

~~My dear Reginald~~  
THE AUNT

AND

T H E N I E C E.

A NOVEL.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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“ Stiff in the letter, lax in the design.”

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“ If sensuality effeminates the mind, in bearing the reverses which must occur, *Ambition* renders its votaries still more miserable, by an irritating remembrance of the towering elevation from which they have fallen.”

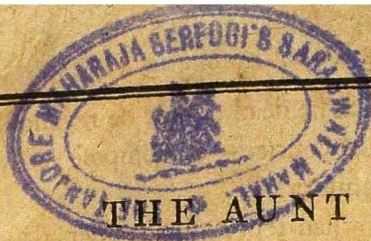
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VOL. I.

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THE AUNT  
AND  
THE NIECE.



CHAP. I.

THE sun had disappeared; it had sunk into its watery bed, leaving only a saffron glow behind: yet Lady Fitzallan still remained stationary at that window, where, for the last four hours, she had stood in anxious, in fearful expectation; while her silent meditations had been uninterrupted, save by her own bitter tears, her deep-drawn sighs, or, at intervals, by the philosophic entreaties of Catherine, such as—" Pray, Madam,



give over. The dead cannot be recalled!—You will hurt yourself—do compose yourself, and take comfort!”

Lady Fitzallan repeated after her daughter the words *composure* and *comfort*; she turned her aching eyes towards the picture of a boy, fair as the opening morn, which was placed over the mantle-piece:—the burst of agony broke forth from her troubled spirit, and again she leaned against the window. Meanwhile Sir Hugh Fitzallan sat near the fireside:—to him his daughter had spared her exhortations, for there she saw composure and resolution. Alas! poor Catherine was not endowed with the faculty of penetration; to almost a superficial observer, the fearful calm of Sir Hugh Fitzallan's countenance might have betrayed the force of that blow which could thus have petrified his faculties; while the deep curve on his brow, and the marked lines round his mouth, were such incontestable proofs of his fixed despair, to his unhappy wife, that she dared not look at him. Her more resigned daughter, however,

however, had for some hours been seated opposite to him, with most Roman-like fortitude, employing herself as usual with her netting.

A superstitious awe crept over the chilled frame of Lady Fitzallan, as the bird of night flitted by the window, and took its station in its long occupied turret. The sound of wheels, of heavy sullen wheels, was now heard; the bell of Fitzallan Church "flung to the hollow gale its loud lament."

"He comes then, he comes," shrieked out the unhappy mother; "but how," cried she, still raising her voice to agony, "how is it that my Frederic meets his mother!"

The heavy groan of Sir Hugh proved that he also felt at this bitter moment as a man and a father, while Catherine retired to give calm and collected orders for the reception of the remains of an only brother.

As the corpse was brought into the house, Lady Fitzallan threw herself on the bosom of Sir Hugh, while he hung tenderly over



her, and joined his tears to her's. Miss Fitzallan had re-entered ere the procession had reached the house; and during this affecting scene, she walked steadily to and fro the apartment, as if to bid her sorrowing parents imitate her bright example. At length slowly and cautiously the parlour door was opened; it was by the old and faithful Geoffery, who had been butler in the Fitzallan family more than forty years. With careful steps he walked up to Catherine, but articulation seemed denied him;—he stopped a minute, and parting his flowing silver locks, which played on his forehead, and casting a piteous look towards his respected Lady, the big tear, no longer to be suppressed, rolled down his furrowed cheek.

“What wouldst thou have, Geoffery?” said Catherine, tired of this dumb spectacle of feeling, in which she had no participation.

“All, all is ready; your orders have been obeyed,” said Geoffery; “the—the—it is lain—it is put——”

“Oh,

"Oh, very well; they have laid poor Frederic's remains in the apartment which he used to occupy—very well!"

Lady Fitzallan started from her seat; she rushed to the door.

"Where wouldst thou go, my Gertrude?" asked Sir Hugh, following her.

"Well, make the people welcome," said Catherine, not attending to her mother.

"Welcome!" repeated Lady Fitzallan, who had caught the word; "Oh Catherine!" and she hastened out of the room.

"The lady has fainted," said Geoffery, approaching nearer to Catherine, and speaking in an under tone.

"Yes, she will faint—she will kill herself, and me also, if she persist in going to that chamber," said Sir Hugh, as he eagerly went to seek her.

"Ah, it is well my poor master misunderstood me," said Geoffery, shaking his head.

"What lady? Who? Speak?" said Catherine,



Catherine, more agitated than she had been since her brother's death ; " what lady ? "

" Alas ! I know not," answered Geoffery.

" After the funeral procession there followed a mourning chariot :—a lady stepped from it ; she was dressed in black ; her face was covered with a veil. In her arms she bore a lovely infant ; she entered the hall, but when she saw the coffin which had been taken from the hearse, and laid—laid on the marble floor, she, she——" Geoffery stopped.

" Go on, go on," cried Catherine, in breathless agitation.

" She knelt by its side, she drew her infant towards it, she clasped her child to her bosom, while wildly shrieking—" It is over !—he is gone for ever !—my child, thou hast no father, no friend !"—she fell into a swoon, from which she is not yet recovered. The child, indeed, I gave to the care of——"

" You did ! It is like your credulity ! " said the furious Catherine.—" What, are the

the doors of Fitzallan Castle opened for the reception of guilt? Do the destroyers of my brother attend him to the tomb? Do his sinful connections follow him even here, to contaminate, with their polluted breath, the spotless abode of the Fitzallans? Send her away—send her away, old man!” cried she, stamping, and furiously raising her voice, on perceiving Geoffery did not move—“ instantly take her away!—drive her from these walls!” waving her arms, as if the object of her fury was then before her.—“ Obey me instantly!”

Geoffery was about to speak. He stood irresolute for a moment, but, intimidated by the threatening looks of Catherine, he left the room, and hurried to the house-keeper's apartment; tears forcing their way to his eyes, when he reflected on the harsh orders he had received from his young mistress.



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CHAP. II.

THE mournful stranger seemed to have collected fortitude during this interval. With natural grace, and much expression, she turned to thank Mrs. Jervis, the housekeeper, for her attention, and to receive her child again to her bosom, which she pressed to it as if it was her only cordial; then turning to Geoffery, she said—"My good friend, I have now no further business here; my work is completed! Frederic Fitzallan is laid under his father's roof; his corse will soon be placed in the tomb of his ancestors; the wretched Angelina must now separate from him

him for ever, and, with this relique of affection, must wander up and down a toilsome world, where she has no resting-place, no friend, no *hope* but in God!—Yes, there,” continued she, “I yet have hope—there only can I have hope, when all human hope is vain! Destitute, fatherless as thou appearest, my babe,” added she, pressing her lips to those of her infant, “yet hast thou an Heavenly Father—one who will still care for thee!”

Geoffery and Mrs. Jervis were too much affected to interrupt her; but when she ceased speaking, and the convulsive sob again informed them of her renewed emotion, Geoffery said—“Forgive me, Madam, if I ask you why you give way to this excess of grief:—my young master is indeed lost to us all.”—Here he wiped his eyes.—“But Sir Hugh Fitzallan has a heart to cherish, and a hand to support, his son’s wife and child, even though the connection might have been formed (pardon my boldness) without his consent.”



“Wife!” repeated Angelina, her lips quivering, her cheek suffusing with indignant crimson—“yes! recording angels know that I ought to have been the wife of Frederic Fitzallan!—Oh vows, a thousand times repeated! Oh protestations, never to be forgotten! Oh professions, never, never to be erased from my heart! And were they indeed meant to deceive the credulous wretch who reposed her confidence in them?—I am not a wife,” said she, starting from her chair, and looking at Geoffery—“I cannot, dare not impose on worth like your’s even for a moment.—Yet, alas! I am not the guilty wretch you think me, even though I avow my situation—even though I acknowledge this smiling cherub as the child of shame!”—She paused, and putting her hand to her forehead, as if ruminating, she said in an under tone—“If such am I, Oh what was Frederic, the deceiver of innocence! the—I dare not—must not say so! No! let me cheerfully bear all the opprobrium of the world, but  
may

may the death of Frederic have expiated all his offences!

When Goffery and Mrs. Jervis saw that they were conversing with the mistress of their late loved young Lord—when they heard this confession issue from her own lips, a sullen silence seemed to seize them both; but it was not the silence of self-righteousness, secretly exulting that they were not as the poor sinner before them; it was not the silence of outrageous virtue, which feared to be tainted by holding converse with a frail sinner: it was the silence of difficulty and doubt, accompanied with an earnest wish of benefiting and protecting the representatives of Frederic Fitzallan!—These worthy people knew the hearts and dispositions of the family with whom they lived, and whose wages they earned. Mild, meek, and merciful, they knew that Lady Fitzallan's heart would yearn with tenderness towards her infant grand-daughter, and would pant to extend its protection to her surviving parent; but that the tyrannical Catherine would

thwart every benevolent purpose, and try to stifle every compassionate feeling in its birth.

Bent down by grief, his firm spirit melted by sorrow, now was the time to introduce to Sir Hugh Fitzallan the descendant of his only son. But would not an excruciating pang assail his soul, at the moment when his eye glanced with pleasure on this little representative of his Frederic, should he be told, that in the world she could never be considered as such? Yet justice, humanity, would have set these obstacles aside, could our good domestics for a moment have ventured to think of braving the malice and fury of Miss Fitzallan:—here their compassion again interfered, and seemed to oppose itself; and they thought that extreme poverty, every ill of life, would be preferable to dragging on existence under the despotic sway of the heiress of the Castle.

“ Shall the doors of Fitzallan for the first time be closed on the destitute and distressed,” thought Geoffrey, “ and closed



too on those who have every claim to their sheltering protection, which injury and misfortune can entitle them to? No, it must not be!"—Yet still he continued to ponder on the probable consequences of Catherine's anger, should he present the two unfortunates at this time to her father, till his whole soul recoiled from the idea; yet not for himself did Geoffery fear, but to behold that spirit tortured, which was already subjugated by misfortune; to behold an innocent babe reared and educated under the eye of malice and uncharitableness, was more than he could bear, and, for the first time in his life, Geoffery Morgan had recourse to deception.

A long and a private conversation ensued between Geoffery and Angelina. Overcome by his entreaties, and melted by his honest sympathy and native feeling, with sighs and tears Angelina confessed that she was a friendless and destitute being, without the means of obtaining the common necessities of

of life. The romantic purpose of her heart fulfilled, she had determined to fly from the Castle, and to throw herself and her child, naked and defenceless, on the wide world.

“All the malice of my destiny I could have borne,” sighed she, “conscious that I deserved it. Yes, I could silently have braved the contumely of the world; I could have bent my head to oppression; I could have seen poverty take up its abode with me, and all without a struggle; for patience, under the chastisements of Heaven, is the duty of all, and more peculiarly that of her who has disobeyed its laws, and neglected its commands! But here—here,” said she, pressing her babe to her heart, and taking the hand of Geoffery, “here you have indeed probed me to the quick! I will do as you desire;—if there be a crime in the duplicity which I am about to practise, Heaven surely will pardon it, when it is at your instigation, virtuous old man, that I adopt it—when it is for this cherub we plan it.

Angelina

Angelina then wiped off a tear, and taking her child in her arms, she walked with unequal steps through the long passages and hall of Fitzallan Castle, followed by Geoffery. The chariot which had brought her to this house of mourning, stood at the great entrance ready to receive her again. The long black veil still covered her face; and though many of the domestics, with commiserating countenances, followed her retreat, yet none of them could obtain a view of her features. Geoffery held out his unsteady hand; she ascended the carriage—the vehicle drove off—she waved her hand; and as if unanimous in feeling, a sigh issued from every bosom, and “sent back its sound” as the sympathizing domestics returned through the hall. Yet not a word escaped from their lips, though anxious to know the history of the fair mourner; though fearing, by her hasty departure from the Castle, that her character would not permit her being received as its inmate, they kept their sentiments to themselves, not daring



daring to breathe a hint which could derogate from the merit of their lamented young master, whom they had loved with all the enthusiasm of their artless natures, being used to contemplate in his manly form and open countenance, the descendant and representative of that family, in whose service their grandfathers and great-grandfathers had lived and died. Even his remains were contemplated with a respect almost amounting to adoration; and when they recollected that Catherine would be their future mistress, their hearts sank within them.

We will now give a short history, or rather character, of the young man whose race was run so early, and for whose sake, his parents seemed likely to mourn all the remaining days of their lives.

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CHAP. III.

SIR Hugh Fitzallan inherited that title from a long race of British worthies, who had resided in the family Castle in the West of England. The fortune had been entailed on the eldest son ; but, in default of male issue, it was to descend to progeny in the female line, and the legitimate daughter of the male heir, was to be the inheritor in preference to his sister. These clauses had never been recurred to by the Fitzallan family ; for more than three centuries had elapsed since it had wanted a male heir.

Gertrude Melville was distantly allied to the Fitzallans ; and though her family could boast a long line of ancestry, their fortune  
was

was unequal to the support of such pretensions. She was an only child, and mild, humble, and lovely. Sir Hugh Fitzallan soon discerned her merit, loved her, and transplanted her to Fitzallan Castle just after he had become the master of it. Adored by their dependants, beloved by their equals, and blessed by their poorer neighbours, years flew rapidly over the heads of Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan:—their wishes, their pursuits, and their ambition soared not beyond their own domain, and, in a circumscribed spot, they had the power of extending their usefulness, far beyond its general bounds. When the eye saw them, it lighted up with pleasure; when the ear heard them, the heart dilated with thankfulness.

The character of the English Baron was still kept up at Fitzallan Castle, if hospitality, cheerfulness, and benevolence ever formed its leading traits. Though far retired from the great world, and unversed in the mysteries of fashion, Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan were too liberal in their ideas and opinions,



nions, to imbibe those narrow prejudices which are often rooted and nourished by a life of seclusion.

The first year of their nuptials was succeeded by the birth of a daughter, who was received by her fond parents with affectionate delight; and while uttering a blessing on her head, Sir Hugh mentally resolved to live within his income as much as possible, that he might yearly lay by a sum for the future portion of his Catherine. Yet as the revolving seasons rolled on, and Lady Fitzallan gave no hopes of increasing her family, these plans were soon laid aside, and the little Catherine seemed universally looked on as the sole heiress of the Castle. Her ears were early accustomed to the title, and her young heart naturally impressed with lofty ideas; and leaning to ambition, found its full gratification in the respect and deference with which she was treated.

The mild and peaceable Lady Fitzallan was ill calculated for the education of such a girl as Catherine.—She made use of opposition

sition and violence, when her mother's advice and instructions did not meet her wishes; and too weak for coercion, and fearing to alarm Sir Hugh with the account of her child's irascibility of disposition, Lady Fitzallan often yielded the point, when her will ought to have been a law, and where concession was of material injury to her child: yet where her wishes led the way, Catherine outstripped the speed of her teachers. She loved to dwell on every kind of information which related to the laws and customs of her ancestors: history was therefore her favourite study, and ambition in any character, always gave it interest to her. When she read in the Roman and Grecian page of any daring act or bold achievement, her dark eye lighted up with more than feminine fire, and for a moment she seemed to lose herself in the contemplation. Remarking her fondness for this kind of reading, and unsuspecting of the latent passion which actuated her, her father encouraged the propensity, and at ten years of age, a rage for uncon-

uncontrouled dominion, an imperious manner, a despotic sway had taken entire possession of Catherine Fitzallan; when, to the astonishment of every one, Lady Fitzallan declared herself pregnant, and at the expected time was safely delivered of a son and heir!

The bells of Fitzallan Church proclaimed the glad tidings to the surrounding neighbourhood; the tenants, the labourers, the poor, hastened in crowds to congratulate their landlord, their master, and friend; while Catherine Fitzallan retired in sullen silence from all the noise and bustle of mirth and joy, to brood over the disappointment of her high-raised hopes, to lament the total demolition of all her towering plans! Yes, at little more than eleven years of age, a young creature, born of virtuous parents, educated as it should seem with the utmost care, and nourished by all that affectionate tenderness could desire—at *this* early age she dared to whisper the most bitter imprecations against a helpless infant, the child of the



the same parents, for unclosing his innocent eyelids on a world of pain, of sorrow, and of guilt !

“ And did this unheard-of malignity proceed from natural depravity ?” we may ask, “ from inherent turpitude ?”—Alas ! we know not how to answer. Children of sin from our birth, how early its fatal shoots spring up in the heart we know not ; but that they should be retarded in their growth—that each rising twig should be repressed—that if temperate pruning will not do, even the axe should be laid at the source of the evil—this is certain, and Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan, when too late, had reason to wish that mildness had given place to severity, in their treatment of their daughter.

Artful beyond her years, and already an adept in dissimulation when it would serve her purpose, Catherine, with a steady countenance, and with some show of affection, introduced herself to her infant brother.

Lady Fitzallan, when recovered from her confinement, was pleased to observe the  
apparent

apparent partiality with which Frederic was beheld by his sister. Softness, or an immoderate display of sensibility, she did not expect from Catherine, knowing these qualities to be opposite to her disposition; and therefore the slightest attention shewn to the feeble infant from her, was of double value in the eyes of its doting mother.

Sir Hugh Fitzallan was almost overcome with joy, at seeing the accomplishment of his dearest wishes, after he had so long resigned them. In a transport of affection, he pressed his lips to the forehead of his boy, and folded him to his bosom; when meeting the dark eyes of Catherine fixed on his face, in a tone of animated delight, he called her to kiss his Frederic also. Catherine obeyed the call with as good a grace as she could assume; and the fond father in silence bent over his children, and mentally resolved once again that every year he would lay up from his income, a sum to portion off his daughter as her rank in life demanded. But these resolutions, like many others



others of the mental kind, were accompanied by certain mental reservations; and this year it was wholly impossible, because the expences occasioned by receiving the congratulations of his numerous tenants and dependants, prevented him.

The next his Frederic was one year old, and there must be feasting at the Castle, to celebrate the blessed anniversary, and this feasting could not continue less than a week:—another, and another, and another came still some excuse; and when Frederic went to Winchester, and after that to College, then it was quite out of the question, and the father's purse was drained even of the money which he wanted for current expences: but Frederic was not to blame.—“No! liberal, generous, full of health, beauty, spirit, vivacity, who could deny any thing to so charming a youth?”—Not his doting parents, though Lady Fitzallan often wished that he would come more frequently to the Castle; but this she forgot to tell him when she had him before her transported



transported eye, and while fondly and affectionately he looked in her face, after every extended absence. When she saw the filial attentions that he turned on Sir Hugh, the softened tones in which he endeavoured to conciliate the love of his sister, and to melt down the asperities of manner which, spite of herself, would oftentimes break forth, she would silently exclaim, while her eye filled with the crystal drop—

“Who could wish him altered? It is not to be expected that this solitude can suit such a lively spirit as his; our ancient modes and usages appear formal and precise to the sanguine and impassioned imagination of my Frederic. Go then, dear youth! go into that world which you were formed to shine in; there enchant all eyes, enslave all hearts; and when thou art sated with the gay career of pleasure and applause—when thy noble soul feels an aching void, then return to the mansion of thy parents, and by thy presence in a moment call up joy and revelry!”

If Sir Hugh's meditations were not so heated or so impassioned as his Lady's, yet were they as little to the purpose; and though this mistaken couple had their eyes opened, with regard to their improper mode of educating Catherine, they fell yet deeper into the error with respect to Frederic: and seeing his temper naturally flexible, his principles just, noble, and generous, they gave him unlimited indulgence, and let him rush down the stream of folly, unawed, uncalled by the voice of parental authority!

That intoxication—madness ensued, is not to be wondered at; every extravagance that folly and prodigality could devise, was plunged into; every cup of pleasure was drunk to the dregs; and though not deliberately guilty, Frederic Fitzallan's conduct could neither bear inspection nor scrutiny. Yet his father cheerfully continued to pay large sums to supply his excesses; their extent was concealed from him by a mercenary tutor, who owed his bread to Sir Hugh Fitzallan



Fitzallan, and who requited him by silently seeing his son verge on to ruin, and even by assisting him on the road : and though Catherine gained from this sapient companion, all that she wished to know, and more than she dared disclose (for Catherine was wary) ; yet Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan were the last to hear, what it nearly concerned them to check ere yet too late.

Seeing in her brother the being who had defeated all her expectations ; with envy contemplating his handsome form and pleasing manners ; and with a feeling similar to envy, beholding him rioting in dissipations which her sex, and the common usages of society, forbade her to join in, no wonder that Catherine Fitzallan's disposition grew daily worse. Few ventured within her sphere of action, without experiencing its baneful effects ; and though ardently attached to his parents, loving them beyond every thing (save the world and its pleasures), yet Frederic Fitzallan, withheld by the knowledge of Catherine's disposition, often remained at



a distance from the Castle, when his wishes would have led him there.

Not so Mr. Clifford, the tutor:—he seemed chiefly to rest on Catherine's society, when with Frederic he visited the Castle. He admired what he called "the great prejudices" of Miss Fitzallan; the haughty inflexibility of her disposition, he termed "nobleness of soul;" and her eccentric and whimsical propositions were, in his vocabulary, "liberality of sentiment."

"No matter," would Frederic exclaim, "what names you give them; for, faith, by any name they are insupportable: and how my dear good mother, and my father, can live with my sister, and keep their senses, is surprising!—Ah Clifford! Heaven is my witness that I would cheerfully hazard my life for Catherine, could I, by so doing, affect her heart, even for a moment, with a spark of sisterly regard. Extravagant, wild, thoughtless as I am, I am not destitute of feeling. Often when, as now, I fly from the Castle, I should cheerfully, happily con-  
tinue

tinue there, were my parents' smiles accompanied by a sister's; but when I see my presence instantaneously produce a contrary effect—when I hear her harsh dictatorial tone, and see the art with which she contrives to contrast her steady conduct with my irregularities, all the bad passions of my soul are roused, and I fly away, and am guilty of excesses, which I never thought of committing. Folly, ruin, madness is better than the contemplation of what you term 'nobleness of soul,' and 'liberality of sentiment.' Ardent and impetuous as are my temper and disposition, how I have had patience to bear with all the contumely with which she has treated me, I know not: how I have withheld myself from complaining to my parents, is still more extraordinary. Pride and affection have here gone hand in hand, I believe, to deter me: it seems cowardly, unmanly, to complain of a woman's ill treatment—that woman too a sister. And could I disturb the sacred tranquillity of Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan?—



I would offer to relinquish any sum to Catherine, which it were possible to raise on the Fitzallan property, the moment it becomes mine, if this would satisfy her; but to yield my whole birthright, my claims on the estates of my ancestors, my right to their venerable woods, their castellated mansion—no! that would be impossible!”

Thus frequently would Frederic Fitzallan pour out his whole soul to Clifford, at his return from the Castle;—but these occasional traits of feeling and despondency were soon lost in the vortex of pleasure; and we mention them only to shew, that his heart was not wholly devoid of virtuous emotions. Had they been properly cultivated, he might have been an ornament to the world—he might have been, at this moment, the comfort of his parents, instead of, we had almost said, their destroyer!

