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ADELAIDE :
OR,
THE COUNTERCHARM.

VOL. IV.



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ADELAIDE:

Surfaze Royal. 1827

OR,

THE COUNTERCHARM.

A Novel.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"SANTO SEBASTIANO; OR, THE YOUNG PROTECTOR;"

"ROMANCE OF THE PYRENEES;" AND

"THE FOREST OF MONTALBANO."

VOL. IV.

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1813.

ADELAIDE :

OR,

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CHAPTER I.

“ **T**HE misery you have overwhelmed me with by your unjustifiable silence you will not commiserate, or you would not have inflicted it.

“ Believing you all faith, all kindness, all excellence, I concluded that illness, or some dire calamity, compelled you to an involuntary silence ; and, in the delirium of my delusive adoration of your mind, I offended my best friends, and flew to give your sickness, or calamity, all the consolation a tender husband could bestow. But how did I find you ?—as faithful information portrayed for me :—the idol

of admiration, the forgetful wife, losing all recollection of an absent husband in the homage of licentious libertines and designing speculators !

“ Oh, Adelaide ! when I expected to find you in sickness, or sorrow, I beheld you dancing on a stage for the gazing public, and listening, with all the avidity of growing levity, to my dangerous rival ! But, learn this from me. if you can cease to remember the precepts of the amiable Falkland,—the example of your beatified mother ;—if you can permit the noxious breath of the spoiler to blight the fair blossoms of every human virtue you deluded us with the fascinating promise of,—that it is not with impunity the Duke of St. Kilda shall triumph.

“ I am now hastening back to those friends who never cease to consider my feelings ; who never, by cruel neglect, plant daggers in my heart ! and I go, Adelaide, without seeing—without expostulating with—you ; for, if you require the force of a husband’s arm to drag you from the precipice before you, your honour is not worth an effort for its preservation !

“ Oh, Adelaide! if you prove a deceptive character, let mortals, in future, even doubt the seraph's purity!

“ Nothing, no, nothing under heaven but your barbarous silence, your cruel breach of promise in punctually writing to me, with my agonizing ocular demonstration of how your time has been devoted, could have led me to give credit to the representations of those who have had opportunities of warily observing you since the absence of your no longer regarded husband.

“ MONTAGU BOUVERIE.”

The stunned senses of Adelaide for some moments seemed to have lost all perception of what had sent some direful blow to the centre of her heart. Her straining eyes still gazed in vacancy upon the paper which her grief-chilled hand now grasped with the firmness of despair, until the feelings of anguish, too mighty for long suspension, unfolded gradually to the infliction of direful agony; but yet, in their first sensations, unknowing where the wound had pierced from which they suffered.

“ Alas! alas! my child,” exclaimed

Obearn, "I well divined this letter was no kind one."

"Only not kind," said Adelaide, sobbing piteously, in the anguish of her misery, "because poor Montagu receiving not one of all my letters, naturally thought me unkind; and when, in all the glow of tender alarm, he came hither, fearing I was ill, to find me dancing merrily, was quite sufficient to put unkind thoughts into any one's head; therefore we must excuse poor Montagu, if they have flowed a little too ungently from his pen, for me, who was unconscious of meriting censure, quite unmoved to bear."

"Ah! jewel of my love!" replied Obearn, now subdued to tears, "it is thus you ever seek to excuse those who trespass against you.—But my master, who knew you from your very infancy, he cannot be excused, for believing you ever wilfully failed in the performance of any duty. He should not have flown back to that general's hateful clan without waiting to hear from yourself if you had written. Oh! I shall never forgive him, for allowing any thing to lead him into giving pain to you."

"Oh! my own nurse! why then do you

too give me pain by speaking so unkindly of my husband?" exclaimed the still weeping Adelaide—"You who knew him from a very boy! whom, then, you loved,—ay, dearly,—dearly,—Norah!"

"Because he *then* adored you," impetuously replied the warm-hearted Obearn, who instantly caught from the anguished expression of her darling's countenance, what a painful allusion her sentence had unwarily conveyed; while the heart-riven Adelaide, wishing to dismiss so distressing a subject, requested her nurse to go and detain Dennis for a letter she would immediately set about writing to Bouverie, to go by Richard, whom she begged Dennis would request to deliver into no hand but his master's.

Obearn departed on her mission; and Adelaide, although fully determined upon quitting Melcombe Park, and all its unlucky gaieties, on the morrow; yet felt totally at a loss how to effect her prudent purpose without betraying Montagu to further censure as a husband, or offending her kind and hospitable host and hostess; and her dilemma seemed to increase with

her anxiety to overcome it, that she might inform Montagu of how she arranged her projected return to the seclusion of her home ; but, unused to form excuses not founded on truth, she was wholly at a loss for one subterfuge to aid her, when a gentle tap at the door called her, most unwillingly, to admit Lady Ellen Melcombe.

Our heroine was too much the object of general admiration not to have her long absence observed, and murmured at ; and at length, apprehensive of illness causing its protraction, Lady Ellen anxiously sought her.

“ My dear Mrs. Bouverie,” said her ladyship, “ forgive my intrusion ; but, fearing you were indisposed ”—and now perceiving the trace of tears and evident agitation on the countenance of Adelaide, the lovely Ellen paused for a moment, and then, in a tone of distress, added,—“ Oh ! our fears were just ! What,—what is the matter ? ”

“ I am not very well, certainly, dear Lady Ellen,” replied Adelaide,—“ that is, I mean, I feel if I was almost so, from extreme agitation, which a very unpleasant

letter, forwarded hither to me, has just occasioned."

"Alas!" replied Lady Ellen, "I hope no unpleasant intelligence of any one you regard."

"My dear Lady Ellen," returned the painfully agitated Adelaide, as blushing and faltering she endeavoured to frame an answer, not deviating from truth, and yet shielding the fact from detection,—“it is a letter, awakening my distress for impending, not actually existing, calamity.

"There are, Lady Ellen, in many families, circumstances occurring, which cannot, in possibility, be revealed, even in confidence, to those whom most we estimate. Believe me, this is an affair of that sort of imperious delicacy which demands my silence, except to my husband, or I should instantly, in the ingenuousness of my nature, tell to you and Lady Melcombe, with all that unreserve of growing friendship my heart would prompt, what thus has unhinged me;—what thus compels me to entreat Lady Melcombe to excuse my appearing this night, and to grant me permission to return

to my home to-morrow, since I feel it incompatible with my regard for those to whom I owe many sacrifices, to remain in scenes of gaiety while they are unhappy."

"Oh! do not leave us, dear Mrs. Bouverie," said her ladyship, beseechingly; "for, since you are in trouble, surely it is amongst friends you ought to stay, to receive their consolations; and not to fly to solitude, to give way to unavailing affliction."

"Could I, by my confidence, make my friends sympathizers in my uneasiness, then I might profit by their advice and kind participation," responded Adelaide, endeavouring to become more tranquil:—"but, dear Lady Ellen, this is one of those family secrets that cannot receive the balm of friendship's consolation. My sense of duty commands me to fly, at present, from the pleasures of Melcombe Park: and, as the inspirations of duty are never, I am convinced, disregarded by you,—you, I trust, will be my advocate with Lord and Lady Melcombe to forgive my necessity-impelled wish for returning to the solitude of my home, until this cloud, lowering

over the happiness of those I am deeply interested for, disperses, as I trust it will."

"I will go on your embassy," said Lady Ellen kindly, "though you want no advocate with my father and mother."

Lady Ellen, in unfeigned concern, departed on her mission; and Adelaide commenced her letter of justification to her husband: in which, though the stings of wounded innocence rankled painfully in her sensitive bosom, no asperity, no *hauteur* of indignant ire, flowed from her pen. It was a being whom she loved, who had insulted her by suspicion; and the tenderness of her affection forbade a retort. It was her husband! who, alas! had been led to believe her calumniator; and her sense of the mild, submissive duties the character of wife inspired, restrained her from upbraiding.

In her vindication of her neglect in writing, she was firm and dignified, as the votary of unsullied truth proclaiming facts; in portraying sorrow for the sufferings her supposed silence had inflicted, all the fascinating tenderness of feeling seemed to guide her pen; but, when she attempted

to answer the aspersions of her growing levity,—her serious misdemeanours,—feeling overpowered her ; and, after several anguished efforts, she gave up the inutile endeavour, and said to him, “ she would not persist in torturing her feelings by the misery of replying to impeachments, which, well she knew, her husband’s heart refused the impression of on the tablet of its belief ; but that, to give her kind observer no further opportunity of embodying shadows emanating from the form of urbanity into frightful demons portentous of transgression, she had arranged to quit all the gay scenes of Melcombe Park on the succeeding day, and to return to her cottage, where it would be her own fault if any guests were admitted during his absence whom he could in possibility disapprove.”

But, although we have given no interruption to our detail of the purport and tone of our poor heroine’s letter to Montagu, yet she wrote it not without one ; for scarcely had she commenced it, when Lady Melcombe, led by courtesy and feeling kindness, requested admission, to

offer her condolence, and to express her sorrow at so unexpectedly losing so highly prized a guest : and although no unjustifiable impulse of curiosity urged the interrogations of her ladyship to develop a secret of family uneasiness, she yet put many questions to poor Adelaide which puzzled her inexperience in such modes of defence to parry, for the purpose of discovering if it was the imperative necessity of an absolute duty, or the romantic inspirations of juvenile enthusiasm in a fancied one, which impelled her young visitant's determination to return to her home : and in this kind catechism Adelaide contrived to give no firm basis for suspicion of the fact ; yet still, from her anguish of countenance, and the betraying tones of heart-resident grief in her voice, a suggestion sprung up in the mind of Lady Melcombe of Colonel Bouverie's bearing some part in his lovely wife's present distress and hasty resolution to remove from Melcombe Park ; and that idea once awakened, her ladyship forbore any further attempt to alter a determination she believed impelled by prudence.

Through the unslumbering attentions of

politeness and hospitality, the poor recluse was not forgotten in her retirement ; and when the breakfast bell called for the assembling of the family the succeeding morning, Lady Ellen kindly attended Adelaide, to know if she chose that meal in her own apartment ; but to a party *en famille* she saw no cause for objection, and therefore she joined it, when the pale dejection of her countenance, the melancholy of her voice and manner, awakened the sympathizing interest of every feeling heart present.

But long the party had not assembled to breakfast, when the tide of interest and pity turned from Adelaide into an overwhelming torrent of home distress ; for, upon Mr. Lysander Melcombe not attending as usual, his apprehensive mother sent to his apartment to inquire the cause, which ultimately led to a discovery of his having set off the preceding night, ere the departure of all the guests, upon a matrimonial expedition to Scotland ; leaving a letter for his brother, to be delivered by his groom the moment he was missed in the morning.

Lady Melcombe fainted upon this most

unexpected intelligence, unceremoniously delivered ; and while her almost distracted husband and daughters were rendering her every assistance, Lord Woodley opened his letter ; and, after reading a few lines, his countenance assumed the hue and tone of horror, and, starting from his seat like a maniac, he rushed from the room, but no further than the antechamber had he power to go ; for there, subdued by the fell shock he had sustained, he sunk on the floor, bereft of every faculty.

The noise of his lordship's fall summoned instant assistance ; and all, now, became dire consternation.—From the letter he had dropped, which was to entreat his kind fraternal offices for Lysander with his offended parents, the distracted father learned his unfortunate child had chosen for the future partner of his life the daughter of an obscure farmer in the neighbourhood, whose extreme beauty was all she had to boast ; and upon the recovery of Lord Woodley, ere his sense of prudence was quite reanimated, the expressions of dismay and remorse he uttered, more than half revealed to his

terror-anguished father, that a discarded mistress of his own had inveigled his too credulous brother, in full conviction of her purity, into becoming the ostensible parent of her expected offspring.

The moment the faculties of the conscience-rived Lord Woodley returned to their full power, he sprung at once into action to pursue the fugitives with all the wild impetuosity of his distracted feelings, to rescue, if possible, his ill-fated brother from the direful lot his libertinism had unthinkingly prepared for him, by the seduction of this girl and early abandonment of her; who, in the rage of her disappointed love and hopes, had sworn to plant daggers in his conscience ere his child was born; but how, he had never troubled himself to inquire, thinking a sum of money he presented her with, and a promise to provide for her child, would soon tranquillize the raging storm.

In the almost phrenzied state of Lord Woodley, his father could not suffer him to go alone; and apprehending too, in the vehemence of his fury against the siren, he might make discoveries to the infatuated

Lysander, which ought not, for his peace, to be made, if they should prove too late to prevent the marriage, or successful in their efforts to annul it, he determined to accompany him : and although Lady Melcombe entertained no suspicion of the extent of the calamity attendant upon this marriage, yet, beholding the apparent agony of her husband and son upon the subject, she felt all painful alarm for them, in the dangers she imagined menaced their health in the subduing violence of their present almost phrenzied agitation, until Lord Ennismore volunteered in accompanying them.

Scarcely were they all set out, in the fleet speed of determined pursuit, when Lady Melcombe resolved to proceed immediately to the family seat in Yorkshire, to anticipate the else tardy intelligence that must otherwise content her in Sussex ; and as Mrs. Bouverie was going that very morning to her home, she felt no impediment to her wish, as the Misses Price she would take with her, and to Sir Edward Fitzallen the state of her family was a sufficient excuse to plead.

To this suddenly projected journey of her mother's, vain in opposition proved the expostulations of the angry Lady Clarinda, and useless her assurances, "that but for this impolitic measure, she should shortly be Duchess of Saint Kilda;" nor was her chagrin and mortification diminished,—notwithstanding the boasted fair prospect of her speculations,—when Sir Edward Fitzallen, to sanction his petition for attending the fair and agitated party into Yorkshire, made his proposals for Lady Emma to be laid before Lord Melcombe at a more auspicious season; for so had Lady Clarinda's ambitious project operated, that this young baronet, of ancient descent and immense possessions, for whom she had been scheming many months, when just about to catch the bait, disgusted by her coquetry and want of feminine reserve, transferred his serious wooing to her who would have been his spontaneous choice in the family, had not the lures of Lady Clarinda been spread to entoil him as her captive.

Adelaide, from the confusion that now reigned, hastened the moment of her

departure, to remove the restraint her presence might lay their courtesy and kindness under, and bidding them such an adieu as a feeling and grateful heart could inspire, returned to her cottage, to cherish alternately her hopes and fears ; and when her thoughts could stray from Montagu and turn to the sudden transition from cheerful happiness to consternation and distress in the Melcombe family, she sighed to think Lord Melcombe was thus removed from giving his testimony to the fact of her punctuality in writing to her husband, should Montagu still be influenced to disbelieve her,—a testimony she had forborne to request, lest it should lead to a suspicion of who had overwhelmed her with such affliction ; and whilst the removal of one of Melcombe Park lords occasioned her regret, that of the other would have afforded her pleasure, had it been caused by any agency but family calamity.

Although poor Adelaide could cherish no hope of the post bringing her the reply of Montagu on the morning after her return to seclusion, yet to evening she looked for her consolation.

“ For, perhaps,” her ardent heart whispered, “ Montagu, fearing his epistle of returning kindness might meet a similar fate to my last packets, may send Richard to me, as the safe convoy of my treasure.”

But evening came, and with it no treasure, no comfort for Adelaide; who, moping and melancholy, retired to her pillow of wakeful sorrow: but, with the returning orb of day, new hopes sprung up in sanguine expectations, but again they met the bitter pang of disappointment, and another night drew in, and no letter, no Bouverie appeared; and, as one forlorn of every other resource, she despatched her coachman to Marino, to inquire, when the family were expected home? who soon returned with intelligence to our dismayed heroine,

“ Of orders having been received that very day by the housekeeper to desist from any arrangements for their speedy return; as Lady Marian had been alarmingly ill, and though now considered out of danger, yet too little advanced in recovery to fix any period for the family’s return to Marino.”

Agonizing, now, were the pangs which tortured the anguished bosom of the tenderly attached, neglected, Adelaide; since, now, no hope-inspiring doubt cheered her heart, of the direful belief that Montagu, in alarm and interest for the life and recovery of Lady Marian, had lost all recollection of his wretched wife.

CHAPTER II.

FROM the restless pillow of apprehension's pointed thorns Adelaide again arose, pale, languid, and unrefreshed, to encounter another day of bitter disappointment, through which she had recourse to every talent she possessed, to chase the dire influence of despondence, by unceasing employment; and never did industrious individual toil more perseveringly with the labouring oar to gain subsistence, than Adelaide now did against her nerveless powers, her wandering thoughts, her recoiling inclinations, to preserve the equilibrium of her firmness; and though nothing but the addresses of her devotion could yield one moment of pleasure's occupation to her hours, yet nothing could detach her from her toils; for if while she trained her flowers in her garden, or portico, and that the misery of her heart overpowered her into momentary forgetfulness of her employment; or if that misery stayed her hand, in her strains of harmony,

or closed the page of science or instruction, as she read, and stole its baneful influence through every pulse ; she with the bound of elasticity, springing from affection's inspiration, would renew with avidity her toil of duty, whilst mentally she exclaimed,—

“I must not yield to my anguished thoughts, lest illness should subdue me ; and that, deprived of my senses, I might utter, in my ravings, murmurs against my husband.”

The appetite of poor Adelaide was now flown with her happiness ; and Obearn and Dennis had the grief once more to take meal after meal from before her, scarcely lessened by her, whose happiness they mourned for ; yet dared to make no comment to her upon the cause of all they lamented ; for though tenderly attached to her nurse, and gratefully so to Dennis ; though mild and docile, and as amenable to the control of friendship, or sage advisers, as in her days of childhood they had early learned, she would bear no condemnation of her husband, even from them ; and that she turned with the wary eye, and

dexterity, of almost maniac cunning, from all that could lead to awakening a censure against Montagu: all they, therefore, now could do, was to talk and lament together the blight of her peace, and plan a plot for its restoration, and find their plans abortive; for Dennis to cramp his fingers daily in writing to Lee, Fitzpatrick, and Richard, to inquire, “if it was dead they were?” and to weary his poor leg in walking to the post-office, to Marino, and Bexhill, to seek some alleviation for the *darlingt's* sorrows.

And as successful, too, proved the efforts of these faithful, affectionate, humble friends, to persuade the sorrow-stricken Adelaide, for the preservation of her health, to extend her range for exercise beyond the circumscribed pleasure-grounds belonging to the cottage; for to her little lawn, garden, and portico, her promenade was now solely confined; her carriage never entered by her, and even her favourite walk upon the beach neglected; for Montagu had accused her of growing levity, had suspected her of horrid possibilities, and she had determined the

boundaries of the domain she inhabited should be the land-mark she would never stray beyond, until he returned, to feel conviction of her innocence, and expand again her wings of undefiled purity.

In Adelaide's indefatigably toiled-for round of salutary employment, the adornment of Montagu's dressing-room was not forgotten by her ; and each day the vases were replenished with a new collection of the choicest flowers.

" Nothing shall wither, nothing shall decay, through neglect, here," she would mentally exclaim ; " and when Montagu returns, he shall find his flowers fresh as my unfading affection."

This apartment now became the favourite retreat of the dejected and neglected Adelaide : to it, her *porte-feuille*, her globes, and books, were, one after another, conveyed by her ; and had her musical instruments been equally portable for her hand, they, too, would have found a local charm gifted by the magic of Bouverie's name ; for on each trunk and box around her was that engraved ; and here were the most successful touches given to a beautiful

miniature of Montagu she was secretly painting in the finest style of surpassing excellence, to become the partner of her bosom.

Six heavy-pinioned days had thus moved tardily over the head of the suspense-tortured Adelaide; when expectation, enfeebled by constant disappointment, scarcely turned the eye of hope towards the hour for the post's arrival, that Dennis burst into the room, with a letter in his hand:

"From the master, jewel!" he exclaimed; "'tis his own hand and seal; but the post mark is London!"

"London!" reiterated the agitated Adelaide, seizing the letter with all her might, as if she feared being bereaved of it by the imps of Lady Marian's magic; and as she carried it with the enthusiasm of her feelings to her lips, murmured out, "London!" What can have taken Montagu to London?"

"Sure we will know, *whin* we read our letters, jewel! myself has the ditto from Lee, dated the self same place," exclaimed Dennis, retiring; and now, flattering

himself he had brought comfort to the *darlingt*.

With the paralyzed fingers of hope and fear-inspiring agitation she unfolded the letter, and read, long ere her senses seemed to comprehend, the following lines :

• Dear ADELAIDE !

“ Most unexpected business calling me to town for a few days, and having several commissions to execute for my fair friends in General Harley’s family, you will much oblige me by sending me immediately the direction to the shop where your India shawl, you had at the Hastings ball, was purchased.

“ I shall esteem it a particular favour, also, if you, or Obearn, can take the trouble of remembering any prescription of Mr. Falkland’s for fainting fits, and will have the goodness to transmit it to me, that I may convey it to poor Lady Marian Harley, who was taken dangerously ill on the very day I went on my *Quixotic* expedition to nurse you in illness, or soothe you in affliction.

“ You must think me a sad idle fellow,

not, ere this, to have answered the long epistle you took such an infinity of condescending trouble to write, at *last*, to me: but the fact was, when Richard brought it, the life of Lady Marian was scarcely considered out of danger; and no one but an inhuman insensate could have attended to the answering of extorted letters from cold ceremony's correspondents in an hour of direful anxiety; of pity for a suffering world, menaced with the loss of the brightest example of female excellence it ever boasted; and, after that eventful period, preparation for my unexpected trip to town pressed so heavily on me, I had not a moment to read your letter with that due attention the elaborate endeavour you made, to convince me you felt for the uneasiness you had occasioned me, required.

“ However, on my journey to town, I purposed your letter should have been the companion of my solitary way, that my ingenious endeavours might strive to satisfy me, (as I toiled for them in my uninterrupted perusal of your well imagined composition) with the little you

condescended to urge in your vindication ; but, unluckily, I left it behind me in the pocket of my uniform.

“ The Harleys will be at Marino almost immediately ; and I would recommend you to accept any invitation you now receive from them, as it will not prove very gratifying to me to hear you censured for the country *Missiness* of unbending formality.

“ I remain your’s truly,

“ M. B.”

“ It was a little unfortunate, was it not, for the sublime effect of your intended sacrifice of your Melcombe Park gayeties to my admonition ; the family being called from their home, and compelled to so prompt a dispersion of their guests ?”

Again, and still again, Adelaide read this extraordinary epistle, ere she could perfectly comprehend it : but she shed not a tear ; for the total indifference, nay the contempt, it seemed to indicate for her, harrowed up her finer feelings, freezing the current of her sensibility, and chilling

her vital warmth to the shiverings of horror-inspired agitation, until the anguish of wounded affection relit some genial spark by the innovation of indignant feeling in her gentle bosom ; and, for the first time, her heart prompted censures against the conduct of Montagu.

“ And was the vindication of my fame, were my sufferings on being so debasingly suspected,” she mentally exclaimed, in direful anguish, “ of so little interest to my husband, that he could detach no moment from the business he voluntarily performs for others, to give my letter his serious, unprejudiced consideration ? Had I not one pitying friend remaining in his bosom, to remind him—it was his wife,—the orphan confided to his protection by his credulous friend and patron, whose claim for justice was before him ?—Oh, Montagu ! Montagu ! how have you deceived my uncle ! how have you deluded me !—We believed you the possessor of every human excellence : but what have I proved you ? Unfeeling,—unjust,—un—”

Here, an intuitive impulse broke the unfinished censure, as if with a sudden

shock of electricity ;—she blushed,—she hung her head ;—tears started to her eyes, and, with energy, she clasped her beautiful hands, as firmly she aspirated

“ Oh! forgive me, Heaven and Montagu ! for thus, in the impetuosity of angry passion, reviling, so unchristianly, the conduct of my husband !”

“ Yes, yes, it was unchristian,” repeated the repentant Adelaide, now pacing the room in all the mental inquietude that oppressed her ; “ for could I not perceive, through the tone of his whole letter, that his mind is perverted, turned from the ingenuousness of his generous confiding nature, by the baneful influence of jealousy, implanted carefully in his bosom by my cruel, cruel rival !”

Adelaide, now convinced she had erred towards Montagu, by her angry censure, though breathed to no mortal ear, became all anxiety, all impatience, to make him every atonement in her power, and summoned Obearn, to learn from her if she remembered any particular prescription of her dear guardian’s for persons subject to fainting fits ?

Obearn obeyed the summons with such evident traces of stifled grief and agitation upon her countenance, that her lovely nursling, in dismay, promptly divined some dire intelligence from Lee, relative to her blighted happiness, was its source; but resolutely conquering her painful curiosity, and commanding these newly-awakened alarms to a silent station in her wounded heart, she hastened to make her inquiries for the benefit of Lady Marian.

But Obearn had no memory upon this occasion.—Had Adelaide's inquiries been for deadly drugs, for noxious poisons, for recipes to annihilate, her recollection had, probably, proved more retentive.

All, therefore, that her own memory could supply her with, for the benefit of Lady Marian, Adelaide transmitted to paper, with the direction to Bouverie of where he might possibly find such a shawl as her's.

After thus complying with the requests of Montagu, Adelaide proceeded in her letter, with much delicacy of inherent kindness, to request her husband to make use of the little cash she had still remaining

in the hands of Messrs. ———, since she knew his period for claims upon any of his funds was not yet arrived, and that he greatly disliked anticipations of those resources : and next, with all the sweetness of one who had not received such terrible cause for resentment, she mildly intimated,

“ That having proved herself so feeble a pleader in her own cause, she should now confide it solely to the advocate within her husband’s bosom for her ; secure of finding, on some auspicious day for her, a kind and honourable acquittal.”

The moment our heroine had completed her letter, she despatched it by Dennis to the regimental post-bag at Bexhill, and who returned with intelligence extraordinary, which no motive existed for withholding from the *darlingt*.

“ Ah ! then, jewel ! sure this Lady Marian must have been humbugging the people,—shamming Abraham !” he exclaimed the moment he entered the room where this adored child, he helped to rear, was sitting, “ or sorrow ready could she be ready for other shams in no time at all, at all.—Och ! murder ! from a death bed

upon a stage!—Faith, that's the queerest jump for a delicate lady to take, myself ever heard of."

"What mean you, Dennis?" exclaimed Adelaide, in dismay,—“Is—can Lady Marian be gone in a stage, to—to any where?"

"Oh! faith, jewel! if she was gone in the last stage on her way to kingdom come, more grief to me if I would be the one to clap a drag on her wheel, or squeeze out so much as an onion's distillation from my eyes for her; but 'tis to be making people shed tears for her, the only chance herself thinks she has for them, I suppose—she is going to die for the public amusement, as a play actor, a stage tramper, yonder *beyant* in the grounds of Marino; where there is a mighty grand theatre stuck up by the owners of the place, where they say my lady is to exhibit as a Fair Penitent: but I can never believe that she'll proclaim her sins by public penitence; not she, the garran! Och! if I could see her in her winding sheet in the church porch, I would think her ghost the finest piece of flesh and blood myself ever set eyes on.

But for a certainty a fine scene furbisher is arrived from town, to put the theatre in order; and they are going to act plays, and humbugs, as my lady and the colonel, and these Gayvilles and Warrens, used to be going on with at Malta.

“Faith, and myself thinks it would be fitter for them not to be dashing the money about in this fashion, nor be running in debt up and down, and imposing on people by sham fits, and such *pilaver*; to go and be dabbling with money-lenders, and such kind, and mortgaging their own lawful property from their unborn heirs, for such cattle.”

Adelaide interpreted all this latter intelligence, as information conveyed in Lee's letter; and although dismayed by the menace of future ruin it conveyed, yet forbore to make a comment on any part of Dennis's communications, lest it should operate as encouragement to betray more explicitly to her the infatuated imprudence of her husband.

A day of melancholy rumination this proved to Adelaide; for, in despite of her numerous employments, thought was ac-

tive ; for many were the torturing themes that would obtrude to agonize her bleeding heart.

When evening's close called our poor recluse from her circumscribed rambles round and round her limited premises, she flew as usual to her harp, to find employment at that for the intervening moments, until a sufficient decrease of light made candles necessary ; and as usual she drew the instrument near the door, into the portico, to catch the fullest rays of twilight.

The voice of Adelaide had breathed its fascinating melody through several enchanting strains, to the most beautiful accompaniment that mortal hand could compass, when her harmony received a sudden check ; for a deep drawn sigh stole on her ear.

Her heart for one moment fluttered with alarm ; then bounded with joy ; for the deluder, Hope, whispered it was Montagu. She paused—she listened—she trembled ;—expectation was disappointed, and alarm was dissipated ; no repetition of sigh, or any sound, but the breeze of evening, stealing through the surrounding foliage,

broke on her attentive ear ; and assured at length it was fancy's sigh had disturbed her, she renewed her melody, and ventured to sound for herself a little composition of her own, of touchingly plaintive sweetness, to the celebrated lines of our immortal bard—

“ She never told her love,” &c.

and given with the resistless effect of her sympathetic feeling, she subdued the firmness of the fascinated Duke of St. Kilda, as he in ambush listened ; and as she breathed her last melting cadence, he sunk at her feet, overpowered by the inthrallment of his captivated heart, his enraptured senses.

The dismay of Adelaide could only be exceeded by her resentment ; and the rising impulse of the former was only suspended by the indignation of the latter ; and the shriek of terror was promptly changed to the impressive tone of offended virtue's stern reproof.

“ Oh chide me not, angel of every excellence !” exclaimed the trembling, direfully agitated duke, catching her robe, as she endeavoured to fly, “ for as soon dare I profane the celestial Power your mind is

governed by, as come hither with an intention to insult you.—Oh! Adelaide! revered and sacred idol of my soul! to Bouverie's self your fame is not more precious than to me."

"Then why, my lord, this inexcusable intrusion?" responded the trembling Adelaide, scarcely supporting her spirits against a burst of terror-inspired tears—"Why break in on my retirement at such an hour, with such suspicious appearance of every thing insulting to my prudence as a woman, my conduct as a wife?"

"Your voice, your own seraphic voice, unjust, ungenerous Adelaide! inthrall'd my prudence, and led me, spell-bound by its resistless magic, still on, and on, to listen, as returning from a solitary ramble I passed this way; until fascination conquered every faculty, and I lost my power to guide myself: but your voice, in terrible change, sounding reproof, recalled my senses to the direful recollection of the insuperable barrier that fate has placed between us.

"That voice which led me to offend, sounding suspicion of my honour and of

my reverence for you, now sends me from you a wretch more miserable than when your resistless fascination led me hither to offend you.—Ere then, I could delude my breaking heart with the flattering belief that you esteemed me ;—but now the torturing pang is mine to know, you consider me a miscreant, meriting your detestation.”

“ Oh ! forgive me ! ” exclaimed the pitying Adelaide, now subdued from her indignation by the mental agony his grace so unequivocally endured ; “ but the peculiar delicacy of my present insulated situation must plead my excuse for thus wounding your feelings by the injustice of my suspicion ; and believe not, duke, the being whose life you have saved, is ungrateful for that preservation ; and rest assured, that deeply, most deeply, I deplore my sensibly felt misfortune, in proving the cause of one moment of unhappiness to you ; and that all the esteem my heart is capable of conceiving for a highly valued friend, shall be yours, when I find you have successfully struggled with a weakness, which is not for your peace or my comfort your thus cherishing.’ ”

“ Oh ! Adelaide, Adelaide ! say but again—repeat the anguish-chasing sound, that your esteem is not, like your love, hopeless for my attainment !”

“ My lord,” replied Adelaide, “ I am anxious to esteem you ; am anxious that you should respect me ; and to ensure those earnest wishes of my heart, I am now compelled to the inhospitality of bidding you good night.”

“ Adieu ! estimable, as lovely being !” exclaimed the agitated duke, catching a fold of her drapery in her retreat, and pressing it with the reverence of idolatry to his lips ; and then rushed from the portico, in the moment this adored being of all his hopes and speculations vanished from the room.

CHAPTER III.

THE painfully agitated Adelaide now fled, with all the speed of one escaping from destruction, to the dressing-room of her husband; as if that, from its appertaining particularly to Montagu, was the most secure sanctuary she could fly to from the shafts of slander; and where, after the first conflict of her perturbation had subsided sufficiently to prevent her recent alarm from evincing itself, she rang for lights: and when Obearn appeared with them, she said,—

“I think, my own Norah, I shall like my glass of milk up stairs to-night, and that I shall sit here always until Montagu returns.”

“There is a two-foot square closet on the house-top,” replied Obearn gravely, “had you not better at once enclose yourself in that, until my master comes home?”

Adelaide, who could not endure her beloved nurse should be out of her confidence, where she infringed no duty by

confiding in her, now threw herself upon her affectionate bosom, to hide the blushes which tinted her cheeks, as she whispered lowly in her ear, the unsanctioned appearance of the Duke of St. Kilda in the portico.

Obearn was now thrown into as great alarm and distress as her darling child herself had been, by this imprudently infatuated man ; and no longer objected to the determination of her nursling, to sit up stairs in future ; and lest his grace should have been seen by any individual upon the premises, she thought it expedient to account for her mistress's retreat up stairs, by stating, " she had been alarmed by seeing a man in the portico ;" and therefore, in consequence, issued orders to Dennis to close all the windows and doors, in future, ere the evening set in.

On the subsequent morning Richard arrived with Bouverie's horses ; and brought intelligence, that the general and family would be at Marino that very evening.

" My lady has *perked* up surprisingly, for one of the gentry," said Richard to Obearn, " after such an illness as came

pounce-like upon her, in about an hour after master set out for hoam, to turn weathercock when he got here; but 'twas well the wind blew him back, as I take it; for my lady must have doied, folks think, only master thought on some right doctor's stuff that cured her: but an she had a relapse, we had been in a fine way in master's absence; for the very next evening his honour trundled off in the mail for Lunnon, attended by Mr. Lee, as sullen as an old bear *surelie*; and no sooner was his honour gone, than up my lady gets, and dizens herself out as fine as two-pence, and played at rubbers in her dressing-room, to divert her after her fright of dying."

