed in your soul. And I, poor, credulous fool! I admired you, loaded you with blessings, and prayed Heaven to accomplish all your wishes; while all your wishes were to seduce my daughter! What do I say, wretch as I am! I delivered her up to you, I engaged her to run after you, in truth, to restore to you that gold, that poison, with which you thought to corrupt me: it seemed as if Heaven had warned me that it was a destructive and treacherous gift; I resisted the impulse, and forced myself to believe you compassionate and generous; you were only perfidious and unpitying; and the hand which I would have kissed, which I would have watered with my tears, was preparing to pluck out my heart. Behold," continued he, baring his bosom, and shewing his scars, "behold what a man you have dishonoured! I have shed, for my country, more blood than you have in all your veins: and you, Sir, what are your exploits? Distressing a father, and debauching his daughter! empoisoning my days and her's! See there the unhappy victim of your seduction: see her there, sleeping in her tears her daily bread. Brought up in the simplicity of an innocent and laborious life, she loved it; she now detests it: you have rendered insupportable labour and poverty to her; she has lost her joy with her innocence, and she can no longer lift up her eyes without blushing. But that which distracts me, that which I will never forgive you, is, that you have shut the heart of my daughter against me; you have extinguished the sentiments of nature in her soul; you have made the company of her father a torment to her: perhaps, alas, —I dare not speak it—perhaps, I am her aversion."

'Ah, my father!' cried Lauretta, who till then had remained in dejection and confusion; 'Ah, my father! this is punishing me too much. I merit every thing except the reproach of having ceased to love you.' On saying these words, she fell at his feet, and kissed the

duilt of them. Luzy prostrated himself before him, and in an excess of tenderness 'My father,' said he, 'pardon her, pardon me, embrace your children; and, if the ravisher of Lauretta be not too unworthy of the name of her husband, I conjure you to grant me that title.'

This return would have softened a harder heart than Basil's. 'If there were,' said he to Luzy, 'any other way of restoring to me my honour, and to both of you your innocence, I would refuse this. But it is the only one; I accept it, and much more for your sakes than for my own; for I neither expect, and will have nothing from you, and will die in cultivating my vineyard.'

The love of Luzy and Lauretta was consecrated at the foot of the altar. Many people said that he had done a mean thing, and he agreed to it: 'But it is not,' said he, 'that which they attribute to me. The shame was in doing the wrong, and not in repairing it.'

There was no way of engaging Basil to quit his humble habitation. After having tried every art to draw him to Paris, Madam de Luzy obtained of her husband to purchase an estate near Coulange, and the good father consented at last to go there and spend his old age.

Two hearts formed for virtue were ravished in having recovered it. That image of celestial pleasures, the agreement of love and innocence, left them nothing more to desire, but to see the fruits of so sweet an union. Heaven heard the wish of Nature; and Basil, before he died, embraced his grand-children.

A WIFE OF TEN THOUSAND!

'ENJOY, Madam, all the comforts of your house; do the honours, and be the delight of it; but never trouble your head about the conduct of it.' This, near eight years ago, was the language of the haughty Melidor to his wife. The advice was agreeable to follow;

low; and accordingly the young and lively Acelia had pretty well followed it. But reason came with age; and the kind of intoxication, in which she had been plunged, vanished.

Melidor had had the misfortune of being born in opulence. Brought up among the young nobility of the kingdom, invested on entering into the world with a considerable charge, master of his wealth from the age of reason; it became to him the age of follies. His prevailing foible was to want to live like a man of quality. He made himself familiar with the great, carefully studied their manners; and as the noble and simple graces of a true courtier are not easy to imitate, it was to the airs of our little lords that he attached himself, as to good models.

He would have thought it a disgrace not to have been able to say, *My domains and my vassals*: he laid out, therefore, the better part of his ready-money in the purchase of lands, the revenue of which was small, indeed, but the rights whereof were magnificent.

He had heard say, that the great lords had stewards who robbed them, creditors whom they did not pay, and mistresses who were not very faithful; he considered it, therefore, as beneath him to look into his accounts, to pay his debts, or to be delicate in love.

His eldest son had scarce attained his seventh year; he took particular care to chuse him a governor that was self-sufficient and a coxcomb, who had no other merit than that of making a handsome bow.

This governor was the dependant of an humble friend of Melidor's, called Duranson, naturally an insolent, low fellow; a kind of dog who barked at all passers-by, and caressed only his master. The part he acted was that of a misanthrope, full of arrogance and moroseness. Rich, but covetous, he found it convenient to have a good house which was not his own, and pleasures of every sort of which another bore the expence. A silent observer of all that passed, one might see him sunk in his armed chair, deciding on every thing with a

few cutting words, and setting himself up as a family censor. Woe to the good man who was not an object of fear! He tore him to pieces without mercy, if his air had displeased him ever so little.

Melidor took the moroseness of Duranfon for philosophy. He was conscious that he was his hero; and the incense of a man of his character was to him a delicate perfume. The rough flatterer took care not to expose himself to the world. If he applauded Melidor in public, it was only with a glance, or a complaisant smile: he kept his panegyric for a *tête-à-tête*; but then he gave him a full meal of it. Melidor could scarce believe himself endowed with such eminent merit; but there must be something in it, for his friend Duranfon, who assured him of it, was the farthest in the world from being a nauseous flatterer.

It was not enough to please the husband; Duranfon had also flattered himself with seducing the young wife. He began by speaking well of her alone, and very ill of all others of her age and condition. But she was as little touched with his satires as his encomiums. He suspected that he was despised; he endeavoured to make himself dreaded, and by some malignant and sharp strokes, he made her perceive that it was at any time in his power to be severe even on herself. That succeeded no better. 'I may have foibles,' said she to him, 'and I allow them to be attacked, but at a little more distance, if you please. A perpetual censor would be almost as tiresome to me as a servile flatterer.'

By the resolute tone which she assumed, Duranfon saw plainly that, in order to reduce her, he must go a little farther about. 'Let me endeavour,' said he, 'to make her stand in need of me: let me afflict her in order to console her; and when her wounded vanity shall throw her off her guard, I will seize one of those moments of disgust. The confident of a woman's sorrows is often the happy avenger of them.'

'I pity you, Madam,' said he; 'and I ought no longer to conceal from you what afflicts me sensibly.
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For some time past Melidor goes astray ; he is guilty of follies ; and if he goes on in this manner, he will no longer have occasion for such a friend as myself.'

Whether it was levity or dissimulation with a man whom she did not esteem, Acelia received this information without deigning to appear moved. He dwelt upon it, made a merit of his own zeal, and declaimed against the caprices and irregularities of husbands of the age ; said that he had made Melidor blush at it ; and opposing the charms of Acelia to the dowdies which touched her husband, he grew so very warm, that he forgot his part, and soon betrayed himself. She smiled with disdain at the knave's want of address. ' That is what I call a friend,' said she, ' and not those base adulators whom vice keeps in pay in order to flatter and serve it. I am very sure, for example, that you have told Melidor to his face all that you have just now said to me.'—' Yes, Madam, and a great deal more.'—' You will, then, to be sure, have the courage to reproach him with his wrongs before me ; to overwhelm him with them.'—' Before you, Madam ! Ah, beware of making a noise ! that would be to alienate him irrecoverably. He is proud ; he would be hurt at having cause to blush before you. He would consider me only as a perfidious friend. And who knows to what hidden motive he would impute our correspondence ?'—' No matter ; I will convict him, and confront him, in you, with a witness whom he cannot disprove.'—' No, Madam, no ; you will be undone. It is by dissimbling wrongs that a woman governs : discretion, gentleness, and your charms, these are your advantages over us. Complaint and reproach only serve to exasperate us ; and of all the methods of correcting, the worst is to put us to confusion.' He was in the right, but to no purpose, Acelia would hear nothing. ' I know,' said she, ' all my risk ; but though it were to come to a rupture, I would not act, by my silence, the convenient woman to my husband.' He strove in vain to dissuade her ; he was reduced to ask her pardon, and
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to entreat her not to punish him for a zeal which, perhaps, was imprudent. 'And this, then,' said Acelia, 'is that courageous freedom of yours which nothing can intimidate? I shall be more discreet than you; but remember, Duranſon, never hereafter to ſay any thing of your friends that you would not have them hear again. As to me, whatever injuries my husband does me, I forbid you ever to ſpeak to me about it.'

Duranſon, enraged at ſo ſcurvy a reception, vowed the deſtruction of Acelia; but it was neceſſary firſt to involve her in the ruin of her husband.

Nobody at Paris has ſo many friends as an opulent and prodigal man. Melidor's friends, at his ſuppers, never failed to commend him to his face; and they had the kindneſs to wait till they were withdrawn from table, before they ridiculed him. His creditors, who daily increaſed, were not ſo complaiſant; but his friend Duranſon kept off the throng. He knew, he ſaid, the way to impoſe on thoſe knaves. However, as they were not all equally timid, there was a neceſſity from time to time, in order to appeaſe the moſt turbulent, to have recourſe to expedients; and Duranſon, under a fictitious name, coming to the ſuccour of his friend, lent him money on pledges, on the moſt uſurious contracts.

The more Melidor's affairs became diſordered, the leſs he wiſhed to hear of them. 'Manage it,' ſaid he to his ſteward; 'I will ſign, but leave me at peace.' At laſt the ſteward came to tell him that his capital was exhausted, and his effects were going to be ſeized. Melidor fell on his agent, and told him he was a rogue. 'Call me what you pleaſe,' replied the cool ſteward, 'but you are in debt, and muſt pay; and becauſe you fail, they are going to ſue you.'

Melidor ordered the faithful Duranſon to be called, and aſked him if he had no reſource. 'You have one very ſure one: let your wife engage herſelf.'—'Ah! but will ſhe conſent to it?'—'To be ſure! can ſhe heſitate, when your honour is at ſtake? However, do
not

not alarm her: treat the matter as a trifle, and let her see in this engagement nothing more than a common form, which she cannot avoid fulfilling.' Melidor embraced his friend, and repaired to his wife.

Acelia, wholly devoted to her amusements, knew nothing of what passed. But, happily, Heaven had endued her with a just way of thinking, and a firm soul. 'I am just come, Madam,' said her husband, 'from seeing your new carriage: it will be exquisite. Your new horses are arrived. Ah, my dear, what a beautiful set! the Count De Pifa trains them. They are full of spirit; but he will break them: he is the best driver in all Paris.'

Though Acelia was accustomed to the gallantries of her husband, she could not help being surprized and pleased with this last. 'I ruin you!' said she.—'Pr'ythee, my dear, what better use can I make of my fortune than to employ it in what pleases you? Give a loose to your desires, and enjoy them at your ease. I have nothing which is not at your service; and I flatter myself that you think so. Apropos,' added he, carelessly, 'I have some deeds to settle, which the common forms of business will require you to sign. But we will talk of that this evening. At present I can think of nothing but the colour of your carriage; the varnisher only waits for your directions.'—'I will consider of it,' said she. And as soon as he was gone, she fell into reflections on what had passed between them.

Acelia was a rich heiress, and the law secured her the disposal of her fortune. She perceived the consequences of the engagement proposed to her; and in the evening, instead of going to the play, she went to her attorney. What was her surprize, on learning that Melidor was reduced to the most ruinous expedients! She employed the time of the play in getting intelligence and advice.

At her return she concealed her uneasiness before the company at supper; but when her husband, *tête-à-tête* with

with her, proposed to her to engage for him.---'I will not abandon you,' said she, 'if you will deign to trust yourself to me; but I require an entire confidence, a full power of ruling my house.'

Melidor was humbled at the thought of having his wife for a tutor: he told her that she had no reason to be alarmed, and that he would not suffer her to take so disagreeable a charge upon herself. 'No, Sir, I have neglected it too long: it is a fault which I will no longer be guilty of.' He gave up the point; and the creditors being assembled the next day---'Gentlemen,' said he to them, 'your visits are troublesome to me: my wife would be glad to talk with you; see and settle with her.'---'Gentlemen,' said Acelia to them, in a prudent but assured tone, 'though my estate be my children's, I am sensible that I ought to assist their father with it; but I will have it done fairly. Those who are honest shall find me punctual; but I will not satisfy knaves for the follies of a spendthrift. Bring me your demands to-morrow. I require only time to examine them; I will not let you wait.'

From the moment that Acelia saw herself at the head of her house, she was no longer the same woman. She cast her eyes on her past life, and saw nothing in it but the flutter of a thousand idle occupations. 'Are these,' said she, 'the duties of a mother of a family? Is it, then, at the price of her honour and of her peace, that she must pay for handsome suppers, rich equipages, and brilliant trifles?'

'Sir,' said she to her husband, 'to-morrow I shall have the state of your debts; I must have that of your revenues; order your steward to come to me.' The steward came and gave in his accounts. Nothing was more clear; far from having money to hand, it was found that he had advanced, and there was due to him above double the amount of his accumulated wages. 'I see,' said Acelia, 'that the steward understands his accounts better than we do. We have nothing to do but to pay him, thanking him at the same time that we are not more in
his

his debt.'—'To pay him!' said Melidor, in a low voice, 'and with what?'—'Out of my fund. The first step in oeconomy is to turn off the steward.'

A reform was instantly made in the household, and in the expence; and Acelia setting the example—'Courage, Sir,' said she, 'let us cut to the quick: we sacrifice only our vanity.'—'But decency, Madam?'—'Decency, Sir, consists in not dissipating the substance of another, and the innocent enjoyment of one's own.'—'But, Madam, at discharging your people you pay them; and that is exhausting our only resource.'—'Be easy, my dear: I have trinkets and diamonds; and by sacrificing only these ornaments, I make myself one which is well worth them all.'

Next day the creditors arrive, and Acelia gives them audience. Those of whom Melidor had purchased moveables of value, or superfluous knick-knacks, consented to take them back again, with a fair allowance. The rest, enchanted with the reception and good intentions of Acelia, unanimously agreed to abide by her decisions, and her conciliatory graces united all minds.

One alone, with an air somewhat confused, said that he could not abate any thing. He had valuable effects in pledge; and on the list of monies borrowed, he was set down for an enormous usury. Acelia detained him by himself, in order to bend him, if possible. 'I, Madam!' said he, pressed by her reproaches; 'I come not here on my own account, and M. Duranson had better have excused me from playing this villainous part.'—'Duranson, say you! What, is it he who under your name?'—'He himself.'—'So our pledges are in his hands!'—'Yes, and a writing from me, in which I declare there is nothing due to me.'—'And may I have a duplicate of that writing?'—'Certainly, and presently, if you will, for the name of an usurer sits heavy on me.' This was a weapon for Acelia; but it was not yet time to enlighten Melidor, and incense Duranson. She thought it necessary to dissemble some time longer.

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Her lawyer, who came to see her, found that in twenty-four hours she had laid by a good part of her revenue, and discharged a multitude of debts. 'You proceed,' said he, 'upon good principles. Oeconomy is, of all resources, the most sure and the easiest. It enriches one in an instant with all the wealth that has been dissipated.'

While they were discoursing, Melidor in confusion afflicted himself at seeing his house stripped. 'Nay, Sir,' said his wife, 'console yourself: I retrench nothing but your follies.' But he considered only the world, and the humiliation of a fall. He retired in consternation, leaving Acelia with her lawyer.

A young woman has in business a prodigious advantage: besides inspiring hope and the desire of pleasing, she interests and disposes to a kind of easiness which men have not for one another. Nature contrives a secret intelligence between the two sexes. Every obstacle is removed before them, every difficulty vanishes; and instead of treating one another as enemies, like man to man, with a woman we deliver ourselves up as friends. Acelia was more than once a proof of it; and her lawyer exerted a zeal and affection in serving her, which he would not have had for her husband.

'Madam,' said he to her, on stating the balance of Melidor's estate with his debts, 'I find enough to acquit them.' 'But effects sold in a hurry commonly go at a low price. Let us suppose that his are free; they will more than answer the two hundred thousand crowns which he owes; and if you will engage yourself for him, it is not impossible to reduce this multitude of ruinous debts to a small number of more simple and less burdensome articles.'---'Do it, Sir,' said Acelia; 'I consent: I engage myself for my husband; but let it be without his knowledge. The lawyer acted with prudence; and Acelia was authorized to contract in Melidor's name.'

Melidor had acted openly with her in every article but one, which he had not dared to declare to his wife. In the night,

night, Acelia, hearing him groan, endeavoured tenderly to comfort him. 'You do not know all!' said he; and these words were followed with a profound silence. Acelia pressed him in vain; shame stopped his mouth. 'What!' said she, 'have you sorrows which you dare not confide to me! have you a friend more tender, more sure, more indulgent?'---'The greater right you have to my esteem,' replied Melidor, 'the more I ought to blush at the confession which I have yet to make to you. You have heard of the courtesan Eleonora-----What shall I say to you? She has notes from me for upwards of fifty thousand crowns.' Acelia saw with joy the moment to regain the heart of her husband. 'It is not a time for reproaching you,' said she, 'with a folly of which you are ashamed, and to which my own dissipation has perhaps exposed you. Let us repair and forget our wrongs: this last is not without remedy.' Melidor had no conception that a woman, till that time so full of levity, should all of a sudden have acquired so much consideration. Acelia was not less surprized that a man, so haughty and vain, should suddenly become so modest. 'May it not be happy for us,' said they to each other, 'that we have fallen into misfortune?'

The next day Acelia, having considered well, went in person to Eleonora's. 'You know not,' said she to her, 'who is come to see you? It is a rival.' And without any farther preparation she told her her name. 'Madam,' said Eleonora, 'I am confounded at the honour you do me. I am sensible I have done you wrong, but my condition must be my excuse. Melidor is to blame, and on seeing you I blame him myself: he is more unjust than I imagined.'-----'Madam,' said Acelia, 'I complain neither of you nor of him. It is a punishment due to a thoughtless woman to have a libertine husband; and I have at least the pleasure of seeing that Melidor has still some delicacy in his taste. You have understanding, and an appearance of decency and graces worthy to embellish virtue.'-----'You view

me, Madam, with too much indulgence; which convinces me of the truth of what has been often told me, that the most virtuous women are not those who are the most severe on us. As they have nothing to envy us, they have the goodness to pity us. Those who resemble us are much more rigid! they tear us to pieces, while they imitate us.'-----'I will tell you,' replied Acelia, meaning to bring her to her purpose, 'what we blame most in persons of your way of life; it is not that weakness of which so many women have cause to blush, but a passion still more odious. The fire of youth, the relish of pleasures, the attraction of a voluptuous and unconfined life, sometimes even sentiment itself, for I can believe you susceptible of it, all this may have its excuse; but in renouncing the modesty of a woman, you are at least the more obliged to have that of a man; and is there not a kind of honesty which you do not renounce?'-----'Yes, without doubt.'-----'Very well; tell me, then, does that honesty permit you to make an ill use of the intoxication and folly of a lover, to such a degree as to require, and to accept of his mad engagements, that are ruinous to his family? Melidor, for example, has given you notes for fifty thousand crowns; and do you perceive the consequence of them, and how much room there is to be severe against such a seduction?'-----'Madam,' replied Eleonora, 'it was a voluntary gift; and M. Duranson can witness for me that I have refused much larger.'-----'You know M. Duranson?'-----'Yes, Madam; it was he that put Melidor into my hands; and I was willing on that account to acquit him of all his own promises.'-----'Very well: he has set down his own article, then, to his friend's account?'-----'He told me so, and I imagined that Melidor had approved of it. As to the rest, Melidor was at his own liberty; I have nothing of his but what he has given me, and nothing, in my opinion, can be more fairly acquired.'-----'You think so; but would you think so, if you were the child that is stripped for it?' Put yourself in the place of
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of a mother of a family, whose husband ruins her in this manner; who is on the point of seeing him dishonoured, pursued, driven from his house, deprived of his estate, obliged to conceal himself from the eyes of the world, and to leave his wife and children a prey to shame and grief; put yourself for one moment in the place of that miserable and distressed woman, and judge yourself, in that condition. What steps would not you take, Mademoiselle? You would, without doubt, have recourse to the laws which superintend our morals. Your complaints, and your tears, would put in their claim against an odious surprize, and the voice of nature and of equity would rise up in your favour. Yes, Mademoiselle, the laws would rage against poison; and the gift of pleasing is poison, when we make an ill use of it. It attacks not life; but it attacks reason and honour, and if, in the intoxication which it occasions, mad sacrifices are required and obtained of a man, what you call free gifts are in reality robberies. This is what any other would say; what you would say, perhaps, in my place, yourself. But I am more moderate. There is somewhat due to you: I am come to pay you; but nobly, and not madly. It is six months that Melidor has been your lover, and in giving you a thousand guineas, you will confess that he is magnificent.' Eleonora, softened and confounded, had not the courage to refuse. She took Melidor's notes, and followed Acelia to her lawyer.