Clifford, the pretended Mentor, the appointed tutor, and the insidious friend of Frederic, was the being of Sir Hugh Fitzallan's bounty, and existed only under  
his



his protection. His art and dissimulation had early gained him a warm interest in the heart of the good Sir Hugh; and, unsuspecting himself, he saw in Clifford one of the most faultless and disinterested of human creatures. Clifford's father had been bred to the law, and succeeded to the Fitzallan stewardship at the death of his parent; but a rapid decline precipitated him to the grave when very young; his wife soon followed him, and the orphan Clifford found new and affectionate parents at the Castle, who, from the hour that he lost his natural ones, fulfilled their duties with the utmost attention and care.

When we point out the violence of Catherine Fitzallan's temper, and the unhappiness which it caused in her family,—when we shew the misery into which the death of the misguided Frederic overwhelmed his idolizing parents—when we proceed to Clifford, who stung those bosoms which had fostered him, we do not mean to infer that virtue and good intentions always meet with

this return on earth. That this is not the place where they are to meet with their just reward, is certain; and our remark, when we see the good suffer, and the bad prosper, ought to be, that Providence always acts in the wisest manner, though we cannot pierce through the veil; and however we may commiserate the good Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan, whose only failings seem to have been those of too great indulgence in the education of youth, and a want of discernment and discrimination (and these cannot be failings of the heart), we may pity them; but in so doing, we must take care not to arraign Providence.

William Clifford and Catherine Fitzallan were nearly of the same age, and bred up together, with a tolerable portion of sense and abilities on either side. They early saw into each other's propensities. Clifford perceived that Catherine's soaring spirit panted to outstrip every competitor, and to protrude itself on the busy stage of life:—hence he always followed her lead, and waited for her  
to



to propose what he himself had meditated; and thus, in appearance, yielded to her pleasure, when in fact he was following the bent of his own inclinations. This behaviour was not lost on Catherine;—in her turn she flattered Clifford; and though she always affected great superiority, and seemed to feel the disparity which existed between them, yet there were moments when this seemed forgotten, and Clifford might almost have imagined himself master of her heart. Yet such occasional lapses were indeed momentary; the *hauteur* of Miss Fitzallan was instantly resumed, and seemed to be increased by this transient forgetfulness; and Clifford never had had the temerity to make advances, which he might have repented, when pride should have reassumed its dominion. Yet was there a latent hope in Clifford's breast—yet was there a latent partiality in Miss Fitzallan's:—in Frederic each contemplated the enemy of their schemes; and hence, though neither had imparted their secret feelings, they were drawn together



by those assimilating ties, which too often hold the bad more firmly, than affection does the good.

This concordance of sentiments and hopes, though tacitly acknowledged by each, had never been openly avowed by either ; and though Clifford, under the most specious seeming, contrived to lay open all the irregularities of Frederic to Miss Fitzallan, “ as he dared not unveil the guilty page to good Sir Hugh and his worthy Lady, and trusted to Miss Fitzallan’s remonstrances and solid arguments, to persuade her brother to a different course of life ; ” — though Catherine acknowledged “ that for herself, she could bear the idea of Frederic’s forming some low matrimonial connection, and that he should disgrace his family for ever, rather than that he should continue in his present excesses ; but that such a step would cause an eternal breach with her father, whose only fault was the pride of birth and family : ” — yet neither of this amiable pair thought the lurking motives

tives of the heart were seen by the other; when, in fact, Clifford discerned that his only hope depended on her brother's dying unmarried, or at least without a legitimate heir; and that the history, the highly exaggerated history, which he often poured into her ear, of his riotous living and excesses, was calculated to call forth all her joy, as she whispered to herself the probability of his soon numbering his days:—and though Clifford secretly exulted as this idea crossed his mind, yet was he not sufficiently assured of his interest in Catherine's heart, to be convinced that, on the death of Frederic, he should have a nearer connection in the family.

By feeding Catherine's malicious disposition by flattery and many a specious art, he endeavoured, however, to secure his advantage; while though at some moments assured that her heart felt a softness almost inimical to her nature, when she meditated on Clifford, at others, Miss Fitzallan would recoil at the idea, and indignant pride



would crimson her cheek, at the bare probability of Clifford's indulging such presumptuous notions; yet she saw it in his looks—she heard it in his voice; and, though she did not encourage him, she dared not check him, while he was still the confidential friend, and the secret spy of her brother, and while her hopes remained uncompleted—in fact, while Frederic lived!

Unsuspecting and open, Frederic Fitzallan saw not that, by inhuman malice on one side, and by deceitful allurements on the other, he was impelled on to ruin!



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CHAP. IV.

AT a large dinner in the City, Frederic Fitzallan first saw Angelina Melross, an orphan, and unprotected. It had been the fate of poor Angelina to attract the notice of the splendid Miss Blumgrove (with whom she had been at school); and on coming to reign Lady paramount in her father's mansion, this heiress to half a million had desired dear papa "to let her also have a companion for the mind\*." Alas! this was an wholly useless appendage; for Miss Blumgrove had no mind!—In vain poor

\* See the comedy of the Heiress.

Angelina

Angelina resisted for some time the entreaties of Wilhelmina Clementina Blumgrove :—those who had hitherto protected her, declared their intention of foregoing it, unless she exerted herself, and endeavoured to provide for her own maintenance. Ingratitude for favours received, was not in the nature of Angelina ; and she patiently, and with something like a smile on her countenance, entered on her new situation.

An alliance with the Fitzallan family would have been the height of Mr. Blumgrove's ambition ; and of course the oftener Frederic repeated his visits, the greater were the hopes of the good citizen. Not so his more quicksighted daughter ; she saw that the native and simple charms of her young companion were the attractions which her father's house held out to Fitzallan ; and burning with envy, and wounded self-love, she made poor Angelina's life a miserable one.

Submitting to the difficulties of her situation, with all the forbearance and humility  
which



which she could command, there were moments, in which the spirit of poor Angelina rose at the indignant treatment she received; but at others her heart shrunk within her, an insensibility seemed to creep over her faculties, and she encouraged an apathy of disposition, which seemed to steel her against every renewed insult or provocation. Not long, however, would this dangerous calm last, which resembled the appalling pause of nature prior to its most frightful convulsions. The acutest agony, the most heart-piercing emotions seized poor Angelina, when, after a temporary suspension of this sort, she overheard Miss Blumgrove give her little history to Frederic Fitzallan.—What glowing crimson rushed into her cheeks!—what burning tears fell from her eyes, as the sad recapitulation of a mother's shame, of a father's falsehood was related.

The death of that mother in bringing her babe into the world, the father perishing almost for want in a foreign country, and the destitute and friendless state of the  
infant,



infant, were now lost upon Angelina nearly as they attached to her; for all her faculties were engrossed by the reflection that Frederic Fitzallan knew her to be the offspring of guilt!

“Never, never more could she lift up her eyes in his presence. What right indeed had she to associate with those, whose pretensions were so widely different? Ah, cruel Miss Blumgrove!” sighed she, “your notice of a humbled creature like me, can only raise yourself in the world’s opinion; it is calculated to degrade me lower than I was before!—Ah! why was I singled out for the object of your benevolence? Why was it my ill fortune to become the being of your caprice? But yet,” continued she, “while still I am virtuous, while I have yet a conscience void of reproach, who shall hurt me? Oh tell it, spread the guilty history to the whole world; for, amidst that ‘throng of millions,’ there was only one, from whom I would have withheld it, and he is already made acquainted with it!”

Thus

Thus did the agitated Angelina soliloquize, while the reflections of Frederic Fitzallan were, for the first time in his life, (where a lady was concerned) serious. He had been greatly interested by Angelina, while seemingly attending on her benefactress. Her sweetness and loveliness had insensibly stolen upon his heart; yet he had never attempted to define his sentiments, or thought a moment with respect to the future.—“Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof,” applied to our thoughtless Frederic, who acted as if he understood this sentence literally, not in the way which it was intended that we should take it (namely a warning to avoid too great an anxiety in our temporal concerns). Frederic never thought of the morrow while he enjoyed to day; and the cares of the future never engrossed, indeed never entered, his imagination, while he immersed into the pleasures of the present with sanguine avidity.

Now he felt a weight about his heart; he thought at first that he was pitying the misfortunes



fortunes of Angelina, but at length he discovered his mistake, and was convinced that he not only pitied, but participated in them. He loved Angelina, with fondness loved her; and the story of her sorrows had only increased his passion. He saw through the weak and malicious motive of Miss Blumgrove, but he had not time to dwell on her; nearer concerns engrossed his thoughts.

His father too well he knew, and remembered his cherished prejudices for birth; that his sanguine wish was to behold his Frederic honourably and equally allied in marriage.—“And can I, dare I disobey so indulgent a father? Can I ally myself to the illegitimate daughter of a spendthrift gamester of obscure birth?”—These reflections made him irresolute, and unable to determine what course to pursue.

Let us, however, defend this trait of Frederic's character, and inform our readers, that any thought but of marriage had never presented itself to him, as it referred to Angelina.

Purity.



Purity and virtue like her's he would not have injured for the universe; and all his ruminations not settling the point to his satisfaction, he visited from day to day, and from week to week at Mr. Blumgrove's; and at length the timid but fond Angelina, grateful for his continued attentions, and willing to try any change of situation, consented to an elopement and private marriage; Frederic consoling himself with the idea that while his family remained ignorant of it, no injury could arise; and knowing Clifford too well, to dread his interfering in a business, which he would look upon as mere common-place gallantry.

The lovers were privately married by a young friend of Frederic's, who was the ensuing day to embark for the West-Indies. His servant was the witness of the nuptials, and every precaution being thus adopted; which could prevent the secret from transpiring, Frederic set off with his bride on a tour of three weeks, and then placed her in a small retired cottage, which he had provided

provided for her at Richmond; where, though she assumed his name, no one imagined she had a legal claim to it.

All the private hours of Frederic were devoted to Angelina, with the most unremitting attention. Clifford had contented himself with a slight remark or two on his pupil's "new-formed connection;" and ended with hoping that one day or other his eyes would be opened, ere yet too late. —(Though he never pried into the secrets of his tutor, yet Frederic's eyes had long been opened with regard to Clifford's frequent absences from town; yet as these had furthered his own convenience, he was silent). — To Miss Fitzallan, indeed, Clifford was far more diffuse:—he painted the crime of seduction in its proper colours; he described the beauty of Angelina; he gave an exaggerated description both of her person and her mind; the latter, he said, was the seat of purity and virtue, till she unhappily was thrown into the way of Mr. Fitzallan.

"Is it not too distressing, my dear Madam,"



Madam," continued he; "is it not too distressing to my feelings, that honesty and principle should oblige me to give you in every letter which I have the honour to address to you, so fearful a recital?—All that the most zealous friendship, the most solid arguments, the most strenuous persuasions could do, I have urged without effect! On my knees I have conjured your brother (a brother—ah! how unlike his sister!), to reflect on the unmanly conduct he is pursuing—on the immoral and sinful connection he has formed—on the misery he is drawing down on the unhappy participater of his guilt—and on the dark prospect which the hereafter presents, and on which I dare not dwell even in idea!—That all my rhetoric has been lost, you, my dear Madam, may too well guess; else why this distressing appeal? But dare I wound the ears of your venerable parents by a recital which would break their hearts? No! And if the sad tale must in duty be disclosed, let it be  
softened



softened through the medium of your benign interference !”

This quotation is we hope sufficient for our readers to see into the character of this prototype of Joseph Surface.

Catherine disclosed just as much of this letter as she thought necessary for her parents to hear ; but lest they should forego all the claims of family and blood, in favour of some obsolete notions of reparation and marriage, she was rather backward in her communications ; and hence, though not from the tenderest motives, she spared their hearts many an agonizing pang !

In the meantime, Angelina's life flew on in comfort and happiness. Her mornings were spent in retirement, and in those studies and amusements to which she had been early habituated : her evenings were brightened by the presence of her husband, whose taste for domestic comfort was daily heightened, and whose mind was daily returning to its natural bent. The birth of  
a daughter

a daughter gave him new feelings and new pleasures, and he experienced a happiness, which had never been his during his mad career of dissipation. At times, indeed, when his parents crossed his imagination, his heart would feel compunction; and when, in the world, he heard Angelina talked of as his mistress, a combination of the most unpleasant emotions seized his soul.

These reflections often cast an occasional shade over his features when caressing his child; and the watchful Angelina never let it escape her, though she forbore asking an explanation, which he did not voluntarily give. Possessed of a disposition formed for solitude and retirement, and feeling a security in a husband's love and protection, which were wholly new to her, the surmises of the world, and her marriage being kept a secret from it, did not much disturb her, especially as she imagined that to his intimate friends, to the "favoured few," her Frederic had made known her claims. How was she shocked and humbled  
then,



then, when one morning the name of Clifford was announced, and he entered the room where she sat.

Clifford had for some time been uneasy at the constancy which Frederic evinced for Angelina; he observed with chagrin that his former extravagances were wholly laid aside, and that, except in this particular, his conduct was irreproachable. No longer then could the irregularities of the pupil screen those of the tutor; the purse of Frederic was not, as heretofore, open to supply excesses for which he had lost the relish. The fondness for his child, which had reached the ears of Clifford—the fiery turn of his eye, when one day he had talked somewhat too lightly of Angelina in his presence—the undaunted look with which Frederic had uttered the words—“Dare not, Sir, to affix any imputation or dark aspersion on purity like her’s; she is my——” He stopped, and hastily left the room—all these had given Clifford the most fearful suspicions; his hopes seemed dying



dying in their birth; and, determined to ascertain the fact, he broke in upon Angelina's solitude!

Agitated at the appearance of a stranger—that stranger the tutor of Fitzallan, Angelina half rose to receive him; but fearing he came to communicate some sad tidings of her husband, she hastily resumed her seat, trembling with increased emotion.

"Sit down, Madam—sit down, Miss Melrofs," said Clifford, in a friendly and soothing tone of voice.—"Let not my presence distress you; I do not mean that it should, and whatever may be its issue, my only motive is that of your welfare, and of one other being, whose conduct through the dangerous current of life, it is my lot to steer. Hear me with attention," said he, taking her hand, and drawing a chair near her.—"Interesting young lady, calm your fears, and behold in me not the rigid censor, but the pitying friend of the erring sinner!"

Angelina started, and was rising.—"Sir!—

Sir!—does Mr. Fitzallan—does Frederic—does my—does he know of this visit?”

“ Stop, Madam, for Heaven’s sake be calm !” said Clifford ; yet his own countenance underwent some changes, as he saw the crimson hue of offended virtue mount to the cheek of Angelina.—“ Miss Melross, while I contemplate that seemingly natural emotion—while I observe the workings of that ingenuous countenance, I am impelled, however strong my conviction to the contrary, to believe that you are the most faultless of your sex.”

“ Whatever your conviction, whatever your belief,” interrupted Angelina, somewhat hastily, and in a more collected tone, “ it can make no difference to me, nor can my conduct in any way affect you. Of me the world may freely talk ; I am responsible not to it for my actions, but to a higher Judge.”

“ A young lady is always responsible to the world for her actions : by a deference to  
its



its opinions and its laws, the decencies of society are kept up, and few are daring enough to condemn them, without repenting their temerity. The higher tribunal to which you refer, can alone know the motives of the heart; the world judges only by the outward appearance: and most sincerely sorry am I to add," cried he, looking at Angelina with a face of extreme commiseration, "that in your case it is not harsh, when it puts on them a fearful construction."

Angelina's cheek turned pale—her lip quivered; she was about to leave the room, but again Clifford withheld her. She felt herself in a most distressing situation.

Wounded to the soul at hearing the dreadful stigma affixed to her character, without the power of vindicating herself, lest in so doing, she should betray a secret, which might for ever draw down on her husband's head the maledictions of his father; yet the insidious looks which Clif-

ford cast on her, the tone of softened and impassioned interest with which he addressed her, were calculated to give her a favourable opinion of him. She had never heard Frederic say much about him; the little that had dropped from him on the subject, was in praise of his indulgence and lenity; and she was almost tempted to disclose to him the secret of her marriage. Angelina was almost new to the world, and yet newer to the voice of kindness and sympathy;—her tears fell fast.

Clifford paused, as if fearful of increasing her emotion, and at length thus proceeded:—“ You say your conduct can in no way affect me. Ah, dear Madam! recollect yourself a little, and then say whom it can affect more? Am I not delegated by Sir Hugh Fitzallan, to supply his place to his son? Am I not the guardian of his conduct, of his pursuits, of his morals?—and what account could I give of my trust, were I to overlook this flagrant instance of his immorality?



ality?—When I see you transplanted from your eligible and highly respectable situation at Mr. Blumgrove's;”—Angelina sighed, but it was not a sigh of regret—“when I hear the whole world unite in throwing its opprobrium on the seducer of so much innocence and beauty!—when I hear that an infant cherub has opened her eyes on the world, who will perhaps ere long be taught by its distracted mother to curse her father——”

“Oh monstrous!” cried Angelina; “what an idea! Never! never!—Mr. Clifford, this is too much! My Frederic is the most noble of men: he is—dare I trust you?—Oh Fitzallan, forgive me, if thus I vindicate thy name!—He is——”

“Speak, Madam,” cried Clifford with warmth, while his whole frame shook with emotion—“speak, Madam.”

“He is my husband,” said Angelina in a lower tone, yet her eye sparkling, her cheek glowing. “Oh Mr. Clifford, I con-

fide in you ; you will not, cannot betray us to Sir Hugh Fitzallan !”

“ Betray you ! No, no, no, certainly not !” said Clifford in a distrait and embarrassed manner ; then resuming his presence of mind, he professed himself delighted at hearing that Mr. Fitzallan had acted as he ought ; and he left not the unsuspecting Angelina, till he had drawn from her every particular of her marriage. Then when all his hopes were again rising to their highest pitch, then did the Proteus countenance of Clifford wear the hue of dejection, of doubt, of anxiety, and suspicion. He tried, as it were, to hide these feelings from Angelina ; yet, in the midst of a cheerful speech, he breathed a heart-rending sigh, and while a smile played on his lips, his brow seemed wrinkled by care. Again and again he made her repeat every circumstance of her nuptials : he wrote the name of the Church and the Clergyman ; he noted down in his pocket-book, the day of the month on which the ceremony had been performed ;



performed; and he then made Angelina give him her sacred promise, not to acquaint Frederic with his visit till he had again seen her: and whilst Angelina made this promise, and smiled at the doubts which Clifford's absent and musing manner had implied, though she was assured of the truth, the honour, and the affection of Fitzallan, and felt the delightful certainty of being his wife, yet did a fearful foreboding creep round her heart.

We will now follow Clifford, who had at first heard enough from Angelina to have filled his bosom with dismay, had not her succeeding information brightened the prospect. He saw from her conversation that her heart was the seat of purity; he saw also that she was guileless, credulous as an infant: the secrecy observed with regard to her marriage, its privacy, the circumstance of the Clergyman's immediate embarkation for the West-Indies, with his servant, the only witness of the ceremony—all seemed to co-operate in his favour; and

never more naturally employed than when striving to outwit others, he resolved to work upon the feelings and credulity of Angelina, and to make her believe herself the victim of Fitzallan, who had successfully practised a villanous scheme of fraud and deception, in order to get her into his power. Should he convince her, of this, which he had no doubt of doing, he knew that in the first moment of her resentment and distress, she would be tempted to fly for ever from her seducer ; and to provide her a place of security, and to forward her retreat, was to be his peculiar care.

Without unnecessarily detailing his arts, and his succeeding specious conversations with Angelina—without entering too minutely into her affliction, suffice it to say that he at length succeeded, and the morning was appointed for his escorting his hapless victim far from Richmond and from Frederic Fitzallan !

*That* Frederic was meanwhile scarcely less agitated than his wife.

The



The day after Angelina's first interview with Clifford, her husband's penetrating eye had remarked an absence and an embarrassment in her manner, which had before been strangers to it. Another and another day succeeded, and still she was the same. Fired with suspicion, and stung with jealousy he knew not why, he at length placed himself in ambush near the house: he saw the entrance, he marked the exit of Clifford!—he discerned the air of conscious triumph—he perceived the look of exultation which sat on his countenance. Maddening with rage, he was about to rush upon him, but a remaining spark of reason still withheld him; and having seen him retire, with trembling hand, and agitated nerves, he knocked at Angelina's door for admittance. She was denied to him—it was enough!—He did not repeat his request, but hurried to London.

Clifford, unsuspecting, was at home before him, and alone. With breathless eagerness Fitzallan rushed into the room, a brace of

pistols in his hand. He grasped the throat of Clifford.

“ Instantly tell me,” cried he, “ your whole, your sole motive for visiting Miss Melross this day ; or take one of these, and let the succeeding moment terminate your or my existence !”

Fearing that Angelina had betrayed him, appalled, and frightened, Clifford stood irresolute, and vainly attempted to articulate. All the doubts of Frederic were, by this silence, turned to heart-rending certainty : he translated it into guilt—acknowledged guilt. His body was convulsed by emotion ; he writhed his limbs in agony, and he forced a pistol into the hand of Clifford : he still retained the other, and as if calling up all his resolution for this last effort, he measured the distance, and then motioned to Clifford to give the first fire. Though half irresolute, Clifford too well understood his signal, and with a deep groan Frederic Fitzallan fell on the floor.

The



The alarmed domestics instantly rushed in. Medical assistance was sent for; a ball had lodged in the side, and the right arm appeared shattered to pieces; yet Clifford did not at that moment apprehend any danger: and therefore fearing his deep-laid scheme of villany might be totally circumvented, he thought it would be wise to keep Frederic his friend; and, to his frantic exclamations, he answered—"Angelina is innocent; my visits proceeded from motives purely disinterested!"

"Oh forgive me, Clifford, most injured of men!" cried the fainting Fitzallan; "hasten, fly to ensure your safety, for my doom is sealed!—Oh send for Angelina!" cried he, his voice faltering; "even in death let me look on her, let me once more hear her angel voice!"

Then, as the deep drawn sigh of anguished recollection escaped from his tortured soul—as with retrospective eye, he in a moment contrasted what he was, to what he might have been—as he pictured the

affectionate parents (from whose watchful eyes he had so often with joy escaped, and to whom he had returned with distaste and apathy)—the quiet and respected dwelling of his ancestors, the woods, the lawns which surrounded their placid and venerable domain—then local attachment for the first time pressed on his heart: a variety of feelings seemed instantly to endear to him the spot of his nativity; he would have given worlds that he had never quitted it—that he had never gone beyond the mild sway of his father—that he had never emerged from the affectionate indulgence of his mother. Fitzallan Castle appeared to him the abode of peace, security, and happiness.

“And, Oh!” cried he, gasping for breath, “bear my remains to Fitzallan Castle; let my bones lie by my relatives—let me in death be allied to my ancestors, though my life was unworthy of the consanguinity! Oh sister! Oh Catherine!

now,



now, now is thy triumph!"—He then fainted.

Two gentlemen of the faculty entered, who concurred in saying that all hope was over; and Clifford was then easily persuaded to quit his friend, and provide for his own safety. He did so ere the heart-broken Angelina had arrived, to take her station at the bed of death!