Obearn now inquired if Richard had himself delivered his mistress's letter to his master?

"Yes, sure; I be never worse than my word, Mrs. Obearn; and I can tell you his honour snatched it in eagerness loik from me, and opened it with a hand all of a *queak*, and face as red as a rose; and began a reading, as I warrant me he did her love-letters ere they married;

but ere he had toime gin him to read more than, ‘Honoured husband, This comes, hoping you be well,’—or such loike line, in popped Mustress Colemun, with word, my lady wanted his honour forthwith; so with that he crams the letter into his pocket; and so I heard nor saw nothing more about it.”

When Lady Marian, through alarm at the growing influence of Adelaide upon the heart of Bouverie, caused this politic separation, she found, to her jealous rage and torment, even in that separation she had much to perform, to effect the monopoly of affection she panted for; and amongst many of her diabolical devices, was that of intercepting every letter of Adelaide’s to Montagu, and many of Montagu’s to her; by which manœuvre she awakened the resentment of wounded feeling in the mind of Bouverie against his wife, so suited for jealous impressions; and the intelligence she received from her faithful emissary, the valet of Lord Woodley, she worked upon, and distilled into the poisonous draughts she wished this idol of her passion to drink deeply of:

but contrary to her hopes and expectations was the operation of her baneful infusion ; for Bouverie, instead of writhing in jealous indignation, persuaded himself into a firm belief, that sickness, or the misfortunes of some one whom she loved, had subdued Adelaide, and occasioned her extraordinary silence ; and that of Dennis to Lee ; as none of his letters either had been permitted to reach their place of destination ; and at length set out for Melcombe Park, in defiance of all the subtle arts of the dismayed Lady Marian to prevent him.

But in an inauspicious moment he arrived at the village of —, to behold Adelaide in the midst of those gayeties which had been portrayed for him in all the artfully glowing colours of perverting malice ; and when the seldom attempted assiduities of the Duke of St. Kilda appeared conspicuous, by his suddenly withdrawing from the reel to follow Adelaide to her station by Lady Melcombe.

The chameleon eyes of Bouverie now instantly beheld all before him through the green telescope of phrensied jealousy :

and when in this moment he heard one of the villagers tell to another among the throng of gazers, "That beautiful young lady was getting her picture drawn at Melcombe Park, to add to Lord Woodley's collection of beauties"—the jealous passion of Montagu subdued reason, and every auxiliary that could have favoured Adelaide in his mind; for on the memory of his heart had been engraven the very words with which she had declined the proposition of her uncle, to have her portrait taken :

"I once sat for my picture; my mother was the artist, and I was fondly encircled in my father's arms, as she took the resemblance of her husband and her child, just—just before my father left us for the fatal continent; and I remember it all: her fond looks, and his caresses—and how can I ever again have my portrait taken, my dear, dear uncle?"

"Now all this is forgotten in the mind of Adelaide, and vanity has led her to overcome her filial sensibility, to gratify this libertine!" Bouverie mentally exclaimed, and in maniac impetuosity

obeyed the impulse of indignant resentment, and flew from his home to the siren, whom he believed lived only now for him.

Far Bouverie had not proceeded on his anger's flight, when he met a private express from Mrs. Coleman, imploring his return forthwith, or the life of her lady must fall a sacrifice; for that she had been taken dangerously ill the moment almost succeeding his departure; and, in her delirium, had betrayed to her, her illness was caused by direful alarms, awakened by his absence.

This intelligence made prompt effect upon the heart of Bouverie, whose speed now impelled by the tumult of his feelings, he arrived at ——— in time to experience the anguish of near an hour's uncertainty, relative to the life of this infatuating siren; for that period elapsed, after her faithful Coleman had carefully announced to her that he was returned, ere the attending physician found reason to pronounce this passion-phrensied inamorata out of danger.

In the moment of Bouverie's most unexpected and precipitate departure for Melcombe Park, Lady Marian's projects, she

flattered herself, were in the altitude of fair promise. Though enamoured to almost infatuation, yet the voice of worldly interest could be heard in her bosom; and while she was making her speculating arrangements for all she was resolved should occur, she calculated that, independent of the preservation of her fame, it would be more to her interest not to prove the cause of impoverishing Bouverie, by throwing damage thousands into the coffers of the hateful Harley; but still to continue her Platonic system, until the intemperance of the general should dissolve her union with him by death, and the misconduct of Adelaide free her husband, and pour twenty thousand pounds, at least, into his purse, out of the Duke of St. Kilda's stores; and that both these wished-for events would soon take place, she buoyed her heart up with the flattering expectation of; as the general evinced fast augmenting symptoms of determined *felo de se* upon his constitution; and Monsieur Espion, Lord Woodley's valet, was too courteous to permit a lady to pay amply for intelligence that would not please her, and, therefore, sent

off his diurnal despatches to his *chere amie* Coleman, with accounts of the Melcombe Park revels, and their effect upon Mrs. Bouverie ; and of his own lord's violent passion for her ; and the rapid progress the Duke of St. Kilda was making in her favour ;—formed, from his own diabolical imagination, into what would prove most welcome to the lady who had purchased his services ; and so welcome all proved, that it obtained firm footing in her implicit belief : and now secure of each impeding obstacle being speedily removed, she was plotting to detain Bouverie, out of the way of inauspicious interference, until the duke's power was more secured ; when Bouverie, in defiance of all her spells, set out for Melcombe Park.

This prompt departure, with all the interest it betrayed for Adelaide, plunged at once a dagger to the doating heart of this enamoured woman, and brought on, by the violence of her alarm and rage, an indisposition of a most alarming aspect.

The moment that possibility would admit of it, Bouverie was introduced by Mrs. Coleman to the bed-side of her lady,

where wan and languid, and interestingly dejected, he now beheld this dangerous seducer, who, with all the pathos suited to entoil his feelings, portrayed her despair at his supposed dereliction, as the cause of her direful illness ; and her certainty from it, that if she lost one particle of his affection, her instant death would prove the inevitable consequence.

This passion-snare operated with such evident good success, that in a few hours the siren's infatuating strains were repeated ; another interview was contrived by Mrs. Coleman, when Lady Marian, with all the tears and mental agony of necessity struggling against her wishes, revealed to this infatuated young man—
“ That the desperate state of the general's affairs were such at that moment, if she could not contrive by some means to raise a thousand pounds, their immediate ruin would be sealed ;—a knowledge of what her imprudent, though well-meant concealment of the derangement of his affairs, must burst like the fell shock of death's cannon upon her poor husband ; and her life, in such a moment of subdued strength, would also fall a prompt sacrifice.”

Bouverie's mind, wound up to a climax of tender passion and pity for her, and just in the susceptible state of shaking off the anguished grief, inflicted by his apprehensions for her life, was exactly in the mood to be moulded by her wiles into her sinister purposes; and he too readily assented to setting off that evening to London, to raise money for her extrication, by a mortgage upon his paternal inheritance.

But scarcely had Bouverie given this precipitate promise, than he felt conviction of his error. Compunction for injustice to Adelaide, and the offspring they might be blessed with, keenly pained his tortured bosom; but it was now too late to recede, since nothing could tempt him to break a promise to this fascinating invalid; for to disappoint a hope so fully awakened in her bosom, might in her present delicate state, prove fatal to her: but although his interest for this sorceress was in glowing animation, that for Adelaide was now aroused too, by the idea of injustice to her: and dwelling upon one subject of injustice towards her, led him to the contemplation of another possible

one, in having censured her without sufficient cause ; and he meditated upon this possibility, until it assumed the aspect of probability, which he gladly welcomed to his bosom ; as in penitence for all his misdeeds to her, his heart melted in tender sympathy for her ; and with hope and joy, in full belief of finding her acquitted in it, he took his wife's letter with a trembling hand from Richard.

But too quickly the fell agent of discord appeared to summon Bouverie again to Lady Marian ; not allowing him a moment to peruse a letter, they doubted not Richard would be the bearer of ; and were therefore on the attentive watch for his arrival, to time their moment of Machiavelian interruption.

Lady Marian, by instantly demanding " If he had not received a letter from Mrs. Bouverie ? " obtained the prompt power of parlying for the perusal of it. Bouverie declared he had not yet read it himself ; and therefore knew not if he could with propriety, shew it even to her.

" It was evident then," she said, " that a tender understanding subsisted between

him and his idol wife ; and she was the dupe, the wretched dupe of his perfidy and art ;” and in a well-sustained scene of jealous refinement’s anguish, she worked upon the feelings of Bouverie so completely, by his fears of throwing her into a renewal of illness, that he weakly gave to her hand the letter of poor Adelaide, to have its import make the first impression on his mind, through the subtile machinations of her artful rival ; and every sentence it contained found prompt perversion, through the wily influence of this insidious woman.

But even yet, the heart of Bouverie shrunk from the condemnation of his wife ; and in defiance of alarm for the effect of the irritation of jealousy upon the frame of this infatuator, he warmly supported Adelaide’s right to be believed, from her well known sacred, undeviating reverence to truth.

“Ah ! my soul’s idol !” exclaimed the artful siren, throwing her head from the pillow, where it had been reclining in interesting langor, upon his bosom, to hide, as it should seem, her blushes at the

transgressions she was about to plead guilty to—"was Adelaide, this saint of your's, a more pure, unspotted disciple of celestial truth than I was, ere my adoration of you led me to apostacy? Was Adelaide more firm, more inflexible in veracity than you were, until with me you were led to deviate for the concealment of our mutual passion? Both you and I, my treasure, who, ere we loved, would have turned in horror from the suggestion of uttering or framing falsehoods, what are we become, to steal the bliss of many a happy interview, and to secure ourselves from the censure of the world?—Why perfect adepts in the inventive art! Was my mind less pure; was your honour more corruptible, than Adelaide's? or why not believe the possibility that she may be taught, by a growing illicit passion, how to dissimulate too?"

Bouverie, who fanatically believed that Lady Marian's celestially stamped mind had known no blemish, until it imbibed its fatal passion for him, was compelled to believe in the possibility of illicit love teaching even Adelaide to become a dissi-

mulator; but from the conviction of that dire passion having entered her bosom to defile it, he turned in horror, and grew sick at heart.

But with this insidious argument, the wily Marian closed not her toils for the overthrow of Adelaide's peace; for she left nothing unsaid, nothing unattempted, during the intervening hours until Bouverie's departure, for town, to work upon the inflammable matter in his mind, necessary to the accomplishing the destruction of Adelaide, in the estimation of her husband; and, as a climax to this day's diabolical manœuvring, she contrived to purloin, in the moment of her last ardent embrace of tender adieu, the letter of Adelaide from the pocket of Bouverie, where she had seen him carefully place it, that he might peruse it on his way, uninfluenced by the voice of prejudice.

Not even in absence from Bouverie, could this fiend of malice desist from her warfare against the peace of Adelaide: and promptly she dispatched intelligence to him, which conveyed conviction with a

barbed shaft into his tortured breast, that Adelaide had learned duplicity.

As Monsieur Espion had not accompanied his lord upon his pursuit of his brother, but had followed with the family into Yorkshire, he had leisure for one more mischievous dispatch, to obtain a reward from Lady Marian; and, therefore, informed Mrs. Coleman of the elopement, the pursuit, and Lady Melcombe's seizing both, as an excuse for dispersing her guests, as she had become uneasy at Lord Woodley's no longer veiled attachment to Mrs. Bouverie; and at her having been won by him to sit for her picture for him, which was wonderfully like: and the communications of this diabolical epistle, with many additions and embellishments, accompanied by Machiavelian annotations, were dispatched with all convenient speed to the hotel where Bouverie remained, while mortgaging part of his inheritance, for the purpose of giving one thousand pounds to the subtle Marian, for defraying the expense of raising the cash, for purchasing gifts to evince his adoration of this infa-

tuator, and to prevent his feeling so much pecuniary distress as he had lately done.

To the idea of Adelaide's ever proving a defaulter in the path of virtue, Bouverie's heart continued an inconvertible infidel; but to the possibility of her becoming less sacred in excellence than she had hitherto proved, Lady Marian had brought his mind to subscribe; and in these moments, when the poisons of this sorceress's distillations, were operating most powerfully, would almost believe that such a descent from pre-eminence in goodness would be a relief to him; since then his transgressions would sit more easy on his conscience: but soon this last information convinced him he was mistaken; for although he wrote to Adelaide under the first impulse of feeling it inspired, which was contempt at her duplicity, mingled with his jealousy, yet scarcely was his letter gone, than his long cherished impressions of Adelaide arose to torture him, through direful contrast; and had she been the adored unrivalled wife of his tender affection, he could not have deplored with more poignant anguish this first unequivocal proof, as he believed it, of her

lapse from the most exalted state of sublimated excellence.

The answer of Adelaide arrived, and the perverted senses of Bouverie read it with horror. In vain did her touching appeal to his heart, for a fair and candid acquittal, thrill through that bar, and call up judge and jury in her cause: for her draft upon her banker was ascribed to the inspiration of the demon of growing art, which now possessed her, as a feeling trap to bribe him to forgetfulness of the dissimulation she had evinced, relative to her pretended voluntary removal from the allurements of Melcombe Park; and, with phrensical contempt, he tore it to atoms: and now every delay that could be projected to retard his return to the presence of this deceptive Adelaide, he would have devised, until his mind could learn to feel at ease, in the bitter necessity of despising her; only, that each hour of delay he made added to the pecuniary disquietude of his inestimable and adored Marian, who wrote most plausibly to tell him—"That to lure his mind from feeling too severely, the great shock his disappointed high opinion of his

wife's candour and truth had sustained, she had prevailed upon the general to permit a renewal of their theatricals, which had obtained for her and him such unbounded applause at Malta."

The arrival of Richard was almost immediately succeeded by that of the post, with a packet forwarded by Lord De Moreland's banker, containing a letter from his lordship, dated Madrid, and addressed to both his beloved children, Montagu and Adelaide.

The susceptibility of Adelaide's feelings, made it almost a task requiring the aid of fortitude, to commence the perusal of this tender relative's letter, lest she should find in it any thing to afflict her, since letters now to her were become sources of sorrow ; and like a presentiment was this alarm of feeling ; for although his lordship spoke most favorably of his health, and talked of his shortly returning to England, yet it was a letter that powerfully affected her, since in every line was betrayed a miserable anxiety relative to their happiness, by the tautology of hope upon hope of their being so ; a frequent recapitulation of his having

received letters from his dear Adelaide, replete with grateful expressions for her husband's kindness and tenderness during her terrible malady: but from Montagu not one line had reached him.—“Had Montagu forgotten him, or why not write to tell him of that happiness he had hoped was so certain?”

“Alas! alas! my uncle, you who knew the heart of Montagu was not mine, when under the delusion of falacious hopes, he married me!—You doubt, you fear, you tremble, for our happiness; and the sad, sad certainty will await your return, however we attempt to deceive you, that we are wretched!” sobbed out the heart-rived Adelaide, who by no one occupation through this cheerless day,—no not even from her devotions, could throw off the melancholy forebodings which the tone of her uncle's letter had inspired.

CHAPTER IV.

THE succeeding morning, as Adelaide was pensively training some of her flowers in the little pleasure-ground before her cottage, General Harley and Major Gayville entered the premises on horseback; when perceiving her at her employment, they rode up to her, and being pressed for time, apologized for not alighting.

General Harley said, he was come to put her charity to the test, by trying if she would take pity upon a poor invalid, and dine, *sans ceremonie*, at Marino, the following day, to aid in raising the spirits of his poor Marian.

Instantly Adelaide assented, in consonance with the wishes of Montagu; and in now making a still more particular inquiry for the health of her ladyship, than their meeting civilities had allowed time for, the general branched off into a most circumstantial account of how ill she had been.

"I really believe," he added, "I should

have lost her, only the unexpected revels at Melcombe Park sent Bouverie so suddenly back to us, in escape from them; when he providentially remembering a prescription of your guardian, Mrs. Bouverie, this famous Doctor Falkland effected her almost instant and miraculous cure."

While the general thus recounted the manner by which the recovery of Lady Marian was effected, a smile of contemptuous pity at such blind credulity sat on the countenance of the sneering Major; and though unnoted by General Harley, did not escape the observation of Adelaide; who had further to hear this deceived husband utter high eulogiums upon the kindness of Bouverie to himself and his Marian; and to pronounce his own regard for him, as one of the most highly estimated of his friends.

Every word of this eulogium struck with a deep wound to the heart of Adelaide; for all betrayed to her a system of deceit and perfidy towards this confiding friend; and the moment General Harley departed, this heart-riven wife flew to her own cham-

ber, where locking herself in, she with scalding tears bewailed this fell stain upon Montagu's excellence; and fervently prayed to Heaven to exterminate from his bosom this baleful passion for Lady Marian, ere it blighted thus each fair blossoming virtue of his heart.

Difficult now became the task to Adelaide, of shutting out from her contemplation all but the perfections of Montagu; for the idea of his perfidy to a confiding friend would obtrude in anguished misery to her heart; rending the veil which duty or affection strove with all their power to raise, to hide them from her; and in terror, lest such contemplation should weaken her affection, she flitted about the house, finding no refuge from misery in any avocation, roving and restless, like the ghost of murdered Peace.

Nor on her pillow could our poor heroine find that oblivion the wretched woo, until exhausted nature took precedence of care, and sunk her senses in a troubled sleep as day began to dawn.

The post of this day brought letters to Adelaide from Lady Beechbrook and Ro-

salind, announcing their having been tempted by the fineness of the weather, to run over from Port Patrick to Donaghadee, to make a tour through Ireland; but not one line arrived from Montagu.

At length the dejected and reluctant Adelaide set out with trembling heart and fear-chilled frame to Marino, where the first individual she beheld on entering the drawing-room was the Duke of St. Kilda.

Worlds poor Adelaide would have given not to have met the Duke of St. Kilda at all, whilst the erroneously imbibed impressions in her husband's mind were not obliterated; but meeting him at Marino, increased her distress; as there she knew each word, each look, which urbanity compelled them to interchange, would be perverted in representation to Montagu; but although trembling in coward apprehension of this conviction, she called up all the powers of her mind, to aid her in effecting an unembarrassed manner, when she paid her compliments of courtesy to the duke; and so well did she succeed, as to awaken the chagrin of disappointment in the bosom of the warily observing mis-

chief Marian, who now feared she should have only invention to aid her in her meditated tales, for the ear of the now too credulous Bouverie.

As Lady Marian meant by her captivating sweetness of manners, by displaying her pre-eminent talents and rich stores of mental cultivation, to strike poor Adelaide with firm conviction that her feeble light could never shine, where so resplendent a luminary blazed with dazzling brilliancy, she placed our heroine on a sofa beside her, and commenced her winning wiles.

At dinner Lady Marian being the arranger of places, established the Duke between herself and Mrs. Bouverie; and while by her artful management, she kept alive the constant recollection in the minds of all, that his grace was the silent adorer of her lovely guest, she ceased not her brilliant display of intellectual stores, to astonish and overpower the humility of the timid Adelaide, to fathom whose mental endowments and rich funds of information, her ladyship must have wandered out of her own depth.

Mrs. Gayville, fancying herself a woman of great talent and profound erudition, aided considerably in the exhibition of Lady Marian's powers, by toiling to transfix the conversation in that channel, through which the streams of knowledge might most advantageously flow for herself and friend ; nor once did either lady perceive, that whilst under dominion of their own displaying vanity, they by their persevering discharge of their own mental artillery now and then attracted an explosion from Adelaide's deeply seated mines, that destroyed at once every impression they could make upon those citadels of admiration they were storming.

Lady Marian sat an immense time after dinner, revelling in this dearly loved feast of vanity's enjoyment, in which she had not for some time indulged ; since Bouverie condemned all talent exhibitions, and before him, whom beyond all others she wished to charm, she could therefore only venture to appear as one whose redundant current of knowledge would overflow the boundaries of merit's modesty, in spite of self-control ; but when at length

she did retire to the drawing-room, she had new arrangements made to entrap the admiration of Adelaide, that by alluring her esteem, through her dazzled fancy, she might lull every suspicion of her moral excellence, and hoodwink her to her entanglement of her husband.

Her ladyship's first manœuvre in this alluring project, was to wear the semblance of a tenderly adoring mother; her three children therefore awaited her in the drawing-room, where, to the surprise of the two eldest, she overwhelmed them, as well as their little brother, with caresses; and expatiated to Adelaide upon their fast budding virtues, and rapidly expanding perfections; although in the morning she had cruelly chastised them, and had vehemently pronounced them devoid of every excellence.

The youngest child, born at Malta, and named after Montagu, who was his sponsor, she took into her fondly circling arms; and from portraying his wonderful endowments, she reverted to the direful loss she had sustained by the death of her two eldest children; whose decease she now began

most piteously to deplore, either from believing it better late than never, or from finding this the first opportunity of doing it, that would answer any purpose; and she had just got to the altitude of her well sustained lamentations, and was drawing largely upon the sympathy of the feeling hearted Adelaide, when the lively Mrs. Warren exclaimed,—

“I cannot more bear such bad dolefuls;” and flying to the piano forte, began a lively air for the children to dance to; but finding that failed in the effect of drawing Lady Marian’s handkerchief from her eyes, she snatched up a violin, and by the most grotesque gestures and movements, as she fiddled and capered like a complete buffoon, she almost convulsed the children with laughter, and infected her ladyship with such fits of invincible risibility, that soon led Adelaide to perceive, pitying Lady Marian for the loss of her children, had been supererogation of sympathy.

Lady Marian now roused from her innovating scene of maternal sensibility, proceeded to the exhibition of her musical talents, which would have proved a for-

tune to any professor: she played with skill and execution seldom surpassed; and in her vocal performance, evinced to Adelaide that the most celebrated singer at the Opera House might envy Lady Marian; since her's was the exquisite voice, the style, the compass, the undaunted firmness, requisite for an accomplished first singer for the Opera.

At length her ladyship, perfectly satisfied of having thoroughly astonished and fascinated her hated rival, called for coffee, and sent her summons to the gentlemen.

The young Harley's had been so fascinated by Adelaide's attractive beauty and sweet manners, that, uninvited, they all insinuated themselves into her notice; and little Montagu was seated in her lap, and his brother and sister hanging on her arms, listening to Dame Hubbert, which at their request, she was reading to them, when the first detachment from the dining-room entered.

The eyes of the Duke of St. Kilda, who formed one of this readily attending group, now, as ever, where she was to be found to charm his vision, were instantly attracted

by the form of Adelaide, and now rested upon her in the eloquent gaze of ardent rapture, as he saw he was unobserved by her; but the wary perception of Lady Marian he escaped not, who instantly exclaimed—

“I can read in your eyes duke, that, like Mrs. Bouverie, you are fond of children.”

“Your penetration is profound, for I am indeed fond of children, particularly when they are so attractive as Lady Marian Harley’s,” replied the blushing duke, who now, in consequence of her ladyship’s remark, found it most happily incumbent on his urbanity to lead him to approach the object of his adoration, to take the children by the hand.

“What prodigious friends Mrs. Bouverie and your grace ought to be,” said her ladyship, smiling, “for I have discovered such congeniality of sympathies in you both this day, that your souls cannot be ought but kindred spirits.”

The duke was paradoxically affected by this remark: it gave the most lively thrill of pleasure to his heart, whilst it pained it

too for the delicacy of Adelaide, which he knew would be wounded by it; and to relieve her embarrassment became his aim, and promptly he commenced a conversation calculated for that purpose, and which happily succeeded.

A new detachment from the dining-room afforded her ladyship an opportunity of terminating a conversation, in which Adelaide had very much enraged her, by appearing so composed; and determined that she should not always have the power of so provokingly retaining her self-possession, she promptly formed the project of throwing her into an embarrassing situation ere the evening was far in its wane; and for this purpose she made a proposition for walking.

Her ladyship having proclaimed herself to all her guests as just recovering from the jaws of death, Adelaide felt something of astonishment on finding her one of the pedestrians.

“Neither Mrs. Bouverie or his grace, I am sorry to say, have been at Marino before,” said Lady Marian, as they were quitting the house; “therefore I shall

allot to myself the pleasure of being their *Cicconi*, as there are many things worth viewing here."

And now taking an arm of each, she proceeded onward to a beautifully romantic sort of thicket, in which they had not proceeded far, when Lady Marian said—

"The last day I was in this boscade, I had a little sort of *brouillerie* with Harley, which ended in a wager, which has not yet been decided; and I feel tempted now to discover if I shall be the loser; as in that case I will take care not to be the renewer of the subject. It was relative to three roads, which issue from one point, and terminate at another. Harley contends they are all of equal length, and I that they are not. Now, as there are three of us, and if we can endure to separate from each other for a very few minutes, we can, by keeping, on honor, steadily to our present pace, ascertain this business in a few seconds. Here now are the three paths, have you any reluctance to oblige me?"

"None, certainly," said the unsuspecting Adelaide; whom the sentence "if we

can endure to separate from each other," impelled to prompt acquiescence.

"Do you take that path ; you that ; and I this ;" exclaimed her ladyship ; "and if, as I hope, one arrives at the reunion of the paths before the other, let them feel assured there can be no exercise for patience, since their companions must be close at hand."

Adelaide, fearing to be first, lest she might have one moment's *tête-à-tête* with the duke, ere Lady Marian joined them, promptly persuaded herself she was proceeding too fast for the steady pace of her compeers ; and at length moving almost as slow as foot could fall, she encountered the duke, but no Lady Marian ; and after a short pause of distressing embarrassment, the alarmed Adelaide proposed their returning to seek her ladyship.

"Nay, give her one moment more ;" replied the duke. "But perhaps, she may be onwards a little, for you perceive there is no third path here."

Adelaide seeing that there was not, and agreeing to the possibility of finding Lady Marian a little farther on, consented,

though with trembling acquiescence, to proceed to the next intersecting path; but scarcely had they advanced a dozen steps, when a hundred different paths opened upon them, and all so intricately intertwined in puzzling semblance, that when they turned round to retread the one they came by, they could neither of them ascertain it.

“ Oh! Mrs. Bouverie,” exclaimed the Duke, “ we are surely mazed! for this must be the labyrinth, I now recollect having heard of many witty exploits being performed in by the mirthful pair, Mrs. Warren and Captain Thornly, upon unwary novices like ourselves. But I could not have supposed that Lady Marian would have condescended to a hoax so puerile: but why do you turn so pale, and look so terrorized? Surely, surely, Adelaide!—Mrs. Bouverie, you do not—cannot feel alarmed at being left here with me, who would sacrifice my life a thousand times sooner than distress you? ”

“ Oh! no, no, no,” said Adelaide, trembling with dismay, “ I should feel no alarms, were all the world as good—as

honourable, as you are." And tears now began to chase each other down her fear-blanced cheeks, awakened by direful apprehension of how this would be represented to her husband.

"Oh! Adelaide!" exclaimed the tenderly adoring duke, now subdued almost to weeping sympathy, "I cannot, cannot bear to see your tears: and although those moments I pass near you are the only now prized in my existence—

"Oh! duke!" said Adelaide upbraidingly, "do you, forgetting the feeling of an honourable man, thus ungenerously hold this improper style of language to me, because I have been entrapped into a cruel snare, from which I know not how to extricate myself?"

"No, Adelaide, no," the duke replied, with all the dignity of offended rectitude, "I merit not such unjust suspicion.—No: thus ensnared, I feel you are become even more sacred to my venerating homage; and I was about to tell you, that the only sunbeam the dreary gloom of life has now for me, I would voluntarily resign to save you from the ma-

licious plot of this designing woman ; nay, even to secure you from the pain to your trembling delicacy of the sully of a witling's jest, at having wandered here alone with me."

"Oh ! forgive me !" cried the sobbing Adelaide, now subdued by her gratitude and contrition to augmented agitation." "But how can you effect this generous purpose ? If you can escape, why may not I ?"

"No, Mrs. Bouverie, you cannot ; since, to destroy the effect of this jest, or malice-prompted snare, I must take rapid measures. I must force my way through the wood ; for was I to stay and seek our mutual extrication, I should only aid the project we have been entailed for. I have no thin drapery to rend in my rough exit ; and where pliant boughs will not yield me a passage ; my sabre shall cut one for me."

And now briefly telling her, "the moment he cleared the labyrinth he would whistle loud, to announce to her that she might commence her attempt to find her way out without fear of encountering him, and that he then would proceed as ra-

pidly as active speed could carry him, to prove an *alibi* in Lady Marian's indictment, by appearing at public parade," he hastened to make his first effort to break through the fence, which proving easy and successful, he soon was lost to the view of Adelaide, who felt more deeply penetrated by dangerous gratitude for this delicacy of conduct towards her, than for all her other debts to him; since her pure heart felt the preservation of her fame, as far transcending her obligation for that of life.

But this dangerous glow of her gratitude-softening feeling Adelaide promptly checked, by her torturing apprehension of what this cruel manœuvre of Lady Marian's had been practised for; and now, all anxiety to commence her efforts for withdrawing from this maze, she became an eager listener for the promised signal, and which for nearly twenty minutes after his grace's departure was not sounded.

CHAPTER V.

THE signal at length given, Adelaide bounded into action : but to wander into new intricacies seemed all she obtained by her efforts to find a way out of this obnoxious place ; until in her mazy rounds the sound of a loud shrill female voice, at no great distance, calling, “John, John,” repeatedly, awakened a beam of hope once more, and drew her to turn her course towards the sound, in the flattering expectation of obtaining extrication from this female, by making herself heard ; and scarcely more than a dozen yards had she moved along in this new direction, when the same female voice struck on her ear, quite close to her, on the other side of the enclosure, saying—

“What, in the name of torment ! could have sent you in here when you heard me calling ? For a pin I would let you have your tramp too, and allow you to go with that packet to the Hastings-coach, though the colonel is arrived.”

“Arrived!” exclaimed a man, drawing near to the first speaker; “but I am glad to my heart he is come, for it will save me many a wearisome jaunt to Hastings: but are you sure, dear Coleman, he is arrived?”

“Ay, as sure as that he has brought the thousand pounds. Why, I smuggled him up to her dressing-room myself, and there I left him to his raptures at meeting, and to be gulled by her out of his senses, as well as out of his money; and came off to seek you, to spare you your walk to Hastings, and treat you to one with me to the village.”

The intelligence thus conveyed seemed to paralyze the faculties of Adelaide, and would have destroyed her power, had she even longer felt the inclination to apply to Mrs. Coleman for a clew to guide her out; and now recoiling from the vicinity of these evident confidants of Lady Marian’s gulling projects, she took a new direction, and to her great relief soon discovered a resting place on the stump of a tree, where seating her terribly agitated frame, she fell into a painful musing upon

all she just had heard ; and with many a bursting sigh from her anguished bosom, she deplored the hapless destiny of her husband, to become enthralled by a woman so unprincipled as to gull him to his ruin ; yet so exquisite in beauty and fascinations, that it must prove beyond the power almost of mortal man to break from her infatuating spells.

At length that powerful agitation from misery's conflicts in poor Adelaide's mind, taught her frame to experience an alarming chill from her inaction ; and terrorized at the idea of bodily ailment, while all her mental energies were requisite to combat with her griefs, she started to her feet, determined upon one more effort to seek her way out ; and after a moment's contemplation of the place, she thought it possible, by attempting to draw a correspondent line upon her tablet as she moved along, she might be led to a discovery of the principle upon which the maze was formed.

Accordingly she did so, when her aptitude in comprehension led her by the path of science out of this maze ; for quickly

her mathematical knowledge taught her to discover, that it was by an ingenious multiplication, and alternate subtraction, of the paths, the clew was formed ; and, with her tablet in her hand, she had just emerged from her labyrinth of dangers when she encountered the whole of the dinner party, (save Lady Marian,) approaching to extricate her.

When Lady Marian returned from mazing this intended victim to her malice, she informed Mrs. Gayville of the fine sport she had prepared for them all, at the expense of the demure prude, Mrs. Bouverie ; and not choosing herself to appear further in it, instructed her ready double, when those of the gentlemen who attended parade returned, and Mrs. Bouverie and the duke were missed—then, as if come to her sudden recollection, “to announce her ladyship having desired her, an age before, to go seek them in the labyrinth, where she had, by some means, unintentionally on her part, lost them ; and had wearied herself in their pursuit.”

Lady Marian, after giving these directions, was immediately summoned by

Coleman to her boudoir, to receive Bouverie, whom, had she expected that day, she would not have invited his wife to Marino; and after their fond greeting was over, this smiling mischief's heart set at ease relative to the pecuniary aid he brought her; and a beautiful shawl, and other costly tokens of his attachment presented to her; she hastened to give the now credulous Bouverie her fabricated account of the manner the duke and Adelaide had conducted themselves to each other during the day; and how his grace had been frequently seen at twilight wandering near Castle Cottage; while in cherished rapture she mentally anticipated the explosion of the labyrinthean mine, by various channels, to the ears of Bouverie.

Whilst all this was passing in the boudoir, Mrs. Gayville, and her promptly made confidant, Mrs. Warren, were on the tenter-hooks of impatience for their delightful quiz at Mrs. Bouverie, mazed with the notoriously enamoured duke for so great a lapse of time; but at length the return of the officers from parade, accompanied by his grace, deranged the whole plan, and

filled these ladies with alarming forebodings of disappointed malice.

“Where, general, could you have picked up my lord duke?” exclaimed Mrs. Gayville.

“At Bexhill,” returned the general.

“Impossible!” she said—“Why, Lady Marian, by some strange hocus-pocus-manœuvring of Mrs. Bouverie and the duke, lost them both in the labyrinth above an hour ago.”

“It is that which is impossible,” said the general, “for we found his grace at parade before us.”