'Would not you like,' said Acelia to her on arriving there, 'an annuity of a hundred guineas, rather than this sum in hand, which will soon be dissipated? The way to detach one's self from vice, child, is to set one's self above want; and I am of opinion, that you will one day be glad to have it in your power to be virtuous.'

Eleonora kissing Acelia's hand, and letting fall some tears; 'Ah, Madam,' said she, 'under your features how amiable and touching is virtue! If I have the happiness to return to it, my heart will owe that return to you.'

The lawyer, charmed with Acelia, informed her that the two hundred thousand crowns were ready in his hands, and that they waited her orders. She departed transported with joy, and on seeing Melidor again, 'There are your notes,' said she: 'it was very hard to part with them. Write no more so tender!' His friend Duranfon was present; and by the dull air of Melidor, she plainly saw that he had made him ashamed of having resigned himself to his wife. 'You receive them very coldly,' said she to her husband, 'considering they come from so dear a hand.'-----'Would you have me, Madam, rejoice at being the talk of all Paris? They speak of nothing but my ruin; and you make it so very public, that my friends themselves are not able to deny it.'---'Your friends, then, Sir, had some way of remedying it without noise? They are come probably to offer you their credit, and their good offices? M. Duranfon, for example-----' 'I, Madam, I can do nothing; but I think that without such a disgraceful publication, it would have been easy to find resources.'---'Yes, resources which leave none! My husband has made too much use of them: you know it better than anybody. As for the disgrace which you affix to the publication of our misfortune, I know how great your delicacy is, and I esteem it as I ought.'---'Madam! I am an honest man, and it is well known.'-----'It ought to be known, for you tell all the world of it; but as Melidor will have no more love-intrigues to form, your honesty grows useless.' Melidor, at these words, took fire himself, and told his wife, that it was an affront to him to insult his friend. She was about to answer; but, without deigning to hear her, he retired in a rage, and Duranfon followed him.

Acelia was not the least shaken by this; and leaving them to conspire together, devoted herself entirely to the care of her family. Her son's governor, since their failure, thought his office beneath him, and plainly told them his mind. He was discharged that very evening; and in his place came a good abbé, simple, modest,

modest, and sufficiently learned, whom she intreated to be their friend, and to infuse his own morals into his pupil.

Melidor, whom Duranson had taught to consider the ascendant which his wife had assumed, as the utmost mortification, was incensed at hearing that the governor was discharged. 'Yes, Sir,' said she to him, 'I give my son the example and direction of a wise man instead of a coxcomb; I mean also to rid you of an insolent parasite, who makes you pay for his pleasures. These are the injuries I do you, I confess them; and you may make them public.'---'It is odious,' replied Melidor, without listening to her; 'it is odious to avail yourself of the condition to which I am reduced, to prescribe laws to me. No, Madam, my misfortune is not such as to degrade me into your slave. It was your duty to enter into the engagement which I proposed to you: you have declined it; you are no longer dear to me, and your cares are useless. If I have run out, it was for you: the only remedy to my misfortune, is to remove the cause, and to-morrow we separate.'---'No, Sir, this is not the proper juncture. In a little time you shall peaceably enjoy a reputable fortune; you shall be free, and easy, and happy. Then, after having re-established your honour and your peace, I shall see whether I ought to give place to the workers of your ruin, and to leave you, by way of punishment, at the brink of the abyss, whence I am now going to draw you. Till then we are inseparable; and my duty and your misfortunes are inviolable ties to me. For the rest, you shall judge to-morrow what a man he is whom you prefer to me. I will give you proofs of his perfidy, before his face; and I renounce all claim to your esteem if he dares to disavow them.'

Melidor, shaken by the generous firmness of Acelia, was distracted all the night between anger and gratitude. But in the morning he received a letter, which threw him into despair. They writ to him, that nothing was talked of at court but his luxury, his extravagance,

travagance, and the misfortune which was the fruit of it; that every body blamed him loudly; and that they proposed nothing less than to oblige him to quit his charge. 'Read,' said he, on seeing Acelia; 'read, Madam, and tremble at the condition to which you have reduced me.---Oh, my friend,' said he to Duranfon, who arrived just at that instant, 'I am undone; you foretold it to me. The bustle she has made dishonours me. They are taking away my place.' Duranfon pretended to be overcome with the news. 'Be not afraid,' said Acelia to him; 'your security is good. You will lose nothing by it but the monstrous usury which you would extort from your friend.---Yes, Melidor, he is our usurer, our lender upon pledges.'-----'I, Madam!'---'Yes, Sir, you yourself, and I have the proof in my hands.---There it is,' said she to her husband; 'but this is not all: this worthy friend made you pay Eleonora for the favours which he had received from her; he had the presumption to want to seduce your wife, by informing her of your amours, at the same time that he ruined you under a borrowed name.'-----'Ah, this is too much!' said Duranfon, and he rose to depart. 'One word more,' said Acelia to him. 'You shall be unmasked in an hour, known by the city and the court, and marked every-where with infamy, if you do not this very instant carry to my lawyer's, where I am going to wait for you, both the pledges and the notes which you have of Melidor's.' Duranfon turned pale, was confused, disappeared, and left Melidor confounded and immoveable with indignation and astonishment.

'Courage, my dear,' said Acelia to her husband. 'I answer for laying the storm. Adieu. This evening it shall be appeased.'

She repairs to the attorney's, becomes bound, receives the two hundred thousand crowns, discharges his debts, tears the bills, beginning with those of Duranfon, who had prudently done as he was ordered.

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From thence she takes a post-chaise, and repairs immediately to court.

The minister did not dissemble his discontent, nor the resolution which had been taken to oblige Melidor to sell his place. 'I do not attempt to excuse him,' said she: 'luxury is a folly in our situation, I confess; but it has been my folly rather than my husband's. His complaisance has been his only fault; and ah, Sir, what will not men do for a wife whom they love! He was young, and handsome in his eyes; my husband consulted my desires rather than his own means; he knew no fear, nor misfortune, but that of displeasing me: this was his imprudence; it is now repaired; he owes nothing more than my portion, and I make him the sacrifice of it.'---'What, Madam,' cried the minister, 'have you become bound for him?'-----'Yes, Sir; who ought to repair his misfortune, but she who occasioned it? Yes, Sir, I have engaged myself, but thereby I have acquired the right of managing his estate, and of ensuring my children's fortune. He does not know what I have done for him, and he allows me full power to dispose of every thing. I am at the head of my family, and the whole of it is already reduced to the most severe œconomy. Here, in two words, is what I have done, and what I propose to do.' She then entered into some details, which the minister was graciously pleased to hear. 'But,' continued she, 'the friendship, the esteem, the confidence of my husband, all is lost to me, if you punish him for a fault with which he must reproach me till I shall have effaced it. You are just, sensible, and humane; for what would you punish him? For having loved the other half of himself too much? for having forgot himself, and sacrificed himself for me? I shall then be odious to him; and he will have reason perpetually to repeat to my children the error and dishonour into which their mother shall have plunged him. To whom would you make satisfaction by punishing him? To the public? Ah, Sir! it is an envious, wicked public, unworthy

worthy of that complaisance. As to that part of the public which is indifferent and just, leave us to give it a sight much more useful and more touching, than that of our ruin. It shall see that a discreet woman can reclaim an honest husband; and that there are, to well-disposed hearts, inexhaustible resources in courage and virtue. Our reformation will be an example; and if it be honourable to us to set it, it will be glorious to follow it; whereas, if the punishment of an imprudence which hurts us alone, exceeds the fault, and survives it, they will, perhaps, be incensed to no purpose, at seeing us unhappy without being criminal.'

The minister listened with astonishment. 'Far from being any obstacle to your intentions,' said he, 'Madam, I will second them, even in punishing your husband. He must renounce all title to his place.'-----
'Ah, Sir!---' I have disposed of it in favour of your son; and it is out of regard, out of respect for you, that I leave the survivorship to the father.' Acelia's surprise, at obtaining from the minister a favour instead of a punishment, made her almost fall at his feet. 'Sir,' said she to him, 'it is worthy yourself to correct, in this manner, the father of a family. The tears which you see flow are the expression of my gratitude. My children, my husband, and myself, shall never cease to bless you.'

Melidor waited for Acelia with terror; and uneasiness gave place to joy, when he learned with what gentleness his dissipation was punished. 'Well,' said Acelia, embracing him, 'are we to part to-day? Have you still any good friend whom you prefer to your wife?'

It is well known with what ease reports in Paris are spread, and destroyed as soon as propagated: Melidor's misfortune had been the news of the day; his re-establishment, or rather the noble part which his wife had acted, caused a kind of revolution in people's minds, and in their conversation. They talked of nothing but the wisdom and resolution of Acelia; and
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when she appeared abroad, with the modest and free air of a person who neither braves nor fears the looks of the public, she was received with a respect which she had never before inspired. It was then that she perceived the value of the consideration which virtue gives; and the homages which had been paid to her youth and beauty, had never flattered her so much.

Melidor, more timid, or more vain, knew not what air to assume, nor what countenance to wear. 'Let us wear,' said his wife, 'the air of confessing frankly, that we have been imprudent, and that we are become discreet. Nobody has any thing to reproach us with; let us not humiliate ourselves. If they see us glad of being amended, they will esteem us the more.'----- 'And with what eyes,' said he, 'will you look upon that multitude of false friends who have abandoned us?'----- 'With the same eyes that I have always seen them; as people whom pleasure attracts, and who fly away at its departure. What right had you to depend upon them? Was it for them that your feasts were made? The house of a rich man is a theatre, in which every one thinks he has paid for his place, when he has filled it agreeably: the shew ended, every one retires, acquitted of all demands on them. This is a disagreeable reflection; but in losing the illusion of being loved, you convert an agreeable error into an useful experience. And it is with this remedy, as with many others: the bitterness forms its efficacy. View, then, the world as it is, without being mortified at having mistaken it, without boasting that you know it better. Above all, let nobody be informed of our little quarrels: let neither of us seem to have given way to the other; but let it appear, that the same spirit animates and actuates us both. Though it be not so great a shame as it is accounted, to suffer one's self to be guided by a wife, I would not have them know that it was I who determined you.'

Melidor owed every thing to his wife, but nothing touched him so sensibly as this mark of delicacy, and
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he was so ingenuous as to confess it. Acelia had another view besides flattering the vanity of her husband. She wanted to engage him, by his vanity itself, to follow the plan which she had traced out to him. 'If he sees all the world persuaded,' said she, 'that he has acted only according to his own pleasure, he will soon believe it himself, as well as the rest of the world: we stand to our own resolutions by the sentiment of liberty, which resists those of others; and the most essential point in the art of leading people is, that of concealing from them that they are led.' Acelia took care therefore, to reflect on her husband those praises which were bestowed on her; and Melidor, on his side, spoke of her with nothing but esteem.

However, she dreaded, on his account, the solitude and silence of her house. There is no keeping in a man who grows dull and weary; and before Melidor could fall into some employment, it was necessary he should have amusement. Acelia took care to form for him a society, not numerous, but well-chosen. 'I invite you not to feasts,' said she to the ladies whom she engaged; 'but instead of pomp, we shall have pleasure. I will give you a hearty supper, which shall cost nothing; we will there drink in freedom to the health of our friends; perhaps, also, we shall laugh there, a circumstance uncommon enough in the world.' She kept her promise; and her husband alone still regretted the opulence in which he had lived. Not that he did not try to accustom himself to a plain way of life; but one would have thought that the same void had taken possession of his soul and his house. His eyes and ears, habituated to tumult, were stupified as it were with calm and repose. He still viewed with envy those who were ruining themselves, like himself; and Paris, where he found himself condemned to privations, in the midst of enjoyments, became odious to him.

Acelia, who perceived it, and who pursued her plan with that constancy which is found only in women, proposed to him to go and see the lands which they had

had bought. But, before setting out, she charged her lawyer to hire her, instead of the hotel which they occupied, a house genteelly plain, to live in at their return.

Of three estates, which Melidor had, the two most honourable produced scarce a third of the interest of the purchase-money. It was resolved, therefore, that he should sell them. The other having been long neglected, required only improvement to become an excellent estate. 'This is the estate we must keep,' said Acelia: 'let us employ all our care in raising its value. It is a wholesome air, an agreeable prospect, and a fertile soil: we will pass the pleasant part of the year there; and, believe me, we will love one another there. Your wife will not have the airs, the caprices, the art of coquettes, but a sincere and tender friendship; which will constitute, if you partake it, your happiness, mine, that of our children, and the joy of our family. I know not how it is, but since I breathe the air of the country, my pleasures are more simple and natural; happiness seems more within my reach, more accessible to my desires; I see it pure, and without clouds, in the innocence of rural manners; and I have, for the first time, the idea of the serenity of an innocent life, which flows in peace to the very end.' Melidor heard his wife with complaisance, and consolation diffused itself over his soul like a delicious balm.

He consented, not without repugnance, to the sale of those of his lands, the rights of which had flattered him the most; and the good lawyer managed so well, that in the space of six months, Melidor found himself indebted to nobody in the world.

Nothing now remained, but to strengthen him against the bent of habit; and Acelia, who knew his foible, did not despair of extinguishing in him the relish of luxury, by a taste more discreet and satisfactory. The estate which they had reserved, presented a vast field for useful labours; and Acelia bethought her of forming a little council of husbandmen for the direction of them.

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This council was composed of seven honest, sensible villagers, to whom she gave a dinner every Sunday. This dinner was called, *The Banquet of the Seven Wise Men*. The council was held at table, and Melidor, Acelia, and the little abbé, assisted at the deliberations. The quality of soils, and the culture which suited them; the choice of the plants and seeds; the establishment of new farms, and the division of the ground into woods, pasturages, and corn-fields; the distribution of the flocks, destined for fattening and labour; the direction and employment of the waters, plantations, and enclosures, and even the smallest particulars of rural oeconomy; were treated in this council. Our sages, glass in hand, animated and enlightened each other; to hear them, one might have imagined that one saw treasures buried in the earth, which waited only for hands to come and dig them out.

Melidor was flattered with this hope, and above all with the kind of domination which he should exercise in the conduct of these labours; but he did not think that he had means sufficient to carry them into execution. 'Let us begin,' said Acelia, 'and the ground will assist us.' They did but little the first year, but sufficient to give Melidor a foretaste of the pleasure of creating.

The council, at Acelia's departure, received from her a small recompence, and the good grace with which she gave it enhanced the value.

Melidor, on his return to town, was enchanted with his new house. It was commodious and pleasing, furnished without pomp, but with taste. 'This, my dear, is what suits us,' said his wife. 'There is enough of it to be happy in it, if we are wise.' She had the pleasure of seeing him grow dull at Paris, where he found himself confounded in the crowd, and sigh after the country, where the desire of reigning recalled him.

They went down there before the return of spring;
and

and the sages being assembled, they regulated the labours of the year.

From the moment that Melidor saw the ground enlivened by his influence, and a multitude of people employed in fertilizing it for him, he felt himself lifted above himself. A new farm, which he had established, was adjudged by the council, and Melidor had the sensible joy of seeing the first crop.

Their joy was renewed every day, on seeing those very fields, which two years before languished uncultivated and unpeopled, covered with labourers and flocks, with wood, harvests, and herbages; and Melidor saw with regret the arrival of the season which recalled him to Paris.

Acelia could not resist the inclination of visiting the minister, who, in her misfortune, had stretched out his hand to her. She gave him so touching a picture of the happiness which they enjoyed, that he was moved to the bottom of his soul. 'You are,' said he to her, 'the model of women: may such an example make on all hearts, the impression which it makes on mine! Go on, Madam, and depend on me. It is too much honour to be able to contribute to the happiness which you occasion.'

That fortunate country, to which our couple were recalled by the fine weather, became a smiling picture of oeconomy and abundance. But a picture, still more touching, was that of the education which they gave to their children.

They talked in the neighbourhood of a couple like themselves, withdrawn from the world, and who in a pleasing solitude, made it their delight to cultivate the tender fruits of their love. 'Let us go and see them,' said Acelia; 'let us go and take lessons from them.' On arriving, they saw the image of happiness and virtue; M. and Madame de Lisbé, in the midst of their young family, solely occupied with the care of forming the understanding and the heart.

Acelia was touched at the grace, the decency, and,

above all, with the air of gaiety which she remarked in these children. They had neither the rustic bashfulness nor the indiscreet familiarity of childhood. In their address, their conversation, their language, nothing appeared but a natural excellence; so very easy had habit rendered all the movements which it had directed.

‘This is not a visit of ceremony,’ said Acelia to Madame de Lisbé: ‘we come to take instructions from you in the art of bringing up our children, and to entreat you to teach us the principles and the method which you have followed with so much success.’

‘Alas, Madam! nothing is more plain,’ replied Madame De Lisbé. ‘Our principles consist in treating children as children; to make useful things a play to them; to make plain what we teach them, and to teach them only what they are able to conceive. Our method is equally simple: it consists in leading them to instruction by curiosity; in concealing from them, under that allurements, the idea of labour and constraint, and in directing their very curiosity, by certain thoughts thrown in their way, and which we give them an inclination of seizing. The most difficult is that of exciting emulation without jealousy; and in that, perhaps, we have less merit than good fortune.’—‘You have given them, without doubt, excellent masters?’—‘No, Madam, we learned whatever we wished to teach them. See how the dove digests the nourishment of her young ones. Let us imitate her; and from thence result two advantages, and two pleasures; that of instructing ourselves, and that of instructing our children.’ ‘This little labour is so much the more amusing,’ said Monsieur de Lisbé, ‘as we have reserved all the abstract studies for the age of reason; and as our lessons are, at present, confined to what falls beneath the senses. Childhood is the age in which the imagination is most lively, and the memory most docile; it is to objects of these two organs that we apply the minds of our children. The surface of the ground is an image; the history

history of men, and that of nature, are a succession of pictures; the natural philosophy of tongues is only sounds; the part of the mathematics, to be perceived by the senses, is reduced to lines; all the arts may be described. Religion itself, and moral philosophy, are better learned by our feelings than they are conceived in idea; in a word, all our simple and primitive perceptions come to us by the senses. Now, the senses of children have more fineness, delicacy, and vivacity, than those of maturer age. It is taking nature, then, in her strength, to take her in childhood; to perceive and seize every thing which requires not the combinations of the understanding; besides, that the soul, free from all other care, is entirely at leisure to attend to this; that it is greedy of knowledge, exempt from prejudice, and that all the cells of the understanding and the memory being empty, we range ideas there at pleasure, especially if, in the art of introducing them, we follow their natural order, if we are not in too much haste to accumulate them, and if we give them leisure to settle themselves each in their place.