All the wrongs which she imagined had been heaped on her head by Frederic Fitzallan, were now forgotten. With silent anguish she watched beside his pillow, assiduously tried every method to sooth, to support, and comfort him; and even repressed the struggling sigh and gushing tear, while she contemplated his livid, his dying countenance. Speech and almost motion had left him ere Angelina had arrived; yet once he tried to say—

"Oh Angelina, forgive!"

"Heaven is my witness that I do!" answered she, as she fondly bent over him.

Fitzallan

Fitzallan could say no more, yet his languid eyes still remained fixed on her, till they were fixed in death! And when at length death had for ever closed them, Angelina still remained near the bed.

Though lost to the world, to fame, to honour, destitute and forlorn, with a helpless babe to nurture and to foster; yet while she contemplated the corse of him whose arts had, she imagined, brought her to this situation, not a thought of self obtruded. No! her soul was lifted up in earnest, in penitential supplication to the throne of grace and mercy, in behalf of him, who had thus, unauthorized, dared to present himself before it.

Yet Angelina's heroism soon ceased:—fainting fits followed each other, and a derangement of the mental faculties succeeded. The disorder of her mind, though somewhat abated, yet still operated, when in the wildness of her grief, she resolved to follow the corse of Frederic to the Castle.

We



We have seen her conduct there ; and have here only to add, that the diabolical spirit of Clifford had not been appeased.

Ere he embarked for the continent, he had written a few hasty lines to Angelina, in which he besought her forgiveness, “ as he was conscious that, however deep her injuries, the untimely death of the injurer could only be an aggravation of them. He acknowledged that, having obtained unanswerable proofs of Frederic’s depravity, his resentment at his conduct had thrown him off his guard, else nothing could have tempted him to lift his arm against the son of Sir Hugh Fitzallan !” and with a few fine flowing turned periods he bade her farewell.

The motives of this letter my readers may easily divine ; he wished to put the deception of Frederic beyond all doubt in the mind of Angelina. There wanted not this letter, however, to do that : the last words of Frederic—“ Oh Angelina ! forgive——” had stamped the deepest conviction on her mind.

mind. Yet all her accusations were now wholly turned on herself: she blamed her too easy credulity, her consent to a clandestine marriage, her imprudent elopement from Mr. Blumgrove's. Regret, commiseration, and sorrow were the only feelings which found entrance in her bosom, when she turned her thoughts on Frederic. His deceit and falsehood were lost in the dreadful expiation he had made.

To put a decisive stroke to his manœuvres, and to prepare the way for future laurels, Clifford wrote also to Miss Fitzallan as follows:—

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“ In saving the honour of the Fitzallans, I have become an alien from my friends and my country; and I have saved its honour, though I may be accused of bereaving them of their dearest hope.

“ When next Catherine Fitzallan shall behold William Clifford, let her remember his claim on her gratitude. Farewell !”

CHAP.



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CHAP. V.

A MONTH had succeeded to the interment of Frederic Fitzallan; and though the sun rose and set with its former splendour, and shone unrivalled through the day—though the peasant went forth to his labour, and the birds carolled in the air; yet the laws of nature seemed inverted to the jaundiced eye of Sir Hugh Fitzallan, while he still mentally beheld the son of his love lying an inanimate corse before him, or saw the opening tomb receive that form, which in the course of years might have been expected to breathe the sigh, and  
to

to have performed the last obsequies for him.

Lady Fitzallan in vain tried to bury her feelings in her bosom, and to infuse some portion of tranquillity into that of Sir Hugh. The attempt was received with that affection which he had always demonstrated for his Gertrude; and though their only earthly hope had been taken from them, yet by attention to one another, and by submitting themselves to Heaven, this worthy pair tried to temporize with fore calamity. Their all in this world now consisted in the affection which subsisted between them; for the haughty and philosophic Catherine was ill calculated to warm the tender feelings, or to excite the more gentle emotions of our nature.

From the moment which had announced the death of Frederic Fitzallan, his sister had attained the summit of her wishes: that moment teeming with agony to his unhappy parents—with almost madness to his wife—with disgrace and degradation to  
Clifford



Clifford—that eventful moment seemed to have placed her happiness beyond the power of chance or fate! Yet so well could she dissemble her feelings, that nothing of the reality could be perceived, and her whole deportment was tempered by a majestic gravity, which excited respect and attention, though it did not claim (because it did not seem to want) either pity, compassion, or sympathy.

The untimely death of Frederic, accomplished by the hand of Clifford, and his subsequent flight, were far beyond her most sanguine calculations; and while she blessed the spirit which nerved the arm of Clifford, she rejoiced that his safety could only be effected by flight. Emotions which she did not wish to analyze, for a moment agitated her frame, as she perused the hasty note of this alien from his country.

“For me,” cried she, “for me did Clifford venture so far beyond the general conduct of the world. Yes, does he  
not

not ask, does he not claim my gratitude?—  
Oh Clifford!—Dear——”

Her eyes were filling with tears—the softness of a woman was assailing her heart, when quickly recovering herself, her cheek burning, the fire of her eye in a moment drying its unbidden drop, she added—

“Is it Catherine Fitzallan who thinks, who talks thus? Is it the heiress of these wide domains, who thus indulges sentiments of more than pity for the son of her father's steward? Impossible!”—And with that word, all that was feminine seemed dismissed from her bosom, while she yielded herself without controul to the unlimited dominion of pride.

The circumstances of the quarrel between Clifford and Frederic, and which had terminated in the death of the latter, had never been perfectly understood at the Castle; even Catherine knew little of the share which Angelina had borne in it. The whole tenor of Clifford's correspondence

with



with her, had of late pointed only to one subject, and that, as our readers know, was the obstinate attachment of Frederic to Angelina Melrofs: of course, then, Catherine imagined that the arguments of Clifford had been too warmly urged, and that in attempting to persuade her brother to forego the connection, he had provoked the altercation which had so fatally terminated.

As to Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan, they still remained strangers even to the existence of Angelina. The life of their son had been destroyed by Clifford!—Clifford had lifted his arm against the child of his patron!—Forgetting the irreproachable character which he had hitherto maintained—forgetting the situation in which he stood, as the companion and tutor to Frederic Fitzallan—forgetting the immorality, the heinous guilt of duelling, he had at once destroyed the life of his companion and friend—the happiness, the peace of his parents—and his own character. Knowing  
I this,

this, they wished, they wanted no further information :—hope was interred in the tomb of their Frederic ; and, as if by mutual consent, the name of Clifford never passed their lips—his crimes appeared to them beyond all parallel. Had he been in England, how far the spirit of retribution might have actuated them, we know not ; but now convinced he was beyond their reach, they only wished never to hear, or (if possible) never to think of him more.

When Geoffery Morgan came to inform Catherine that a lady had attended the funeral procession of her brother, that she bore an infant in her arms, and had fainted, no wonder that all the fiery particles of her nature were raised into a flame. In a moment Angelina Melrofs rose to her imagination ; the exaggerated description of her person and attractions, which she had received from Clifford, were minutely recollected ; and her whole hopes seemed to depend on forcing her from the Castle, ere Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan should be informed



informed of her arrival. No force, however, was required. Poor Angelina intended not to obtrude herself into the presence of the family; and for worlds would not Geoffery have mentioned her at that hour, to his beloved master and Lady.

At a window of the Castle, Catherine arrived just in time to see the vehicle drive off, which contained, as she thought, the only enemies to her repose; for though the child of this unhappy mother could never inherit the Fitzallan estates, yet she feared she knew not what, should she be introduced to her parents, and obtain (what in their eyes she would have a right to claim) their notice and regard.

The departure of Angelina ascertained, Catherine once again seemed to defy the world; and to have known the helpless child of her brother in a state of absolute want, would not have given her one moment's pain.

Six months had elapsed since the interment of Frederic, when one morning Mr. Sutton,

Sutton, the steward, called at the Castle, and informed Sir Hugh that he had received an application from a widow lady, who wished to become the tenant of the cottage at the extremity of the park. That cottage could not now be mentioned in Sir Hugh Fitzallan's hearing, without recalling disagreeable sensations. It had been built for the accommodation of Clifford's father. Clifford had opened his eyes on the world in that habitation; there he had been born, there he had been nurtured, fostered, reared by the Fitzallans, to blast their happiness for ever!

These ideas obtruded themselves on the mind of Sir Hugh; he attempted to speak but his voice faltered. Sutton saw and pitied his situation; and to give him time to regain his self-possession, he added—

“As your goodness dispenses with my residence in the park, and as I really find it more convenient, and much more advantageous to reside at——, I think it would be a pity for you to refuse this offer. A lady's proximity will



will not at all affect you, except as it may afford a prospect of agreeable society to Lady and Miss Fitzallan."

"Ah!" said Lady Fitzallan, sighing, and in a mildly pensive tone of voice, "that prospect is to me, like every other you could mention, totally obscured."

"Let us know, Mr. Sutton, who this person is, and what are her pretensions to our notice, ere we thus venture to distinguish her?" said Catherine, darting her black eyes at Sutton.

"Her pretensions are humble, but Lady Fitzallan will acknowledge them; for she is unfortunate!" answered Sutton. "She is in the bloom of youth; her family, I have been credibly informed, was something above mediocrity; but being early left an orphan, she chose a protector for herself, a subaltern officer, who fell in his country's service abroad a few months since, and left his widow with a very straitened income, and a helpless infant, to mourn his loss."

Lady Fitzallan wiped her eyes; and though they still glistened, yet she nodded approbation, and Sutton proceeded.

“ A friend whom I value, recommended Mrs. Lawson to my attention, and I procured her lodgings in ———; but you know, my dear Lady, how ill the trifling employments and frivolity of our *sociable* town, would agree with a diseased mind.—‘ You are very good to me, Mr. Sutton,’ said Mrs. Lawson the other day; “ your wife is more than a sister to me; but ——— is not the country—I must be more retired; find me out a sequestered spot, where I may indulge my turn for solitude, without appearing singular or eccentric, which I must do here.”

“ Let her have the cottage, Sutton,” said Sir Hugh with quickness, “ and mind that the rent be moderate. We know how to appreciate the worth of a soldier who died in the defence of his country.”—His lip quivered; he recollected how differently

his



his Frederic had fallen.—“ And we must remember likewise,” added he, “ not to wound her already barbed heart with the sense of obligation, which she could ill bear the weight of, while we are strangers.”

Lady Fitzallan pressed the hand of her husband.

“ And is this woman to be received without further enquiry or stipulation ?” asked Catherine.

“ I trust wholly to the recommendation of Sutton,” answered Sir Hugh.

“ And her misfortunes will ensure her a friendly reception from us,” added her Ladyship.

“ Caution should be used,” rejoined Catherine, “ ere one admits strangers into the very bosom of one’s family.

“ There is no caution required now,” replied Sir Hugh, looking with anguish at Catherine, “ there is nothing to guard against ; the injury has been effected—it is irremediable. But it was not the hand of a stranger or an adversary that pointed the fatal

blow; but it was even our companion—the guide of our Frederic, his own familiar friend!—As yet,” continued Sir Hugh, raising his voice, and looking with more asperity at Catherine than he had been accustomed to do, “as yet Fitzallan Castle and its domains are mine. How soon I may resign them, Heaven only knows; but while daily expecting to be called upon for an account of my stewardship, can I refuse to shelter the widow and the orphan?—When my fortune devolves to you, Miss Fitzallan, act for yourself; but I advise you, in the practice of caution and prudence, not to overlook the higher claims of humanity and benevolence; for these will bring you more peace at the last.”

“You have quite mistaken my meaning, Sir,” said Catherine, endeavouring to restrain the contending passions which were fermenting in her bosom. “If in my earnest wish that the peace and tranquillity of yourself and my mother might meet with no interruption, I expressed myself somewhat



too freely on the subject of this stranger, pray impute it to the right motive."

This condescension was so very unusual, that Sir Hugh Fitzallan, surprised and pleased, pressed the hand of his daughter, and told her, "that he did not mean to wound her feelings by what he had said;" and Mr. Sutton was ordered to prepare the cottage for the immediate reception of Mrs. Lawson.

In less than a week she was quietly settled in it; and in very little more than that period, she was welcomed as a valued friend at the Castle, while her child—her sweet little Clara, was almost idolized by its master and mistress.

The mildly placid demeanour of Mrs. Lawson, the plainness and simplicity of her attire, the humility and modesty which marked her sentiments and manners, could not fail to draw the regard and affection of the unsophisticated and warm-hearted Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan; and while the little Clara's opening faculties, and infantine playfulness

playfulness delighted them, they would often turn to the picture of their lost Frederic, which still hung before their eyes, and recollecting how similar he once had been to the little cherub before them, though the tear of anguished recollection would gush from their eyes, yet would they redouble their caresses on the playful fairy who had excited them.

Often on perceiving their distress—the acuteness of their bitter retrospections, as *her eyes* also wandered towards the picture, Mrs. Lawson's emotions were **beyond controul**. The heart-piercing sigh was heard to issue from her bosom, a look of fixed despair took possession of her features, and her partial friends were too surely informed that her struggles and resolution must have been great indeed, ere she could have obtained that semblance of composure which in general characterized her manner; and they were therefore more careful to temper their own sorrows in her presence, lest, by  
calling



calling forth her sympathy, they should add to her sufferings, and enervate her mind, instead of strengthening it.

Miss Fitzallan was at these periods generally absent.

At Mrs. Lawson's first introduction to the Castle, she had intently studied her countenance, as if she would "have read her inmost soul;\*" but with all her discernment, she could not perceive a trace of self-consequence, of pride, or haughtiness (for though abounding in those qualities herself, she had an utter aversion to them in another); and although the humility of Mrs. Lawson did not bear the remotest alliance to servility, yet Catherine was satisfied that there was nothing formidable in her—nothing to fear; no plot, no design meditated by such an apparently "poor inanimate creature."

Of the child she took no notice. The beauty or interesting actions of an infant

\* Home.

were much too insignificant to amuse her mind, which was bent on higher aims; and knowing that neither her father nor mother had it in their power materially to benefit these objects of their favour, as all their property must descend to her, she quietly left them to the indulgence of what she thought a very foolish predilection; and rejoiced that their having the company of Mrs. Lawson enabled her to be frequently absent from the Castle.



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## CHAP. VI.

IT would be paying a very ill compliment to our readers' discernment, were we now formally to tell them that Mrs. Lawson was the identical Angelina Melross, who was so hastily sent off from the Castle; and that the child so fondled by its respectable owners, was Angelina Fitzallan, their grandchild and lineal heir. After so deeply lamenting her own clandestine conduct, having, as she imagined, been irremediably ruined by the deceit practised on her by Frederic Fitzallan, we expect that the re-appearance of Angelina under a false name and character, will draw down on her defenceless head, a great deal

of asperity and odium from our numerous readers. Our business is to give plain matter of fact: "such things are," and we relate them, without speaking of the proper or improper. But recollect we do not hold up this erring child of Nature as a faultless being, (nor what is more to us, do we call her our heroine); so having premised all this, we shall just relate the inducements which led her to the adoption of this eccentric plan.

In the long conversation which had occurred between Angelina and Geoffery at the Castle, prior to her departure from it, she had, without reserve, communicated to him her whole history, mildly palliating (as far as she could, without wholly covering herself with obloquy) the deception of Frederic Fitzallan.

Geoffery's honest heart was deeply affected by the narration. Unwilling as he was to acknowledge it even to himself, he saw that his young master had acted a dishonourable part; and while he contemplated  
the



the youth, the distress, and loveliness of this unfortunate creature, the tears rolled down his venerable cheeks. With all her frailties, there was an openness and candour in Angelina's manner, which he could not help contrasting with the hauteur and reserve of Catherine; and as he looked on the lovely babe before him, the child of his lamented young master, he would cheerfully have yielded up his breath, to have seen her the acknowledged heiress of Fitzallan Castle!

All reserve was now laid aside; and, melted by his honest sympathy, Angelina acknowledged her friendless state. All her worldly wealth consisted in a few valuable ornaments, some elegant pieces of furniture, the gifts of Frederic, and her wardrobe:—these she meant to dispose of immediately on her return to Richmond, and seek for a maintenance for herself and child, by taking in needle-work.

“Service,” said she, “might afford me a more certain subsistence. But, alas! to whom could I apply for a recommendation?”

My appearance would be against me, for I do not look capable of servitude."

"No, you do not look formed for servitude, indeed!" interrupted her hearer with a faint sigh.

"And could I leave my child?" cried Angelina, pressing her fondly to her bosom. "No, my good friend, I feel I could not, and therefore the first scheme must be adopted."

"So young, so beautiful," said Geoffery, musing, "the temptations, the snares to which she will be exposed in that great city, which I have never visited, and hope I never shall!—No, Madam, it must not be—something better must be thought of by Geoffery Morgan for the child of his young master—for the grandchild of Sir Hugh Fitzallan!—But, ah, Madam! I dare not acquaint my worthy Sir Hugh and his Lady with your story; their hearts, broken as it were already, would sink within them, when they should hear that their Frederic was the deceiver of innocence!—that——"

"I have



“ I have forgiven him,” said Angelina mildly ; “ may his Heavenly Father hear my prayer, and receive him to his mercy ! We will not recapitulate his faults, Geoffery ; we will speak only of his virtues—they were numerous.”

“ Pardon me,” answered Geoffery ; “ these tears speak for me, that I valued them as they deserved. But you know, Madam, why I dare not mention you to Sir Hugh and my Lady.”

“ Oh ! not for worlds would I have you do so !” said Angelina with warmth.

Geoffery again seemed to meditate for some minutes, and then proceeded.

“ Madam, you cannot, must not return to London to reside. All the ills to which you will be exposed—all the trials and temptations which you will have to encounter, will recoil on me for permitting it—me whom you have honoured with your confidence. I am not fond of deceit or falsehood—I have never practised it ; but if you  
will

will attend to me, and will follow my advice, I could ensure you a safe asylum."

"Name not deceit or falsehood to me," said Angelina; "remember I am their victim!"

Yet when Geoffery told her of the untenanted, yet furnished cottage—when he mentioned its contiguity to the Castle—when he talked of his worthy master and mistress—when he promised her their notice and regard, then she felt herself too weak to oppose him, and she yielded to his advice.

Romantic by nature, the enthusiasm of her mind had been augmented by misfortune; and the prospect of wandering in those lawns which Frederic's infant feet had pressed—of rearing his child amidst the shades where he had been nurtured—of contemplating those scenes on which his eyes had lingered—of obtaining for his child an interest in the hearts of its relatives, seemed to present her with a picture



ture of serene content, which in this world she had never expected to see realized; while Geoffery's sole hope rested on Catherine's continuing single, and leaving her fortune, at her demise, to the child of her adoption (convinced that in time the child of Frederic must become so). The improbability of this idea failed to strike him, and, in his honest zeal for the fatherless babe, he overlooked Catherine's ignorance of its origin, which was with him the chief (if not the only) cause which interested him. He forgot too, the more than frigid nature of his young mistress; and almost as romantic, and more visionary than Angelina, he already saw in imagination all his wishes effected.

Not to weary my readers with unnecessary recapitulation, suffice it to add, that Mr. Sutton, as well as Mrs. Jervis, the house-keeper, were admitted into the secret.

Sutton followed Angelina to Richmond. He disposed of her property; and, very

much to her surprise, informed her that he had purchased with it, in her name, fifteen hundred pounds stock in the three per cents.

Angelina could only sigh at such a proof of Frederic's generosity, as she had no idea that she could have realized half the sum; and warmly thanking her active friend, she accompanied him from London to M——, where, as he mentioned at the Castle, he procured temporary lodgings for her as Mrs. Lawson.

Although he could have relied on his wife's prudence, yet Mr. Sutton thought the fewer who were acquainted with Angelina's secret, the less probability would there be of its transpiring; and it rested in the breasts of our well-meaning trio.

Ere she finally quitted the metropolis, Angelina longed to visit the Church of ———, and examine the marriage register; but when she attempted to do it, her heart sickened within her, and she gave up the idea. If she had at first doubted the  
the



the testimony of Clifford, had not the last words of Frederic too fatally confirmed it? And what could she gain from the inspection? Nothing!—while the remembrance of Frederic's turpitude, which she wished to bury in oblivion, must recur with added poignancy, when her eyes should again rest upon that altar which he had dared to prostitute to the basest purposes? And in making the enquiry, she should draw on herself the invidious surmises of the person of whom she should seek information, and be pointed at as the victim of depravity.

Had Mr. Sutton heard the exact history of Angelina, he would probably have made the enquiry with great advantage to her: but we have before said, that even to Geoffery she was not accurate or minute in the detail of her story, where it related to the deceit practised on her by Frederic. Where she had been brief, Geoffery had been nearly silent, when he retailed her history to Sutton; as he dreaded to injure even the memory of his young

young lamented master, by affixing the shadow of guilt to his character.

Had the unfortunate rencontre with Frederic not occurred, we know not how Clifford could have sustained his deep part of villany. But the gentleman who had performed the marriage ceremony, was a Clergyman of worthy character; and though he had really embarked for the West-Indies the ensuing morning, and his servant also (the only witness of the ceremony), yet he took a certificate of the marriage, and he gave one to his servant. And that it had not been registered, was because entrance to the Church had been obtained by bribing the sexton, without the knowledge of the parochial Minister; yet the sexton knew the gentleman to whom he had yielded up his trust: and though he was not informed of the names of the united couple, yet, by the desire of Frederic (when he returned to him with the key), he made a memorandum of the event, the day, even the hour in which it had taken place.

Mr.



Mr. Sutton, ignorant of all these circumstances, frequently wondered, as he journeyed with Angelina down to M——, how it had been possible for Mr. Fitzallan to deceive and betray so much candour and innocence united to so much good sense; and when he introduced her to his honest helpmate, he bespoke for her the warmest regard and friendship.

## CHAP. VII.

DAYS, months, and years now glided on in calm uniformity. Mrs. Lawson was still a favourite, and almost an inmate at the Castle. The affection of its worthy owners every day increased for her, while her reverence and gratitude for them knew no bounds. Clara was early taught to list the names of her best friends; and while fed by their bounty, and owing to them almost the existence of herself and child, Angelina felt not the weight of obligation, conscious that her society and attention more than repaid the debt in their eyes.

Sir



Sir Hugh's increasing infirmities confined him almost wholly to the house. His sight was impaired, and Lady Fitzallan's strength was unequal to the task of reading to him. Catherine disdained the employment; the audible recitation of Tillotson's Discourses, or the provincial papers, were to her equally irksome tasks; and conscious how very much she was indebted to Angelina, who always cheerfully and readily performed them, she treated her with civility, and now and then bestowed some slight token of regard on Clara. Sir Hugh Fitzallan's annual fits of the gout were now extended far beyond their usual length. At those periods Mrs. Lawson was stationary at the Castle; and leaving little Clara in the housekeeper's apartment, to the care of Mrs. Jervis and old Geoffery, she became a willing prisoner in the chamber of her father-in-law.