“It is very true, Mrs. Gayville,” said his grace, smiling—“and also true that I was in the labyrinth at the time you mention, with Lady Marian and Mrs. Bouverie; but suspecting those fair ladies were in a combination to maze me, to make sport withal, I resolved to turn the laugh against them, and made my escape to the barracks, to prove I was Christian enough to forgive her ladyship’s intended prank, by getting from my rooms the Lay of the Last Minstrel, which after dinner she expressed a wish to read.”

“Fore George!” exclaimed the general, “you have turned the tables, and the laugh rises against these Merry Wives of Bexhill. But where are they, until you have your crow out, duke?”

“Lady Marian, sir,” said Mrs. Gayville, “was so fatigued in her pursuit of her lost companions, whom, I can assure the duke, *she* had no intention to maze, that she was compelled to retire to recover herself, and requested me to go seek Mrs. Bouverie; but my little boy falling down, and severely hurting himself just then, put it out of my head, and I thought no more about it until I saw the duke.”

“Had I not better run, and liberate Mrs. Bouverie?” exclaimed Thornley, eagerly.

“Fair and softly, youngster,” returned the general—“Your escort, Mr. Nimble-shanks, will be insufficient. After the very great inattention this young stranger has experienced, in being suffered so long to feel the effect of being uninitiated in the mystery of that d——sh place, I must go myself; and if the whole party attends me, to assist in making peace for the neglect of my family, I think I shall then have no

more than a chance of success :”—and feeling extremely indignant at Mrs. Gayville’s non-compliance with his dear Marian’s request, he offered his arm to Mrs. Warren, when the whole party set forward, and found the prisoner enlarged.

The moment the party reached the drawing-room, General Harley called for tea, and desired Lady Marian should be informed it was ready, when in a few moments Fitzpatrick returned, and, with something of a not totally suppressed smile, said—

“That her ladyship was much distressed at being compelled to absent herself from tea ; but through the extreme fatigue she had endured, in seeking his Grace of St. Kilda and Mrs. Bouverie, when they lost her in the labyrinth, she found she must remain quiet in her dressing-room a little longer.”

His grace, stung to the quick at the invidiousness of sending publicly, in a message by a servant, a proclamation that Mrs. Bouverie had been wandering in the maze with him, exclaimed—

“Her ladyship had been spared such

inutile fatigue, upon my account, had she fortunately taken the right road in pursuit of me to the barracks, where I went to fetch this book for her; which, as it possibly may amuse her ladyship as she rests, I shall thank you, Mr. Fitzpatrick, to have conveyed with my best compliments to her."

This further testimony of the duke's lively interest for her fame, was not lost upon the susceptible gratitude of Adelaide, although Fitzpatrick's message from Lady Marian had brought with it an almost subduing pang of agony to her bosom; since little could she doubt that it was to prolong her interview with Bouverie her excuse was made; and that Montagu should concur in the continuation of that *tête-à-tête*, to lengthen his absence from her, whom if he knew not was in the house, was aware of her being in the neighbourhood, proved a cruel wound, that fell with torture's point upon her bleeding heart.

As soon as tea was ended, Mrs. Warren flew to the piano-forte, and played a beautiful waltz, which had such a lively effect upon Mrs. Gayville, that she started up

with Captain Warren, in whose arms she figured about the room in a style that did a little amaze “the demure prude, Mrs. Bouverie.”

Colonel Londsdales now requested the honour and happiness of leading Mrs. Bouverie through a waltz ; when the half-offended Adelaide gravely declined, saying, “She never waltzed.”

“Really, Mrs. Bouverie,” exclaimed Mrs. Gayville, in a tone of asperity, “I know not what we can strike out to amuse you, since you will not join us in dancing—and we never play at cards.”

“Mrs. Bouverie will dance a reel with one of you, while the other plays,” said the general, who began to feel some internal symptoms of dissatisfaction at poor Adelaide himself ; since it was solely through *politesse* to her, as this was her first visit at Marino, that he had quitted the bottle so soon ; a measure he was now beginning to repent, and to determine, could he once get her employed, to return and make an appeasing libation to Bacchus, with his ready auxiliary, the major.”

“Oh, no, General Harley,” said Ade-

laide, who, from her unfortunate reel at Melcombe Park, had determined never to dance again, unless the confidence of her husband should be fully restored to her—"I am too much fatigued by my evening's meanderings to dance, but still I can be useful, by taking Mrs. Warren's post as musician."

Adelaide accordingly did so, and played waltzes and reels with the most animating spirit, although her thoughts were not attendants of her employment; and her wistful eyes were almost immoveably fixed upon the door, expecting the reappearance of Lady Marian, and the entrance of Montagu: but in this expectation she was doomed to disappointment, until the dancing ladies were compelled, through downright exhaustion, to sit down to rest, when Lady Marian made her *entrée* alone.

Her ladyship instantly began to recapitulate her already-made apology for her absence to Adelaide; but in this apology was mingled an artfully-arranged upbraiding, for her and the duke contriving so ingeniously to lose her.

"I perceive, Lady Marian," said the

indignant duke, "that neither my message nor the Lay of the Last Minstrel were delivered to you, or your ladyship must know that I am perfectly innocent of the crime of fatiguing you, through your pursuit of me in a place I was a full mile distant from."

"Nor have I any thing to upbraid myself with upon the subject," said Adelaide, calmly, "since the path I trod was that which Lady Marian placed me in ; and if that could lead me to err, it was her ladyship's fault, not mine."

Lady Marian could not effectually succeed in vailing that both his grace and our heroine had highly disconcerted her ; but not wishing to betray her chagrin to either of them, she endeavoured to overwhelm them both with the most pointed attention : but in her manner to Adelaide was now visible an air of such ill-disguised triumph, that poor Adelaide, in anguished terror, augured this striking change as the convincing harbinger of impending evil, in some of her dire machinations against her peace having proved successful ; and, in trembling dismay, she awaited the

momentarily expected appearance of Montagu, to learn from his aspect if her heart-riving fears were founded on certainty.

But Bouverie appeared not; and Adelaide sat an internally wretched, smiling puppet of society, until her carriage was announced, which was not for forty minutes after she had ordered it, and after having twice inquired for it.

The moment Adelaide was seated in her carriage, and found herself absolutely upon her way from Marino, she burst into an agony of long difficultly suppressed tears.

“And am I, am I,” she sobbed in bitter anguish, “indeed despoiled of my husband’s confidence, my husband’s love? Am I condemned as a defaulter in my sex’s best adornments?—unheard condemned? And am I, ere I have completed seventeen years, in the bloom of reputed beauty, am I scorned, detested, recoiled from, like a noxious weed by my own husband—him whom from infancy I delusively adored?”

“Alas! alas! my cruel destiny! Why, oh! why was not that predilection felt by me for the Duke of St. Kilda? Then,

then, the happiness of my life would not, as now, be blighted in the bud ; my presence would have been sought, not shunned, to make me the degraded object of triumph to an exulting rival. Oh ! no,—then I should have been beloved by a tender husband ; then I should have known the blessing of connubial happiness unalloyed.

“ But hushed be these repining murmurs,” she suddenly exclaimed : “ Is unalloyed happiness merited by her who dares to arraign the unerring decrees of the Wise Disposer of human fate ? ”

At length she arrived at the door of her cottage ; and the moment she alit she inquired from Dennis, “ What had delayed the carriage so long beyond the time she had appointed for it ? A question which politeness forbade her asking him at Marino, as it might have led Captains Warren and Thornley, who had escorted her to it, to believe she had become weary of the society she was in.

Dennis informed her his master had himself changed the hour.

This answer implying that Bouverie was

arrived at his home, Adelaide flew on the wings of ardent feeling, although those wings trembled in their expansion to the drawing-room to seek him ; but there he was not.

Obearn had closely followed her, and from her she inquired where he was ?

“ Gone to bed ; ” replied Obearn, mournfully—gone to bed, too much fatigued by his journey to sit up for you.”

“ Gone to bed without seeing me, after so long a separation ! ” exclaimed Adelaide, in the tremulous tones of struggling grief. “ Oh ! why did he delay the carriage ? Had he not, I then might have arrived in time to see him.”

“ Oh, my child ! ” said Obearn reproachfully, “ what could have tempted you to dance to night, after my master was so hurt at your doing so at Melcombe Park ? ”

“ Dance ! ” exclaimed Adelaide, in chagrined surprise ! “ I have not been dancing. I would not for ten thousand worlds dance again in the absence of Montagu ! Who accused me of it, my own nurse ? ”

“ My master believed you were dancing ; for when he arrived I told him where you dined, and that you had ordered the carriage to be at Marino at half past nine ; but that now he was come, I would send it immediately for you.”

“ No, no,” he replied in a hurrying tone ; and, as he turned round, I saw by his countenance he was agitated and not pleased. “ Mrs. Bouverie is dancing ; and for worlds I would not have her amusements interrupted.”

“ Oh, sir !” I said, “ nothing to her can prove such happiness as seeing you ; therefore pray allow me to send for her.”

“ Mrs. Obearn,” he haughtily replied, I presume to hope I have a will of my own ; and that as the carriage is mine, I may have liberty to send it for my own wife when I please. I now desire you to order it not to go for her until half past ten. I know not that even then the *ball* may be over. After you have delivered that order, I will thank you to send me in some tea.”

“ Of course I instantly sent him in tea and coffee, with every thing which I thought he might relish, as I found from

Lee he had taken no refreshment on the road, in his impatience to reach a-a home; while as to the order about the carriage, my precious child, I dared not dispute it; so that all poor Dennis and myself could do, was to send it stealing through the straw yard twenty minutes before the time he named; but even then it was too late for our wish to recall you, for even then my master was gone to bed."

"Oh! how unlucky," said Adelaide in the faltering tone of extreme mental agitation, "my going to Marino to-day! But, my kind attentive Norah, I hope poor Montagu partook of some of those things you so considerately provided for him?"

"He scarcely touched any thing, and very shortly summoned Lee; when complaining of much fatigue, and not wishing to be disturbed by you when you returned from the ball, he—he—ordered—ordered the spare room to be got ready for him, and there he went to bed."

Adelaide's heart seemed chilled to marble; the hue of death blanched her countenance; the icicles of grief froze the vital warmth in her veins, and the anguish-

ed agitation of her frame sunk her into the nearest seat ; for now she felt that Marian indeed had triumphed ; and Montagu had himself thus affixed his fatal, but willing signature to their disunion.

“ Oh ! adored child of my tender care ! ” exclaimed the sorrow-stricken Obearn, “ do not look so dismayed at this event. It is all, all the effect of this irritation of his somehow most strangely altered temper, on being led to believe you were dancing when he wished you to have been at home to receive him. But, now you are come, you will hasten to undeceive him : you need not, I am certain, scruple to enter his room, to tell him you were not dancing, since sleep will not visit his eyelids this night, if I am not mistaken.”

“ No, Norah, no,” said Adelaide, in an accent, and with a look of wildness, that terrorized her nurse, “ he said he wanted rest, and must not be disturbed by me—by me, who would not have disturbed him for ten thousand worlds. No ; I would have glided into my place beside him, like the noiseless ghost of happiness ; and not even a sigh should have strayed

from my breaking heart to awake him ;—
no, not if it had burst in anguish.”

“ My child ! my child ! my darling Adelaide !” exclaimed Obearn, frantically clasping her in her arms, “ talk not in such tones ; look not thus, or you will break my heart.”

This action and appeal of Obearn’s recalled the fleeting senses of the heart-wrung Adelaide, who bursting into an agony of tears, Obearn’s dire apprehensions were happily terminated ; and soon she began to entreat this adored child of her fond affection to go to her husband instantly, and remove from his mind some terrible impression, made by misrepresentation of her conduct, which no doubt actuated his proceedings.

Adelaide felt the advice of Obearn to be judicious ; and which, had she been longer married, she would have followed ; but now the timidity, the sensitive timidity of her nature led her to recoil from the idea of entering the chamber of her husband, to which he had voluntarily retired from hers ; although it was to accomplish the important step of her vindication,

and regaining his lost confidence ; and as nothing her nurse could say to embolden her to such an undertaking proved successful, she retired to her pillow, where she passed her sorrow-waking vigil ; and, unfriended by even one short oblivious slumber, she arose with the sun, to be in readiness, let Montagu have engaged to proceed to Marino as early as he might, it should not be her fault if he went without seeing his unjustly censured wife.

CHAPTER VI.

THE moment Adelaide heard Bouverie moving in his dressing-room, she glided down to the room where she had ordered breakfast to be prepared; and where, in the anxious hope that he would join her, she eagerly sought some employment, to take from the appearance of being formally waiting for him; and with a book in hand, she endeavoured to hold it steadily, not to betray by the evidence of its vibration how violently she was agitated.

But soon even this almost paralyzed agitation, which shook her sensitive frame, powerfully augmented, when she heard the loitering footsteps of her husband on the staircase. By this symptom of unwillingness to advance, poor Adelaide augured those lingering steps were leading him to her; but soon they died away upon her painfully listening ear; and in the torture of disappointed hope conceiving he was gone to Marian, she threw her

book from her, clasped her hands in an agony of despair; and as she raised her eyes to supplicate Heaven still to supply her with fortitude to bear her misery, she caught a view of Bouverie standing in the portico, contemplating her from the open glass-door.

“ Oh, Montagu !” she exclaimed, starting from her seat and attempting to spring forward with extended hands to receive him; but her painful agitation destroyed her faculty of doing so; and unable to proceed, she sunk down upon her seat.

That frigid bulwark which the diabolical Lady Marian had so skilfully raised around the heart of Bouverie to exclude his wife for ever, had felt something like a melting influence thawing a breach in some of the frost-work, on contemplating the dejection of her air, the alteration in her aspect, from the portico into which he had accidentally strayed on his way to seek that path which Lady Marian told him communicated with his cottage, in which the Duke of St. Kilda was seen straying through in the twilight, every evening since his wife’s return from Mel-

combe Park; intelligence that still was ringing discordantly through his ears, and finding incessant reiteration through his heart; when the appearance of his wife, as without her observation he beheld her, awakened such prompt interest in his bosom, that he would have flown forward to take her in his arms, and to ask her what thus had altered her, had not those demons placed in his bosom by the sorceress Marian to guard her dominion there, prompting the direful suggestion, "that it might be love for the duke, or penitence for her duplicity, that had thus transformed her," restrained the tender impulse, and chained him to his station, an austere, suspecting observer.

But common humanity was still unextinguished by his pernicious attachment; and her evident distress, evinced by agitation so powerful, called him to her side, and to take her hand; but it was with nothing like tenderness or affection he did it; and Adelaide, in despite of every effort to suppress them, burst into an agony of tears.

"Adelaide," said Bouverie, in a voice not

steady to either the contending influence of *hauteur*, or pity, "are these contrition's tears?"

"Contrition's tears they cannot be," responded the heart-rived Adelaide, in accents of pained surprise, "since committing no transgression, I have no cause for penitence. No, Montagu, no: they are tears of anguished grief to find that you still can suspect me of evil!"

"From the hour of our union until this present moment it has been my wish, my study, my happiness, to do that only which I thought would please you; and the dire misfortune has been for me to fail in my efforts; but as I can affirm with the full sanction of my conscience, that failure has not been intentional, surely it would not have been expecting too much from my guide, my protector, to have taken pity on my erring judgment, and to have led me to actions meriting his approbation."

Bouverie was not prepared for so gentle an appeal, so touchingly uttered; and he felt awkward and embarrassed; while conviction of her misdemeanours held empire

in his mind against the softer pleadings of his heart in her behalf ; and scarcely aware of the inconsistency he was articulating, said,

“ What can have led you to suppose you have so seriously displeased me ? ”

“ Oh, Montagu ! you have led me to suppose it,” Adelaide falteringly replied in touching cadences of heart-resident grief. “ Did you not ask me, were my tears those of contrition ? What did that imply ? What did your late letters import ? Were you not at Marino while I was there, and you sought no interview with me after our long separation ? And still more, in proof of my disgrace with you, delayed the carriage on purpose to escape an interview with the poor culprit.”

“ The delay of your carriage, Mrs. Bouverie,” he replied with an ironical smile, was solely to oblige you ; not to interrupt too soon your pleasing pastime. Reeling and waltzing were more congenial to your new humours, than coming home to dulness and your husband.”

“ I neither waltzed nor reeled : my heart was too sad to admit of either, even

could I have ceased to remember the unfortunate effect of my thoughtless reel with Lord Melcombe. My part in the pastime was that of an automaton musician for Mrs. Gayville and party to dance to. But these indications of—of your displeasure, Montagu, I will not dwell upon, lest they should, alas! be indications of a greater evil, and therefore distressing to you even to be glanced at.

“Affections, I know, are not always at our command; and if the blessing is not for me to constitute your happiness, believe me, though while existence is extended to me I must ever deplore it as a dire misfortune, that I will never upbraid you for it.”

Adelaide now, with the energy of Heaven-inspired firmness, struggled successfully with an agony of tears, which seemed rising to destroy her power of utterance; and with lowly, yet melting accents, she proceeded—

“But, my highly honoured, and, if you will permit me to add, my tenderly regarded husband, I trust I may even compatibly with my submissive duty as a

wife, and consistently with my consideration of your feelings, upon one point press for a hearing. You have dismayed my senses and appalled my heart by a heavy accusation of growing levity in me. My veracity you have implicated ; and even now you conceived the tears I shed might be those of contrition ! You have told me that I had a wary observer at Melcombe Park, who faithfully portrayed to you my every action there ; and do I ask too much to have the faith of those reports investigated ? Do I presume too much to demand an unbiassed scrutiny of all my actions ?

“ The most guilty of culprits whom the law takes cognizance of, are allowed the mercy of an unprejudiced judge, and the power of pleading in their own extenuation ; and surely the husband of my choice, my natural friend, guide, advocate, and defender, will not credit other testimony, and refuse his ear to mine, ere guilty, or not guilty, is pronounced against me ! ”

Bouverie almost subdued by the internal struggles of his mind—against a warfare of feeling powerfully working in Adelaide’s

cause, and the dire belief that had found conviction in his bosom of all the misrepresentations of Lady Marian having truth for their basis—was unable to reply ; and perhaps unwilling too ; lest feeling, while thus inthralled, should lead him to a decision incompatible with the firm judgment which ought to sway him.

Adelaide gazed upon him in torturing anxiety, as upon her fate ; and at length mournfully she said—

“ Montagu, I see this appeal distresses you ; and therefore I will press it no further ; but bear it in your mind : cherish it there, I implore, I conjure you ; and trace out, as it best may accord with your feelings, proofs of my innocence in all things.” And now, subdued by the anguish of her heart, she arose to make a precipitate retreat, to fly where she could give her sensations free indulgence ; when her way was most unexpectedly impeded by the encircling arms of her husband.

“ Adelaide,” he exclaimed in the subdued voice of powerful emotion, “ I thank you for this affecting kindness and for-

bearance ; and believe me it shall not be thrown away upon me. My heart acquits you, and robes you in your wonted innocence : but my judgment must not be swayed by feeling. I will do all that you require. I will trace out your innocence, and your own statement of facts shall aid in your acquittal."

Adelaide pressed his hand to her lips, to evince her gratitude ; and in a lowly murmur, as she smiled and wiped her tears away, asked, " Would he breakfast with her ? "

" I came down with that intention," he replied, " and you have not lessened my wish to do it."

Adelaide now rang for the tea-urn, &c. and Montagu drawing her into the portico, inquired where all the different paths which surrounded their cottage led to ; and our heroine, although surprised at the apparent inconnexion with their thoughts of the question, answered with information destructive to the suggestions of Lady Marian.

" Adelaide," said Bouverie, after some moments of painful musing, " the Duke

of St. Kilda has twice aided in the preservation of your life; and yours is a grateful, a very grateful nature."

"I trust that it is not an *ungrateful* one," returned Adelaide, still wondering at the want of catenation in Montagu's questions, "since in my gratitude's faithful remembrance has never faded the lively recollection of your preservation of my life, although so many years have elapsed since you, even youth as you were, achieved more than the Duke of St. Kilda in maturity has accomplished:—he saved my life twice, but he risked not his own, as you did, Montagu, in the preservation of mine."

The scorpion stings of jealousy's suspicions seemed now extracted by this estimate of facts, given with the emphasis of truth and feeling; yet Bouverie was too much subdued to speak, but he took his wife's hand, and pressed it with conciliating kindness.

"Our dear uncle," said Adelaide, after a long uninterrupted pause, "seems to have been inspired with a spirit of divining, that all was not exactly concordant

with his wishes between his children, as he affectionately calls us in a letter which has arrived from him, addressed to us both."

"A letter from Lord De Moreland, Adelaide!" Montagu exclaimed, his cheeks blanching to the pallid hue of death; and his lovely wife beheld the most powerful agitation, almost paralyzing his frame—"Is he arrived in England?"

"No, Montagu; but he announces his hoped-for speedy return."

"Allow me to see the letter."

"Not now; you have touched on unpleasant themes sufficient for one day, I think, my poor Montagu," Adelaide kindly replied; "and I fear this letter may distress you; for—for his lordship greatly apprehends, from your not writing to him, that you are not happy."

Bouverie's paleness and agitation increased so visibly, that in all the tender sympathy of her affectionate, forgiving nature, Adelaide caught his arm, and in fascinating kindness, hanging upon that with enchanting sweetness, said—

"When these direful phantoms of my

growing predilection for the Duke of St. Kilda, and of various other frightful forms, are allayed, you then will write to our uncle, and say you are not *unhappy*, Montagu."

Bouverie subdued by her affecting kindness, in wishing to console his evident distress, (which conscience whispered he deserved not from her), through the impulse of his grateful heart, clasped her tenderly in his encircling arms: and in that moment Lady Marian Harley, Mrs. Gayville, and Captain Warren, entered the portico, as Lee, rushing through the house to anticipate the party, appeared, to announce their arrival.

The demoniac rage, the envenomed pang, of phrensied jealousy, which sprung up in the mind of Lady Marian, seemed, in their first assailment, to threaten the annihilation of all sense and discretion; but her bosom counsellor, mining art, gave her prompt aid; when, with a look of admirably managed anguish at Bouverie, quickly succeeded by the most alluring smile of winning sweetness at his wife, she exclaimed—

“ Ten thousand pardons for thus so unopportunately breaking in upon an unexpected scene of tender interest! but, attracted by the beauties of this little parterre, and not here expecting a *public exhibition* of the renewed influence of a moon, supposed to distil its honey exhalations for no more than a month, we followed not, as we ought to have done, the servant, who was hastening to announce that we were come to have the pleasure of breakfasting with Mrs. Bouverie.”

Adelaide, who in timid bashfulness would have felt embarrassment at any one beholding the tender endearments of Montagu evinced to her; but having now mingled with that embarrassment the pain to see that Bouverie was quite unhinged at Lady Marian's detecting him in a circumstance so insulting to his love for her, found it a difficult effort to recover herself sufficiently to pay the necessary compliments of hospitality to these most unwelcome guests.

“ I feared, Mrs. Bouverie,” said her invidious ladyship, after Adelaide had given her the gracious reception of urba-

nity's dissimulation, "from the frigidity of your manner to me yesterday, that you were ceremonious, and could not forgive my not having been to wait upon you in your *pretty* cottage; therefore I lost no time to do away the unfavourable impression of that necessity-compelled omission: and to convince you I wish all formality to be annihilated between us, I have intruded thus, at your *déjeûné*, if you permit me and my companions to interrupt your *tête-à-tête*."

Adelaide was again compelled to utter the untruth of being most happy in the honour of her ladyship's company, and then invited the unwelcome trio to enter the breakfast-room; from which, however, Lady Marian, with inimitable address, contrived to linger, after sending our heroine in with Mrs. Gayville and Captain Warren, to let the storm burst on the offender's head for the scene of tenderness she had witnessed; when in that spirit of dissimulation, which he had imbibed from that illicit passion which was perverting all his excellence, he lulled the raging tempest by a positive assurance that he

had been compelled to the hypocrisy of affecting tenderness, to hush suspicions which had in some inexplicable manner found their way into the mind of his wife.

Lady Marian, in full mental triumph over her obnoxious rival, now entered the house with Bouverie, where again her self-possession was nearly annihilated by vexation, mingled with amaze, at beholding the beautiful *bijou* which Adelaide had made; and felt as much chagrined, as Captain Warren was pleased, at finding a *déjeûné* so elegantly arranged as the family one.

It was but natural that Adelaide should have scrutinized with a vigilant eye every thing at Marino belonging to Lady Marian individually, or annexed to her province; it had, therefore, not escaped her observation, that her house betrayed in all things a total disregard to neatness; that her table was comfortless, although set out with a most ostentatious display of style; with dishes ill assorted, and as badly cooked; the viands the very worst of their kind, and all as cold as the attentions of the beautiful hostess; just as might be imagined in the house of a woman devoted

to pursuits which threw her completely into the power of her servants, and who having no time or inclination for issuing the regulating mandates for domestic order, affected to despise it.

And while Adelaide was making these annotations upon such visible defects in the female department, where no rank exempts the eye of observation from leading to emendations in the acting agent's arrangements, she cherished the flattering hope that Montagu might perceive the contrast in his home, where his wife attached to him, and to every duty of her station, lured comfort to his house and board, to give its fascinating zest to all things.

Captain Warren expatiating too rapturously upon the transformation of this, so lately wretched cottage, and upon the elegance and excellence of the repast, unprepared as it was for company—so highly incensed Lady Marian against poor Adelaide, as the “grovelling machine” of this too obviously merited eulogium, that in all the invidiousness her heart was glowing with, she said—

“Your pallid countenance, Mrs. Bouverie, gives me the concern to find you have not recovered your fatigue from dancing so many reels and waltzes last night.—Harley declares my female guests were bitten by the tarantula, and capered and romped about most famously, while under the operation of cure.”

“Why, Lady Marian,” Captain Warren exclaimed, “Mrs. Bouverie was not bit! she sat quietly on the music-stool the whole time, benevolently supplying the antidote at the piano-forte.”

“I misunderstood Harley, then,” said her ladyship, highly disconcerted at this untoward statement of facts; and immediately changed the theme of conversation to her meditated theatricals.

“Our first rehearsal is to take place this evening,” continued her ladyship; “and as we shall all be so engaged, it would be too horridly dull for you, Mrs. Bouverie, for my attempting to request your accompanying Colonel Bouverie to Marino to-day. To-morrow we are, provokingly, to have a most annoying male party; but the next day may I hope for the happiness

of your company at dinner, to meet three female friends of mine, from Hastings, and some officers of your own regiment?"

Adelaide concluding it to be the wish of Montagu, unhesitatingly accepted this invitation; when Mrs. Gayville, in one of her witty veins, demanded—

"When Bouverie meant to evince he was not devoid of hospitality, by opening his doors, and giving them a dinner in his capacious mansion?"

"Nay, Mrs. Gayville," said Adelaide, with invincible good humour, "I do not think the hospitality of Colonel Bouverie can be implicated through this delay in entertaining his friends at his board, for how could he invite you to the house of contagion which I infected? And since Lady Melcombe removed the interdict, you have been absent collectively, or Montagu individually, until last night.

"And now he is returned," continued Adelaide, playfully taking cards from her writing desk, "you shall have an invitation as rapidly as I can write one.—Pray, Lady Marian, have the goodness to name what day of convenience to you and

General Harley I shall have the honour of entertaining my first dinner party since I became a wife. An early one I hope it may be, as I am anxious to expunge this stigma from my *caro sposo's* hospitality ; although conscious I shall prove myself, like every novice, very awkward as mine hostess. Yet one thing I may venture to assure Mrs. Gayville of, that I will contrive no colds shall be caught by my kind visitors, in the wide range of apartments my capacious mansion affords me for their reception."

Adelaide electrified the mind of her husband ; he felt point in almost every word she had uttered : he believed from what she now said, combined with what had fallen from her that morning, some suspicion of all he panted to conceal from her was awakened ; and in shame and contrition he hung his head at the rebuke she had thus conveyed to him, for her never having done the honours of his table to a party ; yet all was said with such attractive good humour, such ineffable sweetness, every movement so alluringly graceful, and her gayety so fascinating, that even his

passion-inthralled fancy was charmed ; he even wondered at his preference for Lady Marian, and could not but augur, that when a little more accustomed to society, and had acquired confidence in her own powers, his wife would surpass all other women ; nay, even in possibility, he almost thought, the angelic Marian herself : and as all these thoughts passed rapidly in his mind, he felt the culpability of his conduct towards her with a degree of anguish he had scarcely ever before experienced ; yet he formed no wish to break from the enchantment which held him from her.

Lady Marian was on her part amazed and chagrined by Adelaide : she felt conviction that she was not the tame wife she had hoped to find her ; and that she had powers, whenever she should find courage, to prove a countercharm to all her magic : and now, while with smiling courtesy the arch fiend named an early day for dining at Castle Cottage, her every thought was at hard labour, toiling for contrivances to remove Bouverie, as speedily as possible, from this too dangerous rival, and to

lengthen his detention at Marino by every spell of passion's witchery.

At length, to the inexpressible joy of the wily Marian, a distant ruffle of drums afforded her a pretence for hurrying Bouverie off to the general, as there was going to be a field-day, through her ladyship's management.

"Do not expect the colonel home very soon to-night, Mrs. Bouverie," said Lady Marian, as she made her *congé*, "as I fear our rehearsal will be rather tedious, from its being the first of some of our performers."

Bouverie, in despite of the wary eye of his infatuator, pressed the hand of his wife in adieu; and as they departed from the cottage, Captain Warren mentally exclaimed—

"Was that Adelaide mine, no Marian, no Circe in existence should lead me, spell-bound, from my adoration of her!"

Lady Marian had foretold but faithfully her own intentions, since it was very late ere Montagu returned; and though Adelaide had been long retired to her pillow

sleep had not weighed her eyelids down, since the apprehensions of her bosom had banished that salutary friend ; nor was it likely to be recalled, when her appalled ears heard, in shuddering forebodings of perpetual disunion, the cautious foot-falls of her husband leading him to the chamber which in jealous spleen he had flown to the preceding night.

“ Alas ! alas ! ” exclaimed the heart-rived Adelaide, “ every impression I can make upon the affection of my husband, is but stamped upon the fluctuating sands, which the arts and fascinations of this Lady Marian, like a rushing tide, too rapidly effaces, leaving not a trace behind ! ”

And now poor Adelaide wept the annihilation of all hope of happiness thus foretold, until the rising orb of day reminded her it was time to compose her countenance, to disrobe it of its tone of anguish, and deck it in smiles to receive her husband at their breakfast-board, should he condescend to attend it.

The night of Bouverie was passed even more unhappily than that of his innocent

wife ; for the stings of conscience were among his miseries ; and from his unhallowed passion he could taste no consolation, since it was surrounded by nothing but guilty horrors of impiety, dishonour, perfidy, and ingratitude ; and if those pangs of envenomed jealousy which mining art had but too successfully introduced into his bosom, had fact for their foundation, what new page of misery's compunction would that prove to agonize his mind with ! since if Adelaide, the purest being that Nature ever formed, was led to swerve from the path of virtue, the fault would be recorded as his, and flame before him as the fiat of eternal condemnation in the awful hour of final judgment.

Not to sleep had Bouverie forsaken the chamber of his wife, but to pace his room through the night in mental agony ; lamenting, shuddering, recoiling at times from the precipice he was impelled to ; yet too much enthralled by the sorceress Marian to form one wish, not to say one effort to break her spells and save his peace ; and the sun had long arisen on the pedestrian vigil of Montagu, ere he could sum-

mon fortitude to determine upon a *tête-à-tête* breakfast with his wife, for the purpose of encountering that trial which he knew awaited him, in perusing the conscience-riving letter of Lord de Moreland.

CHAPTER VII.

BUT at length Montagu did call up sufficient fortitude to encounter a *tête-à-tête* breakfast with his wife, because impatience to repair to the infatuating presence of his Marian was the stimulus; and when he did present himself before poor Adelaide, the placid melancholy sweetness with which she bade him good morrow, struck such a pang of self-reproach through his conscience, that worlds would he have given to escape her presence; but when through their nearly nominal repast she conversed, even with the semblance of cheerfulness, upon every topic she thought would prove most pleasing to him, without one betraying symptom of resentment for his conduct towards her, he pronounced her "Either a miracle of forgiving mercy, or too much devoted to the Duke of St. Kilda, to care about his proceedings."

At length the servants removed the breakfast equipage; and as every inter-

ruption had now terminated, and the fondly coveted moment for a fair excuse for hastening to Marino rapidly advancing, Bouverie, with a tremulous voice and agitated frame, requested to see the letter of Lord de Moreland.

Adelaide presented it with the trembling hand of sympathy, and instantly withdrew; nor could her husband avoid regarding with the admiring eye of pleased applause, that delicacy which led her to spare him the embarrassment and mortification of any witness,—but more particularly herself,—of his emotion; and as he read, in tortured compunction read, he felt his obligation for this kindness and delicacy of Adelaide's increase, since his agitation became too powerful for concealment; and in an agony of mental suffering he paced the room, accusing himself of ingratitude to his friend and patron; with perfidy and cruelty to Adelaide, by leading her a deceived victim to the altar; and for the mere chance of restoring his lost happiness, to endanger hers.

But at length the demoniac guardians of Lady Marian's influence in his bosom,

arose to censure Lord De Moreland, as almost as culpable an assassin of poor Adelaide's peace as he had been ; and in seeking eagerly every extenuation for his own transgressions, that he might without molestation from remorse still adore the siren Marian, he continued his pedestrian musing, until a loud peal at the gate bell led him to apprehend an interruption from company to detain him from Marino, when he flew into the lawn, where in his paces he had beheld his wife employed training some beautiful flowers, which but a short time since she could have more than emulated in loveliness ; and rapidly returned his lordship's letter to her without a comment.

"There is company arrived," he eagerly said, "and therefore I must be off, lest I should be detained, as the general has particular business with me this morning."

"It is only the post I believe," said Adelaide ; and as she spoke Dennis appeared with a letter for her.

