

~~Baron de Fleming~~
BARON DE FLEMING,

THE SON;

Baron de Fleming *Chagala 1927*
OR

THE RAGE OF SYSTEMS.

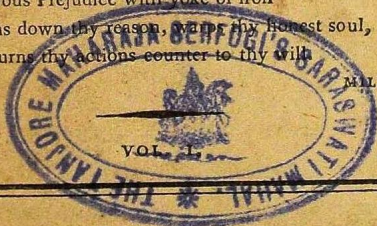
A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

AUGUSTUS LA FONTAINE.

Barbarous Prejudice with yoke of iron
Weighs down thy reason, warps thy honest soul,
And turns thy actions counter to thy will.



MILLER.

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BARON DE FLEMING,
THE SON.

CHAP. I.

AT the conclusion of the history of Baron de Fleming, the Father, we left the young Baron at that important moment of his life, when he was about to quit his mother, to mingle in some of the more busy scenes of the world, with a passionate desire to throw himself into a career, which his imagination

decked with the most glowing colours. Under the tuition of the honest and learned Beyer, he had acquired more than a usual share of literature, and a competent general knowledge, having read the best authors, although, it must be owned, with various degrees of attention, according to the turn his enthusiastic temper happened to take at the moment. He was perfectly master of the learned languages, spoke French fluently, and could read the most difficult English authors : in a word, he might be regarded as a young man of considerable information and learning.

His first ambition was to become a member of one of our learned Universities—a design which he had long entertained, and which had been retarded only by various accidents. Not that he proposed to himself to acquire any new knowledge under new masters;

masters ; but feeling that he possessed all the powers of the most scholastic subtilty, he flattered himself he should triumph in controversy, or, at the least, that he should be able to maintain his ground against the most learned, dexterous, and obstinate disputants. He accordingly entered himself a member of the University of Gottingen, and seized the first occasion to make a trial of his strength in the field of controversy. But it is impossible to express either his surprise or mortification, when he found even mere students so well exercised in the art of disputation, that it was with difficulty he could keep the combat equal. Finding that here he could gain no superiority, which alone was capable of satisfying his craving ambition, he suddenly abandoned the ungrateful field of philosophy, to plunge

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with a still stronger passion into the dark night of antiquity.

The Professor of this science was one who had an exclusive veneration for all that was ancient, who despised and detested the greatest of the moderns, and maintained in his lectures, with very little consciousness of the hyperbole, that the ancients alone knew how to eat, or sleep, or put on their clothing. He had an absolute argument to demonstrate that the twelve tables of the laws of Rome contained a greater depth of wisdom and policy, than all the codes of the various nations of our times, not excepting the English, whom he acknowledged to have made some progress in the art of legislation. His love of antiquity was too strong even for his piety; and he regarded the mysteries of *Eleusis* with more veneration than

than all the sacred dogmas of Christianity. Of the divine numbers of Pythagoras he spoke with such energetic passion, that his auditors were ever ready to worship them; although, it must be confessed, his reasoning was so intricate, that he had himself as confused a conception of it, as the most ignorant and credulous of his scholars.

The vivid attractions of novelty, the greatness of his preceptor's renown, and even the mysterious veil which covered this new science, for some time had an irresistible influence over the ardent temper of the youthful Baron. He studied Algebra with eagerness; figures were his inseparable, his darling companions; and he explored his way, with indefatigable patience, up to the mysteries of the remotest antiquity.

As this new-born passion began in its turn to decline, he found the most learned

commentators contradicting each other; and recollected a thousand instances when the same thing had occurred, but had made less impression on his mind. After hesitating amidst various subtilties, and now finding it impossible to decide, he began to perceive that a science which has its foundation in doubt, must be eternally subject to error; that a path traced in obscurity, could scarcely lead to that brilliant light his imagination had fondly wished to pursue; and that a road trodden in the midst of darkness by so many others, could, at best, only conduct him to a borrowed reputation.

“It is,” he at length exclaimed, “by the sublime powers of invention alone that pure fame is attained. Glory forbids that I should creep in the dark after the footsteps of others!—let me strike out a new path!—let me tread an unknown road, the discovery
of

of which will shed on my name that blaze of light, which adorns the heroes who were the inventors of the Arts and Sciences!"

In the midst of the anxiety occasioned by the search of a new object to satisfy the active faculties of his soul, and flatter his desire of fame, he heard one of the most learned and distinguished members of the academy extolling the comprehensive mind of Leibnitz; not so much for his writings, as his having been the first to conceive the possibility of a universal language. The orator described, in most eloquent terms, the grandeur of the idea; and in the vehemence of his zeal, invoked curses on the ungrateful age which could reject this luminous and happy thought.

Here was matter to inflame the Baron's soul! Secretly devouring this new idea, he already promised himself immortality. His

success he pictured as certain, and did not despair that even the progress would be rapid.

"It is I," he said, "who will discover this universal language!—I shall gather the laurels of admiration from my contemporaries, and the palm of gratitude from posterity!—Propitious moment! happy encounter!"

Occupied with this new project, the young philosopher returned to his apartments. Agitated by that passion which governed all his enterprises, he shut himself up to study signs, characters, and hieroglyphics. He passed all his time in making various essays. His attempts successively failed; and if by chance some of them promised a more happy issue, he found himself suddenly stopped by an unforeseen difficulty. Never wearied, however, not at all disgusted, he began again

again from some new spot ; and with all the perseverance of his strenuous temper, sought a new, and he always hoped a more happy route.

His domestics, observing that he was continually employed in tracing characters which appeared to them without meaning, began to conceive some uneasiness respecting his intellects. In truth, the papers on his table, and even the walls of his apartments, were filled with figures, which were from time to time obliterated only to give place to others ; and this was generally attributed by his attendants to an alienation of mind. One of the wisest among them, however, observed that, as their young master was perfectly rational in all other respects, it was probable that he studied magic ; and Brinon, the Baron's valet, actually wrote an account

to Madame de Fleming, of the passion, and strange studies of her son.

This sage matron and tender mother was so much the more alarmed with this unpleasing intelligence, as she had frequently found, in fact, in his letters, instead of the accustomed characters, crosses, squares, and triangles, of whose signification she would have been absolutely ignorant, if her son had not taken care to send her, in notes, the key of these enigmas, which, in despite of these explications, it is probable she did not perfectly comprehend.

CHAP. II.

AFTER many months of a painful and fruitless study, no doubt because this grand discovery is reserved for some one more able or more fortunate ; worn out by the multiplicity of trials, and in despair of success from his solitary efforts, he resolved to seek the assistance of the admirer of the great Leibnitz, whose former discourse had engendered this new passion.

He ran eagerly to this admirer of Leibnitz, submitting to him the most successful of his essays; but what was his astonishment to hear this same man treat the scheme as a vision.

“The conception,” he said, “I admit to be great, and worthy of an elevated genius. But how shall we realize this project?—All your efforts, my dear Baron, must shew you the impossibility.”

De Fleming sustained his argument by the instance of the hieroglyphics; surely they proved the possibility of a universal sign for ideas. His surprise was increased, and his confidence abashed, when he heard his new teacher question the real antiquity of those characters.

“The existence of the Pyramids even,” said he, “is not clear from doubts; and perhaps

perhaps those boasted and stupendous monuments have been reared no where but in the brain of poets and priests."

Disgusted with the inconstancy and caprice of his learned friend, the Baron de Fleming returned to his apartments with a melancholy prospect before him, resolved, however, to die, rather than desert his useful and glorious enterprize. He became more recluse and studious than ever. He was worn to a shadow with his application; when suddenly he conceived an idea which led, he thought, immediately to his darling object: and the means were the more pleasing to him, as they had an analogy to an object which had formed one of his preceding studies."

"If," said he, "in imitating the movements of another, one could excite in one's self, the same feelings which exist in him, what more

more is wanting?—Ideas spring from experience, and experience is composed of the remembrance of sensations. Every one of our ideas, therefore—even the most abstract and subtle, must have its expression, which is painted on the physiognomy; and this expression being universal, must be rendered with facility by a language which is also universal.”

This reasoning appeared to him to be infallible. He began his task again with renovated zeal; and the study of physiognomy, which already had many charms for him, he now considered as the sure foundation of all his future glory. His attention was never so rivetted to any object, as when he saw two persons conversing together in a foreign tongue, which he did not understand. He would approach nearer and nearer to them, as if drawn by some fascination.

fascination. None of their motions escaped his penetrating eye ; and such was the flexibility of his own muscles, and such his aptitude to imitate the variations of their features, that he stood as if employed in mocking them. He thought he had caught Nature in the fact of her operations. His joy rose almost to madness whenever he imagined he comprehended the sense of the speakers. In the excess of his transport he cried out—

“ For me is it reserved to explain what was the gift of tongues conferred on the first Christians !—It was doubtless this universal language. Savage people are always pantomimic in their discourse, and talk as much by gesture as by words. This is the universal language which Nature herself teaches ; and civilized man only corrupts its simplicity and precision, by the multiplicity and
ambiguity

ambiguity of words. Let us conduct expression back to its original purity of character, and men will understand each other without words."

From this time, his passion to make observations, to fortify his new system, hurried him from the retirement of his closet, to every place of public resort. Wherever there was a crowded assembly, the Baron was sure to be present. His singular demeanour was soon noticed. His grimaces, as he imitated all the turns of countenance of the person on whom he looked, was soon the object of curiosity and discussion. Some thought it was an affection of the nerves; but most that it was a grain of madness. The ladies especially made a jest of the perpetual play of his muscles, while he was only imitating the affectation of their expression.

Convinced,

Convinced, by a great mass of observations, that physiognomy is the great mirror of the soul, and resolved to reduce these observations to a form and consistency, which might render his scheme practicable, he composed an alphabet of a multitude of visages, which he caused to be drawn from various expressions of his own, persuaded that he could make these expressions thus intelligible to others; and he concluded he had entirely succeeded, when, by force of repeated instructions and practice, he had taught his domestics to understand some of the most common of his orders, without the intervention of words. Proud of his success, he at length called his servants in to witness the practicability of his scheme whenever it was disputed; and he bore with impatience the smallest appearance of doubt in his auditors.

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From this situation of things, he could not fail to have a thousand unpleasant adventures. He supported them all with a courage which springs from a consciousness of superiority, and he consoled himself by saying—

“ Thus it has ever been that great men are treated by the vulgar.”

The vexations which his singularity drew upon him, however, multiplied so fast, that he sought refuge in the determination often made by sages, to abandon a place where ignorance covered him with ridicule.

From Gottingen he repaired to Brunswick, where he was presented at Court, and received into the best company. His distinguished birth, a very fine figure, and his many acquirements, procured him the most flattering reception; and his immense fortune promised him that consideration, which
would

would have been flattering to any other than himself:—but, entirely occupied with his passion for his system, he enjoyed no true pleasure beyond that of delivering himself up to its fascination, although he endeavoured now to do this in secret.

He hoped to elude the judgment of the ignorant by the most profound mystery; but, in despite of all his caution, betrayed by habit, or unconsciously actuated by passion, a look, an expression, a movement escaped him, which marked his singularity even when he thought himself concealed by the closest veil of reserve.

“Have you seen the young Baron de Fleming?” was the general question; and the answer was given in a tone of ridicule or of compassion, as the speaker happened to think him insane or affected.

Among those who had most closely observed

observed his eccentricities, was a scholar of very distinguished character, who conceived a wish to become acquainted with him. At a party where they met, having fixed his eye for a long time on the Baron with a manner so intent as to give some offence to the young enthusiast, he accosted him with these words.

“ I beg your pardon, my Lord, but I hope I do not ask an impertinent question. I am infinitely curious to know if you were born in Germany, and if your ancestors were of European origin ?”

“ I thought,” replied the Baron, “ my family were sufficiently well known, to have made this question unnecessary. However, Sir, I have no objection to say, that as far back as can be traced, the House of Fleming has lived in Germany ; but a knowledge of its origin is lost in its antiquity.”

“ Certainly

“Certainly then,” said the scholar, a good deal embarrassed, “I must own that you have very much disconcerted my system.”

“Your system!” cried the Baron, suddenly excited by the word; “ah! you have a system—a novelty perhaps?—May I ask, Sir, of what nature it is?”

“This, my Lord, is not a place in which I can develope my opinions to you; but indeed I—I am disconcerted. With features so fine, so noble as your’s!—Pardon me, I am quite at a loss, my Lord.”

“How!” exclaimed De Fleming with emotions of resentment; “have you discovered something ignoble in my conduct?”

“I do not absolutely say that. You have light-coloured hair—the finest blue eyes—and then an aquiline nose——”

A truce

“A truce with compliments ! Let us come to the fact.”

“I do not know very well how to express the subject of my embarrassment ; but withal you have a degree of motion in your countenance and limbs, that ill corresponds with your fine physiognomy. May I ask if the restlessness of your limbs and muscles is a misfortune which you have had from the cradle ?”

“No,” said the Baron, laughing immoderately.

“Is it then some accidental affection ?”

“Nothing of the kind ; it results from a secret, by which I have learned to know the undisguised expressions of men’s thoughts. I feel inclined to explain myself to you on this interesting subject, but I must first receive an assurance of your secrecy ; for I
am

am resolved never again to expose the most sacred of all sciences to the ridicule of the vulgar. You know that all savage people express their ideas and passions as much by their gestures as their words.

“Not every people,” interrupted the learned man with great eagerness; “for the *Celts*, whatever country they may chance to inhabit—the men descended from the noblest race of beings, have neither that suppleness of limb, nor that flexibility of muscle, which is necessary to that kind of expression. The least civilized among them, is born to invent, and not to imitate.”

“What do you mean by a Celt?” enquired the Baron. “I believe I am of a race sufficiently noble; and yet you see I possess the flexibility which you seem to despise.”

“It is that which embarrasses me—not because you are a nobleman of an illustrious family,

family, but because I find in your figure all the marks of the most distinguished race. With a forehead, with hair, and with eyes like your's, there is an incongruity in having that inclination to motion in the muscles, which, to speak frankly, is altogether ignoble. During forty years that I have studied the science—a science which will spread the clearest light on the history of human nature, I find you the only exception to a general law, and I can scarcely persuade myself that you are not of foreign origin.”

Suddenly caught with so curious a novelty, the Baron eagerly pressed the learned man to communicate the knowledge he had acquired by so long a course of study.

“I consent,” said the scholar, “under a promise of the greatest secrecy;” and De Fleming having given his word, the scholar proceeded thus.

“ You must know that, reflecting deeply, in the course of my studies, on the differences among men, which are usually attributed to different degrees of civilization, I began to suppose an original difference, which appeared to admit of primitive and real distinctions. This idea, which first passed through my mind like a ray of light, left, however, its impression. From that moment I insensibly and gradually turned all my remarks towards that notion. The further I proceeded, the stronger were the proofs; the colour, features, weakness, strength, manners, customs—in a word, every thing aided me in building up my system.

“ I am Professor of Theology, and my opinions, you will perceive, contradict some of the dogmas of our religion. I am not willing, however, to resign my chair, nor can I renounce principles that are infallible;

and therefore have I invited you to secrecy. I cannot persuade myself that the Negroes, the Americans, the Orientals, and the Germans descend from the same stock. I have sought the lines of distinction or resemblance; and the result is, that I have divided the human race into four classes, dispersed by various accidents over the whole globe, but which are not the less distinct. The Moguls, with whom I rank the Negroes and the Americans, form the class the most abject and despicable; the Orientals form the second; above them rise the Sclavi, and over the whole is placed the superior class, the Celts.

“ Each of these classes has its characteristic signs, its distinguishing features, and colour. It may have accidental qualities besides; but these are light shades, which rarely disturb, and never destroy the picture.

Confirmed

Confirmed in my system, I must own to you that nothing shakes my conviction. Even reasons which appear to have the least connection with it, have helped to make it unalterable. I am convinced that good and bad qualities depend on organization, and that the difference between the noble and ignoble can be lessened only by a mixture of the different races wisely combined; and for this opinion I am accused of Materialism.

“I hold it also as a consequence, that the Celts, that eminent class, being organized in a manner to be capable themselves of perfection, have no need of a Saviour; and for this I am accused of heresy. Can any thing be more unjust?—Yet my system obtained for some time, and to a certain degree among the learned, many of whom heard me with pleasure, till I asserted that dark hair, especially if it was inclined to be
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curled,

curled, was one of the principal signs of an ignoble origin. The greater part of my learned brethren had brown or black hair; and my assertion was sufficient to excite a general clamour against me.

“The collector of the taxes, however, was friendly to my system, because it followed from my doctrine, that nothing was more reasonable, than to levy double contributions on the members of the reprobated classes. Notwithstanding his support, the clamour became so loud, that I was compelled carefully to conceal, as a crime, opinions that would procure me the most renowned glory, if men were accustomed to think justly. Even in my own house I was reduced to silence; for my wife is brown, and will listen to no reason on this subject.

“You see, my dear Baron, how great is my misfortune. I yield myself with perfect
delight

delight to the pleasure of unfolding myself to you ; but you will perceive how much prudence imposes silence upon you."

A zealous admirer of every singularity, the Baron pledged himself to the most absolute reserve, and besought the learned man to enter with him into the details necessary to his entire comprehension of his doctrine. But while he listened, occupied with his own chimera, that happened to him, which frequently befalls the makers of systems—he thought he found a connection between his own opinions and those of the learned man, and suddenly exclaimed—

"My dear Professor, there is much analogy between our ideas. I have long been in search of a universal language."

"Good God !" cried the scholar, petulantly, "such a thing can exist only in a heated imagination. Men having neither the same origin, the same organization, nor

the same destiny, how is it possible they can understand each other by general signs?—Renounce this error, my friend, and listen, while I teach you perfectly to distinguish the different races by their appropriate signs. A flat nose, a low forehead, thick lips, and white teeth, eyes sunk, and dark like the hair, mark by their assemblage the unmixed race of the Sclavi. The greater or smaller number of these marks in an individual, will determine all the judgment that you may form of his character.”

“Ah!” cried the Baron, “this was the reason of Maria’s treachery. Though her eyes were the most beautiful in the world, yet both they and her hair were of a deep chestnut colour.”