‘I see,’ said Acelia, ‘but without terrifying myself at it, that all this demands a continued attention.’-----
‘That attention,’ replied Madame de Lisbé, ‘has nothing constraining nor painful. We live with our children, we have them under our eyes, we converse with them, we accustom them to examine, and to reflect; we assist them, without impatience, in developing their ideas; we never discourage them by a tone of ill-humour or contempt; severity which is only of service to remedying the fault of negligence, has scarce ever place in an unremitted education; and as we do not suffer nature to take any vicious bent, we are not obliged to put it under constraint.’

‘Shall I not be indiscreet,’ said Acelia to her, ‘in testifying to you the desire I have of being present at one of your lessons?’ Madame de Lisbé called her children, who were employed together in a corner of the hall. They flew to the arms of their mother

with a natural joy, at which Acelia was touched. 'Children,' said the mother, 'the lady would willingly hear you: we are going to question each other.'

Acelia admired the order and clearness of the knowledge which they had acquired; but she was still more enchanted at the grace and modesty with which they replied in their turns, at the good understanding which reigned among them, and at the lively interest which they took at the success of each other.

Acelia's object was to interest Melidor in this sight, and he was moved even to tears. 'How happy are you,' said he continually to Madame de Lisbé; 'how happy are you in having such children! It is the sweetest of all enjoyments.'

Acelia on quitting her neighbours, requested their friendship; she embraced a thousand times their children, and prayed them to give her leave to come sometimes to instruct herself by their studies.

'What can be more astonishing, and more plain?' said she to Melidor, on going away. 'Can it be that a pleasure so pure is so little known, and that what is most natural should be what is most uncommon? People have children, and grow tired of them! and seek abroad for amusements, when they have such touching pleasures at home!---' 'True,' said Melidor; 'all children are not so well endowed.'---'And who has told us,' replied Acelia, 'that Heaven has not granted us the same favour? Ah, my dear, it is for the sake of sparing ourselves, that we so often reproach Nature. We generally blame her, in order to justify ourselves. Before we have a right to think her incorrigible, we should have done every thing to correct her. We are neither weak nor wicked; our children ought not to be so. Let us live with them, and for them; and I promise you they will resemble us.'

'You are going to have two assistants,' said she in the evening to the abbé. 'We have just had a foretaste of the pleasure of educating our children.' And she related what they had seen and heard. 'We would follow

follow the same plan,' added she. 'You, my good abbé, you shall teach them the languages; Melidor is going to apply himself to the study of the arts, and of nature, in order to be able to give lessons on them. I reserve to myself what is easiest and most simple, the manners, the objects of sentiment; and I hope, in a year, to be able to keep pace with you. You must shew us the sources, and direct our studies, step by step, on the shortest plan.'

The abbé applauded this emulation, and each of them set about filling his task with an ardour, which, far from weakening itself, only redoubled.

Melidor found no farther vacancy in the leisure of the country. It seemed to him as if time hastened his course. The days were not long enough to attend to the cares of agriculture, and the studies of the closet. One might have said, that these employments stole from one another. Acelia was divided, in like manner, between the cares of her household and the instruction of her children. Nature seconded her views. Her children full of application and docile, whether by the example of their parents, or through a mutual emulation, made their little exercises their diversion.

But this success, satisfying as it was to the heart of a good mother, was not her most serious object. She had ensured to Melidor the only inexhaustible resource against the dullness of solitude, and the attraction of dissipation. 'I am easy,' said she, 'at last,' when she saw in him a determined liking for study. It is a pleasure which costs little, which we find every where, which never tires, and with which we are sure of not being obliged to fly ourselves.'

Melidor, restored to himself, far from being ashamed to confess that he owed his reformation to his wife, took a pride in relating all she had done to reclaim him from his errors: he ceased not to commend the courage, the understanding, the sweetness, the firmness, she had mingled in it; and all the world, on hearing him, said, 'This is a Wife of Ten Thousand!'

FRIENDSHIP PUT TO THE TEST.

IN one of those schools of morality to which the English youth go to study the duties of a man and a citizen, to enlighten the understanding and elevate the soul, Nelson and Blanford were distinguished by a friendship worthy of the first ages. As it was founded on a perfect agreement of sentiments and principles, time only served to confirm it; and the more it was enlightened every day, the more intimate it every day became. But this friendship was to put to a test, which it had some difficulty to support.

Their studies being finished, each of them took to that way of life to which Nature invited him. Blanford, active, robust, and courageous, determined for the profession of arms, and for the sea-service. Voyages were his school. Inured to fatigues, instructed by dangers, he arrived, from rank to rank, to the command of a vessel.

Nelson, endowed with a manly eloquence, and of a genius wise and profound, was of the number of those deputies, of whom the national senate is composed; and in a short time he rendered himself famous there.

Thus each of them served his country, happy in the good which he did it: while Blanford sustained the shock of war, and of the elements, Nelson stood proof against favour and ambition. Examples of an heroic zeal, one would have thought that, jealous of each other, they contended for virtue and glory; or rather that, at two extremities of the world, the same spirit animated them both.

‘Courage,’ said Nelson, in his letters to Blanford, ‘does honour to friendship, by preserving its country; live for the one, if it be possible, and die for the other, if there be occasion: a death, worthy of its tears, is more valuable than the longest life.’—‘Courage,’ said Blanford, in his letters to Nelson, ‘defends the rights of the people and of liberty: a smile from one’s country is of more value than the favour of kings.’ Blanford

Blanford enriched himself by doing his duty; he returned to London with the prizes he had taken on the Indian seas; but the most valuable part of his treasure was a young Indian, of a beauty that would have been uncommon in any climate. A Bramin, to whom Heaven had given this only daughter in reward for his virtues, had consigned her up, in his dying moments, to the hands of the generous Englishman.

Coraly had not yet attained her fifteenth year; her father made her his delight, and the tenderest object of his cares. The village in which he dwelt was taken and pillaged by the English. Solinzeb (that was the Bramin's name) presents himself on the threshold of his habitation. 'Hold!' said he to the soldiers, who were come quite up to his humble sanctuary; 'hold! Whoever you be, the God of Nature, the beneficent God, is yours and mine: respect in me his minister.'

These words, the sound of his voice, his venerable air, impress respect; but the fatal stroke is given, and the Bramin falls, mortally wounded, into the arms of his trembling daughter.

At that instant Blanford arrives. He comes to repress the fury of the soldiery. He cries out; he makes a passage through them; he sees the Bramin leaning on a young girl scarce able to support him, and who, tottering herself, bathes the old man with her tears. At this sight, nature, beauty, love, exercise all their influence on Blanford's soul. He easily discovers in Solinzeb the father of her who embraces him with such affectionate sorrow.

'Barbarians,' said he to the soldiers, 'be gone! Is it feebleness and innocence, old age and childhood, that you ought to attack?--Mortal, sacred to me,' said he to the Bramin, 'live, live; suffer me to repair the crime of those savages!' At these words he takes him into his arms, makes him lie down, examines the wound, and procures him all the assistance of art. Coraly, witness to the piety, the sensibility, of this stranger,

stranger, thought she saw a god descended from Heaven to succour and comfort her father.

Blanford, who did not quit Solinzeb, endeavoured to soften the sorrow of his daughter; but she seemed to have a presage of her misfortune, and passed the nights and days in tears.

The Bramin perceiving his end approach---‘I would fain,’ said he to Blanford, ‘go and die on the border of the Ganges, and purify myself in its waves.’-----‘Father,’ replied the young Englishman to him, ‘it would be easy to give you that consolation, if all hope was lost: but wherefore add to the peril in which you are, that of so painful a removal? It is so far from hence to the Ganges! And, then, (be not offended at my sincerity) it is the purity of the heart which the God of nature requires; and if you have observed the law which he has engraven on our souls, if you have done mankind all the good that you have been able, if you have avoided doing them ill, the God who loves them will love you.’

‘Thou art full of consolation,’ said the Bramin. ‘But thou, who reducest the duties of mankind to a plain piety and purity of manners, how can it be that thou art at the head of those robbers who ravage India, and who bathe themselves in blood?’

‘You have seen,’ said Blanford, ‘whether I authorize those ravages. Commerce draws us to India; and if men acted uprightly, that mutual exchange of conveniencies would be just and peaceable. The violence of your masters obliged us to take arms; and the transition is so quick from defence to attack, that at the first success, at the smallest advantage, the oppressed becomes the oppressor. War is a violent state, which it is not easy to soften. Alas! when man becomes unnatural, how can he be just? It is my duty here to protect the commerce of the English, to make my country honoured and respected. In the discharge of this duty, I spare, as far as possible, the effusion of blood and tears which war occasions: happy if the death

death of a good man, the death of Coraly's father, be one of those crimes and misfortunes which I am destined to save the world! Thus spoke the virtuous Blanford, and embraced the old man.

'Thou wouldest persuade me,' said Solinzeb, 'that virtue is every where the same. But thou believest not in the god Vistnou and his nine metamorphoses: how can a good man refuse his assent to them?'-----

'Father,' replied the Englishman, 'there are millions of people upon the earth who have never heard of Vistnou, or his adventures; for whom however, the sun rises every day, who breathe a pure air, who drink wholesome waters, and to whom the earth lavishes the fruits of the seasons. Would you believe it! There are among these people, as well as among the children of Brachma, virtuous hearts, and good men. Equity, candour, uprightness, beneficence, and piety, are in veneration among them, and even among the wicked. O, my father! the dreams of the imagination differ according to climates; but the mind is every where the same, and the light which is its source, is as widely diffused as that of the sun.'

'This stranger enlightens and astonishes me,' said Solinzeb within himself: 'all that my heart, my reason, the inward voice of nature, tell me to believe, he believes also; and of my worship he denies only that part which I have so much trouble myself not to deem absurd.'

'Thou thinkest, then,' said he to Blanford, 'that a good man may die in peace?'—'Certainly?'—'I think so too, and I wait death as a gentle sleep. But when I am gone, what will become of my daughter? I see nothing in my country but slavery and desolation. My daughter had only me in the world, and in a few moments I shall be no more.'—'Ah!' said the young Englishman, 'if to her misfortune, death deprives her of a father, deign to confide her to my cares. I call Heaven to witness that her chastity, innocence, and liberty, shall be a deposit guarded by honour, and for ever inviolable.'—'And in what principles shall she be brought up?'

up?'—'In yours if you please; in mine, if you will allow me; but at all events in that modesty and virtue which are every where the glory of a woman.'—'Young man,' replied the Bramin, with an august and threatening air, 'God has just heard thy words; and the old man with whom thou now speakest will perhaps in an hour be with him.'—'You have no need,' said Blanford to him, 'to make me perceive the sacredness of my promises: I am but a feeble mortal; but nothing under Heaven is more immoveable than the honesty of my heart.' He spoke these words with such firmness, that the Bramin was penetrated with them. 'Come, Coraly,' said he to his daughter; 'Come embrace thy dying father: let him be, after me, thy guide and thy support. There, my daughter,' added he, 'is the book of the law of thy forefathers; the *Veidam*: after having well meditated on it, suffer thyself to be instructed in the creed of this virtuous stranger, and chuse that of the two forms of worship which shall seem to thee most proper to make people virtuous.'

The night following the Bramin expired. His daughter, who filled the air with her cries, was not able to detach herself from that livid and cold corpse, which she watered with her tears. At last sorrow exhausted her strength, and the attendants availed themselves of her fainting, to carry her away from the melancholy place.

Blanford, whom his duty recalled from Asia to Europe, carried thither with him his pupil; and though she was beautiful and easy to seduce, though he was young and strongly taken, he respected her innocence. During the voyage, he employed himself in teaching her a little English, in giving her an idea of the manners of Europe, and in disengaging her docile mind from the prejudices of her country.

Nelson was gone to meet his friend. They saw each other again with the most sensible joy. But the first sight of Coraly struck and afflicted Nelson. 'What do you do with this girl?' said he to Blanford in a severe tone.

tone. 'Is she a captive, a slave? Have you carried her off from her parents? Have you made nature mourn?' Blanford related what had passed; he gave him so touching a portrait of the innocence, candour and sensibility of the young Indian, that Nelson himself was moved at it. 'This is my design,' continued Blanford; 'at my mother's, and under her eyes, she shall be instructed in our manners: I will form that simple and docile heart; and if she can be happy with me, I will marry her.'—'I am easy, and acknowledge my friend.'

The surprizes and different emotions of a young stranger, to whom every thing is new, have been often described; Coraly experienced them all. But her happy facility in seizing and comprehending every thing, even outstripped the pains which they took to instruct her. Genius, talents, and the graces, were in her innate gifts: they had only the trouble of developing them by a slight culture. She was near sixteen, and Blanford was going to marry her, when death deprived him of his mother. Coraly lamented her as if she had been her own; and the pains which she took to console Blanford, touched him sensibly. But during the mourning which retarded the nuptials, he had orders to embark on a new expedition. He went to see Nelson, and he confided to him, not the grief which he felt at quitting the young Indian; Nelson would have made him blush at that; but the grief of leaving her to herself, in the midst of a world which was unknown to her. 'If my mother,' said he, 'were still living, she would be her guide; but the ill-fortune which pursues this poor girl, has taken away from her her only support.'—'Have you, then, forgot,' said Nelson, 'that I have a sister, and that my house is your own?'—'Ah, Nelson,' replied Blanford, fixing his eyes on his, 'if you knew what that charge is, which you would have me confide to you!' At these words Nelson smiled with disdain. 'This uneasiness,' said he, 'is a fine compliment to us both. You dare not trust me with a woman?' Blanford in confusion blushed. 'Pardon my weakness,' said he: 'it made me

see danger where thy virtue finds none. I judged of your heart by my own : it is me whom my fear humbles. Let us say no more of it : I shall set out in peace, leaving the pledge of my love under the guard of friendship. But, my dear Nelson, if I die, let me request you to take my place.'—'Yes, that of father; I promise you: ask no more.'—'Enough: nothing farther detains me.'

The adieus of Coraly and Blanford were mingled with tears: but Coraly's tears were not those of love. A lively gratitude, a respectful friendship, were the tenderest sentiments which Blanford had inspired her with. Her own sensibility was not known to her: the dangerous advantage of unfolding it was reserved for Nelson.

Blanford was handsomer than his friend; but his figure, like his temper, had a manly and austere fierceness in it. The sentiments which he had conceived for his pupil seemed to have given him rather the disposition of a father than of a lover: his attentions were without complaisance, his goodness without charms, his concern tender but solemn, and his desire was that of rendering her happy with him, rather than of being happy with her.

Nelson, who was of a more engaging temper, had also more sweetness in his features and his language. His eyes, especially, expressed the eloquence of the soul. His look, the most touching in the world, seemed to penetrate to the bottom of people's hearts, and to procure him a secret correspondence with them. His voice thundered when there was a necessity to defend the interests of his country, her laws, her glory, her liberty; but in familiar conversation it was full of sensibility and charms. What rendered him still more engaging, was an air of modesty diffused over his whole person. This man, who at the head of his nation, would have made a tyrant tremble, was, in company, of a timid bashfulness; one single word of commendation made him blush.

Lady Juliet Albury, his sister, was a widow of great prudence, and an excellent heart; but of that kind of
unhappy

unhappy prudence which always anticipates misfortune, and accelerates instead of preventing it. It was she who was charged with consoling the young Indian. 'I have lost my second father,' said that amiable girl to her; 'I have now only you and Nelson in the world. I will love you, I will obey you. My life and heart are yours.' While she was yet embracing Juliet, Nelson arrives, and Coraly arises with a smiling and heavenly countenance, but still bedewed with tears.

'Well,' said Nelson to his sister, 'have you consoled her a little?'—'Yes, I am consoled, I have no farther complaint;' cried the young Indian, at the same time wiping her fine black eyes. Then making Nelson seat himself by the side of Juliet, and falling on her knees before them, she took them by their hands, put them one in the other, and pressing them tenderly in her own, 'There is my mother,' said she to Nelson, with a look which would have softened marble; 'and you Nelson, what will you be to me?'—'I Madam—your good friend.'—'*My good friend!* that is charming! then I shall be your good friend too? Give me only that name.'—'Yes, my good friend, my dear Coraly, your frankness delights me.' 'My God,' said he to his sister, 'what a beautiful girl! she will be the delight of your life.'—'Yes, if she is not the misery of yours,' replied the provident sister. Nelson smiled with disdain. 'No,' said he, 'love never disputes in my soul the rights of sacred friendship. Be easy, sister, and employ yourself in peace, in the care of cultivating this beautiful innocent. Blanford will be enchanted with her, if, at his return, she is mistress of our language; for we may perceive in her ideas, shadows of sentiment, which she is unhappy at not being able to express. Her eyes, her gestures, her features, every thing about her, proclaims ingenious thoughts, which only want words to call them forth. This, sister, will be an amusement to you, and you will see her mind open like a flower.'—'Yes, my brother, as a flower with a multitude of thorns.'

Lady Albury constantly gave English lessons to her pupil,

pil, and the latter rendered them every day more interesting, by intermingling with them strokes of sentiment, of a vivacity and delicacy, which belongs only to pure nature. It was a triumph to her but to make discovery of a word which expressed any gentle affection of the soul. She made the most natural, the most touching applications of them. Nelson arrived; she flew to him, and repeated her lesson to him with a joy and simplicity, which yet he found only amusing. Juliet alone saw the danger, and wanted to prevent it.

She began, by making Coraly understand, that it was not polite to *thee* and *thou* it, and that she should say *you* at least, unless it were a brother and a sister. Coraly made her explain what politeness was, and asked what it was good for, if brother and sister had no need of it? They told her, that in the world it supplied the place of good humour. She concluded that it was useless to those who wished well to each other. They added that it displayed a desire of obliging and of pleasing. She replied, that this desire displayed itself without politeness: then giving for an example Juliet's little dog, which never quitted her, and caressed her perpetually, she asked if he was polite. Juliet entrenched herself behind the punctilios of decorum, which approved not, said she, the too free and joyous air of Coraly towards Nelson; and the latter, who had the idea of jealousy, because Nature gives us the sensation of it, imagined within herself that the sister was jealous of the kindnesses which her brother did her. 'No,' said she to her, 'I will afflict you no longer. I love you, I submit, and I will say *you*, to Nelson.'

He was surprized at this change in Coraly's language, and complained of it to Juliet, 'The *you*,' said he, 'displeases me in her mouth: it agrees not with her simplicity.'—'It displeases me too,' replied the Indian: it has something rebuffing and severe; whereas the *thou* is so soft! so intimate! so attracting!—'Do *you* hear, sister? she begins to understand the language.'—'Ha! it is not that which makes me uneasy: with a soul like her's, we express ourselves but too well.'—'Explain to me,'

me,' said Coraly to Nelson, 'whence can arise the ridiculous custom of saying *you*, in speaking to a single person?'—'It arises, child, from the pride and weakness of man: he perceives that he is insignificant, being but one; he endeavours to double himself, to multiply himself in idea.'—'Yes, I comprehend that folly; but thou, Nelson, thou art not vain enough.'—'Again!' interrupted Juliet with a severe tone. 'Hey! what, sister, are you going to chide her! Come, Coraly, come to me.'—'I forbid her.'—'How cruel you are? Is she then in danger with me. Do you suspect me of laying snares for her? Ah! leave her that pure nature; leave her the amiable candour of her country and age. Wherefore tarnish in her that flower of innocence, more precious than virtue itself, and which our factitious manners have so much difficulty to supply? It seems to me that Nature is afflicted when the idea of evil penetrates into the soul. Alas! it is a venomous plant, which grows wild but too readily, without our giving ourselves the trouble of sowing it.'—'What you say is very fine, to be sure; but since evil exists, we must avoid it; and in order to avoid it, we must know it.'—'Ah! my poor little Coraly,' said Nelson, 'into what a world art thou transplanted! What manners are those, in which we are obliged to lose one half of our innocence, in order to save the other!'