The glance of eager curiosity which Bouverie cast upon the superscription, did

not escape the observation of his wife ; who, all anxiety to remove every degrading suspicion from his mind of her, requested him to read that letter for her, while she tied up a few more flowers, which would complete her morning task there.

“ It is franked by Lord Melcombe,” said Bouverie, warily observing her.

“ I shall then hear some account of that family in their present distress,” Adelaide replied with all the composure her innocence inspired.

“ The seal bears the simple signature of ‘ Ellen,’ ” said Bouverie.

“ Sweet Ellen !” Adelaide pronounced with thrilling emphasis ; “ pray read, dear Montagu.”

Montagu obeyed ; but in a voice too unsteady to give the advantage of a good delivery to Lady Ellen’s composition, who said, “ that in compliance with the kind request of Mrs. Bouverie to hear from her after her arrival in Yorkshire, she wrote to tell her the fugitives had been traced to Gretna Green, and their marriage there ascertained ; but, after that, all trace of

them disappeared as completely, as if a sudden chasm in the earth had enclosed them." Her ladyship then proceeded as follows:

"I never thought, my dear Mrs. Bouverie, any thing could have occurred to reconcile me to that letter of family unpleasantness, which led you so precipitately to the determination of quitting your admiring friends at Melcombe Park; but how have I since been led to change my mourning into thankfulness! since by your decidedly announced resolution of leaving us so immediately, mamma was left at liberty to follow the impulse of her feelings to hurry off to Elme Lodge; since most providentially by that step we all are here to do our duty in the painful task of nursing our dear dear Woodley, who was so distressed at the degrading, and, I much fear, unworthy choice our poor infatuated Lysander has made, that the direful agitation he was in during the whole pursuit has terminated in a dreadful fever, which seemed only to await his return to his ready nurses, his fond mother and affectionate sisters, to subdue him to

an illness ; which, although the faculty who attend him cheer us with hope, they yet pronounce to run to an alarming height.

“ Papa desires me to say, ‘ that if it had been his happiness for either of his sons to have obtained such a wife as you are, he should not now be the wretched parent he is.’ He further desires me to tell you, ‘ that he yesterday received a letter from the postmaster at Hastings, assuring him the daily packets franked by his lordship of specified dates for Colonel Bouverie, were duly forwarded to their places of destination.’

“ Lord Melcombe did not before know your diurnal despatches had not been received ; but on receipt of this letter from Hastings, evidently caused by your inquiries there, he, notwithstanding his distraction relative to my brothers, wrote off immediately to the postmaster-general ; and has therefore no doubt of their being traced to the spot of their detention.

“ In the present painful state of our anxiety I know your goodness will excuse.

my adding more, than that I feel an ardent hope of being permitted to rank myself

“ My dear Mrs. Bouverie’s

“ Sincere and affectionate *Friend*,

“ ELLEN MELCOMBE.”

“ Mamma, who desires her most affectionate regards to you, has just told me, ‘she is certain Lysander was very suddenly lured to the unfortunate step he has taken; since the whole time you were at Melcombe Park, until the day of our *fête*, he seemed devoted to his secret employment of taking your portrait, as the *chef-d’œuvre* of his successful performances; and which he had adopted secrecy to you in, from the information he had received, that nothing could induce you to sit for your picture.’”

As the delicately-textured heart of Adelaide had writhed in anguish at the idea of being suspected of dissimulation, and a failure in veracity, by Montagu; so her rapture at this unsought justification was beyond effectual concealment; for tears of joy sparkled in her eyes; the brightest

blushes painted her glowing cheeks; and her bosom heaved in agitation's measure.

But what were Bouverie's emotions? They were such as almost to baffle description! for shame and joy, mortification and contrition, were so interwoven with vexation, that his all-perfect Marian could be convicted of such an uncharitable misrepresentation of any one's conduct, that it was almost difficult to define which his sensations proved, more pleasurable or painful, on three of the charges against his wife being so incontrovertibly refuted.

She had voluntarily removed from Melcombe Park; she had written daily to him, as she had asserted; her portrait had been taken without her knowledge; and she had been grossly insulted by his injustice; and what now could he offer in his extenuation? His conscience told him he had offended beyond any expectation of forgiveness; and his heart reproached him so acutely for having been led by any one to doubt the ingenuousness of Adelaide, that he stood with eyes rivetted by shame upon the ground, unable to speak, to

move, or look on her, whom he had so unworthily treated.

But the magic of Adelaide's excellence soon unchained his faculties ; for with all the generosity of her delicate feelings, she recoiled from the idea of humbling her husband to an apology, or of appearing to expect one from him ; and the moment she accomplished the subjugation of her own emotion sufficiently to articulate, she, while affecting to be deeply engaged in the new training a rose, averted her face, lest Montagu should conceive her glances shot with triumph at him, and hastily spoke ; and although she endeavoured for a steady voice, it still retained a betraying sound, that it was not because she did not feel her acquittal that she had forborne all allusion to it.

“ How infinitely to be pitied are poor Lord and Lady Melcombe, Montagu,” she said, “ Heaven send this Lord Woodley may be spared to amend his life, and prove, what I believe he has not hitherto been—a comfort to his parents !”

“ But, but Montagu,” she hastily con-

tinued, fearing she had been indelicate, even to allude to the letter which bore her vindication, "I have not lately thought to ask if you ever hear from Mr. Mellifont how poor Dr. Birch and his son are?"

Montagu could only reply by catching her in his arms; his every suspicion hushed, his every passion vanquished by Adelaide, except his baleful one for Lady Marian; and as he hid his face upon her bosom, the trickling drops of deeply-felt contrition penetrated the veil which covered it, as he implored her to forgive "his having dared to disbelieve what she affirmed."

Adelaide generally found tears a sympathetic distillation; but when falling from her husband's eyes, the purest drops of pity and affection's dew arose from her heart, and trickled in accompaniment.

"Oh, Montagu!" she exclaimed, "why do you weep? Let mine be the only tears—the tears of joy, on finding you no longer feel a cause for suspecting my ingenuousness."

"Adelaide! Adelaide!" he replied, "I am unworthy of this delicacy of genero-

sity—this forgiving mercy. But who ever—ever was so kind, so sweet as you are?”

“What ever was so sweet as this?—and this?—and this?” said Adelaide, plucking some fragrant flowers, and playfully patting Bouverie’s face with them; and then with sportive grace she lured him into the house; so apprehensive she was of any individual approaching them on the lawn to witness his evident emotion; and where, the moment they had entered, she flew for a glass of water for him; and then, as she tenderly held his hand and sat beside him, she asked him a thousand questions upon comparative unimportant subjects, for the purpose of withdrawing his mind from the agitation that so powerfully subdued him.

Amongst many of her queries she desired to know, “If he wished to have other company to meet the Marino party; and who, that they might receive their invitations?”

“Was not this cottage so inhospitably small,” he replied, “I should wish to invite the Duke of St. Kilda, Hope, Clay-

ton, and a few others, to meet the general and his large home detachment, as it will be rather a dull business asking them to their own *en famille* party."

"Well," said Adelaide," smiling archly, "invite whom you please; and I promise to find accommodation to meet your hospitable wishes."

"Impossible, Adelaide!"

"Nay, have you not strong suspicion that I have already exercised the power of magic in this cottage?" she responded, "and believe my spells can perform the wonders of extension too."

Bouverie's horses were now announced, and Adelaide hastened to inquire, "if he did not think she ought no longer to delay returning the visits which the friends of Lady Melcombe in the neighbourhood had paid her; and if he could spare Lee to attend her?"

Montagu advised her to pay immediately this debt of urbanity; and readily admitted of Lee's attendance; although he blushed, as the conviction arose in his mind of why she preferred his servant to her own upon the occasion.

Bouverie for some moments sustained a sort of mental warfare, his heart drawing him in haste to Marino; his conscience and his shame leading him to linger where he was: but his heart at length triumphing, he kindly took his wife's hand, and as he pressed it in adieu, said, with affected carelessness:

"Oh! Adelaide, I must not forget to tell you I had no occasion to make use of the draft you so kindly sent me to town, therefore I destroyed it."

"I hope it was no fastidious scruple, fearing I might want it, that led you to do so," she replied; and as she spoke, Bouverie developped an evident expression of joy beam over her countenance, which proclaimed to him she was not displeased the cash had not been taken by him.

And now full of surmises upon whether she had been so courtly to offer what, in sincerity, she wished not to be accepted; he took his leave, and galloped for about a quarter of a mile as hard as his charger could go, as if to escape the painful humiliation, the shame, the remorse, which the presence of his wife overwhelmed him

by ; for although she had awakened the brightest glow of gratitude in his bosom ; although she had aroused the most powerful feeling of admiration in his mind, yet she occasioned too much pain in the contrast of her superiority over himself, too much envy for her surpassing Marian, to make her society a heaven to him ; and like an unhallowed spirit, unfitted for the bliss of paradise, he flew from it ; and when his short gallop terminated, he sunk at once into the opposite extreme of movement ; and as slow as foot could fall he paced the rest of the way to Marino, for the purpose of full leisure to retrace and analyze the conduct of his wife through every part of their morning's *tête-à-tête*.

And in this retrospection so much was his heart softened from its obduracy in error ; so much did the merits of Lady Marian sink in the equipoise of justice between the rivals ; that not during this whole day did Adelaide lose one inch of the ground which she had won, not until evening came, and opportunity for tender dalliance in a chaise returning from a distance, with the general as their companion,

soporifically inebriated, did passion and Marian resume their baleful influence.

Adelaide, with veracity and ingenuousness cleared to their unsullied brightness in the opinion of her husband, was no longer the depressed and wretched being which humiliating suspicion had made her ; and, as it was natural to her extreme youth, her hopes or fears were easily awakened ; and now the former arose buoyant from conviction, through the betraying feelings of Montagu during the morning, that however Marian might triumph for a season, he would at length return to domestic happiness and her.

Cheered by the bright scenes of distant happiness, presented to her view through hope's perspective, Adelaide dressed for her visits, and set out to pay them ; and as she felt inclined to be much pleased with several individuals she had to call upon, she was sorry not to find one of them at home ; as all, she learned, were gone to a breakfast at Winchelsea encampment.

Adelaide wondered General Harley's family were not of this party, since it was a military one ; which she felt assured they

were not, as Montagu had desired her to make a visit at Marino in her round.

With a palpitating heart our poor heroine drew near the mansion of Marino; and a nervous trepidation, which she vainly endeavoured to subdue, pervaded her frame, as she felt the carriage actually stop at the door; and when she beheld Fitzpatrick fly out on the steps, she feared it was to admit her; but that fear was lulled, and other sensations promptly awakened, when informed

“ The family were all gone to a public breakfast at Winchelsea, where they were to dine also; and were not to return until a late hour at night.”

“ But, madam,” Fitzpatrick continued, “ by the colonel’s desire I sent a messenger to your house to prevent your having the trouble of calling here, by informing you, that my lady, not recollecting her engagements at Winchelsea until this morning, the colonel knew nothing of them before he arrived here; when the carriages being ready to set off, he had not a moment to write a line to you; and therefore requested me to have you immediately in-

formed of it, madam ; and also to tell you, that as it would be very late indeed before his return, he thought it wiser to remain here all night."

Adelaide, thanking Fitzpatrick for his information, the carriage moved rapidly on its way home ; our heroine lost in rumination upon the littleness of that mind which had thus infatuated Montagu ; for to her this lapse in memory appeared a wilful one, to prevent any necessity of inviting her to join a party which her husband formed one of ; if Lady Marian had, as it was probable, unlimited power to add to the guests : but from this contemplation of her rival's mental meanness she was suddenly aroused by the love-tuned voice of the Duke of St. Kilda, paying her his morning compliments as he rode up to the carriage side.

"I would not have taken the liberty of stopping your carriage, Mrs. Bouverie," he continued, "only I could not resist the gratification of being the bearer of pleasing news to you.—The Longuivilles are, at last, coming. I had a letter from Sir Charles, by this morning's post, and he

announces their arrival here for Tuesday next."

Adelaide's rapture was indeed great at this intelligence, which evinced itself by glowing cheeks and illumined eyes; but soon this fascinating animation changed to the pale aspect of alarm, when his grace lowering his tones, inquired—

"If she could tell him how he had lost, what he most highly prized, the good opinion of Colonel Bouverie?"

Adelaide repeated a terrorized negative; and eagerly implored to know what had awakened such a supposition?

"Oh! look not so dismayed," said the duke with tenderness—"You have nothing to apprehend, dear Adelaide, between Bouverie and me. Believe me, I would deserve even the epithet of coward—of every thing degrading in dishonour, ere I would raise my arm against your husband; then fear no hostilities, although a very repellant contrast now marks his manner to me."

"I must beg leave, duke, to mention this conversation to Montagu," Adelaide replied, blushing, in consciousness of what

led to Bouverie's change of manner ; "and I have not a doubt of his soon convincing you, his esteem, his gratitude, are unsubdued."

"I wish," said his grace, hesitatingly, "that all this certainly existing repellency on his part, may be of such a nature as to dissipate upon your kind interference ; as it would operate as one of the most dire calamities which could befall me, were I compelled, by existing circumstances, to shun that society, in which I now ever know happiness is a resident upon earth."

"You may rely on my husband's meeting you beneath the olive tree, with the renewed smile of never-extinguished cordiality," said Adelaide ; "therefore I will not longer detain your grace from the continuance of your ride."

"Oh, Adelaide !" exclaimed his grace, despondingly, "your never-slumbering suspicions of my honour and my veneration of you wound my heart more keenly than your husband's hostile arm could do."

"Duke !" said Adelaide, waving her hand in adieu, "were you my brother, I then could converse with you without one

murmur from propriety ; you then should know, that I think not even Montagu superior to you in every moral excellence."

And now having given her signal to her coachman to go on, the reluctant duke was compelled to say adieu, half angry with that sensitive perception of propriety, which he adored, while he suffered by it ; and Adelaide proceeded on her way, although dangerously flattered by the duke's adoration of her, yet not pleased with him for striving to detain her on the public way alone, and unprotected even by the sanction of any companion, to hear all they conversed upon.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN what she feared was a forlorn hope of Montagu's coming home to breakfast, Adelaide deferred her *déjeûné* the subsequent morning, until an unusually late hour; and she had just relinquished the but barely cherished expectation, when he galloped up to the door; and, with a degree of impatience new to the ears of his lovely wife, he made his way to her presence, and after kindly greeting her, he exclaimed—

“I am rather glad you have not done breakfast, as I shall now take a second with you.—Yours looks so tempting; while at the general's, I know not how it is, but they are always comfortless to a degree.”

“Lady Marian,” said Adelaide, blushing, and smiling with pleased emotion at this highly-prized preference to her assemblage of comforts; “Lady Marian conceives that Spartan food for the appetite may suffice, where the minds of her guests

are feasted on the most highly-seasoned Athenian banquets!"

"But you, Adelaide," said Bouverie, smiling in approbation on her, "you can give us excellent viands, with the true Athenian seasoning too."

Our heroine, although nearly subdued by such a heart-welcomed eulogy from Montagu, playfully replied to his gallant praise; and much lively dialogue was continued by them, until Bouverie asked his heart more than once, "In what lay Marian's attractions, which Adelaide could not rival her in?"

At length Adelaide announced the Longuivilles' expected arrival.—"And, with your permission," she added, smiling, "I mean to invite them to our *débat* in dinner parties; and increase your wonder at my capacious necromancy."

"You mean to have *marquées* pitched on the lawn, I suppose," said Bouverie.

"I mean to be very mysterious at present," she responded, smiling, "that you should be expiring with curiosity, and then overpowered with amazement, when my sorcery is complete."

Bouverie thought, as he looked upon her, that there was sorcery certainly practised, since nothing less could exclude her image from the shrine of adoration in his bosom.

“Well,” he answered, “I am expiring with curiosity, as you would have me, and promise you I shall be overpowered by amazement, if you can accommodate so large a party in this cottage. Besides this wonderful dinner, the Longuivilles will arrive in time for our first theatrical exhibition at Marino. We perform the Fair Penitent on Friday evening.”

“The Fair Penitent!” exclaimed Adelaide, in a tone of chagrin—“Alas! then, I shall not see you perform, even should Lady Marian do me the honour of inviting me.”

“Why so?” asked Bouverie, in astonishment.

“Oh! because that is a play which does not meet Mr. Falkland’s approbation; he therefore excluded it from his dramatic selections for my perusal; and he requested me never to see it performed; so I cannot, unless you desire it, Montagu, and I should be sorry for that.”

“Why, what a dear conscientious good child you are!” said Bouverie, most fully approving her faith to Falkland, since it would save him from her annotations upon the impassioned performance of Lady Marian and himself.

“I trust I am conscientious,” she replied, “in fulfilling promises to those I make them in seriousness to; and to prove it so, in one instance, I promised you, Montagu, to tell you all that ever should occur relative to the Duke of St. Kilda, which you ought to know; and I now have much to communicate.”

Luckily for Adelaide this was an auspicious moment for making these communications; since the waking vigil of Bouverie on his pillow, the preceding night, had arrayed her again in his vision, in all the charms of that innocence and sweet forgiving aspect she had worn during the scene of her acquittal, and which had raised her to such an eminence in his admiration and esteem, that not one innuendo uttered by Lady Marian, or Mrs. Gayville, at breakfast, to influence his susceptible jealousy, took effect; although

they led him to hasten to his home rather more favourably disposed towards his wife, for what he thought unjustifiable invidiousness ; and panting to have the matter they had been working upon cleared up, yet unwilling to offend by the semblance of suspicion, he was impatiently waiting for a delicate opportunity of explanation ; and nothing more consonant to his wishes could have occurred, than her mentioning the duke herself.

“ But,” said Adelaide, “ ere I proceed, I must conjure you to answer me with that candour intuitively yours, Montagu. Have your feelings undergone any alteration, since you told me ‘ That gratitude for the Duke of St. Kilda’s preservation of me, would teach you to be slow in resenting any thing objectionable in his attentions to me, and therefore I might unhesitatingly confide in you ?’

“ You hesitate, Montagu, and you alarm me !—Believe me, I have nothing to complain of, although I have communications I wish to make—except in his continuing to persevere in his profitless attachment.”

“My dear Adelaide,” said Montagu, “I hesitated, that I might with more sincerity reply to you ; and I am firm in my belief of having no cause for variation in my feelings relative to this duke ; yet some inexplicable weakness hangs about my heart, which certainly makes me less amicably inclined to him than I was.”

“After this ingenuous confession,” responded our heroine, “I should fear to proceed in my wished-for communication, did I not so intimately know the disposition of my husband.”

And now Adelaide stated, with all the ingenuousness of truth, but with all the eloquence of animated feeling, her distressing adventure in the labyrinth, in which the venerating homage of an honourable man shone so brilliantly ; and as every possible detection of their having met, after the departure of Lady Marian, was averted by his grace’s delicate management, conviction came to the heart of Bouverie of the innocence and candour of his wife ; and tenderly pressing her to his bosom, when she came to her close, he said—

“Adelaide, you have judged my dispo-

sition correctly.—My contumacy in suspicion is vanquished ; and whilst listening to your narrative, I was undecided which to venerate most, that honour and homage of respect which did such violence to the feelings of a lover, in bereaving him of moments so auspicious to his adoration, to secure your fame from the sully of a censure ; or that inborn delicacy and propriety of mind and manners which could inspire that conduct so honourable to you both.—After this recital, you have nothing to apprehend from my unfounded inquietude, since how can I ever suspect the Duke of St. Kilda of any views to give me pain ? although I must still wonder what motive can actuate him to a perseverance in an attachment, which you justly term so profitless.”

“ But, as we are talking of his grace,” continued Bouverie, hesitatingly, “ where did he escort you to yesterday ? ”

“ He was not my escort any where yesterday, Montagu,” replied Adelaide, blushing, from the pang of being so continually misrepresented to her husband—“ Lee had that post of honour yesterday.

The Duke of St. Kilda merely stopped my carriage to hold a short conference with me, which I am anxious to repeat to you."

And Adelaide now faithfully recorded every sentence uttered by each party in this *en passant* interview.

"I am afraid the duke's complaint of my repellent conduct to him is not unfounded," said Bouverie, "for I own I have felt wounded and irritated that he or any man should have been near to preserve you in the moment of danger but myself; and it inspired me with a sort of superstitious dread, as if I augured from it, that Fate had designed your eventually being united."

"Ah, Montagu!" exclaimed Adelaide, "act not under the influence of any such pernicious feeling, if you regard me! Do not, I conjure you, allow this man to suspect you cherish one uneasy thought inspired by him: for that would degrade me, Montagu; and must, in my consciousness of those sensations which disturb you, make me wear the semblance of encouragement to him.

“ Had you never revealed to me, Montagu, that this weakly cherished attachment of the Duke of St. Kilda could inspire you with uneasiness ; and were the ladies at Marino—Mrs. Gayville and Mrs. Warren,”—here, from motives of delicacy, Adelaide forbore to class Lady Marian with those she complained of—“ less witty than they are, I could meet the duke this day at Marino, as the preserver of my life, with the tranquil duty of my unslumbering gratitude, the calm aspect of perfect, although mere esteem.

“ But, as the case now stands, may not one grave look from you paint my cheek with wounded feeling’s liveliest tints, in some awkward moment ? May not the smiles, the significant smiles and nods, the invidious whisper and oppressive remarks upon congeniality of sentiment, or some other tell-tale of mutual attachment—more ingeniously imagined than ingenuously represented—by these mirthful dames, distress timidity not quite subdued, and give to my aspect the semblance of what my heart can never shelter ?”

“Oh, Adelaide! my angelic wife!” exclaimed Bouverie, pressing her to his bosom with an animated tenderness, which a sudden spark of affection, kindled by admiration and pity, inspired, “you have portrayed the snares and embarrassments I have drawn around you, until you have frozen the current in my veins: but these witling, invidious women shall not distress your sweet timidity, my love! I will call on the duke, my own Adelaide, ere dinner, to remove from his mind every impression torturing to your seraphic delicacy; and you shall experience no grave look from me, unless I see you are distressed.”

Adelaide, unused to such tenderness from her beloved husband, was so subdued by its novelty, that tears came to betray how sensibly she was affected; and after several inutile efforts to articulate, she succeeded in expressing her gratitude for his kind promise of support through that day.

“With *that*, believe not I shall ever falter,” she added, “though assailed by ten thousand suitors. The bow of Ulysses bent by my Ulysses alone, can ever send

the successful arrow through the heart of your faithful wife. But pray excuse these tears, dear Montagu; they were involuntary: and I now must leave you, to recall my firmness to its post, that I may tell you as I ought how much I feel your kindness."

Bouverie attempted one gentle effort to detain his wife still with him, when a straying thought to Lady Marian unnerved his arm; and Adelaide was permitted unimpeded to depart, to drink some water, bathe her eyes, and use all her strenuous exertions, not only to subdue her tears, but every trace of them.

Thus left to himself, those miserable thoughts which now in solitude were ever his companions, rushed wildly in upon Bouverie's cogitations, each with their scorpion stings to wound him in the retrospection of all the wretchedness his baleful passion had drawn around himself and his angelic wife; and up and down his little suite of apartments he rapidly paced, in all the agony the warfare of his feelings could inspire, until his never dormant vanity in Adelaide prompted the alarm of

her recent weeping still more impairing her visibly altered looks, when hastily ringing to issue a rapid order, he darted upstairs to seek his wife.

“Adelaide, my love!” he said, “I have ordered the curricie; and I think a little drive in it will do us both good.”

The cheeks of Adelaide seemed now in one instant to anticipate the benefit Bouverie intended she should derive from her airing; for they put forth the liveliest tints of those blushing roses, whose sweetness her smiles seemed prompt to emulate, and rapidly she equipped herself, lest one moment should be lost, through her tardiness, of the happiness now promised her; a rapidity of action which, finding no sympathetic influence in the stable-yard, she was ready to enter the curricie long ere that was announced: but those intervening moments until they set out, proved not tedious ones to her, since Montagu conversed with her, through them, with a tender interest he had not evinced towards her for weeks.

At length their airing terminated, and

Bouverie felt the excursion as one so pleasing to him, that he was sorry it had so soon ended, until he recollected that what caused his regret, afforded him time to call upon the Duke of St. Kilda to perform his promise to Adelaide, and he instantly proceeded to Bexhill.

Our readers can readily imagine the toilet of Adelaide was made most carefully this day, and from her most becoming stores; yet Bouverie was not quite satisfied: his vanity, and some other, to himself, inexplicable sensation, panted to have her surpass even herself.—He thought she looked pale, because his eye was now vitiated in taste, relative to bloom, by the constant society of the glaringly enamelled ladies of Marino; and those beauties of figure so advantageously displayed by Lady Marian, he felt disappointed that the dress of Adelaide so much concealed —Adelaide, whose form was so exquisitely perfect in symmetry, so transcendent in grace: yet while his anxious eye coveted more conformity with the latitude of tolerating fashion, some intellectual feelings

taught his heart to offer approving homage to the more fascinating reserves of inborn delicacy.

At length they set out for Marino ; and Bouverie beheld with alarm the fear blanching paleness which overspread the cheeks of his wife, as she approached the haven of his fondest attachment ; since what could it portend ? and at all events it despoiled her beauty of the charm of striking animation : but when she entered the drawing-room, he beheld those blushing roses expanded on her cheeks, which would, had they not been counterfeits, have faded on those of the enamoured Lady Marian, on seeing her beautiful, her hated rival enter, leaning on the arm of her husband ; he who, in his truancy from Marino the whole morning, had been exposed to those perils the charms of his wife ever menaced her with.

Beside a large assemblage of the Bexhill garrison, the family of the mansion, Adelaide and Montagu, three ladies, most particular friends of Lady Marian, were come over from Hastings, to remain at Marino during the approaching theatricals,

at which one of them was to afford the aid of her powers.

These ladies were an aunt and two nieces, who resided together, and, by the commingling of their large individual incomes, lived in great splendour, and trod the round of dissipation in the blue stocking livery of the female literati, with indefatigable industry.

The aunt, Baroness Chatterfield, a peeress in her own right, was now past her grand climacteric, and yet not past her rage for admiration, which with the hope of deceiving the world into bestowing upon her, her face and form carried about them specimens of every human invention to take from age respect, and make the venerable ruin a ludicrous attempt at impracticable repair.

Attachment in early life to the tutor of her brother, had infected her with a mania for literature which never could be cured, even by incapacity and the disastrous fate of every effort of her pen ; but her industry was invincible ; and as time taught her policy, she purchased the eulogium she could not win, and drew the shadow of fame upon herself, reflected from the cele-

brity of her associates ; for, enriched by the large jointure she came into by her widowhood, and from failure in the male line, her own family wealth, with its honours, devolving to her, she could spread sumptuous banquets to tempt genius and learning to her board ; and at length, from the renown of her daily guests, she manœuvred to have herself enrolled as a woman of talent, and yet only one talent she did possess in an eminent degree, and that was fluency in articulation, combined with the art of fastening upon any individual she wished her torrent of words to flow out upon, with such invincible success, that no effort of address or stratagem could shake her off, as long as her ladyship thought it would yield her *eclat* to adhere.

The Countess of Dinwood, the youngest of her nieces, was at this period in her thirty-seventh year ; and having been separated nearly fourteen years from her lord, (who preferred an establishment with a *chère amie* to the society of his wife,) had, by living this long period the arbitress of her own time and actions, and possessing a bold ungovernable spirit, with an invin-

cible passion for notoriety, had given way so completely to her eccentricities, that a general opinion was imbibed of her whimsicalities being the effect of malady.

And this belief Lady Dinwood took infinite pains to encourage, having no progeny to injure by the circulation of a report that granted her the privilege of setting consistency at defiance, and of saying and doing exactly what her fancy prompted.— Her ladyship was unquestionably handsome, but it was of the masculine cast, both in form and face, and her pretensions to the appellation of *bas bleu* arose from her sock and buskin fame, as a successful writer of prologues and epilogues, and an indifferent one of farces; whilst her skill in recitation, in mimicry, and as an actress, stood high on the records of celebrity.

The Honourable Eleanora Constantia Laura Scribbleton, her ladyship's sister, was two years her senior; and who, ere she had been emancipated from the nursery, determined to astonish the world, as the most perfect beauty which had been ever presented to the eye of admiration: but, untowardly for the accomplishment of this

determination, Nature had unkindly put a decided negative upon that captivating design, and poor Miss Scribbleton finding the world had not taste sufficient to discover in her face and form those exquisite charms she beheld in herself, resolute in her purpose of celebrity, next sought fame as an author ; and as a writer of romances and novels she proved more successful. She wrote from living characters ; her wealth could purchase family anecdotes from mercenary babblers ; and from her rank in life, mixing in high circles, she had full scope for varied selections, which she made with tolerable judgment, and which combining with that command which riches and interest acquire over fame, obtained for her a rank above mediocrity in this class of writers.

But, unfortunately for Miss Scribbleton, her original thirst for admiration, through personal allurements, was not extinguished ; and those charms she had gifted her heroines with, in the flights of fancy, she legitimized as her own, until her vanity, fed by the incense of her own imagination, ebulliated into almost mania, thirsting like

the feverish lip for the cup of mental and personal homage ; and in expectation panting for those universal conquests she gave to her Lavinias and Carolines, and demanding from all who approached her the adulation those fancied all-perfects were overwhelmed by ; yet poor Miss Scribbleton was so ill adapted for tender inspirations, so diseased by affectation, so romantic from her pursuits, so conceited from her literary fame, that, notwithstanding her manifold attractions in landed and funded property, she had hitherto proved unsuccessful in that kind of conquest she was unceasingly in pursuit of—No elegant, beautiful, accomplished, titled youth, had yet been vanquished by her charms of genius and of loveliness.

CHAPTER IX.

MISS SCRIBBLETON had been performing upon the harp when Colonel and Mrs. Bouverie were announced ; and the interruption their entrance occasioned seemed to sever her thoughts from her employment ; and her imagination appeared at once to stray into some far distant realm ; and in a striking attitude, such as she would have chosen for one of her heroines to captivate in, she pensively hung over her harp, her now silent harp, in deep reverie, until long after Adelaide's reception and convey, by Lady Marian, to a seat by Lady Chatterfield, whose victim for that day her insidious rival had ordained her.

“ When Eleanora returns from her flight to the regions of fancy,” said Lady Marian, at length, with a most attractive smile glancing at Bouverie, as she addressed Lady Dinwood, “ I trust she will proceed with her delightful harmony. Beautifully as she always touched her magic harp, I think that touch improved even to more transcendence of perfection.”

“ Oh ! that is because she keeps her nails shorn now,” replied Lady Dinwood : “ lest it should be imagined she had ever recourse to the author’s reputed resource in sterility of invention, she used, you know, to keep them so refutingly long, you might hear them twang on the strings, as a horn accompaniment at Saint Paul’s, if the wind was westerly.”

The fair Eleanora’s nerves were so shocked at the idea of a long-nailed heroine twanging a harp, that her thoughts seemed at once to descend to the globe of vulgar realities; when running her fingers lightly over the harp in a wild cadence of plaintive harmony, she arose with an effort at graceful dignity, and directly walked up to a window where the Duke of St. Kilda and Bouverie were standing, with the latter of whom she had a slight acquaintance, and instantly recommenced the subject of constancy in love, and of the susceptibilities of the heart, upon which they had slightly touched a few mornings before in the library at Hastings.

And this renewal was commenced in so

wild, so romantic a strain, that it awakened all Montagu's long dormant archness; and he replied in a manner so judiciously arranged to lead her on in the eccentric path she had entered, that very shortly two-thirds of the men present were collected round her, to listen to such extraordinary arguments and opinions; giving to the self-approving Eleanora the delicious conviction of her attractive charms, proving this triumphant magnet; not once suspecting it was the speeches, not the speaker, which convened them in such eager groups.

Dinner was at length announced; and when assembling round the festive board, Lady Chatterfield exclaimed, "Mrs. Bouverie and myself are the 'Inimitable Inseparables' for this day; so remember I proclaim we are not to be divided; for she is so charming a companion I cannot give her up."

"But, my good madam," said the general, "there are so many present ready to start as your competitors upon the same plea, that I know not how to act impartially. What say you, Mrs. Bou-

verie, will the *beaux* agree to this monopoly ?”

Adelaide, smiling at the idea of her being deemed a charming companion by a woman who had not suffered her to prove her not being a dumb one, replied, “That *beaux* were too gallant to disappoint the openly expressed wishes of a lady.”

“But gallantry in this case evinced to Lady Chatterfield, would not be gallantry to Mrs. Bouverie ; therefore I vow, if I must not separate the ‘Inimitable Inseparables,’ I will be the supporter of one of them,” exclaimed Major Gayville, taking his station at the other side of Adelaide.

And now between these two heavy clouds, placed by her rival’s policy to obscure her brilliancy, poor Adelaide was seated at table ; for not one effort of any man present proved successful in frustrating the previous arrangement of the Machiavelian hostess.

To such perfection Lady Chatterfield and Major Gayville performed the task assigned them of penning in the powers of Adelaide to attract in conversation, that scarcely any thing addressed to her could

be hear or answered, they were so loud in their volubility, and so indefatigable in engaging her attention: and though she promptly perceived their annoyance was premeditated, and as promptly developed the purpose of it, no trace of chagrin was visible on her countenance; and determined her plotting rival should not exult in triumphing over her temper, she even smiled not unfrequently at the anecdotes repeated to her by her prosing tormentors: and at length one of her smiles, almost approaching a laugh, at the absurdity of what she was at one time politely listening to, Lady Dinwood loudly exclaimed—

“Heavens! what a beautiful mouth and teeth that lovely creature, Mrs. Bouverie, has got!—Why, Eleanora, her teeth out-dazzle those of our next door neighbours at Hastings, who arrived just in time to grin for husbands at Rock fair.”

“Who are they?” demanded Lady Marian, eager to turn the general attention from the blushing Adelaide, and expanding her smile to display her own fine teeth as she spoke.