“As to the Celts,” continued the Professor, “with the exception of the extreme mobility of your physiognomy, I find all the characters by which they are marked—

a noble

a noble mien, a tall and erect figure, and an air formed to command, and not to obey. When your physiognomy enters into the repose for which it is formed, I behold in you an accomplished Celt."

Flattered with this testimony of the learned man in his favour, De Fleming had one more reason to relish this new system, which now became the rule of his conduct, till a time arrived when a most happy exception led him back to juster ideas. At that moment, however, he was agitated by a fervent enthusiasm, and secretly pined that he could not make an open profession of his faith. From a sacred regard to the promise he had plighted to his new master, he could not open his lips in his present abode. He resolved, therefore, to change his habitation, and chose the residence of a Prince, in whose territory part of his estates were situated.

CHAP. III.

DEEPLY impressed with a sense of the greatness of his origin, not as the Baron de Fleming, but as a Celt, the young enthusiast resolved to regulate the whole mode of his life on the most elevated principles. He was presented at Court, and appeared before the Prince with the confidence which he derived from a sense of his native greatness.

“A Prince,” he said to himself, “is no other than a more splendid vassal than I
am ;

am; and every Celt is the equal of the greatest Monarch on earth."

He was received with that flattering distinction which is always paid to a man who is known to be of high birth, and extremely rich. The women contended for his preference. Every young lady of distinction formed a design upon his heart, and the whole world talked of the handsome and accomplished Baron de Fleming. It was not long, however, before this prevalent sentiment of admiration was as generally changed into astonishment and conjecture as the Baron's opinions evinced themselves in the singularity of his conduct.

He had engaged a very handsome house, and gave frequent entertainments, upon which no expence was spared. His table was covered with a profusion of delicacies, and served with splendour; but all things

were arranged in a manner quite different from that of other tables. His wines were of the lightest kinds—a simplicity from which he never departed, though well aware the courtiers did not perfectly relish such simplicity. Instead of coffee being served after dinner, orgeat and lemonade were always presented. Cards he disdained, as unworthy to be the amusement of a Celt, and they were never introduced into his apartments. He generally regaled his visitors with music; but as the choice of the compositions was necessarily his, the pieces that were performed, were usually more extraordinary than agreeable. He invariably went to bed at ten, dismissing his guests at that hour without apology; and he constantly arose at a very early hour in the morning, to apply himself to his studies.

Although the furniture and decorations
of

of his house were chosen with equal taste and magnificence, they did not less display his singularity, than his table. Antique ornaments mingled with modern decorations. But the walls of his own chamber, his favourite apartment, were most his care. They were covered with drawings of heads and necks. Many were done from the life, among which he distinguished with great exactness the Calmuck, or Cossack, among Germans and Frenchmen, and still more scrupulously the Sclavi and the Celt. His learning on these points seemed to increase rapidly, so that he could instantly perceive a shade of difference in the characteristic traits of his various classes, which another eye could with the greatest difficulty at all discern. He had gathered together also specimens of the costume of every known people upon the face of the globe, and had

possessed himself of accurate drawings of the cabins and canoes of the various hordes of savages.

Having carefully preserved and arranged all his hieroglyphics of a universal language, it sometimes happened that an explanation was demanded of him of these unknown characters. On these occasions he smiled with an air of conscious superiority and reserve, but declined giving any insight into the mystery.

This rage of systematising, while it misled the understanding of Baron de Fleming, did not entirely destroy the sensibility of his heart ; yet it must be confessed that an inordinate vanity, guiding him through the medium of his prejudices, too often corrupted the sources of his benevolence. His vassals and domestics were treated by him with the greatest indulgence and
humanity ;

humanity; he attended to all their wants, and consoled them in their afflictions. Every child of misfortune had sacred rights to his compassion, and might address themselves to him with confidence; but it must be acknowledged that to the unfortunate beings, whose features and complexion denied them admission into the favoured class, his succours were accorded with a reserve of manner that almost amounted to repugnance, while the more fortunate Celts obtained, from their fair hair and blue eyes, benefactions accompanied with the most delicate tributes of esteem, and all the profusion of unbounded generosity.

His friendships, like his benevolence, submitted to the dominion of his prejudices. The favourite of the Prince, a man possessed of wit and a cultivated taste, attached himself to the Baron de Fleming, and evinced

a desire to be upon terms of intimacy with him. How great was the astonishment of every person to see the marked advances of the Prince's favourite, received by De Fleming with a haughty coldness. Was it possible for any one to divine that black hair naturally curling round his temples, lively eyes of the same colour, an animated though dark complexion, and teeth of a perfect whiteness, were traits that could render one man unworthy the friendship and confidence of another? Yet such alone were the causes of the Baron's repulsion; and the courtier, little accustomed to see his friendship contemned, nourished a resentment that did not long want the aggravation of other offences on the part of De Fleming, to contribute to its increase.

The Baron de Fleming, acting thus far rigorously upon the principles of his new faith,

faith, had hitherto scrupulously concealed the motives of his eccentricity, according to the caution bestowed on him by his instructor in these new theories; but an event now took place, which appeared to him to demand an explicit avowal of his sentiments.

A considerable benefice upon one of his estates became vacant. A young ecclesiastic, who was patronized by the mistress of the Prince, was warmly recommended for this office to De Fleming. Without ever having seen the candidate, De Fleming readily professed his desire of obliging his Highness the Prince; and gave a species of promise to appoint the young divine to the benefice. In consequence of this obliging concurrence, the young ecclesiastic, accompanied by the Prince's Chamberlain, waited upon the Baron; but no sooner had he presented himself

himself before De Fleming, than the latter started back with surprise and affright, saying—

“I am very sorry, Sir, but indeed I cannot.—It is impossible, Sir—altogether impossible; I assure you I never can give the benefice to a man made like you.”

The confusion of the young man, and the exclamations of astonishment from the surrounding persons, caused the Baron to proceed.

“How!” said he with vehemence, “would you have me bestow on my vassals a pastor, a guide, a director, whose every feature announces him to belong to an ignoble race?—A man with small, dark, and sunken eyes, a flat nose, and thick lips!—No, no, it must not be!”

Some one represented the amiable qualities of the divine, his learning, and his virtues,

virtues, the favour he was in at Court, and the hopes he had been taught to encourage by the Baron's previous declarations.

"I am exceedingly concerned," was De Fleming's reply; "I desire nothing more earnestly than to please the Prince, and to do justice to every one. I sincerely wish this gentleman had less merit, or that he did not bear such unequivocal signs of his origin. In a word, I wish he were of a better race."

"This is most extraordinary," said the Chamberlain, who had hitherto stood mute with amazement at the strange turn of this negotiation.—"Is it absolutely necessary then, Sir, that your pastor must be nobly born?"

"My God! no!—It matters not to me if his father were a husbandman or a mechanic. This is not a question of a coat
of

of arms—I expected to have found him to belong to the noblest class of mankind :—in a word, he should have been a Celt.”

“But, Sir, you do not know him; he is yet a stranger to you. Converse with him; you will find him full of wit and intelligence. I assure you he is an excellent companion.”

“I believe it—I believe it all,” said De Fleming; “but were he in other respects the most amiable of mankind, with those features he can never be appointed to my benefice.”

The Chamberlain, with increasing surprise at the peremptory refusal of De Fleming to accept the young ecclesiastic, pressed for more satisfactory reasons than those he had yet received, for that unexpected decision; and the Baron, unwilling to incur the resentment of the Prince, whom this proceeding

proceeding was likely to offend, thought himself now called upon to explain his system; believing that its truth and excellence would carry immediate conviction to his auditor, of the propriety of his declarations against the ecclesiastic. He accordingly invited the Chamberlain to his apartment; and triumphantly pointing out to him two of his most finished heads—

“Behold, Sir!” said he, with an air of exultation; “are you not struck with the astonishing contrast of formation these heads display?—Let the Prince send me a man whose head resembles this one, and I shall proudly and joyfully present him my benefice. I ask no other knowledge of his merits.”

“Well, my dear Baron,” replied the Chamberlain, “and supposing that I allow you this wonderful difference between the formation



formation of these two heads, which to confess the truth, I do not very distinctly perceive, what relation has the shape of these skulls with the young pastor, whose good qualities have been so earnestly recommended to you?"

"What relation!—Good Heavens!—Does not this beautiful head announce it to you by its fair hair, its aquiline nose, and its other exquisite traits. The brain enclosed within this vault of noble architecture, must be incapable of conceiving aught but sublime ideas and virtuous projects. Look at this other. Observe that it is covered with black hair, and that every part of its physiognomy indicates, by a thousand signs, that it was created but to vegetate and obey. It is the head of one of the mean race of the Sclavi; the other is that of a noble Celt."

"But yet I do not perceive——"

"Have

“Have a moment’s patience, I beseech you. I will endeavour to explain to you the theory of an incontrovertible doctrine, in which, however, I am as yet but myself a learner. Nature creates several distinct species of men, as she creates many distinct races of animals, more or less noble. She bestows on each species exterior signs that distinguish them, and which also indicate their intellectual qualities. For instance—this fine head is that of a noble German, and this one is the head of a vile Cossack. That of your candidate being formed upon the same model as the latter, you will, I hope, allow that I am justified in aspiring to give my vassals a pastor who belongs to a better species.”

“’Tis very well. But permit me to ask you, Sir—these observations—this hypothesis,

hypothesis, are they so incontrovertible, that your conclusions can never err?"

"Ah, my dear Sir! I can prove that to you without difficulty," said De Fleming. "Grant me your attention a little longer. As Nature in her labours ascends, by imperceptible degrees, from the minute insect who is all stomach, to the animal whose head forms a distinct part of his body; and from the meanest reptile that crawls in debasement upon the earth, to the proud courser and the agile stag, who bear their heads aloft—as she passes from the ape who dares essay to walk on two legs, to the man, with whom it is a natural position, she at length arrives at the rational animal. Here she recommences her gradations, and in the creation of intelligent beings, she follows the same distinctions that she has observed in the

the

the general creation. First, we see arise from her hands the reptile of the human species, in whom all the functions destined to manducation, and the preservation of animal life, are the strongest. The teeth of this class, like those of animals, are white and sharp; the skin blackened, thick, and smooth; the forehead irregular, the visage round, the features flattened, the belly large, and the legs curved. Such are the Negroes, the Americans, and Orientalists of the south.

“These exterior forms are the certain indications of insensibility, cowardice, the indulgence of voluptuous and sensual appetites, and a total want of that reflection, and that moral instinct, whose absence engenders a thousand vices. This class evidently proves that Nature only created these imperfect beings, as the first degree
between

between the animal and the man ; and thus has she proceeded, by many intermediate degrees, up to the Celt, the noblest of creatures—he who approaches to the perfection of angels, and partakes of the divine intelligence. It is in his fine and delicate figure, the whiteness of his skin, in his blue and sparkling eyes, his forehead rounded, and expanding amidst the ringlets of his fair hair, the oval form of his face—it is, in fine, in his smile, which conveys the most perfect expression of grace and dignity, that you recognise his noble origin ; while his inventive genius, his refined sensibility, whether in supporting the afflictions, or enlarging the enjoyments of life, his constant exercise of the intellectual faculties, and his disdain of sensual pleasures, sufficiently declare him to be the favourite of the Almighty, who has destined him to
reign

reign over all other creatures, even to the dominion of his degraded brothers in humanity."

The whole figure of Fleming was animated while he spoke; joy and triumph glowed in the heightened colour of his cheeks; and, persuaded that he had sufficiently justified his refusal, he here ended the conference.

Nevertheless, his reasoning upon this topic was not received with any cordiality at Court. The Prince, his mistress, and the young candidate were equally enraged at his refusal of the benefice. The Chamberlain, indeed, who had been very zealous in the execution of his commission, felt more pity than anger against the folly of the Baron. It was, however, a subject so happily adapted to ridicule, that he could not forbear amusing his friends with a faithful

account of De Fleming's doctrines. The history spread from one to another; and wisdom and folly, envy and revenge, the benevolent as well as the malignant, all joined in the laugh of irony against the system and the systematiser.

The facility with which the frank and ingenuous temper of De Fleming yielded his singularities to their observation, increased their amusement. Absorbed in the contemplation of his system, and having, by his declarations to the Chamberlain, freed himself from the constraint of silence, it was his highest pleasure to detail and defend it. His eloquence enforced attention; he was always heard, rarely contradicted; and the insidious leer, or sly sarcasm, was so governed in his presence, as to be understood by all but himself."

He

He tried all things upon the test of his principles ; virtues, vices, superstitions, weaknesses were all brought to the same standard ; and in his systems he discovered the sources of every moral or political event. If the oppression of the people, and the despotism of the Prince were spoken of, he decided them to be inevitable, while the Minister was a man with a flat nose and a large belly, and the Inspector of the Finances had black and curling hair. Feeble measures or unwise regulations of the Government he traced, satisfactorily to himself, to the unfortunate features of the Prince's favourite.

CHAP. IV.

WHILE the Baron and his opinions thus occupied the public attention, Madame de Limberg arrived from the country. She soon met De Fleming at an assembly; and observing that he underwent a kind of persecution from the raileries of the other ladies, she announced her determination of taking him under her protection. Madame de Limberg was a very accomplished cour-tier. With a captivating grace, and an amiable appearance of candour, she turned the conversation upon the subject of his favourite system,

system, and easily persuaded him she listened with interest and attention.

The goodness of Madame de Limberg, which in the eyes of the other courtiers was mere politeness, took in those of De Fleming a character of peculiar approbation and esteem. It had, in fact, neither of these motives; Madame de Limberg was selfish and artful in the extreme. Her conduct was always governed by interested views, and she had the address frequently to bring the most disjointed circumstances into a union to promote her designs. The Baron, on the first glance, appeared expressly formed to make the fortune of her only daughter. It was then on the future husband of her dear Caroline that she lavished her cajoleries and attentions—attentions that warmed the bosom of De Fleming with transports of gratitude.

“You must visit me, my dear Baron,” she said to him ere they separated; “your conversation delights me. The young men of the age in general are so frivolous, that I invite them to my house as little as possible; but from you we shall reap instruction. Visit me without ceremony; we will reason upon your systems. I must understand something more of these grand and extraordinary principles.”

The Baron, quite enchanted with her condescension, kissed her hand, and was perfectly convinced that his new patroness was a woman of very superior merit.

“Caroline,” said Madame de Limberg on entering her own house, “I have this evening made a very important acquaintance. My good fortune has led me to the knowledge of the young Baron de Fleming, a very fine figure, and the richest cavalier-

cavalier of the whole Principa'ity. He is a little deranged in his ideas, they say ; but his heart is excellent, and his madness is, at the bottom, a very innocent one. You have heard of him, no doubt, and of his classes of Celt and Sclavi. With all his folly, he is really very eloquent on this subject, and engaging even in the extreme of absurdity. But no matter for his follies ; you must secure him. It will be an excellent match for you. Your fortune is very small, and Court pensions very narrow. Reflect on this, and forget not the delights of an independent rank and great riches."

"Really, Madam," answered Caroline, with an air of indifference, "he has so much folly, I shall scarcely be able to endure him."

During the night the disdainful beauty made deeper reflections. All that had

appeared so desirable to her mother, was no less desirable in her estimation; and the folly of the Baron's systems was now diminished to a small speck, that scarcely dimmed the splendour of his rank and wealth.

On the following day, when the Baron's visit was expected, Caroline appeared dressed with the greatest elegance and attention. Her delighted mother could not forbear exclaiming, as she advanced towards her—

“Admirable, charming creature! What an air! what grace! what movements!—How happy you make me, my Caroline, by thus adopting my views for your welfare!—Come, let me embrace you, my child, for this docility, and because you are so beautiful!”

The overflowings of a mother's vanity will generally find pardon; but it will not
be

be so easy to excuse Madame de Limberg for the apostrophe that followed her homage to her daughter's charms, addressed to a gentle and timid being, who had many claims to her protection. After having sanctioned the elegance of Caroline's adjustments with the warmest praise, she turned to her niece, the modest and humble Emily.

"You might learn, Mademoiselle, to imitate your cousin's style of dressing; your's is always of a mean and ignoble taste."

"My dear aunt, I do not possess such a wardrobe as my cousin's."

"What effrontery! Doubtless you think I ought to despoil my daughter of her ornaments, to decorate you."

"Indeed, Madam," replied the unassuming girl, in a tone the most conciliating, "I

do not envy my cousin ; I am perfectly content with what I have."

"And what have you, Mademoiselle, more than you have received at my hands ? —Did you bring any thing into my house but your misery ?"

"Alas, no !" replied the insulted Emily, as a tear escaped her. "My unfortunate father——"

"If your father, Mademoiselle, had not foolishly squandered his wealth with such profusion, on people who knew how to avail themselves of his weakness, by a well-wrought story of their distresses, he had not been so unfortunate, nor had you been cast a useless burthen upon me."

"Ah, Madam ! my father was so good ! How I loved him !"

"Oh yes ! you loved him, who squandered your all, and left you to beggary ;
but

but I, who have fostered you with the care of a mother, am not honoured with any portion of your duty and affection."

"Dearest Madam, I beseech——"

"Ah, my God! No whining, pray! We understand all that grimace perfectly!"

"But, aunt, suffer me to say one word for my father. He did not merit his misfortunes; it was that fire! the enemy——"

"Enough! enough! I am weary of these eternal complaints. You may retire, Mademoiselle, to your apartment."

"Well, my dear Caroline," said Madame de Limberg to her daughter, as soon as the weeping Emily had withdrawn, "I hope you have considered the advantages you will derive from a union with the Baron, and are prepared to use every means to secure your conquest."

Caroline smiled with an air of complacence; and throwing herself into a studied, but apparently negligent and graceful attitude, her air and mien seemed to express that she yielded herself to the enterprise, and did not despair of succeeding.

Early in the afternoon, the Baron presented himself at Madame de Limberg's, and was very courteously received by both ladies. The person of Mademoiselle de Limberg appeared to him charming; yet he could not forbear remarking to himself that her style of dress was more studied, and less modest than suited his taste: but the oftener he looked at her face, the more he was inclined to excuse this little error. She was precisely in the fashion; and when, in conformity with fashion, even ugliness went uncovered, it would have been unnatural for

for a young and beautiful woman to assume another costume.

After the trifling subjects of the news of the Court, &c. had been sufficiently discussed, Madame de Limberg turned to her daughter, and said—

“Caroline, you must entreat the Baron will favour you with a relation of his system, upon which we conversed last night. It is no less curious than interesting, and must afford you great pleasure.”