Catherine spent several of the winter months in Bath or London; her return or her departure was not interesting, except as the

the former seemed to bring with it a portion of restraint to Clara, and as the latter dispersed it : for though it had been the earliest wish of Angelina to impress on the mind of her child the utmost respect and affection for the Fitzallan family—though she had constantly represented to her the extent of the obligations she was under to every individual of the family, for obtaining their attention and regard, to which she had no claim—though she represented to her the probable advantages which might accrue to her in future from the countenance of a woman of Miss Fitzallan's connections and respectability, yet all failed in their effect on her obstinate little girl.

“ Ah !” cried Clara, “ you need not bid me love Sir Hugh or Lady Fitzallan, for I love them best—best of all in the world, except my own dear mamma ; but Miss Fitzallan indeed, and indeed I can't help it (but you know, mamma, you always bid me speak the truth, then don't be angry), but I cannot love her !”

“ And



“ And why, Clara, can you not ? I am not angry, my child ; but recollect how good Miss Fitzallan is, in allowing you to visit her parents, and in not being angry with them for loving you so much.”

“ Why, I don’t know,” answered the quick child, then only eight years of age, after a pause, “ one can’t help loving ; and I am sure her papa and mamma would love me, were she to be ever so angry at it. And she ought to love me too for your sake, mamma, who take all the trouble of nursing Sir Hugh, and attending on him, and comforting Lady Fitzallan, on yourself ; while she is at liberty to go about and visit, just as if she had only herself to think of. To be sure, I don’t say but that she may be perfectly easy to leave them while you are with them ; for I am certain it is no trouble to you, but a pleasure ; and, as Geoffery said the other day to Mrs. Jervis, you are a thousand times more like their daughter than she is : and he called you a ministering angel, and said, his good master and mistress had

had lived eight years longer, for your coming to the Castle."

"Geoffery was wrong, my child," said Angelina, sighing, "to say so. Our lives are in the hands of the Almighty, as I have often told you. It was his will that our worthy friends should recover tranquillity, and have their days protracted, after the stroke of bitter misfortune, in the loss of their only son,"—her voice faltered—"seemed to have pointed the death-stroke to their peace. You have often heard me mention this melancholy circumstance—I will not dwell upon it now. Geoffery is very wrong to draw comparisons in his honest fondness for me, which are by no means impartial. In my conduct there is no merit; for, overwhelmed as I was by calamity when I lost your father, what comfort could there have been for me in the world, or in the society which is there commonly met with?—None!—the gaiety of those who had never known a heart-ache, and who had their friends and families around them, would  
only



only the more poignantly have kept alive the remembrance of my sad loss. In my intercourse with the Fitzallans, I am grateful for their kindness; I love them tenderly—almost filially; and if, in some measure, I add to their comforts, I am thankful to Heaven: and with the delightful consciousness of my usefulness to them and to you, I pray for an extended being, and feel my highest pleasure in administering to the wants of this worthy pair, and in improving your opening mind. Judge then, Clara, whether much merit be my due, when I tell you these are my only comforts: if contrary were my inclination, and I still pursued this method, then perhaps I would allow it. Miss Fitzallan is unfitted for this character. Though past the bloom of life, her spirits are still buoyant: an active life—that activity which seeks society, a thirst for information, and perhaps for novelty also, impels her steps from home; and sensible that her parents are contented

with my attendance, she follows her wishes. You see here, my Clara, something to admire:—no mean jealousy, as fearing to leave a rival near her parents' heart—no self-opinionated ideas, as if nobody could fulfil the task but herself. Besides, Miss Fitzallan will one day appear as the only remaining descendant of her family.”—Angelina here paused a moment, and looked tenderly at Clara; then drew out her handkerchief, which having held to her eyes, she thus proceeded:—“it is fit she should be known, and make connexions in the world.”

“My dear mamma, you have always taught me to converse freely with you, and never to withhold my sentiments. Won't you be angry, then, if your Clara says one word more?”

“Go on, my love.”

“Why, perhaps, then Miss Fitzallan may have no self-opinionated ideas about tending on her parents, because—because—I don't know how to express myself—but  
I am



I am sure," hesitating, blushing, and throwing herself into her mother's arms, " she does not, cannot love them, as I do you."

This appeal was unanswerable ; and while Angelina folded her Clara to her bosom, the soft tears of maternal delight fell fast from her eyes.

Although it had been the wish of Angelina to cultivate the regard of Miss Fitzallan for her child, yet she did not dictate to Clara a fawning or servile submission ; on the contrary, she strenuously urged the necessity of decision and firmness in her conduct through life. To fix her principles, and to mould her heart, had been more the aim of this anxious mother, than to form the manners ; though, under her example, her own were intuitively caught by Clara, who opposing in her unadulterated mind the stiff and haughty mien of Miss Fitzallan to her mother's simple and unassuming deportment, and seeing in this striking contrast the advantage which natural grace possessed over constrained and distorted habit, soon fell

into the same easy path. She had already inherited from nature the lovely person and sylphlike form of her mother; while in the vivacity of her guileless heart—in the sprightly enthusiasm of her manner—in the arch glance, and the quick repartee, the remembrance of Frederic Fitzallan often brought tears to the eyes of Angelina.

The repugnance which Clara had ever felt towards Catherine, did not surprise her mother, conscious that her forbidding look and hard countenance were ill calculated to inspire either love or regard; yet she earnestly wished to see her Clara the favoured companion of her aunt, and she acknowledged to herself that interest only actuated this wish—though not for herself was it inspired. No! Mrs. Fitzallan's views were fixed to her cottage; nor did she wish to verge beyond the precincts of the Castle. Her little income was ample there; but to be able to gain a friend for her child—one who would protect her through all the struggles of life, which Catherine would



would have the power of doing, had she the will—these were the latent hopes of Angelina.

All the asperity of Catherine's temper and disposition was perceived by her :—her pride—her obstinacy—her *hauteur*—her vindictive self-will, could not pass unremarked. But the deep malignancy of her heart, the hatred with which she had pursued an only brother—that brother her ever-regretted Frederic—these she was an utter stranger to : for not wishing to relate any thing to his beloved Angelina, unless it would afford her pleasure, and unacquainted with that species of depravity, which could derive satisfaction in portraying the vices of his nearest relations, Frederic had been almost silent with respect to her character ; though the inference was obvious, as Angelina had often heard him descant for hours on the goodness and benevolence which marked the characters of his parents.

In adopting a plan of disguise—in appear-

ing under a feigned name and assumed character, Angelina had been impelled by the enthusiasm of her nature, and the romantic sorrow which filled her bosom at the death of Frederic. For a short time her conscience had severely reproached her for this conduct; but its murmurs had been gently lulled to rest, as she gradually found her society more prized, and her presence of more use at the Castle. Her attachment was now become so rooted to its inhabitants, and her attentions so entirely a matter of choice, that no inducement which could have been offered, would have tempted her to forego her situation; she fancied that she was called upon to act the part which she so zealously fulfilled; she fancied that her Frederic, could he have seen her, would have blessed her for it; and when she received the parental kindness of her friends, and saw her Clara blooming in health and loveliness, she almost forgot that she had ever been unhappy.

Geoffery,



Geoffery, Mrs. Jervis, and Sutton often blessed themselves for planning and assisting in what they termed "an act of mercy" to their good Sir Hugh and Lady Fitzallan.

"Ah, Madam!" said old Geoffery, "I daily get nearer my grave; I hourly feel the hasty advances which I make towards it. My master too—but, alas! no one ought to grieve for him; he will be taken from a sad troublesome world to a better place. You, only you, Mrs. Lawson, have kept him here so long. He loves you as a daughter, without knowing that you ought to stand in that light to him; but he must know it—he shall know it—he must not die unacquainted with it."

"He can never know it, Geoffery," answered Angelina; "never must the fatal secret be revealed!"

"Oh say not so," cried Geoffery; "consider your Clara—consider your sweet daughter—consider—ah, Madam!—consider

(excuse the liberty I take)—consider the narrow income which, should my master die, and Miss Fitzallan——”

“ I know what you would say ; I feel your generous kindness, Geoffery : but it must not be. To Providence I trust the care of my Clara : she is young, intelligent, and active. With his gracious help, I will train her mind to virtue, and leave to him the rest. If we have but little, we will curtail our wants. I have always taught her to despise show ; I trust her heart will be too rightly turned, to indulge the approaches of vanity. I do not mean that I expect her perfect, or without the vanity incident to youth ; but I trust that the tinsel of dress, or the attention to be gained from outward appearance alone, will not take possession of her senses.”

“ If she be not an angel herself, she is nearly related to one,” cried Geoffery with honest fervour.

“ Ah, my good friend ! recollect yourself



self—recollect my numerous failings,” said Angelina, sighing.

“ But you must, indeed, Madam—you must acquaint my master with the claims which you have on his regard. He will then consider his grandchild ; and though much may not be in his power, yet what he can, he will do : for I am proud to say it, Geoffery Morgan knows the heart of his master ! ”

“ What ! shall I wound his ears with the errors of an only son ?—Shall ‘ I rake up the ashes of the dead ? ’—Shall I recall to the eye of day, those errors which have been long since atoned for ?—Shall I disturb—shall I agitate the last moments of a resigned saint ? I must repeat it, Geoffery,” said Angelina in a firm tone, “ never !—If my disguise was wrong, I must continue in my fault—it shall be disinterested ; and though I may act for my child contrary to the world’s policy, yet in keeping silence, I act according to my own judgment. Believe me, Geoffery, no false shame retards my

confession ; my errors have been many—I trust my repentance has been sincere ; and when confessed to my Creator, they fear no earthly ear !—But, I entreat you, let Sir Hugh sink quietly to the grave. Peace be to the ashes of Frederic Fitzallan !”

Angelina, here overcome by her emotions, left the room ; and Geoffery never after ventured to resume the subject. He was silent, though by no means convinced.



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### CHAP. VIII.

YEAR after year Sir Hugh Fitzallan's infirmities increased; and though his life was protracted, to the surprise of all who knew him, sixteen years after the death of his son, yet at length enfeebled nature could hold out no longer, and his spirit left its earthly tenement.

Lady Fitzallan felt this stroke as a wife, but she bore it like a Christian: her grief was not loud, though it was deep. She did not mourn like one without hope; for she firmly expected soon to be reunited to her beloved husband in a better world.

The heiress of Fitzallan, as formerly, bore this new *trial* with unexampled composure. She walked majestically over the great hall, her sable robes sweeping after her; and she gave her orders in a tone of unlimited authority, instantly shewing the trembling household that from henceforth she was whole and sole mistress of the Castle.

Lady Fitzallan's jointure was suitable to her station in life: it was the third part of the income accruing from the Fitzallan estates, which at her demise must devolve to Catherine. More Sir Hugh could not allot to her; otherwise he would no doubt have done it. The small sum which he had the power of bequeathing, had been divided amongst his old and valued servants. Five hundred pounds to Geoffery, the same to Mrs. Jervis, and fifty pounds a piece to the remainder of his household.

The will had been made immediately after the death of Frederic Fitzallan; but five years preceding that of Sir Hugh, on recovering



recovering from the longest and severest fit of the gout he had ever been afflicted with, he had sent for Sutton, and as appeared by the date, had made him annex a codicil to his will, bequeathing to Clara, the daughter of Mrs. Lawson, five hundred pounds, to be paid to her mother for her use, twelve months after his death. And the clause specified that it was meant particularly as a small mark of gratitude, for the more than filial attention with which Mrs. Lawson had regarded him, from the time of her residence at the cottage.

Angelina's heart palpitated, and her eyes filled with tears of thankfulness, as Mr. Sutton read her this paragraph aloud by the order of the heiress. Miss Fitzallan chose to be present at the time: though she would have thought it very derogatory to her dignity, to have been the reader herself, she seemed much pleased at witnessing the surprise evinced by Angelina at hearing it.

“ Mrs.

"Mrs. Lawson," said she, "I do not at all wonder at your being thus affected. Could you have understood the heart of a Fitzallan, you would have been prepared for it; for it is not in the nature of one who bears that name, to endure the sense of obligation."

"Ah!" thought Angelina, "I was better acquainted with the heart of my deceased friend, than his daughter. His meaning was not the payment of a debt; it was a mark of regard, of esteem, of affection!—and, as such, I receive it with humble gratitude and thankfulness."

A month had scarcely elapsed from the interment of Sir Hugh Fitzallan, when his daughter informed Lady Fitzallan that she intended visiting Bath.

"As you will have the society of Mrs. Lawson, Madam," said she, "I make no apology for leaving you. My health requires a change; entire seclusion does not accord with my feelings, and therefore I mean to go next week."

Lady



Lady Fitzallan made no opposition, and Catherine continued:—

“ To you, and your care, Mrs. Lawson, I entrust Lady Fitzallan; but as I am now called upon to sustain my part in the world, and to act as the sole representative, and the immediate heiress of our ancient house, as in my person is now concentrated all that remains of the Fitzallan family, it is necessary that I should emerge from retirement to observation, in a style something more fitted to the character I am to support, than has hitherto been the case; and to further this design, I have hired two new male domestics to attend me, and a female friend in Bath has procured a woman to be more immediately about my person; yet still my election is not completed. In my more retired moments I should often feel the want of a companion; one cannot converse with one’s servant. Amongst my numerous and unavoidable routine of engagements, I could not write to your Ladyship, perhaps, so frequently

as I might wish; and therefore I was thinking, Mrs. Lawson, to beg your Clara of you. I confess I have hitherto felt a repugnance to the company of children; but she really appears a tractable quiet child, and I should find her useful, and might probably derive a portion of entertainment from her society, when free from engagements or more solid conversation. The manifold advantages which would accrue to her from being seen with me, I will not enumerate; it might seem ostentatious, but to you they must be obvious."

Mrs. Lawson felt wholly at a loss with regard to her answer: she feared to offend Miss Fitzallan by a refusal. She saw that her child might probably derive some advantage from the journey; but would not the disadvantages greatly preponderate?— Might not her Clara imbibe such a relish for the world and its pleasures, as to unfit her for returning to the cottage?—Could she bear a separation from her child?—or would that child herself consent to a separation?



ration?—For a few moments she was silent, while these suggestions agitated her mind; but she saw that Miss Fitzallan expected her to answer, and she said that she was much obliged, and grateful for her kindness; she would consult her Clara, and let her know the result."

Catherine was not gratified by this answer:—she had expected to see Mrs. Lawson entranced with joy and rapture at her condescending proposition.

"Let your decision be speedy, if you please, Madam," said she, "that I may settle my plans accordingly. Your making Miss Clara a party in your consultation, I am tempted to smile at: at her tender age much reliance cannot be placed on the judgment, I should imagine. However, I beg you will act entirely as you like; don't let my proposal constrain your inclinations."

Then rising majestically and slowly from her seat, she quitted the apartment.

A long

A long conversation ensued between Lady Fitzallan, Mrs. Lawson, and Clara (for Clara was indeed summoned, and bore her part); and being a "tractable quiet child," she at length tearfully consented to leave her beloved mother, and her revered (though undiscovered) grandmother, and to accompany Miss Fitzallan to Bath: yet when the moment of separation arrived, each of the trio repented her consent. Lady Fitzallan kissed her daughter with composure; but she sobbed on the neck of her granddaughter, who gave her tear for tear; while Angelina, clasping her child to her bosom, no sooner saw the carriage turn from the door, than she seemed to lose her Frederic again—again to close the eyes of Sir Hugh Fitzallan. Every sorrow which had marked her life, rose afresh to her imagination: she fancied her Clara was sent from the maternal shelter, to experience them all with added poignancy, and she fainted in the arms of Mrs. Jervis, where



where we must unwillingly leave her for the present, to turn to our heroine, just making her *debut* on the busy stage of the world.

But a heroine always requires a new chapter; and as Miss Fitzallan always expects precedency where it is her due (though perhaps if she ever were inclined to yield her claim, it would be where her seniority was in question), we will just give a short sketch of her person taken from the life.

As an heiress looking out for a suitable establishment, she entered Bath in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred. Miss Fitzallan had just attained her forty-fifth year; her person had always been coarse; but what at fifteen passed for rude luxuriant health, had been constantly increasing, till her large prominent features had attained an appearance of more than masculine hardihood. Her eyes were black, quick, and expressive—her nose was long, and more acute than aquiline;—her mouth  
was

was rather wide, and the scornful expression which it often adopted, had greatly contributed to extend it beyond its natural bounds;—her teeth were large and very conspicuous; Time had not levelled many of them, and Art had supplied his sparing devastations with very good success;—her high protruding cheek-bones were assisted in their efforts for notoriety, by the present fashion of disposing the hair; and though Time had been more free with the head than the teeth, yet Art had here also exerted his benevolence, and had yearly sent substitutes from a wiggery of the first *ton*, which had had the desired effect, and at present Catherine's sable locks vied with the plumes on her hat.

In her person she was far above the common height; yet by aiming continually at grace, she had entirely lost sight of it. Her joints, never flexible, had now stiffened with her years; and the slowness of her movements, and the upright position of her



her body, were much more like a piece of mechanism than what she meant to represent, viz. an *elegant and interesting young woman*. Miss Fitzallan had never in her youth attracted admirers. While Frederic lived, her fortune was known to be trifling; and her person, such as we have described it, did not appear formed to inspire "*la belle passion*." Clifford indeed had professed himself her captive; and for a much longer period than she would willingly have avowed even to herself, she had felt his power over her heart. Since the death of her brother, and the secession of Clifford, she had received one or two matrimonial proposals, from men who had sense enough to overlook the superficial charms of softness and beauty, in the contemplation of the more solid advantages to be met with in the possession of the Fitzallan acres. When these suitors had pressed for a definitive answer, they had been refused with disdain. But the lady had had no objection to hold them in suspense and "*durance vile*,"

vile," for the pleasure of viewing them in her train; for, proud of her imaginary mental pre-eminence, of her birth, her family, even of her personal charms, the beauty still retained her freedom, and aimed at higher game!

Yet years rolled on; no suitable alliance offered; and though her glass might inform her that her features grew more fixed, and her countenance more firm, even self-love could not blind her so far as to persuade her that they improved: and therefore with every hope renewed by the death of her father, and the immediate inheritance of that property, of which the prospective only had been hitherto seen by the world, this young damsel-errant of forty-five, once more set off for Bath in an elegant new chariot and four, two new footmen as outriders, a little *élève* by her side in the form of Clara Lawson, and every appendage which her birth required, to inform the world of all that she wished it to know.

With



With a disposition so independent, and so conscious of its own importance, as was Catherine Fitzallan's, she would never, perhaps, have deemed a change of situation necessary, had she not feared the total extinction of the family name. This idea wounded her to the soul; and she would unhesitatingly have refused an Earldom when opposed to a man of ancient family, who would have relinquished his own rights, to bear the arms and name of Fitzallan.

In chusing a simple modest girl like Clara for her companion, she judged herself very politic. How strikingly would the calm dignity of her manners contrast with those of the unformed child's?—And how amiable would it appear, to profess herself the benefactress of so helpless and unconnected a being?—Our readers will probably acknowledge the “force of contrast” also, if they will follow us to the next chapter.

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CHAP. IX.

CLARA Lawson, the “tractable quiet child,” who had been chosen for Miss Fitz-allan’s companion in this journey, wanted only two months of being seventeen years old. Her person was rather below than above the middle size, yet it was moulded with the utmost symmetry; her eyes were of sparkling blue, her complexion was beautifully clear and white, the colour in her cheeks would have foiled the best *Parisian bloom*; yet, except when she addressed a stranger, felt herself the object of attention, or talked of her absent parent, she



she would have looked pale by the side of most of our modern belles!—lips have been so often compared to coral, that I shall compare my heroine's to capficums. Ivory teeth is rather a hacknied simile; China will not do, I fear, for I am told there is a thriving manufactory of these; so I will only add that a better set was never placed within a more lovely mouth. But Clara's person had nothing to do with her attractive powers, nor can I define them to my readers; but I hope they will discover them in the course of my work. Suffice it to add, she was all nature, frankness, and simplicity: her heart was affectionate, her temper good, her spirits lively; her understanding was somewhat above mediocrity, and it had been cultivated by her mother, who had made a judicious selection of the books from Sir Hugh Fitzallan's library, for her daughter's perusal, and who had laboured more to store her mind with useful knowledge, and to impress it with

religious truths, than to make her a learned woman. As to her accomplishments, she did not excel; indeed she had obtained every thing through her mother, who had dwelt far more on the useful and the beneficial, than on the ornamental and the specious. She could speak French indifferently, but understood it very well: she sang agreeably, played a little on the piano-forte, not at all like a modern amateur, or Dilettanti performer—with taste perhaps and expression, but with little execution.

For the first time in her life Clara had emerged from home and from her mother's eye. Her heart seemed overwhelmed with anguish; the varied landscape had no charms for her; novelty failed to attract her attention;—her thoughts, her wishes, her whole soul seemed at Fitzallan Castle with her mother, and her beloved Lady Fitzallan. She was in imagination really with them; she still felt the tear of Lady Fitzallan—she still felt the firm, the almost frantic embrace



embrace of her mother; her tender prayer was still whispered in her ear—"God Almighty bless, preserve, and keep my dearest girl, and return her safe to these arms!"

It has been remarked that Clara had always felt a repugnance towards Miss Fitzallan. As her judgment expanded—as her faculties improved—as her perception and discernment had increased, she had felt this repugnance strengthen rather than diminish; she had often confessed this to her mother, and at her persuasion had tried to conquer it; but she felt that it arose from principle, and she could not do it. When she saw the coldness of Catherine's behaviour towards her parents (to call it by no harsher name,) when she observed the pride with which she treated her inferiors, the asperity which marked her conduct towards those who fell under her displeasure, and the despotic sway with which she had ruled at the Castle since the death of Sir Hugh

C 2

Fitzallan,

Fitzallan, she had frequently struggled feverely with herself, ere she could continue to treat her with that attentive respect which her mother had always enjoined her to adopt; and nothing but the entreaties of that mother, and the tears of Lady Fitzallan could have prevailed on Clara to become her voluntary companion.

The prospect of seeing the world—of being introduced to young persons of her own age—of partaking of gay amusements, which, seen at a distance, had often made her young heart beat with expectation, seemed now entirely obscured, when she recollected who was to accompany her. But Clara's disposition had not the smallest tinge of fullness; she had a small portion of philosophy; she remembered an injunction, frequently repeated by her mother—"Never make the worst of trifling unpleasantries; strive against them, and you will soon conquer them."—Clara had not philosophy enough to think this journey a trifling unpleasantry;



unpleasantry; she was sure she could not forget it while she continued with Miss Fitzallan; but she resolved by cheerfulness and civility, to evince that she meant to conduct herself so as to render herself agreeable.

Miss Fitzallan meanwhile was deeply musing on her own more important plans, and therefore did not distress Clara by remarking her taciturnity.

The second day of their journey, our young traveller began to be more reconciled to the idea of leaving home; and in the evening, when they entered the gay city of Bath, she had regained a tolerable portion of contentment.

The friend who had hired the *femme de chambre* for Catherine, had also taken an elegant house for her in the Crescent, which she was driven to immediately on her arrival, and seemed very much to approve.