In proportion as the moral ideas increased in the young Indian's mind, she lost her gaiety and natural ingenuousness. Every new institution seemed to her a new fetter. 'Another duty,' said she, 'another prohibition! My soul is enveloped as with a net: they are going soon to render it immoveable.' That they made a crime of what was hurtful, Coraly comprehended without difficulty; but she could not imagine any harm in what did no harm to any body. 'What greater happiness in living together,' said she, 'than to see one another with pleasure? and why conceal from ourselves so sweet an impression? Is not pleasure a blessing? Why then hide it from the person who occasions it. They pretend to feel it with those whom

they do not love, and to feel none with those whom they do ! Some enemy of truth devised these manners.'

Reflections of this sort plunged her into melancholy ; and when Juliet reproached her with it, ' You know the cause of it,' said she : ' every thing that is contrary to Nature must make her sorrowful ; and in your manners every thing is contrary to Nature.' Coraly, in her little impatience had something so soft and touching, that Lady Albury accused herself of afflicting her by too much rigour. Her manner of consoling her, and of restoring to her her good-humour, was by employing her in little services, and by commanding her as her child. The pleasure of thinking that she was useful, flattered her sensibly ; she foresaw the instant, in order to seize it ; but the same attentions she paid to Juliet, she wanted to pay to Nelson, and they distressed her by moderating her zeal. ' The good offices of servitude,' said she, ' are low and vile, because they are not voluntary ; but from the moment that they are free, there is no longer shame, and friendship ennobles them. Fear not, my good friend, that I shall suffer myself to be abused. Though very young before I quitted India ; I knew the dignity of the tribe in which I was born : and when your fine ladies and young lords come to examine me with such familiar curiosity, their disdain only elevates my soul, and I perceive that I am well worth them all. But with you and Nelson, who love me as your daughter, what can there be humiliating to me ?'

Nelson himself seemed sometimes confused at the trouble she took. ' You are very vain, then,' said she to him, ' since you blush at having need of me ! I am not so proud as you : serve me ; I shall be flattered with it.'

All these strokes of an ingenuous and sensible soul, made Lady Albury uneasy. ' I tremble,' said she to Nelson, when they were alone ; ' I tremble lest she should love you, and lest that love occasion her unhappiness.' He took this hint for an injury to innocence. ' See there, now,' said he, ' how the abuse of words alters and displaces ideas. Coraly loves me, I know it ; but she loves me as you do. Is there any thing more natural than

than to attach one's self to the person who does us good? Is it a fault in this girl, if the tender and lively expression of a sentiment so just, and so laudable, is profaned in our manners? Whatever criminality we affix to it, has it ever come into her thought?—'No, brother, you do not understand me. Nothing more innocent than her love for you; but—' 'But, sister, why suppose, why want it to be love? It is true and pure friendship for me, which she has for you likewise.'—'You persuade yourself, Nelson, that it is the same sentiment; will you make trial of it? Let us have the appearance of separating, and of reducing her to the choice of quitting the one or the other.'—'See there, now: snares! wiles! Why impose them upon her? Why teach her to dissimble? Alas! does her soul practise disguise?'—'Yes, I begin to constrain her: she is grown afraid of me, ever since she has loved you?'—'And why have you inspired her with that fear? You would have us be ingenuous, and you make it dangerous to be so: you recommend truth, and if it escape, you make it a reproach. Ah! Nature is not to blame; she would be frank if she had liberty; it is the art which is employed to constrain her that gives her a bias to falsity.'—'These are very grave reflections for what is in fact a mere jest. For, after all, what does the whole amount to? To make Coraly uneasy for a moment, in order to see to which side her heart will incline: that is all.'—'That is all: but that is a falsity; and which is worse, an afflicting one.'—'Let us think no more of it: it answers no end to examine what we would not see.'—'I, sister, I only want information to know how to behave. The manner alone has displeased me; but no matter: what do you require of me?'—'Silence and a serious air. Coraly comes; now you shall hear.'

'What is the matter, now?' said Coraly, on coming up to them. 'Nelson in one corner! Juliet in the other!—Are you displeased?'—'We have just taken,' said Juliet to her, 'a resolution which afflicts us; but there was a necessity of coming to it. We are no longer

ger to live together; each of us is to have an house of our own; and we are agreed to leave you the choice.'

At these words Coraly viewed Juliet with eyes immoveable, with sorrow and astonishment. 'It is I,' said she, that am the cause of your wanting to quit Nelson. You are displeased that he loves me; you are jealous of the pity which a young orphan inspires him with. Alas! what will you not envy, if you envy pity, if you envy her who loves you, and who would give her life for you, the only valuable thing which is left her? You are unjust, my lady; yes, you are unjust. Your brother, in loving me, loves you not less; and if it were possible he would love you more, for my sentiments would pass into his soul, and I have nothing to inspire into him towards you, but complaisance and love.

Juliet would fain have persuaded her, that she and Nelson parted good friends. 'It is impossible, said she: 'you made it your delight to live together; and since when is it become necessary that you should have two houses? People who love one another are never put to straits; distance-pleases only those who hate each other. You, O Heaven! You to hate!' resumed she. 'And who will love, if two hearts so good, so virtuous do not. It is I, wretch as I am, that have brought trouble into the house of peace. I will banish myself from it: yes, I beseech you, send me back into my own country. I shall there find souls sensible to my misfortune and to my tears, who will not make it a crime in me to inspire a little pity.'

'You forget,' said Juliet to her, 'that you are our charge.'---'I am free,' replied the young Indian fiercely: 'I may dispose of myself. What should I do here? With whom should I live? With what eyes would one of you regard me, after having deprived you of the other? Should I supply the place of a sister to Nelson? Should I console you for the loss of a brother. To occasion the unhappiness of what alone I love! No, you shall not part: my arms shall be a chain to you.' Then running towards Nelson, and seizing him by the hand; 'Come,'

‘Come,’ said she to him, ‘swear to your sister that you love nothing in the world so well as her.’ Nelson, touched to the bottom of his soul, suffered himself to be led to his sister’s feet; and Coraly throwing herself on Juliet’s neck, ‘You,’ continued she, ‘if you are my mother, pardon him for having loved your child: his heart has enough for us both; and if you are any loser there, mine shall indemnify you for it.’—‘Ah! dangerous girl,’ said Juliet, ‘what sorrows will you soon occasion us!’—‘Ah, sister,’ cried Nelson, who felt himself pressed by Coraly against Juliet’s bosom, ‘have you the heart to afflict this poor girl!’

Coraly enchanted at her triumph, kissed Juliet tenderly, at the very instant when Nelson put his face to his sister’s. He felt his cheek touch the glowing cheek of Coraly, still wet with tears. He was surprized at the confusion and extasy which this accident occasioned him. ‘Happily, that,’ said he, ‘is only a simple emotion of the senses: it goes not to the soul. I am myself, and I am sure of myself. He dissembled however from his sister, what he would fain have concealed from himself. He tenderly consoled Coraly, in confessing to her that all they had just said to her, to make her uneasy, was nothing more than a jest. ‘But what is no jest,’ added he, ‘is the counsel which I give you of distrusting, my dear Coraly, your own heart, which is too innocent, and too sensible. Nothing more charming than this affecting and tender disposition; but the best things very often become dangerous by their excess.’

‘Will you not quiet my uneasiness?’ said Coraly to Juliet, as soon as Nelson was retired. ‘Though you tell me so, it is not natural to make sport of my sorrow. There is something serious in this pastime. I see you deeply moved; Nelson himself was seized with I know not what terror; I felt his hand tremble in mine; my eyes met his, and I saw there something so tender, and so sorrowful at the same time! He dreads my sensibility. He seems to be afraid that I should deliver myself up to it. My good friend, would it be any harm to love?’—‘Yes, child, since we must tell
you

you so; it is a misfortune both for you and for him. A woman; you may have seen it in the Indies as well as among us; a woman is destined for the society of one man alone; and by that union, solemnized and sacred, the pleasure of loving becomes a duty to her.-----' I know it,' said Coraly ingenuously: 'that is what they call marriage.'---' Yes, Coraly; and that friendship is laudable between two married persons; but till then it is forbidden.'-----' That is not reasonable,' said the young Indian: 'for before uniting one to the other, we must know whether we love each other; and it is but in proportion to our love before hand, that we are sure of loving afterwards. For example, if Nelson loved me as I love him, it would be clear that each of us had met their counter-part.'---' And do you not see in how many respects, and by how many compacts, we are slaves; and that you are not destined for Nelson?'---' I understand you,' said Coraly looking down; 'I am poor, and Nelson is rich; but my ill fortune at least does not forbid me to honour and cherish beneficent virtue. If a tree had sentiment, it would please itself in seeing the person who cultivates it repose himself under its shade, breathe the perfume of its flowers, and taste the sweetness of its fruits: I am that tree, cultivated by you two, and Nature has given me a soul.'

Juliet smiled at the comparison; but she soon gave her to understand, that nothing would be less decent, than what to her seemed so just. Coraly heard her, and blushed; from that time, to her gaiety, to her natural ingenuousness, succeeded an air the most reserved, and a conversation the most timid. What hurt her most in our manners, though she might have seen examples of it in India, was the excessive inequality of riches: but she had not yet been humiliated by it; she was so now for the first time.

'Madam,' said she the next day, to Juliet, 'my life is spent in instructing myself in things which are rather superfluous. An industry which furnishes bread, would be much more useful to me. It is a resource which I beseech you to be pleased to procure me.'---' You will never

never be reduced to that,' said Lady Albury; 'and not to mention us, it is not for nothing that Blanford has assumed towards you the quality of father.'—'Favours,' replied Coraly, 'bind us much oftner than we would chuse. It is not disgraceful to receive them; but I clearly perceive that it is still more reputable to do without them.' It was in vain that Juliet complained of this excess of delicacy. Coraly would not hear of amusements, or of useless studies. Amidst the labours which suit feeble hands, she chose those which required the most address and understanding: and, on applying herself to them, her only anxiety was to know whether they afforded a subsistence. 'You will leave me then,' said Juliet. 'I would put myself,' replied Coraly, 'above all wants, except that of loving you. I would have it in my power to rid you of me, if I am any obstacle to your happiness; but if I can contribute to it, entertain no fear of my removing myself. I am useless, and yet I am dear to you; that disinterestedness is an example which I think myself worthy of imitating.'

Nelson knew not what to think of Coraly's application to a labour merely mechanical, and of the disgust which had seized her for matters of pure entertainment. He saw with the same surprize, the modest simplicity which she had assumed in her dress; he asked her the reason. 'I am trying what it is to be poor,' replied she, with a smile; and casting her eyes downwards, bedewed them with her tears. These words, and involuntary tears touched him to the soul. 'O Heaven!' said he, 'can my sister have made her afraid of seeing herself poor and desolate!' As soon as he was alone with Juliet, he pressed her to clear up the matter to him.

'Alas!' said he, after having heard her, 'what cruel pains you take to poison her life and mine! Though you were less certain of her innocence, are you not persuaded of my honour?'—'Ah, Nelson, it is not the crime, it is the misfortune which terrifies me. You see with what dangerous security she delivers herself up

to the pleasure of seeing you; how she attaches herself insensibly to you; how Nature leads her, without her knowledge, into the snare. Ah, brother, at your age and her's, the name of friendship is but a veil. And why can I not leave you both under the illusion! No, Nelson, your duty is dearer to me than your ease. Coraly is destined for your friend; he himself has confided her to you; and, without intending it, you take her from him.'—'I, sister! what is it you dare to warn me of?'—'Of what you ought to shun. I would have her, at the same time that she loves you, consent to give herself to Blanford; I would have him flatter himself with being loved by her, and be happy with her; but will she be happy with him? Were you sensible only of pity, of which she is so worthy, what sorrow would you not feel at having troubled, perhaps for ever, the repose of this unfortunate young creature? But it would be a prodigy to see her consume with love, and you do nothing more than pity her. You will love her---Will, do I say? Ah! Nelson! Heaven grant that you do not already!'—'Yes, sister, it is time to take whatever resolution you please. I only beg of you to spare the sensibility of that innocent soul, and not afflict her too much.'—'Your absence will afflict her without doubt; yet that alone can cure her. This is the time of the year for the country: I was to follow you there, and to bring Coraly; do you go alone, we will remain at London. Write however to Blanford, that we have occasion for his return.'

From the moment the Indian saw that Nelson left her at London with Juliet, she thought herself cast into a desert, and abandoned by all nature. But as she had learned to be ashamed, and of course to dissemble, she pretended, as an excuse for her sorrow, the blame she took to herself for having separated them from each other. 'You was to have followed him,' said she to Lady Albury; 'it is I that keep you here. Ah, wretch, that I am! leave me alone, abandon me!' And in saying these words she wept bitterly. The more Juliet tried to divert her, the more she increased her sorrows.

All

All the objects which surrounded her, served only just to touch her senses; one idea alone possessed her soul. There was a necessity for a kind of violence to draw her from it; but the instant they left her to herself, it seemed as if one saw her thought fly back again to the object which she had been made to quit. If the name of Nelson was pronounced before her, a deep blush overspread her visage, her bosom heaved, her lips trembled, her whole body was seized with a sensible shivering. Juliet surprized her in a walk, tracing out on the sand, from place to place, the letters of that dear name. Nelson's picture decorated Juliet's apartment; Coraly's eyes never failed to fix themselves upon it, as soon as they were free: it was in vain she wanted to turn them aside; they soon returned there again, as it were of themselves, and by one of those emotions, in which the soul is accomplice, and not confidante. The gloominess into which she was plunged dispersed at this sight, her work fell out of her hands, and the utmost tenderness of sorrow and love animated her beauty.

Lady Albury thought it her duty to remove this feeble image. This was to Coraly the most distressful misfortune. Her despair now broke all bounds. 'Cruel friend,' said she to Juliet, 'you delight in afflicting me. You would have all my life be only sorrow and bitterness. If any thing softens my troubles, you cruelly take it from me. Not content to banish from me the man I love, his very shadow has too many charms for me; you envy me the pleasure, the feeble pleasure of seeing it.'—'Ah, unhappy girl! what would you?'—'Love, adore him! live for him, while he shall live for another. I hope nothing, I ask nothing. My hands are sufficient to enable me to live, my heart is sufficient to enable me to love. I am troublesome to you, perhaps odious; remove me from you, and leave me only that image wherein his soul breathes, or wherein I think at least I see it breathe. I will see it, I will speak to it; I will persuade myself that it sees my tears flow, that it hears my sighs, and that it is touched by them.'—'And wherefore my dear Coraly, nourish this cruel
flame

flame which devours you? I afflict you, but it is for your good and Nelson's peace. Would you render him unhappy? He will be so if he knows that you love him; and still more so if he loves you. You are not in a condition to hear my reasons; but this inclination which we think so sweet, would be the poison of his life. Have pity, my dear child, of your friend, and my brother: spare him the remorse, the complaints, which would bring him to his grave.' Coraly trembled at this discourse. She pressed Lady Albury to tell her how Nelson's love for her could be so fatal to him. 'To explain myself farther,' said Juliet, 'would be to render odious to you, what you ought for ever to cherish. But the most sacred of all duties forbids him the hope of being yours.'

How is it possible to express the distress into which Coraly's soul was plunged! 'What manners! what a country!' said she, 'wherein one cannot dispose of one's self; wherein the gift of all blessings, mutual love, is a terrible evil! I must tremble then, at seeing Nelson again! I must tremble at pleasing him! At pleasing him! Alas! I would give my life to be one moment, in his eyes, as amiable as he is in mine. Let me banish myself from this fatal shore, where it is made a misfortune to be loved.'

Coraly heard, every day, of vessels sailing for her country. She resolved to embark, without taking leave of Juliet. Only one evening, on going to bed, Juliet perceived that in kissing her hand, her lips pressed her more tenderly than usual, and that some profound sighs escaped her. 'She leaves me more moved than ever before,' said Juliet alarmed. 'Her eyes are fixed on mine with the most lively expression of tenderness and sorrow. What passes in her soul?' This uneasiness disturbed her the whole night, and the next morning she sent to know if Coraly was not yet up. They told her that she was gone out alone, and in a very plain dress, and that she had taken the way to the water-side. Lady Albury gets up in distress, and orders them to go in pursuit of the Indian. They find her on board a vessel,
begging

begging her passage, environed by sailors, whom her beauty, her grace, her youth, the sound of her voice, and, above all, the native simplicity of her request, ravished with surprize and admiration. She had nothing with her but bare necessaries. Every thing they had given her which was valuable, she had left behind, excepting a little heart of crystal, which she had received from Nelson.

At the name of Lady Albury, she submitted without resistance; and suffered herself to be conveyed home. She appeared before her a little confused at her elopement; but to her reproaches she answered, that she was unhappy and free. 'What, my dear Coraly, do you see nothing here but unhappiness?'---'If I saw here only my own,' said she, 'I should never leave you. It is Nelson's unhappiness that frights me, and it is for his peace that I would fly.'

Juliet knew not what to reply: she durst not talk to her of the rights which Blanford had acquired over her: this would have been to make her hate him, as the cause of her unhappiness. She chose rather to lessen her fears. 'I could not conceal from you,' said she to her, 'all the danger of a fruitless love; but the evil is not without remedy. Six months of absence, reason, friendship, how can we tell? Another object, perhaps-----' The Indian interrupted her. 'Say death; there is my only remedy. What! will reason cure me of loving the most accomplished, the most worthy of men? Will six months of absence give me a soul that loves him not? Does time change nature? Friendship will pity me; but will it cure me? Another object! You do not think so. You do not do me that injustice. There are not two Nelsons in the world; but though there were a thousand, I have but one heart; that is given away. It is, you say, a fatal gift: that I do not comprehend; but if it be so, suffer me to banish myself from Nelson, to hide from him my person and my tears. He is not insensible, he would be moved at it: and if it be a misfortune to him to love me, pity might lead him to it. Alas! who can, with indifference,

see himself cherished as a father, revered as a god?--- Who can see himself loved, as I love him; and not love in his turn?'---'You will not expose him to that danger,' replied Juliet; 'you will conceal your weakness from him, and you will triumph over it. No, Coraly, it is not the strength that is wanting to you, but the courage of virtue.'---'Alas! I have courage against misfortune; but is there any against love? And what virtue would you have me oppose to him? They all act in concert with him. No, my lady, you talk to no purpose: you throw clouds over my understanding; you shed not the least light on it. Let me see and hear Nelson; he shall decide upon my life.'

Lady Albury, in the most cruel perplexity, seeing the unhappy Coraly withering and pining in tears, and begging to be suffered to depart, resolved to write to Nelson, that he might come and dissuade the poor girl from her design of returning to India, and preserve her from that disgust of life which daily consumed her. But Nelson himself was not less to be pitied. Scarce had he quitted Coraly, but he perceived the danger of seeing her, by the repugnance which he had to leave her. All that had appeared only play to him with her became serious in being deprived of her. In the silence of solitude, he had interrogated his soul: he had found there friendship languishing, zeal for the public good weakened, nay, almost extinguished, and Love alone ruling there, with that sweet and terrible sway which he exercises over good hearts. He perceived with horror, that his very reason had suffered itself to be seduced. The rights of Blanford were no longer so sacred; and the involuntary crime of depriving him of Coraly's heart was at least very excusable; after all, the Indian was free, and Blanford himself would not have wished to impose it on her as a duty to be his. Ah, wretch! cried Nelson, terrified at these ideas, whether does a blind passion lead me astray! The poison of vice gains upon me: my heart is already corrupted. Is it for me to examine whether the charge, which is committed to me, belongs to the person who commits it?