The Baron did not require much solicitation; and Caroline listened with perfect complaisance, exclaiming now and then rather adroitly—

“Indeed!—Admirable!—Certainly!”

But Madame de Limberg, with superior address, made little objections, suggested doubts, and demanded still more accurate details. She learned, with infinite pleasure,
that

that a profusion of light hair was a distinguishing mark of a Celtic origin.

“Then I need not doubt,” said she, “that my daughter is a Celt; for there can scarcely be a finer head of hair than her’s.”

De Fleming corroborated her remark with a gesture of admiration. He now proceeded with his descriptions, casting, from time to time, animated glances upon Caroline, or looking down with an embarrassed air, according as any of her features approached to, or differed from, the Celtic perfection.

He was greatly chagrined, for example, when he perceived a nose turned up at the point, and pouting lips. This was a disappointment that completely disconcerted him. His physiognomy underwent a total change. Madame de Limberg perceived it, and, after a moment’s hesitation, demanded
the

the cause of his embarrassment and sudden silence.

“What is the matter, my dear Baron?” said she. “I am ready to think you do not find in my daughter those traits you love to recognise.”

“Ah, Madam!” he answered, with a perplexed air and hesitating voice, “I know not how to express myself.”

Caroline, unable to resist laughing at the confusion of the Baron, displayed her teeth, which she had hitherto been on her guard to conceal as much as possible. Struck with their colour, he exclaimed, in the sincerity of his soul—

“Ah, Mademoiselle! your teeth are as admirable as your hair!”

“Madame de Limberg and her daughter looked at each other in doubt as to what this unexpected compliment might imply; for,

for, in fact, her teeth were decidedly ugly. But Fleming, perceiving their astonishment, hastened to explain himself further.

“Yes,” said he, “very white teeth belong to the animal character, the lowest species among the humankind. I blush at the whiteness of my own; but I leave them entirely to nature, and should rejoice to see them become yellow.”

“I believe you are in the right, Baron,” said Madame de Limberg. “I have in my house a niece, whose teeth are as white as alabaster. I used to envy them for Caroline; and yet indeed the child is little more than an indocile kind of animal. But one has the habit of considering white teeth as a beauty.”

“Good God! Madam, what an obvious error! The Moors and the Negroes all have teeth of the same whiteness and consistency

as those of carnivorous animals. Nevertheless, without any application to Mademoiselle, your niece——”

“Oh! I am convinced, Baron, your opinion is well founded. She precisely justifies your remark;—her’s is indeed a body without a soul.”

The conversation on these favourite topics of the Baron’s, was prolonged during the whole of the evening by Madame de Limberg’s well-timed observations; and Caroline, excited, and sustained by frequent signs from her mother, applauded every thing judiciously enough: and having fixed the attention of the Baron by her personal charms, she gained his confidence by her flattery of his domineering foible. He found her fascinating and amiable in the extreme. They separated enchanted with each other,
and

and promising to renew their intercourse with the very earliest opportunity.

Scarcely a day now passed in which the Baron did not make a visit to Madame de Limberg. His attentions to Caroline took a character of tenderness blended with admiration. The favourable impression she had at first made upon him, increased at every succeeding interview, nor did she appear to seek to disguise the pleasure she received in his society; and seldom did he bid her adieu, without being furnished by her with some pretext for a speedy return.

After a month of assiduities, which seemed to confirm him her slave, Caroline could no longer forbear to try the extent of her power over the heart of the Baron. She indulged her most extravagant fantasies;

was

was by turns whimsical, coy, coquettish, and tyrannical. But she was handsome in all her variations ; and saw, with triumph and delight, that her lover endured every change with patience, and employed his most winning attentions to soften the rigour of her contradictions.

Proud of her conquest, and anxious to bring the Baron avowedly to her feet, she next affected the most delicate languors of sensibility—a feebleness of constitution, and that perfect helplessness so captivating in a fine woman. Sometimes extended upon a sofa, she was tormented with a head-ach so intense, that light and sound were scarcely to be endured. At others, her nerves were so disordered, she could with difficulty preserve herself from fainting. The good Baron sympathized in all her sufferings, spoke in a whisper, moved without noise, would

would kneel, unwearied, by her side, to present salts and perfumes, or entreat to be allowed to press her agonized temples with his hands.

On these occasions the lady's dishabille was most becomingly negligent, her attitudes graceful; and more than once the Baron expressed his compassion in words of such tender import, that Madame de Limberg's prudence could scarcely repress the tokens of her exultation.

"He is conquered!" she exclaimed to herself. "It is time to display my triumph. Yes, he will speedily declare himself!—My daughter is on the point of becoming Baroness de Fleming, and all my friends must know it.—What envy we shall excite!—Caroline shall shew her captive."

CHAP. V.

TO give all possible *éclat* to her daughter's conquest, Madame de Limberg invited the Baron de Fleming to dinner, together with a numerous party of her acquaintance. Caroline was dressed on this occasion with more than usual art and taste. She attracted general notice, and every eye seemed to compliment her beauty. This universal homage increased her animation; she was doubly piquant and attractive, and never had

had the Baron displayed more admiration. She exacted of him a number of little services with the tone of an established intimacy between them. He obeyed with promptitude and deference, while her ease and nonchalance announced the security of her dominion.

In passing to the dining-room, she carelessly took his arm. Each of the guests had taken his place, except De Fleming, who stood next to the beautiful Caroline, when the door opened, and the modest Emily, making a respectful reverence, which no one returned but the Baron, entered the room. She was dressed in a coarse stuff, made in the most humble form; but it could not disguise her fine figure. Her fair hair was not the less beautiful for hanging negligently on her shoulders. A plain handkerchief covered her neck; but the little that

was

was seen of her skin, displayed the most delicate whiteness. Her beautiful eyes, cast down from timidity and modesty, were expressive of a melancholy so enchanting, that the Baron could not regard her without the deepest emotion.

As she approached a vacant chair at the bottom of the table, an aged officer, seated near the top, offered his seat ; but Madame de Limberg, without waiting to see if she would accept it, said to her in a haughty tone—

“ Have you forgot yourself, Emily ?—
You know your place.”

The gentle Emily modestly took the seat intended for her. On her countenance there did not appear the least mark of anger or impatience ; only for a moment a slight blush spread over her visage, and was as
instantly

instantly succeeded by the natural paleness of her complexion.

Although the Baron had heard mention sometimes made of Madame de Limberg's niece, who was never seen but at the dinner table, the manner in which she was spoken of, had not excited in him any desire to know her; but the prejudice he had conceived, now increased his astonishment at finding her so beautiful. It must be acknowledged that Emily was the very reality of his chimera. She was a perfect Celt; and the care that had been taken to conceal her beauty, only served to heighten her charms, and to render their effect more irresistible. She received no advantage from art; her beauty owed nothing to its aid.

The Baron frequently stole a glance at Emily. Caroline was very handsome; he
had

had thought her so, and still continued to acknowledge it : but she wanted that charm which irresistibly drew his attention towards Emily. He heard the conversation of his beautiful neighbour with absence of mind, and inconsistently answered the railleries she addressed to him. Caroline thought little of his strange manner ; she attached too great a value to the arts of the toilet, to suppose she could be eclipsed by a poor girl in the homeliest dress.

De Fleming continued to turn his eyes toward the bottom of the table, and sometimes encountered those of Emily. There was in her look something anxious and supplicating, the motive of which he did not understand, but in which he felt the most lively interest.

It was not known to him that Madame de Limberg constantly spoke of him in her

family as the future husband of Caroline, and had taken frequent occasion to counsel Emily to cultivate and deserve his goodwill and protection; in doing which she had excited Emily's fears of meeting with a haughty tyrant in the Baron, and the look, which he could not comprehend, was no other than that of an unfortunate dependant silently and almost unconsciously imploring his commiseration.

During dinner Madame de Limberg insidiously accused Emily of a thousand faults, and ridiculed her carriage and timidity, which she called awkwardness. The old officer, who had invited Emily to take his place, feeling all the coarseness of this persecution, and charmed with the patient and amiable temper of the poor girl, resolved to give her as much as possible of his countenance and support. He led the conversation

conversation to the subject of the preceding war, cited eminent instances of service of M. D'Altenberg, her father; spoke in animated terms of his courage and generosity, observing that he had gained no less honour by the use of his purse than his sword, dying, as he did, in an honourable poverty, occasioned by his liberality to his troops, and every object in distress. He looked at Emily as much as to say that he had made one movement in her favour. A sudden glow of her countenance expressed her gratitude.

He turned to Madame de Limberg, expecting that he had imposed silence on her; but he saw in her manner reason to fear that he had only inflamed her ill-humour. Changing, therefore, the conversation, he thought to gain a little upon her, by adroitly reminding her of her youth, her

charms, and conquests, which produced so good an effect, that, sending round the table at that moment a particular sort of fine wine, she filled half a glass, ordering it to be handed to Emily with a most condescending air. The poor girl was so touched by this unusual mark of kindness, that in tasting the wine, she suffered a tear to fall into the glass. Soon after, according to her usual custom, she rose, and retired from table before the company had left their places.

M. de Bruce, the old Colonel who had interested himself so much in behalf of Emily, removed to the seat she had just quitted, and drank a little wine which had remained at the bottom of her glass. The Baron, who had observed him with a look half expressive of envy, said—

“Sir,

"Sir, you have tasted the best wine at table."

"You saw then," replied the Colonel, "that which made it so precious?"

"What does all this mean?" cried Caroline.

"You know, Madam," answered the Colonel, "that Cleopatra dissolved pearls in her drink :—in this glass was a pearl of greater price than all the east can produce. —Ah! how happy will that young man be——" Suddenly stopping, he turned to the Baron, and said—"Since we have both been touched by the same instance of sensibility, let us drink together to the same health."

As he spoke, he filled two glasses, offering one to De Fleming.

"I never drink wine," said the Baron, with a manner which made it impossible

not to forgive the singularity. He felt a secret partiality in behalf of this old officer, from that quickness of feeling he recently observed in him; although, at the first sight, he had, in regarding him according to his system, encountered some of those marks which by no means belonged to his favoured class. On the other hand, M. de Bruce, who had heard of the singularity of the Baron's character, could not forbear reflecting on the charm of a feeling heart, since even eccentricity of opinion could not suppress its emotions.

In fact, De Fleming was extremely moved. The Colonel's exclamation—"How happy will that young man be!" had reached his heart. Retiring to a window, he involuntarily repeated—

"Ah, how happy!" and instantly fell into a reverie. "What," said he, reasoning with

with himself, "is the value of the most perfect form of the noblest of the species, since a man whom I must class among a very inferior species, feels as swiftly as I do, the most refined charm of virtue. Caroline is beautiful, and all the world has known and felt that; yet little is she to be compared with the divine Emily. But how has this old foldier, who certainly has not that delicacy of organ which belongs to a Celt—how has he been able to discern the greater excellence, hid as it was beneath the coarsest guise?"

Suddenly quitting the window, and joining the Colonel, occupied entirely by his system, he began to sound him as to the principles on which he had discovered Emily's merit.

"In truth, my dear Baron," replied the Colonel, "Emily pleases me, because she is

handsome ; and interests me, because she is unfortunate."

Unable to draw any other account from the old officer, De Fleming, after turning the matter awhile in his thoughts, concluded that in the individuals of the subordinate classes there must exist an inherent sense, an unconscious impulse, which at the sight of a Celt, was compelled to cry out—

"This being is superior to me, and I must bow down before it, as the timid dog crouches before the generous lion."

He was tempted for a moment to suppose that the sense of smell might contribute to this discernment ; but this reasoning he corrected on the conviction that the exhalations of a Celt must be too delicate and subtle for the gross sense of one of the Sclavi. He imagined Emily to be
surrounded

surrounded with an atmosphere more ethereal than is the air of the upper regions. From these reflections his mind returned to the mingled feeling of admiration and compassion excited in him by the appearance of Emily.

“Could we not,” said he to the Colonel, “contrive to lessen the sufferings of this interesting girl?—Cruel is the yoke she endures!—Happy would he be who could free her from it!”

“Happy indeed!” said M. de Bruce; “and if I had the means—if I were not the father of six children——”

The Baron had heard enough. The Colonel’s poverty prevented him from giving an asylum to the unfortunate orphan. He seized instantly on this hint, and engaged to pay the Colonel three hundred crowns annually for Emily’s board. The Colonel

said this was too much by a third; but they both began to concert the means of obtaining the consent of all the parties interested in this arrangement.

The Colonel undertook to see Emily immediately, the first thing being to consult with her. He found Emily alone, at work on some millinery for her cousin. She was a little alarmed at this visit. Unaccustomed to receive attention from any one, she concluded he brought her ill news. A friendly heart, however, has something which cannot be long mistaken. M. de Bruce opened his project to her.

“ You have some knowledge, I believe, Mademoiselle, of my eldest daughter. With her I hope you may find some of those enjoyments of which here you are deprived.”

Her work fell from her hands. She raised her fine eyes to heaven with equal surprise and
and

and joy. Tears rolled down her cheeks. She took the Colonel's hand between her's, and pressed it to her lips with a sudden emotion which he had not time to oppose.

In a moment, however, every trace of joy disappeared from her countenance. She quitted the Colonel's hand, and said, with an expression that greatly affected the old officer—

“Alas, Sir! your kind intentions are fruitless!”

He entreated to know the obstacle. For awhile she was silent, and a shade of the deepest inquietude passed over her countenance.

“You are very good, Sir,” at length she said, “to interest yourself in my fate; but indeed, Sir, I am not permitted to accept of your offer. I must not be ungrateful. My aunt treats me severely, but I owe my

support to her ; and why should I forfeit the satisfaction of knowing that I endeavour to repay her with my services ?—and you, Sir, have a family——”

“ And you may add, that I am a poor devil ; but, my child, you do not know that you have four hundred crowns annual rent ?”

At these unexpected tidings, Emily's embarrassment was far from being removed ; and learning that De Fleming proposed to grant her an annuity to this amount, she exclaimed—

“ And must I then owe even this good fortune to my aunt ?—Ah, Sir ! you cannot imagine how hard it is to be grateful to one who treats you with unkindness !”

The Colonel explained how far she was from owing any obligation to her aunt for this turn in her fortunes ; and at length
his

his affectionate advice brought her to consent to the proposed arrangement, provided it was not opposed by Madame de Limberg.

Early the next morning, the Colonel waited upon that lady with the proposition, which she was pleased to call singular, expressing surprise as to his motives, and demanding time to consider of her answer.

It would not have been disagreeable to Madame de Limberg to be freed from the company of a niece, towards whom she felt something like aversion, and whose beauty might be a dangerous rival to her daughter. She had often reasoned on the fear of that ; but her pride had as often rejected the idea, and the kind of life she compelled Emily to lead, seemed to give her sufficient security. She derived also some honour from the protection she gave the unfortunate orphan, which she was unwilling to lose. After a
few

few days, therefore, she informed M. de Bruce, that she could not suffer her niece to quit her protection. The Colonel and De Fleming were inexpressibly vexed and disconcerted by this answer.

CHAP. VI.

ONE day at Madame de Limberg's, when there was a large company, the Baron refused to sit down to the card-table, even after he was repeatedly invited by Caroline. Although his refusal was accompanied with that dignity of manners which arises from a consciousness of superior motives, the honest Colonel thought there was something comic enough in it, and joined a party at *ombre* without scruple or remorse.

De

De Fleming, weary of his situation, thought naturally enough of Emily. Although he judged her incapable of taking part in the frivolous amusements of society, he could not forbear secretly exclaiming—

“Noble and excellent girl! superior to all around thee! what are the innocent pleasures which sometimes dry thy tears!”

The idea touched his heart; and to relieve himself from his thoughts, which became impatient, he left the room with the design to go to the library. Passing along a gallery which led to it, he heard a female voice singing in an artless strain; but the voice was one of the sweetest he had ever heard, and seemed to be wholly governed by melancholy. He approached the room whence it proceeded; and the door being partly open, he saw Emily, who was singing, with her eyes fixed on her work. He
regarded

regarded her for some time with silent admiration ; but at length, suddenly hurried away with an impetuous feeling, he presented himself to her, and passionately said—

“ Emily, the most admirable of human creatures, in vain do I labour to conceal the sentiments with which you have inspired me !—And why should they be concealed ?—they are as pure as your own angelic mind !—It is my happiness to have a common origin with you ; and the first moment that I saw you, I felt that there existed between our souls a union, more close, more powerful than that of blood.”

He took her hand, which he pressed ardently between his ; and so greatly was he agitated, that his manner alarmed the innocent Emily. She was willing enough that the future husband of her cousin should
conceive

conceive a friendship for her, and, far from repelling that idea, she gave encouragement to it; but the Baron's language, his agitation, and the fire of his eyes excited not only inquietude, but even terror. Yet she so far governed herself, as to say with some tranquillity—

“The Colonel has informed me of your goodness, my Lord.”

“Goodness!” replied the Baron; “my intention does not deserve that word.—Say rather, my sense of justice. It would have been my duty to soften the rigour of your fortune, had I not found in you those features which reveal your illustrious origin.”

He threw himself on his knees, holding her hands, and appeared rather to be rendering the homage of devout admiration
than

than of love, when at that very instant Madame de Limberg entered the room.

The feelings of the timid Emily may be easily imagined. Madame de Limberg cast upon the poor girl a look of the utmost fury; then turning to the Baron, she said, in a tone which affected to be only half angry—

“When you prefer, my Lord, the pleasures of a *tête-à-tête* to those of society, you ought to be more prudent in your choice of a partner. But, no doubt, you will now return with me to the drawing-room?”

He was silent, and suffered himself to be conducted back to the company, Madame de Limberg saying—

“Here is a poor creature, Caroline, whom I bring back to you, taking pity on him, at finding the horrible melancholy into which he had fallen in his absence from you.”

She

She hoped that her daughter's ascendancy would soon retrieve him from a temporary wandering. Madame de Limberg returned without delay to Emily, who was seized with a universal trembling at seeing her.

"Audacious wretch!" cried she, "you can court the attention of men, while we think you are employed in the duties of your situation!—But now that I know your artifices, I shall also know how to disconcert them."