Clara was astonished at the elegant regularity of the buildings, at the brilliancy of

the scene, indeed at every thing which was presented to her eyes ; but she had too much good sense to express herself in loud wonder, which she knew would not fail to call down on her the reproof and animadversion of Miss Fitzallan, who disliked nothing so much as what she termed “ a voluntary display of ignorance :” and as Mrs. Letsom, the new Abigail, received the travellers at the hall-door, with “ turbaned head, bobbed ears, and broached bosom,” Clara kept entire silence ; as her surprise alone would have prevented speech, while she surveyed the *tout ensemble* of one of the highly improved order of domestics.

Miss Fitzallan, leaning on the arm of her *protégée*, walked through the spacious rooms.—“ So Mrs. What’s-your-name,” addressing her new attendant “ I suppose you are the young person hired by Lady Plumtree, to attend on my person ?”

“ Yes, Ma’am, I am—I am proud to say it, Ma’am, I am the person selected from  
all



all the numerous train, who offered to her La'ship for that purpose; and, Ma'am, I shall be proud as well as happy, to have the satisfaction of attending on so nice a lady."

This speech was uttered with the utmost fluency; and it ran so glibly from her tongue, that Clara could not help surmising that it had been learned off hand, to speak extempore on the present occasion.

"Oh, very well," said Catherine, pleased with the flattery contained in the speech, "very well. I have a reliance on my friend Lady Plumtree, and I dare say you will suit me. Pray are you of a good disposition?"

"Why yes, Ma'am, I am proud to say, my only fault that way is being too good-tempered."

"Why, indeed, Mrs. What's-your-name——"

"Let'som, Ma'am," with a low curtsy; but she was not heard by Catherine.

"Indeed that may be; but I hope you  
know

know your own consequence too well, to demean yourself by making companions of your fellow-servants : for certainly your situation," —(here Catherine raised her voice)—" your situation, I say, Mrs. What's-your-name, is a highly respectable one. For there is a vast difference surely between the footman who merely conveys messages—the man who decants the wine, the porter who opens the door, and the female attire-woman, who arrays the person of her Lady, is admitted into her boudoir, and whose only avocations are of the most delicate and interesting nature !"

" Certainly, Ma'am," answered Mrs. Letsom, dropping almost the fiftieth low curtsy.

Miss Fitzallan continued—" I say, Mrs. What's-your-name, I hope you can deport yourself so as to impress respect, and not treat those as your familiars, who are undoubtedly your inferiors."

" Oh surely, Ma'am, I must say I have my share of pride, thank God for it ! It has  
kept



kept my head up, Ma'am, these many years."

"Surely!" said Miss Fitzallan, rising majestically on her heels, and drawing up her own head—"surely!"

Clara's risible faculties were moved almost involuntarily, though imperceptibly, at her companions, as she heard Mrs. Letsom's eulogium on pride, and her conception of its source, and observed the corresponding movements of Catherine. She, however, soon checked herself, and the questioning proceeded.

"Can you convey a verbal message with precision and perspicuity?—for there is a vast deal in those qualities, Mrs. What's-your-name——"

"Letsom, Ma'am," accompanied by the usual drop, the questioner still deaf.

"The head of a family is saved a great deal of trouble, if a person in a sub station has a good comprehension."

"Why yes, to be sure, Ma'am, you

are certainly right ; and I must needs say my mental faculties are very good."

" Pray, Mrs. a—— Mrs. a—— tell me your name ?"

" Letsom, Ma'am ; I thought my Lady Plumtree had informed you, Ma'am : otherwise I should have taken care to have announced myself before."

" Perhaps she did ; but I have had such an accumulation of ideas, and such an influx of business to settle, that it went out of my head. Letsom—Letsom—Letsom is a genteel sounding name enough for an Abigail. Remember it, Clara ; and do you remember, Letsom, to treat this young lady with the respect due to a *protégée* of mine !"

Mrs. Letsom curtsied obedience, and after some time longer the examination ended.

Mrs. Letsom having confessed herself the inheritor of all the Cardinal Virtues, of every mental qualification, acknowledged herself in possession of the blackest quality of the human heart, pride—and placed it on the  
side



side of her virtues, and announced her capability in every the minutest branch of her office, she was dismissed; when Miss Fitzallan, turning to Clara, expressed herself much pleased with her new attendant.

“ Her manners, and the whole style of her conversation, are so widely different from that of Mrs. Jervis, and my mother’s woman !” said she.

So also thought Clara; though she was not so well pleased with the contrast. She still retained some prejudices in favour of her early friends at the Castle; and preferred their homespun wearing qualities—their unassuming conversation, and plain habits, to the slipshod dialect, specious professions, and fantastic apparel of Mrs. Letfom.—“ But her deportment and behaviour are both immaterial to me,” thought she; “ thank Heaven! my situation in life exempts me from the attendance of these people; and, were it otherwise, I think I should still prefer my independence, at the risk of

being a singular-being, and my own tire-woman."

Fatigued, and sickened with listening to the bombastic declamations of Miss Fitzallan, Clara would willingly have fought her pillow; but this was impossible—she was obliged to attend to her sickening and wearisome details till a late hour. At length she was about to retire, when Miss Fitzallan called her back, saying—"Oh Lawson! I had nearly forgotten a most important thing:—do take the pen and ink, and announce my arrival, that it may get into to-morrow's newspaper; otherwise half my acquaintance will be ignorant of it for this week to come!—Really the multiplicity of my concerns had almost driven it out of my head.

Clara held the pen in her hand, irresolute how to proceed in this seemingly important business; but guessing nothing requisite but the name, she wrote—"Miss Fitzallan."

"Let



“ Let me see it,” said Catherine — “ My dear child, what have you been about ? Mrs. Letsom could have been announced in this manner. Who could recognise me under this designation ?—Here, pray take a fresh sheet of paper, and write on the first line — ‘ Arrived here ’—then in the next, with capital letters— ‘ Miss Fitzallan and suite ! ’ —There, that will do — James, carry this to the printer, and bid him place it at the head of his list of arrivals : give him this also from me,” putting a guinea into his hand. Then formally curtsying to Clara, Catherine withdrew for the night, followed by Mrs. Letsom.

Clara willingly tripped up after, as fast as the solemn procession would give her leave ; and when she had gained the chamber allotted for her, she hastily locked the door, as if she feared another recall. Her solitary reveries, however, though unrestrained, were not more pleasing than had been her *tête-à-tête*.

“ What a specimen,” thought she, “ has  
this

this night afforded me of Miss Fitzallan in her companionable humour!—Oh my dear mamma! you do not—you cannot know what you have made your Clara undergo in accompanying Miss Fitzallan! How different, how widely different are her conversation, her manners, her sentiments from your's, and my ever-respected Lady Fitzallan's. How often have I fondly listened, while you have represented to me the danger of self-importance, the folly of ostentation, the wickedness of pride!—Ah, my dearest mamma! you might have spared your admonitions. Is it possible for me ever to fall into these errors, while I see their frightful effects so constantly before me? Is it possible that I can be self-important, when every revolving minute I am in some way or other reminded of my littleness?"

Clara's reflections were continued for some time, till sleep beguiled her of her uneasy retrospections.



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## CHAP. X.

IN the morning she reasoned herself into a more contented frame of mind, and met her patroness with tolerable grace. The hours till twelve were allotted by Miss Fitzallan to receiving her numerous tradespeople; and her orders, though issued in her usual haughty and formal manner, were received with the utmost attention and profoundest civility, as they were given to a pretty large amount. At two o'clock Catherine made her appearance in the drawing-room, ready to receive company. She had, to use a nautical term, "crowded all her sail;" and her long crape veil descended from the left side, and trained on the carpet.

Clara

Clara had often remarked the cadaverous hue of Miss Fitzallan's countenance at the Castle.—Bath seemed to have acted on it with magic art: the bloom on her cheeks was vivid, the jetty hue, the evenness of her eye-brows was striking; and as she witnessed how quickly her shape had grown to the fashion, and how prominently conspicuous this was made to appear in two points, though new to the world, yet Clara was quick-sighted, and she easily divined what had been the “*delicate and interesting avocations*” of Mrs. Letsom!

Miss Fitzallan drew her chair to the table, and told Clara to sit on the inkstand.—“Always remember, Lawson, to have this done,” said she. “Throw a newspaper carelessly here, put my netting-box there, bring that volume of Gibbon's Rise and Fall—place it before me; it will look as if I had been writing notes from it. A few Reviews scattered about the table will not be amiss: I like an appearance of activity in the mind. You, child, had better appear busily



busily arranging my card racks. Remember that your province is to keep my list of engagements!"

Clara sighed at the contrast which this *seeming* exhibited, to all that she had been heretofore taught; but tried *in reality* to employ herself, by ornamenting the helps to the memory ere they were affixed to the mantle piece.

Miss Fitzallan was deeply studying the declension of empires, and the fall of states, when suddenly looking up, she bade Clara pull the bell.

"I must see Letsom immediately," said she, "otherwise company will come up, and it will be too late."

Letsom appeared to the summons.

"Go instantly to Miss ———, and tell her not to make my cap so wide by two inches, as the pattern sent: the beads must be placed more in the front, two rows of the lace must fall pendant from the left ear, the bow must be full and handsome, and the lappet must be longer than

than the one which I saw; the folds of the crape must lie closer to each other, and I should like the feathers, though placed in a horizontal direction, to droop a little over my brow. Make haste, child—that is all—I fear she may begin it. Though stop—on recollection one thing more—tell her to put the fullness behind, and to exhibit a regular puffing on the crown. That is all—you may go.”

“Ma’am, Ma’am,” said the half-scared Letsom, curtsying, “I should be glad if—if you would repeat—if you——”

A smart rap was heard at the hall-door. Letsom was ordered out of the room, lest she should meet the company on the stairs; and Clara thought the head of the person in the “sub-station,” would be a most extraordinary one indeed, if it could contain every particular of these extraordinary directions!

Lady Plumtree was presently announced; and while the two friends were warmly professing their mutual pleasure at this meeting,

Clara



Clara had an opportunity of surveying this first specimen of the *beau-monde*.

Her Ladyship would have appeared seventy years of age, could her face have been well washed, and the natural colour of her hair been distinguished; but her delicate and interesting avocations had been so well performed, that she could very well have passed for twenty years younger. Bred in the world, educated for it, and existing only in it, her's had been

“ A youth of folly—an old age of cards!”

*Green cloth* was the object of her attraction, when *green fields* smiled in May and June; and to make up her parties, to see them surrounded by the rich, the titled, and the fashionable, was the height of her ambition. By flattering Miss Fitzallan's foibles, she had effectually wormed herself into her favour, gained an ascendancy over her mind, and ensured her presence when she required it. Though not fond of play, Catherine never objected to Lady Plumtree's stake; and several rouleaus from her  
purse

purse had vanished almost imperceptibly, in her Ladyship's drawing-room the preceding winter.

The reflections of Clara were interrupted by the warm and pressing entreaties of Lady Plumtree.

"Nay, my dear friend, you must not refuse me: I assure you I dare not shew myself at home again, if I do not prevail. Sir Herbert Manwaring would not have engaged himself, if I had not assured him solemnly on my honour, that I would introduce him to you. You know, I suppose, my dear friend, that he has lately purchased an estate in the vicinity of your Castle, though he has never seen the place; yet he has heard of its proximity to you, and I assure you that does not seem its least attraction in his eye."

"But consider, my dear teasing Plumtree," said Catherine in a half-lisping, drawling tone, and her eyes almost closed in affected languishment, while her widening simper betrayed her inward satisfaction,  
 "consider



“ consider the *outré* figure I shall cut in these rustic *habillements* ?”

“ I admire that excessively !” answered her Ladyship, “ when you know, you extravagant thing, that within this month I sent you down three entire suits of mourning in the newest style. Come, come, they will certainly do a fortnight longer : then of course you will lay aside your blacks. Well, you come ?—I see I have prevailed.”

“ No, no,” cried Catherine.

“ Two negatives make an affirmative !—I say yes,” said her Ladyship ; “ of course you will bring your friend with you,” glancing her eye at Clara, who had not been thought of consequence enough to be introduced.

“ Oh, yes, I shall take her with me ; I am not fond of leaving young persons to themselves.”

“ Right, very right.—You do not play yet, I presume, Miss ?”

“ No, Madam,” replied Clara.

“ Oh well, time enough yet ; you can look  
on,

on, and learn. You will soon come to it; and believe me you will find it the comfort of your life. Indeed it is the only rational amusement in the world."

Clara almost stared with astonishment: she thought her ears must have deceived her; till with much emphasis, and spreading out her hand, as if to enforce her axiom, Lady Plumtree repeated—

"The only rational amusement in the world."

"Oh, but Clara is a child, you know," said Catherine, "and of course has scarcely ever seen a card played; she hardly knows hearts from diamonds, I suppose. At her tender age, I am sure I did not."

"A relation, I presume?" said Lady Plumtree, glancing at Clara, and speaking to Miss Fitzallan.

"Oh bless you, no! How could such an idea enter your head?"

"I beg your pardon—the deep mourning caused the mistake."

"I told Lady Fitzallan it would be so,"  
said



said Catherine hastily, and raising her voice with emphasis. Then turning to Clara, who sat in a state of painful humiliation, which cannot be described, she said—"Will you go, child, and see if Letsom be returned?"

Clara saw that this lame excuse was framed to tell her that her company could be dispensed with. She gladly availed herself of the permission conveyed in it, and no sooner reached her room, than she burst into tears.

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CHAP. XI.

SO deeply was our heroine wounded by the treatment she had just experienced, that she was on the point of writing to her mother, to request her permission to return to the cottage; but recalling to her mind the earnest wishes of Lady Fitzallan—recollecting the tender persuasions which her mother had used to urge her departure, she resolved to bear her unpleasant situation a little longer, if only for their sakes.

“Yes,” sighed she, “the constant mortifications I meet with, shall cease to wound me, when I recollect that for their dear  
sakes,



sakes, I submit to them ; the insults to which I may be exposed, will not call forth my resentment, when, by patient sufferance, I am certain of ensuring the affection of my best, my only friends. Perhaps these trials are meant by the Great Disposer of all things, to check that vanity, that confidence in myself, which the praises of my doting friends have sown in my mind. And, after all, of what do I complain?—Not of bodily suffering—not of actual distress—not of real misfortune.”—She felt her cheeks flush as she asked herself these questions, and again sighed, as she added—“ Alas ! I see how it is—my self-consequence is hurt!--I find myself an insignificant being—I am humbled, mortified, and almost ashamed to acknowledge the truth even to myself.”

Clara had promised to write her mother a faithful detail of every passing occurrence. She now employed herself in addressing a letter to her ; and after the foregoing mental examination, it may be supposed that

she had heroism enough to pass over her mortifications lightly. She gave the history of her journey, and dwelt more on the sorrow she felt at leaving the Castle, than on her present situation. Warm from the heart, her expressions of affection and regard were impassioned and sincere; and as her hand traced the characters, her eyes overflowed. She had concluded her letter ere she was again summoned to the drawing-room; though the unremitting applications to the hall-door, informed her that Miss Fitzallan held quite a morning levee.

At length one of the footmen knocked at her chamber-door, and told her his mistress desired her presence. Hastily giving him her letter to consign to the post-office, she returned to wipe her eyes, and to compose her countenance, which still retained traces of her recent emotion; and then with a beating heart she descended to the drawing-room.

At the door of it she stopped a moment.  
—The confusion of mingled voices intimidated



dated her, but she instantaneously regained courage; and though diffidence might be seen in the manner of her *entrée*, yet it must have been a very superficial observer who could have mistaken it for awkwardness. Some of the fashionable circle stared her full in the face; others did not look towards her, engrossed by themselves or the conversation; while the more polite and respectable part made a movement of their persons, to shew her that she could not be overlooked.

“ I sent for you, Miss Lawson,” said Catherine, “ to chat to those two young ladies; they are quite dull in that corner by themselves.”

Clara went to that part of the room to which Miss Fitzallan pointed, and cheerfully attempted to amuse two girls about eight and ten years of age. Naturally fond of children, she did not feel any degradation from this employment; but soon found that these *old young* ladies would set her down for a perfect infant: for after con-

feeling that she had never seen London, Weymouth, or Brighton, they at length descended to more minute questioning; and at hearing she had never been in the Bath Rooms, they broke out into a loud and unrestrained laugh. They then told her of their own numerous engagements, with all the importance which their mother could have adopted; and mentioned two private balls to which they were invited the ensuing week.

“At Mrs. Turton’s there are to be fifty couple,” said the youngest girl; “and though all of us are to be under sixteen years old, yet I assure you there are three dashing fellows of Midshipmen, and an enchanting little Ensign, that all of them are trying to catch for a partner.”

“Yes, and besides these balls,” said the other, “Eliza and I are going to an infantine rout to-night at Mrs. Dixon’s. We are to play three card loo; and as it is called infantine, the loo is limited to eighteen-pence: but the last time I was there, I won



I won thirty shillings! Only think how delightful! We can bet a little, you know, if we have a mind to make it higher, just by way of keeping up the spirit of the thing."

"But that is not required, I should think, at a game where it is possible to win or lose the sum you mention."

"Oh, I assure you, as mamma says," with a melancholy shake of the head—"eighteen-penny loo is but dull work—mere milk and water! But, you know, it is very well, for some of the party are not allowed to play higher; all mothers are not so good-natured as our's."

"Perhaps all parents cannot so well afford to have their money laid out in this manner," said Clara. She would have added—"or perhaps they can apply it to better purposes;" but, unwilling to say any thing by which they could infer that she meant to condemn the conduct of their's, she was silent.

"We have a party at home to-morrow—  
that

that is, mamma has," said Eliza, "and when we have dined, how I shall pray for seven o'clock, and so will mamma too I dare say; for she is generally seized with a yawning fit till the company begin to drop in."

"Oh," said the other sister, "I do hate company evenings from six till half past seven or eight; if one could but sleep away the time, it would do well enough: but then you know one should be afraid of over-doing it, and not waking again exactly at the proper time; and then besides, there would be the danger of discomposing one's dress. But I know delightfully how to amuse myself to-morrow evening.—I'll tell you," said she to Clara, lowering her voice; "but promise me solemnly that you won't tell; for I assure you 'tis a monstrous secret."

"You had better not trust me," said Clara, "and then there can be no danger."

"Oh yes but I will though, because it's monstrous funny, and 'twill make you laugh.

I will



I will write a love-letter to our governess, and sign it with Colonel Darnley's name, and give it to one of the footmen to give to her, and charge him to say that Darnley's own man brought it; and then what fun we two shall have, when we see *poor* Maxwell laying about to meet him in the hall as he enters; for mamma never allows her to come into company (unless she wants one at a card-table, or to make out the figure of a dance). She only makes tea for them all in the butler's room, which is very near the hall-door."

"But do you consider that you will tell an untruth, my dear," said Clara, "and degrade yourself by making one of your servants a confederate in your plot?—that you will insult the person appointed by your parents as your governess, and that you will commit forgery also (*smiling*) in signing the Colonel's name?"

"Lord, how serious you are!" said the little plotter. "Why, mamma would only laugh at it."

“Are you sure of that?” asked Clara.  
 “And are you as sure that Miss Maxwell will be *laying about*, as you call it, to meet the Colonel? I should rather think that she would avoid him.”

“Oh, bless you, no—that is impossible! for he is a very handsome man, and Maxwell has never had a sweetheart—that I’m sure of, by her constant sighing; and one day the Colonel, when he was at romps with us, ran up the stairs after me, and went into the room where she was sitting; and she did look so odd, and so confused, you’ve no notion!”

Lady Meynill now rose to take leave, and the misses, her daughters, followed her bright example. Eliza just nodded her head, and tripped after her good-natured mamma; while the elder sister itaid to say, in no very pleasant tone, to Clara—

“I dare say now, you look so odd and so precise, that you will be spiteful enough to let the cat out of the bag to Miss Maxwell. But if you offer to do it, you’ll-natured,  
 ridiculous



ridiculous thing you ! I never will forgive you."

Clara assured her she had nothing to fear from her, and she ran out of the room after her mother and sister.

The morning visitors were not wholly dispersed at four o'clock in the afternoon. Then Miss Fitzallan retired to dress for Lady Flumtree's; and sparkling with jets, she entered the dining room at six, in a very condescending humour: as she had been much gratified by the early attention of her numerous friends in the morning, and was full of the promised introduction to Sir Herbert Manwaring in the evening.

Though in the midst of these pleasing retrospections, and more pleasing anticipations, she forgot not to lament the "total want of memory" which Letson laboured under.

"Would you believe, Lawson," said she, "that after my plain and particular orders this morning, she made three mistakes in delivering my message to Miss ———,

and omitted three instructions. I could not wear my cap, and have been obliged to substitute my Grecian head-dress. Perhaps," said she, viewing herself at the glass, "this may be as well for the present occasion. To say the truth, Letsom has some notion of ornamenting the person."—This was uttered in a tone of visible satisfaction; and she added,—“Well, well, I must make her a memory.—I was much pleased, Clara, by the readiness you evinced to enter into chat with those children in the morning. If it had not been for you, I should have found them a dead weight; for Lady Meynill is foolish enough to take the poor *babes* every where with her, and is outrageous if they are not noticed.”

“They appear to me rather too old for their years, if you will allow the expression.”

“A very good distinction,” said Miss Fitzallan. “Lady Plumtree and I were talking of you this morning, child, and she says it is absolutely necessary for you to put off your mourning;—you will go with me



to Lady Meynill's party, and after that to the ball to-morrow night, and I have sent to ——'s warehouse. You will have a variety of dresses to see in the morning; chuse one, and pay for it," putting a five guinea note into her hand, "and look out your white dresses."

"I feel your kindness, Madam," said Clara, "but your good mother was too generous at my departure from the Castle, for me to accept your proffered bounty!"

"Oh pray keep it! Put it in your pocket, I entreat," said Catherine. "I did not ask your company to draw you into expence; that would, indeed, be unlike a Fitzallan!"

"You are very good; and that respected name cannot be heard by me," answered Clara, "without recalling forcibly to my mind the generosity of him whom we have so lately lost. Pardon me then, Miss Fitzallan, if I entreat your permission to wear this dress a little longer?"

"It is quite impossible," returned Catherine

rine, frowning, and raising her voice ; “ the nearest relatives now wear mourning only six weeks. I shall throw off mine when the next ten days are expired ; and as you were not related or even connected to the Fitzallans, I think the *farce* has been already kept up full as long as is requisite.”

“ Call it not a farce,” exclaimed Clara with emotion ; “ my affection—my gratitude towards Sir Hugh Fitzallan, were feelings which seemed inherent to my nature.—“ They grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength !”

“ Poetical allusions are highly improper, Miss Lawton, at your time of life ; they give a romantic bias to the mind,” said Catherine. “ Your feelings must, of course, be far more susceptible than mine on the present occasion. You know it stands to reason,” in an ironical tone ; “ the ties of blood are nothing. Your recalling my griefs—your probing my lacerated heart, by reminding me of the lost Sir Hugh, is  
perhaps



perhaps well-timed, and tallies with your ideas of the right and the proper. However, here I am mistress, Miss Lawson; here you are under my controul; and hear me—you put off your mourning to-morrow!”