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And am I made the judge, to whom it belongs, when I have promised to keep it? The Indian is free, but am I so? Should I doubt the rights of Blanford, if it were not in order to usurp them? My crime was, at first, involuntary; but it is no longer so, the moment I consent to it. I justify perjury! I think a faithless friend excusable! Who would have told thee, Nelson, who would have told thee, that on embracing the virtuous Blanford, thou shouldst call in doubt whether it were permitted thee to ravish from him the woman who is to be his wife, and whom he delivered up to thy trust? To what a degree does Love debase a man; and what a strange revolution its intoxication makes in a heart! Ah, let him rend mine if he will; he shall not make it either perfidious or base; and if my reason abandon me, my conscience at least shall not betray me. It's light is incorruptible; the cloud of passions cannot obscure it: there is my guide; and friendship, honour, and fidelity, have still some support.'

In the mean time Coraly's image pursued him perpetually. If he had only seen her with all her charms, arrayed in simple beauty, bearing on her countenance the serenity of innocence, the smile of candour on her lips, the fire of desire in her eyes, and in all the graces of her person the attracting air of voluptuousness, he would have found in his principles, in the severity of his manners, sufficient force to withstand seduction; but he thought he saw that amiable girl as sensible as himself, more feeble, with no other defence than a prudence which was not her own, innocently abandoning herself to an inclination which would be her unhappiness; and the pity which she inspired him with, served as fuel to his love. Nelson blamed himself for loving Coraly, but forgave himself for pitying her. Sensible of the evils which he was on the point of being the cause of, he could not paint to himself her tears, without thinking of the fine eyes which were to shed them, and the heaving bosom which they would bedew: thus the resolution of forgetting her rendered her still dearer to him. He attached himself to her by renouncing her: but in

proportion as he perceived himself weaker, he became more courageous. 'Let me give over,' said he, 'the thoughts of a cure: I exhaust myself in fruitless efforts. It is a fit which I must suffer to go off. I burn, I languish, I die; but all that is mere suffering, and I am answerable to nobody but myself for what passes within. Provided nothing escape me from without that discovers my passion, my friend has no reason to complain. It is only a misfortune to be weak: and I have the courage to be unhappy.'

It was in this resolution of dying, rather than betraying his friendship, that he received the letter from his sister. He read it with emotion, and an extasy that was inexpressible. 'O sweet and tender victim,' said he, 'thou groanest, thou wouldest sacrifice thyself to my repose, and to my duty! Pardon! Heaven is my witness, that I feel, more strongly than thyself, all the pangs which I occasion thee. Oh, may my friend, thy husband, soon arrive, and wipe away thy precious tears! He will love thee as I love thee; he will make his own happiness thine. However, I must see her, in order to detain and console her. Why should I see her? To what do I expose myself? Her touching graces, her sorrow, her love; her tears which I occasion to flow, and which it would be so sweet to dry up; those sighs, which a heart simple and artless suffers to escape; that language of nature, in which a soul the most sensible paints itself with so much candour: what trials to support! What will become of me; and what can I say to her! No matter: I must see her, and talk to her as a friend and a father. After seeing her, I only shall be the more uneasy, the more unhappy for it; but it is not my own peace that is in question, it is her's; and above all the happiness of a friend depends on it; a friend for whom she must live. I am certain of subduing myself, and how painful soever the contest may be, it would be a weakness and shame to avoid it.

At Nelson's arrival, Coraly trembling and confused, scarce dare present herself to him. She had wished his return with ardour; and at seeing him, a mortal child-

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ness glided through her veins. She appeared as it were, before a judge who was preparing with one single word to decide her fate.

What were Nelson's feelings, on seeing the roses of youth faded on her beautiful cheeks, and the fire of her eyes almost extinguished! 'Come,' said Juliet to her brother, 'appease the mind of this poor girl, and cure her of her melancholy. She is eaten up with the vapours with me; she wants to return to India.'

Nelson speaking to her in a friendly manner, wanted to engage her, by gentle reproaches, to explain herself before his sister: but Coraly kept silence, and Juliet perceiving that she was a restraint upon her, went away.

'What is the matter with you Coraly? What have we done to you?' said Nelson. 'What sorrow presses you?'—'Do not you know it? Must you not have seen that my joy and my sorrow can no longer have more than one cause? Cruel friend! I live only through you, and you fly me: you would have me die! But you would not have it so: they make you do it: they do more, they require of me to renounce you, and to forget you. They fright me, they damp my very soul, and they oblige you to make me distracted. I ask of you but one favour,' continued she, throwing herself at his knees; 'it is to tell me whom I offend in loving you, what duty I betray, and what evil I occasion. Are there here laws so cruel, are there tyrants so rigorous, as to forbid me the most worthy use of my heart and my reason? Must we love nothing in the world? or, if I may love, can I make a better choice?'

'My dear Coraly,' replied Nelson, 'nothing is truer, nothing is more tender, than the friendship which attaches me to you. It would be impossible, it would be even unjust, that you should not be sensible of it.'—'Ah! I revive, this is talking reason.'—'But though it would be extremely agreeable to me to be what you hold dearest in the world, it is what I cannot pretend, neither ought I even to consent to it.'—'Alas! now I don't understand you.'—'When my friend confided you

to my care, he was dear to you?'---'He is so still.'---
 'You would have thought yourself happy to be his?'
 ---'I believe it.'---'You loved nothing so much as him
 in the world?'---'I did not know you.'---'Blanford,
 your deliverer, the depository of your innocence, in lov-
 ing you, has a right to be loved.'---'His favours are
 always present to me: I cherish him as a second father.'
 ---'Very well: know that he has resolved to unite you
 to him, by a tie still more sweet and sacred than that of
 his favours. He has confided to me the half of himself,
 and at his return he aspires only to the happiness of be-
 ing your husband.'---'Ah,' said Coraly, comforted;
 'this then is the obstacle which separates us? Be easy,
 it is removed.'---'How?'---'Never, never, I swear to
 you, will Coraly be the wife of Blanford!'---'It must
 be so.'---'Impossible! Blanford himself will confess it.'
 ---'What! he who received you from the hand of a dy-
 ing father, and who himself has acted as a father to
 you!'---'Under that sacred title I revere Blanford, but
 let him not require more.'---'You have then resolved
 his unhappiness?'---'I have resolved to deceive nobody.
 If I were given to Blanford, and Nelson demanded my
 life of me, I would lay down my life for Nelson; I
 should be perjured to Blanford.'---'What say you?'---
 'What I will dare to tell Blanford himself. And why
 should I dissemble it? Does love depend on myself?'---
 'Ah, how culpable you make me!'---'You, in what?
 in being amiable in my eyes? Aye, Heaven disposes of
 us. Heaven has given to Nelson those graces, those
 virtues which charm me; Heaven has given to me this
 soul, which it has made expressly for Nelson. If they
 knew how full it is of him, how impossible that it should
 love any thing but you, any thing like you!—Let them
 never talk to me of living, if it be not for you that I
 live.'---'And this is what distresses me. With what re-
 proaches has not my friend a right to overwhelm me?'
 ---'He! of what can he complain? What has he lost?
 What have you taken from him? I love Blanford as
 a tender father: I love Nelson as myself, and more than
 myself: these sentiments are not incompatible. If Blan-
 ford,

ford delivered me into your hands as a deposit which was his own, it is not you, it is he that is unjust.'—
'Alas! it is me, who oblige you to reclaim from him that treasure of which I rob him: it would be his if it were not mine; and the keeper becomes the purloiner.'—
'No, my friend, be equitable. I was my own, I am yours. I alone could give myself away, and have given myself to you. By attributing to friendship rights which it has not, it is you that usurp them in its behalf, and you render yourself an accomplice of the violence which they do me.'—
'He, my friend, do you violence?'—
'What signifies it to me whether he does it himself, or that you do it for him? Am I treated the less like a slave? One single interest occupies and touches you; but if another than your friend wanted to retain me captive, far from subscribing to it, would not you make it your glory to set me free? It is then, only for the sake of friendship that you betray nature! What do I say? Nature! and Love, Nelson.—Love, has not that also its rights? Is there not some law among you in favour of sensible souls? Is it just and generous to overwhelm, to drive to despair a fond female, and to tear without pity, a heart whose only crime is loving you?'—

Sobs interrupted her voice; and Nelson, who saw her choaked with them, had not even time to call his sister. He hastens to untie the ribbands which bound her bosom; and then all the charms of youth in its flower were unveiled to the eyes of this passionate lover. The terror with which he was seized, rendered him at first insensible of them; but when the Indian, resuming her spirits, and perceiving herself pressed in his arms, thrilled with love and transport, and when on opening her fine languishing eyes she sought the eyes of Nelson; 'Heavenly powers,' said he, 'support me! all my virtue abandons me. Live, my dear Coraly!'—
'Would you that I should live Nelson! would you then that I love you?'—
'No, I should be perjured to friendship, I should be unworthy to see the light; unworthy of seeing my friend again. Alas! he foretold me this, and
I vouch-

I vouchsafed not to believe him. I have presumed too much on my own heart. Have pity on it, Coraly, of that heart which you rend to pieces. Suffer me to fly you, and to subdue myself.—‘Ah! you would have my death,’ said she to him, falling into a fit at his feet. Nelson, who thinks he sees what he loves expiring, rushes to embrace her, and restraining himself suddenly at the sight of Juliet, ‘My sister,’ said he, ‘assist her, it is for me to die!’ On saying these words he withdraws.

‘Where is he?’ demanded Coraly, on opening her eyes. ‘What have I done to him? Why fly me?—And you, Juliet, more cruel still, why recal me to life?’ Her sorrow redoubled when she learned that Nelson was just gone; but reflection gave her a little hope and courage. The concern and tenderness which Nelson had not been able to conceal, the terror with which she had seen him seized, the tender words which had escaped him, and the violence which it was to him to subdue himself and withdraw, all persuaded her that she was beloved. ‘If it be true,’ said she, ‘I am happy, Blanford will return, I will confess the whole to him; he is too just and too generous to want to tyrannize over me.’ But this illusion was soon dissipated.

Nelson received in the country a letter from his friend, announcing his return. ‘I hope,’ said he, at the end of his letter, ‘to see myself in three days united to all that I love. Pardon, my friend, if I associate to thee in my heart the amiable and tender Coraly. My soul was a long time solely devoted to thee; now she partakes of it. I have confided to thee the sweetest of my wishes, and I have seen friendship applaud love. I form my happiness both of one and the other; I make it my felicity to think that by thy cares, and those of thy sister, I shall see my dear pupil again; her mind ornamented with new acquirements, her soul enriched with new virtues, more amiable, if possible, and more disposed to love. It will be the purest bliss to me to possess her as a benefit conferred by you.’

‘Read this letter,’ writ Nelson to his sister, ‘and
make

make Coraly read it. What a lesson for me! What a reproach to her!

'It is over,' said Coraly, after having read; 'I shall never be Nelson's; but let him not ask me to be another's. The liberty of loving is a good which I am not able to renounce.' This resolution supported her, and Nelson in his solitude was much more unhappy than she.

'By what fatality,' said he, 'is it that what forms the charm of nature and the delight of all hearts, the happiness of being loved, forms my torment? What say I? Of being loved? That is nothing; but to be loved of what I love! To touch on happiness! To have only to deliver myself up to it! Ah, all that I am able to do is to fly! inviolable and sacred friendship asks no more. In what a condition have I seen this poor girl! In what a condition did I abandon her! She may well say, that she is the slave of my virtues. I sacrifice her as a victim, and I am generous at her expence. There are, then, virtues which wound nature; and to be honest, one is sometimes obliged to be unjust and cruel! Oh, my friend! mayest thou gather the fruit of the efforts which it costs me; enjoy the good which I resign to thee; and live happy from my misfortune. Yes, I wish that she may love thee; I wish it, Heaven is my witness; and the most sensible of all my pain is, that of doubting the success of my wishes.'

It was impossible for Nature to support herself in a state so violent. Nelson, after long struggles, sought repose; alas! there was no more repose for him. His constancy was at last exhausted, and his discouraged soul fell into a mortal languor. The weakness of his reason, the inefficacy of his virtue, the image of a painful and sorrowful life, the void and the state of annihilation into which his soul would fall if it ceased to love Coraly, the evils without intermission which he was to suffer if he continued to love her; and, above all, the terrifying idea of seeing, of envying, of hating, perhaps a rival in his faithful friend; all rendered his life a torment to him, all urged him to shorten the course of it. Motives more strong restrained him. It was not a part of Nelson's

Nelson's principles, that a man, a citizen, might dispose of himself. He made it a law to himself to live, consoled in his misery if he could still be useful to the world, but consumed with heaviness and sorrow, and become as it were insensible to every thing.

The time appointed for Blanford's return approached. It was necessary that every thing should be so disposed as to conceal from him the mischief which his absence had occasioned; and who should determine Coraly to conceal it, but Nelson? He returned therefore to London, but languishing, dejected to such a degree, as not to be known. The sight of him overwhelmed Juliet with grief, and what impression did it not make on the soul of Coraly! Nelson took upon him to re-encourage them; but that very effort only served to compleat his own dejection. The slow fever which consumed him redoubled; he was forced to give way to it; and this furnished occasion for a new contest between his sister and the young Indian. The latter would not quit Nelson's pillow. She urgently entreated them to accept of her care and attendance. They kept her out of the way from pity to herself, and for the sake of sparing him; but she tasted not the repose which they meant to procure her. Every moment of the night they found her wandering round the apartment of the diseased, or motionless on the threshold of his door, with tears in her eyes, her soul on her lips, her ear attentive to the slightest noises, every one of which congealed her with fear.

Nelson perceived that his sister suffered her to see him with regret. 'Afflict her not,' said he to her; 'it is to no purpose; severity is no longer necessary. It is by gentleness and patience that we must endeavour at our cure.'—'Coraly, my good friend,' said he to her one day when they were alone with Juliet, 'you would readily give something to restore my health, would not you?'—'O Heaven, I would give my life.'—'You can cure me at least. Our prejudices are, perhaps, unjust, and our principles inhuman; but the honest man is a slave to them. I have been Blanford's friend from my infancy. He depends on me as on him-
self,

self, and the chagrin of taking from him a heart of which he has made me the keeper, is every day digging my grave. You may see whether I exaggerate. I do not conceal from you the sources of the slow poison which consumes me. You alone can dry it up. I require it not: you shall be still free; but there is no other remedy for my disease. Blanford arrives. If he perceive your disinclination for him, if you refuse him that hand which but for me would have been granted him, be assured that I shall not survive his misfortune and my own remorse. Our embraces will be our adieus. Consult yourself, my dear child; and if you would that I live, reconcile me with myself, justify me towards my friend.—‘Ah! live, and dispose of me!’ said Coraly to him, forgetting herself; and these words distressing to love, bore joy to the bosom of friendship.

‘But,’ resumed the Indian, after a long silence, ‘how can I give myself to him whom I do not love, with a heart full of him whom I do love?’—‘My dear, in an honest soul, duty triumphs over every thing. By losing the hope of being mine, you will soon lose the thought. It will give you some pain, without doubt; but my life depends on it, and you will have the consolation of having saved it.’—‘That is every thing to me: I give myself up at that price. Sacrifice your victim: it will groan, but it will obey. But you, Nelson, you, who are truth itself, would you have me disguise my inclinations, and impose thus on your friend? Will you instruct me in the art of dissembling?’—‘No, Coraly, dissimulation is useless. I have not had the misfortune of extinguishing in you gratitude, esteem, and tender friendship; these sentiments are due to your benefactor, and they are sufficient for your husband: only display these towards him. As to that inclination which leans not towards him, you owe him the sacrifice of it, but not the confession. That which would hurt if it were known, ought to remain for ever concealed; and dangerous truth has silence for its refuge.’

Juliet interrupted this scene too painful to both, by leading away Coraly, whom she employed every endearment

ment and commendation to console. 'It is thus,' said the young Indian with a smile of sorrow, 'that on the Ganges they flatter the grief of a widow, who is going to devote herself to the flames of her husband's funeral pile. They adorn her, they crown her with flowers, they stupify her with songs of praise. Alas! her sacrifice is soon finished; mine will be cruel and lasting. My good friend, I am not eighteen years of age! What tears have I yet to shed till the moment when my eyes shall shut themselves for ever!' This melancholy idea painted to Juliet a soul absorbed in sorrow. She employed herself no longer in consoling her, but in grieving along with her. Complaisance, persuasion, indulgent and feeling compassion, all that friendship has most delicate, was put in practice to no effect.

At last, they inform her that Blanford is landed; and Nelson, enfeebled and faint as he is, goes to receive and embrace him at the harbour. Blanford on seeing him, could not conceal his astonishment and his uneasiness. 'Courage, man,' said Nelson; 'I have been very ill, but my health is returning. I see you again, and joy is a balm which will soon revive me. I am not the only one whose health has suffered by your absence. Your pupil is a little changed: the air of our climate may contribute to it. As to the rest, she has made a great progress: her understanding, her talents, have unfolded themselves; and if the kind of languor into which she is fallen vanishes, you will possess what is pretty uncommon, a woman in whom Nature has left nothing wanting.

Blanford, therefore, was not surprised to find Coraly weak and languishing; but he was much affected at it. 'It seems,' said he, as if Heaven wanted to moderate my joy, and to punish me for the impatience which my duty excited in me at a distance from you. I am now here again, free, and restored to love and friendship. The word *love* made Coraly tremble: Blanford perceived her concern. 'My friend,' said he to her, 'ought to have prepared you for the confession which you have just heard.'—'Yes, your goodness is well known

'known to me; but can I approve the excess of it?'
----' That is a language which favours of the politeness of Europe: join with me to forget it. Frank and tender, Coraly, I have seen the time when if I had said, "Shall Hymen unite us?" you would have answered me without disguise, "With all my heart!" or possibly, "I cannot consent to it." Use the same freedom now. I love you Coraly, but I love to make you happy: your misfortune would be mine.'
'Nelson, trembling, looked at Coraly, and durst not guess her answer. 'I hesitate,' said she to Blanford, 'through a fear like yours. While I saw you only as a friend, a second father, I said to myself, "He will be content with my veneration and affectionate regard;" but if the name of husband mingle with titles already sacred, what have you not a right to expect? Have I wherewith to acquit me towards you?'—'Ah! that amiable modesty is worthy of adorning thy virtues. Yes, thou hast of myself, your duties are fulfilled, if you return my affection. Thy image has followed me every where. My soul flew back towards thee across the depths which separated us: I have taught the name of Coraly to the echoes of another world.'—'Madam,' said he to Juliet, pardon me if I envy you the happiness of possessing her. It will soon be my turn to watch over a health which is so precious to me. I will leave you the care of Nelson's: it is a charge not less dear to me. Let us live happy, my friends: it is you who have made me know the value of life; and in exposing it, I have often experienced by what strong ties I was attached to you.'