Emily, for the first time in her life, found her face covered with the glow of anger, and answered—

"Although I have under my eyes the daily example of the labour which is taken to attract the attentions of men, I have the happiness not to desire them."

"Not to desire them!—Then doubtless
they

they were voluntarily offered to you ! Very well ; let us hear what was said to you ?”

“The Baron said to me, Madam, that if ever he left an orphan daughter, he would not bequeath her to the care of a sister.”

How could the gentle Emily find the courage to answer with so much bitterness ? Madame de Limberg was not less astonished at her words, than she herself was the moment she had uttered them. Her aunt recovered from her surprise, while Emily was reproaching herself for her hasty expression ; and giving her a box on the ear, said—

“Take that for my answer !”

She then poured forth a torrent of abuse on the poor Emily, who patiently supported the punishment, feeling that, for this time at least, she had justly deserved it.

After the company had departed, Madame de Limberg kept the Baron to supper. It was

was important to her to sound his intentions ; and, after various other subjects, she introduced the name of Emily with apparent carelessness, of whom she affected to speak with the most perfect disdain. De Fleming expressed a veneration for her character.

“ You must have perceived, my Lord, that she has scarcely a word to say for herself.”

“ Indeed, Madam, her silence to me is more expressive than the richest eloquence ! — Ah, how interesting are her tears !” he added with great simplicity.

“ He is a fool !” said Madame de Limberg to Caroline, after his departure. “ He cannot distinguish your superiority. But we must leave it to time to second our views. Meanwhile Emily shall no longer appear when he is present.”

The

The Baron continued his visits at Madame de Limberg's, in the hope of meeting Emily. He no longer saw her; she was shut out from all company.

Meanwhile Madame de Limberg congratulated herself on having removed charms that were likely to be so dangerous, from the Baron's sight. She now practised every art to exhibit her daughter to the Baron in every scene that could set her off to advantage; and Caroline employed alternately a series of blandishments and caprices. Art and an appearance of simplicity, in their turn, called to her aid whatever could interest or please; but it was too late. De Fleming, on perceiving the real sentiments with which he had been inspired by the presence of Emily, began also to comprehend the views Madame de Limberg and her daughter had formed upon him, at the first

first aspect of which he was extremely mortified.

“What !” said he, “have I been on the point of blindly engaging myself in the most solemn contract ?—and while I merely thought of passing my time agreeably here, an artful and base project was formed against my liberty and happiness !—Alas ! to what ills does the possession of fortune expose those, who are said to be blessed in being master of it !”

In this temper he saw more perfectly the object of a thousand artifices, which before appeared to him accidental circumstances, although he had at the time noticed them as singular. He called to mind, for instance, the mortification of Caroline one day, when her mother observed the smallness of her foot ; and when he had said that he preferred one of a middling size, which he thought
more

more suitable to her height. He also remembered another scene; when praising Emily's modest garb, Madame de Limberg peevishly said—

“My dear Baron, do not you wish to see women packed up like a bale of goods?”

“No, Madam,” he replied, “but I acknowledge that the modest dress of Emily is more to my taste than the nakedness which others admire.”

“Nakedness, Sir! However, it is the newest mode, and so general, that a woman of fashion cannot appear otherwise.”

“I do not deny that, Madam; but I have no doubt that this immodest fashion was invented by some frontless woman—some one of the vulgar Sclavi. To such, however, may be left this livery of licentiousness. How has it been possible that modest

women could adopt the exterior signs of impudence !”

Recalling to his mind this conversation, he remembered also that the next day Caroline was enveloped by her dress in a manner to be almost faint with heat, and that all visitors were excluded for the day, to shun the ridicule of a masquerade, destined solely to produce an effect upon him.

These reflections led him to conclusions that he thought infallible as to their designs, and were followed by a firm resolution to give no further aid to their illusion, that they might no longer nourish a vain hope.

CHAP. VII.

WHILE the Baron proposed thenceforth to act with such frankness that they could no longer be deceived as to his intentions, a person, not yet introduced on the scene, had taken his interests with Emily under her protection, and, unknown to him, laboured in his cause. This was the waiting-woman of Madame de Limberg. Lisbe was the sole confidant of Emily's secrets. Having learned from her the

F 2

proposition

proposition made for her deliverance, and reflecting on a circumstance singular enough, concluded that a secret attachment of the Baron could be the sole cause of a generosity which appeared otherwise to be extravagant.

“There is but one thing,” she said, “that can explain this, and that is love.”

Such a discovery is always matter of joy to a chambermaid. Lisbe saw an opportunity to exercise her talents, and regaled herself with the contemplation of an intrigue. Besides, she loved Emily; and it would be delightful, she thought, to prosecute a scheme for her advantage. In a word, she preferred Emily's interests to those of her mistress, and all these reasons concurred to carry her with more zeal to the forwarding of a mysterious intercourse.

She made her first essay on Emily ; but here she was so ill received, that she saw she must change her battery ; and she resolved to address herself to the Baron. She secretly conveyed to him a billet, in which she confirmed all that he had known and suspected, inviting him, in the name of generosity, to deliver this oppressed beauty from her chains, revealing the means that might favour the enterprize. She described to him the walk which she and Emily constantly frequented whenever Madame de Limberg was absent, requesting him to meet them there, as if by accident, and to be careful to remove from Emily all suspicion of any concert between them, which she knew would never be pardoned by the lovely orphan.

The billet was read by the Baron with the greatest emotion.

“Generous



“Generous Emily!” he exclaimed, “you conceal your sufferings from me—from me who have the power of relieving them!—Courage and delicacy equally exist in your exalted mind!”

He entered the walk precisely at the hour mentioned. Emily trembled with surprise and confusion, and reluctantly took the arm which he persisted in offering to her. After a turn or two, Emily timidly said to him—

“I beseech you, Sir, to leave us. My aunt is ignorant of our meeting; and I cannot permit any thing which must be concealed from her.”

“Since my admiration of your pure heart,” cried the Baron, “exact obedience to your will, and since I must not see you, must not converse with you, having no wish
but

but to render you some service, may I venture to write to you?"

"Neither dare I avow that to my aunt. Ah, Sir! leave it to time to soften what you are so good as to pity in my fate!"

"Far be so poor a thought from me!" said he vehemently, and taking her hand. "Be it my happiness to serve you, lovely Emily! Be it my bliss to deliver you from oppression!"

"Nonsense!" cried Lisbe, seeing that Emily was retiring; "determine upon some plan."

De Fleming remained silent, hesitating between his delicate sense of Emily's rectitude, and his generosity and love.

"Lisbe," said Emily, "I must return."

"Well, Madam, since it is so, if I lose my place for it, I'll do this for you in spite of yourself. I'll come back to this spot in

half an hour, and here you must stay till I come back."

She disappeared that instant, which threw Emily into the greatest astonishment and confusion.

While she hesitated what to do, the Baron availed himself of the opportunity, and besought her to accept of the asylum he had proposed. He urged that she might be permitted thus to withdraw herself from her aunt's tyranny. He described the tranquil, happy, and useful life she might pass with the Colonel's family; and speaking of the veteran's daughters, after boasting of their gentleness and modesty, he concluded the sketch of their characters in these words—

"They are fair complexioned, and of a generous nature. You must perceive that such a society only is worthy of you. As to the father, I acknowledge with sorrow that
he

he is unfortunate in having the physiognomy of the Sclavi; but he is an exception from that degraded class, for his heart is noble and compassionate."

Emily did not understand a word of this language, and obliged the Baron to explain it more than once. He readily yielded to the pleasure of talking to her on his favourite theme, which he undertook to explain. This was, however, fruitless. Emily, whose mind was distracted by an alarmed delicacy and a thousand fears, did not comprehend a word of his reasoning; but she did not the less feel the delight, so new to her, of finding a protector, a friend; and her heart, subdued by gratitude, not the less indulgent. The goodness, the simplicity, and beneficence which she saw in the Baron's character, through many singularities, which she could not conceal from

herself, banished all idea of any thing ridiculous in his notions. It must be acknowledged also that the new sentiment by which De Fleming was agitated, spread over his conversation the warm colouring of nature and feeling, from which he was generally too remote.

When he had imagined that he was enamoured of Agnes or Maria, it was nothing more than the play of a vivid imagination, in which his vanity was the principal actor. At present all his feelings were overwhelmed—his heart alone was interested and engaged; he permitted himself gently to be drawn to the love of an amiable object, and to the exquisite desire of forming her happiness. He yielded to the charms of confidence; and in this sweet manner passed two hours, which appeared to him so many minutes.

Emily,

Emily, who measured the time as much by sensations of inquietude as of pleasure, had calculated more justly ; and when Lisbe returned, reproached her with having been so long absent. The skilful waiting-woman, regardless of that reproof, insisted upon fixing the time of a second meeting, which Emily resisted with firmness.

"I cannot consent," she said, with the greatest gentleness possible, but in a manner so steady, that neither the instances of De Fleming, nor the successive raillery and prayers of Lisbe could alter her resolution.

The Baron quitted her in the utmost dejection at not knowing when he should see her again ; although Lisbe whispered to him that she would find some means independent of Emily's consent.

When De Fleming had returned to his apartments, he reflected with surprise on the

sentiment which pervaded his mind. He was astonished at the content, the happiness, the calm which reigned over his soul; while the sweetest emotions deliciously agitated his heart without troubling his repose, and while he recollected the turbulent passions which had formerly tortured him, he almost reproached himself for the calmness of his passion for the adorable Emily.

The more he reflected, however, the more was he convinced that the tie by which he was bound to her, was not the less strong for its being the more gentle. All his faculties were now bent upon obtaining a few moments like those he had just passed; and though he despaired of seeing Emily at Madame de Limberg's, he resolved to continue his visits, to treat that lady with more respect, and even to flatter her, if by
that

that he could procure a chance of seeing her amiable niece.

The next day he paid a visit to Madame de Limberg; but he was surprised at the very equivocal air, and manner of reception, so different from what had been customary. Caroline, who was with her mother when he entered, retired the moment she saw him. Her eyes were inflamed, and swelled with weeping. It was evident that the conversation between the mother and daughter had been animated, and on no ordinary subject. He apologized, and was about to retire; but Madame de Limberg said to him—

“My dear Baron, no person on earth could have come more opportunely than you have at this moment. Caroline and I have been discussing a family uneasiness, which it is in your power, and your's alone
to

to remove, and we rely wholly on your friendship."

"You do me justice, Madam; but what is the subject?"

"Yesterday at Court, I observed a general murmur in the circle, of which we were the object. Every one whispered, and pointed at us. Groups were formed here of men, and there of the women, but more of the latter. I learned at length, from one of my intimate friends, that your situation with Caroline was the cause of all this gossiping. I am accused of having tolerated, and even authorized a degree of familiarity between you, with which I am reproached as a crime. But this is not the worst. I could endure what is merely personal to myself; but Caroline is also blamed, and it is said that her reputation has suffered from your intercourse. You see what our
misfortune

misfortune is. It is indeed insupportable. As to myself, I feel that my friendship and my esteem for you may have rendered me imprudent; but is it not terrible that for so excusable a fault, to see one's self the object of sarcasm and disdain in the first society?"

"To me, Madam, it would be a cause of the greatest grief to occasion you or your daughter the least uneasiness."

"That is what I said to Caroline, my dear Baron."

"When the cause ceases, Madam, the effect too will cease. I banish myself from your house; and the public will thenceforth judge of the innocence of our intentions."

"No, my Lord," said Madame de Limberg, with an assumed haughtiness, "it is too late to take that course. It is not thus that the honour of my daughter is to be repaired. The honour of my daughter is
stained

stained by your assiduities. Caroline is undone, if she is not your wife ; and I know, and have asserted, that you have too much honour to decline the only path which probity points out to you."

"My probity, Madam, does not reproach me, since the error was altogether involuntary on my part."

"Involuntary, my Lord ! Have you not paid the most assiduous court to Caroline ?—Have you not sought to impress her with the idea that you love her ?—Have you not, in fine, excited sentiments which form at once our wretchedness and our shame ?—I must confess, my Lord, I had so little question as to your real sentiments, that, to put an end to all this scandal, and screen my daughter from this unmerited disgrace, I openly declared that you were engaged to marry her."

"Marry

"Marry her, Madam!" cried the Baron, with a look of stupefaction; then recovering himself, he said—"No, Madam, never!"

At this moment the door opened, and Caroline appeared, with her eyes still inflamed with crying.

"Ah, De Fleming!" said she, "am I then to be publicly disgraced?"

Madame de Limberg had placed much confidence in this preconcerted appearance of her daughter. Her indignation was extreme at perceiving that the Baron remained perfectly calm; and having looked first at one, and then at the other, without uttering a word, he cast his eye round the room for his hat, evidently prepared to retire.

Caroline approached him in a suppliant manner, and took one hand, while Madame de Limberg pressed the other with an appearance of the greatest affection.

"My

“My dear Baron,” said the former, “can you abandon me to the persecution of malice?—Can you give up my name to dishonour?—For pity’s sake, do not deny that you have loved me; and, ah! do not so far dishonour yourself, as to permit levity and inconstancy to deny me justice!”

These few words were interrupted by sobs; and while she waited for an answer with apparent agony, a look of extreme compassion from the Baron promised her a happy issue to this scene.

“Ah! my dear Baron,” said Madame de Limberg, “reflect what your answer ought to be. Be just, be humane, be generous! Speak frankly, and with perfect honour. Ought not you to be the husband of my daughter, since you have injured her reputation.”

“As

As she said this, she threw her arms round his neck, and Caroline extended her arms as if ready to embrace him, if he had answered with the smallest appearance of yielding to their wishes; but the Baron remained silent and immoveable.

Having again repeated her entreaties, Madame de Limberg, suddenly changing her tone, cried out with fury—

“Thou art a wretch!—Away from my sight!” Then, seizing her daughter, she exclaimed with an apparent frenzy—
 “Come, my child!—better to receive thy death at the hands of thy mother, than to live dishonoured!”

“Ah! a thousand times do I prefer death!” cried Caroline in accents of despair.

Doubtless great had been the expectation of Madame de Limberg and her daughter
 from

from the rehearsal of this tragedy ; but De Fleming, who had understood very little of it, had remained cold and immoveable, intent chiefly on the means of making his retreat.

Suddenly Caroline again changed the scene, and humbling herself on her knees, took his hand, on which she shed a torrent of tears, beseeching him, by the most tender epithets, not to abandon her ; while the mother, with an air half supplicating and half authoritative, called for a reparation to their honour, which she protested, as a mother, she was sanctioned by heaven and earth to demand.

“ My Lord, what have you to object to my daughter ? ”

In truth, he did not offer a single objection, but he said not a word. He had the air of a man wrapped up in impenetrable silence

silence and insensibility. Perceiving that every artifice was useless, Madame de Limberg regarded him with a menacing air. She uttered the name of Emily with all the fury of madness, and hinted at the secret of her interview with the Baron on the preceding evening.

De Fleming, with all that *naïveté* which was his essential character, phlegmatic as he had been till that moment, instantly kindled at the touch of alarm. His vivid imagination saw Emily the victim of her implacable aunt. He therefore sought to appease her rage ; but this change was but too much calculated to inflame her passion. The anxiety and apprehension of the Baron were but new motives for her vengeance. She poured forth a torrent of menaces. Emily, the Colonel, and De Fleming himself were threatened with ruin.

The

The Baron in a moment assumed the occasional vigour of his character, and said with great dignity—

“Madam, I shall find a thousand means to succour Emily, and ten thousand to avenge the least of her wrongs.”

Having retired, Lisbe followed him, and found an opportunity to tell him that the preceding evening Madame de Limberg, having met with something vexatious while paying her visit at Court, had returned home at an early hour, and knowing that Emily usually walked at that time, had gone out to seek her, and had seen them together. This was the true cause of the recent scene. Caroline, to whom she communicated this, proposed instantly to go to the Baron and Emily, and reproach them with what she termed their baseness; but Madame de
Limberg

Limberg saw how great a triumph she would thus give to her rival.

When Emily returned to the house, she was interrogated by the mother and daughter, and dismissed with the most opprobrious language. Madame de Limberg then said to Caroline—

“This Baron is a mere fool, but he shall nevertheless be your husband!”

CHAP. VIII.

DE FLEMING had no sooner left Madame de Limberg's, than he repaired to his friend, the Colonel. The honest old soldier declared to him frankly that it was his duty openly to pronounce himself the protector of Emily, and that he had the right which every man has to protect an unfortunate woman.

This advice was very far from displeasing to the Baron. It was equally relished by
his

his courage, his generosity, and his love. Still he was greatly embarrassed. He did not expect the consent of Emily, of whose delicacy of feeling he had had the surest proof. M. de Bruce advised his effecting his purpose by a *coup-de-main*, since he had neglected to gain Emily's consent when Fortune had given him so admirable an opportunity.

While the old soldier and his friend were concerting the means of rescuing the beautiful prisoner, Madame de Limberg, excited by offended vanity, and thirsting for revenge, resolved first to undermine the Baron's character. She spread a report that she had been compelled to shut her doors upon him for the profligacy of his conduct. She declared that, while he sought her daughter in marriage, he had endeavoured to seduce and carry off her niece.

This calumny, first uttered with confidence, and afterwards artfully circulated, was eagerly received by the enemies De Fleming's imprudence had made; among whom were the Minister, the mistress of the Prince, and even the Sovereign himself, who had each personal motives of anger against him.

The Prince readily granted his name and sanction to Madame de Limberg's proceedings. It was openly declared that it was her duty to preserve her niece from the Baron. She was highly commended for having rejected his suit to her daughter; and it was loudly proclaimed that he was unworthy of marrying into any honourable and virtuous family.

Meantime the Colonel meditated on the means of giving liberty and happiness to Emily; and being impatient at all these intrigues,

intrigues, he concluded that nothing was left but to carry her off by stealth. He saw no difficulty but that of obtaining Emily's consent. Her timidity and sense of duty would be difficult to overcome. He employed Lisbe to carry her the proposition, and bring her answer.

Many days passed without intelligence from the waiting-woman. The Baron was consumed with anxiety. M. de Bruce burned with impatience and disdain. Soldiers seldom bear delays with patience.