“ Oh ! I know not ; they belong to a set whom you would expect to see at sixes and sevens in a hackney drag, airing their elbows on a Sunday.”

“ What for matter is with Miss Scribbleton to-day ?” said Mrs. Warren ; “ she looks not quite in de good humour.”

“ In good spirits, you mean, Mimica,” said Warren, hastily, “ Miss Scribbleton is always in good humour.”

“ Go, you are a flatterer,” cried the pensive Eleanora Constantia Laura ; “ but really I believe I am infected a little with *ennui* from fatigue of study ; for those odious books so monopolize me, I really find no leisure for exercise.”

“ I would not read de odious books, I would get quite pretty ones,” said Mrs. Warren.

“ Oh ! I call all books odious, although they are my passion,” exclaimed the authoress.

“ By this same rule, then,” said the Duke of St. Kilda, “ the man of your choice, Miss Scribbleton, will experience the mortification of hearing himself styled by you—‘ my odious husband !’ ”

“Forbid it, love!” exclaimed Miss Scribbleton, in a tone of melting pathos, fixing her eyes most intelligibly upon his grace, to inform him he need not fear an odious epithet, until his eyes fell beneath her earnest and subduing gaze; when instantly her self-possession found its oft-tried retreat, in the apparently far distant regions of soaring fancy’s contemplation.

Whether one of the attendants thought she had strayed from her company long enough; or whether it was by mere accident; but he recalled her from her interesting reverie, by the rude shock of spilling some iced water over her arm and shoulder.

Miss Scribbleton was visibly disconcerted; and her sister, who never frowned at trifles, began to banter the chagrined Eleanora.

“Nay, my dear,” she exclaimed, “if you look so dismayed at a little sprinkling of water, people may suspect it is so long since you were christened, that you have lost all recollection of the feel of the shock.”

“My memory is not defective, although I cannot recollect the sensation of being christened something more than twenty years ago,” replied Miss Scribbleton, within a hair’s breadth of being angry—“but you know I hate any thing like soil or slatternliness about me, and I feared it was gravy, and that made me look so alarmed; for you know,” she added with a significant smile upon all around her, “I love to appear in print.”

“Not more than the world does to see you so, Miss Scribbleton,” said Bouverie.

“Ah! you flatterer! But I do wish now, you seem to have so much taste, that you would assist me a little in my way.—I have just finished my last month’s pastime, a very beautiful—I mean a—a romance, in nine volumes; and I am quite at a loss for a title—I wish you could strike out something very attractive for me.”

“Your own name is so attractive, that titles can be of little consequence to your works,” said Montagu, gallantly: “besides, I am incompetent to the task; but there is

the Duke of St. Kilda, who can supply you with half a hundred beautifully romantic Scotch, English, and Welch titles."

"I am sure I shall be most happy to adopt any title his grace would have the goodness to honour me with," returned Miss Scribbleton, looking with the half-averted eye of interesting consciousness and supplication towards the duke.

"As I know not the fable of your beautiful work, madam," returned his grace with a languid smile, "I might, in my effort for the honour of assisting Miss Scribbleton, select a very inappropriate title; but might it take its name from its fair authoress, I would call it 'Fancy's Favourite.'"

Miss Scribbleton bowed with rather a disappointed air; and the general said—

"Talking of being in print reminds me to ask, Are your bills for your first performance struck off yet, Marian?"

"No: for Lady Dinwood has not yet decided upon what she will delight us in."

"Are you fond of theatrical representation, Mrs. Bouverie?" demanded General Harley.

“ I cannot decidedly answer you, general,” answered Adelaide, blushing, “ as I never saw a drama to advantage.”

“ Did you ever see a play performed, Adelaide ?” asked Bouverie, whose ears were surprisingly quick this day in taking in all that his wife uttered.

“ Oh, Montagu ! can you forget the one I saw ?” answered our heroine in surprise.

“ *The* one you saw ! Mon Dieu !” exclaimed Lady Dinwood, with an emphasis worthy of a better cause. “ Mon Dieu ! *the* one you saw ! Delectable novice ! how we shall astonish you ! But pray, what was *the* one you saw ?”

“ Cato, madam ; in which Colonel Bouverie performed when a boy at school.”

“ Admirable ! Bravo ! Bravissimo !” exclaimed her ladyship : “ how I long to recite for you ! I vow I will have the delicious treat of sitting by you during the performance of the tragedy on Friday evening.”

“ Mrs. Bouverie does not mean to honour our theatre with her presence on that

evening, Lady Dinwood," said Lady Marian.

"Oh! no, the play to be represented is not moral enough for Mrs. Bouverie," exclaimed Mrs. Gayville with a sneer, who had sat boiling with jealous ire ever since Captain Warren had made an effort to gain a seat next Adelaide.

"The Fair Penitent," said Bouverie, blushing with vexation to find what he had told in confidence to his Marian, now publicly talked of at table—"the Fair Penitent is certainly in many points not wholly unexceptionable: but Mrs. Bouverie's objection to see it represented does not arise from her own knowledge of it, Mrs. Gayville; she acts through an amiable adherence to a promise made on the subject to a guardian, whom she is under the most incalculable obligations to."

"It is unfortunate," said Lady Marian, "that, unknowing this promise in time, I arranged for a rehearsal this evening."

"In consequence of my knowledge of this arrangement," returned Bouverie, "I ordered the carriage to

Bouverie a quarter of an hour before the time appointed for the rehearsal."

"But," said the general gravely, "if this play is immoral, I do not approve of having it performed by my wife and family under my sanction. I must consider my situation, and the consequences of example to the youngsters under my jurisdiction."

"Certainly," returned Lady Marian with an ill-suppressed sneer; "and in your own individual pursuits you are renownedly careful; but, as to mine, I beg you may not take the trouble of interfering. I hope I am a competent judge of my own actions, sir?"

"Faith, you ought to be at this time of day, if you ever are," returned the general, dryly, not a little nettled at her allusion to his pursuits: "but still I must beg leave to say, I think the play might be changed to one of celebrated morality."

"To *George Barnwell* for instance," said Thornley, inadvertently.

"Or the *Busy Body*," retorted Lady Marian in a very harmonic tone.

“ Marplot, by Captain Thornley ; whose able and natural performance of that character has long obtained for him universal applause, as a *chef-d'œuvre* of the histrionic art,” responded Thornley humorously.

“ I will not vote for George Barnwell,” said the general, “ for that Milwood is an odious wretch, and George, a poor credulous *ninny* ; and neither could find a proper representative amongst you. Besides, I am decidedly for comedy. What can be more diverting than the *Beaux Stratagem*, or the Recruiting Officer ? ”

“ A most consistently moral choice for so fastidious a gentleman, I must confess ! ” said Lady Marian ; “ but the Fair Penitent is the absolute performance for Friday next. The week following, Mrs. Bouverie may, without a scruple imbibed from her fastidious guardian, honour us, as one of our audience, to see our immortal Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* performed.”

“ That indeed,” said the general, “ I shall like myself, if Mrs. Bouverie is the Juliet, and Thornley, Romeo ; since they

are girl and boy enough to tolerate the romantic passion they represent."

"Lud, general!" exclaimed Lady Dinwood, "juvenility cannot always be attended to on the stage. I shall play Miss in her Teens one of the nights, most naturally; and you, general, I think, will make an admirable Fribble, or Master Watty Cockney, when we sport the Romp."

"Let him alone, my dear, until we sport the Tempest," said Lady Marian, smiling with alluring archness; "in that we shall find him quite at home."

Lady Marian,—foiled in the attempt at completely enclosing the attractions of her hated rival between the overshadowing powers of her auxiliaries, and pierced to the heart by jealousy and alarm at perceiving she attracted more general admiration than herself, and that she was still an object of powerful interest to Bouverie, —felt so internally wretched, so unequal to preserving the semblance of captivating sweetness in temper and manners, that very early after the removal of the cloth she determined upon seizing the first op-

portunity for withdrawing with her female guests: but when at length it transpired in conversation, that Colonel Bouverie had taken his wife to Hastings in his curricie that morning, her alarm and jealousy almost overpowered her senses; and no longer possessed of self-command, she precipitately arose from table, pleading sudden indisposition.

From the dining-room Lady Marian instantly flew to her own apartments, followed by Mrs. Gayville, leaving the rest of her female party to the care of Mrs. Warren, with whom they strayed a little on the lawn near the house, until the temperate squadron of the men filed off from the general and entered the drawing-room, whither Mrs. Warren almost flew with her phalanx to join them.

The moment Lady Dinwood now entered the drawing-room, she placed one hand on the shoulder of Bouverie, while with the other she grasped a button of his breast, to detain him in the window recess she had drawn him to, as she softly said—

“ Let me talk to you about your beautiful and interesting wife, whom I should

warn you not publicly to evince your inconstancy to; since half the men in existence, as well as those at Marino to-day, will be ready to snatch her from you, should that law of gravitation fail her, which now suspends her far out of their reach, in the high region above mortal frailty; only that I fear your interests with Lord De Moreland may soon be injured by another more fatal stroke,—even by her death.”

Bouverie started, turned pale as the phantom she conjured up to fright him; and trembled so violently, her ladyship felt the vibration of his frame beneath her hand.

“Alas! my poor friend!” she cautiously exclaimed, “how has she thrown away her inestimable affections upon an ingrate! Your heart is incontestably Adelaide’s; while vanity and passion’s spells only enchain you to poor Marian.”

“Lady Dinwood,” said Montagu indignantly, “I cannot comprehend you. I know not by what authority you address such very extraordinary suppositions to me.”

“ By authority of the full confidence of your adoring Marian, whose existence now hangs upon your love ; who has called me into her council, and whose projects have all my decided disapprobation, as all romantic and ruinous. Your wife, I take upon me to prophesy, will never by any *faux pas* liberate you from your marriage vows ; and as you are at present not a rich enough man to pay conveniently the attendant damages of an elopement, you must content yourselves to temporize with circumstances ; and be happy under the auspicious sanction of this unsuspecting sot Harley ; and to keep well with Lord De Moreland, send your wife from making observations, under the pretence of tender preservation of her health, to Clifton, Cornwall, or the Madeiras.”

The effect of this advice upon Bouverie was so completely to unnerve him, that he was compelled to break from her ladyship's grasp, and to fly into the wooded grounds, to recover the shock her prediction, relative to the health of Adelaide, had occasioned ; and to ruminate upon all she had so unceremoniously advised : and

where, while all the subtile poisons her ladyship had administered were operating in new raised hopes of happiness with his infatuating Marian, his struggling thoughts would often revert in anguished apprehension to the direful possibility of Clifton, or Cornwall, or the Madeiras, being necessary for the restoration of the health of the peerless Adelaide.

CHAPTER X.

As a project had been formed by some of the young men, on their way from the dining-room, to rescue, by every power of management, the lovely fascinator Mrs. Bouverie from the fangs of Lady Chatterfield, the moment the ladies entered from the lawn, they surrounded the *chaise longue*, where the dowager had placed herself next to her devoted prey; when Thornley, by the most fulsome adulation to her ladyship's charms, almost with magic influence succeeded in withdrawing her attentions from Adelaide; when Miss Scribblerton, perceiving the spot her aunt and Mrs. Bouverie now occupied the most attractive to her in the room, approached; and requesting a seat with them, set about her favourite project of astonishing by the wonders of her literary abilities.

"Do you ever read novels or romances, Mrs. Bouverie?" she affectedly inquired.

“Frequently, when recommended by those whose taste and judgment I may depend upon for not endangering my morals, or wasting my time for me,” replied Adelaide smiling.

“Then you have read *The Ardent Lovers*?”

“No.”

“*The Sentimental Footman*?”

“No.”

“*The Elegant Phantom*?”

“Never had that surprising pleasure.”

“Nor *Fantastic Simplicity* either?”

“No, indeed.”

“But *Clandestine Delights* you must certainly have read?”

“Most certainly I have not.”

“*Mon Dieu*! Did no one then recommend any one of those to you?”

“Never.”

“Alas! What tasteless beings you have been doomed to vegetate amongst! Those works, I may without vanity affirm, are enrolled in a blazoned page of Fame’s distinguished records; and you must allow me to present them to you, as my

humble attempts at literary renown. Thirty volumes, the amusement of a few hours of my yet not far run race of life."

"Most fertileley imagined, great Sche-razade! would I were thy grim musta-choed spouse!" Thornley exclaimed, bombastically. "But oh, queen of fiction! Empress of invention's mines! Shepherdess of the black and white flocks of fable! since such a deliciously entertaining fate is not for me, unsultaned that I am! Wilt thou not, bright genius of fancy's visions! Fire of the forge of tales of fallacy! bestow on me the mighty boon also of these thy thirty nights' extempores?"

"Take my advice, both of you," said Lady Dinwood; who now, forsaken by Montagu, joined this group around Adelaide; "accept not one volume of her works from her, unless you have a cool fifty or hundred ready on demand for the next subscription, raised by her delicate sensibility, for some elegant poetess in distress. Learn, from an adventure of mine, what expensive gifts presents from authors may prove:—

"Not long since I took a young friend

with me into the country, whose health was delicate, and eggs were recommended for her; but being difficult to procure at that season, the Lady Bountiful of the neighbourhood promised most sentimentally to supply me. I received one from her, and almost in the same moment my poor young friend burst a blood vessel, and expired ere night; and upon my appearance in town, in the following spring, my Lady Bountiful, for the kindness she had meant to show me, (which the one useless-egg was the earnest of,) came coolly pounce upon me for ten guineas, as a subscriber to a splendid work she was about to publish: but from that hour I never saw her work, unless she paid me the compliment of naming it after me, and that the town was for two seasons delighted by my adventure, under the denomination of Mother Goose, or the Golden Egg."

Tea and coffee were brought in just as Lady Marian, interestingly languid, entered, leaning on Mrs. Gayville's arm: but useless proved the effect of such an entrance, since Bouverie was not there.

Mrs. Warren, who was always devising

some prank to attract attention, at length appeared on the lawn before the windows, dressed most grotesquely, with a tambourine in hand, attending three dogs, attired as gipsies, that she had taught to dance in high style.

Every one flew out upon the lawn to view more perfectly Mrs. Warren's excellently well managed ludicrous exhibition, except Lady Chatterfield, who was holding forth to Adelaide in her incessant volubility; but from whom, even consistently with politeness, our heroine effected her escape; but not until several moments after the general rush out, did she succeed in this achievement, when, in her eagerness to make her escape secure, she perceived not the skin of a peach, which one of the children had thrown on the top step of a flight of stone stairs which descended to the lawn, when her foot sliding over it, she must have been precipitated down the step, had not the Duke of St. Kilda saved her from her impending fall.

Adelaide, as she flew through the door, beheld Montagu just arrived upon the lawn from his cogitations in the wood, and the duke, standing near each other, looking

up at her; but his grace being some paces nearer to her than Bouverie, was the first to reach her: but although by his arm she was saved from a dangerous fall, he instantly resigned her to her husband, who clasped her with tremulous tenderness to his bosom, and with a fervor of interest, which electrified her, he inquired "If she was hurt?"

Adelaide was totally unhurt; but the rapture which thrilled through her heart, emanating from her husband's unexpected tenderness, combining with her pitying grief at beholding the look of desponding anguish the duke glanced upon her, as he resigned her to the arms of Montagu, so completely overpowered her, that she could not articulate.

"You are hurt, my Adelaide!" exclaimed Montagu, in an agony of alarm.

"No, no," returned Adelaide, endeavouring to rouse her firmness, "I am not hurt in the least, Montagu; it is only agitation."

"Will you walk a little, out of the way of observation, until you recover your composure?" said Montagu.

With an ineffably sweet smile of tender-

ness and gratitude, she took his arm to proceed with him; when the look of agonized despair the duke regarded her with, as he drew back to let her pass with the being he most envied upon earth, did not diminish the agitation of her spirits.

Montagu led his lovely wife from the lawn into the bosage he had flown to meditate in so short a period since; from which he had emerged, not quite determined which to cling to, his infatuator, or the countercharm, when the thrill of ardent tenderness which the danger he beheld his wife in, seemed to promise the triumph to Adelaide; and as under the delusive hope of her influence prevailing, he walked, he tenderly inquired, "Why she was still so agitated?"

"Why you tremble," he said, with the affectionate smile of fondly growing interest, "like a little bird entangled in the fowler's cruel net."

"Oh, Montagu!" she replied, almost subdued to tears by this innovation of domestic happiness, "it is the net of tender affection your kind attention has entangled me in, that makes me tremble so."

And scarcely had her soft accents ceased to thrill through his ear to his heart, when Bouverie snatched her to his bosom with an ardent embrace, calling her

“His own adored wife! his fascinating trembler!”

Scarcely had Bouverie given utterance to these exclamations of tenderness, when a cry of distress, a mingled groan and shriek, assailed their ears; when Montagu starting in dismay, recoiled from the embrace he had sought, and pushed poor Adelaide from him with frantic horror; then stood for a moment, pale and trembling, transfixed by appalling sensations, almost threatening the subjugation of his senses; but in a moment more the cry was repeated, still more indicative of anguish, when he rushed like a maniac from the presence of his wife towards the spot from whence the portentous sound had issued.

Adelaide had sunk from the arms of her husband against a contiguous tree, for support; and against it she still leaned, like one whose every faculty was stunned by an unexpected hurl from the heights of

fancied happiness in Hope's elysium, to the lowest gulf of destruction, where every tender expectation at once was wrecked, until in a few moments more she was aroused to the keenest feeling of her misery, on beholding Montagu bearing the apparently swooning form of Lady Marian, like a distracted man, in his arms, towards the house.

The effect of Lady Marian's cries, (for Adelaide seemed to learn intuitively they were hers) had prepared her mind for her own dire overthrow in the moment of fancied triumph: but this conviction of how invincible was the charm which bound her husband to her rival, seemed at once to overpower her, and she sunk on the cold turf beneath the tree, and on the root of which she hid her face, and wept the bitter, bitter torrent of anguished disappointment's scalding tears.

At length, recollection of where she was, called the faculties of Adelaide to prompt exertion, to subdue her unavailing tears and fit herself for that circle she must appear in ere she returned to her home of misery; a circle where she, alas! had not one

friend to cling to; not one to give her courage, by their kind support, to account, without betraying the anguish of her heart, for the dereliction of her husband on their walk.

But most of all that Adelaide dreaded in her return to the house, was the tender anxiety of the Duke of St. Kilda, to learn if she had sustained any hurt in her narrowly escaped fall; the duke, whose interest, whose affection for her, were never the caprice of the moment, the delusion of fancy, or the toil of effort, but the tender feelings of unfaltering attachment: however, on rejoining the party, she found them in the drawing-room, and, to her great relief, the duke was gone—gone from viewing happiness he would not murmur at, since Adelaide's was promoted by it.

With blushing cheeks of pained emotion, at being compelled to utter an untruth to spare her husband from reprehension, Adelaide replied to the numerous questions of what she had done with her *caro sposo*? “That his orderly from Bexhill had business with him.”

These heart-riving interrogations ended, Lady Dinwood informed poor Adelaide she had only been waiting for her return to comply with the general request for some of her recitations.

Lady Dinwood now called for a glass of water, being a little nervous, she said; and after taking a sip of it, she placed it on a table by where she seated herself, and then began her very animated recital of *Alonzo the Brave*.

All was soon profound, or apparent attention; and when her ladyship believed she had, by her skilful management in emphasis, cadences, and fear-awakening starts and gestures, raised horror to its most nervous susceptibility, she with piercing thrill announced "the bell tolled one," with the unexpected accompaniment of a strong fillip against the glass, giving at once the sound described.

The effect of this accompaniment disappointed the expectation of her ladyship, whose animation received a visible check; and after languidly running through the sequel, she in the same breath which conveyed the terminating pause, attacked her auditors upon the callosity of their nerves.

“Why I thought my female auditors would at least have shrieked, and my male ones started in horror,” she added, in a highly disconcerted tone—“And you, Mrs. Bouverie, I expected the triumph of throwing into fits; and lo! and behold! you have humbled me by an apathy I never saw surpassed.”

Adelaide blushed in consciousness of her total inattention to the animated recital, since a spectre more appalling to her than Alonzo the Brave had been dismaying her senses in the form of Lady Marian Harley, at the moment in which the glass’s sound was intended to chase her senses from their functions: yet thinking some extenuation of her too visible apathy necessary, she said—

“How could I feel any thing in the form of terror, even though wound up by your ladyship’s unrivalled powers, to harrow up one’s faculties, while surrounded by such an invincible phalanx of Alonzos Brave?—Besides, I must confess, to these kind of attacks my nerves are most disgracefully impenetrable.”

“Say you so?” exclaimed her ladyship, with a loud laugh of expected triumph;

“then I’ll have a shy at them, by Jupiter!”

And now instructing all the company to an immuniton of their wide extent of circle, more perfectly to hear “a tale of horror, which always so unnerved her in the direful recital, she could seldom, near its close, articulate above her breath,” she began indeed a tale most horrible; told most inimitably; combining in matter and manner every thing to work the imagination up to the most terrific expectation of some dread mystery, direful to hear; when, with panting breath and tone unsteady, murmuring articulation, she was by dismaying snatches proceeding, when suddenly her eyes expanding until the orbs seemed about to start from their sockets, her nostrils distended, and rising from her seat in stiffening fear and dire amazement, she uttered the most shrill and piercing shriek that ever appalled the ear of mortal, as if she beheld realizing the horror she had so well prepared her auditors for the impression of.

Lady Dinwood’s powers now indeed received their full meed of triumph, for the

three uninitiated ladies shrieked most loudly, most naturally, their applause ; whilst the gentlemen, startled by surprise at so unexpected a termination to this assault upon their nerves, many of them intuitively laid their hands upon their sabres, as if about to unsheathe them, to fight the phantom so mercilessly conjured up to appal them.

The second manœuvre of Mrs. Warren's terror was to throw her into a violent fit of genuine hysterics. Mrs. Gayville's ebulliated into almost abusive passion at such an unjustifiable assault upon any one's nerves ; while Adelaide, after her emphatic shriek of spontaneous echo, sunk down on her seat again trembling in foundless apprehension, and feeling a powerful impellent to cry at she knew not what.

In this moment of still existing confusion Bouverie rushed into the room, alarmed by the first shriek, and resistlessly drawn from the siren Marian's boudoir, as in the echoing screams, although unacquainted with the tone of Adelaide in such a distressing cry, he firmly believed her voice was mingled ; and with dismay

portrayed on every line of his fine and eloquent countenance, he stood amid the preparing assailants of the peeress's phantom; and was flying to his wife, to shield her from every possible danger; when the recollection of how he had left her in the wood arrested his steps through shame; and staggering back the quick advance he had made, he beheld his Marian standing by his side: Marian, whom he believed he had left subdued by the effect of a death-resembling swoon, occasioned, as she informed him, by his embrace and exclamations of tenderness, which she had witnessed from the ambush she had flown to, for the purpose of listening to his conversation with his wife in their walk. But in this confession she omitted to acknowledge her swoon was counterfeit.

All thoughts of flying to sooth or protect poor Adelaide were dissipated at once, by the direful apprehension of again annihilating the senses, and menacing the existence, of this adoring enchantress, by any symptom of attachment to his wife.

The general, Major Gayville, and a few more, firm votaries of Bacchus, now con-

trived to stagger in, to learn the cause of such a tumult; when obtaining the necessary information, they stammered out a doubtful blessing upon her ladyship's witty achievement; and reeled away to their beloved orgies: and Fitzpatrick too having been drawn thither by apprehension of evil, Adelaide, in as steady a voice as her sensibly wounded spirit could command, audibly requested him to let her know the very moment her carriage arrived.

"Dear Mrs. Bouverie, why eager to quit your friends so soon?" said Lady Marian, in a tone of interesting langour, and with an air of condescending kindness. "This anxiety to go, is surely not very flattering to those you fly from."

"My anxiety is to accommodate those I fly from, Lady Marian," Adelaide responded with a dignified sweetness, which struck conviction to the heart of all who could comprehend her feelings, that however wounded sensibility trembled in her heart, without one jarring element her mind was formed. "I feel myself in the way, as the moments draw near for the commencement of your rehearsal."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Lady Dinwood; "this is not the true motive of your hurry to abscond. You are afraid of a renewal of my warfare against your nerves; which, to say truth, are much stronger than I expected. But let me advise you, for the effect of captivating mankind, who love to behold feminine helplessness in our sex, affect something of more susceptibility on such occasions."

"Oh, Lady Dinwood! you forget I am married," answered Adelaide smiling; "and the captivation of mankind is no longer a lawful pursuit for me. However," she added in a varying tone, (for, in despite of every effort, as she proceeded her cadence sunk to a plaintive pathos, that thrilled to the most sensitive recesses of her husband's conscience,) "your ladyship has not much occasion to pronounce your manifesto against my susceptibility; since upon no individual present the shrieks of this evening can have made a more lasting impression than upon myself."

At this moment a loud peal of the gate-bell was heard, which Lady Marian right-

ly auguring proclaimed the punctuality of her rival's servants, she began to make signals to Bouverie, with impetuous gestures, which told him decidedly she must be obeyed; therefore in compulsive compliance he arose—for every feeling that could excite reluctance sprung up within him, to awaken a shame, a grief-inspired repugnance, to approach Adelaide with the intelligence the tyrannic arbitress of his fate had decreed him to impart; and ere he could impel his unwilling feet to reach the sofa where his wife was seated, her carriage was announced.

Adelaide now hastened to pay her departing civilities with that precipitance the pride-wounded feeling of knowing her absence wished for, inspired; and when she approached the siren Marian, her ladyship, eager in more than half-way courtesy to receive the *congé* of her obnoxious guest, hastily said—

“ I fear, Mrs. Bouverie, I must be compelled to the distressing necessity of excusing myself and family from dining with you on Thursday, since our inmates have received the addition of my three fair

friends; and your house is unfortunately too small to admit so overgrown a party."

"Upon that plea, Lady Marian, necessity does not compel me to the mortification of admitting your excuse," Adelaide replied with invincible sweetness; "for however small my abode, I trust the diligence of inventive hospitality will always instruct me how to find my dwelling sufficiently capacious to receive, without the limitation of numbers, the friends of Colonel Bouverie; amongst whom I am confident he is most anxious to class the friends of Lady Marian Harley."

And now addressing Ladies Chatterfield and Dinwood, and Miss Scribbleton, Adelaide made her invitation to them with the winning grace of highly polished life; untinged at this moment with any of that youthful hesitating timidity, which so often threw its veil over her fascinations, amazing them by a native dignity, that electrified her wily rival with the conviction that she soon would emerge from behind the cloud of bashfulness, an orb of surpassing brilliancy; and that therefore her measures must be prompt, or they

would prove inutile for securing Bouverie to herself for ever.

In the hall, although detachments of cavalry and infantry escorted Adelaide thither, the now nerve-agued Montagu took an opportunity to whisper to her,

“That he had a thousand apologies to make for leaving her so abruptly, with such apparent unkindness, in the wood; but as it had been a cry of real distress which called him from her, he trusted her humanity would prove his advocate.”

Adelaide bowed, and feebly smiled; but she attempted not the obvious retort which resentment might have inspired—

“Is my humanity to prove your advocate also for leaving me to weep in anguished misery, the dire conviction of finding another’s voice had power to teach you to recoil from me; and lead you to fling your unoffending, lately wedded wife, like a noxious weed, from your bosom?”

Bouverie next, with an air of still torturing embarrassment, proceeded hesitatingly to say, “That as the rehearsal was to commence so late, and so many of the performers had not practised together be-

fore, they would inevitably be tedious; and that after its termination there was to be a *petit souper*, it would be so late, so very late, he thought it better not to return home all night, lest he might disturb her."

"Whatever is most adapted to your own convenience, Colonel Bouverie, pray do," said Adelaide, with the semblance of calmness, whilst her heart was rived with the anticipation of what all these too successful schemes of Lady Marian to estrange him from her, would effect; "but for my rest, it will, at least to-night, defy disturbance. Shall I send Lee back in the carriage with your toilet?"

"No; he has been already apprised; and—and—is, I believe, indeed arrived;" stammered out Bouverie.

Adelaide, with an intuitive impulse, which no one gentle feeling of her nature had power at that moment to conquer, rapidly withdrew her hand from Montagu's grasp; and with a hurried adieu to the gentlemen who surrounded them, bounded into the carriage, ere any one was prompt enough to offer her assistance.

CHAPTER XI.

THE following day being Sunday, Adelaide, after a solitary breakfast, attended by the painful pangs of disappointed hope of Montagu's appearance, set out, accompanied as usual by Obearn and Dennis, to the parish church.

As our heroine's attention never strayed from the sacred duty which brought her to the spot of public worship, unless something very extraordinary occurred to call her thoughts from her devout employment, she knew not therefore until after the terminating prayer, that the Duke of St. Kilda and Captain Hope had occupied Lord Melcombe's pew.

Adelaide, although half angry with the duke for seeking places where she was to be found, could not turn from him with displeasure, or betray any marked severity of manner, when with his companion he escorted her to the entrance of her own premises; where, without any attempt at intruding further, their parting bows were made.

But during their walk from church the duke inquired, "Was she to spend the following day at Marino?" Adelaide's response was a negative.

"Of course, then, Colonel Bouverie will be at home to-morrow?" Adelaide with a painful blush replied, "She could not tell."

"I wish you could, Mrs. Bouverie," returned his grace, "since I feel an invincible anxiety to pass some part of my day at your cottage to-morrow; and if I knew the colonel would be at home, I would take advantage of the kind wish he expressed for being on terms of friendly intimacy with me, by inviting myself to take my tea with you."

"When Lady Longuiville arrives," said Adelaide blushing, in anxiety to turn the point of their conversation from the mortifying circumstance of her being unacquainted with any of her husband's arrangements, "I trust I shall often have the pleasure of seeing you, duke, Captain Hope, and our other friends, in our cottage."

"But that will not be *to-morrow*," re-

plied the duke with emphasis ; then, after a pause, he continued, “ May I take the liberty of sending here to-morrow at dinner time, to know if Colonel Bouverie is at home ; and whether he will permit me to call upon him in the evening ? ”

Adelaide could find no plea for negating this request ; and as she walked up the paddock to her home after she had parted from him, she meditated, in awakened curiosity, upon what could make this interesting young man so mysteriously anxious to spend some of the morrow at her cottage.

“ Surely, surely,” she exclaimed, while a gratified thrill from her vanity fluttered her heart, “ he cannot know it is my birth-day ! ”

When our heroine entered the house, she found a note awaiting her from her husband, stating, with more apparent ceremony than affection, his concern that a variety of engagements, which he briefly stated, must prevent his having the happiness of seeing her before Tuesday morning, when he purposed having the pleasure of breakfasting with her.

The intelligence this note contained proved a death-blow to all poor Adelaide's hope-reared visions for the morrow; a direful wound to her bursting heart that Montagu could forsake her on her birth-day; removed too, as she was, from that dear fostering parent, who in his fondly-cherishing attachment had never failed to make it a gala-day for all around her.

The sun arose next morning in its most glorious brightness, without one beam to gild the hopes of Adelaide; and the moment her nearly untouched breakfast was removed by the afflicted Dennis, that fondly attached domestic, in a short speech, too replete with excess of feeling to be eloquent, presented the "*Darling!* he had helped to rear," half a dozen pair of most beautiful silk shoes, brought by a sailor from Cadiz.

"Which to be sure myself did not grab at the purchase of," he continued, "the instant moment it was sung into my ears, like the sweet notes of a nightingale, that they had been offered for sale at Marino; and though it was mad they were for them there, and kept them since this day eight

days, to see if it was smaller their feet would be growing, or the shoes larger by delay; yet, och, murder! to these hopes not a thumping foot among the whole kit of them but what was a mile too big, and more grief to them! to be wedged into these fairy hunter's shoes."

Adelaide was too tender of the feelings of those she regarded, to make any demur about accepting this present from her attached servant; which with gracious kindness she did; and made him happy by putting on a pair, to assure him they fitted her to perfection; since he now found, that to a certainty, through his humble means, a mortification was prepared for "*The splaw-futted kit at Marino.*"

But scarcely had Adelaide done gratifying her affectionate servant by her acceptance of his birth-day offering, when a cross post-man from London arriving that day brought her a packet, containing a poem printed in the finest style on vellum, addressed to her upon her natal day; so exquisitely beautiful in its poetic excellence; so refined in all its tender allusions,

to the writer's ardent, hopeless, and unalienable attachment to her; so affecting in its aspirations for every happiness to attend her through every coming year, that in a burst of anguished tears she wept that Montagu was not the writer.

And now, as she wept for the homage of the heart she coveted not being hers, she dwelt on the dangerous contrast between the voluntary absence of her husband on this day, and the never dormant memory of all that related to her in the man who stood confessed to her detection as the writer of this enchanting poetic incense.

"It was, it must be, the Duke of St. Kilda, from his poetic turn and implied remembrance of the day," Adelaide mentally pronounced, as she wept that it was not Montagu; and grieved that the duke should so devote his every thought to her, until these tears, this pity thus awakened, this feeling of gratified vanity thus aroused, this parallel between his grace and Montagu, so softened her heart, that at length alarmed by a sudden thrill of terror, on finding herself opening the poem a fifth time to read it, she sprung into action, to

dissipate the pernicious weakness inspired by disappointed love's resentment and flattered vanity.

As it had been amongst Falkland's endeavours in rearing his ward, to impress upon her mind that her being was given her for nobler purposes than the mere frivolities of human existence; he had always set apart for the anniversary of her nativity such exercises as he thought best calculated to call her thoughts to serious reflexion, and to leave on her mind a pleasing impression for retrospection of how she had been employed her last birth day, as an incentive for emulative benevolence on the succeeding one.

Every precept of Falkland had been engraven with so indelible an impression upon the heart of his ward, that not one of them could be consigned to oblivion in her breast; and all which in his presence she had performed with cheerful obedience, had, since their separation, been adhered to with almost religious reverence.