Clara was silent;—she reluctantly submitted to this imperious mandate, and Miss Fitzallan seemed appeased.

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## CHAP. XII.

LADY Plumtree's rout was crammed with fashionables. Sir Herbert Manwaring was, on Miss Fitzallan's appearance, instantly introduced to her, and as instantly seated as her partner at half-guinea whist. The person of this Baronet was greatly in  
his

his favour :—his height was majestic ; his manners commanded respect ; his attentions to Miss Fitzallan were highly flattering to her vanity, as he was by far the handsomest man in the room.

Sir Herbert was really descended from a very respectable family, and had originally possessed a good fortune, being the eldest son of a country gentleman ; but an early propensity to every species of gaming had nearly ruined him, when, by the death of an uncle, he came into possession of thirty-thousand pounds and a title. Still he retained, and indulged his favourite vice ; and he had already sunk three parts of the above-mentioned sum, when an estate being advertised for sale adjoining the Fitzallan demesne, it occurred to him that it might be good speculation to become the purchaser, and thus facilitate an intercourse with the rich heiress. Fashionable in his manners, and gentlemanly in his address, Sir Herbert Manwaring had ever been the favourite of the fair, though at the age of  
forty



forty he still retained his liberty. But as there were no more uncles—as there were no aunts to leave the stage—as he expected never more to see the all-vivifying words, “I give and I bequeath,” on his own account, he had at last resolved to hazard his success with Miss Fitzallan.

Sir Herbert had a brother in the West-Indies, who was in possession of a large fortune, which he had obtained by his marriage with the only daughter of a wealthy planter:—but this brother was his junior; and though he resided in an intemperate country, both his profession and his principles led him to the adoption of a temperate mode of living: hence he had secured his health, amidst all the horrors of a pestilential distemper. He had a son too; so that all hopes from that quarter had long ceased. And not an unprincipled man, where self-interest did not interfere, Sir Herbert Manwaring had received his nephew with pleasure, when he had been sent over by his father, three years before this period, to finish his education

education in England; and at his vacations from Oxford, he always had him with him. The inspection of his conduct, and the regulation of his expences, had been entrusted to him by his brother; and he had acted with honour and honesty.

The world had been quite deceived with respect to the fortune left to Sir Herbert by his uncle. As is usual in such cases, it had been widely exaggerated; and thus while his last thousands had been expended in the estate before mentioned, and his last hundreds were in his pocket, to equip him for his season at Bath, he was imagined to roll in riches; and even his friend Lady Plumtree, when she talked to Catherine of his vast fortune, believed what she said (which we thought it necessary to observe, as her Ladyship was not always remarkable for an addiction to truth). By recommending Sir Herbert to the heiress, and the heiress to Sir Herbert, she thought she was conducing to their mutual benefit; while she ensured to herself two attentive friends,  
and



and pinned two firm supporters to her Board of Green Cloth !

Clara Lawson, not being known in the circles of fashion, nor famed either for her beauty or her fortune, of course escaped unnoticed in Lady Plumtree's circle, except by those who were unavoidably seated near her. Amongst these was a quartetto of belles, who disclaimed card-playing, because they preferred flirting with every man who appeared. They had taken sole possession of a large sofa, which, for the purpose of making room, had been placed near the door of the entrance-room, and took their chance for the first loungee who might appear. But, notwithstanding their acknowledged importance at a rout, the young men of the present day are not fond of the *bore* which they must inevitably endure, should they shew themselves at an antiquated Dowager's in the early part of the evening. And fully sensible of their own high value, they generally shew it, by contriving to make themselves scarce (as it is called), and stalk  
in

in just as the company are dispersing, in boots, and a *complete* dishabille. This was the case to-night ; and our female coterie, not having better amusement, threw their eyes on Clara, and entertained themselves with critiques on her person and dress, which of course were loud enough for her to hear, otherwise no entertainment could be derived from it :—and as her confusion and embarrassment were obvious, they gave no quarter ; observing her shoulders and elbows were covered, and that she carried a fan of six inches in her hand, instead of one of three : they protested she came out of Noah's ark.

“ I should imagine so too,” said one of them, who thought herself a great wit, and whose repartees were well known, “ but that I think I have heard that all the inhabitants of that semi-house, semi-ship, were paired ; now I am confident that this lady is matchless.”

All laughed at the drollery and originality  
of



of this speech, which they affirmed was as unique as the subject of it.

“How far they might have proceeded, is uncertain, if Mr. Fairfax had not been announced. A general movement took place, of bridling, tossing, and fanning; and ere the young man could proceed two paces into the room—ere he had answered the polite enquiry of the lady of the house, they all, as if with one consent, fastened on him.

“Here, Horace,” cried the wit, “we wanted you to tell us who that antediluvian is; for that she is just escaped from father Noah’s ark, you may perceive by the miserable *mauvaise honte* of her appearance.”

“That young lady!” said he with evident surprise, turning his eyes towards her; but instantly checking them when he perceived they had encountered those of the fair stranger, “I never saw her before.”

“No, no, that I believe,” said Miss Selwyn; “but do in charity *class* her for us?”

“And you tell me she came from the ark,”

ark," said he. " Her looks are guileless as the dove's ; and though she appears to carry the olive-branch in her ingenuous countenance, yet I am no physiognomist, if she will not prefer returning to her insulated mansion again, rather than encounter the troubles of a world, which is yet inundated by folly, ill-nature, caprice, malevolence, and envy !"

" How vastly sententious ! Thank you old Classic," said Miss Selwyn.

" What an allegorical, metaphorical trope !" said another. A third coughed. The fourth bit her lip, and played with the locket which concealed a small spot of her expanded bosom.

In the meantime Clara had risen from her seat, and had walked into the next room, and stood at the card-table where Miss Fitzallan was playing, afraid to listen to Mr. Fairfax's answer to the ladies, though her curiosity impelled her to do so ; as, from the transient glance she had had of his countenance, she had imbibed a favourable idea  
of



of him. A vacant space happened to be left just by Catherine's chair, into which Clara glided; and in two minutes after, she perceived Fairfax walk up to the opposite corner of the same table.

"Horace," cried Sir Herbert, "I am glad you are come; as her Ladyship expected you, and her rooms are to-night rather thin of beaux. Miss Fitzallan, will you permit me to introduce to your notice my nephew, Horace Fairfax?"

Catherine received the introduction very graciously; and whispered, loud enough for the nephew to hear, "a fine youth!"

Clara could not resist another glance at Fairfax, as these words escaped the lips of Miss Fitzallan; for feeling the indelicacy of them herself, she wished to see if he felt them also:—that he did so, the mantling crimson evinced. While Sir Herbert seeing him engage himself in sweetening a cup of tea for Miss Fitzallan, said, in a lower tone—"Though an exotic, yet does he rival our native plants. His character bears all the

the pleasing traits of the West-Indian, yet has it the stability and application so peculiarly the growth of the English soil."

Perceiving Clara's situation prevented her from helping herself, Fairfax now offered to give her some tea also. As she answered him, Sir Herbert first threw his eyes upon her countenance; and, rivetted by the sparkling intelligence there displayed, Miss Fitzallan observed the peculiar expression of his features: but when she perceived the cause, which she instantly did, she turned round to Fairfax, who was helping Clara—

"Thank you, Sir," said she. "And be so good as to stir it for the child, and then take out the spoon: she is apt to spill it on her frock."

Clara could not resist a smile. Sir Herbert had resumed his attention to his game and to his partner; and as Fairfax put the tea into Clara's hand, he said in a low tone of voice, with an inexpressibly arch turn of countenance—"Suppose I likewise taste your  
tea



tea for you, lest you should scald your mouth?"

There was so much good-nature and apparent openness in his manner, that Clara could not be angry with him: she smilingly thanked him, saying there was no occasion."

Miss Fitzallan, now moving back her chair, told Clara she thought she had better walk about, and not remain confined in a corner."

This hint was instantly seized on by Fairfax, and he escorted her to the other room, found her a vacant seat, and having placed her in it, he stood at her side.

"As my uncle is engaged at cards with your friend, your *considerate* friend," said he, laying an emphasis on the word, "will you not suffer me to stand by you a little? Strangers as we now are, we may probably (and most earnestly do I wish it) be very soon better acquainted. For if I do not greatly err, the lady who is now my uncle's partner at that whist-table, is the very Miss Fitzallan

Fitzallan to whom Lady Plumtree promised him an introduction to-night, and whose nearest neighbour he will shortly be?"

"Your conjecture is perfectly right," answered Clara.

"Might I hazard another?" asked he, while his features bespoke the interest he took in it.

Clara smiled assent.

"I guess the naughty young lady who spills her tea so frequently, is a niece of Miss Fitzallan's, who has grown up a little too fast to please her aunt."—He paused.—Clara was silent; yet his eyes were still fixed on her face with a look of earnest enquiry. Her's fell under them, and she hesitatingly answered, though her voice became impeded by conflicting emotions—

"No, you are as wrong in this conjecture as you were right in the last. I am not related to Miss Fitzallan!"

"Pardon my impertinent freedom," said he; "but your mourning, your attendance on Miss Fitzallan, and her very great caution



with respect to you, led me into the mistake."

"It was a very natural one," said Clara, trying to resume her self command. "My mother has lived for many years in a cottage contiguous to Fitzallan Castle. She found shelter there, when the loss of her husband unfitted her for the world: Sir Hugh Fitzallan's smiles cheered her, and fostered me. His death was the cause of sorrow to us both. In grateful respect to his memory, I wear these robes; though, in compliance with fashion, I find I am to lay them aside to-morrow; yet my feelings tell me that my regret is still alive!"—A tear stood in her eye, but she averted her face, that Horace might not witness it. He guessed the cause; and, inexpressibly hurt at the distress which his thoughtlessness had occasioned, he said—

"Forgive me! For worlds would I not have indulged my curiosity at the expence of this emotion. But it is ever thus with me: I madly run on, commit some foolish blunder,

blunder, am sorry, get forgiven, and then err again."

"Well, you are forgiven already," said Clara, smiling languidly.

"And I shall err then instantaneously," cried he, his features lighting up with pleasure. —"Your name—give me your name, I pray you, most compassionate lady, and I will promise to stir your tea for you as often as you shall chuse?"

Clara unaffectedly told him her name, and a lively conversation ensued, in which the various amusements of the gay city they were in, were described by Horace, and commented on by his auditor. Encouraged by his modest freedom, and gratified by his attention, she told him of the animadversions which she had heard on herself. He was greatly amused, and time glided imperceptibly away; and a great part of the company were moving off, when the quartetto of animadverters passed the part of the room where Clara still retained her seat—Fairfax lounging



lounging at her side. They all broke out from a smothered titter to a horse laugh, on espying this *tête à tête*; but Miss Selwyn, more assured than the rest, stepped before her companions, and addressing Fairfax in a mock heroic tone, said—

“ And so the dove has found her mate at last; she has dropped the olive at his feet—she is arrived at her haven of rest!—Ha! ha! ha!—the affected ignorance was well carried off, upon my honour. Good night, Mr. Horace Fairfax, by the grace of God, defender of the fair, and so forth!” drawling out her words in lingering measure, to a very slow, solemn, and formal curtsy.

“ You have infected me with your malady, I believe,” said Clara; “ in my turn I am grown curious. To what can this strange woman’s as strange address allude?”

Fairfax’s diffidence would have kept him silent, but he could not resist a partial explanation. Clara’s confusion was evident as he gave it; and she acknowledged to herself that she had paid justly for her curiosity, as the

fixed gaze of Horace evinced that he almost enjoyed her embarrassment,

But she presently resumed her self-possession. She felt grateful for the spirit with which he had defended her, and was almost loath to quit the room when she received Miss Fitzallan's summons.

While Sir Herbert Manwaring in great form escorted Catherine to her carriage, Fairfax was deputed by her to "take care and see the child safe;" an office he gladly accepted.

And when our heroine reached home (we must with reluctance own it), her mind had so much of the common stamp, that she had almost brought herself to think that Bath was not quite so hideous a place as she had at first imagined it to be.



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### CHAP. XIII.

OUR readers will perhaps accuse us of drawing Miss Fitzallan's character in a very strange manner. We first represented her as bold, enterprising, and haughty ; we now portray her vain, trifling, and foolishly eccentric : but when they consider that the heiress was now wholly independent—that she had emerged from her solitude, the undisputed mistress of a large property, and the last representative of the Fitzallans—when they consider these circumstances, they may perhaps concede to us, and allow that, in the full plenitude of power, human nature

is apt to grow wanton, whimsical, even childish in its vagaries. That mind which had had strength in its infancy to oppose all coercion, was still obstinate, refractory, and unfeeling; but these passions were at present dormant in the bosom of Catherine, and the ultimatum of her wishes tended to establish herself according to her rank in life, and to take the lead in the gay parties into which she entered, to be appealed to for her decision—to be courted, quoted, admired—in short, to be the fashion.

If she found that the time was past, and that she could not be all these, she yet found very sensible consolation in the attention of Sir Herbert Manwaring, and she had returned from Lady Plumtree's in very high spirits. Of the antiquity of his family she was fully satisfied, as her friend had largely and copiously descanted on that subject. Fortune her Ladyship had been equally diffuse on, and Miss Fitzallan willingly believed all her information.

The succeeding morning Clara desired

to



to remain at home, finding that the warm rooms at Lady Plumtree's had made her feel a degree of lassitude and imbecility, which she had never before experienced. Though she was herself conscious of the cause, she did not plead it as an excuse, but merely said she had the head-ache; this excuse however was not received. Miss Fitzallan declared she must accompany her to the Pump-room.

"For you know, child," added she, "I told you last night that I should drink the waters this morning, and I am sure it will be *outré* in the extreme, to appear there with no aiding arm on which to recline. The music will drive away your head-ache, and you will be all alive for the ball to night. I shall go there at ten o'clock, just for an hour after Lady Meynill's party."

Obliged to comply, Clara was silent; and with some reluctance stepped into the carriage after her protectress.

Miss Fitzallan paid numerous visits, by  
 1 4 dropping

dropping a card at every door, and then proceeded to the Pump-room.

Sir Herbert Manwaring appeared as if waiting for them. He instantly joined Miss Fitzallan, and closely attached himself to her side during the time which she chose to promenade up and down the room.

The buzz of voices, the grotesque figures which were flitting before her eyes, and even the music, contributed to disorder the head of our rustic heroine. She escaped from the hold of Miss Fitzallan, who seemed "nothing loath" at her secession, now the Baronet was near her, and seated herself on part of a vacant form; where, silent and solitary, in the midst of noise and a crowd, her thoughts wandered to Fitzallan, and the dear parent and loved friend who were its inhabitants.

"Ah!" thought she, "what a perversion of taste is Miss Fitzallan's, if she can prefer these noisy haunts of nonsense and folly, to the peaceful and sequestered domains of her ancestors—if she can for a  
moment



moment prefer the society of the dissipated and riotous crew of fashion, which I met last night, to the tranquil conversation of Lady Fitzallan!—Her reflections here took another turn:—she recollected that in Horace Fairfax's company she had enjoyed a very high degree of satisfaction—she thought there could not be many like him in Bath—she almost thought there was not one like him—so animated, so lively, so elegant, so unreserved, yet so perfectly free from that unlicensed boldness and effrontery which so disgrace the young men of the present day. She then began to wonder that she did not see him with his uncle; and we know not where she would have gone next, but her conjectures were interrupted by Lady Meynill, who seated herself close by her, and began an earnest conversation to a lady whom she brought under her arm; which, though loud enough for Clara to join in, if she liked, it did not appear that she was expected to do: for her Ladyship never con-

descended, even by a nod of the head, to acknowledge her recollection of the young lady who had so successfully entertained her two girls the preceding morning.

“Does your Ladyship intend to put your name down in the subscription?”

“Why I suppose I must; my one pound one must go for form's sake, or else one's acquaintance would wonder: but there's no end of them—one need be made of a mint of money, if one must assist all the unfortunate cases which appear in this room. Oh, here comes Miss Latimer—now for her doleful tale.”

Miss Latimer was a very prepossessing young woman; she appeared about six and twenty, her person was very pleasing, her form was graceful, and her manners easy, and free from affectation. She instantly addressed herself to the two ladies.

“Lady Meynill! and Mrs. Curzon!—precisely as I wished. By what good fortune do I find you both together? I hope I see  
you



you well. I have already had the honour of addressing you each, by note, this morning. May I request an answer?"

Mrs. Curzon looked at Lady Meynill, as if precedence was always considered by her as the first rule of life; and indeed to follow the lead of her superiors, had been for some years the leading trait of Mrs. Curzon's conduct.

"I do not apologize for my application," continued Miss Latimer; "the occasion too forcibly speaks for itself, to require it; and your known character for benevolence and liberality would receive it with an ill grace."

"Had not your friend better have a petition written, and put up in this room, Miss Latimer?" asked her Ladyship, laying an emphasis on the word *friend*. "You see it is very common, and it always answers, for one is expected to put down one's name, and one's guinea:—it is a known rule, and if one does not do it, one would be remarked. I

am going now to set down mine for twenty-one shillings."

"And I mine for ten and sixpence," said Mrs. Curzon, "which will preclude me from assisting your friend, Miss Latimer," laying her emphasis on *your*, just as strongly as her original had done it on *friend*.

"Cannot I succeed then?" asked Miss Latimer in a dispirited tone, and looking at Lady Meynill.

"Really, Miss Latimer, I am surprised at your interesting yourself in such a manner about what does not attach to you. I assure you, my dear, ill-natured people might be wicked enough to say that you wanted a new dress for the Master's night, by the tone of your voice, and your truly petitioning accent."

"Ah, they might indeed!" said the echo.

"Such a suspicion would not hurt me," replied Miss Latimer in a spirited tone, "and I should soon confute it by my appearance



pearance on that night in an 'old friend,' not even with a 'new face,' Mrs. Curzon; for I never learned to appreciate worth by externals: and to be neither conspicuously fine, nor conspicuously plain, has always been my aim, and, as you know, suits best with my purse."

Lady Meynill, being in general very much over dressed, and Mrs. Curzon newly vamped up in hacknied finery, not being frequently seen clean, they were, perhaps, both silent at this moment, from thinking Miss Latimer's speech was meant to convey more than met the ear.

"Her Ladyship is very right," said Mrs. Curzon, first recovering herself; "people may really accuse you."

"They may indeed," said Miss Latimer; "but the contemplation of such an accusation is quite foreign to my present purpose, which is——"

Lady Meynill rose from the bench.

Mrs. Curzon followed her example.

"Suffer me, ladies, to detain you a few  
5 moments ;

moments; let me recite my melancholy tale," said Miss Latimer.

"Oh, no melancholy tales, for Heaven's sake, dear Latimer! I can number sigh for sigh, and tear for tear," cried her Ladyship, putting herself into a Siddonian attitude. "I lost only fifteen guineas last night at that old Dowager's, Lady Plumtree's, to that notorious gentleman Black Legs, Sir Herbert Manwaring."

"And I was basted off the board at a shilling a fish," said Mrs. Curzon, "because my partner, Miss Evergreen, could not see hearts from diamonds, and yet would not pull out her spectacles. Colonel Darnley voted that she should be excluded from company till she did."

Miss Latimer sighed.

"Come, come," cried Lady Meynill in an affected soothing tone, and tapping Miss Latimer's cheek, "I won't break its poor heart neither. Here's a crown for her."

"And here's half the money," said Mrs. Curzon, presenting two-and-sixpence.—

"The



“The widow’s mite, you know, Miss Latimer!”

Miss Latimer smiled and curtsied, but looked disappointed.

Clara felt very curious to learn the story of distress which she would have told.

She immediately took the seat which Lady Meynill had quitted, and with the utmost ease addressed her.

“Miss Lawson, I believe?” said she.—“I think I had the pleasure of seeing you last evening at Lady Plumtree’s with Miss Fitzallan?”

Clara bowed, and smiled assent.

“To you I fear I must have appeared a very bold petitioner; but the necessity of my case is my excuse: and when I meet with such ‘impenetrable stuff’ as that,” pointing to the receding form of Lady Meynill, “I cannot spare it. She wallows in riches, if I may use the expression—an inelegant one, to be sure it is; but she sinks all her money in the mire of ostentation and unfeeling profusion, when how greatly might it add to  
her

her lustre? As to the other thing," turning up her lip, "she, you see, is a mere cipher, an inferior wheel moved by a superior machine. She has not much money I believe: a half-crown perhaps is as much as I had a right to expect from her; and I thank her, though I owe it to her passion for imitation. You will think me whimsically censorious—strangely severe; but "out of the abundance of the heart, you know, the mouth speaketh."

Miss Fitzallan now beckoned to her companion; and, very much hurt at being obliged to quit her new acquaintance, her speaking countenance demonstrated it, as she turned it towards her, more plainly than her words; though with the utmost modesty she said—  
 "My wish to hear your promised narration is very great. Shall we not meet at Lady Meynill's party to-night? I left my purse at home this morning; but then I could offer my mite—mine by the beneficence of Miss Fitzallan, and you would perhaps receive it: and—and——"

"And



“ And I should have no difficulty in defining your motive either, my dear,” said Miss Latimer, catching her word, and giving her an approving smile. “ But go; Miss Fitzallan waits. Yes, yes, I must be at Lady Meynill’s; she will expect for her five shillings, to see me an hour at least in her *Bath stove*. I hope we shall meet and converse. But, mind me, I shall not rob your pocket, though I shall your heart and your eyes, or I greatly mistake you. God bless you, child! Go instantly. Miss Fitzallan looks quite *enragée* at your stay.”

Sir Herbert Manwaring, having escorted Miss Fitzallan to her carriage, bowed, and walked off. She immediately broke out by saying—

“ What on earth, child, could you be in such close confabulation with that strange character, Miss Latimer, for! I waited till I was almost out of patience. The air at the door blew quite keen in my face, and I dare say I have taken cold;—you were strangely negligent! Surely you should  
always

always watch my movements, and be ready to follow instantly, on my motioning to depart :—this is proper behaviour ; it shews a tractability of demeanour and deportment, which in the young *protégée* of a lady is required. Perhaps, Clara, you wonder at my referring frequently in company to your young and tender years ; but I am proud to say, I always act from decided motives of propriety. I know the irremediable injury which it does girls, to have them introduced too early into the world : they grow old before their time ; and there are a certain set who are no longer young themselves, and who are consequently envious of all those who are. This set are more correct with respect to age than the parish-register ; and a few years hence, should you ever happen to be seen again, you will be pointed at, as she who accompanied Miss Fitzallan to Bath so many centuries ago.”

Clara did not quite credit Miss Fitzallan's explanation ; but she saw that there existed  
decided



decided motives of propriety for trying to make her believe it, and she answered with rather more spirit than she generally assumed—

“ My dear Madam, your intentions are well meant, but I fear that ultimately they will be of no avail. If memory should fail, or be imposed upon at first, the encroachments of Time would be apparent: the gradual approach to maturity—the more quick transition to the decline of life, is marked upon every human countenance, and cannot be concealed from the most casual observer. And why should they?—Do they not afford a most salutary lesson?”