"You shall go yourself, dear Baron," he cried. "You shall mount to the assault, and present yourself at midnight at Emily's window.—A word is sufficient; but that word is indispensable. In receiving it, give her the wedding-ring, and thenceforth all things are in their proper order. Who shall forbid your marrying an object worthy of

you and of your love?—I have sent a letter to Emily to prepare her for our enterprise. Act promptly, and the field is our's!"

Every arrangement was made to execute the Colonel's plan; but Madame de Limberg having surprised Emily at the very moment when she read the Colonel's note, snatched it from her hand, and preventing all intelligence from being sent out of the house, made preparations on her part to receive the Baron.

A little after midnight, the Baron, seeing at Emily's window the sign agreed upon, (a white handkerchief), fixed his ladder, and mounted to the window.—In a moment the window is opened, the ring is received from him, and De Fleming, beyond his expectation, is invited, in a low whisper, to enter the chamber.

Astonished

Astonished and delighted with this mark of Emily's confidence, he enters the room, and embracing the object of his love, expresses his gratitude in terms equally impassioned and delicate. While he is pouring forth these effusions of his heart in the midst of darkness, the doors of the chamber are thrown open, and he is instantly surrounded by a number of persons bearing lights; and he is discovered embracing Madame de Limberg instead of Emily!

The firmest nerves would have been shaken by such a scene. De Fleming was at first utterly disconcerted, and sought to retire from the peals of laughter and bitter raillery which pressed from all sides. It was in vain; he was enclosed, to whichever side he turned.

This excess of humiliation at length roused all his courage; and addressing

himself to Madame de Limberg, he said, with an air which imposed silence—

“Madam, I came here to obtain the consent of your niece to our marriage.—My views are honourable ; and it is not for me to blush at a scene equally extraordinary and disgraceful. Your brutal usage of the most perfect of Heaven’s creatures permits her to seek an honourable refuge from your obdurate tyranny !”

“Very well, my Lord ; we shall see,” said Madame de Limberg, “what is permitted to my niece. Meantime, your Lordship may retire.”

A passage now opened, and the Baron withdrew, pursued by the shouts and peals of laughter of Madame de Limberg’s friends.

The Baron could with difficulty recover from his surprise at this incident, or his mortification

mortification at the failure of his attempt. The next day he received an order from the Court, which forbade him to entertain any design whatever respecting any female under Madame de Limberg's protection, or to enter her house after the nocturnal attempt with which he had dishonoured it. The Colonel, to whom he went for advice in this embarrassing situation, was himself extremely disconcerted.

"If you had not so many enemies," he said, "nothing would be more easy than to triumph over Madame de Limberg. Frankness and integrity are naturally too strong for calumny and malice; but prejudice is armed against you in every quarter. You have paid little deference to mere rank and power, and have wounded the vanity and self-love of your adversaries.

“My apprehensions,” said De Fleming in a solemn tone, “from the machinations of my enemies, are so much the greater, because I well know that the race of the Sclavi are implacable.”

“Ah, my friend, beware!—Do you not accuse me, whom you respect I believe, of bearing the external signs of the class you despise!”

“It is true; and, notwithstanding the profound esteem which I have for your virtues, I would give much——”

“And I also,” said M. de Bruce with great good humour, “I would give a great deal, if my belly were of less rotundity, because it incommodes me; but in the meantime I hope a man may be honest with a large belly.”

“I do not deny that,” said De Fleming with his usual *naïveté*, “for you are one of
the

the instances ; but to appreciate your merit, you must be first known : and is it not more fortunate to announce, by the mere aspect and features, the nobility of one's origin ?— Reflect on the sudden impresson, never to be effaced, which Emily made on my heart when first I saw those features which bespeak her noble descent. It was not the mere effect of beauty ; it was those true and unalterable marks which expressed the presence of a Celt.”

“ Ah, my dear Baron ! with that air of innocence, of gentleness, and suffering, she would have equally interested you, had her eyes and hair been of the deepest die !”

“ No, my friend, I cannot believe that with any other features, however beautiful, Emily with all her sufferings could have made that kind of impresson upon me

when I first saw her enter Madame de Limberg's dining-room. No, this sudden and indescribable sentiment, which is felt at the first glance of the object, is produced by a superiority which commands respect, virtues which inspire confidence; and all this is the peculiar attribute of those only who are descended from the most pure and unmixed race."

This ascendant, according to De Fleming, was so powerful, that he considered it as the undefined and secret motive which forced the people of many savage nations to offer their wives and daughters to Europeans, acknowledging, by imperious necessity, their inevitable influence, and perhaps entertaining an obscure hope of ennobling their own race.

"Hold! hold!" cried the Colonel,
 "here your mistake is plain. In the case
 you

you suppose, there doubtless exists a real ascendant, but it is that of the strong over the weak. Have we not seen the Saxons happy to tolerate the condescension of their wives to the Cossacks, in whom they certainly acknowledged no other superiority than that of the greater force?—Your system, my friend, is absurd in itself, and would produce the most unhappy consequences, if it were generally received, and its principles made the rule of our conduct.”

“Perhaps,” said the Baron, reflecting a moment, “the consequences might not accord with our ideas of happiness, and therefore the system is not popular. But every opinion which is founded in truth, ought to be generally received.

“But while we are discussing this point, we forget Emily.”

“Emily!” cried the Baron, starting as from a sudden recollection, “ah! what can we do for that amiable Celt!—Dispose of my fortune, if you can alleviate her sufferings; and if the sacrifice of my happiness will ensure her’s, renounce, in my name, all my pretensions to her!—Let her but be released from the odious tyranny of her aunt; and I pledge my word to remove myself for ever from her presence. Be you her father, and be my fortune at your disposal, to promote her union with some one worthy of her!”

“How, my friend! Can you love so passionately, and renounce the object of your love?”

“Oh! with all my being would I renounce her!” exclaimed the Baron passionately. “It is not myself that I love—it is Emily; and her happiness is that which,
above

above all things, I desire ! Here do I pledge myself never more to see her !”

“Strange and inconsistent man !” cried the old veteran, pressing the Baron to his heart with the most lively affection. “Do you not feel that the noble temper and resolution of your mind is infinitely above all vain systems. But it is enough, my friend, to be capable of so great a sacrifice ; Emily shall be your’s in despite of all the aunts in the world, and all the obstacles they can throw in our way.”

Having said this, he took his leave of the Baron, to commence his labours to this effect. He repaired to Lisbe, and learned that Madame de Limberg treated her niece with increased violence, endeavouring to extort from her a promise never to marry the Baron ; and that, bearing all her aunt’s cruelty with firmness, the gentle Emily

refused

refused to enter into such an engagement, with a disdain that seemed utterly inexplicable to her cruel relations. He then hastened with this consoling news to his friend. Nothing could be more consonant to the feelings of De Fleming. He shed tears over the constancy of his noble Celt; but passing from the extreme of tenderness to that of fury against the tyrants of Emily, he would have taken some violent resolution, had not M. de Bruce interrupted him.

“Your anger is certainly just. Madame de Limberg is a devil, whose soul is incapable of pity. The negro mother, who sells her infant, presses it to her heart, and bathes it with her tears. Ah, my friend! believe me the savages of Kamschatka are more worthy than Celts like Madame de Limberg!”

“She!”

"She!—she is a monster midst her species!"

"Monster she is, I know; however, acknowledge that nothing is more deceitful than these signs and indications, whether of good or bad, on whose base you rest your opinions. But this is not the time for argument. Let us first see what can be done for Emily. I should be very reluctant to try the expedient of bribing some of Madame de Limberg's domestics to favour the evasion of Emily, though I do not pretend to affirm that one may not be justified in such a measure, when all other means have failed. Would to God I was at the head of my regiment! With what pleasure I should obey every tittle of such orders against this wicked woman, as have tortured my soul when issued against some innocent citizen of an unfortunate city under contribution.

contribution. I would deal with her by force of arms; and I promise you she should not soon forget the old Colonel of Dragoons. But courage, my friend!—I will try one other plan, and if that fails, then for the key of gold.”

CHAP. IX.

FROM the Baron de Fleming the good Colonel hastened to Court, and demanded an audience of the Prince. His services merited, and always obtained for him this privilege. He was immediately admitted.

“ I come,” said De Bruce, “ to implore the protection of your Highness for a friend of mine. It is the Baron de Fleming, whom I would recommend to the favour of my Sovereign.”

“ De

“ De Fleming !” exclaimed the Prince, in tones of anger and surprise. “ Surely, Colonel, you know not of whom you are speaking. De Fleming is a bad man, a daring libertine, a profligate seducer. What possible favour can I grant to him ?”

“ Justice, your Highness !—he needs only justice ; he wants no other favour. Deign to give me a patient hearing in his behalf. My Prince, if these grey hairs, and fifty years of honourable service for my country, entitle me to your confidence, I dare assure you that De Fleming is a man of the strictest honour and integrity, and who would rather sacrifice his life, than act unworthy of his character and his name. It must be acknowledged that he indulges in strange fantasies, and his systems are perhaps ridiculous enough ; but he is, notwithstanding, most humane, generous, and benevolent.

lent. He has attached himself to a niece of Madame de Limberg, a lovely and amiable girl, by whom he is beloved. Her aunt opposes their marriage without any just cause. In truth, your Highness, Madame de Limburg is unworthy of such a niece."

"My dear Colonel, how strangely you are misinformed! He has seduced Madame de Limberg's niece. Have you not heard of his being discovered in her chamber at midnight?"

"Pardon me, my Lord; it is I alone who can give the proper explanation of that affair—it was a project of my forming. In my profession, when we are not in a condition to attack the enemy face to face, we make forced marches, and endeavour to harass him in the rear: such are the military tactics. The Baron was denied access to his mistress by day; the enemy, Madame de Limberg,

Limberg, was securely entrenched, and I counselled De Fleming to scale the walls at night, to obtain from the imprisoned lady a decisive answer. He did so, but with intentions of such purity as are not often to be found in young men, who go on such expeditions at midnight. He was occupied only with the desire of effecting an honourable deliverance to a lovely and unfortunate girl, who suffers under a tyranny the most cruel and unjust. Surely this virtuous intent sanctifies the means. Ah, my Prince ! if you knew how amiable and interesting this poor child is in her misfortunes !”

The Prince was touched by the zeal of the Colonel, and listened with the utmost condescension to the details De Bruce now entered into, of the designs of Madame de Limberg, of the sufferings of Emily, and the honourable intentions of the Baron de Fleming ;

Fleming; he was equally affected by the misfortunes of Emily, and the generous proceedings of the two friends.

Amidst the grandeur, ostentation, and frivolity of a Court, the Prince yet preserved a feeling which flattery had not been able to quench, nor the levity of youth wholly to lead astray. He reflected a few moments upon the good Colonel's appeal.

"If," said he, in a lively tone "this is the case, my ear has been shamefully abused by other representations of this affair."

"Deign, I entreat your Highness, to rely on the veracity of an aged veteran, whose probity has ever kept equal pace with his courage. It is not in approaching the termination of an honourable career, that he will urge a falsehood to his Sovereign. But your Highness may easily convince yourself of my truth. Condescend to see the
young

young lady, interrogate her, and judge afterwards."

The Prince could not question the veracity of the Colonel ; and desirous to see the person he spoke so warmly of, he dispatched one of his gentlemen to request the presence of Madame de Limberg's niece at the Castle for a few minutes.

Madame de Limberg was greatly alarmed at this order. Emily prepared to obey, but looked at her aunt, waiting for her permission. Madame de Limberg saw the necessity of obeying the order, and signified her approbation, while she trembled with rage and apprehension.

While Madame de Limberg was the prey of her own fears and suspicions, Emily accompanied the messenger with extreme fear and emotion. She endeavoured to reason on this unexpected order of the Prince.

Could

Could it be De Fleming by whom this order was solicited, or was it some machination of her aunt?

As she alighted from her aunt's carriage, she saw M. de Bruce advancing to meet her. His manner and countenance soon restored her courage.

"My dear child," said he, as he gave her his hand, "suppress these tears; they are the last, I hope, that you will ever shed."

He conducted her to the audience, and said to the Prince, as he presented her—

"Here, my Sovereign, is the amiable and unfortunate girl, of whom I had the honour to speak to your Highness."

The Prince, observing that Emily was extremely agitated, said to her—

"Fear nothing, Madam; I am your friend."

She

She raised her eyes to the Prince, endeavouring to acquire sufficient calmness to express her gratitude ; but it was with extreme difficulty she could articulate—

“ Your Highness is too good. It is true—that I am—very unfortunate.”

The Prince was sensibly affected by the gentle, yet expressive manner in which these few words were pronounced ; and already convinced that Emily merited a happier fate, he seemed at once disposed to authorize the designs the Baron had proposed in her favour. He offered to Emily to retain her at the Castle, to screen her for the present from persecution. Her modesty was equally alarmed at a proposition of an asylum at the palace of a Prince who was yet in his youth, and at a sudden marriage, at which the Prince had hinted.

“ It

“ It is for my second father,” said she, taking the hand of M. de Bruce, “ to guide my steps. To him I wish to confide my future fate.”

The Prince in vain endeavoured to discover her sentiments respecting De Fleming; she spoke only of her gratitude.

This conversation continued for some time; and the amiable orphan inspired the Prince with all that interest which naturally flowed from her youth, beauty, virtues, and misfortunes. It was finally agreed that she should return to Madame de Limberg, taking with her a note, informing that lady of the protection granted her by his Highness. The Prince, as a mark of his favour, gave her a watch of great value, requesting her to accept it, in remembrance of the hour which he had the pleasure of passing with her.

Emily returned to her aunt's, resolving to make no use of the note the Prince had given her. Her heart was sufficiently relieved and satisfied in the consciousness of possessing so powerful a protector.

She was received at home with an unquiet and scrutinizing eye. Madame de Limberg sought to discover by her manner, and by every other indication, what had passed at the palace; but was yet too haughty directly to question one whom she had been accustomed to treat as an abject dependant.

The gentle Emily, whose heart was revived by the attention and kindness she had so recently experienced, now felt emotions of tenderness towards her aunt, which she expressed with her usual frankness. Madame de Limberg did not dare to reject these expressions of kindness, which she
therefore

therefore returned, though with the utmost constraint and dissimulation.

For more than an hour Madame de Limberg tortured herself in this manner. She would gladly have instantly decided what should thenceforth be her treatment of her niece, and what should be the air and conduct she should now assume with the public.

Although she did not precisely know what had passed at the palace, the watch presented by the Prince to Emily, was an evident token of her gracious reception, and his favour. She reflected on this with the utmost inquietude. Throughout the whole of her disjointed conversation with Emily, so great were her perturbation and irresolution, that more than once she detected herself in speaking with her accustomed insolence and disdain; and in the

midst of a rude sentence, would suddenly repress her feelings, lower her tone, change her expressions, and conclude her sentence with something that was meant to resemble kindness.

At length, incapable of any longer restraining her curiosity, she directly required of Emily to inform her of what had passed at the Castle, which the gentle Emily repeated with all the delicacy and humility of her temper.

“It is to the good old Colonel alone, Madam,” said she, in conclusion, “that I am indebted for the audience with which the Prince has honoured me, and the protection he has deigned to promise me.”

At the word *protection*, Madame de Limberg was absolutely frantic. She demanded the Prince’s note which Emily, in the sincerity of her recital, had mentioned,
but

but had no thought of producing. Madame de Limberg was torn with convulsions of passion while she read it. Not daring, as formerly, to make Emily the victim of her vengeance, every dependant in her house successively felt the weight of her anger.

The sudden change in Emily's fortune produced a very contrary effect on Caroline. After a moment's conference with her mother, she hastened to Emily, and congratulated her *dear* cousin, as she now called her, with apparent frankness and sincerity upon the splendour of her new prospects. The protestations of regard that she lavished on Emily, extremely excited her simple and unsuspecting heart; and, as a token of her love and gratitude, she offered to Caroline the watch she had received from the Prince, which was accepted with many professions of reluctance. Caroline, however, took it

with the most lively joy, much less for the sake of its value, than to rob Emily of this mark of the Prince's favour.

Madame de Limberg joined to her daughter's thanks a smile of approbation ; but it was so foreign to her heart, that it had almost the air of mockery. Her face, although naturally handsome, became instantly distorted whenever she attempted to assume an air of friendship towards Emily. Yet the gentle Emily, unable to detect the insincerity of these expressions, returned them with all the kindness, the affection, and the sensibility of her disposition.

While Madame de Limberg and Caroline painfully laboured to conform themselves to circumstances, M. de Bruce communicated his success to the Baron.

“ I should have been more satisfied,” said the old officer, “ if the Prince had granted

granted his protection more deliberately, and if he had yielded merely to the force of the reason that I had on my side ; but having condemned both you and her unheard, and on the faith of interested and vile representations, he suddenly becomes the open protector of the poor orphan, because she has fine eyes ; and concludes her to be innocent, because she is beautiful."

" Ah, my friend !" cried De Fleming, eagerly, " he judged by the surest signs, although perhaps little conscious of their real nature."

The Colonel smiled at his young friend's extravagance ; but without noticing it, continued thus—

" The Prince is an excellent young man, whose intentions are of the best kind ; but something more is necessary to form a good Prince. Levity has too much to do with

all this ; and protection and favour lightly granted, are often speedily consigned to oblivion. What we have to do then, is to seize the moment. We have gained a strong position, which enables us to carry the day. Emily's situation at her aunt's is very different from what it was. Madame de Limberg cannot now refuse you permission openly to solicit Emily's hand. My dear Baron, you must seize this instant of Emily's public favour, to make her your wife, before intrigues have time to create new obstacles."

In truth, nothing could be more prudent than the advice, and nothing better founded than the fears of M. de Bruce.

CHAP. X.

THE Prince was exceedingly struck with the charms of Emily; and as it was his custom to confide all the emotions of his soul to Madame de Fabrice, his mistress, the Colonel and Emily were no sooner withdrawn, than he flew to Madame de Fabrice's apartments, and made so brilliant an eulogium on the charms of the beautiful and interesting orphan, that his mistress was not perfectly at ease as to the extent of this new partiality,

partiality, and was far from being assured that she might not find a dangerous rival in Emily : however, the Prince thought himself actuated only by motives of pity and compassion. She therefore prudently endeavoured to weaken the force of this too vivid impression, and to throw shades over the picture so forcibly traced on the Prince's imagination.