Adelaide, attended by Obearn, set out as the almoner of her uncle, having no means of her own now left for the uses of

benevolence, and not one cottage of indigence within two miles of her, but partook of her bounty, either by clothes or money; none where other distresses taught the heart to moan, but had that cup of consolation given them, such as hers and her nurse's treasured stores of knowledge in physic; her kindest sympathy, her heart-resident piety, and highly cultivated mind could yield them; and laden with the blessings of those she had relieved or comforted, she returned to her solitary dinner.

As the hour of dinner passed away without any message from the duke, Adelaide concluded he had been convinced by his reason that he ought not to seek her society; and she felt joy that it was so; but how was all this fancied prowess of his grace's reason over love dissipated, when, as she sat forlorn and sad at her tea, the housemaid, as Dennis and Obearn were out on a love-inspired stroll to deplore, unheard by mortal ear, the hard fate of their darling—announced the Duke of St. Kilda, who, finding her master was from home, begged leave to see her mistress, to leave an important message with her for the colonel.

Adelaide arose to receive him with all the self-possession she could command; but offended at the impropriety of the intrusion, her looks were cold to frigidity. in defiance of every feeling her gratitude awakened for the preserver of her life.

“Oh, forgive, forgive, I implore you, my bold intrusion, Mrs. Bouverie!” his grace exclaimed the moment the retreating domestic closed the door upon them; “but had I sent an inquiry as I first proposed, I dare not then, under the mask of ignorance of Bouverie’s absence, brave that frigid reception, which, knowing you, I had anticipated; but no effort of reason, no terror of offending you, could hush in my anguished heart the ardent wish, the fond solicitude of my panting interest for you, to present myself before you on this day, to offer you the congratulations of sincerity, the wishes of an adoring friend, for the sun of everlasting happiness to shine upon you, though mine is set for ever.”

And now, snatching the hand of the unprepared Adelaide, he pressed it with ardour to his throbbing lips, his panting heart; and ere her rising indignation could find

an emphatic phrase to articulate her marked displeasure in, he relinquished her struggling hand, retreated a few paces from her; and as he wiped away an unbidden tear of his misery's distillation, he lowly articulated—

“Spare your reproofs, dear Adelaide! I know I merit them: and though agonizing to my heart my return to imperative duty, I am penitent; and will endeavour to be all I wear the unfaltering semblance of, the estimating friend of the wife of Bouverie.”

“I presume,” his grace continued with a steadier voice, “I presume, unasked by you, Mrs. Bouverie, to take a seat, because I am resolved to prove myself worthy of the honour of remaining where you are; and believe me, you may allow me one short half-hour's conference.”

Adelaide bowed acquiescence; yet still with an air of existing reserve, although her indignation had for some moments been vanquished by gratitude's reminiscence and pity's influence.

“I have already confessed to you,” continued the duke, “that the resist-

less influence of this day arbitrarily drew me hither; but yet I had a subordinate motive. In the days of my fatal delusion at Roscoville, I heard Colonel Bouverie utter a wish for being returned to parliament, and his intention, should Lord De Moreland ever propose it to him, unhesitatingly to acquiesce.

“Now, Mrs. Bouverie, by the death of a most honourable member, a borough of mine has become vacant; and its having in the memory of man been represented only by men of unblemished honour and high abilities, I can with greater confidence offer it to Bouverie; which I am now come hither to do. Will you, therefore, have the goodness to mention it to him when he comes home to night; and tell him I must request an answer in time for the departing post to-morrow, as I have already had many applications for this borough; and I think where one is under the necessity of pronouncing a negative to a request, one ought not to add to disappointed hope the pang of protracted uncertainty.”

Adelaide, with all her native grace and

sweetness, anticipated the thanks of Montagu for such an honourable distinction in this flattering offer; and gave her promise of being the faithful repeater of the duke's kindness to her husband the moment he returned.

A pause of some moments ensued; when, after one or two unsuccessful efforts to announce his wish, his grace said—

“After having so evidently incurred your displeasure, Mrs. Bouverie, by my daring intrusion to night, shall I ever be forgiven if I presume to plead for the honour of taking some tea with you?”

“Oh, duke!” she responded, as she poured out some tea for him, “I am not so fastidious as you would fain portray me. My earnest wish has been, and ever shall be, that you would put it in my power to receive unhesitatingly in my house the preserver of my life as my esteemed friend, or a beloved brother.”

“Then, then believe me, Adelaide, I will henceforth, with all the firmness of my mind, endeavour to invest you with that power; and even though regarded by you only as a brother, yet still even as

such, to be beloved by you, I would aim at being contented."

And now his grace succeeded by a powerful effort in appearing cheerful; and he entered upon every topic of the day that he thought could interest or entertain his lovely companion; beguiling for her the progress of time, under every fascination of the most refined and enlightened conversation; lulling fears, and every censure from internal monitors, by respect of homage almost approaching holy veneration; until the rapidly advancing twilight reminded Adelaide her fascinating companion was trespassing; when, with mildness and dignity happily blended, she bade him remember, "Bexhill was three miles off."

Instantly the duke arose to depart; yet he said adieu with such an affecting emphasis of lingering tenderness's fond wish to stay, that for full twenty minutes after his departure Adelaide remained transfixed to her seat, leaning with her elbows on the table before her, with her face hid in her spread hands, endeavouring to solve the nature of some magic he left behind him, inthralling to her senses.

But at length a fearful solution came to her reason, upon her hands falling from her face, to open once more the poem of the morning; when instantly that intellectual guide, indignant at such an inthralment stealing on her faculties, imbibed from flattery's most refined incense, offered at the shrine of humbled vanity and piqued affection, called all her strongest auxiliaries to council; in horror called them, to sit in condemnation upon such an innovating, transgressive weakness.

And now in this terrorized council of her mental rulers, reason, unclouded by magical illusion, conveyed a new conviction to the bosom of the trembling Adelaide of the duke having acted most reprehensibly towards her, by intruding himself, as he had done, to a *tête-à-tête* with her, in the known absence of her husband; and the interview, in which she before beheld such fascinations of intellect, such incense of intoxicating, respectful homage, the clear optics of reason now presented to her as the deep design of beguiling, through the unwary path of confiding estimation, a guileless heart, disappointed in its tender-

est affections; and while smarting from the wounds of humbled love and vanity, more likely to fly to that assuaging balm offered by flattery in every seductive mitigating form.

Adelaide now in horrorized conviction of the direful precipice the force of contrast had beguiled her to the verge of, with all the fervour of a virtuous heart, shuddering at transgressing, offered her thanksgiving at the throne of mercy for her providential escape from the menaced destruction of her peace; and many a prayer she breathed throughout her sleepless night to the guardian protectors of innocence, to save her in future from the thralldom of flattery's magics upon fascinated vanity.

In the intervening time Montagu had been infatuated by the most intoxicating lures of a siren's blandishments into an almost total annihilation of all his hovering tenderness for Adelaide; but his admiration of her mental excellence, the inthralment of passion was not likely to interfere with: and such veneration he still held her virtues in, that he shuddered at

breaking a promise to her, lest she should despise him; and though pained to the quick by every feeling but that of genuine penitence, determined upon every sacrifice to make atonement for the stimulating causes which had urged so gentle a spirit to break from him as Adelaide had done at Marino; and although half convinced, by what she had let drop ere her departure, that she knew to whom he had fled from her, and that agony lay in that conviction; still he resolutely determined to fulfil his promise of breakfasting with her this morning, although he had to brave the high displeasure of Lady Marian to effect it, who at length wound him up to tell her,

“She was selfish in her love, since, for the gratification of detaining him still near her, she scrupled not to make him appear a brute to an angel, who had the misery of being sacrificed to him;” and from a violent burst of hysteric passion at this insult to his devotion to her, in bestowing such an appellation upon his wife, he broke away to attend the elegantly regulated breakfast table of that meek, that

uncomplaining wife, who received him with kindness; but yet, his conscience told him, with the reserve of smothered resentment faintly mingled with it.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN the flush of varied sensations, which the entrance of her truant husband had suffused the cheeks of Adelaide with, had subsided, Bouverie beheld the lily usurping where the rose had so beautifully held dominion; and now, in all the painful alarm the suggestions of Lady Dinwood had awakened relative to her health, he asked her ten thousand questions in a breath, in trembling solicitude about it: and although her companion for exercise had, he knew, so shamefully absented himself, gently chid her for staying too much at home, and neglecting the first of human blessings.

“Indeed, Montagu,” she replied with a sweetly-beamed smile of gratitude, “I have used a good deal of exercise since I saw you. Sunday I walked twice to church; and yesterday, several miles on those annual missions my own dear guardian long since arranged for me.”

“Your daily missions, I suppose you

mean," returned Bouverie ; " since I know, like Titus, you think that day a lost one, in which you perform no kindness to a fellow-being."

" I was correct in saying my annual missions ; although your gallantry would fain change it to a much more praiseworthy diligence," returned Adelaide ; " but you remember those annual legations that I speak of, since you have sometimes accompanied me on them ; for yesterday was my birth-day, Montagu."

Bouverie was electrified, as if by some unexpected stroke of horror at this intelligence ; and mechanically he repeated—

" Your birth-day, Adelaide !"

" Yes, Montagu : I completed my seventeenth year yesterday," responded Adelaide, with a cadence so touchingly inspired by the reflexion of what a fatal year it seemed destined to prove to her, by her marriage, that Bouverie, overpowered by its tone, felt unable to support her presence ; and flew from her into the adjoining room, which he paced in painful agitation, until his gentle wife appeared to him, and taking him affectionately by the

hand, informed him "That breakfast was ready."

This gentle pressure of his hand Montagu returned, by clasping her with fervour in his arms; and whilst rising tears of penitence struggled for suppression, he exclaimed—

"Forgive me, my Adelaide! forgive my total forgetfulness of the anniversary of a day that I had often passed with you, in all the sweet enchantments of your early excellence. Oh, my wife! how, how could I forget it! Brute that I am to you! how could I leave you to solitude on such a day with none but domestics to speak to; no society to break the monotony of your silent hours!"

"Oh! but I had society, most unthought of by you and me, Montagu," she replied with a painful blush, as a reprehending thrill from the rigid monitor within her darted through her bosom, at the remembrance of her momentary tendency to lapsing duty, "the Duke of St. Kilda took his tea here."

"The Duke of St. Kilda take tea alone with you, Adelaide!" exclaimed Bouverie

in horror; and, from an impulse of impetuous feeling, withdrawing his arms from enfolding her.

Not more precipitately did Montagu withdraw his arms, than she rushed back into them; and clinging to him with a supplicating look of eloquent meaning, to be spared again the degradation of those suspicions his actions implied, but hers refuted; and ere he could articulate, she told him, in the dignified tone of conscious innocence, the ostensible cause of the duke's visit to their cottage.

Montagu's every faculty now seemed enchained by surprise, pleasure, and indecision; since he had long wished for a seat in parliament; and now his Marian's extreme anxiety for his obtaining one, increased his; but to accepting it from the Duke of St. Kilda, some of the inexplicable sensations of his heart inspired a negative; and after a hesitating agitated pause, he said—

“His grace is very good to think of me for this borough. Shall I, or shall I not accept it, Adelaide?”

“Was I in your place, Montagu,” she

replied with emotion, "from the Duke of St. Kilda I would not accept a seat in parliament at present."

Bouverie turned pale with jealous apprehension, and eagerly requested to know what her reasons were for so extemporaneous, yet so determined, a decision?

"Because," she returned, painfully blushing, "I consider it a delicate point for a husband to accept favours from any man, who has stood confessed to the world as the lover of his wife, unless the conduct of years has given him conviction of that love having changed its form to the unexceptionable one of steady friendship. The Duke of St. Kilda has yet had time for no such unequivocal proof of conquered attachment; and in full confidence to my dearer self, my better half in judgment, I must with grief acknowledge, that although the respect of venerating homage marked his conduct to me in our yesterday's *tête-à-tête*, it was not veiled from me, that the subjugation of his unfortunate passion is still unattempted.

"Of the duke's honour it would be uncharitable to form any doubt, without firm

ground for a suspicion ; and upon my own prudence I now build, perhaps, a presumptuous faith ; yet as we both are mortals, inheritors of mortal frailty, I would have you look to consequences in the perspective of possibility. Was I a husband, I would receive no favour of importance from the known admirer of my wife, to barter for it my independence of judgment ; my power to censure. No, Montagu, no ! I would still retain unimpaired the uncontrolled right of frowning my displeasure upon the man who should dare offer particularities to my wife my feelings did not sanction ; nor would I allow gratitude, through its imperative influence, to teach me hood-winked leniency of construction, where every sensitive inspiration of honour, of reserve, of delicacy, and respect to myself, and her who bore my name, should be active in full mental vigour, to form an unbiassed judgment, and *perform* an unshackled part."

" Oh, Adelaide !" exclaimed Bouverie, fervently pressing her hand in all that ardour of approbation she had inspired, " can I sufficiently admire the purity of

soul, the excellence of judgment, which have formed your advice to me ! And, in deference to the beauties of your heart and mind—not from imbibing or cherishing one apprehension you have bid me guard against—I will act from your decision ; and, ere I attend the rehearsal at Marino, I will call on his grace, and make my grateful negative.”

“ Montagu,” said Adelaide, “ you asked for my opinion, and candidly I gave it ; but remember how inexperienced, how incompetent to judge, is the counsellor you have honoured by applying to for advice ! and, I conjure you, adopt it not if it agrees not with your own, and if it militates against a favourite wish of yours.”

“ No, Adelaide, no,” said Bouverie, with the ardour of kindling passion’s tender admiration, “ I have no wish, but to have the power to behold you with unprejudiced eyes and unbiassed judgment, what you are,—the purest, fairest blossom of human excellence !”

Whilst seated at breakfast, Montagu again talking of proceeding to Bexhill, to call upon the duke, the moment he should

leave her, Adelaide began to blush, and to appear embarrassed; and after several hesitating attempts to speak, at length timidly said—

“As you are going to Bexhill, Montagu, I must no longer wait for better courage, to tell you that I have taken the liberty of doing something in your name, which I feared had I first mentioned to you, you would have negatived; but believe, what an irresistible impulse of my heart led me to, was never meant to wound one feeling of your mind.”

“What mean you, Adelaide?” Bouverie exclaimed, wondering if Adelaide had done any thing to prove her less perfect, to reconcile him to that perversion of taste which led him to love another woman more passionately.

“Montagu,” she answered, blushing to a beautiful tint of bashfulness; and with a tear of refinement’s delicate shame trembling in her eyes, at making a confession of what her right hand would not have voluntarily communicated to her left; “Montagu, you more than once lamented before me that it was not in your

power to emulate the Duke of St. Kilda, and many of your brother soldiers, in aiding the subscription for your late riding-master's widow and orphans, as their claim was so powerful upon humanity; therefore when I found you had disdained my poor cash in town for your own use, I sent for it; and yesterday remitted it to your pay-master, as your subscription to the fund for the provision of poor Cator's widow and orphans."

Montagu, who had mentally arraigned his wife for courtly insincerity relative to that very sum, now transfixed by contrition and admiration, almost painful to a heart that but narrowly escaped wishing he could find her not so superior to his infatuating Marian, could make no reply.

Adelaide, alarmed by this silence, fearing it was the silence of displeasure, eagerly caught her husband's hand, and looking anxiously and beseechingly at him, exclaimed—

"Oh, forgive me, I implore you! for I could not endure that you should wear the semblance of what you are not—less benevolent, less awake to the inspirations

of heavenly charity, than others. I could not endure to have your character misconceived; and I presumed to do for you that, which only want of present means withheld your doing for yourself; and two hundred pounds from you, I thought, would be equal in proportion to the duke's five, because he is so much richer than you are, Montagu."

"That I deny," exclaimed Bouverie, at length unchained from his temporary silence of enthralled feeling, and pressing with ardour her hand to his lips, "for, in possessing Adelaide, a treasure is mine, which not all his wealth could purchase!"

"Such as I am, I trust it could not," said Adelaide, lowly, as she hid her face, blushing with delighted emotion, on the shoulder of her husband, who again felt an obtruding sort of conviction stealing through his bosom, that the task would not be so very, very painful to yield up Marian for this heavenly Adelaide, was it not that the life of the passionately adoring Marian would prove the inevitable sacrifice.

In this moment, so auspicious to the

influence of Adelaide, Major Gayville was announced ; come to summon Bouverie to an immediate rehearsal.

“ Why,” said Bouverie in surprise, “ the rehearsal, when I left Marino, was fixed for two.”

“ Yes, my good friend,” returned the major ; “ but who can dispute the right of sovereign beauty to be capricious ? And now the lovely Calista wills the prompt return of her truant Lothario.”

Adelaide was now compelled to form a hasty excuse for instantly quitting the room to conceal a coming tear, which the smile of half-pleased vanity that beamed on the countenance of Bouverie, on learning Marian had changed the hour of rehearsal, no doubt to hasten his return to her, had painfully excited.

Bouverie, pierced to the soul by Adelaide’s look, as she quitted the room, flew after her, and catching her hand as she retreated, impetuously exclaimed—

“ Although I cannot see you again before morning, on account of the performance of our first drama to-night, instead of Friday, as it was first arranged for, I

will be with you to breakfast; and will spend one quiet, happy day with my own sweet Adelaide."

"Ah, Montagu!" she returned, in a tremulous under-tone, endeavouring to conceal the impetuous tears that had now arisen to an overflow, "perhaps some rehearsal, some new arrangement of your friends at Marino, may intervene, to detain you from me."

"Nothing of their arrangements shall prevent it, by Heaven!" returned Montagu, with energy.

"Oh! swear not, Montagu," replied our heroine mildly; "for in all things relative to me I would have you act as the free agent of your wishes. With my whole heart shall I welcome your return to your home to-morrow, should no engagement intervene to be relinquished with reluctance to come to me."

Bouverie pressed her hands with energy, through gratitude for this kind latitude given to his actions, as firmly he pronounced—"To a positive certainty I will pass to-morrow with you."

"Oh! inconstant man! what are your

promises, your vows, to us poor women; and poorer yet, poor wives!" sighed the dejected Adelaide, the subsequent morning; as her breakfast, protracted to a late hour, was at length removed, without seeing or hearing aught of Bouverie: but determined now not to grieve, as long as hope could sustain existence, she promptly sought employment in giving some of her last embellishing completion to the surprise she was preparing for Montagu on the morrow, from which she was summoned, at length, to her visible haunts, to receive Lady Longuiville.

As Lady Longuiville was no stranger to the devotion of Colonel Bouverie to the infatuating Lady Marian, or to Sir Charles's conviction of the hapless wife's suspicion of his inconstancy, she was not surprised, though sensibly grieved, at beholding so pitiable an alteration in the aspect of this young creature, whom last she had seen in all the lovely blossoms of health and beauty.

It so happened that every officer in Bouverie's regiment had seemed to imbibe intuitively a notion, that the arrival of Lady Longuiville in Sussex was to remove

at once the interdict to a free admission at Castle Cottage ; for scarcely had her ladyship's cordial meeting with her young favourite ended, and an invitation to dine at Sir Charles's negatived by Adelaide, through her cherished expectation of Montagu's fulfilling his promise ere the day was gone, when almost every one of them came pouring in from all quarters along the coast, as if to some great personage's levee, by attending which they expected promotion.

They all informed Lady Longuiville, who was a perfect idol among them for her intellectual fascinations, that they had all been to pay their devoirs to her ; and learning her ladyship was at Castle Cottage, had not retarded the anxiety of their speed to pay their compliments of congratulation to Mrs. Bouverie, upon the arrival of her friend.

But, not like the general etiquette of drawing-rooms and levees, every personage remained stationary after presentation ; and such a formidable host was at length assembled, that every chair in Adelaide's suit of miniature apartments was in re-

quisition : and as all were eager to contribute their share to the general conversation, every incident that had occurred the preceding evening at Marino, which feeling for the lovely neglected wife permitted a repetition of before her, was told to the two ladies ; for Lady Longuiville had not attended the theatricals no more than Adelaide : and although many ludicrous anecdotes, and descriptions of persons and performances, were mingled among them, yet Adelaide gleaned from all opinions, that nothing could transcend the surpassing excellence of Bouverie and Lady Marian, in their animated and exquisite representation of Lothario and Calista, and that her ladyship had never looked so young, or so fascinatingly beautiful.

The accounts of the preceding evening's entertainments at length were exhausted, and the conversation turned on other local circumstances ; by which, altogether, Adelaide was let into so many of the mess-room jests, and anecdotes of the neighbourhood, she could not but congratulate herself, that while performing the arduous task of hostess on the alarming morrow, she should

not feel so completely in the wood as she had done, while the *bon mots* of the day were referred to, or discussed, at Marino, the two days of misery she had passed there.

At length Dennis delivered a note to Adelaide from Montagu; and as he announced that Richard waited to know if there was any answer, she obtained permission to read, what she had the grief to find was an apology for failing in his engagement with her that day, through indispensable business detaining him until a late hour in the evening at Marino.

But Bouverie did not acknowledge that the spells of Lady Marian were the sole cause of that detention; for that this sorceress had thrown new spells around his susceptibilities of infatuation, by every incantation she could raise in her alluring performance the preceding evening, and through the seductive softness she assumed to him, after the play was ended, to enchain his passion in its pernicious idolatry.

"This note requires no answer, Dennis," said Adelaide faintly, when she had finished it; and then arousing her voice to

more steadiness, she revoked her excuse to Lady Longuiville for dining with her that day.

Every man now turned his beseeching eyes eloquently upon Lady Longuiville, who, well accustomed to this kind of dumb boon entreaties, mirthfully exclaimed—

“You are the most unconscionable set of animals I have lately met with, to expect, when I only arrived last night, that I can feed the whole garrison to-day.—No, no, honest men, go feed on your own messes to-day, for they are better than mine I warrant me; and as many as can break from the charms of claret by my tea hour, I will charitably give that pleasant beverage to; but nothing more substantial can I promise until I have been to market.”

“But we do not belong to the Bexhill mess,” said the officers who came from distant quarters; “and you cannot, we are sure, dear Lady Longuiville, be so uncharitable, to send poor men starving home to seek their dinners, and lose the beverage you so kindly offer to the temperate.”

“Well,” returned Lady Longuiville,

“my *caro sposo* will call for me presently, and if he will permit such captivating heroes to dine with his wife during his absence, (for he honours the mess with his presence to-day,) why I will try and persuade the housekeeper to put her best foot foremost in scudding about the larder to search for rations for you.”

Just as her ladyship ceased speaking, Sir Charles was announced, when, after his greetings with Adelaide and her levee were past, his wife informed him “of the modest assurance of the men present, who wanted to storm her empty larder, and the sort of half promise she had been forced into with three or four of the most importunate mendicants among them, who pretended to be in actual want of a dinner.”

“No, no,” exclaimed Sir Charles, smiling, “I cannot allow such fellows footing in my house during my absence: besides, I have a most invincible antipathy to bridges formed of noses; and, therefore, as you cannot feed all who begged the boon of a dinner from you to-day, Louisa, you must turn over these most deplorable of the poor mendicants to me, who will give them

pottage at the general mess; and then in a formidable body we will come to storm your tea-table, and your larder too, for a *petit souper*."

All being now arranged, the thronged levee began to disperse; and Adelaide, making a hasty toilet, accompanied the Longuivilles to their home.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE house of Sir Charles Longuiville was pleasantly situated between the barracks and Marino, and commanded so complete and approximate a view of the latter place, that poor Adelaide, in gazing earnestly upon a spot where all her happiness was sacrificed, had the grief and mortification to behold Bouverie and Lady Marian return from an airing in the former's curricie, soon after her arrival at Sir Charles's; and then, upon alighting, she saw them proceed to a further continuance of their *tête-à-tête*, in a walk.

“Alas! alas!” thought Adelaide, “and this direful passion, amongst its concomitant evils, has taught my once guileless husband to give untruths under his very hand. Ah! Montagu, you believed that in the seclusion of my cottage I should never learn that it was the fascinations of Lady Marian, and not your indispensable business with the general, that detained you from me.”—And now finding a rising flood rushing to her eyes, and remembering

where she was, she struggled successfully to suppress them ; and, turning from the window, expressed her impatience for an introduction to “ the pocket Hèrcules.”

Lady Longuiville flew off for her lovely child ; and Adelaide, who from her earliest days had been passionately fond of contemplating, and caressing, and aiding, infant innocence and helplessness, was highly gratified at this beautiful boy’s crowing and smiling at her, and appearing all animated playful happiness in her arms.

Sir Charles seemed as expert a nurse as either of the ladies ; and when his fair guest, in the course of the day, marked his devotion to his wife, the prompt and heart resident affection which emanated from every spontaneous attention he paid her, she could not but wonder by what magic Lady Longuiville had captivated, in the character of a wife, a man, who, when he married her, had his heart devoted to the external charms of another.

As the ladies dined before the mess hour, Sir Charles did the honours of his table ere his departure for the barracks, and arranged for them a plan of amusement for the evening ; according to which they

took a delightful health-inspiring ride along the sands to Hastings, and then arrived in time to hear the martial bands, at evening parade, at the barracks, where Sir Charles was on prompt duty to receive them, and where every homage which respect could offer, was ready and anxious to greet them.

At parade there attended a detachment from Marino, but no Bouverie. And though with terror the remembrance of Montagu's disapprobation of her joining in the amusements at Melcombe Park, had been haunting Adelaide's bosom from the moment Sir Charles arranged for their attending the parade, and that she found so large a party was to pass the evening at his house, yet she knew not how to excuse herself from either, without an affected appearance of extreme fastidiousness, or acknowledging she feared the possibility of her husband's displeasure.

All Adelaide's levee of the morning adjourned from parade to Sir Charles's, where all passed a most cheerful evening; and even our poor heroine, in defiance of the oft'n recurring fear of Montagu's displeasure, and the more direful apprehension of his heart's irrevocable dereliction of her,

was often pleased, and even sometimes gay, as Lady Longuiville, whose cheerfulness was ever chastened by all those inherent feelings of propriety which make a woman estimable.

At length Adelaide's carriage was announced; and the moment she arrived at her home, Obearn put a note into her hand, which had just arrived from Bouverie—when, with a palpitating heart, anticipating something unpleasant, through the influence of Lady Marian, she read as follows:—

“ My dear ADELAIDE ! ”

“ Finding you are so very agreeably engaged with your friends, the Longuivilles, I feel the less regret at being drawn in to promise to assist in a little interlude of Lady Dinwood's, after our *petit souper* ; and as our party will not, in consequence of this performance, break up until long after yours, I think it advisable not to return home to-night, to disturb my less dissipated household.”

“ Yours truly,”

“ M. B.”

Those emotions of grief and resentment which this note, so demonstrative of how easily Montagu could be withheld from his home, awakened in the mind of poor Adelaide, she with arbitrary firmness conquered; determined not to destroy, by indulgence to her heart-riving causes for sorrow, her powers for conducting herself agreeably to her wishes on the morrow, or by passing her waking vigil in beauty's-blighter-tears, to present a stronger contrast to the fascinating charms which Lady Marian had dazzled all by the preceding evening; and fortunately for poor Adelaide's wish to sleep through the night, for the improvement of her looks and spirits, the salutary sea breezes she had benefited by in her airing that evening, aided her own exertions to banish distracting thought, and to procure her a few hours of renovating repose.

On the following morning our poor heroine arose full of anxiety for the effect of the first entertainment she had been permitted to give since she became a wife; and as it was to be given to the rival who had usurped the dominion of her husband's

heart from her, it was most natural that her ardent wishes centered in a hope of all things being so well arranged, as to defy the invidious ridicule of those whom she knew would be eager to catch at every imperfection in management, that could be discovered through the day.

Every servant in her household, luckily, experienced the same solicitude that all things should defy a censure, therefore no exertion on their parts was withheld. A caravan the preceding day had arrived from Roscoville, laden not only with the choicest flowers, and various green-house plants, but every rare delicacy for the table which that great estate and establishment could supply.

From the housekeeper too, in Berkeley-square, many delicacies from the markets and shops of the metropolis had arrived in due time; while Harper had procured the choicest fish of the season, and Mrs. Harper had ranged the country round, in her little cart, for all that was wanting which her own farm could not supply.

Adelaide had fully expected Montagu to breakfast, doubting not that curiosity at

least, if not a kinder motive, would lead him to his home—but he came not; and hour after hour passed on without his appearance, although Lee had arrived very early, and had evinced little less zeal than Obearn and Dennis themselves, to have every thing in the most perfect style of elegance.

At length, Adelaide having completely arranged the flowers in her reception rooms, and her plants and flowers in her dining apartment, the cloth was laid with the most exact care; and the table and side-board ornamented with a most beautiful, although compact, service of plate, presented by Lord de Moreland to Adelaide on her marriage, and now first unpacked for this occasion.

By this time poor Adelaide had given up all hope of seeing her husband, until he should arrive with the party from Marino, as one of the company; and with a heavy heart she at length retired to her dressing-room, to adjust what of all her cares that day required no aid from ornament: but long she had not been in her dressing-room, when she heard Montagu

enter the house, who shortly after tapping at her door, inquired if he might come in?

On being admitted, he approached his wife with an air of very apparent indifference, while a blush of conscious awkwardness flushed his cheeks; and, although looking towards her, scarcely sensible of seeing her whom the sorcery of Marian seemed to banish from his vision as well as from his heart; and carelessly he exclaimed—

“ I am sorry I could not be here sooner, Adelaide, lest you might have wanted me to consult upon any thing relative to this overgrown party you have so inadvertently undertaken: but the fact was, our performance on Tuesday went off with such *eclat*, that petitions poured in all day yesterday for another performance speedily; so Marian--Lady Marian, has been induced to arrange for two plays every week, to oblige the neighbourhood; therefore we were summoned by our prompter to an unexpected rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet* this morning, which is only just over.”

“ But pray, Mrs. Bouverie,” he rapidly continued, “ is it not time your con-

jurations for the accommodation of this immense party should evince themselves? I have looked about every where below, and perceived no symptom of preparation but a beautiful selection of the choicest flowers: surely you do not conceive your company a swarm of bees, to be fed on flowers?"

"Is it not the perfection of housewifery for preparation of all kinds never to obtrude?" returned Adelaide in a cheerful tone. But perhaps 'Where the bee sucks, there lurk I;' and as Ariel I may presently appear; or rather, as Ariel's harpy; and by a quaint device reverse his performance, and make a banquet appear, instead of disappear."

The dulcet tones of Adelaide's voice had from her earliest days sounded like magic harmony in the ears of Bouverie; and often thrilled that magic to his heart: with former effect it seemed now to operate there; for it cleared his vision to behold his wife; whose playful answer, instead of resentment's *hauteur* at his truancy and almost petulant interrogations, had charmed to enthusiasm; and with a smi-

he replied, as he looked on the beautiful hair Obearn was braiding,

“As a harpy, I defy your ever appearing: but tell me any thing celestial you mean to vary your form to, and I’ll believe you.”

“Oh, my gentleman!” exclaimed Adelaide, laughing, as a blush of pleased emotion mantled her cheeks; “you have been rehearsing Romeo to some purpose, to spout out extempore flatteries like this.”

Lady Marian had, in the rapidly relaxing decorum long practised by her towards this devoted victim, admitted Bouverie to her toilet the last two days, to view, when effect sanctioned the measure, the last adornments of her love-inspiring form.

The hair of this siren he had wonderfully admired as a prodigy of beauty; and now, to his utter amazement, he perceived his own wife’s infinitely surpassed it in every attraction: and as Obearn twisted it into those forms the taste of her lovely nursling guided her to, Montagu stood in gazing wonder, questioning his heart if even Marian could have been so lovely

in her juvenility as his neglected wife; until Adelaide, after a succession of deepening blushes, at his earnest observation, timidly reminded him, that he too had a toilet to make.

“And after that, you know,” she added, “I have to emerge from mystery, and initiate you into the necromancy I have practised, ere our guests arrive.”

Bouverie snatched her hand, and imprinted on it a fervent kiss ere he departed; and as he gazed upon her while he slowly closed the door, he mentally ejaculated, “I know another, perhaps as beautiful, and, by some secret magic, more alluring; but never one so sweet, so forgiving, so innocent, as you are.”

Our readers must conclude, that Adelaide's attire for this day was carefully selected from her most becoming stores; and when her toilet was completed, and Bouverie joined her in the drawing-room, he thought she had never looked more interestingly lovely; when in gratified vanity, smiling his applause, he eagerly exclaimed—

“Is the magic of mystery dispersing?

When am I to be enlightened, my gentle enchantress?"

"Now," she said, taking his hand; and while opening the door which led from their drawing-room through a colonnade of Adelaide's own ingenious, rustic architecture into her hall of mystery, we will initiate our readers in the incantation, which gave her power to entertain so large a party.

Very shortly after her commencement of beautifying this cottage, in her perambulations round the castle ruins, she discovered, in the only part of them which had escaped the dilapidations of time, a long room of most beautiful Gothic architecture, with a range of stained glass windows on the southern side, all in high preservation; and the whole place so formed for a conservatory, that instantly she determined to hire it from her landlord, who merely used it for a store-room for pulse; and upon getting it into her possession, after it had undergone the necessary measure of cleanliness, hired appropriate furniture at Hastings; and a fine supply of orange trees, and other green-house plants, from a man-

sion in the neighbourhood, the owner of which being a minor, the guardians were accumulating money in every way for the ultimate benefit of their ward, and from the approximate situation of this room to her cottage, she easily contrived a communicating colonnade; and in her girlish wish to surprise Montagu, she preserved the whole business a profound secret from him; and to aid this purpose, she had not suffered the timber which had been piled for years against the exterior of the windows to be removed, until the day previous to her dinner-party; since it served as an impenetrable screen to her works within. However, Bouverie's almost constant absence from home, gave her little cause to apprehend his detection; and yielded her full time and opportunity to complete her most beautiful conservatory; which by its own fine architecture, combined with her ingenuity and judicious taste in adorning it, was now transformed into a most alluring place.