It was settled, that in less than a week Coraly should be married to Blanford. In the mean time she remained with Juliet, and Nelson never quitted her. But his courage was exhausted in supporting the young Indian's. To be perpetually constrained to suppress his own tears, to dry up those of a fond girl, who sometimes distressed at his feet, sometimes fainting and falling into his arms, conjuring him to have pity on her, without allowing one moment to his own weakness, and without ceasing to

recal to his mind his cruel resolution; this trial appears above the strength of nature: accordingly, Nelson's virtue abandoned him every moment. 'Leave me,' said he to her, 'unhappy girl! I am not a tiger, I have a feeling soul, and you distract it. Dispose of yourself, dispose of my life, but leave me to die faithful to my friend.'—'And can I, at the hazard of your life, use my own will? Ah, Nelson! at least promise me to live; no longer for me, but for a sister who adores you.'—'I should deceive you, Coraly. Not that I would make any attempt upon myself; but see the condition to which my grief has reduced me; see the effect of my remorse and shame anticipated: shall I be the less odious, less inexorable to myself, when the crime shall be accomplished?'—'Alas! you talk of a crime! Is it not one, then, to tyrannize over me?'—'You are free; I no longer require any thing; I know not even what are your duties; but I know too well my own, and I will not betray them.'

It was thus that their private conversation served only to distress them. But Blanford's presence was still more painful to them. He came every day to converse with them, not on the barren topics of love, but the care he took, that every thing in his house should breathe cheerfulness and ease; that every thing there should forestall the desires of his wife, and contribute to her happiness. 'If I die without children,' said he, 'the half of my wealth is her's, the other half is his who, after me, shall know how to please and console her for having lost me. That, Nelson, is your place; there is no growing old in my profession: take my place when I shall be no more. I have not the odious pride of wanting my wife to continue faithful to my shade. Coraly is formed to embellish the world, and to enrich Nature with the fruits of her fecundity.'

It is more easy to conceive than describe the situation of our two lovers. Their concern and confusion were the same in both; but it was a kind of consolation to Nelson, to see Coraly in such worthy hands, whereas Blanford's favours and love were an additional torment

to her. On losing Nelson, she would have preferred the desertion of all nature, to the cares, and favours, the love of all the world beside. It was decided, however, even with the consent of this unfortunate girl, that there was no longer time to hesitate, and that it was necessary she should submit to her fate.

She was led, then, as a victim to that house, which she had cherished as her first asylum, but which she now dreaded as her grave. Blanford received her there as a sovereign; and what she could not conceal of the violent state of her soul, he attributes to timidity, to the concern which at her age, the approach of marriage inspires.

Nelson had summed up all the strength of a stoical soul, in order to present himself at this festival with a serene countenance.

They read the settlement which Blanford had made. It was, from one end to the other, a monument of love, esteem, and beneficence. Tears flowed from every eye, even from Coraly's.

Blanford approaches respectfully, and stretching out his hand to her; 'Come,' said he, 'my best beloved, give to this pledge of your fidelity, to this title of the happiness of my life, the inviolable sanctity with which it is to be clothed.'

Coraly, on doing herself the utmost violence, had scarce strength to advance, and put her hand to the pen. At the instant she would have signed, her eyes were covered with a mist; her whole body was seized with a sudden trembling; her knees bent under her, and she was on the point of falling, if Blanford had not supported her. Shocked, congealed with fear, he looks at Nelson, and sees him with the paleness of death on his countenance. Lady Albury had ran up to Coraly, in order to assist her. 'O Heaven,' cried Blanford, 'what is it that I see! Sorrow, death, surround me. What was I going to do? What have you concealed from me!----' Ah, my friend, could it be possible!---- 'See the light again, my dear Coraly; I am not cruel, I am not unjust; I wish only for your happiness!'

The women who surrounded Coraly, exerted themselves to revive her; and decency obliged Nelson and Blanford to keep at a distance. But Nelson remained immovable, with his eyes fixed on the ground like a criminal. Blanford comes up to him, and clasps him in his arms. 'Am I no longer thy friend?' said he. 'Art thou not still the half of myself? Open thy heart to me, and tell me what has passed. No, tell me nothing, I know all. This poor girl could not see thee, hear thee, and live with thee, without loving thee. She has sensibility, she has been touched with thy goodness and with thy virtues. Thou hast condemned her to silence; thou hast required of her the most grievous sacrifice. Ah, Nelson! had it been accomplished, what a misfortune! Just Heaven would not permit it! Nature, to whom thou didst violence, has resumed her rights. Do not afflict thyself: it is a crime which she has spared thee. Yes, the devotion of Coraly was the crime of friendship.'---'I confess it,' replied Nelson, throwing himself at his knees: 'I have been the innocent cause of thy unhappiness, of my own, and that of this amiable girl; but I call fidelity, friendship, honour, to witness-----' 'No oaths,' interrupted Blanford; 'they wrong us both. Go, my friend,' continued he, raising him, 'thou wouldest not be in my arms, if I had been able to suspect thee of a shameful perfidy. What I foresaw is come to pass, but without thy consent. What I have just now seen is a proof of it, and that very proof is unnecessary: thy friend has no need of it.'---'It is certain,' replied Nelson, 'that I have nothing to reproach myself, but my presumption and imprudence. But that is enough, and I shall be punished for it. Coraly will not be thine, but I will not be her's.'---'Is it thus that you answer a generous friend?' replied Blanford to him in a firm and grave tone of voice. 'Do you think yourself obliged to observe childish punctilios with me? Coraly shall not be mine, because she would not be happy with me. But an honest man for a husband, whom but for you she would have loved, is a loss to her, of which you are the cause, and
which

which you must repair. The contract is drawn up, they shall change the names; but I insist that the articles remain. What I meant to give Coraly as a husband, I now give her as a father. Nelson, make me not blush, by an humiliating refusal.'---'I am confounded, and not surprized,' said Nelson, 'at this generosity which overpowers me. I must subscribe to it with confusion, and revere it in silence. If I knew not how well respect reconciles itself to friendship, I should no longer dare to call you my friend.'

During the conversation Coraly had recovered, and again saw with terror the light which was restored to her. But what was her surprize, and the revolution which was suddenly wrought in her soul! 'All is known, all is forgiven!' said Nelson, embracing her, 'fall at the feet of our benefactor: from his hand I receive yours.' Coraly would have been profuse in her acknowledgements. 'You are a child,' said Blanford to her. 'You should have told me every thing. Let us talk no more of it; but let us never forget that there are trials, to which virtue itself would do well not to expose herself.'

THE MISANTHROPE CORRECTED.

THERE is no correcting the natural disposition, they will tell me, and I agree to it; but among a thousand combined accidents which compose a character, what eye is sufficiently fine to distinguish that indelible characteristic? How many vices and irregularities are attributed to Nature, which she never occasioned? Such is, in man, the hatred of mankind: it is a factitious character; a part which we take up out of whim, and maintain through habit; but in acting which, the soul is under restraint, from which she struggles to be delivered. What happened to the misanthrope, whom Moliere has painted, is an instance of it; and we are now going to see how he was brought to himself again.

Alceste, dissatisfied as you know with his mistress and his judges, detesting the city and the court, and resolved to fly mankind, retired very far from Paris, into

the Voges, near Laval, on the banks of the Vologne. This river, whose shells contain the pearl, is still more valuable, on account of the fertility which it communicates to its borders. The valley which it waters is a beautiful meadow. On one side arise smiling hills, interspersed with woods and hamlets; on the other extend in a plain, vast fields covered with corn. Thither Alcestes retired, to live forgotten by all nature. Free from all cares and duties, wholly resigned to himself, and at length delivered from the hateful sight of the world, he praised Heaven for having broken all his connections. A little study, much exercise, the less lively but tranquil pleasures of a gentle vegetation; in one word, a life peaceably active, preserved him from the dullness of solitude: he desired, he regretted, nothing.

One of the pleasures of his retreat was to see around him the earth, cultivated and fertile, nourish a people who seemed to be happy. A misanthrope, who is such from virtue, thinks that he hates men, only because he loves them. Alcestes felt an emotion mingled with joy, at the sight of his fellow creatures rich by the labour of their own hands. 'These people,' said he, 'are very happy in being yet half savages; they would soon be corrupted if they were more civilized.'

Walking in the fields, he accosts a labourer, ploughing and singing. 'God preserve you, good man,' said he to him; 'you are very merry!'—'According to custom,' replied the villager.—'I am very glad of it: it proves that you are content with your condition.'—'And well I may.'—'Are you married?'—'Yes, thank Heaven.'—'Have you any children?'—'I had five: I have lost one; but that loss may be repaired.'—'Is your wife young?'—'Twenty five.'—'Is she handsome?'—'She is so to me; but she is better than handsome, she is good.'—'And you love her?'—'Love her! who would not love her?'—'She loves you too, without doubt?'—'O, as to that, most heartily, and as well as before marriage.'—'You loved one another, then before marriage?'—'Or else should we have taken each other?'—'And your children, do they come on well?'—'Ah,

—‘ Ah, that is a pleasure! The eldest is but five; he has more wit than his father already. And my two girls! they are charming. It would be a very great pity if they should want husbands! The youngest boy sucks still; but the little rogue will be a sturdy fellow. Would you believe it; he beats his sisters when they go to kiss their mother. He is afraid that they are coming to take the breast from him.’—‘ All this is very happy?’—‘ Happy! I think so. You should see our joy, when I return from work. You would think they had not seen me for a year: I know not which to listen to. My wife hangs upon my neck; my daughters jump into my arms, my eldest boy seizes me by the legs; not one of them neglects me even to little Jackey himself, who rolling on his mother’s bed, stretches out his little hands to me; while I laugh, and cry, and kiss them; for all this moves me.’—‘ I believe it.’—‘ You ought to feel it, for to be sure you are a father.’—‘ I have not that happiness.’—‘ So much the worse: there is no other joy.’—‘ And how do you live?’—‘ Very well; upon excellent bread, good milk, and the fruits of our orchard. My wife, with a little bacon, makes a supper of cabbage, of which the king himself might eat. Then we have the eggs of our fowls; and on Sundays we regale ourselves, and drink a cup of wine.’—‘ Yes, but when the year turns out bad?’—‘ We are prepared for it, and live comfortably on what we have saved in a good one.’—‘ Aye, but the rigour of the weather, the cold, the rain, the heats?’—‘ We are accustomed to them; and if you knew what pleasures we have in coming in the evening to breathe the fresh air after a summer’s day; or, in winter to unnumb one’s hands at a fire of good brush-wood, between one’s wife and one’s children! And then we sup heartily, and go to sleep; and do you think that we ever bestow a thought upon the bad weather? Sometimes my wife says to me, “My good man, do you hear the wind and the storm? Ah, if you were now in the fields!”—“ I am not there, I am with thee,” I tell her; and in order to assure her of it, I press her against my bosom. Ah, Sir!

Sir! there are a great many of the fine people who do not live so happy as we.'-----' And the taxes?'-----' We pay them chearfully: it must be so. All the country cannot be noble. The lord of the manor, and the judge cannot come to labour. They supply our wants, we supply theirs: and every state of life, as it is said, has its troubles.'-----' What equity?' said the misanthrope. 'There, now, in two words, is the whole œconomy of primitive society. O Nature! there is nothing just but thee: it is in thy uncultivated simplicity that we find sound reason!----But in paying the tribute so well, do not you give room to be charged more heavily?'-----' We used to fear it formerly; but, thank God! the lord of the manor has freed us from that uneasiness. He performs the duty of our good king: he imposes, he receives himself, and in cases of necessity he makes the advances. He takes care of us, as if we were his children.'---' And who is this gallant man?'---' The Viscount de Laval. He is well enough known: the whole country respects him.'---' Does he reside in his castle?'---' He passes eight months of the year there.'---' And the rest?'---' At Paris, I believe.'---' Does he see company?'-----' The townsmen of Bruyères, and sometimes our old folks: who go to eat his soup, and to chatter with him.'-----' And does he bring any-body from Paris?'-----' No-body but his daughter.'-----' He is very much in the right!----And how does he employ himself?'---' In judging us, reconciling us, marrying our children, maintaining peace in our families, and assisting them when the seasons are bad.'---' I will go,' said Alcestes, 'to see his village: it must be moving.'

He was surprised to find the roads, even the cross-roads, bordered with hedges, and kept with care; but having met people busied in keeping them even; 'Ah,' said he, 'there are the statute-labourers.'---' Statute-labourers!' replied an old man, who presided over these works; 'we know none such here: these people are paid; no-body is constrained. Only if there come to the village a vagabond, an idle fellow, I am sent to him; and if

if he wants bread he earns it, or he goes to seek it elsewhere.'---'And who has established this happy policy?'---'Our good lord, the father to us all.'---'And the funds for this expence, who provides them?'---'The community; and as she imposes them herself, it comes not to pass, as is seen elsewhere, that the rich are exempted at the charge of the poor.'

Alcestes redoubled his esteem for the wise and beneficent man who governed this little people. 'How powerful would a king be,' said he, 'and a state how happy, if all the great proprietors of lands would follow the example of this nobleman! But Paris absorbs both the wealth and the men: it strips, it carries away every thing.'

The first glance of the village presented him with the image of ease and health. He enters into a plain and large building, which was to appearance a public edifice, and there he finds a multitude of children, women, and old men, employed in useful labours. Idleness was not permitted, excepting to the last weakness. Infancy, almost at its issuing from the cradle, acquired the habit and relish of labour; and old age, at the brink of the grave, still exercised its trembling hands. The season in which the earth rests, assembled to the workhouse the vigorous men; and then the shuttle, the saw, and the hatchet, gave a new value to the productions of Nature. 'I am not surprized,' said Alcestes, 'that these people should be exempt from vice and want. They are laborious and perpetually employed.' He enquired how the workhouse had been established. 'Our good lord,' said they to him, 'advanced the money. It was but a small matter at first; and all was done at his risk, at his expence, and his profit; but after being well assured that it was advantageous, he gave up the undertaking to us: he interferes no longer, except in protecting it; and every year he gives to the village the tools of some one of our arts: it is the present he makes at the first wedding that is celebrated in the year.'---'I must see this man,' said Alcestes: his character pleases me.'

He advances into the village, and he observes a house
into

into which the people are going and coming with uneasiness. He demands the cause of these movements; they tell him that the head of the family is at the point of death. He enters, and sees an old man, who with an expiring, but serene eye, seems to bid adieu to his children, who melt into tears around him. He distinguishes, in the midst of the crowd, a person moved, but less afflicted, who encourages and consoles them. By his plain and grave dress, he takes him for the physician of the village. 'Sir,' said he to him, 'be not surprized at seeing here a stranger. It is not an idle curiosity that brings me hither. These good people may have need of assistance at so melancholy a juncture; and I come -----' 'Sir,' said the viscount to him, 'my peasants thank you: I hope as long as I live, they will have need of nobody: and if money could prolong the days of a good man, this worthy father of a family should be restored to his children.'---'Ah, Sir,' said Alceste, on discovering Monsieur De Laval by this talk, 'pardon an uneasiness which I ought not to have had.'---'I am not offended,' replied M. De Laval, 'that a good deed should be disputed with me; but may I know who you are, and what brings you here?' At the name of Alceste, he recollected that censor of human nature, whose rigour was so well known; but without being intimidated, 'Sir,' said he, 'I am very glad to have you in my neighbourhood, and if I can be of service to you in any thing, I beg you to command me.'

Alceste went to visit M. De Laval, and was received by him with that plain and serious gentility which proclaims neither the want, nor the desire of being connected. 'There, now,' said he, 'is a man of some reserve. I like him the better for it.' He felicitated M. De Laval on the pleasures of his solitude. 'You come to live here,' said he, 'far from mankind, and you are very much in the right to fly from them!'---'I, Sir! I do not fly from mankind. I have neither the weakness, to fear them, the pride to despise them, nor the misfortune to hate them.' This answer came so home, that Alceste was disconcerted at it. But he would support
with

what he set out with, and he began the satire of the world. 'I have lived in the world, as well as others,' said M. De Laval, 'and I have not found it so wicked. There are vices and virtues in it, good and evil; I confess; but nature is so compounded, we must know how to accommodate ourselves to it.'---'Aye, but,' said Alcestes, 'in that compound, the good is so very small, and the evil so predominant, that the latter choaks up the former.'---'Ah, Sir,' replied the viscount, 'if we were as strongly fired with the good as with the evil, if we used the same warmth in publishing it, and good examples were posted up as bad ones are, can you doubt but that the good ones would carry it on the balance? But gratitude speaks so low, and complaint declaims so loud, that we only hear the latter. Esteem and friendship are commonly moderate in their commendations: they imitate the modesty of the virtuous in praising them; whereas resentment and injury exaggerate every thing to excess. Thus we see not the good but through a medium which lessens it, and we view the evil through a vapour which magnifies it.'

'Sir,' said Alcestes to the viscount, 'you make me wish to think like you; and though I might have on my side the melancholy truth, your mistake would be preferable.'---'Why, yes, without doubt: fretfulness is of no service. A fine part for a man to play, to be out of humour like a child, and get into a corner to pout at all the world! and why? For the bickerings of the circle in which we live; as if all nature were an accomplice and responsible for the injuries at which we are hurt!'---'You are right,' said Alcestes, 'it would be unjust to render man a solitary animal; but how many griefs have we not to reproach them with in common? Believe me, Sir, my prejudice has serious and weighty motives. You will do me justice when you know me. Permit me to see you often.'---'Often, that is difficult,' said the viscount: 'my time is very much taken up; and my daughter and I have our studies, which leave us little leisure; but sometimes, if you please, we will enjoy our neighbourhood, at our ease, and without laying

laying any constraint on each other; for the privilege of the country is to have it in our power to be alone when we have a mind.

‘This man is rare in his species,’ said Alceste on going away. ‘And his daughter, who listened to us with the air of so tender a veneration for her father; this daughter, brought up under his eye, accustomed to a plain life, pure manners, and pleasures that are innocent, will be an estimable woman, or I am very much mistaken—at least,’ resumed he, ‘unless they lead her astray in that Paris, where every thing is ruined.’

If we were to represent to ourselves delicacy and sentiment personified, we should have the idea of Ursula’s beauty. (It was thus that Mademoiselle de Laval was called.) Her figure was such as imagination gives to the youngest of the Graces. She was eighteen years compleat; and by the freshness and regularity of her charms, one might see that Nature had just put the last hand to her. When unmoved, the lilies of her complexion prevailed over the roses; but on the slightest emotion of her soul, the roses effaced the lilies. It was little to have the colouring of flowers, her skin had also that fineness, and that down so soft, so velvet-like, which nothing has yet tarnished. But it was in the features of Ursula’s countenance, that a thousand charms varied perpetually, displayed themselves successively. In her eyes, sometimes a modest languor, a timid sensibility seemed to issue from her soul, and to express itself by her looks; sometimes a noble severity, and commanding with sweetness, moderated the touching lustre of it; and we saw there reigning by turns, severe decency, fearful modesty, and lively and tender voluptuousness. Her voice and mouth were of that kind which embellish every thing; her lips could not move without discovering new attractions; and when she condescended to smile, her very silence was ingenuous. Nothing more simple than her attire, and nothing more elegant. In the country she let grow her hair, which was of a pale white, of the softest tint; and ringlets which art could not hold captive, floated around her ivory

ivory neck, and waved down upon her beautiful bosom. The misanthrope had found in her the gentlest air, and the most decent conversation. 'It would be a pity,' said he, 'that she should fall into bad hands: she might make an accomplished woman. Indeed, the more I think of it, the more I congratulate myself in having her father for a neighbour; he is an upright man, a gallant man: I do not believe that he has a very right way of thinking, but he has an excellent heart.'