“ Yes,” said she, with apparent impartiality, “ there is something extremely pleasing in that orphan, whom I have sometimes seen at Madame de Limberg's table; yet surely, my dear friend, you observed that her's is a beauty without expression. That extreme whiteness of skin has certainly nothing lively in it, and those large blue eyes have not a word to say for themselves.”

“ Ah,

“ Ah, pardon me, Madam ! they spoke to my heart words of such innocence, affliction, and gratitude, that they instantly won from me a promise of my most powerful protection. Madame de Limberg is one of your particular friends :—you must do me the favour to announce to her that I interest myself in the fortunes of her niece, and that from this time I have my eyes open on her conduct towards my *protégée*.”

“ His *protégée* !” said Madame de Fabrice to herself when the Prince had retired. The warmth and eagerness of the Prince’s partiality for Emily weighed heavily on her thoughts. She passed a restless night ; and at a very unusual hour the next morning, was at Madame de Limberg’s.

She found her friend in utter despair at these recent events.

“ You see,” said Madame de Limberg,

“that the Baron will be authorized openly, in my own house, and in my own presence, to demand this orphan as his wife. How cruel this triumph, how bitter the affront to my poor Caroline! I shall die of shame and vexation to be obliged to give my consent to their marriage! Ah, my best friend, advise me what to do! It is impossible that I can support the idea of Emily becoming the wife of De Fleming.”

“Do not suffer yourself to be thus agitated,” said Madame de Fabrice; “a little caution may bring all these affairs into a better train.”

Madame de Fabrice was not of a malevolent disposition; yet to gain a point, she would condescend now and then to use a little artifice. In this case she promised Madame de Limberg that she would find means to prevent the intended union, on condition

condition that Emily should be given into her hands. Of the prudence and necessity of this arrangement she was still more convinced, on her return to the palace, when the Prince pressed on her a thousand eager questions respecting his lovely *protégée*."

"Yes, my Lord," said Madame de Fabrice, "I have seen this little girl; and you must permit me to assure you she played her part to a miracle before your Highness. In fact, she is neither altogether as innocent or as unfortunate as she wishes you to believe; and Madame de Limberg is not without an excuse, if she has been a little severe with her. However, as your Highness has seen fit to take her under your protection, Madame de Limberg knows her duty, and will not oppose her will to your's. She submits to the marriage; but my regard for the honour of my Sovereign compels

compels me to solicit that you do not as yet grant your sanction to this union : it ought to be deferred. It is necessary, for the reputation of Madame de Limberg's family, that the scandalous story of the midnight visit should die away ; besides, your Highness will appear so inconsistent. One day an order is issued, forbidding the Baron de Fleming to approach the house of Madame de Limberg ; and on the morrow, almost a permission is granted him to marry the niece of that lady. Madame de Limberg, though she will not dare openly to resist your mandate, cannot but feel herself aggrieved. She will accuse your Highness of cruelty and injustice, and the whole capital will presently resound with exclamations of your instability. Already I have reason to think she has made but too much use of the billet your Highness somewhat inconsiderately

ately (pardon the expression of my zeal) gave in your own hand-writing to Mademoiselle Emily. Knowing how very unfavourable to the purity of your Highness's intentions might be the constructions of calumniators on this billet, I have prevailed on Madame de Limberg to deliver it up to me, and here I present it to your Highness."

"You were in the right," answered the Prince, looking with some little confusion on the letter he had written. "I really did not see the affair in this light. I was betrayed by a sudden impulse of generosity. Emily is a most seducing girl. But you, dear, amiable Fabrice, shall guide me; continue thus ever to watch over my glory and my true interests."

With a warm and benevolent heart, with an earnest wish to create the happiness and welfare

welfare of his people, the Prince was perpetually the dupe of his credulity. He relied implicitly on the probity and disinterestedness of those who surrounded him, and was firmly persuaded he had none but honest counsellors.

Madame de Fabrice, it was said by the Prince, and allowed by the courtiers, was a perfect model of sweetness, delicacy, and refinement; nay, more—Madame de Fabrice was called *virtuous*. Like the Duchesse de la Valiere, she was only to be subdued by love, disinterested love; but less humble than the beautiful mistress of Louis XIV. she demanded to be always *virtuous*. She founded her pretensions to this unusual distinction, upon the merit of her long resistance to the Prince's passion. She asserted that in yielding, she had preserved her dignity, as she was the bride of the Prince's choice;

choice ; and although the policy of Government might compel him to receive a Princess to his arms, she was still the legitimate wife. However erroneous this opinion, it was a favourite theme with Madame de Fabrice ; and those to whom she spoke of her virtue, readily adopted her creed. Unfortunately, De Fleming was not so complaisant ; terms that he had used in speaking of her foible, had been related to Madame de Fabrice, who gratified her own revenge, while she affected only to consult the wishes of Madame de Limberg.

“ Yes,” said Madame de Fabrice to herself, “ in serving my friend, I shall have the satisfaction to punish an insolent man, who has dared even to attack my reputation ; I shall also guard the honour of the Prince, and preserve his heart. But this innocent girl,” whispered the secret voice of
con-

conscience—"yes, truly, she is innocent and amiable, and surely she deserves a better fate than to be united to a fool."

And thus the Prince imagined himself to be advised, while in fact he was enslaved; so easy is it to deceive one's self, and commit the evil while seeking for the good.

Madame de Fabrice having prevailed on the Prince to suspend his intentions in favour of the Baron de Fleming, easily obtained from Madame de Limberg the care of Emily, whom, with the greatest secrecy, she immediately conducted to a villa she possessed without the gates of the city.

"Dispose of her as you wish," said Madame de Limberg, on delivering up her niece; "her fate is in your hands. Prevent her becoming the wife of De Fleming, and I will subscribe to any conditions you shall impose."

The

The heart of Madame de Fabrice had ever acknowledged in secret the captivating graces of the unfortunate Emily; and the touching air of melancholy resignation with which she now resigned herself to her new protectress, inspired Madame de Fabrice with feelings of compassion. She resolved to treat Emily with every mark of kindness, and to alleviate, as much as possible, her misfortunes, with the reserve of not permitting her to be her rival, or the wife of the Baron de Fleming.

With these intentions, Madame de Fabrice employed the most insinuating manners to win the confidence of Emily, who at first scarcely dared to breathe with freedom in the presence of her aunt's friend; but her courage insensibly revived—terror gave place to confidence, and sorrow to hope. Accustomed to shrink under the tyrannic commands,

commands, or harsh invectives of her aunt, her heart now dilated with pleasure before the attentive complaisance of Madame de Fabrice. She delivered herself, by little and little, to confidence in the assurances of her protectress, and the warmth of new-born friendship animated her grateful bosom.

Their first interview took place in a delicious garden, where she was received by Madame de Fabrice. A simple, but elegant dinner was served in an arbour covered with roses and jasmine. No other person appeared at table. The beauty of the garden, the exquisite perfume exhaled on every side, the serenity of the air, the melodious chant of the birds, and the irresistible attraction she felt towards her new friend, compelled Emily at length to exclaim—

“ This

“ This is happiness ! Ah, Madam ! what felicity would be mine, could I dwell for ever in this charming retreat with you ! How shall I again be able to endure the weight of my aunt’s cruelty, the insupportable yoke of her injustice ! ”

“ Your wish is granted, my charming friend,” said Madame de Fabrice, rising, and embracing her with enthusiasm ; for she was enchanted that Emily so completely seconded her views.

“ You shall not return again to Madame de Limberg—your aunt has delivered you to my care ; she has delegated to me all the extent of her authority : and will not my sweet Emily believe that I have only assumed it, to perfect her happiness ? Give me your affection, and with it your entire confidence. Rely on me. Speak with freedom and sincerity. Unveil your whole heart to me.

Be



Be my daughter, or my sister, my charming friend. In me you will find that tenderness which the ties of consanguinity have not procured you."

"Oh, how good you are!" replied Emily, with the liveliest emotion, and raising her fine eyes, suffused in tears of joy, to heaven. "Permit me to be your daughter, your grateful and obedient daughter. Deign to guide me with your counsels, and every thought of my heart shall be laid open to you."

"Agreed," said Madame de Fabrice, drying a tear that was ready to escape from her eyes. "Our ages indeed so nearly approach each other, that we shall still appear like sisters; yet, my charming friend, I adopt you from this moment my beloved, my cherished daughter, and I address you with the solicitude of a mother, anxious only

only for the welfare of her child. A marriage is talked of, the bare mention of which excites the anger of your aunt. De Fleming, it seems, has offered you his homages after the most unequivocal professions to Caroline, which may naturally enough prove a source of unextinguishable hatred to you from Madame de Limberg and her daughter. Do you love De Fleming, my dear child? Does your happiness depend on a union with him? Speak without reserve."

"I believe," said Emily, with perfect simplicity, yet blushing very much, "I believe that I do love him. Was not he the first to take pity on my destitute and unhappy condition, and to attempt my delivery from a cruel slavery? Ah, Madam! if you knew how hard a thing it is to have no person by whom you are beloved, or who cares for you, you would judge of the influence

influence of the Baron's conduct towards me. You are beloved by all the world; and till M. de Fleming and the Colonel deigned to cast their eyes on me, I was forgotten by the whole universe. Ah! it is difficult to comprehend how fervent is the gratitude of a deserted being for the smallest act of kindness or attention!" /

"The situation of your mind, my lovely daughter, is perfectly natural," said Madame de Fabrice, who at that moment really sympathized with Emily, and was on the point of approving of her growing attachment; but one of those expressions in which the Baron had formerly indulged, respecting Madame de Fabrice, unfortunately recurring to her mind with uncommon force, reanimated her almost extinguished resentment, and awakened all her prejudice against him.—"No," said she to

herself, "the man who is capable of wounding a feeling mind by rude sarcasms, is unworthy of the hand of the gentle Emily."

Therefore, changing on a sudden her manner, she counselled Emily not too hastily to yield to all the extravagance of her gratitude, alledging a thousand good, or rather plausible reasons to deter her from a precipitate resolution; but perceiving that Emily was extremely afflicted by her conversation, and having really conceived an affection for her, she said—

"My dear child, I must appear extremely cruel to you, if you love the Baron, as I fear you do! To defer your happiness, must appear too great a sacrifice."

"No, Madam," said Emily, blushing; "I would willingly delay the consideration of this subject for any time you think proper,

provided I do not pass the interval with my aunt."

"I am pleased with your passion for the country, my dear Emily, because that facilitates a plan I have in view for you. I am happy that you are so reasonable in your just partiality for the Baron, without which, my plan could not be acceptable to you. What I have to propose, demands secrecy; and I rely on your discretion. I have, unknown to all but a faithful agent, purchased an estate in a delightful country, which I have provided as a retreat, should circumstances hereafter compel me to quit the Court. That is an event which may happen much sooner than any one at present imagines; and thenceforth I shall hide myself for ever in solitude. Will you be my companion, Emily? Answer me sincerely.

Could

Could you pass your time in such a retreat with me ?”

Emily with sincerity said, that no destination could make her more happy.

“ You shall then go,” said Madame de Fabrice ; “ and expect me. You shall be absolute mistress of the domain. Build and plant at your pleasure, and add every embellishment you can to our abode and its neighbourhood. My steward, who has the care of the estate, is an intelligent man ; and you will consult with him as much as your taste may incline you. His wife is an agreeable woman ; and in the country her conversation now and then may banish the tediousness of absolute solitude. My dear child, you must watch over the happiness of the peasants ; you shall be their patroness, and to your care and intercession they shall owe every little aid, every comfort they may want.”

Emily expressed her joy and gratitude at this delightful vision of future tranquillity, and Madame de Fabrice said—

“How happy are you, my child, to feel with so much good sense and propriety respecting your real situation, and wisely to moderate your attachment to the Baron! Like you, I look forward to this retreat as the commencement of a purer kind of happiness than I have enjoyed—as the beginning of repose and peace. Yet I fear the moment when I must pass from my present condition to that. I love the Prince more than my own existence, and—but no matter; you must have observed, my dear child, that I seem to be universally beloved, and indeed my conduct has entitled me to that, if it were possible; but interest and policy alone sway the Court. Thousands expect, and eagerly expect the moment of
my

my declining fortunes, although, in enjoying favour, I have been most anxious to extend its influence to others. Enough of this ; "my Emily will soon be the whole world to me."

A secret tie unites the unfortunate to each other. Emily's heart sympathized with Madame de Fabrice ; and tenderly embracing her, promised her every consolation that could be tendered by filial affection.

The resolution of putting this scheme into practice was instantly taken ; and its execution was fixed for the very next day.

Madame de Fabrice had a thousand reasons for conducting this affair with the most profound secrecy, which Emily did not oppose ; but promised to preserve the place of their retreat a secret even from the Baron and M. de Bruce : only she gently urged the obligations she owed to her two

friends, from whom she could not withdraw herself without some explanation. A written message would be suspected by them of being the result of constraint; and how indeed could she persuade them that she voluntarily withdrew herself from their protection and kindness?

Madame de Fabrice felt all the truth of this reasoning, and the delicacy and difficulty of the situation. After a short absence of mind, she said—

“ My dear Emily, I have discovered the means of escaping from this embarrassment. You shall write a note, declaring that you have voluntarily decided on your own fate; that you retire from your friends for the present, but will see them again in due time. This, my love, you shall carry yourself. Take my carriage, and see either M. de Bruce or the Baron, but enter into
no

no further explanation; referring them to the billet, assuring them only that you act from your own free choice. Your countenance, my Emily, will be sufficient to assure them of the truth of your assertion. Appear to be only what you are—at liberty to act for yourself, and at liberty to do so.”

Emily literally followed this advice; and taking Madame de Fabrice’s confidential woman with her, she proceeded in the carriage to the Baron de Fleming’s apartments, believing that she could better resist any remonstrances of the Baron, than the reasoning of the veteran soldier, who had justly acquired the ascendant of a parent over her.

De Fleming flew to the carriage at the bare mention of Emily’s name, happy at receiving so flattering a mark of her con-

fidence ; but how great was his astonishment when he heard her say—

“ My Lord, I beseech you to communicate the contents of this note to M. de Bruce. It contains a resolution which I have deliberately taken. We shall meet again, my Lord ; meantime, I shall pray for your happiness in the midst of the tranquillity which I hope to enjoy. Say the same for me to M. de Bruce.”

The carriage disappeared as she finished these words, and left De Fleming in a stupor of mind, which for a moment deprived him of all power of utterance.

He afterwards returned slowly to his apartment ; and opening the letter, read the following to M. de Bruce, who happened at that time to be with him.

“ I leave

“ I leave you, my benefactors, penetrated with gratitude for your generous conduct towards me. Reasons, which I am not at liberty to explain, convince me that at present I could take no other resolution with propriety. I am liberated from my aunt’s power by the Colonel’s disinterested interference. Be tranquil as to my present destiny ; be assured that I have assumed no new yoke. I shall see you both again. I embrace M. de Bruce with the most respectful affection and tenderness ; and if the sentiments the Baron has generously entertained for me, are proof against the power of absence, nothing shall ever change those sentiments of gratitude with which he has impressed my heart.— Farewell !

“ EMILY.”

CHAP. XI.

IT is not possible to express the surprise and agitation of M. de Bruce and the Baron at this extraordinary epistle; and it would be difficult to say whether regret or anger were most predominant in their feelings. This sudden flight they mutually considered as an injury done to their affection; nor was the young man perhaps less wounded than the aged veteran.

The

The Colonel had passionately attached himself to the hopes of the union of M. de Fleming and Emily, from which he expected the purest benefits to result to each :—on the one hand, the correction of those errors which disfigured the actions of a benevolent heart ; and on the other, the happy establishment of the orphan, his adopted daughter. To see this blissful prospect vanish in an instant, and by the deliberate choice of Emily herself, was a stroke of Fortune against which the old soldier was not prepared, and which he supported with very little moderation.

De Fleming felt a silent and sullen anger ; but, ever carried away by some sudden transport of passion, he started from a long reverie, to order his horses and domestics, that he himself and all his dependants might go in search of the fugitive. During four days the pursuit was made upon every road

that led to the city, but in vain; Emily having got into a travelling carriage, and proceeding night and day, reached the place of her destination in safety; and every circumstance had been prepared with such fidelity, and executed with such success, that the place of her retreat remained an impenetrable mystery.

A few days afterwards, the Prince, having enquired of Madame de Fabrice what was become of his little *protégée*, was assured by her that she had found it necessary to withdraw her not only from the persecution of her aunt, but from the Baron's pursuit.

"I am happy," said he, "that you have taken care to provide for the safety of my beautiful *protégée*. But where is she?"

Madame de Fabrice with great steadiness endeavoured to convince the Prince that the place of Emily's retreat must be a secret

to all but herself. The Prince was by no means satisfied.

“What shall I say to the Colonel, to whom I promised Emily as a wife for his friend?—How have I fulfilled the promise of my own personal protection to the orphan, since I permit her to leave my Court in this mysterious manner?—Trust me, Madam, I fear that you yourself will be accused of either caprice or jealousy.”

“My Prince, I fear nothing for myself when your reputation and honour are secure. Emily was not in safety here, and I acted for you in what I have done. Every interest that ought to be consulted in this affair, is perfectly provided for; no one is more content with this arrangement than Emily herself. You shall shortly see letters from her, bearing proofs of her own free will, and

and of her entire content in her new situation."

In effect, Madame de Fabrice soon produced letters to that purpose; and the Prince asked no further questions, easily forgetting what was no longer before his eyes.

While the Baron had been in pursuit of the fugitive, M. de Bruce was assiduously engaged in researches into the causes of this strange flight. He learned from the faithful Lisbe, that Madame de Limberg and Madame de Fabrice had lately held a long conference at the villa of the latter; that she had interrogated Madame de Limberg's coachman, but he was as silent as his horses; yet that certainly her mistress and Madame de Fabrice had concerted this flight, whatever might be their object.

The

The Baron, who had attentively listened to all this, said, most unexpectedly to the poor Colonel—

“ You see, my friend, the truth of what I have remarked in the features of Madame de Fabrice. With all her beauty, she has those very features which you know I hold to be——”

“ Good God!” cried the Colonel, “ for once let us have a truce with these presumptuous and false visions! Madame de Fabrice is capable of great generosity. I know many instances of her noble temper; and, instead of reading her physiognomy, what you have to do, is to make her your friend, which I am sure you may do, and to endeavour to learn how she has disposed of our dear orphan, whom I feel I love, in despite of the vexation she has occasioned me.”