Through the colonnade of her ingenuity's architecture, now adorned with green-house plants of the most grateful

fragrance, Adelaide led her husband into her now strikingly beautiful conservatory; at the door of which the amazed senses of Bouverie transfixed him; whilst his lovely wife ran briefly over the history of that enchantment's process, which seemed now to operate upon his faculties; and then gracefully, as her wish accomplished, presented her work to him as a banqueting-room to entertain his friends in.

The heart of Bouverie felt the barbed arrows of compunction through it. The wretched hovel, selected by her rival to seclude his wife in from all possible intercourse with society, she had changed to the gem irradiated grotto of patient virtue and domestic ingenuity; adding lustre to the charms of her who resided in it: and from an impulse of contrition, for suffering such an insult to be offered to her; and of admiration and gratitude, for all she had effected; he pressed her to his bosom, and uttered the most gratifying eulogiums upon every thing his astonished eyes beheld in this her enchanted and enchanting room.

But Bouverie had not half done admir-

ing this beautiful and surprising scene of his wife's necromancy, when a loud peal at the gate led them hastily to the drawing-room, to receive the first detachment from Marino, which consisted of Ladies Dinwood and Marian Harley, Major Gayville, and a veteran General Selby, whom Lady Marian introduced as a friend, who had arrived that moment almost from Tunbridge to see them; and therefore she had taken the liberty of bringing him with her.

Lady Marian, who thought it *eclat* to be last every where, had arrived thus early, to evince to Bouverie she could only exist where he was; and in full determination to be all that was captivating in sweetness, as well as beauty, whilst she covertly aided, in every invidious measure, to throw ridicule upon this stowed-up dinner-party of her rival.

But all this mentally arranged plan of captivating sweetness, received a most impeding infusion of acidity, on perceiving how beautiful, in even her apparently declining health, the odious Adelaide had contrived to look that day; and if her own

looks could kill, she would have instantly annihilated her by them.

And now to conceal the acidity of expression which she felt pervading her countenance, in defiance of every effort to subdue it, her ladyship turned her head round to look into the dining-room, which she wondered at seeing open ; when perceiving the cloth was not laid there, as she expected ; and concluding Adelaide's beds were all taken down to make dining-rooms above stairs, and that this apartment was left to eke out accommodations below she instantly resolved to cut it off from that purpose ; declared she was cold, although a sultry day ; and deliberately shutting this door, placed herself in a chair so directly athwart it, that, without disturbing her, no one could pass that way.

Sir Charles and Lady Longuiville now arrived ; then their entrance was retraced by the Bexhill reinforcement ; and immediately after them, the second division from Marino ; and although twelve of this dinner company were of her own bringing, yet Lady Marian was resolved to create as much confusion as possible, and, by af-

fecting anxiety to accommodate, remind others of the existing want of it ; that, by making all the day conspicuously ridiculous, deter Bouverie from allowing his foolish wife's again attempting to entertain.

“ Why, Bouverie,” said General Harley, after he had ranged about the two rooms his wife permitted his access to,—the second of which, Adelaide had fitted up for Montagu's morning-room, and was furnished with books, globes, chess-board, &c.—“ do I dream ? or was there not some murmur against you at the time you took this cottage, for fixing on a mean sort of infernally filthy place to bring your wife to, and which now appears to me a vastly pretty place, and so exquisitely neat, it refreshes one's senses to look about them in it :—what can mean, my boy, this contradiction of report and reality ?”

“ They can only be reconciled, by betraying a little sort of necromantic secret,” returned Montagu, endeavouring to *badiner*, to conceal a sort of awkward embarrassment he felt : “ you must know, general, Mrs. Bouverie has, like the famed Cinderella, a fairy for a godmother ; who

not only provides slippers for her that no other foot can penetrate to the extremity of, but, at her request, turns a piggery into fancy's bower, and a pumpkin into a Gothic hall !”

Lady Marian was now completely terrorized by the manner in which Bouverie looked on his wife as he spoke, and felt conviction that she must not long delay in taking some decisive measure for fettering the honour, at least, of Bouverie to her ; or this alarming Adelaide would find means to sever her and the object of her adoration for ever.

The last detachment from Marino now arrived ; and Lady Marian, who, as they entered, had been deeply contemplating her meditated crime, roused herself from her reverie to act her minor mischiefs, and began a new fuss of attempted accommodation, to inspire those who entered with a belief of their being in a fair way to be squeezed to death.

Adelaide was too penetrating, not to develop her malicious aim, yet too sweet-tempered to evince resentment ; but to let it escape quite unnoticed she found impos-

sible ; and now perceiving the ludicrous capers of Major Gayville for finding a retreat to accommodate by, led him to prance over the fender, with a playful tone of good-humoured raillery she exclaimed—

“ Unless you have a predilection like the eccentric Wortley Montagu, and prefer a flight up the chimney, Major Gayville, I can teach you where to expand your wings by the simple method of walking through the portico into the adjoining room—unless Lady Marian Harley has no *particular motive* for her partiality to her present seat, and permits a nearer entrance to one of our suite of spacious apartments.”

Lady Marian could now no longer retain her seat ; and, boiling with internal rage, she arose to move, to open ample accommodation for all the party ; and at that moment dinner was announced ; for Dennis had stationed a boy on the top of a lofty tree, for descend with information, the moment he beheld the last coach-load from Marino begin their progress towards the cottage, that arrangements for dinner being placed on the table the moment they arrived, might rapidly commence, since he

had determined upon this achievement the instant Lee informed him Lady Marian had said “she supposed they should have to wait until midnight for dinner at Castle-Cottage; where the kitchen must be so small, and every thing so inconvenient, the poor servants must be knocking their heads together to get a sufficient quantity of provisions dished for such a party as the foolish girl had invited to her hovel.”

“Oh! then, the d——l burn her in the chimney of the hovel with his best-seasoned faggots!” exclaimed Dennis, the moment Lee ceased,—“but do you roast me in the embers, after the pirating Jezebel, if she shall have that same crow over the *darlingt* any how!”

The moment dinner was announced, Lady Marian, flying to her friend, Lady Dinwood, caught her arm, exclaiming—

“Thus let us link, like bands of sylphs or zephyrs.”

“We must, if Mrs. Bouverie’s staircase bears proportion to her room,” cried Lady Dinwood, “beware of the fate of two *elegantes*, attempting a fashionable *entrée*

up a ladder staircase, at a rout, at Hastings, a few nights ago, who most direfully fractured their drapery in the ascent; and who, only through aid of a judicious shove from their father, who closely followed them, could they clear the door at the same moment, and that at the expense of some of the skin off their elbows."

"Possibly," said Adelaide, "if our pilot proves a skilful navigator, you may escape such perils in the dangers of our straits."

CHAPTER XIV.

LEE proved so skilful a navigator through this strait, barren of danger, that he led them, without any rents of skin or drapery, or any sort of mutilation, except of their nerves ; for, the moment Lady Marian entered the rustic colonnade, and beheld, through the folding-doors, open before her so spacious, so beautiful a room, where the sun-beams emanated in a gently-soft light through the painted glass, reflecting pleasingly upon the gradually delving fragrant lining of the walls, and falling soberly upon the sumptuous banquet there spread out, her ladyship was overpowered with a shock of surprise, which ebulliated into rage and envy almost too mighty for concealment ; and, in despite of her indefatigable toils to appear amiable in the eyes of Bouverie, she murmured out, rather peevishly,

“ We shall be annihilated by all these oppressive flowers.”

“ I should hope not,” Bouverie replied

gravely, not pleased that any thing like disapprobation should be levelled at Adelaide in her very first effort to entertain a large party, "since the room is too lofty and spacious for any unpleasant effect to arise from as well-chosen a selection of innocently fragrant plants, as I ever saw."

The rest of the party, save the satellite Gayvilles, were pleasingly amazed at this Fairy-Land they had so unexpectedly entered; and when all seated at table, Sir Charles Longuiville declared he should almost fear the influence of magic upon himself if he dared to partake of a banquet which all might see nothing less than supernatural agency could have arranged to such elegance of perfection.

"If I die for it, then," exclaimed Lady Longuiville, looking in delight around her, "I will partake of it, in the ardent hope of imbibing from the nourishment it yields, some of this dear, lovely, attractive fairy's fascinations."

Adelaide's dinner was, through every part of it, as excellent, as correct, and as elegant, as youthful enthusiasm could have wished it; yet she trembled, like the

tenderest blossom of the plants around her, vibrating in the passing breezes, when, for the first time, she took her station to perform the honours of her own table to a party; and with real grief she found herself disappointed in her wish of having Sir Charles one of her supporters, to aid and encourage her; for, by the arrangement of General Harley, she was seated between himself and General Selby, who had been a warrior of great renown; when Lady Marian, panting with anxiety to vent some of the spleen she was raging with, invidiously exclaimed,—

“ Bless me, Harley! how all your actions smell, not of the lamp, but of the field! You only consult the rank in the army-list, not in the court-calendar.— There, you have placed your friend, the veteran general, on the right-hand of Mrs. Bouverie, where his Grace of St. Kilda ought to be, who will never forgive you this solicism in *etiquette*, so destructive to his hopes. Come, duke, claim the seat of honour. Let there be an exchange announced between the veteran and the young soldier, in a gazette extraordinary,

and the rapid promotion of his grace shall follow."

"No, Lady Marian, no," said the blushing Adelaide, even summoning up an audible voice of steadiness; "the Duke of St. Kilda, emulating the great Frederick of Prussia, reflects more honour upon himself by resigning its nominal seat to a laurel-crowned veteran, a second Zethen."

Montagu, whose eyes were cast down in a sort of struggling conflict, between displeasure at Lady Marian's proposition, and admiration at the brilliant animation with which she uttered it, had them raised from their downcast station by a thrill through his heart, he was little prepared for, by his wife's spontaneous address, in getting rid, with so much *eclat* to herself, of an embarrassing proposition; and now, with a gaze of delight he looked on Adelaide, whom his vanity had the gratification to perceive at that moment, was the admiration of all, but those who envied her.

Lady Marian again felt conviction that she erred in judgment, when she ventured any thing against Adelaide, who, upon fair

ground, always rose her superior; and now anxious to monopolize the attention of Bouverie to herself, as the most promising means, endeavoured to confine his conversation to her: but Bouverie was too well bred to admit of that exclusive devotion, even to the woman who infatuated him, while he was master of the banquet.

Sir Charles and Lady Longuiville, whose wary mental annotations led to perceive what was this siren's aim, instantly resolved upon the conversation continuing a general one, that Adelaide should have her chance of charming the infatuated Bouverie too; and although arduous the undertaking, none were more skilled than they were to call into requisition the surrounding talents, and mix them pleasantly into a colloquial commonwealth.

Lady Marian at length perceiving that she would not be permitted to monopolize Bouverie's attention, resolved that no one should surpass her in conversation; and her ladyship could scarcely fail of being successful in such a determination, since she possessed an immensity of local information, from having travelled a good deal.

upon the continent; had read judiciously for effect; was mistress of a pleasing fluency of language; some wit, no diffidence, a prompt discernment to discover when she should recede on any subject, lest she should wander out of her depth in knowledge; and, like Will Honeycomb, she too possessed the ingenious management of making her real ignorance on many deep subjects appear a seeming one.

Amongst others who had rather hear themselves talk, than listen to her ladyship, was Miss Scribbleton; who, after a long reverie, in which her thoughts seemed to be straying wide in the regions of imagination, but, in fact, were rivetted upon all that was passing round her, suddenly exclaimed—

“How singular there should be such a constellation of female authors present! since all of us have written, if not published; for even Lady Longuiville’s secret has transpired of her poetic genius: except Mrs. Bouverie and Mrs. Warren.”

“Ah!” cried Mrs. Warren, laughing, how you know I never am writer? Don’t be sure, quite. I was not that very bad

villain author you so strong reviled, for what you call 'a critique from much envy' on your last work: you know, you do say, 'it was some one who understood not well English'."

"Nothing more possible, Mrs. Warren; except that envy should emanate from your mind to your pen," said Sir Charles, smiling; "and I would not have Miss Scribbleton too sure of Mrs. Bouverie either, innocent as she looks there; for she, too, may be a sister-scribe; for some hide their talent under bushels, some under laurels, instead of hanging them on their branches."

Adelaide blushed so brightly, and looked such an eloquent entreaty at Sir Charles, to desist from revealing an anecdote of her early genius, which Lord Beechbrook had told him of, that Lady Marian, in alarm of something transpiring to crown her rival with these talked-of laurels, instantly exclaimed—

"Oh! as to Mrs. Bouverie, she can do every thing, and has convinced us she is such an exquisite housewife, I should not be surprised to hear she had written upon the art of domestic arrangement in a pre-

eminent style ; and from the specimens of your abilities to day, Mrs. Bouverie, I declare, was I Buonaparte, instead of making you my empress, I would elect you my housekeeper."

"Your ladyship's apprehensions made Mrs. Bouverie appear so long in that character," said the duke, in a tone of sarcastic emphasis, "that I should have thought, with your well known predilection for variety, you might have struck out something new for her ; and, in proof of the elegance of your imagination, something less *homely* too."

"A *bon mot*!" exclaimed Lady Dinwood: "Eleanora, pop it into your common-place book for the Witty Beau you mean to introduce into your next novel, 'The Phenomenon!'—But come, duke, what shall we make this same Mrs. Bouverie ? who, to confess truth, has nothing *homely* in her appearance ; so, shall it be an Empress, a Queen, an Archduchess, a *Duchess*, or what ? shall we take votes upon it ? I'll be teller, and begin with demanding the general opinion."

"The general, as usual, will prove the

major opinion," said Thornley, smiling significantly towards the sycophantic Gayville.

"If my opinion is what you demand, madam," said General Selby, answering her ladyship's bow of inquiry,— "I pronounce, you cannot make Mrs. Bouverie superior to what she now is; therefore, leave her *in statu quo*, as a pattern for all young women who would wish to show what attractions the mild graces can add to even surpassing beauty!"

An almost universal "Bravo!" was reiterated; and Lady Marian, with the semblance of an acquiescent smile, exclaimed,

"Agreed; leave Mrs. Bouverie what she is,—a most attentive hostess,—and then petition her to apply to her godmother to transform a melon, or a patagonian cucumber, into a room to give us a ball in; when, having on those *wonderful slippers* of renown, no doubt the prince, her *inamorata*, will be there, to pick them up, should she chance to let them fall, and to deal poetic justice against those who excluded her from his sight so long."

"Mrs. Bouverie, mind you are pledged to give us this ball," said Mrs. Gayville.

“Not pledged,” returned Adelaide with a smile, “for my fairy patroness has not yet received my petition ; but, should she prove auspicious, you soon shall behold a transformation of sleek mice into running footmen, scampering about with invitations to you all.”

“Desire her to give a ball,” said Lady Marian, in a low tone, to Bouverie ; “as arranging for it will occupy her time out of the way of making annoying observations.”

“I wish you would, Adelaide, give—try attempt—something of the kind,” stammered out Bouverie, not once bestowing a thought upon where she was to get a supply of cash for it.

“If you wish it, Montagu, it certainly shall be attempted,” said Adelaide, with an enchanting smile of gentle compliance, whilst her heart mourned to see the wishes of Lady Marian were laws to Bouverie.

“At this rate,” said Lady Longuiville, “amusements of no common cast multiply upon us ;—Lady Marian Harley’s dramas in the genuine temple of Melpomene and Thalia ; Mrs. Bouverie’s ball, in Fairy

Land ; and Lady Longuiville's concert, from the shores of Italy ; to which last entertainment I now do myself the honour of inviting this present company to my mansion at twelve o'clock to-morrow ; and must plead in excuse for the shortness of my notice, that I knew not myself of the musical treat I should have to give my friends, until a few moments before I left my home."

" May we ask how this sudden fit of harmony came upon your ladyship ?" demanded Lady Chatterfield.

" It came in a letter from Hastings, most unexpectedly upon me," returned Lady Longuiville, smiling. In short, Lady Cecilia Armonioso, with her full band, are on a tour of the watering-places from Ramsgate to Exmouth ; and her ladyship wrote to me to say, ' that having heard I was in the neighbourhood, she could not be so near without giving me a delicious musical treat she knew would charm me ; and therefore purposed, herself and party, to breakfast with me to-morrow ; and give me a two-hours' concert, on their way from Hastings to Eastbourne.'"

“ Pray, who may this obliging Lady Cecilia Armonioso be, Lady Longuiville ? ” demanded Lady Marian

“ Heavens ! ” exclaimed Lady Dinwood, “ you possess a musical soul, and not know the St. Cecilia of the present day ! ”

“ You forget, ” returned Lady Marian, “ that my long residence at Malta has clipt the wings of my knowledge in those matters. ”

“ Perhaps you may remember her as Lady Cecilia Grisdale, said Lady Longuiville ; “ for she was first married to a most worthy baronet of that name ; who, unlike most husbands, finding too much harmony in his home, was driven to accept a government abroad, to escape from the perpetual concerts in his house ; as his lady raged with an incurable musical mania, and was rearing up her three daughters as great proficient in the science as herself, who is esteemed the first instrumental *amateur* performer in Europe.

“ The change of climate proved fatal to poor Sir William, and he died at his government ; when his harmonious widow,

considering the time her envelopment in weeds must close her concert rooms might be judiciously spent in Italy, for the further embellishment of her daughters' beautiful voices thither she went; and soon struck with conviction of what an acquisition the master she employed to improve her girls would prove to her concerts, she, with Machiavelian policy, married Signore Armonioso, to secure him as leader of her band; while, when all was arranged for a return to England, her eldest daughter, infected by her mother's mania, chose to remain with a first-rate opera singer, and has since embraced his profession in her mania; while the youngest, since their return, has been sung into a wretched state of health; and the second, it is confidently reported, has fixed her affections upon a public instrumental performer, who assists at her mother's concerts, and is determined to unite herself to him the moment she comes of age."

The conversation now branched off into the wide field of the dangers arising from the abuse of talent, and yielding the whole

soul to the fascinations of any one pursuit ; which lasted until Adelaide led her female guests to the drawing-room.

The moment they entered the drawing-room, Miss Scribbleton, to lead to her own exquisite performance on the harp, entreated Mrs. Bouverie to allow them the felicity of hearing her play ; when Lady Longuiville, for whom Adelaide had sung, ere they went on their excursion the preceding evening, requested their treat from her might be a vocal one.

Adelaide instantly complied ; and poured into the dismayed ears of Lady Marian a strain of heart-touching melody never surpassed ; nor did her ladyship recover this terror-inspiring surprise of her rival's pre-eminence in a fascinating accomplishment, ere the gentlemen came pouring in from the dining-room.

Adelaide was surprised, though rejoiced to find, that Montagu treated the general with so little ceremony ; he left him, as at Marino, with Major Gayville, and now an additional companion in General Selby, to proceed in his bacchanalia.

As none of the party chose cards, Bou-

verie proposed, that the charm of Lady Longuiville's musical treat on the morrow, should now be anticipated by her ladyship, Lady Marian, and Miss Scribleton.

"Oh, no, no, no!" hastily exclaimed Lady Marian; "that would be surfeiting with good things. No: we will walk about these romantic copses and hop-grounds which surround your cottage; and when weary of that pastime, Lady Dinwood will have the goodness to delight us with some of her inimitable recitations."

And now with an air of girlish coquetry, and with an inviting glance at Bouverie, she seized the arm of Mrs. Gayville to hurry out, as she playfully said, "Be sure not a man of you presumes to follow us, since we don't invite you."

Bouverie, as master of the feast, had been compelled to drink more wine than he was accustomed to; his spirits were therefore elevated above the steady influence of prudence; and rising in buoyancy above the dictates of reason, he felt the glance of invitation as a resistless one; and snatched the arm of Captain Warren, declaring, "They were fairly challenged;

and whilst Warren and he went in pursuit of those who set them at defiance, he trusted the remaining grand division of his gallant army would escort those ladies out, who wished to explore the woods and wilds."

Miss Scribbleton thinking it too hard, always, by submitting to Lady Marian's whims, to have her musical abilities laid aside for her sister's imitations, now declared her predilection for music was so great, she should expire through disappointment, if Lady Longuiville did not oblige her by a repetition of her beautiful vocal and piano-forte performance.

Lady Longuiville, in the good-humoured urbanity of her nature, instantly sat to the piano-forte, to oblige Miss Scribbleton; and in the divining spirit of this wish, really to oblige, her ladyship only sung one song, to prove no long retardance to the exhibition of the languishing Eleanora, who joyfully took the harp, and played on, in determined barbarity; nor ceased, until she believed every heart among her mute auditors was perforated by her and her enchanting melody.

At length Lady Dinwood's mania for

exhibiting could no longer brook control ; when snatching the harp from her sister, she sung to her own accompaniment several ludicrous songs of her own composition, until she found the risible faculties of her auditors beginning to contract from exhaustion ; when she judiciously ceased ; and afforded an opportunity for Lady Longuiville to lure Adelaide into singing a duet with her ; which they did with such beautiful effect, that their auditors were fascinated, and entreated for another, and another duet, until Adelaide's courage augmenting, enabled her friends, the Longuivilles, (who were anxious that all her powers should be called into action against the spells of the sorceress Marian,) to persuade her to venture upon a solo.

The solo now chosen by the heart-trembling Adelaide for this, to her, arduous attempt, was an Italian air, of exquisite beauty, the composition of Signore Philomelli, expressly for her ; and taught by him to her, it was no wonder her performance was exactly what this great master had expected ; and that magic, as she sung, seemed to steal through the listen-

ing ear in intralling rapture, to the enchanted heart.

It so happened, that Bouverie, although strolling in the surrounding woods with his infatuating Marian, who was endeavouring to intoxicate his senses still further by the most softening endearments of her uncontrolled idolatry, felt a sudden conviction spring up in his mind, which no blandishment of this siren could lull to even a temporary rest, that he had acted indecorously to her, as well as individually wrong, in being the one of all the party, where so many unmarried men were present, to follow her ladyship on her lively, though imprudent challenge; and to make the impropriety more glaring, by having selected Captain Warren, the notoriously talked-of favourite of Mrs. Gayville, to be the companion of his pursuit: nor could all her importunities to retard their return, prevent his immediately pointing their footsteps homeward, on the instant this conviction arose in his mind; and they arrived on the lawn just as Adelaide had got about half way through her enchanting solo performance; when

this strain of surpassing beauty struck on their ears. The amazed, the fascinated Bouverie, with uncontrolled rapture emanating from his delighted senses, exclaimed to the terrorized Marian—

“ Oh! it—it is, it is Adelaide, my angelic wife, who sings! I catch the tone of her seraphic sweetness in every magic sound now breathed!”

“ No,” cried the wily tempter, “ it is the fascinating strains of Lady Longville. I have heard her before, though you have not; and I know her exquisite voice full well. But what is the fascination of her voice, to that of the voice of love? One circuit of yonder copse is all I ask, my idol, ere I re-enter the house. Come with me, my Montagu, until I impart something to you, which, if you love as I do, you will not grieve to hear.”

The infatuated Bouverie accompanied her in this circuit; when too soon, in the intelligence she imparted to him, was lost every tone of Adelaide's voice, every recollection of her charms, her virtues; and all religious and moral obligations swept from his remembrance; and Marian and

her voluntary promise only occupied his now completely inebriated senses.

Marian, the vile, the wicked Marian, now secure, had she by a well-timed spell, closed out the danger-teeming influence of Adelaide from the heart of her husband for ever, made no further objection to returning to hear that voice, she, but a moment before, trembled in terror at; but music, by this time, was superseded by Lady Dinwood's imitations, which continued until long after the departure of the Longuivilles.

At length an account was brought to Lady Marian by Major Gayville, who could just contrive to preserve his equipoise, that her general was alarmingly inebriated; an alarm, though previously arranged with this satellite, her ladyship seemed to take to, as an unexpected one; and by her fine performance of conjugal distress, and terrorized apprehension of consequences, might have deceived any one more skilled in the deceptions of a subtile woman, than the guileless Adelaide; who, although wondering how Lady Marian could be so interested about her

own husband and the husband of another at the same time, entertained no suspicion of plot, when her ladyship implored Bouverie to accompany the poor general to Marino, as he had more self-possession at all times than any of them ; and when Bouverie complied with her request, and got into the coach with the accommodat- ingly drunken general, a sudden qualm of conscience led her to declare, “ It was her duty to go with her poor husband, lest any thing fatal should occur on the road.”

When the coach returned for the second detachment, word was brought that every danger was apprehended for the safety of the general ; and when it arrived for the last party, a verbal message was brought to Adelaide—

“ That, as the general was considered in so precarious a state, Colonel Bouverie could not think of quitting him ; and therefore would remain at Marino all night.”

Adelaide was dreadfully shocked by this intelligence ; yet, in the unsuspecting innocence of her nature, rejoiced that Montagu had determined to remain at Marino ;

since his self-possession must make him so much more useful than any of the family: and as soon as she arose next morning, she sent Dennis to inquire for the poor general, whom she expected to hear was no more. "And then," said her aching heart, "I shall be the only obnoxious barrier to Montagu's union with the infatuating widow."

CHAPTER XV.

DENNIS returned with intelligence from the servants at Marino, the family not yet being up, "that they had trundled the general to bed, as usual ; but that Lady Marian, Colonel Bouverie, and Mrs. Coleman, had sat up with him until all their fears of danger had subsided ; and that his valet had just been into his room, and found him in a comfortable sleep, apparently quite well."

From this account, Adelaide's misery at being looked upon as an impeding barrier to her husband's happiness was removed ; and, in better spirits, she dressed for Lady Longuiville's concert, and at whose house she arrived ere any of the rest of the party : but soon, by degrees, the whole of the Bexhill garrison assembled, and were promptly reinforced by all the Marino inmates, except the two generals, "whose heads ached too much to encounter music that morning ; and Lady Marian and Colonel Bouverie, whom General Harley

wished to breakfast with him ; but ere the concert commenced they would certainly break from him, unless they had any reason to entertain new fears for him."

At length, in slow and sure measure, having left Hastings at dawn of day, arrived two caravans with the musical instruments in requisition for Lady Cecilia's travelling party, attended by four men, retained in her ladyship's service for travelling with and taking care of the instruments, and who now carefully removed them from the caravan to their places of temporary destination.

Lady Cecilia's party were too well skilled in time not to be scientifically in concord with their instruments : for, as the caravans drove from the door, their barouche and four whirled up to it ; out of which was ushered in and introduced to the company, Lady Cecilia Armonioso, a very fine looking woman, although past the meridian of life ; the Signor her *sposo*, whom, from his aspect and gestures, until he spoke, the alarmed party assembled conceived to be a Patagonian baboon,—Miss Rosa Grisdale, pale, emaciated, and coughing ever and

anon with sepulchral note,—Miss Grisdale, a very fine blooming girl, of nineteen,—her intended Signore Fortunato, a very handsome looking blockhead,—and, to Adelaide's great surprise and joy, her favourites of the professional world of harmony she had ever known, Signore and Signora Philomelli.

Not more pleasure did Adelaide evince on so unexpectedly seeing this Signor and Signora, than they demonstrated extravagant joy on recognising her, no longer bearing any remains of the malady she had been recovering from when they saw her before ; and the voluble inquiries they both made after her voice, and their raptures at the recollection of its tones, filled the whole Marino party with amazement, as Lady Marian had assured them, “ Mrs. Bouverie's voice ought not to be admired, as it was insignificant in itself ; that she had been vilely taught ; had neither taste, feeling, nor science ; while the only thing correct, relative to her singing, was—her being ashamed of it ! ”

The moment Lady Cecilia heard the much talked of paragon of the Philomelli's,

Mrs. Bouverie, whom they almost deified as a quirister, was so fortunately present, she could not allow herself to inhale breath until she got herself introduced to her; when she entreated to be admitted to her friendship, and that she would yield her the honour and gratification of her company to spend a month at Grisdale Park, the ensuing Christmas.

Adelaide, with the most ineffable sweetness of urbanity, made her acknowledgments, and pronounced the impossibility of a soldier's wife forming any engagement for so distant a period.

An elegant *déjeûné* now commenced; and as Lady Cecilia intimated, that all who loved harmony would not delay in the vulgarism of eating, it was not a very tedious one, in compliment to this *amateur* lady, who came voluntarily so far, fasting, to delight them; yet, though rather expeditiously despatched, Lady Dinwood and the fair Eleanora made good use of their time,—not partaking of the good cheer, but in their better relished employment of egotizing and informing every stranger of their universally celebrated talents.

"Do you ever perform operas, Miss Grisdale?" said Lady Dinwood.

"All, of celebrated fame."

"Have you a regular theatre to perform in?"

"We perform in an orchestra, ma'am."

Lady Dinwood burst into a laugh, at the idea of performing in an orchestra; and, by explaining what her question tended to, opened the way for proclaiming her histrionic abilities.

"Do you read much?" demanded Miss Scribbleton, addressing Miss Rosa Grisdale, who sat opposite to her.

"Very quick at sight," she replied.

"I mean literary reading."

"I can't spare time from my music."

"You, then, never write?"

"Oh! dear, yes; my own compositions always!"

"Are you an author, and never read?"

"I am a composer."

"Do you compose songs?"

"Yes; all I sing now."

"Of course the words are your own too?"

"Dear, no! I have no time, even did

my invention lie that way.—I depend on my friends for a pretty selection of words, and then I compose my airs.”

“Italian, I presume?”

“Chiefly.”

“Then you perfectly understand Italian, to be able to adapt your compositions?”

“Not a word.”

“I thought you had been in Italy!”

“So I was; but I only learned to sing there; I had no time to think of the language.”

Miss Scribbleton shrugged her shoulders, and begged leave “to send her a volume of her sonnets;—English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Persian;—as she presumed to hope, from the fame the literati and public at large had bestowed upon them, that some of them might be deemed worthy of being set to music by her.”

But in this offer of a supply from all nations, Miss Scribbleton forgot to name the different translators she had employed to put her few English sonnets into various languages!

The concert at length commenced; and nothing could be finer than the perform-

ance of this travelling party ; and, although well assured of their own super-excellence, they did not monopolize the whole of the harmonic exertion to themselves ; since every one, who could play or sing, they invited with so much *politesse* to join them, or aid the amusement by solo, that few could decline ; and when they complied, received such kind encouragement and animated applause, that even the most timid were induced to oblige them ; so that Adelaide would have found it difficult to utter a negative, even had not Signore Philomelli been present ; but to him she could not say a nay ; and even in the first act the voice of Adelaide was heard in its most touching fascinations.

It was in the cessation after the first act that Lady Marian, tenderly leaning on the arm of Bouverie, walked the short distance from Marino ; and, in full view of the large party assembled at Sir Charles's, slow as foot could fall, coquetishly tarrying on the way to prolong their walk, while, in studied attitudes, to display the fine symmetry of her form, she stopped to point out some new beauty on the wide expanse of water.

At length, though slow was their pace, and unwilling their foot-falls, they did arrive ; and were about to enter the saloon which opened upon the lawn, when the first object that struck the view of Montagu was his wife ;—his wife, in all the irradiation of transcendent beauty and heavenly innocence ;—when instantly a pang more direful than had ever assailed his heart shot through his bosom ;—it seemed like the agony awakened by a tantalizing view of Paradise that he had despoiled himself of for ever ; and unable, at that moment, to stand in her presence, he dropped the arm of her he had sworn the devotion of his whole soul to, and, like a culprit flying from justice, he suddenly retreated.

As Lady Marian was not new to wedded transgression, her self-possession failed her not, on sight of a being she had injured ; and although she felt hurt and awkward at this apparently strange dereliction of her obsequious conductor in such a conspicuous moment, yet she made her *entrée*, not only unembarrassed, but rather with an air of triumph, as if conscious of meriting the adoration of the world

Montagu had not flown a dozen paces from the saloon, when the recollection assailed him of how strange, how suspicious his conduct must appear to all observers; and now in high alarm, lest suspicion should be awakened against the fame of the idol of his homage, who had been led from her inherent purity, through adoration of him; he rallied all the firmness of his mind to brave the presence of his wife.

And now, in unison with that system of deceit he was involved in, he took a hasty way back to Marino, as if some suddenly recollected business there was the cause of his abrupt retreat; and after taking a circuit of the hall, he returned to Sir Charles Longuiville's, tolerably composed; again to be heart-riven by his wife, who, not having perceived his extraordinary flight, with an enchanting smile of animated joy and sweetness, motioned for his approach: yet this fascinating invitation of affection retarded, more than it propelled, the advance of Montagu; for it pierced his conscience, and led him the most circuitous, intricate way of lingering unwillingness,

to the back of the *chaise longue*, where Adelaide was sitting, to go through the torturing ceremony of taking her by the hand, and paying his morning compliments to her.

But although he thus kept himself in the back-ground, to escape the scrutiny of his countenance by her ; yet the tremour of his hand, and the low tone of his voice, at once awakened suspicion in the mind of Adelaide—the suspicion of his being ill ; when rapidly turning round more fully to view him, her apprehensions caught new force from his aspect ; and with torturing tenderness she made known her fears ; and feelingly deplored his alarm about the general, and sitting up to watch him, as the cause.

With difficulty Montagu sustained his power of standing, whilst he falteringly assured her he was not ill—“ only a little nervous ; a little deranged, from having the preceding day, in compliance with the rites of hospitality, drank a little more freely than he was accustomed to do.”

“ Hospitality is so sweet, so social a virtue,” Adelaide replied, “ that one ought

never to trespass voluntarily against any of her laws: but, on the other hand, it is hard, in our homage to her, to be led by necessity into the fangs of the harpy, intemperance, who is the deity so worshipped by your friend the general, Montagu, that he will not cease his direful libations. I very much fear, until some fatal consequence, some terrible mischief, ensues."