“ Am I to thank you for one on the present occasion, Miss?” asked Catherine. “ When you have done your sublime speech—(I am really surprised at Mrs. Lawson’s encouraging you in that romantic manner of speaking)—I say, Miss, when you have done, I will finish what I was going to say. But pray do not let me interrupt you!” and she folded her arms, and placed herself

self in the most provoking attitude of attention.

Clara was effectually disconcerted; she saw that Miss Fitzallan had applied part of her speech to herself: and though she was entirely innocent of an intention of the kind, yet she felt that she ought to have considered what she was about to say, ere she had so hastily uttered her sentiments.

“ Pardon me, Miss Fitzallan; I believe I have already said too much,” added she in a meek accent.

“ That speech is the better of the two, at any rate, Miss Lawson,” answered Catherine. “ I was going to give you my other reason, child, for my conduct, when you so very indecorously interrupted me; and after that interruption, you cannot but acknowledge the full force of my observation, if you are not entirely blinded to your own failings and deficiencies.—Were I to introduce you as any thing more than a mere child, people would of course expect you to adopt a different mode of behaviour.

The



The diffidence and uncouth rusticity of your manners—the chimerical and romantic style of your conversation, which may be passed over in one character, must entirely disconcert me, were I to introduce you in any other. Well, child, you may now go, and prepare yourself for Lady Meynill's."

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## CHAP. XIV.

OUR heroine obeyed her patroness, though with rather a heavy heart, and the weight was not removed as she discarded her mourning robe; but the prospect of again conversing with Miss Latimer, helped to console her, and a latent hope of again meeting

meeting Fairfax, contributed to restore her tranquillity, especially when she perceived that her appearance had lost nothing of its advantages from her change of raiment. A plain white cambric dress, and her brown locks simply yet tastefully disposed, were very favourable to her person; and she accompanied Miss Fitzallan with smiles on her countenance. That lady seemed somewhat melted down by observing her companion's altered hue, and in mutual good humour they were set down at Lady Meynill's.

As they passed through the hall, Miss Meynill ran out from behind a door, where she had been hiding herself, to watch the effects of her plot. But, seeing Clara, she caught hold of her hand, and whispered—

“ I can stay here no longer, for the rooms are almost full, and that nasty good-for-nothing Darnley is not come yet. But my letter has been delivered,” said she, winking, “ and so 'twill all do well enough, I believe, without me, and I will come up stairs with you. But God bless you, there's  
a dear



a dear creature, do look in there, and see poor Maxwell ! What a figure she cuts !”

Clara's eyes followed the direction of Miss Meynill's, and in a small room, which, by the decorations, she saw was the butler's, enveloped by tea-cups, china, and glass, sat a very lovely young woman. Her complexion was delicate, and wore the decided look of languor and ill health ; her eyes were large and dark, yet there was a hollowness about them, which shewed that their brilliancy was vanished ; her dress was plain and neat, but there was in her whole appearance a look of perfect elegance. One hand, white as alabaster, supported her head. She seemed lost in thought. Clara was lost also in the contemplation of so much interesting loveliness.

She let Miss Fitzallan go up the stairs—she let her enter the room unattended. Deep sighs issued from her bosom—a tear stood in her eye ; but a thundering rap at the door recalled her attention. It seemed to act as an electrical shock on poor Miss Maxwell's

Maxwell's fragile frame. She started from her seat, and hastily shut the door.

"Well, well, let us come along. The poor thing is afraid it is the Colonel come to know his eternal doom," said Miss Meynill, laughing; "and so the retiring fair one is going to affect modesty. She won't overdo it, never fear!" nodding to Clara.

Clara followed her, and had entered the drawing-room ere she had lost the idea of Miss Maxwell.

"Anna Matilda, where have you been staying?" asked her Ladyship.

"I had a little secret to tell Miss Lawson," answered she.

"How soon do children become acquainted with one another!" said Miss Fitzallan to her Ladyship, as she followed her to a card-table, where Sir Herbert Manwaring, Lady Plumtree, and a gentleman already waited for her.

Clara went near the card-table also; but she took care not to pen herself into a corner a second time. She wanted to find out  
if



if the nephew was near his uncle, but she could not see him, neither did she hear him mentioned; when Lady Meynill, walking up to Catherine, said—

“ You will give Miss—I forget her name—your *élève*—you will give her permission to join the Commerce-table with Anna Matilda and Eliza Maria?”

“ Certainly. By all means,” said Miss Fitzallan. “ Go, Clara, go immediately, and join the young ladies?”

Clara had not the spirit to remonstrate against this decided order. But besides her aversion to, and ignorance of every species of play, she recollected her promised conversation with Miss Latimer. To be cheated of that, would be highly mortifying; and to be seen seated at the card-table by Fairfax, when she had the preceding evening mentioned her dislike of them, must appear the very height of inconsistency, not to say insincerity. These ideas all rushed on her mind at once; and, stimulated by them, she

had courage to say to Lady Meynill, as she was following her to the round table—

“ If your Ladyship would let me overlook the players, I should be infinitely obliged to you. My total ignorance of every game must plead my excuse for thus dissenting from your request.”

“ Oh no, that must not be, indeed !” said her Ladyship.—“ No, that can’t be.—No, that won’t do !” was rejoined in one breath from Anna Matilda, and Eliza Maria.

Colonel Darnley was then announced.

Anna Matilda gave a start of delight.

“ The very thing !” cried she

“ So it is,” cried her mother ; “ now, child, if you can’t pick out three trays, and three deuces yourself, the Colonel will teach you. Come, Darnley, you are always amongst the young ones ; sit down to the Commerce-table, and teach this novitiate how to hold her three cards ; and see that there is no cheating.”

The Colonel made a careless bow to indicate



indicate his compliance; and looking at Clara, said very audibly—

“Who is she?”

“An *élève*, a *protégée* of Miss Fitzallan’s. I believe I could solve the mystery,” answered Lady Meynill in a somewhat lower key, yet one that was still loud enough to be distinguished. “You have heard,” continued she, “of Frederic Fitzallan—of Angelina Melrofs too; of the fatal weakness, and imprudent benevolence with which, at an early period of my life, I was infatuated. You must have heard me mention my blind and foolish conduct?”

“Frequently,” replied the Colonel.

“This girl then appears to me the living representative of that Angelina, and I myself have no doubts of the matter. I only wish Miss Fitzallan may not also, in her turn, meet with ingratitude. And my only wonder is, that she does not own her for what she is, for that would give her great eclat and notoriety. It is now, you know, so very much the fashion to patronize and

introduce the illegitimate branches of a family—it is thought so feeling and so humane! But perhaps Miss Fitzallan would rather have it surmised, whispered about, and generally, though privately believed. Angelina Melross was a base, deceitful woman; yet her manners had all the affected simplicity and sentiment of Maxwell. You have seen her, I think, and know what a poor whining thing she appears.”

Colonel Darnley started, on hearing the name of Maxwell; and, at Lady Meynill's appeal, turned fairly away, while Anna Matilda called out, in no very mellifluous tone——

“ Law, mamma! What can you be keeping the Colonel there for! We shan't be seated to-night?”

Mamma seemed to acknowledge the propriety of her daughter's speech.

The Colonel placed the unconscious Clara in a chair, and according to orders, seated himself next her. Unconscious indeed!—for the recent conversation, though most unintelligible



telligible to her, had filled her with surprise, and a large portion of mortification. Little suspecting how near Lady Meynill was to the truth, she longed to have instantly given her her history (such as she believed it), and to have rescued her honoured mother's name from the obloquy attached to it; but, recollecting that this was meant only for a private conversation, and feeling that the opinion and sentiments of Lady Meynill could never be any thing to her, she recalled her scattered faculties, and obeyed the sovereign mandate of Anna Matilda, who ordered the party, consisting of twelve (of whom, except Colonel Darnley, Clara was by two or three years the senior), to pool a guinea each.

“And then,” cried she, “as we will not weaken the pool, the lowest shall pay the highest half-a-crown a time; so that—let me see, twenty-one shillings, and seven and sixpence—aye, that is right; you can lose but eight-and-twenty and sixpence.”

"What a charming little accountant!" said the Colonel.

"Yes, yes," cried a girl from the opposite side of the table, "Miss Meynill is famous for her reckoning. You know, Miss, there was last night, when you counted so many points, and won my money, by huddling away all the cards in that manner, and saying it was the last sweep!—There, Miss," flinging down her guinea with violence, "see, if you please, I have put in my guinea; I have not sharked."

Nothing intimidated, Anna Matilda counted in the money, and said she would name herself "the young man's best companion;" laughed loudly at her own wit, and "the young man's best companion," was echoed all round the room by the delighted mother.

Remembering the promised narration of Miss Latimer, Clara sighed as she consigned her guinea to the pool. But Miss Fitzallan had given her the money; and if she chose that she should lay it out in this unsatisfactory manner,



manner, she ought not to complain—she had no right to dissent.

Attracted by every new face, and really interested by her manners and appearance, the Colonel paid close attention to his scholar; and though Clara thought of nothing less than winning the pool, though she cared not how soon her death-warrant was signed, yet without being wilfully blind, and making that blindness the laugh of the whole room, she could not refuse the cards which Colonel Darnley constantly threw before her. Common-place witticisms on death, disease, and mortality (those awful serious subjects), went merrily round the table, while the youthful competitors were all aiming at the golden prize; and their cheeks were alternately flushed with the crimson of exultation, or whitened by the chill of disappointment.

Miss Latimer was not announced till several had declared their deaths to the pleased survivors; and not liking the contemplation

of an infantine gaming-table, she walked into the next room, to the infinite mortification of Clara, without casting a glance towards her.

Fairfax also made his *entrée* while she was still engaged. He came up to the table, and watched the progress of the game. Surprise seemed to overspread his features, as he recognised Clara amongst the busy group. As she returned his distant and formal bow, confusion and vexation filled her bosom. Colonel Darnley, perceiving their interchange of compliments, cried out—

“Fairfax, what will you bet me that Miss Lawson does not win the pool?—You see she has three competitors; and, being dealer this time, the odds are twenty to one against her.”

“With such an able assistant,” said Fairfax coolly, “I think the chances are in her favour.”

“And so they are, Mr. Fairfax,” cried Anna Matilda, who could still boast of her  
longevity



longevity, “and so it is; ’tis quite unfair for the Colonel to keep telling Miss Lawson how to play.”

“Indeed, my little Anna Matilda, you are for once wrong—it would be very unfair not to do it;—for just as you came into the room,” addressing himself to Fairfax, “she was going to throw down a King to two more which lay on the table, and to take up two cards of different sorts, which must have ruined her.”

“I know nothing of cards,” said Clara, deeply blushing at the Colonel’s remark.

Fairfax walked away, and soon after, amidst the plaudits of the Colonel, the envy of Anna Matilda, and the disappointment of the rest of the party, our heroine had twelve guineas swept into her lap. The young lady, who had been so plain in her attack on Anna Matilda’s unfair play, was now loud in her complaints; and afraid of affronting her, yet not liking to pocket her money, Clara called Anna Matilda, and desired her to restore her her guinea.

“ Lord help you, no ! She’s a pert thing ! ” said Anna Matilda. “ And I’m glad any body won the pool, so she did not. Put your money in your purse, and say no more about it.”

Miss Fitzallan now rose to go to the ball. Her constant attendant, the Baronet, assisted her to her carriage. Colonel Darnley followed Clara to the door, and said in a negligent way—“ I understand you are going off to the ball. I seldom do dance ; but if you wish it, I must beg to engage your hand.”

Clara thanked him ; but desired that he would not deviate from his usual conduct on her account, as she had no intention of dancing.

“ Remember I asked you,” said he, as he gave a parting bow ; by which she understood that he meant she should dance with no other.

Sir Herbert Manwaring joined the ladies in the ball-room, where Clara immediately saw Fairfax leading down a dance with a  
very



very fashionable looking young woman. Ere it was concluded, Colonel Darnley strolled up to her side; and having discerned, by Miss Fitzallan's manner, that a particular notice of her companion was not her wish, he resolved to be very pointed in his admiration. He praised her shape, her height, the gracefulness of her movements, and catching a ringlet of her hair, "Who but would wanton with the maiden's unbound tresses?" asked he. "Why do the ancients talk of the yellow and the golden hair, Sir Herbert? Surely the glossy brown——"

Clara, overwhelmed with confusion, tried to get on the other side of Miss Fitzallan; but Darnley withheld her, while Sir Herbert Manwaring, glancing obliquely at Miss Fitzallan's *peruque à la Grecque*—"I think that raven locks would be the more poetical allusion; they convey to the mind a grander image of loveliness."

"Oh you are there, are you?" said Darnley in a lower voice, while he still retained

a seat next Clara; and by a vast deal of rodomontade, and burlesque, and sarcastic speeches, he contrived to make the evening entirely disagreeable to her, as well as to Miss Fitzallan.

Fairfax never approached their party but once; and then he had asked our heroine to dance, though not in the unreserved and open manner of the preceding evening. The instant rebuff he met with from Darnley—the authoritative tone with which he answered for her—“Sir, this lady is engaged,” seemed to appal him, and paralyze Clara; for they were both silent, and Fairfax walked off again immediately.

Clara was glad when she reached home. The evening had been to her a most unpleasant one, notwithstanding her great success at the Commerce-table; which many of our modern fair ones will hardly believe. The hours of retirement were spent in reviewing the scenes of the evening: and not her disgust at Colonel Darnley—not her vexation at the loss of Miss Latimer’s narration



tion—not her mortification at the cold and distrait manner of Horace Fairfax, could prevent her chiefly dwelling on Miss Maxwell's image. The look of deep melancholy and care, the wasting form, the interesting attitude were ever before her “mind's eye;” and she ardently wished that she could have been introduced, and known to her; feeling assured (for our heroine had all the warmth and enthusiasm of seventeen) that she should love her, and find her deserving of that love. When she thought of her situation at Lady Meynill's—when she portrayed the mischievous spleen, the low jokes of the girls, whom she was ostensibly appointed to govern, and the haughty and pure-proud ostentation of their “good-natured mamma,” she shuddered, put her hand before her eyes, and felt grateful to Heaven at being placed in a more comfortable situation. With these feelings, she laid her head on the pillow; and though she courted sleep for some time in vain, yet every tumultuous passion was dormant, and gratitude alone had possession of her soul.

## CHAP. XV.

OUR heroine arose early ; and finding the morning temperate and dry, she wrapped herself in a pelisse, and resolved to try, by the fresh air, to regain that portion of strength and spirits, which the crowded rooms of the preceding evening had robbed her of. Miss Fitzallan was always late ; and she knew that she might walk for an hour, and yet be in time to await her *entrée* in the breakfast-room.

She had scarcely got ten paces from the door, when a voice from behind gave her the morning salutation ; she turned round, and



and beheld Miss Latimer. After they had mutually expressed their satisfaction at this unexpected meeting, Miss Latimer said—

“ And pray, my truant companion, why were you not at Lady Meynill’s party, according to your promise !”

Clara explained her situation.

“ Ah ! I see how it was now,” answered the questioner ; “ I did not look for you at the Commerce-table ; neither did I expect to behold in you a white-robed nymph.”

“ Most unwillingly was I engaged at that table, believe me,” said Clara ; “ it was the express desire, almost command of Miss Fitzallan, otherwise nothing could have tempted me to play. Yet now am I rejoiced that I did so : for by so doing, I am rich enough to offer you twelve guineas, towards that benevolent purpose which you petitioned for yesterday.”

“ You are a very good girl,” said Miss Latimer. “ But no, indeed I cannot !— Well then,” seeing Clara’s disappointed look,

“ I will

“ I will take five. Keep the rest, my child: with a heart like your’s, means will always be found of expending them in the most satisfactory way. But the purpose for which I pleaded—Ah, my dear girl! follow me—down this street—through this alley—up this court. Now, now,” said Miss Latimer, pointing with her finger to a small casement window up two pair of stairs, “ in that chamber, worn out by suffering and disorder, on a wretched bed, is laid the Marquis del Fleura!—You start!—Ah, well you may—well may you clasp your hands! When we see the changes, and the almost instantaneous transitions which have taken place in “ this our day,” who would covet the honour or wealth of the world?—who would seek the applause of the multitude?

“ Ten years since, the Marquis del Fleura’s hotel was the temple of pleasure at Paris. He was idolized by his intimates, his friends, even by the multitude also. He was the arbiter of fashion, of taste, of wit:  
yet



yet his own wit was chastened by decency; his pleasures were under the controul of virtue, of reason, and of feeling! And though he was "liberal, he was not lavish." At that era my father was in France. He was introduced to the Marquis; a close friendship was commenced, and at my parent's return to England, the Marquis del Fleura's name was frequently mentioned with esteem and pleasure.

The Revolution, that hydra-headed monster, came; and the Marquis, wholly obnoxious to the new governors and government, no sooner heard the fate of his beloved Monarch, than he fled to this country with his only child. He left behind him his wealth and his titles, but he brought with him an unsubdued spirit, and a soul which spurned at the sense of obligation. In disguise he wandered from place to place with his beauteous daughter. He concealed himself from all who had formerly known him; and in retired lodgings in London, and under a feigned name, he cheerfully earned  
a decent

a decent subsistence by painting miniatures. Thus for some years he lived "unknowing and unknown," maintaining himself and his daughter. As his genius in taking likenesses had always been allowed, of course unremitting application improved him, and his skill in the art was undiminished.

"Why he did not make himself known to my father, who was living when he first came to this country, and who would have added to his own happiness by assisting his friend—why he has constantly refused obligations, is still a secret.—Ah, I fear a sad tale is yet to be unfolded; for this misanthropic frame of mind had no part in the character of the Marquis del Fleura, such as my father has often described him to me.

"But to proceed.—Intense application at length began to make inroads on his constitution: his body was debilitated and enfeebled; his anxious and attentive daughter was almost frantic. She saw in her father the only tie which bound her to the world—the only prop of her existence. She called  
in



in medical attendance. The Bath waters were prescribed, and about eight months since they came to this place, the Marquis still pursuing his former employment. His health improved, his pictures were liked, and his Lauretta smiled again.

“ Alas! how transitory is happiness!—Six weeks since, the Marquis complained one morning, on entering his apartment, of a dimness in his sight; yet, notwithstanding the entreaties of Lauretta, he would not forego a picture he was finishing. Every day—every revolving day, almost every hour, his sight grew worse; yet he would not be persuaded to give up his pencil. Lauretta now tried to finish the pictures herself—the sketch only was done by her father.—Ah! not long was that even in his power: one morning of the last week he arose totally blind.”

Miss Latimer stopped, and wiped the tears from her eyes.

“ We will turn again towards the Crescent, if you please,” said she. “ I am not  
fit.

fit to see Lauretta at present. Poor Lauretta! I cannot talk of her despair. Picture to yourself the horrors of famine, and a father totally helpless!—Picture these evils, and then imagine a young woman, brought up in the lap of Luxury, and in the midst of profusion, unfitted for exertion, or bodily fatigue—imagine, I say, her situation!”

Clara wept.

“Aye, I see,” said Miss Latimer, “you do imagine it too well. I will pass over the business lightly for your, for both our sakes. I believe,” added she, as she drew out her handkerchief, “a physician was called in by Lauretta. Now this physician, my love, is an excellent man; he possesses the darling attribute of Heaven—mercy! His benign accents stole into the pierced bosom of Lauretta. He probed her sorrows, but with a gentle hand. She confided her name, her story to him; but charged him not to divulge it to the world, nor ever to let her father know that she had betrayed his secret. Dr. ——— proposed a female friend. He  
named



named (from my soul I thank him) Miss Latimer. Lauretta started!—The name had been familiar to her ears; she made many enquiries; and hearing that my father was dead, she at length consented to see me.

“ This scene, Clara, shall be passed over too. It occurred the day before yesterday. Lauretta consented to my earnest entreaties, and promised to share my purse. Now though I have a large purse, I have seldom any thing in it; and therefore I petitioned my friends, as you know, though only to you have I revealed the secret of my *protégée’s* real rank. And I will ask you, Clara, how I must feel, when Lady Meynill proposed “ my friend’s having a petition written, and hung in the Pump-room, addressed “ To the charitable and humane.” Thank God, all charity is not come to so low an ebb, nor shall it yet; for the rising generation have still some of it, genuine and unadulterated, glowing in their bosoms. Yourself, for instance, my new friend,” said she, pressing Clara’s hand, “ and young Fairfax;

Fairfax;—how nicely, while I was making my application to Sir Herbert Manwaring last evening, did he slip his purse into my hand, and then vanish from Lady Meynill's !”

Clara coloured. Miss Latimer thought it was at her encomiums on herself.

“ I would of course move my venerable invalid to better lodgings immediately,” said Miss Latimer, “ but that would inevitably destroy our plan. He would discover that his daughter had betrayed him : and now, poor old man ! he believes that she wholly maintains him by her pictures ; for she has told him that, on account of his misfortunes, she has raised her price from three to five guineas, and has already completed two. He extols her speed ; and says that he should have taken all that time, and not have executed one ; and then conjures her, in the most affectionate manner, not to hurt her eyes.

“ By this pardonable deceit, his mind is kept at ease, and he cheerfully accepts those comforts,



comforts, which he believes his daughter's profits enable her to purchase. Poor Lauretta!—She has not indeed her father's genius, but she possesses his principles. Her heart is above all price; and it shall receive an 'exceeding great reward!' I wish you could see her—she appears about six-and-twenty. It may be truly said of her, like Maria of Moulines, that 'affliction has touched her form with something scarcely earthly.' Yet Lauretta is not beautiful; but she is more—she is angelic; and her spirit rests on her countenance!

"Now, child, I have brought you back to Miss Fitzallan, with a light purse and a heavy heart. Don't you thank me for my very friendly attention?"

"I do indeed," cried Clara with warmth.

"I believe you, sweet girl, and often hope to see you, although I am not known to the heiress of Fitzallan!" drawing up her head with affected majesty. "Well, good by! I have had all the talk this time; remember it will be your turn next. Remember

member to forget to say, you have seen me in your morning's ramble." And off she tripped, while Clara entered the house before Miss Fitzallan had summoned Letson to her toilet.

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## CHAP. XVI.

IT would tire our reader's patience, and unnecessarily extend our history, were we to continue to be so minute in our details during our heroine's stay in Bath, as we have begun. We shall therefore content ourselves with a mere summary account of what it behoves them to know, in order to facilitate



facilitate their comprehension of this our famed work.

Miss Fitzallan was for a fortnight all hope and expectation; and if Sir Herbert Manwaring kept her so long in suspense, no wonder if at times her fretfulness exceeded all former bounds, and that her unconscious companion felt some portion of her whimsical caprice. Remembering Colonel Darnley's admiration of Clara's hair, and envious even of *his* admiration, she purchased a large cap, and insisted on her wearing it one evening to the ball: the pretext was, that she had remarked her to cough twice in the morning.

Clara's spirit was roused. She eagerly caught the hint, and insisted on staying at home. She really felt unwell; and, thrown quite out of her way by over-manceuvring, Miss Fitzallan was obliged to yield the point, though not with a very good grace. Clara staid at home, and returned a cap, which would have suited Lady Fitzallan, to lie on Miss H——'s counter, till

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called for; but as in the present century it is allowed that there is no such being as an *old woman*, we imagine the unfortunate cap is still on hands.