The

The Baron for a long time obstinately resisted this advice. His love for Emily was, however, at length the conqueror. He paid his court assiduously to Madame de Fabrice, who from time to time shewed him Emily's letters; which ever containing something in praise of the Baron, he became insensibly charmed with Madame de Fabrice and her conversation, and she, on her part, discovered he was by no means so ridiculous as she had thought him.

Having heard him one day sustain, with the vehemence belonging to his character, that the only true nobility was that of the soul, and infer, from this principle, that all true misalliance was the inequality of moral feelings, she secretly flattered herself that, by the elevation of her own sentiments, she was worthy of an alliance with the Prince; that she might regard herself as his legitimate wife ;

wife ; and that the Princess, whom fortune, or the policy of state, should destine to his bed, might be less really noble than herself.

She indulged in these thoughts with pleasure ; and the Baron had a great share in the complacency of her disposition. He appeared to her to be of so elevated a nature, and so worthy, of her lovely daughter, that she was almost ready to propose their immediate union. Still she hesitated, from habits of caution, and partly because she was unwilling to lose that companion of her retreat, which she had contemplated with so much pleasure. But now she frequently talked to him of Emily, and read to him passages of her letters, which expressed with perfect *naïveté* a warm sentiment of gratitude for the Baron, so nearly allied to a more tender sentiment, that he

was

was extremely gratified with the interest he had gained in her heart. Ever hesitating between his principles and his feelings, while Madame de Fabrice thus attached him to her by gratitude and hope, he found so much pleasure in her society, that he continually forgot the unfavourable circumstances of her physiognomy.

In this general state of his mind, one day some young men were talking of women of a loose and licentious temper. Forgetting himself, from the sudden influence of his system, De Fleming pointed out certain marks in Madame de Fabrice's physiognomy, which placed her inevitably in that class. This language, for which doubtless his heart would have reproached him on reflection, was greedily seized by a courtier, who had long been jealous of the favour in which he stood with Madame de Fabrice,
and

and resolved to use it as an engine of his disgrace with her.

We may well suppose that Madame de Fabrice heard the courtier's tale with excess of indignation. His ingratitude, his folly, and his injustice, for such she thought it, struck her with equal aversion, when she viewed the Baron as the future husband of her Emily. Although she lived in a Court, she had not a heart which could sympathize with one so insincere as she now judged De Fleming to be. He was forbidden her presence, and commanded thenceforth never to think more of Emily.

It may be imagined that the Baron was humiliated by this sudden change of his prospects; but self-love was more busy than usual in coming to his aid. He announced to M. de Bruce his resolution to quit a Court, in which the mistress and the Minister
were

were equally unworthy to enjoy the confidence of the Prince—where even the Celts were infested by the noxious air, and had degenerated from the purity of their origin, as might be instanced, he observed, in Madame de Limberg.

“I go,” exclaimed he, “to hide myself in a desert, where my eyes will be no longer wounded with the daily degradation of some of even the noblest race of men. There I will reduce my system to order, and develop its infallible principles with clearness. I would lay the foundation of a reform of the human race, and would convince even you, my friend, that this is not impracticable.”

The vague project of quitting the residence of the Prince, was formed without any determinate plan for the place of his retreat. He formed a thousand plans, and as hastily replaced them by others as transient as the former ;

former; when one day in reading, he met with the following passage—

“ ’Tis in the country that writers acquire the highest degree of elevation, and nobleness of sentiment. ’Tis in the bosom of Nature that they become more impassioned and energetic. ’Tis there only that the soul can develop itself in all its dignity.”

This passage made the most profound impression on his mind. Long and deeply occupied with the idea of publishing his system to the world in all its principles and consequences, he had frequently begun to trace his notions on paper; but he himself confessed that his essays wanted passion and force. His work always appeared cold and languid; and now, in the above passage, he thought he had discovered the reason. What more was necessary to induce him to retire into the country?—and
what

what place so proper as at one of his own estates?

Now resolved to retire to Zeringue, De Fleming's imagination revelled in the exquisite pleasure of revisiting his mother, his friends Williams and Lissau, and his amiable cousin; but it must be acknowledged that the image of a philosophic labour, and of the eternal fame he should gain, was still more delicious to him. He proposed to himself to acquire that reputation to which he had so long eagerly aspired; and with perfect sincerity concluded that, in the enjoyment of all the charms of retirement, he should assuredly gain immortality.

"Like a tranquil and unknown stream," he said to himself, "I shall silently pierce the rocks of error and prejudice, and shall not arise from my retreat, but to inundate the astonished universe with a torrent of knowledge."

knowledge. Who will imagine, when I am seen peaceably occupied in my sedentary task, that I am laying the foundations of an immense revolution?—Who will suppose that, destined to trace error and vice till I find their source in the same moment, and by the same work, I shall restore the primitive purity of the human race?—But ere long mankind will learn to know me, and future times will utter my name with veneration.”

This project being formed with the vivacity which animated all his designs, he scarcely gave himself time to bid adieu to the Court and the city. He scarcely gave a moment's time to any preparations for his journey, but to the labour of packing up his drawings and his sculls, which he superintended himself with the utmost

utmost assiduity. On the road he travelled with the greatest dispatch, so that any stranger would have supposed that he was proceeding on business of the most immediate urgency.

CHAP. XII.

THE Baron arrived at Zeringue on one of the most beautiful evenings in the month of August; and whether it was to enjoy the beauty of the scene, or to arrive on his estate in a manner most unexpected, he got out of his carriage at the summit of a hill which hung over the village, ordering the carriage not to follow him in less than an hour. Tranquilly regarding the beautiful village, on an elevation of which stood his

ancient and spacious Castle, he was surpris'd to observe that everywhere the inhabitants appeared to be in motion, and that the whole place seem'd to be partaking of one great *fête*. The peasantry were in throngs; yet every thing appear'd to be dispos'd without confusion. He took a telescope from his carriage, to distinguish what might be the cause of this general movement.

He saw a multitude of tables cover'd with refreshments, and surrounded by the peasants. A little further, in an open space, on a natural lawn, he observ'd the youth of the place dancing to the sound of flageolets. The old men were applauding the scene. Peace, delight, and happiness seem'd to reign throughout the whole assembly. Having for an instant enjoy'd the charming spectacle, he impatiently began his march,

to

to share in these pleasures, and to learn their cause.

As he descended the hill, by a path shaded with the trees of the place, he more distinctly saw the objects before him, and descried his mother, Agnes, and Liffau seated near the dancers, to whose innocent pleasures they appeared to give sanction and encouragement by tokens of approbation.

He secretly rejoiced at being near a scene so dear to his heart, and at the thought how greatly the satisfaction of the day would be increased by his unexpected appearance. In the impatience of his temper he began to run towards the spot, when he was suddenly arrested, before he arrived at the extremity of the circle, by an object which seized upon his whole attention. It was a young girl, with light and luxuriant hair, with blue eyes, and an aquiline nose. Could more

be wanting to occupy the enthusiastic admirer of the marks of his favourite race? Fixed on the spot, in contemplation of the beautiful villager, he extended his arms to prevent her passing, and said—

“Amiable and noble creature, receive my homage!”

“I, Sir! I am not noble; my name is Rosina Herman. Pray let me pass you, Sir.”

“You must not pass.”

“Really, Sir, you frighten me!” and perceiving that he resolved to stop her, she suddenly turned aside, and escaped towards her mother, who was at that extremity of the circle.—“This gentleman,” she said, “I think is mad. He says that I am noble.”

“For my part,” replied the mother, “I think he has a great deal of impudence to reflect upon my virtue; for Herman was
never

never any thing more than a simple peasant."

Her husband, incensed at the insult, began to abuse the stranger, who came to the village *fête* to seize upon the pretty girls, and insult their parents. The resentment and fears of the villagers communicated from one to another; and while this agitation spread through the circle, De Fleming displayed all the sensibility of his temper, as he alternately embraced his mother, and the friends of his infancy.

After the first moments given to tenderness, surprise, and the mutual pleasure of again seeing each other, De Fleming, who burned with impatience to know what was the cause of this unusual assemblage, demanded the reason of his mother.

"Is it your birthday that the villagers are celebrating?—It is a happy accident

which brings me back to join in the festivities of such a day. I did not exactly recollect when your birthday was."

"No, my son," replied Madame de Fleming. "In this *fête* there is nothing unusual to us. It is an institution of the intelligent Williams; and in this manner we terminate every week. He encourages the peasants to all the labours of agriculture; and to give life and motive to their efforts during the week, he has placed before them the perspective of a repast, consecrated to relaxation, and the oblivion of care. Each of the men furnishes a small part of his gain towards our festival. Williams has taught the greater part of them to add to the usual labours of the field, some employment which does something more than supply this expence.

"To

“ To Nature they owe the light, and a saloon thus richly decorated. Their orchestra is composed of friends, who relieve each other in this duty ; and therefore each musician in his turn shares in the dance, and the other pleasures of the day. Nothing then is wanting to the feast, but a little wine for the old men, and fruit, cakes, and milk for the young people. And this day has become so much an habitual part of my pleasure, that I gladly furnish my part, not to spoil the simplicity of this scene of enjoyment by the slightest luxury, but merely to shed a little more abundance upon it. But come, you have not seen Williams. Come, and embrace the man, my son, to whom your peasants owe so much happiness, and from whom you derive so much honour.”

The Baron listened to this interesting discourse of his mother with an embarrassed

and distracted air. There was a confusion in his feelings which he could scarcely unravel. The aspect of a country *fête* had ever had an irresistible charm for his heart. The joy, the happiness, and the good-will which reigned over this large assembly, breathed upon his soul a sense of virtue and felicity. Was it in the power of any combination of ideas to destroy the effect of these gentle images?—Were there any means to shut up a generous and lively heart, when every object around him was calculated to dilate it?

Yes, the Baron's system was perfectly competent to work this miracle. His mind was far from being satisfied. The scene inevitably occasioned reasonings connected with his system, which never permitted him to view without repugnance whatever could charm his eyes, or touch his heart. He
followed

followed his mother, however; and approached a table on another part of the lawn, at which Williams presided. As they passed along, a young villager, one of the directors of the dances, came up to the stranger, and with a natural grace, invited him to partake of that amusement; but having in the same instant recognised the Baron—

“I beg your pardon, my Lord! Indeed I did not know——”

This exclamation having drawn the attention of those around, and the news of the Baron's arrival being spread through the assembly, he was immediately surrounded by a crowd, in the midst of which he approached the old men's table. Williams was seated at the head, between two of the most aged and venerable. The whole table was listening to his discourse.

As soon as he perceived the Baron, he precipitately rose, and advanced some steps, supported by his stick, to express his joy at this unlooked-for gratification. No doubt, he expected a cordial return of affection, and perhaps some approbation of the happy scene before them. But on this subject De Fleming was silent. He merely congratulated the old man on his good looks, and observed that Lissau appeared more interestingly melancholy.

After some time, the Baron, having drawn Williams aside, said to him—

“ My excellent friend, I find here the image of happiness; but it is not possible that it should be that happiness which alone is real, because it does not repose on a solid basis. I am come to this estate expressly to procure the well-being of my vassals; but
this

this is not to be accomplished on any other than sure and immutable principles. It appears to me that you treat all these people in one uniform manner. There are, however, more than one species among them, and very different natures. It ought to be the care of the reformer to class those who are to be subject to his operations, to distinguish them, and to apply to their organization, essentially different, the various treatment which is adapted to their various inclinations, derived from their origin."

Williams, at first, looked with the air of a disappointed man. After a moment's meditation, he said—

"I admit there are perceptible differences between one man and another. I will admit also, if you please, that there are essential distinctions of qualities between one

family and another ; and on that subject I have some peculiar opinions, which one day I may have occasion to communicate to you : but in all these instances I see nothing but the effect of education, example, and habit ; I do not perceive any thing that is original, primitive, and intrinsic. I hold that men, taken in the mass, are capable of being directed and governed by motives of an interest well understood. 'Tis on this principle that I have led the whole of your village and your vassals to habits of sobriety and industry, and to the relish of a pure peace and happiness."

"But, Williams, are motives of interest to be privileged?—Is not this to confound virtue with vice?—Is it not to degrade true nobility from the grandeur of its origin?—The genuine Celt will love virtue for the sake of virtue itself."

"Virtue

“Virtue and happiness are inseparable,” rejoined Williams with vehemence; “one and the other are emanations from the throne of the Eternal Being. They are two rivers, flowing from the same head, like those which encircle Paradise; they never separate, but again to join. It is unjust, I confess, as it is revolting, to see the wicked man happy, or at least to see him such in appearance. An exception, however, does not derogate from rules; but it is to shake the throne of eternal justice, to command virtue without the promise of happiness.”

De Fleming might with reason have yielded to the impetuous eloquence of the old man. Still he could not forbear to start objections, and to subtilize on the idea of a disinterested virtue.

“We may,” said he, after some further observations, “mingle our views, and direct
our

our labours to the same end. You have constructed the edifice of felicity for these people ; leave it to me to place it on surer foundations—to give it the character of indestructibility.”

CHAP. XIII.

THE reader, in seeing a whole people virtuous and happy, is doubtless impatient to discover by what means they had been conducted to a state so prosperous in less than two years. It will be remembered that, in parting from Fredericksfeld, the Baron had recommended to his friends to give their whole thoughts to that object on their arrival at Zeringue; and both one and the other had seized on this idea with
all

all the zeal of philanthropy, but with different shades of character.

Although Liffau, devoted to his affliction, was little capable of occupying his mind with ideas foreign to it, that of the happiness of a portion of the human race, gradually became a salutary and not unpleasing diversion from his sorrow. "This object furnished conversations with the intelligent Williams, to whom he willingly yielded ; for their ideas extremely varied as to the means of obtaining the end.

The activity, the impatience of youth, the tendency of lending the prime of their years to cut short difficulties, persuaded Liffau that the readiest means were the best ; and he proposed nothing less than to destroy every thing, and to raise a new edifice on new foundations. Williams, on the contrary, viewed objects with an eye more tranquil

tranquil and reposed. He thought that in operating any reform, it was impossible to proceed too slowly, or with too much circumspection.

“We have in our imagination,” said he, “the image of the statue we would form; but before we attempt to withdraw it from the gross block by which it is surrounded, let us see if our instruments are sufficiently tempered to withstand the obduracy of the materials; let us recollect that we may begin, and not finish. It is infinitely difficult to build up, and easy to destroy; and at last we may only bury ourselves beneath the ruins of our work.”

The simplicity of Williams, and the kindness of his nature, speedily gained him the affection of the inhabitants of Zeringue, who also were delighted to see in him the
son

son of their ancient and beloved pastor, and the companion of their youth.

“The villagers begin to love us,” said Williams, “and that is the first and most important step. We must now possess ourselves of their confidence; and confidence, though the daughter of Love, is so difficult to reconcile with authority, that the title of Inspector, which the Baron has conferred upon me, to give me more influence and consideration on the estate, may alone be a sufficient cause to counteract the design. Nothing is more inevitable,” he would continue, “than that the habit of mistrust should become a second nature among the poor. They are crushed beneath the weight of their superiors. On them reposes the whole burthen of society. They sustain, they feed, they clothe the country; they provide its defenders, they furnish its
chariots

chariots of war, and its instruments of labour. All the vices of the capital and other great towns press with an incumbent weight upon them. Can we be surprised that they are accustomed to mistrust, and that even a benefit to them appears with a suspected air?"

Pursuing this reasoning, and these indulgent considerations, he gradually laid asleep that suspicion which alone he feared as the opposer of his progress. He was at first heard with good-will, and afterwards his professions were believed; and insensibly he introduced useful changes, which would have been rejected, had he proclaimed his views without regard to old prejudices and rooted opinions.

Considering education as the groundwork of the social virtues, and therefore willing to reform the plans on which it was conducted,

conducted, nevertheless he spared ancient usages and customs, and among other things, carefully preserved the place and hours destined to that purpose. He never said—*"We will make a change;"* but imperceptibly he introduced a difference, which no one perceived but in its happy consequences.

Continuing the master of the school in his office, he had the art to induce him to adopt many innovations, and to persuade him that he had always conceived the idea himself. Extending his care to every object, in a little time he formed a variety of useful establishments. He gave such a turn to the minds and dispositions of the vassals, that concord and happiness sprang incessantly from the offices of a mutual good-will. If some intractable temper secretly resisted these reforms, he yet did not dare to
manifest

manifest his selfishness, which would have subjected him to universal disrespect.

Who could have supposed that the Baron would not have deemed himself the happiest of men, to find his people in a condition so prosperous, and to see them united as much by their enjoyments as their wants? When, however, he had retired to his chamber, to rest, looking with a paternal and sincere affection over the extensive and beautiful village on which the bright morn then cast her silent beams, he could not forbear crying out—

“ My poor people, you are wandering in error, although happy!—It shall be my duty and task to open your eyes, although you should lose on the side of happiness, what you gain in perfection. It is for me to teach you that, under the oppression even of wretchedness, and amidst the cries of despair,

despair, wisdom remains self-supported, and that virtue, which is its compass, is also its recompence.

“I will establish,” he continued with enthusiasm, “the distinction of races. The Celts are capable of more sublime efforts, and greater purity. They may be taught to be happy in the very bosom of misfortune, should it ever arrive; and how unmixed, how permanent is that happiness which remains amidst the storms of fate!”

Entirely filled with these beneficent ideas, his heart expanded with the pride of self-approbation. In imagination he walked forth amidst his vassals; and, looking around, he fancied himself already among a regenerated people. In the height of this reverie, he cried out with transport—

“Yes, I will display to the entire universe, to what a point of elevation men may ascend,

ascend, when an enlightened mind and a feeling heart undertake to lead them to true happiness!’

He then placed himself at his secretary, to draw out an irrevocable plan for his conduct.

“What is it,” he said, after long thought, “that I have to propose to myself?—What but to return back to Nature?—It is Nature which has distinctly pointed out to us the only road to happiness. Nothing more is necessary than to inspire man with a proper sense of his dignity. Nothing then remains of imperfect, degenerated beings.”

He recollected that among his peasants, he had perceived some with all the marks of the proscribed class.