Some days after, M. de Laval in walking out returned his visit; and Alcestes talked to him of the pleasure which he must have in making people happy. 'It is a fine example,' added he, 'and to the shame of mankind a pretty rare one! How many folks, richer and more powerful than you, are only a burden to the people!'—'I neither excuse them, nor blame them,' replied M. de Laval. 'To do good, there must be the power; and when we can, we ought to know how to seize it. But think not that it is so easy to effect it. It is not sufficient to be dexterous enough; we must be also happy enough; we must know how to treat just, sensible, docile minds; and frequently a great deal of address and patience is necessary to lead on a people, naturally diffident and fearful, to what is advantageous to them.'—'Truly,' said Alcestes, 'it is the excuse which they make; but do you think it a very solid one? And the obstacles which you have overcome, cannot they also conquer them?'—'I have been,' said M. De Laval, 'solicited by opportunity, and seconded by circumstances. This people, newly conquered, thought themselves undone without resource, and the moment that I held open my arms to them, their despair made them rush into them. At the mercy of an arbitrary impost, they had conceived so much terror, that they chose rather to endure their vexations than to shew a little ease. The expences of the levy aggravated the impost: these good people were over-rated; and poverty was the asylum into which discouragement had

thrown them. On my arrival here I found established this distressing and destructive maxim to the country : *The more we labour the more we shall be trampled upon.* The men durst not be laborious, the women trembled at becoming fruitful. I went back to the source of the evil : I addressed myself to the man appointed to collect the tribute—" Sir," said I to him, " my vassals groan under the burdens of constraint : I would wish to hear no more of it. Let us see what they owe yet of the year's impost ; I am come to acquit them."—" Sir," replied the receiver to me, " that cannot be."—" Why so ?" said I. " It is not the rule."—" How ! not the rule to pay the king the tribute which he demands ? to pay it him with the least expence possible, and with the least delay ?"—" Yes," said he, " that is the king's interest, but not mine. What would become of me, if it were to be paid down ? The expences are the perquisites of my office."---To so good a reason I had no reply ; and without insisting farther, went to see the intendant.-----" I beg two favours of you," said I to him : " one, that I may be permitted, every year, to pay the tribute for my vassals ; the other, that their district may experience only the variations of the public tax." I obtained what I asked.

" Friends," said I to my peasants, whom I assembled at my arrival, " I now give you notice, that it is in my hands you are to deposit for the future the just tribute which you owe to the king. No more vexations, no more expence. Every Sunday, at the parish-bank, your wives shall bring their savings, and you will be insensibly cleared. Labour, cultivate your estates, increase their value to a hundred fold ; may the ground enrich you ; you shall not be charged the more for it : I, your father, will be answerable to you for it. Those who shall be deficient, I will assist ; and a few days of the dead season of the year employed on my works, will reimburse me what I advance."

' This plan was approved, and we have followed it. Our farmers wives never fail to bring me their little offering.

offering. On receiving it, I encourage them; I tell them of our good king; they go away with tears in their eyes: thus I make an act of love of what they looked upon, before my time, as an act of servitude.

‘The statute-works had their turn, and the intend-ant, who detested them, but knew not how to remedy them, was enchanted at the method which I had taken to exempt my village from them.

‘Lastly, as there was here a great deal of superfluous time, and useless hands, I established the workhouse, which you may have seen. It is the property of the community; they administer it under their own eyes: every one works there; but that labour is not sufficiently paid to divert them from working in the fields. The husbandman employs in it only the time which would otherwise be lost. The profit which they draw from it, forms a fund which is employed in contributing to the militia, and to the expences of public works. But an advantage more precious still, from this establishment, is to have increased the human race. When children are a charge, we get no more than we are able to maintain; but from the moment that, at their issue from the cradle, they are able to provide for their own subsistence, Nature delivers herself up to her attraction, without reserve or uneasiness. We seek the means of population: there is but one; the subsistence, the employment of mankind. As they are born only to live, we must insure them a livelihood at their birth.’

‘Nothing wiser than your principles, nothing more virtuous than your cares; but confess,’ replied the misanthrope, ‘that this good, important as it is, is not so difficult as to discourage those who love it; and that if there were men like you----’ ‘Say, rather, if they were so situated. I have had circumstances in my favour, and every thing depends upon that. We see what is right; we love it; we wish to effect it; but obstacles arise on every step we take. There needs but one to prevent it; and instead of one, there arise a thousand. I was here very much at my ease: not a

man of credit had an interest in the evil which I meant to destroy; and how little would have been sufficient to prevent my being able to remedy it? Suppose instead of a tractable intendant, I had been under the necessity of seeing, persuading, prevailing on an absolute man, jealous of his power, entirely led by his own opinions, or swayed by the counsels of his subaltern officers. Nothing of all this scheme could have taken place: they would have told me not to busy myself, but to let things of this kind alone. Thus it is that good-will remains often useless on the part of the rich. I know that you do not suspect it; but there is in your prejudices more caprice than you imagine.'

Alceste, touched to the quick by this reproach, from a man whose esteem was to him of so great value, endeavoured to justify himself. He told him of the lawsuit he had lost, of the coquette who had deceived him, and of all his subjects of complaint against human nature.

'Truly,' said the viscount to him, this was a mighty matter to make one uneasy! You go to choose among a thousand women a giddy creature, who amuses herself, and makes a fool of you, as it were with reason; you take most seriously that love of which she makes a mere diversion: who is to blame? But granting her wrong, are all women like her? What! because there are knaves among the men, are you and I the less honest on that account? In the individual, who hurts you, you hate the species! There is caprice, neighbour; there is caprice in this, you must agree.

'You have lost a cause which you thought just; but does not a suitor, who is a person of integrity, always think that he has a good cause? Are you alone more disinterested, more infallible, than your judges? And if they have wanted lights, are they criminal for that? I, Sir, when I see men devote themselves to a state of life which has many troubles in it, and very few pleasures, which imposes on their manners all the constraint of the most severe decorum, which requires an unre-
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mitted application, a steady recollection, a labour without any salary, where virtue herself is almost without lustre; when I see them, environed with the luxury and pleasures of an opulent city, live retired, solitary, in the frugality, simplicity, and modesty of the first ages; I consider, as a sacrilege, the reproach of their equity. Now, such is the life of the greater part of the judges whom you accuse upon such slight foundations. It is not some giddy persons, whom you see fluttering in the world, that hold the balance of the laws. Till such time as they become more prudent, they have at least the modesty to be silent before consummate judges. The latter are sometimes mistaken, without doubt, because they are not angels; but they are less of men than you and I; and I will never be persuaded, that a venerable old man, who at the break of day drags himself to the hall with a tottering pace, goes there to commit injustice.

‘With regard to the court, there are so many interests in it, so complicated, and so powerful, which thwart and oppose each other, that it is natural that men should there be more delivered up to their passions, and more wicked than elsewhere. But neither you nor I have passed through these great trials of ambition and envy; and it has depended, perhaps, on but a trifle, that we have not been, as well as others, false friends and base flatterers. Believe me, Sir, few people have a right to settle the police of the world.’

‘All honest people have that right,’ said Alcestes, ‘and if they would league themselves together, the wicked would not have so much audaciousness and credit in the world.’—‘When that league is formed,’ said M. De Laval, going away, ‘we will both enrol ourselves in it. Till then, neighbour, I advise you to do, without noise, in your little corner, the utmost good you can, by taking for a rule the love of mankind, and in reserving your hatred for a few sad exceptions.’

‘It is a very great pity,’ said Alcestes, when M. De Laval was gone, ‘that goodness should be always ac-

accompanied with weakness, while wickedness has so much strength and vigour!----' It is a very great pity,' said M. De Laval, 'that this honest man has taken a bias, which renders him useless to himself and others! He has uprightness, he loves virtue; but virtue is but a chimera without the love of human nature.' Thus both, judging each other, were displeased with one another.

An incident, pretty singular, rendered Alcestes still less at his ease with M. De Laval. The Baron of Blonzac, a right Gascon, a man of honour, but haughty, and a misanthrope in his manner, had married the Canoness of Remiremont, a relation of the viscount. His garrison was in Lorraine. He came to see M. De Laval; and whether it was to amuse himself, or to correct two misanthropes by means of each other, M. De Laval wanted to set them by the ears. He sent to invite Alcestes to dinner.

Among men, table-talk turns pretty often upon politics; and the Gascon, from the moment they had dined, began laying on, and drinking at a great rate. 'I make no point of concealing it,' said he, 'I have taken an aversion to the world. I would be two thousand leagues out of my own country, and two thousand years removed from my own age. It is the country of whores and knaves; it is the age of favourites; intrigue and favour have done their parts, and have forgot nothing but merit. He that pays his court obtains every thing, and he that does his duty has nothing. Myself, for example, who have never known but to march where honour calls, and to fight as becomes a soldier, I am known by the enemy; but may the devil take me if either the ministry, or the court, know that I exist! If they were to hear any mention of me, they would take me for one of my grandfathers; and if they should be told that a cannon-ball had taken off my head, I will lay a wager they would ask, if there were any more Blonzacs.'--'Why do you not shew yourself?' said M. De Laval to him. 'There is no necessity to let one's self be forgot.'-----'Why, my lord, I shew myself in the
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‘the day of battle. Is it at Paris that the colours are flying?’

In the midst of this talk, letters were brought M. De Laval from Paris. He asks leave to read them, ‘In order to know,’ said he, ‘if there be any thing new:’ and one of his letters informs him, that the command of the citadel, which he solicited for M. De Blonzac, without his knowledge, had just been granted him. ‘Hold,’ said he to him, ‘there now is one who regards you.’ Blonzac read, leaped with joy, and ran to embrace the viscount; but after the folly he had made, he durst not mention what had happened to him. Alcestes believing he had found in him a second, did not fail in urging him. ‘There,’ said he, ‘there, now, is an example of those acts of injustice which shock me: a man of birth, a good soldier, after having served the state, remains forgotten, unrewarded; and let them tell me, now, that all goes well.’---‘Why,’ replied Blonzac, ‘we must be just: every thing goes not so ill as is said. Rewards are to be waited for a little; but they come in time. It is not the fault of the ministry, if more services are performed than there are rewards to be bestowed; and, in fact, they do what they can.’ Alcestes was a little surprized at this change of language, and the apologetical tone which Blonzac assumed during the rest of the entertainment. ‘Come,’ said the viscount, ‘in order to reconcile you, let us drink the commandant’s health:’ and he published what he had just learned. ‘I ask the gentleman’s pardon,’ said Alcestes, ‘for having dwelt on his complaints: I did not know the reasons which he had to retract them.’---‘I!’ said Blonzac, ‘I have no animosity, and I come to like a child.’---‘You see,’ resumed M. De Laval, ‘that a misanthrope is to be brought back to reason.’---‘Yes,’ replied Alcestes, ‘when he regulates his sentiments on his own personal interest.’---‘Ah, Sir!’ said Blonzac, ‘do you know any one who is warm for what touches him neither nearly nor at a distance?’---‘Every thing that concerns humanity,’ replied Alcestes, ‘touches a good
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good man nearly; and doubt not but there are friends enough of the order, to hate the evil as evil, without any respect to themselves.'---'I will believe it,' replied the Gascon, 'when I see any one uneasy at what passes in China; but as long as people are afflicted only at the hurt which they feel themselves, or which they may feel, I shall believe that they think only of themselves, while they have the air of being taken up with the thought of others. As for me, I am sincere; I never gave myself up as an advocate for the discontented. Let every one plead his own cause. I complained while I had reason to complain; I now make my peace with the world, as soon I have reason to be satisfied with it.'

As much as the scene with Blonzac disturbed Alceste, so much did it rejoice M. De Laval and his daughter. 'There,' said they, 'has our misanthrope received a good lesson.'

Whether it was shame or policy, he was some days without seeing them. He came again, however, one afternoon. The viscount was gone to the village; Mademoiselle De Laval received him; and on seeing himself alone with her, a transport seized him, which he had some difficulty to conceal.

'We have not had the honour of seeing you,' said she to him, 'since M. De Blonzac's visit; what say you to that gentleman?'---'Why, he is a man like the rest.'---'Not so much like the rest: he speaks with an open heart; he says what others conceal; and that frankness makes him, in my opinion, a pretty singular character.'---'Yes, Mademoiselle, frankness is rare; and I am very glad to see that at your age you are convinced of it. You will often have occasion to recollect it, I promise you. Ah, in what a world you are going to fall! My lord excuses it in the best manner he is able: his own beautiful soul does the rest of mankind the honour to judge of them according to itself; but if you knew, how dangerous and hateful the greater part are!'-----'You for example,' said Ursula, smiling, 'you have
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very great reason to complain of it, is it not true?'----

'Spare me, I pray you, and attribute not to me the personalities of M. De Blonzac. I think as he does in certain respects; but our motives are not the same.'----

'I believe it; but explain to me what I am not able to conceive. Vice and virtue, I have been told, are nothing more than relative terms. The one is vice, because it hurts mankind; the other virtue, on account of the good which it occasions.'----

'Exactly so.'----'To hate vice, to love virtue, is therefore only to interest ourselves in the welfare of mankind; and in order to interest ourselves we must love them. For how can you at once interest yourself, and hate them?'----

'I interest myself in the welfare of the good whom I love, and I detest the wicked who hurt them; but the good are so very few in number, and the world is so full of bad people.'----

'See there, now. Your hatred at least extends not to all mankind. But do you think that those whom you love are every where so few in number? Let us make a voyage together in idea. Do you agree to it?'-----

'With all my heart.'----'First in the country, are you not persuaded that there are morals; and if not virtues, at least simplicity, goodness, innocence?'----'There is also commonly distrust and craft.'----'Alas! I can easily conceive what my father has said more than once: craft and distrust are the consequence of weakness. We find them in the villagers, as in women and children. They have every thing to fear; they escape, they defend themselves as well as they can; and we observe the same instinct in most animals.'----

'Yes,' said Alceste, 'and that very circumstance forms the satyr of the cruel and rapacious animals which they have to guard against.'----

'I understand you; but we are now speaking only of the country people, and you will agree with me, that they are more worthy of pity than of hatred.'--

'Oh, I agree.'----'Let us pass to the cities, and take Paris for example.'----

'My God! what an example you choose.'----'Very well; even in that same Paris, the common people are good: my father frequents them; he goes

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often into those obscure recesses, where poor families, crowded together, groan in want; he says that he finds there a modesty, patience, an honesty, and sometimes even a nobleness of thinking, which moves and astonishes him."-----"And this it is which ought to set us against an un pitying world, which forsakes suffering virtue, and pays respect to successful and insolent vice." "Not so fast: we are at the common people. Agree that, in general, they are good, docile, courteous, honest, and that their own sincerity gives them a confidence which is very often abused."-----"Oh, very often!"-----"You love the common people, then! And in all places the common people form the greater number."-----"Not every where."-----"We are speaking only of our own country: it is with that which I would reconcile you at present. Now let us come to the great folks; and tell me, first, if my father has imposed on me in it, when he has painted the manners of the women. "As their duties," said he, "are included in the interior of a private life, their virtues have nothing dazzling: it is only their vices that are conspicuous; and the folly of one woman makes more noise than the discretion of a thousand. Thus the evil rises in evidence, and the good remains buried." My father adds, that one moment of weakness, one imprudence, ruins a woman, and that this blemish has sometimes tarnished a thousand excellent qualities. He confesses, in short, that the vice which we most reproach women with, and which does them the most injury, hurts only themselves, and that there is no reason for hating them. For the rest, what is it you reproach us with? A little falsehood? But that is all by agreement. Instructed from our fancy to endeavour to please you, we have no other care but to conceal what will not please you. If we disguise ourselves, it is only under those charms which you love better than our own. And do you know that nothing is more humiliating to us? I am young; but I can easily perceive, that the most beautiful act of our freedom is, to shew ourselves such as we are; but to disguise one's soul, and to disavow one's self, is of all the

the acts of servitude the most degrading ; and we must do to self-love the most painful violence, to debase one's self to a lye, and to dissimulation. This is what I find woman a slave in ; and it is a yoke which has been imposed on us.'---' If all women thought as nobly as you do, beautiful Ursula, they would not so lightly, and in gaiety of heart, make a mere pastime of deceiving us.'---' If they deceive you, it is your own fault. You are our kings : convince us that you love nothing so much as truth, that truth alone pleases and touches you, and we will tell it you always. What is the ambition of a woman ? To be lovely, and to be loved. Very well, write on the apple, *To the most sincere* ; they will all dispute it with each other in unaffected simplicity. But you have written, *To the most seducing* ; and each tries, who shall seduce you the best. As for our jealousies, our little animosities, our tattlings, our bickerings ; all these things are only amusing to you ; and you will agree that your wars are of very different consequence. Nothing remains, then, but the frivolousness of our tastes and humours ; but whenever you please, we shall be more solid ; and, perhaps, there are many women who have seized, as it were by stealth, lights and principles which custom envied them.'---' You are a proof of it,' said Alceste to her, ' you whose soul is so much above your sex and your age.'---' I am young,' replied Ursula, ' and I have a right to your indulgence ; but the question is not concerning me ; it is the world which you fly, which you abandon, without well knowing why. I have attempted the defence of the women ; I leave to my father the care of accomplishing that of the men ; but I tell you before-hand, that in giving me the picture of their society, he has often told me, that there were almost as few perverse minds as there are heroic souls, and that the majority was composed of weak, harmless people, who required nothing but peace and quiet.'---' Yes, peace and quiet, every one for himself, and at the expence of the person to whom it belongs. The world,

world, Mademoiselle, is composed only of dupes and knaves: now, nobody would be a dupe; and to speak only of what concerns yourself, I must tell you, that all the idle people there are at Paris of an age to please, are employed morning and evening in nothing else but in laying snares for the women.'---'Good!' said Ursula, 'they know it; and my father is persuaded that this contest of gallantry on the one side, and coquetry on the other, is nothing but a diversion, in which both are agreed. Let who will be of the party: those who like not the sport, have only to keep themselves in their own corners; and nothing, he says, is in less danger than virtue, when it is real.'---'You think so?'---'I am so thoroughly persuaded of it, that if ever I commit an indiscretion, I declare to you before-hand, it will be because I shall have liked it.'---'Without doubt they like it; but they like it when seduced by an enchanter who makes you like it.'---'That also is an excuse which at present I renounce: I have no faith in enchantments.'

They were got so far, when Monsieur De Laval arrived from his walk. 'What say you to Alcestes?' continued Ursula. 'He would have me tremble at being exposed in the world to the seduction of the men.'---'Why, said the father, 'we must not be too confident; I do not think thee infallible.'---'No, but you shall be my guard; and if you lose sight of me, you know what you have promised me.'---'I will endeavour to keep my word.'---'May I be in the secret?' demanded Alcestes, with a timid air. 'There is no secret in it,' replied Ursula: 'my father has had the goodness to instruct me in my duties? and if he could guide me perpetually, I should be very sure of not going astray. If I forgot myself, he would not forget me; accustomed to read my soul, he would regulate all its motions; but as he will not always have his eyes upon me, he has promised me another guide, a husband, which may be his friend and mine, and who shall supply the place of a father.'---'Add also, and of a lover; for

for a young woman must have love. I would have you be discreet, but I would likewise have you be happy; and if I had the imprudence to give you a husband who did not love you, or knew not how to please you, I should no longer have the right of taking it ill, that the desire of enjoying the greatest of felicities, that of loving and being loved, should make you forget my lessons.'

Alcestes went away, charmed at the wisdom of so good a father, and more still with the candour and honesty of the daughter. 'A distinction has been made,' said he, 'between the age of innocence and of reason; but in her happy disposition, innocence and reason unite. Her soul purifies, at the same time that it enlightens itself. Ah! if there were a man worthy of cultivating gifts so precious, what a source of delicious enjoyments to him! There is nothing but this world, filled with shelves, from which it is necessary to keep her at a distance. But if she loved, what would it be to her? A virtuous and tender husband would suffice her, would be to her instead of every thing. I dare believe, that at twenty-five, I was the man who suited her--At twenty-five! and what did I know then? To amuse myself, and run into dissipations! Was I capable of filling the place of a wife and vigilant father? I should have loved her to distraction; but what confidence should I have inspired into her? It is not, perhaps, too much yet to have fifteen years more experience. But from eighteen to forty, the interval must be frightful to her. There is no thinking of it.'