Heartily rejoiced was Clara to pass one evening at home; for though a conversation with Miss Latimer or Fairfax would have afforded her much pleasure, yet her dread of again meeting Colonel Darnley, and of being the object of his pointed attention, preponderated. His was that kind of attention which excited her disgust and abhorrence. Without endeavouring to conciliate her esteem or regard, he seemed to single her out purposely to make her the subject of general observation. His behaviour reminded her of some ferocious animal, that fearlessly repulsed every other creature who dared to approach his destined victim, while that victim was doomed to bear all his savage cruelty.

Clara had met him several times since Lady Meynill's party, and he had still adopted the same mode of behaviour:—his conversation



sation had consisted only of common-place topics, except when Fairfax had approached, or he had imagined himself overheard by Miss Fitzallan. Then his tones had instantly changed, and his expressions could only be construed into those of an ardent lover.

The truth is, that this gallant Colonel had no intention but of amusing himself at the expence of Miss Fitzallan. Seeing the envy with which she beheld every attention that was offered her *élève*, observing the jealous vigilance with which she guarded her from the approaches of the beaux, and having a mortal hatred to any thing stigmatized by the name of *old maid*, he was doubly anxious to attach himself to Clara. An adept in the art of tormenting, and not very partial to Horace Fairfax, whom he considered to be the only person likely to prove an eclipse to him that season, he made a point of securing a station next Clara when *he* approached, as his penetration had already discovered a secret, which, though it referred only to Fairfax and our

heroine,

heroine, they were both utterly ignorant of. Meanwhile the distress and confusion, the mingled diffidence and readiness of her replies, the embarrassment and simplicity—nay, sometimes the spirit of Clara, so varied his amusement, and so irresistibly interested him, that he would not—could not forego the art of tormenting. And yet this Colonel Darnley had sense, if he would have used it. His courage had been proved in the battles of his country; and his honour (ah dreadful perversion of terms!) was untarnished.

His person was more than commonly prepossessing, and he had been, for three successive winters, the popular idol of female fashion. Vain of this distinction, he had abused it—he laughed at the sighs of the fair, and boasted of his skill in prematurely driving the roses from the cheek of beauty; and while he had singled out many a fair one, as the pointed object of his gallantries, while her friends and her acquaintance had congratulated her on her prospects, and the  
 lady



lady had imagined him immutably her own, he had made an instant retreat, and was only sorry any *misunderstanding* should have taken place; he appealed only to the lady in question, to say if he had ever made her a declaration of love. No accusation of the kind was heard; and the Colonel preserved his honour, though perhaps at the expence of every manly feeling—perhaps at the ruin of another's happiness; and sought for fresh food with which to supply his rapacious vanity!

Perceiving Clara to be perfectly artless, and translating her dislike of him into rustic bashfulness, he was about to try a new plan, and frighten her into love; but her tell-tale eyes soon informed him that he had mistaken her character, as they involuntarily turned towards one object: and therefore Colonel Darnley contented himself with acting the part of the “dog in the manger.” But notwithstanding his assiduous watchfulness, Clara had twice seen Horace Fairfax in his absence, and had the pleasure of

L 3

observing

observing his features return to their usual expression, and of hearing his conversation resume its pristine intelligent freedom. Miss Latimer's character, feeling, benevolent, and humorous, had afforded them a delightful subject; and in their admiration of her, they kept pace with each other.

Miss Latimer had been wholly estranged from Clara since their morning's ramble.— She had entirely devoted herself to Lauretta. The poor blind artist had been seized with a violent illness, and death had at length closed his sufferings. This information had been communicated to our heroine by Fairfax, who knew not the secret of his rank; he added that Miss Latimer was going a short tour with Lauretta, in hopes, by change of scene, to restore her spirits, and re-establish her health.

Miss Maxwell had lain at Clara's heart, but she had no chance of gaining intelligence of her, as she had firmly refused attending another rout at Lady Meynill's; which had so offended the sweet Anna Matilda, that she



she had passed her in the street without deigning to notice her.

The noble proposals, the respectful offer of Sir Herbert Manwaring, had at length been made; and after three whole days' consideration, during which period the maiden coyness of Miss Fitzallan shone perfectly conspicuous, she yielded a *bashful, blushing* consent; stipulating that Sir Herbert should bear the arms and name of Fitzallan, to which the Baronet had no objection, provided he shared the Fitzallan fortune. As to settlements, his lawyer was to look them over; and cautious in other respects, in this point was the wily Catherine easily duped, so thick a mist had the blind urchin Cupid thrown over her eyes. But no, we will not lay the blame on this poor urchin, who, to say the truth, is often falsely accused, and bears the stigma of high crimes and misdemeanors, of which he is entirely ignorant and innocent, when we all know that his own load is heavy enough in all conscience.

Miss Fitzallan's vanity was flattered, her ambition was gratified; and to be Lady Herbert Manwaring Fitzallan, to retain her name, and yet to change her situation, was the ultimatum of her wishes.

The eager lover pressed for an early day. The lady was not wholly inexorable; her smile seemed to augur well, and Sir Herbert had already given his lawyer the necessary instructions.

Clara was of course no confidant: her young and tender age entirely precluded it. And though she had discernment, and though, from the satisfied looks, and sickening simpers of the destined bride, she could guess what was passing, yet she thought she had no right to hint her suspicions even in her letters to her mother.

With real sorrow, Horace Fairfax had watched his uncle's predilection for high play; yet the part of Mentor became not him. He knew that Sir Herbert's fortune must be seriously injured, ere he would consent



sent to a mercenary marriage, as a means of retrieving it ; but he could not misconstrue his attentions to Miss Fitzallan : and while they afforded him a pretext for conversing with Clara Lawson, he was silent, and remembered the old adage, that “ desperate diseases require desperate remedies.”

Angelina had, in the absence of her child, cheerfully and patiently pursued the path of active duty which she had chalked out for herself ; and though there were times when she doubted whether she had acted right, in permitting Clara to quit her, yet while she constantly heard from her, and while her letters recounted every incident as it occurred, and almost every passing thought as it arose in her mind, she was satisfied.

In writing to a mother, Clara had nothing to conceal : and the whimsicalities and caprice of Miss Fitzallan, the benevolent philanthropy of Miss Latimer, the intelligent manners of Fairfax, and the disgusting assurance of Darnley were all portrayed in their true colours : though if she touched

with too faint a shade, it was in her description of Catherine; and if her colouring was too high, it was when she depicted the merits of Horace Fairfax. For a moment Mrs. Lawson felt uneasy as she reflected that there was a chance of the virtues of Fairfax being too lastingly acknowledged by her child—as she recollected that, by being continually thrown in his way, she might imbibe a serious regard.

“ Ah! if my girl should be the victim of unrequited love, of hopeless despondency,” cried she, “ how should I accuse myself for voluntarily placing her in such a situation !”

She sighed, reperused her letters, and perceiving that they exhibited no marks of forced cheerfulness or restraint—seeing nothing but artless candour and touching simplicity, her fears were calmed, and she again consigned them to her portfolio, and returned to her venerable friend, whose increasing infirmities required her constant attention.



## CHAP. XVII.

OUR heroine had been just six weeks in Bath, when, as she was preparing to attend Miss Fitzallan to an evening party, and from thence to the ball, she received a letter from her mother, which she eagerly opened.

Angelina prefaced her intelligence by saying, that though the subject more peculiarly attached to Miss Fitzallan, she had judged it right to address herself through Clara to her, and desired her to acquaint her protectress, in the most gentle manner, of the alarming illness of Lady Fitzallan.

The letter was short, yet it seemed to

have been written at intervals; and Mrs. Lawson appeared to have no hope of her friend's recovery, though her dissolution might be protracted for some time. She had sent for Dr. ———, whose opinion, she said, agreed with her own; and that she should write by every post, till she saw or heard from Miss Fitzallan.

Deeply affected by the intelligence contained in this letter, the tears rolled in quick succession down the cheeks of our heroine. At one moment she pictured her respected Lady Fitzallan in the icy arms of Death; at another she portrayed the delicate form of her beloved parent, harassed, and drooping from anxiety and fatigue. But she had no time to indulge her sorrow; she remembered that it was her part to inform Miss Fitzallan of the melancholy tidings; and though she could pretty well appreciate the real feeling of Catherine, yet she endeavoured to compose her countenance, ere she tried to gain admittance to her chamber.

As Letsom was in the room assisting her  
Lady,



Lady, she gave no signal; but finding the door locked, she requested that it might be opened.

In no very pleasant tone at being interrupted in her delicate and interesting employment, Miss Fitzallan enquired—

“Who is there?”

On Clara's answering that she wished to communicate the contents of a letter she had just received from her mother, Catherine bade her go down stairs, and wait till she was dressed.

“But it is concerning Lady Fitzallan, your mother,” faltered out Clara.

“Child, will you not take an answer?—I tell you I am dressing,” cried Miss Fitzallan; and the rebuffed girl was obliged to retire.

Convinced that Miss Fitzallan could not go out that evening, Clara went to her chamber, and busied herself in arranging her wardrobe preparatory to leaving Bath, certain that Miss Fitzallan must not postpone the journey longer than the following morning.

Hearing

Hearing her descend the stairs in about an hour, she hastily followed her. She felt a tremor seize her at the thoughts of the tidings she was about to communicate, and which had been so frivolously delayed.

Catherine began.—“Why, Miss Lawton, that very ungentlewomanly appeal for admission at the door of my chamber?—Do I ever intrude on you in your hours of retirement?”

“The occasion will, I grieve to say, plead my excuse.”

“Was the house on fire,” asked Catherine, angrily turning round (her back had previously been towards our heroine). “Bless my stars, what new freak—what’s in the wind now!—Your morning robe. Oh! a fresh cold, I suppose!” sarcastically.

“No, Madam,” answered Clara; “and if you would have heard me just now, I meant to have spared you the fatigue of dressing.—You cannot go out to-night.”

Catherine started.—“Cannot, Miss Lawton!—Is Lady Fitzallan dead then?”

“Not



“Not dead, Madam.”

“Then what is to prevent me?”

“Your mother’s alarming state—her weakness—her——” Tears stood in the eyes of Clara.

“Give me the letter, simpleton! I am sure I cannot understand it, if you are to read it.”

Catherine perused it, and folding it up, she returned it to Clara.

“Mrs. Lawson meant this well, no doubt,” said she. “As you are not going out, you had better answer it, child, and say that I am much concerned to hear of Lady Fitzallan’s illness, and that she is so much worse than when I left her; add also, that if Mrs. Lawson thinks Dr. ——— will be of use, I will immediately send him from hence.”

“Shall I not mention when you return to the Castle?”

“Oh dear, no; because it is quite uncertain.”

“But

“But consider, dear Miss Fitzallan,” said Clara warmly, “Lady Fitzallan may die—she may be dying at this moment.—Surely you will not go to the ball?—Surely you will set off for the Castle?”

“Miss Clara Lawson,” said Catherine in a solemn tone, “it would well become you to calm those tumultuous feelings which appear to agitate you. The government of the passions is certainly rather a difficult task; but it may be learned. You have now a living example before you—look at me: see with what more than Roman fortitude I can bear of the probable dissolution of my nearest connexions, of the tenderest ties of blood, and emulate the patience and magnanimity of a Fitzallan!”

Clara’s anger and contempt were now roused at witnessing such unnatural hardness of heart, and at hearing such ridiculous speeches.”

“If you will let Lady Fitzallan die unnoticed by her daughter, let me go to share



share in my mother's sufferings—to take my part in the last sad offices of friendship.”

“ Ridiculous!—You are a fit person to perform a journey alone, to be sure, at your young and tender age, and equally competent to perform the last *sad offices of friendship!*” drawling out the last words.

“ Your mother, I think, says that she has no hopes of her friend's recovery: at seventy I should imagine there is not much chance of perfect convalescence. Write what I bid you, child.—Oh, I see the chariot waits! My duty to her Ladyship, and compliments to Mrs. Lawson.—Let'som, you have brought my gold fan, when I so particularly said my silver, and repeated it three times!—Surely your senses are asleep!”

The fan was exchanged, and the chariot with the *dutiful daughter* drove off to meet the expecting lover.

With some portion of acrimony towards

Mils

Miss Fitzallan, Clara began her letter, and could not help expressing, in part, the disgust with which her behaviour had inspired her; but as she proceeded, as she wrote of Lady Fitzallan, as she entreated her mother to be careful of her own health for the sake of her Clara, and not in her exertions for her beloved friend, to injure herself, her heart melted, and she gave way to her emotions.

“What can I do,” concluded the pious daughter, “but beseech the Father of Mercies to proportion the trials of my dearest mother to her strength, and to proportion the rewards of our suffering friend to her deserts!”

She had barely concluded her letter, and her countenance yet exhibited traces of emotion, when a gentle rap was heard at the hall-door, and the next moment a servant announced Horace Fairfax.

“Tell me,” said he, “that I am a very bold



bold and a very unlicensed intruder. I plead guilty to the charge.—But,” walking nearer to her, while she averted her head, “how!—what!—whence are these!—Tears!—Tell me that Miss Fitzallan has been exerting her authority, and by Heavens——”

“Stop, stop,” said Clara, “no asseverations! That Heaven to whom you would appeal, is exerting its just authority—he is recalling the life he gave!—Lady Fitzallan is probably now breathing her last!”

She sighed, and put her hand before her face. But, resuming her presence of mind, she added—

“I was deputed by Miss Fitzallan to answer a letter which I have just received from my mother, on the melancholy subject.”

“You deputed by a daughter to write on such an occasion, while she shews herself to a rout first, and afterwards to a ball?—Why, this is a refinement on the stoicism of  
the

the age! which, but that you tell me so—which, but that here are legible evidences of your veracity,” putting his hand to her wet cheek, “I could not—would not have credited!”

“It is more than Roman fortitude certainly,” replied Clara, smiling languidly.

“And yet,” cried Fairfax, after a pause, “I verily believe my uncle is to become the husband of this woman!—Does he know her?—Impossible—surely impossible! And yet when interest sways, all opposition is useless. Perhaps, Clara—perhaps, Miss Lawson, I am the only young man in Bath, who would employ a *tête-à-tête* with you, in telling you he read the Bible?”

“I do not think the worse of you for it,” said Clara warmly.

“I believe you. Now I fear the prophet’s woe will fall upon my uncle:—‘Woe unto them who join house to house and land to land.’—I fear that is the secret—I fear heart to heart has never been thought of by one of the party at least.”

“But



"But the union may not take place."

"But it will take place, I am confident," rejoined Fairfax. "My uncle has been quite silent to me on the business; my interest is not affected by it, except as it concerns his happiness: and the parties are both of age, you know," smiling: "yet I have too great a regard for Sir Herbert Manwaring—for the brother of my father, to see him do such a foolish mad thing, and see it patiently. Miss Fitzallan is a being made up of art, caprice, affectation, and eccentricity. She is——"

"What, no quarter!" asked Clara.

"None, none, for your sake none!—But I had forgotten to make my apology for intruding. The truth is, that when I saw the sweet heiress swim in, unattended, into Mrs. Curzon's rooms, I thought you were—that you might be unwell, and—and—I could not be easy; so I ran here to make the enquiry, thinking I might obtain more direct information than of my aunt; and hearing your were at home and alone,  
I could

I could not resist the temptation, but entered in defiance of propriety, even in defiance of the gallant Colonel Darnley.—What would he think of this interview?" said he in an agitated tone of voice, rising from his seat, and going to another part of the room, as if he feared to read the countenance of Clara, or to hear her answer.

"I never wish to know his thoughts on this or any other subject," said Clara warmly.

"God bless you for an angel! Say those words again!"

"Why? Are they difficult to comprehend?"

No, no, no; they are easy, charming, delightful!—Give me your hand: I must not stay a moment longer!"—He hastily caught it, pressed it to his lips, and in a moment left the house.

The interest which Fairfax had taken in her health—his looks, his accents, his hurried manner, his agitated departure, could not be misconstrued; and while Clara's eyes



were opened to the pleasing certainty of being beheld by him with fond regard, she wondered at the manner in which he checked a declaration, which it was easy to perceive was on the point of escaping his lips.

She now felt that he was dear to her heart, that his welfare was necessary to her happiness, so wonderfully was her self-knowledge increased by this short interview; and she resolved to lay a correct statement of her heart and its emotions before the indulgent eye of her mother. But this was not the time for such a disclosure; more awful considerations awaited the bed of sickness—the hour of death!—and her thoughts again returned to the dear and suffering inhabitants at the Castle.

Miss Fitzallan returned from her evening's amusements in high good humour and spirits. She chatted on indifferent subjects till a late hour, and seemed to pride herself on shewing her companion the transcendent fortitude of her nature.

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## CHAP. XVIII.

MISS Fitzallan passed the succeeding morning in her usual course of visitings and shoppings.

Firm in her purpose, Clara persisted in staying at home from the evening's engagement at Miss Evergreen's, and Catherine at length gave up the point.

She was already dressed for the party ; her carriage waited, and Letsom was putting on her cloak, when a servant informed her that a gentleman wished to speak with her.

"Has he no name?" asked she. "How often must I tell you to ask for the appellation



lation of a person, ere you bring his message?"

The man retired, but returned again immediately.

"The stranger says, Madam, that his name is unknown to you, but that his business is of immediate consequence."

Clara sprang from her seat.

"Shall I go? shall I speak to him, Miss Fitzallan.—I fear that Lady Fitzallan, perhaps my mother, has sent——"

"How ridiculous you make yourself, Miss Lawson! Could your mother, think you, easily dispatch any thing in the shape of a stranger to Miss Fitzallan, from the precincts of her own Castle. You forget, child, that a female in my station has unavoidably a number of matters to arrange, a great deal of business to settle, a multiplicity of affairs to attend to. Bid the gentleman walk in."

The servant once more returned alone.

"He says, Madam, that the nature of his business is as private as it is urgent; but,

lest you should suffer any fear to arise in your breast, he desires that your attendants may not quit the hall."

"Extraordinary!" said Catherine. "Miss Fitzallan has no fears!—Leave me, Clara."

The decided tone in which these words were uttered, precluded every appeal; and though Clara did not like the mysterious messages of the stranger, yet she obeyed the peremptory order.

As she crossed the hall, she cast her eyes towards the intruder. His form was enveloped by an Hussar cloak, his hat entirely shaded his forehead; yet his dark and lowering brows were not wholly obscured, and his acute eyes, emitted their fierce rays, as they fell on Clara. She shuddered she knew not why, and was half-tempted to return again to the parlour; but the words of Catherine yet vibrated on her ears—"Miss Fitzallan has no fears," and she retreated to her own apartment. There she remained for some time;—her meditations were uninterrupted, and though her thoughts wandered



wandered to several other subjects, yet they still recurred to the stranger as their center-point. An irresistible curiosity to know the cause of his sudden and apparently mysterious visit, filled her soul; and as the moments continued to glide along—as she could perceive from the window that Miss Fitzallan's chariot still waited at the door, she knew that the interview still continued. Her surprise and curiosity were almost insupportable when she heard the clock strike nine. She bewildered herself in fruitless conjecture for some minutes longer, when a bell rang, and presently the carriage drove from the door. Clara then took up her candle, and was going down stairs, when she met Letsom with her Lady's cloak hanging on her arm.

“What strange orders are here!” said she, muttering, and not being well pleased; as she had only waited for Miss Fitzallan's disappearance, to join a party of slipshod Abigails to the half-play. “So, after all,

she does not go out to-night, Ma'am.—‘She would and she would not’; and ‘Know your own Mind,’ should be got up to-night, I think. I wish I had been worthy to have known it before; I would not have wasted my time in frizzling out her wig, believe me!”

“Has Miss Fitzallan sent for me to make tea, Mrs. Letsom?” asked Clara.

“Oh no, indeed, Ma'am, she's gone with that man up in the drawing room, and has given her orders not to be interrupted. But however, Ma'am, the coast is clear for you; and you had better go and drink your own tea comfortably in the parlour.”

Clara mechanically followed her advice. She took up a book, and tried to beguile the time; but her uneasiness was not to be subdued, or her fears allayed. She reasoned with herself on the weakness of thus becoming the prey of suspicion and fear; she remembered that Miss Fitzallan had justly observed, in her situation of life, a variety  
of



of affairs must await her decision and voice; and though her eyes were opened to her foolishness, she could not conquer it.

It was twelve o'clock ere the singular visitor departed; then, as Miss Fitzallan rang the bell for a servant to attend him to the door, she desired Miss Lawson might be sent to her. Clara joyfully and eagerly obeyed the summons; but almost started as she entered the room, and observed the alteration which had taken place in Miss Fitzallan's whole appearance. Her hair was disordered, her eyes were red with weeping, her whole countenance wore the traces of strong emotion: tears had flowed plentifully down her cheeks; and they had left undeniable witnesses of the course they had taken, by washing off the thick laid rouge in their progress.

The hitherto obdurate Catherine now appeared to have been humbled and subdued. Her arms were folded together, her head rested against the mantle-piece as Clara approached,

approached, and her brow seemed contracted, as if in solemn meditation:

"It was dark December; wind and rain had beat all night;"

yet even the external comforts of the fire-side were wanting. The fire had been suffered to die a natural death, and, untouched, it was emitting its last spark.

"Miss Lawson," said Catherine, a sigh forcing its passage, "you will pack up your clothes. I shall set off for the Castle at five in the morning."

Clara burst into tears.

"You have then heard from the Castle, and your good mother is worse?"

"No, I have not," answered Catherine; "but I think it right to go, lest any thing should happen."

But the hurried voice, the distraint manner in which this was uttered, convinced her auditor that she had given her only the ostensible reason.

Clara, however, was willing to hail any circumstance



circumstance which had impelled her to pursue the path of duty and humanity; and did not trouble herself to trace events to their causes, when their effects were so desirable.

"You will tell Letsom my determination," said Catherine; "she will follow us in a post-chaise, with the luggage, at a later hour of the morning. I wish you a good night;" and taking up a candle, she retired to her bedchamber.

Mrs. Letsom did not seem half pleased. She wondered "what was in the wind now, to cause this new whimsicalness. For her part, she could not abide old Castles, and believed she should turn her face very soon to the great world again. Retirement did not *shoot* her constitution; it always brought on a deep decline."

Clara left her, and busily prepared for the journey, ardently wishing to see and embrace Lady Fitzallan once more ere Death should separate them for ever.

Anxious to share in her mother's fatigues, and to see that what she had already undergone, had not materially injured her delicate frame, her wishes would have led her to set out immediately, though she could first have liked an interview with Horace Fairfax, to have acquainted him with her hasty departure, and the *given* reason; but she reflected that, after the conversation which had so recently passed between them, he could be at no loss to account for her absence.

She should now be able to tell her beloved mother all that she felt, and all she thought; and if her cheeks should be died with blushes in the recital, still would they be blushes of pleasure—still would she be able to hide them on the bosom of her tender parent.

END OF VOL. 1.