“It is a pity,” said he; but at this moment his heart was so rejoiced with the splendour of his prospects, that he instantly added

added—"Alas! have they less a claim to happiness?—No! over them too will I extend my cares, and my whole territory shall be peopled only by privileged beings."

Having passed the greater part of the night in contemplation of his plan, he was surprised, after he had been a few hours in bed, by a servant, who announced his principal steward, whom, over night, he had ordered early in the morning to attend his commands. He rose, and prepared to receive him. Meanwhile he composed a discourse to be delivered to the steward, designed to unfold his ideas, and to engage this man in a sincere concurrence with them. It will be understood that he proposed to give him all the information necessary to this purpose; and that the signs, favourable or contrary in the human visage, were to be described with a scrupulous exactness. For
this

this latter purpose he traced his instructions upon paper.

He then ordered the steward to be introduced. He held the paper in his hand, and advanced to meet him with condescension; but his eye had no sooner glanced upon the man, than the paper fell from his hand.

Let the reader, if possible, represent to himself the surprise and consternation of the Baron in perceiving in the aspect of him whom he intended for one of his coadjutors, an assemblage of all the detested symptoms of the most degenerate race. He was a short man, with a large belly, a nose flattened to his face, his eyes and hair black, and he advanced slowly towards the Baron, making successive bows, each lower than the preceding.

“ Gracious Heaven !” exclaimed De Fleming, instead of returning the steward’s civilities, “ is it possible that a steward can be made as you are ?”

The poor steward, who had already been sufficiently cast down at the prospect of this interview, was not much consoled by this salute. However, he assumed courage enough to begin, though with a trembling voice, a compliment he had prepared during the night ; but the profound silence of his Lord, his absorbed and angry looks at every step, more and more embarrassed the orator.

In fact, De Fleming, who heard not a single syllable of the harangue, looked alternately at the figure before him, and the drawing of a Celt he had traced upon paper for this man’s instruction, more vehemently protesting to himself, at every look, that it

was

was impossible to be aided in his great designs by a man built like this steward.

Restored, however, to recollection, by the involuntary movements of his excellent heart, which severely reproached him for having humiliated a man who had committed no offence, he asked him some kind questions concerning his family, naturally stumbling, however, on some enquiries into his origin, and even into his tastes and habits. In every answer he found a confirmation of some point of his system; and thence he regained a secret self-satisfaction, on the appearance of which the steward congratulated himself as having a relation to him.

In this more promising train of things, De Fleming demanded of him abruptly, if he were not a drunkard, and jealous; because these dispositions necessarily belonged to the

features of his visage. The poor man instantly imagined that some one had calumniated him to his Lord; and, expecting to lose his place, which was his sole dependance, he exclaimed in an agony of passion—

“Ah! who has been base enough to asperse my character, before it could be known to your Lordship!”

“No, no, my dear steward,” said De Fleming, smiling, “do not be uneasy on that score; I declare to you that no one has said a word to your disadvantage, and if you had the faults which I have supposed, you may be an honest man, notwithstanding. And it is not your fault if Nature has organized you for the production of such faults. Is the crime your's, for instance,” he added, looking at the scull of a Cossack, “if an unhappy resemblance——”

He

He stopped short, touched with the humility of the man's air. Still he thought it necessary to trace in a few words the general principles of his system, and to sketch his plan for the happiness of his vassals. When he had given the principal characters of the principal races, and touched upon his opinions, he said—

“I did not retire to this estate to live in idleness and repose, but to employ my time in a manner useful to my vassals, and to devote myself for their happiness. For these purposes I have abandoned a brilliant career which was opened to me. You, Sir, will aid me in this great work. I have no doubt you will prove worthy of the confidence which I now place in you. After all, with some unfortunate features a man may be well meaning. You are a man as——”
He could never add—“*as I am.*”

The comparison which had thus unfortunately intruded itself upon his imagination, gave him such exquisite disgust, that instead of continuing his encouraging discourse, he abruptly ended as we have seen, casting a smile of contempt on the poor steward.

The tone of confidence and good-will which the Baron had expressed in the course of his conversation, had notwithstanding sunk deep into the steward's grateful heart; and the desire of pleasing him, and the hope of success were still uppermost in his mind. He therefore ventured to assure the Baron of his zeal, and his indefatigable vigilance; but his surprise and confusion were complete, when De Fleming, without noticing these expressions of devotion to his will, with a marked coldness, said—

“ I merely

"I merely expect that you will oppose no obstacles to the execution of my plans."

A slight inclination of the head apprized the poor steward that he might withdraw.

The tone of confidence and good-will which the Baron had exhibited in the course of his conversation, had notwithstanding, sunk deep into the steward's grateful heart, and the desire of pleasing him, and the hope of success, were still uppermost in his mind. He was resolved to exert his utmost vigilance, and his endeavours were not without success. He was not long in perceiving that the Baron was not only a man of great talents, but also a man of great industry and application. He was not long in perceiving that the Baron was not only a man of great talents, but also a man of great industry and application. He was not long in perceiving that the Baron was not only a man of great talents, but also a man of great industry and application.

CHAP. XIV.

THE mortified steward took his way, on leaving the Castle, to the Parsonage-house, cursing, with all his heart, the extravagance of his young Lord. He found the pastor and his sister conversing on the same subject. De Fleming had not been four-and-twenty hours at Zeringue, and already his singularities were the conversation of the whole village, a variety of conclusions being made that were not at all to his advantage.

The

The pastor, more candid, and better informed, did not suffer himself to be seduced by this vain clamour. He resolved closely to observe the Baron, and to judge for himself; and proposed in the course of the morning, to proceed to the Castle to pay his respects to him. He had scarcely declared his intention, when the Baron entered the room; for no sooner had the steward left De Fleming, than the latter, recollecting the humbled and terrified air with which he had departed, was touched with remorse, to which he was extremely subject. He went, therefore, in search of the innocent victim of his opinions, to remove his uneasiness, and confer some mark of favour on him. Having learned that he was gone to the pastor's house, he resolved to follow him thither.

As he concluded that the pastor was perfectly orthodox, and as his system could scarcely be reconciled with the notion of a common origin of all men in Adam, he had predetermined to be silent, for the present, on his opinions, less with the fear of making a new enemy, than because he did not yet feel himself sufficiently fortified to defend his doctrine at all points.

On his entering the room, a new reason was joined to the former, to impose silence on him. He saw, not without a silent grief, that the pastor's sister, the charming Sophia, had in her amiable visage most of the features which were the objects of his horror. Heaven only knows how these features came to be so agreeable!—Her dark eyes and hair, her teeth of alabaster, and an expression of the greatest sensibility, formed a woman altogether so pleasing, that he himself

himself would not have changed the expression of the whole for the figure of the most accomplished Celt. Her fine dark hair spread so gracefully over her white neck, that the fairest hair in the world could not have produced a more beautiful effect. Her nose a little turned up, and her round face, had nevertheless so much grace and expression, that he could not forbear implicitly to admire this living proof of the defect of his system.

He made a secret vow to himself to respect so much beauty, and to permit its owner to enjoy in peace the charms she had received from Nature; or if the general development of the system should necessarily cause her some offence, he swore to himself to make an express and public exception in her favour.

Burning with impatience to begin the projected work of reformation, that was at once to immortalize his name, and render his vassals the happiest, as well as purest people on earth, he issued an order that all the peasants on his estate should assemble at a certain hour on the following day, in the large hall of the Castle.

At the time appointed they accordingly assembled; but every one brought with him an alarmed and agitated mind, and they formed themselves into different groups, to question each other, and to reason upon the motives of this extraordinary summons. The old men feared that their burthens would be increased, and the young husbands trembled lest their beautiful wives were in danger.

“He looks at our wives so closely,” said one to another; “he examines their countenances

countenances in so particular a manner, he must have some designs that we do not understand."

In the midst of this conversation, which passed with some degree of warmth, the door opened, and the Baron appeared.

"Good day, my friends!" said he, with an air of great gentleness and kindness; but this salutation was received with no confidence. The Baron, however, continued, without perceiving the uneasiness that his presence occasioned.—"Although my birth, and rank, and fortune would have opened brilliant prospects to me in the world, I have retired here to live among you, my friends, for the purpose of turning my whole attention to the means of promoting your happiness; and if you sincerely join me in my efforts for this purpose, which is the sole object of my paternal affection for you, I shall

I shall finish my life in the midst of you, and shall find my reward in your felicity. Far from oppressing you, far from trampling down your harvests in the indulgence of the chase, my first desire is to relieve you from some burthen; and I would celebrate my arrival by freeing some of you from the humiliating burthen of the *corvée*. You must give me credit, in believing that I have good reasons for not immediately extending this privilege to the whole village; but I trust the time will arrive when I shall be enabled to grant this enfranchisement to all my vassals indiscriminately."

As the Baron spoke thus, the peasants drew nearer, and by degrees encircled him. He now examined them one by one with an attention so minute, as seemed to renew their first apprehensions. He desired that the fathers of the young men should step forward,

forward, and present him the register of their children's birth; and as they passed in review before him, he wrote some words on the registers of those whom he found to possess marks of a Celtic origin. To these chosen few he now particularly addressed himself; and pronouncing the name of each with an air of respectful consideration, he enfranchised them of the *corvée*. Those whom he observed to be of a mixed race, obtained some small relief from slighter burthens; but the unfortunate black and curled-hair race received no other share of this distribution of their Lord's favours, than advice given with no very gracious air. One man in particular, who bore every trait of the rejected class, the Baron turned from with evident aversion. A low murmur ran through the multitude at this humiliating contempt of a man who ranked highly among them for

his virtues. They were demanding of each other the cause, when he approached the table where the Baron sat, and with a firm but modest air addressed his Lord.

“May I humbly demand, my Lord, for what crime I alone have been excluded, in the presence of your assembled vassals, from every mark of your Lordship’s favour? During twenty years I have carefully discharged the duty of schoolmaster to the village, confided to me by the late Baron, your father, who has often expressed his approbation of my zeal and integrity. I do not ask, my Lord, to partake of the favours you have this day granted to your vassals with the exception of myself alone; but I humbly beseech your Lordship to declare the reasons of my disgrace.”

In an instant a number of voices were raised in favour of the schoolmaster, eager
to

to express their good opinion of his conduct. The proscribed steward, who pretty well understood the reason of his Lord's behaviour, and was so nearly concerned in the Baron's open avowal of its motives, argued for his companion in misfortune with so much good sense, that De Fleming was absolutely disconcerted. His understanding was perfectly convinced of the immutable justice by which his proceedings had been regulated; yet, in despite of his reason, his heart pleaded forcibly for the old schoolmaster.

The Baron, therefore, after a moment's reflection, made the following open declaration.

“Without explaining myself more fully at present, I am willing to own that I was altogether ignorant of the character of this old man; that I have no offence whatever

to reproach him with; and that, on the testimony of the village, I very readily believe that he has discharged the important trust of his office of schoolmaster of the village with perfect fidelity, and in all other things has conducted himself as an honest man: and, therefore, notwithstanding principles that must be the sacred rule of my general conduct, I will discharge him from part of the burthen which he bears as my vassal, that no doubt may remain of my esteem for his character."

The schoolmaster did justice to that esteem; for, having received this public reparation to his honour, he modestly but steadily declined the proffered exemption.

The Baron then declared that, in a future assembly, he should publicly state the reasons of the difference he had made in his treatment of his vassals, as well as the conditions

conditions on which his special favours would be conferred.

The assembly then broke up, each either eager to learn the means of purchasing exemptions, or congratulating himself on having already obtained them. Gratitude, pride, envy, and curiosity respectively influenced the minds of the vassals; and already were sown the seeds of division in a community, distinguished by its former peace and good neighbourhood:—the incident of the chosen few, the rage and disappointment of the rejected others, and the general suspense and expectation threw the whole village into commotion.

It was observed, and spoken of in terms sufficiently pointed, that the largest exemptions, the highest privileges, were given to the peasant who had the greatest number of handsome daughters; and conclusions were naturally

naturally formed not very favourable to the Baron's morals.

De Fleming could not shut his eyes to the disorder which had sprung up in this once happy village. The vigilant and honest Williams had in vain endeavoured to remedy the evil, which the Baron suddenly increased by publishing the conditions on which his protection was to be founded. He issued an order, expressly prohibiting every union between those, on the one hand, whom he called the *Slavi*; and, on the other, those whom he distinguished by the name of *Celts*. He invited the young men of the latter class to seek wives worthy of themselves in the neighbouring villages, when they could not be found at home; hoping gradually to banish the girls of the proscribed class, to find establishments among the villages of other Lords.

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This conduct, which appeared to him to be perfectly natural, and indispensable to the design of purifying the village, inflamed the former hatred and animosities which, from the time of his arrival, had raged among his peasants. From words and disputes they came to blows; the elect and the proscribed met only to quarrel. Even the Temple of Peace was converted into a theatre of discord; scarcely ever was the congregation dismissed by the pastor, without a battle fought on the very threshold of the Church.

All this dissension and misery were so far from exposing to the Baron any error in his system, that, on the contrary, it derived new vigour from them. In all these contests he naturally found the aggressors in the proscribed class; and although convinced that they were to a degree incorrigible, he

at

at length concluded that greater vigour was necessary to repress their vicious inclinations, as far as that might be practicable.

To his privileged class he addressed none but words of paternal care and solicitude; the delicacy of their organization, he said, admitted of no other. It was in vain that the true friends of his interests, that even his mother endeavoured to soften the increasing rigour of his system. He had infallible arguments to oppose to their most affectionate representations, and in India and Mogul found the proofs of his doctrine.

Among a thousand extravagant things uttered by De Fleming, now and then a luminous truth escaped from his mouth, among which may be ranked what he one day said to the proscribed steward.

“ Believe

“ Believe me, the nobility purchased by gold, was the death-blow to that genuine and original nobility which was founded only on elevated virtue, and had already been corrupted by misalliances.”

The steward could not argue this point ; but retired without comprehending what *misalliances* could exist among peasants.

The factious in the village were now daily proceeding more and more to extremity. They began to express themselves by exterior signs. The Baron's favourites, the better to pay their court to his Lordship's taste, distinguished themselves by wearing clothes of a light colour, and by affecting a greater nicety of dress. Their opponents manifested their resentment, and their contempt of the Baron's partialities, by wearing dark brown clothes, which it was known he could not endure. The light and
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the dark dress became the liveries of the parties, and the sign of more desperate animosities. De Fleming, with the infatuation which extracted motives of perseverance from every misfortune, secretly exulted at seeing this distinct barrier placed between his favourite and the proscribed race.

With great ostentation he took every opportunity of calling his friends to witness the success of his schemes. M. de Bruce having paid him a visit, he more particularly delighted in developing to him the happy progress he was making towards the perfection of the human race. He pretended that, by merely consulting what Nature herself had done, he should at length perfect that separation of the noble from the vile, which would eventually purify the earth.

“I do perceive,” said the Colonel, “that with great diligence, and by most violent means,

means, you have established among your vassals a distinction which Nature never intended, and which will be the scourge of your unhappy dependants. And have you supposed, my dear Baron, that Nature was so cruel or so blind, as herself to sow the indestructible seeds of hatred and discord among her children?—No, my friend, nothing can be more horrible than such a thought!”

“Sound reason,” rejoined De Fleming, with a smile of superiority, “prefers a painful truth to the happiest of dreams.”

“Reflect, my friend,” said M. de Bruce, anxiously, “on the frightful consequences of your doctrine. By a single word you humble in the dust millions of beings formed to partake virtue and happiness. You utter the apology for the most horrible despotism of one part of the human race over the other.

You impose on the majority of mankind, the indelible character of personal servitude, and lend to rapacity and cruelty the most effectual and dangerous of arms; in supposing them justified by a natural and eternal law. How is it possible, my friend, that your generous nature could have fallen into an error, inevitably producing such unhappy consequences?"

"I feel compassion as well as you for the humbled race of the Sclavi, but it is the work of Nature, and not mine. Has not Nature also formed the generous and high-spirited horse, and the dull beast of burthen?"

"Let us not compare to brute animals, among which essential differences may exist, a being partaking of the divine intelligence. Believe me, my young friend, this being, coming from the hands of his Creator, is
already

already sufficiently unhappy, in being compelled to creep in the dust, without imposing on him the belief that the greatest part of the human race is condemned never to erect its head towards heaven!—Never, never, my friend. All men are born with the same natural rights—with equal claims to liberty and happiness.”

The Colonel spoke as if he had triumphed; but De Fleming insisted on the original insensibility of mind, which rendered the proscribed class incapable of feeling misfortune in any acute degree. M. de Bruce acknowledged the insensibility that is found among some classes of men, but attributed the effect to oppression, and not to nature.

“It is no more,” said he, “than the obduracy which is begot by the pressure of society. Many a being who had once been proud of the flexibility of his heart, is

compelled to enclose it, as it were, with a coat of mail, to guard its feelings against the oppressor's injustice. — Ah, my friend!" he added, with great animation, "let us leave Nature alone: it is not her work that needs correction; and woe be to the people who, departing from Nature, commit their happiness to the fancies of imagination!"

He then described with energy the advantage which plain sense, directed by a feeling heart, has over the refinements of imagination; and concluded by an appeal, the application of which to the system of De Fleming was by no means difficult.

"What would you say of a Prince," he demanded, "who should make war habitually, justifying himself upon a calculation, which is true enough, that there are more men than women born into the world? Nature has made this provision to supply
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the loss of men in inevitable wars ; but has not given this motive to the warrior as a new and reasonable motive of war. Thus also Nature has granted to man some remedy for inevitable evils—a facility of being insensibly accustomed to suffering ; but has she therefore created any of her children to be the victims of others ?—and is her wise provision an excuse for wanton tyranny and oppression ?—Never, my dear Baron, can I embrace opinions including such cruel consequences as these upon which you act.”

“ I dare venture to assert that you never will,” said De Fleming to himself. “ With such a physiognomy, how could I expect you to do so !—However,” said he, continuing his reverie, “ this man is a complete exception to all my principles, an absolute contradiction to all my reasoning.”

Meantime

Meantime Love prepared other contradictions to his system, of which the Baron little dreamed. Love had united two hearts among his vassals, which the rage of the factions his system had introduced among them, had no power to divide.

END OF VOL. I.



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