He thought of it, however, all night long; the next day he did nothing else; and the day following, the first idea which presented itself to him was that of his amiable Ursula. 'Ah, what a pity, said he, 'what a pity, if she were to take to the vices of the world! her soul is pure as her beauty. What sweetness in her temper! what touching simplicity in her manners and language! They talk of eloquence; is there any truer? It was impossible for her to convince me; but she has persuaded me. I have desired to think like her: I could

have wished that the illusion, which she spread before me, were never dissipated. Why have I not over her, or rather over her father, that lost empire which she has over me? I would engage them to live here in the simplicity of nature. And what need should we have of the world? Ah! three hearts, thoroughly united, two lovers and a father, have they not, in the intimacy of a mutual tenderness, sufficient to render themselves fully happy?

In the evening when walking out, his steps turned, as it were of themselves, towards M. De Laval's gardens. He found him there with the pruning-knife in his hand, amidst his espaliers. 'Confess,' said he to him, 'that these tranquil pleasures are well worth those noisy ones which people like, or think they they like, at Paris.'---'Every thing has its season,' replied the viscount. 'I love the country while it is alive: I am useless at Paris, and my village has need of me; I enjoy myself there, and the good which I do; my daughter is pleased and amused there; this is what attracts and retains me. But think not that I live there alone. Our little town of Bruyeres is full of honest people, who love and cultivate letters. There is no part of the world where the inhabitants have gentler manners. They are polite with freedom; plain, yet informed. Candour, uprightness, and gaiety are the character of that amiable people: they are social, humane, beneficent. Hospitality is a virtue, which the father transmits to his son. The women are sprightly and virtuous; and society embellished by them, unites the charms of decency to the pleasures of liberty. But in enjoying so sweet a commerce, I cease not still to love Paris; and if friendship, the love of letters, connections which I hold dear, did not recal me there, the attraction of variety alone would carry me back every year. The most lively pleasures languish at last, and the sweetest become insipid to him who knows not how to vary them.'---'I can conceive, however,' said the misanthrope, 'that a society, not numerous, intimately connected with ease
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and truth, might supply every thing to itself; and if an offer, agreeable to Mademoiselle De Laval, had no other inconvenience in it than that of fixing her in the country, I am persuaded that you yourself---' 'Why, truly,' said M. De Laval, 'if my daughter could be happy there, I should make her happiness mine: that is most certain. It is now fifty years since I have lived for myself; it is high time now that I should live for her. But we are not come to that. My daughter loves Paris, and I am rich enough to settle her there decently.'

This was enough for Alcestes; and for fear of discovering himself, he turned the conversation to gardening, by asking M. De Laval if he did not cultivate flowers. 'They pass away too soon,' replied the viscount. 'The pleasure and regret of them border so nearly on each other, and the idea of destruction intermingles I know not what of melancholy in the sentiment of enjoyment. In a word, I feel more chagrin in seeing a rose-bush stripped, than joy on seeing it flourish. The culture of kitchen herbs has an interest more gradual, more supported, and to say the truth, more satisfactory; for it terminates in the useful. While Art exercises and fatigues itself in varying the scenes of a flower-garden, Nature herself changes the decorations of the kitchen-garden. How many metamorphoses, for example, have these peach-trees experienced, from the very budding of their leaves to the full maturity of their fruits! Talk to me, neighbour, of lasting pleasures; those which, like flowers, endure but a day, cost too much to renew.'

Master of the father's temper, Alcestes wanted to inform himself of that of the daughter, and it was easy for him to have a private conversation with her. 'The more I penetrate,' said he to her, 'into your father's heart, the more I admire and love him.'---'So much the better,' said Ursula; 'his examples will soften your manners; he will reconcile you with those like him.'---'Like him! Ah, how few are there of them! It is to him, without doubt, a favour from Heaven to have a

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daughter like you, beautiful Ursula ; but it is a happiness as rare to have a father like him. May the husband which the Almighty destines you, be worthy both of one and the other !'---' Pray to Heaven,' said she smiling, ' that he be not a misanthrope ! Men of that cast are too difficult to correct.'---' Would you like better,' said Alcestes, ' one of those cold and trifling men, whom every thing amuses, and nothing interests ; one of those weak and easy men, whom the mode bends and fashions to her own taste ; who are wax, with respect to the manners of the time, and to whom custom is the supreme law ? A misanthrope loves but few ; but when he loves, he loves truly.'---' Yes, I perceive that such a conquest is flattering to vanity ; but I am plain, and not vain. I would not find in a heart devoted to me asperity or moroseness ; I would wish to be able to communicate to it the softness of my own temper, and that sentiment of universal benevolence, which makes me see men and things on the most comfortable side. I could not spend my life in loving a man, who would pass his in hatred.'---' That is not civil, for they accuse me of being a misanthrope.'---' Why, it is from you, and you alone, that I have taken the idea of that character : for M. De Blonzac's humour was nothing but a fit of the pouts ; and you have seen how small a matter could bring him to himself again ; but a hatred of mankind, arising from reflection and founded on principles, is horrible ; and this is what you profess. I am persuaded that your aversion for the world is nothing but whim, an excess of virtue : you are not wicked, you are only rigid ; and I believe you as little indulgent to yourself as to another ; but this too severe and impatient probity renders you unsociable ; and you must confess, that a husband of that temper would not be entertaining.'---' You would have a husband entertain you, then ?'---' And entertain himself,' replied she ; ' with the same things as me ; for if marriage be a participation of cares, it ought, in return, to be a society of pleasures.'

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‘ Nothing clearer,’ said Alceſtes to himſelf, after their converſation: ‘ ſhe could not have told me her thoughts more plainly, though ſhe had divined mine. This is for me and my comrades a diſcharge beforehand. And what am I thinking of? I am forty years, free and eaſy; it depends on myſelf only to be happy. Happy! And can I be ſo alone, with a ſoul ſo ſenſible? I fly the men! Ah, it was the women, the handſome women, whom I ought to have ſrown. I thought I knew them ſufficiently to have no more to fear from them; but who could have expected what has happened to me? I muſt, to my miſfortune, in the corner of a province, find beauty, youth, graces, wiſdom, virtue herſelf, united in one and the ſame object. It ſeems as if Love purſued me, and that he had purpoſely made this dear girl to confound and diſtreſs me, And what a way ſhe takes to trouble my repoſe! I deſt air; nothing more ſimple than ſhe. I deſpiſe coquetry; ſhe thinks not even of pleaſing, I love, I adore candour; her ſoul ſhews itſelf quite naked. She tells me to my face, the moſt cruel truths: what would ſhe do more, if ſhe had reſolved to turn my brain? She is very young; ſhe will change: launched into the world, which ſhe loves, ſhe will ſoon aſſume the manners of it; and it is to be believed that ſhe will at laſt be a woman like the reſt.--To be believed! Ah, I do not believe it; and if I believed it, I ſhould be too unjuſt. She will be the happineſs and glory of her huſband, if he be worthy of her. And I, I ſhall live alone detached from every thing, in a ſtate of ſolitude and annihilation; for it muſt be confeſſed, the ſoul is annihilated as ſoon as it loves nothing any longer. What do I ſay? Alas! if I loved no longer, would that repoſe, that ſleep of the ſoul, be frightful to me? Flattering idea of a greater happineſs! It is thou, thou that makeſt me perceive the void and dulneſs of myſelf. Ah, to cheriſh my ſolitude for ever, I ſhould never have gone out of it!’

Theſe reflections, and theſe ſtruggles, plunged him

into a melancholy, which he thought it his duty to bury. Eight days having rolled away, the viscount surprized at not seeing him again, sent to know if he was sick. Alceste returned for answer, that in fact he had not been well for some time past. The sensible soul of Ursula was affected at this answer. She had entertained, since his absence, some suspicion of the truth; she was now the more persuaded of it, and reproached herself for having afflicted him. 'Let us go and see him,' said the viscount; 'his condition moves my pity. Ah, daughter, what a gloomy and painful resolution is that of living alone, and of being sufficient to one's self? Man is too weak to support it.'

When Alceste saw, for the first time, Mademoiselle De Laval enter his house, it seemed as if his habitation had transformed itself into a temple. He was seized with joy and respect; but the impression of melancholy still made an alteration on his features. 'What is the matter, Alceste?' said M. De Laval to him. 'I find you afflicted; and you lay hold of that moment to fly me. Do you think us some of those people who do not love sorrowful countenances, and who must always be accosted with a laugh? When you are easy and happy, keep at home; very well: but when you have any grief, come to me, either to pity or console you.' Alceste listened, and admired in silence. 'Yes,' said he, 'I am struck with a thought which pursues and afflicts me: I would not, and I ought not, to conceal it from you. Heaven is my witness, that after having renounced the world, I regretted nothing when I knew you. Since I perceive that I deliver myself up to the pleasure of your company; that my soul is attached to you by all the ties of esteem and friendship; and that when they must be broken, alas! perhaps for ever, this retreat, which I should have cherished, will be my grave. My resolution, therefore, is taken, not to wait till the charms of so sweet a connection render the solitude in which I am to live completely odious; and in revering you, in loving both the one and the other, as two beings by which Nature

Nature is to procure honour to herself, and of which the world is not worthy, I beg you to permit me to bid you an eternal farewell.' Then taking the viscount's hands, and kissing them respectfully, he watered them with his tears. 'I will see you no more, Sir,' added he, 'but I will hold you dear for ever.'

'Nonsense,' said M. De Laval to him; 'and who hinders us to live together, if you like my acquaintance? You have taken an aversion to the world: a mere whim: but no matter; I know you have a good heart; and though our tempers may not be the same, I see nothing incompatible in them: and perhaps they resemble each other more than you imagine. Why then take a resolution which afflicts you, and which would afflict me? You think with sorrow on the moment of our separation: it depends only on yourself to follow us. Nothing more easy than to live at Paris, free, solitary, and detached from the world. My company is not tumultuous: it shall be yours; and I promise you, I will not force you to see any but such as you shall esteem.'---'Your goodness penetrates me,' said Alceste; 'and I know what I owe to such kindness.'---'Nothing in it,' replied the viscount; 'such as you are, you suit me. I esteem you, I pity you; and if I deliver you up to your own melancholy, you are a lost man; that would be a pity; and the condition which you are in, permits me not to abandon you. In a month I quit the country; I have room for you; and whether under the title of friendship or gratitude, I insist on your accepting it.'---'Ah!' said Alceste, 'that it were possible!'---'Have you,' demanded the viscount, 'any obstacle? If your fortune were out of order, I flatter myself that you are not the man to blush at confessing it.'---'No,' said Alceste, 'I am richer than a single person had need to be. I have ten thousand crowns a year, and owe nothing. But a more serious motive retains me here: you shall judge of it.'---'Come and sup with us, then, and I will disperse all these clouds if I can.'---'You make a hydra,' said he to Alceste on the road, 'of the vice and wickedness you have

have seen in the world. Would you try now, to what a small number this class of men, who terrify you are reduced, make out a list of them with me this evening: and I defy you to name a hundred persons whom you have a right to hate.'---'O Heaven! I could name a thousand.'---'We'll see. Remember only to be just, and to establish your complaints well.'---'Nay, it is not on particular facts that I judge them, but by the gross of their manners. For example; it is pride which I condemn in some, meanness in others. I object to them the abuse of riches, of credit, of authority, an exclusive love of themselves, a cruel insensibility to the misfortunes and wants of others: and although these vices, in every stage of life, have not features sufficiently marked, formally to exclude a man from the number of honest people, yet they authorize me to banish him from the number of those whom I esteem and love.'---'From the instant that we talk in general,' said the viscount, 'we declaim as much as we please; but we render ourselves liable to be unjust. Our esteem is a possession of which we are but the depositaries, and which appertains of right to him who deserves it. Our contempt is a punishment, which it depends on us to inflict, but not according to our own caprice; and every one of us, in judging of his fellow, owes him the examination which he would require, if it were himself were to be judged; for, in regard to manners, public censure is a tribunal where we all sit, but to which we are also all cited. Now, who of us consents that we should be accused there on vague presumptions, and to be condemned without proofs? Consult your own heart, and see in yourself whether you duly observe the first of all laws?'

Alceste walked with his eyes cast down, and sighed deeply. 'You have in your mind,' said the viscount, 'some deep wound, which I do not probe. I only combat your opinions; and it is, perhaps, to your sensations that I ought to apply the remedy.'

On these words, they arrive at the castle of Laval; and, whether through penetration or delicacy, Ursula steals away, and leaves them together. 'Sir,'

‘Sir,’ said Alceſtes to the viſcount, ‘I am now going to talk to you as to a friend of twenty years: your goodneſs engages me, and my duty obliges me to it. It is but too true that I muſt renounce what formed the conſolation and the charm of my life, the pleaſure of ſeeing you, and living with you. Another man would make uſe of circumlocution, and bluſh to break ſilence; but I ſee nothing in my miſfortune which I ought to diſſemble. I have not been able to ſee with indifference, what Nature has formed the moſt accompliſhed in its kind: I confeſs it to Urſula’s father; and I beſeech him to forget it after I have taken my leave.’—‘How,’ ſaid the viſcount, ‘is this the great ſecret? Very well, now we have it; you are in love: is there any thing in that to make you unhappy? Ah! I would fain be ſo yet; and far from being aſhamed, I ſhould glory in it. Come, we muſt endeavour to pleaſe, to be very tender, very complaiſant: we are ſtill amiable at your age; perhaps you will be beloved.’—‘Ah, Sir, you do not underſtand me.’—‘Pardon me; I believe I do. You are in love with Urſula?’—‘Alas! yes, Sir.’—‘Very well; who hinders you from trying, at leaſt if ſo good a heart will be touched with the feelings of yours?’—‘What, Sir, do you authorize me!’—‘Why not? Sure you think me very difficult! you have by inheritance a handſome fortune; and if my daughter conſents, I do not ſee what can happen better.’ Alceſtes fell, in amaze, at the viſcount’s knees. ‘Your goodneſs, Sir, overpowers me!’ ſaid he; ‘but it is of no ſervice to me. Mademoiſelle De Laval has declared to me, that a miſanthrope was her averſion; and this is the idea ſhe has formed of my character.’—‘That does not ſignify: you will change.’—‘I cannot diſſemble.’—‘You ſhall not; you ſhall reconcile yourſelf to mankind in good earneſt. You will not be the firſt bear that has been tamed by the women.’

Supper being ſerved up, they ſeated themſelves at table; and never before was M. De Laval in ſo ſprightly an humour. ‘Come, neighbour,’ ſaid he, cheer up:
nothing

nothing sets us off like spirits.' Alcestes, thus encouraged, took heart. He made the most touching eulogy on the intimate commerce of souls whom the relish of virtue, the love of truth, the sentiment of what is just and honest, unites. 'What an attraction,' said he, 'have they for each other! With what effusion they communicate! What agreement, and what harmony they form in uniting! I find here but two that are like me; and they are a whole world to me. My soul is full; I could wish to be able to fix my existence in this delicious state, or that my life were a chain of incidents resembling this.'---'I would lay a wager,' replied the viscount, 'that if Heaven were to take you at your word, you would be very sorry not to have asked more.'---'I confess it, and if I were worthy of forming yet one wish--' 'Did not I say so? Such is man. He has always somewhat to wish for. We are but three; and yet there is not one of us who does not wish for something. What say you, daughter? For my part, I confess I ask of Heaven, with ardour, a husband whom you may love, and who may render you happy.'---'I ask also,' said she, 'a husband, who may assist me in making you happy.'---'And you, Alcestes?'---'And I, if I durst, would ask to be that husband.'---'There are now three wishes,' said M. De Laval, 'which might easily be made one.'

I have already given some intimation, that Ursula had conceived for Alcestes an esteem and good will: the trouble she had taken to soften his temper, proclaimed it; but it was only in this instant that she perceived how sensibly that disposition, which we must either love or hate, had touched her.

'Hey!' said her father, after a long silence, 'we are all three struck dumb! That Alcestes, at forty, should be confused at having made a declaration to a lady of eighteen, is natural enough; that Ursula should blush, look down, and observe a modest silence, is quite natural too; but I, who am but a mere confident, why should I be grave? The scene is amusing.'---'Sir,' said Ursula,

Ursula, 'spare me, I beseech you. Alcestes gives me a mark of esteem, of which I am very sensible: and he would be angry that we should make a jest of it.'-----
'Would you have me believe that he is in earnest?'-----
'I am sure of it, and I am obliged to him.'-----
'You do not think so. Forty! A man of his temper.'-----
'His temper should estrange him from all sorts of engagements, and he knows very well what I think of it.'-----
'And his age!'-----
'That is another thing; and I beg you to forget age, when you choose me a husband.'-----
'Ah, child, but you are so young!'-----
'For that reason, I have need of a husband who is not so.'-----
'There is nothing, then, but this unfortunate misanthropy, which you have to object to him; and I own that it is incompatible with your temper.'-----
'And more still with the plan which I have formed to myself.'-----
'And what is that plan?'-----
'That of nature: to live happily with my husband; to sacrifice my taste to him, if unluckily I have not his; to renounce all society, rather than to deprive me of his, and not to take one step in the world without his counsel and consent. Judge, therefore, of what concern it is to me, that his wisdom should have nothing savage in it, and that he should be pleased with that world in which I hope to live with him.'-----
'Whoever he be, Mademoiselle,' replied Alcestes, 'I dare answer, that he will be pleased wherever you are.'-----
'My father,' continued Ursula, 'takes a pleasure in bringing together to his suppers a circle of genteel people, both of the city and court; I would wish my husband to be of all these suppers, I would have him in particular be agreeable.'-----
'Animated with the desire of pleasing you, he will certainly do his best.'-----
'I propose to myself to frequent the plays, the public walks.'-----
'Alas! these were my only pleasures; there are none more innocent.'-----
'Balls, too, are my passion. And I would have my husband go with me there.'-----
'In mask; nothing is more easy.'-----
'In mask, or without a mask, just as I like.'-----
'that is a matter of indifference, as long as
one

one is there with one's wife.'---'Nay, more, I would have him dance there.'---'Very well, Mademoiselle, you will dance there,' said Alceste with transport, throwing himself at her feet. 'Nay,' cried the viscount, 'there is no resisting that; and since he consents to dance at a ball, he will do impossibilities for you.'---'My lord thinks me ridiculous, and he has reason; but I must compleat my dancing so.'---Yes, Mademoiselle, you see at your feet, a friend, a lover, and since you will have it so, a second father; a man, in short, who renounces life, if he is not to live for you.' Useful enjoyed her triumph; but it was not the triumph of vanity. She restored to the world, and to himself, a virtuous man, an useful citizen, who but for her had been lost. Such was the conquest with which she was pleased; but her silence was her only consent. Her eyes timidly cast on the ground, dared not raise themselves to those of Alceste: one of her hands only was suffered to drop into his, and the crimson of her beautiful cheeks expressed the transport and emotion of her heart. 'Hey!' said the father, 'you are motionless and dumb! What will you say to him?'---'Whatever you please.'---'What I please, is to see him happy provided he make my daughter so.'---'It is in his power: he is virtuous, he reveres you, and you love him.'---'Let us embrace, then, my children.' It has been a happy evening, and I forebode well of the marriage, which is concluded as in the good old times.---'Take my advice, my friend, continued he, 'be a man, and live with mankind. It is the intention of Nature. She has given faults to us all, that nobody may be dispensed with being indulgent to the faults of others.'