To hear of the rites of hospitality transgressed, although the subject had been inadvertently introduced by himself, was torturing now to Bouverie; and the idea of mischief resulting from General Harley's terrible propensity, a dagger to his conscience; which so writhed it, that he made a prompt excuse to move towards the door, "as the heat of the room," he said, "was making his bacchanalian headache worse."

The second act of this delightful concert being about to commence, Lady Marian's vocal aid was requested by the amiable mistress of the mansion. Her ladyship, with great urbanity, instantly promised compliance; and as Signore Philo-

melli's opinion was pronounced the criterion of merit, she resolved to win his unqualified applause for her song; and having a slight acquaintance with him, she had an opportunity of overwhelming him with her delicate flatteries, in her regrets at not sooner knowing he was of Lady Cecilia's party; since nothing then should have detained her from coming to catch every note he breathed.

The Signore bowing, modestly said, "Her ladyship had sustained much greater losses than in his songs; since Lady Longuiville and the Misses Grisdale were exquisite singers; and Mrs. Bouverie was—

"A very promising one, certainly," her ladyship abruptly said, interrupting him, on perceiving Bouverie standing by them; "and could she obtain a little of Signore Philomelli's almost supernatural instructions, would become, in consequence, a very pleasing singer."

"I mean," said the Signore, "the *bella Signora* Bouverie, whom *le grande duca* has seat by—"

"So do I," returned her ladyship.

"Oh, *mio Dio!* monstrous! mon-

struoso! a me far quest' affronto! my Ruseignuola! my boast! my *perfezione*, of all I ever teach! to be call *una* singer of promise! Oh! *mio Dio!* what taste! what *affronto!*" and flying off to his wife, to tell her, with the most violent gestures of anger, "*Il affronto!*" given to their favourite Ruseignuola, she quickly pacified him, by an assurance, "It was inspired by envy."

Lady Marian, thus discomfitted in her lure for the Signore's favour, felt not only extremely disconcerted, but lost in astonishment at his allusions to having instructed her, whose singing she had endeavoured to depreciate; when Bouverie, not less amazed, now found wings to approach his wife, to demand from her, "If she had ever received instructions from Signore Philomelli?"

Her reply led him, in the effervescence of ill-disguised indignation, to inquire, "Why she had permitted him so unnecessarily to trouble Lady Marian Harley to exert her interest to obtain that instruction for her, which she had already benefitted by?"

“My dear Montagu,” responded Adelaide, with winning mildness, “it was after you quitted Twickenham I obtained the instructions of Signore Philomelli, as a measure to surprise and please you; and as I was actually benefitting by them in the moment you wrote me word he had sent an ungracious negative to the earnestly kind solicitations in my behalf, I felt then a degree of unwillingness to reveal the fact to you, in a sort of delicacy, lest I might subject the veracity of any of your friends to a suspicion, by proving how sincere were their exertions in my cause with Signore Philomelli.”

Montagu felt electrified, as if with the sudden horror of a view of something like deformity in the formation of Marian’s mind; yet, anxious to close out this appalling vision from his sight, he sought to occupy himself with a real cause of anger against Adelaide, and rather pettishly inquired—

“What prevented her making so agreeable a communication to him, since her arrival in Sussex?”

“The scruples of my delicacy were not

removed by my coming into Sussex, Montagu; on the contrary, I found daily cause for their increase," said Adelaide, with emotion.

Bouverie was silent; he could not answer her: the contrast in conduct evinced by his wife and paramour, in this circumstance, struck him too forcibly, too painfully, to admit of his uttering a comment; and Lady Longuiville opportunely approaching, allowed him to make his escape to the lawn, there to ruminate, and find excuses for the infatuating Marian, in her love for him, which he firmly believed had led her into every transgression she had committed.

Lady Longuiville's mission to Adelaide was to entreat another song; and although it was the infraction of a determination she long had made, never to sing at a concert; yet, in compliment to Signore Philomelli, she was induced further to oblige; and at his request the song was one he selected for her, and which was to be honoured by his accompaniment on the piano forte.

The emotion of Adelaide, awakened in

her short conference with her husband, caused the first two bars of her recitative to be tremulously given; but remembering that Montagu was possibly hearing her, she rallied, by almost preternatural exertion, the energies of her firmness; and succeeded to such surpassing perfection, that Signore Philomelli was almost wild with delight; and was so vehement, yet so natural, in his raptures, that the fascinated Duke of St. Kilda secretly determined to patronize all his concerts the ensuing winter, and to let the munificence of remuneration for his own tickets pay his debt of gratitude for this just appreciation of Adelaide's enchanting powers.

Lady Marian was called upon to sing, and who complied with all the might of her exertions to enchant; but the unforgiving and indignant Philomelli just waited to hear a few bars, and then deliberately walked out of the room; thus impressing upon the minds of all, who imbibed their estimation of talent from this fashionable critic, that she was not worth listening to; an "*affronto*," that proved so torturing to the generally adulated Lady Marian,

that the moment the concert terminated, she wished Lady Longuiville good day, saying, "she must go home to her general; but that none of her party need return with her, save Colonel Bouverie, the only person, except herself, who had any influence over her husband; and as the colonel was on the lawn, she perceived, she would not trouble any one to call him to her, as her way lay by the very path he trod."

Thornley, however, felt himself in duty bound to convey her safely to the care of her preferred escort; whom they broke upon, as he was in deep contemplation upon the charms, both mental and personal, of his forsaken wife; whose tones, wafted by auspicious zephyrs to his ears, had recalled him to the house, and in ambush he listened; and was so enchanted, that when he returned to his walk, to strive for excuses for Marian, his truant thoughts would still revert to Adelaide, to wonder still how she had failed to fascinate him more than Marian.

But soon, too soon, that sorceress appeared, to put those wonders all to flight;

and by her blandishments, still more blindly to infatuate, and to lull his suspicions of her probity, by dexterously forging the invention for his ear, "That it was her friend to whom she had applied, to induce the insolent puppy Philomelli to instruct Mrs. Bouverie, who was the defaulter in veracity, as it was now plain she had made no application at all to him; and had deceived her into uttering an untruth to him, in the innocence of her unsuspecting nature."

At length the musical travellers took leave, to proceed on their way to Eastbourne; but not until Lady Cecilia renewed her pressing invitation to our heroine, to spend the Christmas with her; and when again Adelaide pleaded in excuse her being a soldier's wife, her ladyship, in a burst of wild enthusiasm, exclaimed—

"Oh, that you were not a wife! and that I had a son worthy of you! or that you were in indigence, and that I could purchase your society for myself, as long as I had ears to hear!"

Although the conduct of Bouverie to

her that morning, had made the heart of Adelaide too sad for mirth, yet she found herself beguiled almost into a laugh at this singular compliment, of wishing her in poverty, that her time and talent might be purchased; a restrained risibility, which the remaining part of the company gave free indulgence to, the moment her ladyship departed.

“ I am meditating a voluminous novel for my next month’s pastime,” exclaimed Miss Seribbleton; “ and I will certainly introduce her ladyship and *suite* into it.”

“ I will exhibit them first, with your good leave, my gentle Eleanora,” cried Lady Dinwood, who instantly commenced her mimicry of the whole Armonioso party, in their conversation, their air, their gait, manner, gestures, voices, style of singing, and, above all, the ludicrous grimaces which some of them displayed during their performance, with such force of similitude, that for full half an hour she convulsed every beholder with laughter.

As Adelaide’s carriage had been some time in waiting, the moment her ladyship

ceased her exhibition, she arose to depart, when Mrs. Gayville called out to her—

“Do not expect your colonel home to dinner, for the general will not part with him, I can tell you, as long as he finds himself unwell; and besides too, we are to have a rehearsal in the evening.”

“A rehearsal while General Harley is ill, Mrs. Gayville!” exclaimed Adelaide, affecting even more surprise than she really felt.

“Dear, yes: we are obliged to be unusually gay, when any thing ails him, or the depression of his spirits would be intolerable.”

“Ah!” thought Adelaide, as she got into her carriage, “there is always some device to keep Montagu from his home and me; so that I am allowed no chance whatever to save him from destruction.”

The dinner of Adelaide was ready when she arrived at her cottage; and the sigh was so audible, with which poor Dennis removed it, when he found it had proved a nominal one, that with a sweet, yet melancholy smile of grateful feeling, she gently said—

“ I had a second breakfast, you know, to-day, my good Dennis; therefore do not be uneasy at my not being able to eat again so soon.”

Poor Dennis was now so completely subdued, he had not power to answer her; but rushing from the room, he flew to Obearn; and in tremulous tones exclaimed, as he wrung his hands, in genuine sorrow—

“ Oh, then, more grief to that poaching slut, Marian! for sorrow morsel has passed the *darlingt's* fading lips at all, at all, Norrah. Och! what will we do with her? for 'tis starved she'll be, if the heart of her is not broken! Meal after meal, I'll engage, will be for me to be mourning over, as long as 'tis left she is, like a poor fright of a scarecrow pilgarlic, to mope alone in this cruel fashion. Och, murder! What a burning shame it was, to have the sweetest rose of the garden, the beauty of the wide world, sacrificed in this scandalous manner! Sure 'tis bewitched his honour is, or he would never be forsaking her for all the world; as if 'twas *ould* Alice crow he had in it, to scare him from his home.”

CHAPTER XVI.

BUT very far the evening had not advanced, when the solitude of poor Adelaide was pleasingly interrupted, by the arrival of Sir Charles and Lady Longville, who came to inveigle her upon an airing with them, and then to take their tea with her.

Their airing was salutary and delightful, through a beautiful country; and on their return to Castle Cottage, Lady Longville amused Adelaide and Sir Charles, by recounting to them the different plans, in which human invention had been tortured, to do homage to Mrs. Bouverie, which had that morning been submitted to her, for her election of the kind of entertainment the officers of her husband's regiment were anxious to give immediately to the young bride.

"And which of all these ingenious designs have you selected, Louisa?" demanded Sir Charles.

"Why," replied her ladyship, "from

having the wings of our fancy most cruelly clipt, by the lack of many essentials, necessary for the most eccentric plans, we have been forced to adopt that of a mere simple ball, given in temporary rooms; an order for which, an express has been sent off from the barracks to London; from whence an importation of artificers for the occasion are to arrive on Monday; and on Tuesday, I trust, two of Sir Charles Longuiville's lovely sisters, escorted by his brother Henry."

"Is that possible, Louisa?" exclaimed Sir Charles, colouring with pleased emotion.

"I hope it is," she replied, smiling; "since I wrote a most supplicating entreaty to your mother, to spare them to me for a month, as soon as I found so gay a matter as this *fête* was in agitation."

In despite of the presence of our heroine, Sir Charles clasped his wife to his bosom, in grateful rapture.

"Oh!" said Adelaide, "how I wish my little dance could be attempted before this great ball is given! Do you think your sisters would have sufficiently reco-

vered to come to my revel on Thursday, if Montagu really wishes me to make the experiment of such a measure?"

Lady Longuiville took upon her to answer for her fair sisters being perfectly able and willing to wait upon her; and her ladyship and Sir Charles departed about nine o'clock, with whom Adelaide arranged to go to Hastings after parade hour, on the morrow; and to dine with them, if Bouverie had formed no other engagement for her.

As the poor heart-rived wife apprehended, Bouverie returned not to his home that night; but, as an appearance which Adelaide's peace, and Marian's fame, demanded from him, he arrived to breakfast the subsequent morning, primed with deceptious apologies for his truancy from home.

Unwillingly he came to the presence of his wife, and misery was the companion of his bosom whilst he remained with her; for each tone, each word, each look of hers, all beaming with her forgiving sweetness, went like barbed arrows through his heart; whilst his kindling admiration, as

he beheld, and listened to her, aided most forcibly the rankling stings of his conscience, to fill him with remorse, for not having, before it was too late, combatted successfully with a passion, which had fatally led him into transgression, from which he now saw a hydra of evil rising in his path.

Bouverie could not, like his practised paramour, smile in tenderness at Adelaide, fervently press her hands, or ardently fold her to his bosom ; as with astonishment, tinctured with strong feelings of reprobation, he had seen the wily Marian caress her husband, since her fatal passion for him had, as he firmly believed, seduced her from the path of purity. No : on the contrary, the lovely being he had wedded he now recoiled from, conscious of his own unworthiness to approach her ; his eyes sought every object rather than her, who even now, his heart whispered, was fairer to look upon than all creation ; while to touch her with his palsied hand, he seemed to cherish the belief, would prove the signal for cherubim and seraphim to descend, and snatch their own from the polluted contact.

Adelaide beheld his averted eyes, his palsied hand, the abstraction of his manner, with dismay, since, recoiling from a suspicion of the fact, she believed it was approaching illness, caused by the misery his mind endured, in its warfare between his sense of rectitude, and his fatal love for the bewitching Marian; and appalled with terror at the idea of his life falling a sacrifice to the conflict, her voice imbibed such tones of tender sympathy, they thrilled with magic to the soul of Montagu, increasing the struggle there to agony; for a false sense of honour now holding dominion over him, with its sophistry, in Marian's cause, opposed with all its power and address the resistless impression Adelaide fast was making; and led him to hurry from her, to shorten the anguish her presence caused.

"But shall I not see you again to-day, Montagu? Not once again this whole long day?" said Adelaide, mournfully and tremulously.

Montagu felt almost suffocated, as he articulated his engagements for the day with the general, "who would scarcely

bear his absence for a moment ; and then in the evening, with those untoward rehearsals, and the late supper. But—but, he would see her in the morning ; and hoped soon those theatricals would end, which caused him such a torturing separation from her.”

Adelaide sighed, almost to the semblance of a groan, as her heart noted the untruth he had condescended to utter, to pacify her. “For, ah!” she thought, “was our separation misery to you, it would not exist.”

From this groan-clad sigh of Adelaide, Bouverie, in an agony, retreated to the door ; where suddenly recollecting a mission of the siren Marian’s, he returned, and with rather an air of embarrassment said—

“Lady Marian, I am sorry to say, Adelaide, expects you to adhere to your promise of this little dance ; which,—which is rather unlucky ; as,—as I know, such things cannot be accomplished without the needful ; and just now, from that assistance I unfortunately yielded to, la—

lately to a friend, I,—I have untowardly no supply to aid you with."

"Oh, Montagu!" said Adelaide, benignly, "I trust the distress may never be for us to feel it as unfortunate, our assistance to a fellow-being in necessity: but let not the aid, which the benevolence of your nature led you lately to yield your friends, distress you for one moment longer; for, Montagu, believe I mean not to aim at the developement of any secret you wish to conceal from me: but forgive me, if the deep interest I take in all that concerns you, has led me to discover my husband is not happy; and I have now to fear pecuniary difficulties add their stings to other miseries."

The voice of Adelaide began most pitifully to fail her; but she resolved to conquer its betraying emotion; and after a successful struggle, she more steadily proceeded—

"From your present pecuniary embarrassments I have happily the power to extricate you. I have, subject to no control, five thousand pounds."

"Which for five thousand millions I would not touch one shilling of," exclaimed Bouverie, with a vehemence of emotion, that electrified his wife. "Oh, no, no, no! I have trespassed upon your generosity, your kindness, your benevolence, too much already; and no base miscreant, who lived to repent his frauds, ever more bitterly deplored, than I have done, taking your liberal aid."

"Oh, Montagu, I wish you could understand my heart; and learn to know, it wishes no separate interest from its lord and master."

"I do understand it!--understand it but *too well*," said Montagu, in the low murmuring tone of mental conflict, as he sunk on a couch; and leaning on its elbow, covered his face with his hands.

"*Too well*, alas!" repeated Adelaide, mournfully, in apprehension that his knowledge of her heart had led him to disapprobation of it; yet wishing to turn from every allusion that might teach him to suppose she sought the discussion of unpleasant themes, she promptly changed her plaintive tone, and said—

“ You have not denied I guessed too truly that you endured some pecuniary uneasiness: then why, oh! why not let me, your wife, your friend from infancy, relieve you from it? That five thousand pounds was bequeathed me to please my fancy; and the bounty of our dear uncle allowed it not to be called into requisition for the alteration of my jewels upon my marriage. I have it therefore still for the purpose Mr. Mordaunt left it for, since the peace of my husband being the most precious of all gems to me, I shall please my fancy, and my heart, by resetting him in his native brilliancy of mental ease.”

“ Adelaide! Adelaide! speak not thus to me!” exclaimed Montagu, in a burst of mental agony, “ or you will melt me by your fascinations, to—to disclosures—to—

“ Montagu,” said Adelaide, hastily, “ I have touched upon some chord of your feelings, that vibrates painfully; and I will withdraw until you have recovered your self-possession; lest, in a softened moment, you might make disclosures that, in after thought, might be repented of. Should you wish to quit the house without

renewing this too evidently distressing interview with me, do so, without scruple; but only leave one line to gratify my earnest entreaty to be allowed to send for all, or any part, of my stores for you."

"Never, never, angel as thou art! never will I touch one shilling of it!" Bouverie murmured out, whilst tears bedewed his cheeks, and agony of remorse and contending feeling racked his bosom.

"I must fly," said Adelaide, "for feeling is too active with us both. Only remember I am your banker, if you will oblige me; but should your scruples remain invincible, even then, Lady Marian shall not be disappointed of her wished-for cottage dance, on next Thursday, Montagu, if her ladyship approves that day."

And now, briefly stating her engagements with the Longuilles for that day, she retreated to her own room, to weep those tears that threatened suffocation; and Montagu, in the same moment, to escape from thought, and feelings which were impetuously warring against the phantom honour, which Marian's incantations had conjured up, as her bulwark,

in the place of that idolatrous reverence of esteem, which herself had overthrown, rushed from his home; and like the ruined wretch who seeks the gaming-table, to avert the destruction gaming has brought upon him; or the cup of intoxication, for a palliative against the maladies intemperance has agonized his frame with, he flew to his bane, to seek his antidote; and to forget the charms and virtues of his wife, in the infatuating society of his tempter to transgression.

Lady Marian, who had learned by some secret means that Montagu had rejected a seat in parliament, and being all anxiety her adored paramour should obtain this shield to screen him from the deprivation of liberty which she knew might be endangered by her various exploits, was rather in the pouts on his return to her, at his having given his negative without consulting her; and though he felt the contrast, deeply felt it, between the fascinating sweetness of his wife and the sullen *hauteur* of his offended mistress, yet in the true essence of that infatuation she had enthralled his mind by, he instantly bent to

the most profound obsequiousness, grieving to have acted without her mandate, and quickly wound by her into every cast she chose to mould him in, he became again the ardent lover, the charms of his wife's conduct had so nearly estranged from her.

Adelaide, at length aroused to a recollection of her engagements for the day, dried up her tears by the sun-beams of her piety; and after perambulating the farmer's premises in quest of a contrivance for a supper-room for her ball, that she might leave the little suite open for cards and loungers, she set out, according to appointment, to Sir Charles Longuiville's, where, ere her ladyship was ready to leave her nursling, our poor heroine beheld from the windows Lady Marian and Bouverie set out in the latter's curricie, and take a different route from that to Hastings.

“Alas! alas!” Adelaide mentally exclaimed in agony of heart, “when you said, Montagu, the general could scarcely endure your absence for a moment, you meant the general's wife!”

Nothing particular occurred in Adelaide's long and salutary round with her friends,

except their passing Montagu and Marian on their return, just as each party arrived near home, when the conscious Bouverie averted his face from his wife, while the triumphant Marian bowed, and kissed her hand *en passant*, in the most gracious, or rather the most exulting manner.

“Oh, Marian!” Bouverie exclaimed, the moment they got within the gates of Marino, “how can you look upon that injured innocent, and smile as you do?”

“Have I not cause to smile?” she replied; “for have I not triumphed over her?”

“Triumphed over Adelaide!” Bouverie exclaimed in a tone so dissonant to her ladyship’s feelings, that her most violent ire of jealousy ensued, which raged so vehemently, so deformingly, that had he not known Adelaide was not at her cottage, he would have flown to her from Lady Marian for ever; but too soon the wily serpent perceiving the precipice this indulgence to disfiguring passion had led her to, promptly rallied back her every fascinating blandishment for rivetting her chains still closer round her captive’s heart, to whose perception conviction now was stealing, that

those chains were relaxing in their invincible power to bind, since the reverence of esteem for chastity invulnerable had ceased to clasp them round him.

At Sir Charles Longuiville's there only dined this day Adelaide, Captain Clayton, and Mr. Monro; and the moment the gentlemen went off to evening parade, Lady Longuiville and her lovely guest proceeded to take a salutary ramble upon the beach, where they had not long ranged, when the Duke of St. Kilda and Captain Hope joined them; and when her ladyship at length turned her paces homeward, they both supplicated so earnestly for permission to accompany the fair friends, that Lady Longuiville, although concerned at the weakness of his grace, to seek that society he ought to shun; and that she had strong suspicion of Captain Hope having imbibed the same weakness, yet knew not how to negative a petition so importunately made.

When Sir Charles and his dinner companions returned from parade, he cordially shook hands with Hope, but the duke he shook his head expressively at, who seemed

to borrow one of Adelaide's deepest blushes for the occasion, and soon was called by the amiable baronet to a conference upon the lawn, where he received a half-playful, half-serious lecture, for thus wilfully seeking that society which had destroyed his happiness.

As all the party were uncommonly well-informed, pleasing individuals, it was no wonder their conversation mingled into themes so interesting, that it was with amazement Adelaide heard her carriage was arrived, since she had formed no conception of its being so late ; and, almost with reluctance, she quitted a society which had lulled the poignancy of her misery ; since to solitude she must now return, where the spectre of lost happiness flitted before her wherever she turned ; its appalling influence echoed its sad sighs from Montagu's forsaken room, and its ghastly visage appeared on his deserted pillow.

CHAPTER XVII.

SIR Charles and Lady Longuiville, dreading the saddening influence of solitude upon the young and susceptible mind of Adelaide in this heart-riving season of mortifying dereliction, persuaded her to promise to accompany them, the succeeding day, after their attendance at church, to walk on the fort at Hastings ; and, at the appointed hour, she proceeded with them in their barouche to this fashionable Sunday-morning promenade, where they were instantly joined by a phalanx of Sir Charles's regiment.

As the fort was not yet very numerously attended, Adelaide promptly recognised three very showy looking young women, one married, two single, whom she had seen at the Hastings' ball, as three of the most adulated *belles* there, whom the officers of the Z. Militia had been almost ready to pistol each other to obtain the honour of dancing with, now gayly dressed in the most fashionable style of fashion's apes,

frugal in quantity, and prodigal in quality, escorted by a strong detachment of the officers encamped at Fairlight.

These three attractive luminaries had twice passed our Bexhill party with all the airs and graces of elated vanity, when suddenly, as two men entered the fort, Captain Hope humorously exclaimed,—

“*Morbleu!*—bailiffs, by all that’s taking!—but this is Sunday, and I revive!”

“The day proves to me a specific, too, against the most d——ish ague fit that ever shook a man withal!” cried Captain Clayton, smiling; “since, only for it, I should have expected to behold Stultz’s bill, as large as life, stalk out of that pompadour rascal’s pocket to rap me on the shoulder.”

“Faith, I was preparing to fly from danger,” said Mr. Sykes, “until a sudden recollection of my nonage closed my pinions to my side, and proved sal. volatile to my palpitation.”

“Heavens!” exclaimed Sir Charles, as come to the termination of the walk, he, with his party, wheeled about, “Heavens! they are come for drafts from these militia-

men, whom Doe and Roe have drawn for their garrison battalions."

"They will find some difficulty in procuring substitutes, I presume," said Monro.

"Hold!" exclaimed the Duke of St. Kilda, "these are Bow-Street worthies, and there is felony in the case;—these females are swindlers beyond all doubt."

At this moment, the younger of the two men, whose attire and aspect were exactly such as to awaken the most potent alarm in every conscious debtor who beheld him, unceremoniously seized the hand of the married lady, and placed it under his arm; while the other, an elderly man, who sported a pompadour coat, pushed in between the dashing spinsters, audibly exclaiming—

"Come, lasses, hook on!—a leg or an arm, which do you choose?"

"You, sir, had better take *wing* forthwith," exclaimed one of the escorting militia captains, fiercely.

"La, captain!" cried one of the girls in terror, which overcame her mortification, "tis *me* pa, sir."

The look of amazement, dismay, and lu-

dicrous chagrin, now interchanged by these so lately adulating heroes, could only be equalled by the risibility-awakening sheepish consciousness with which, as if by mutual consent, they all sneaked away, one after another, from the fort, fearing, although it was Sunday, the suspicion their being seen in company with such looking men might awaken, when Cornet Sykes, who loved to delve into the history of every thing but what the classics had presented to him, followed them to the marine library, which was open for the perusal of newspapers, and soon returned with information, which the rapidly accumulating pedestrians upon the fort retarded his impatient anxiety to communicate to his party.

“ Oh !” he exclaimed, the moment he approached Sir Charles, “ I found the poor Z—— in the greatest consternation, having formed a party to go to the rooms with these dashers this evening, and for their band to play for them there ; and now, how to be off and cut the connexion, they know not ; while old Redoubt,—who, it seems, long since pronounced these dashers were not gentlewomen,—is swearing like a boat-

swain at the disgrace likely to be entailed upon the whole corps, through the just ridicule awakened by their neglecting proper acquaintances, to devote their time and admiration to the wife of a turnkey and the daughters of a bumbailiff."

"Not quite so bad as that, either, sir," said one of the shop-attendants; "I understand they are creditable shopkeepers in the Borough."

"Faugh!" was now the regimental note.

"The husband a tallow-chandler, the father a great cheesemonger!"

"Faugh! and doubly faugh!" exclaimed the old don, as he flew out upon the beach in a rage, continued Sykes, "leaving the repentant adulators to vow most vehemently, never in future, was there even a famine of female society in the land, so much as to touch their hats to a woman, till her male relatives pass muster."

Our Bexhill party now amused themselves with speculating upon what the poor Z.— would devise to get rid of their evening's engagement, until Adelaide said,

"I should advise their petitioning the

general to order a field-day to-morrow, to be carried on like some of your late ones, and by constituting them the defenders of the supposed stormed places, afford them the excuse of riding over to view the ground of action to-night, to plan their defensive measures."

The gentlemen all declared this infinitely the best project yet struck out; and if the petition was to Lady Marian it would be certain of success; when Sykes, as good-natured as he was curious, flew off as rapidly as the throng on the fort would admit of to the library, to lay this plan before his distressed brethren.

The throng of pedestrians at length began to grow extremely oppressive to our party; and Adelaide could not but remark the singularity of the people not walking more diffusely upon the fort, but pressing, as it seemed, to one focus; a circumstance she could not account for, since there was no shade from the sun on any part of it; and at length perceiving as they arrived at one end of the battery the other was deserted, she eagerly proposed to Lady Longuiville

to make for the forsaken spot, there to sit on the rampart, and inhale the sea-breezes, unannoyed by the multitude.

“Agreed,” said Sir Charles, smiling; “not that I build much hope upon any of our manœuvres for escaping the press of the multitude, this bout.”

Accordingly they accomplished a retreat to the deserted termination: but ere they were seated, Adelaide, in chagrin, beheld the multitude ranged close before them, but changed now into a stationary throng; or if a movement took place, it was by some one penetrating the front rank of fascinated gazers, overwhelming her with amazement and curiosity to learn what possessed the people? since, never before having been where she could attract the eye of public admiration, it now never entered her thoughts that she herself was the magnet; but at length, concluding it must be the beauty of the hussar uniform that transfixed the multitude to gape at their party, she looked upon the enchanted throng with all the happy composure of unconsciousness.

While the Longuiville party thus con-

tinued stationary, for the accommodation, as it seemed, of the fascinated gazers, the Marino assemblage arrived to walk on the fort, as they did every Sunday ; and the moment they entered the gate, perceiving the great throng of one end, the desertion of the other, Lady Marian, who was leaning on the arm of Bouverie in all the exulting consciousness of surpassing beauty, demanded, “ What could be the matter ? ”

Bouverie, notwithstanding his towering height, could not discover by his eyes, and therefore applied to a sentinel for information.

“ Why, please your honour, ’tis only looking at a woman they be.—Something outlandish for certain ; Madam *Cattleany*, the *Empire-ess* of the French, or some *Uperer* dancer, I takes it.”

“ Shall we push on to see the outlandish sight ? ” demanded Bouverie, smiling at the soldier’s surmises.—“ But is this wonder in a cage, that it remains stationary, to be gazed at ? ”

“ Fixed stars are the most attractive,” said Thornley, eagerly ; “ so let us press on.”

“ You had better, your honour,” cried

a sailor who was seated on the rampart, kicking his heels against the wall, as he smoked his pipe, now taking it from his mouth, "for you *an't* likely to see such a soight agin in your born days!"

"What, is it a mermaid?" exclaimed Lady Dinwood, laughing.

"'Tis *someat* as never was born!" returned the sailor, with ludicrous seriousness; "tis *someat* stollen from aloft by Bony's imps to land on this here island, to slay by her beauty all hands his *rabblety* legions could not vanquish;—aye, 'tis sure as the tide, d——n my eyes, mistress!"

Lady Marian, touched to the quick at Bouverie's thus learning that any beauty had power to attract a crowd, where she had walked, hour after hour, without effecting more than the *en passant* gaze of admiration, now impetuously declared, "She would go walk on the cliffs, since she neither chose to be crushed by a vulgarly gaping mob, or to traverse the desert."

The ladies of her party now began to parley with her to stay where they could see and be seen, and the men to implore one peep

at this unborn agent of Buonaparte's vengeance, when Cornet Sykes, with a detachment of the Z—— militia, entered the gate with a petition to Lady Marian for a field-day on the morrow, to extricate them from their annoying embarrassment; but craftily instructed by Sykes not to confess Mrs Bouverie's having been the suggester of the plan, as that would ensure a negative to their petition.

“Do you know who this witch is who has struck the people motionless on the fort, Sykes?” eagerly demanded Thornley, “you generally know all things.”

“I have seen the enchantress,” he replied.

“And what do you think of her,” demanded Lady Chatterfield.

“I must not tell, madam,” he responded, “lest I should be called to single combat with my colonel here, in the fully awakened belief of my being nothing less than distractedly in love with his wife.”

“How do you know this magnet is my wife, Sykes?” said Bouverie, with a bounding heart, and cheeks vying with the scarlet tint of the brightest infantry coat near him; “you are only just come into the fort.”

“ But I was here before, sir, and saw the magnet resistlessly attracting all eyes and hearts; and so far I will dare venture to say before you, that I wondered not at it, since I never saw Mrs. Bouverie look so transcendently beautiful as she does to-day.”

“ Marian, my own adored Marian,” whispered Bouverie rather falteringly, “ you must pardon my tearing myself from you for a few moments, just for—for the ceremony of speaking to Adelaide.—For your sake must I not be tremblingly alive to the propriety of appearances ?”

And now, although Bouverie beheld fire of jealous frenzy flashing from his paramour’s eyes, he dared to fly from her to seek his wife, when the alarmed and angry Lady Marian took the arm of Colonel Lonsdale, and haughtily moved off to the deserted extremity of the battery, there determined to form a rival court through the influence of her own superlative beauty and Lady Dinwood’s eccentricities.

Montagu commenced his difficult task of navigating a passage to the spot where Adelaide was to be found, full of inexplicable sensations of impatience to behold her, and mentally exclaiming,

“ What will the world, even the little world assembled here, attribute my want of taste—nay, of absolute power of vision to, for thus forsaking my wife for a woman, who, although lovely, accomplished, and seductive in manners, is in all things inferior, infinitely inferior to my wife?—And have I then, maniac that I am! have I given for even one moment a decided preference in my heart from my peerless Adelaide to another?—Have I rendered myself unworthy of my angel wife?—Have I shackled my honour to bind me for ever from her? And for whom have I made such sacrifices? For a defaulter in chastity! a woman of unquestionably a radically impure mind.”

As the torturing ideas of his own transgressions darted into the imagination of Bouverie, he involuntarily slackened his speed to approach his wife, when the allies of Lady Marian in his bosom aroused themselves to exercise their influence in her favour, representing her adoration of him as the source of annihilation to her virtue: but still, veneration for all that Lady Marian had abandoned, with a glowing reminiscence of the fascinations of purity in his matchless wife, arose to crush the sophism

of flattered vanity's inspiration; and more strongly to give foundation to a fast growing conviction, that however infatuated still by Lady Marian, he could never more respect her, never, never more insult his immaculate wife, by attempting a comparison between her and a woman who had voluntarily yielded her title to esteem.

But although Bouverie's speed was relaxed, he at length made his way sufficiently to obtain a view of his wife, seated on the rampart, between Sir Charles and Lady Longuiville, looking, as Sykes had told him, transcendently beautiful; for the lightly-blowing sea-breezes had summoned her now too often grief-chased roses to their blooming station on her cheeks; yet she was beauty in pensiveness, since the truant Montagu occupied her thoughts, and gave the interest of dejection to her aspect, even while admiration stood transfixed to gaze upon her, and adorers hovered near her, panting to lure away that affection her husband had disregarded.

At length, something said by Lady Longuiville occasioned Adelaide to raise her eyes from the ground; and instantly, as if

attracted by sympathy, she beheld Montagu in the crowd, when the prompt irradiation of lively joy which animated her lovely countenance taught Bouverie a momentary oblivion of his own transgressions, of the infatuating Marian,—of all things,—but that Adelaide was his wife, and that he had not seen her for an age!—an oblivion which led him, like the forked lightning, to her side, and fast locked her hand in his.

But short-lived was the happiness this temporary forgetfulness awakened in the breast of Montagu; for a sudden recollection of Marian's witchery and his own transgressions came in shuddering horror over him, to blanch his countenance with the pale hue of misery, and send his eyes, in humility and despondence, to the ground, to escape the tantalizing anguish inspired by the mildly-tender glances of his affectionate wife.

"Had your arrival been delayed a moment longer," said Adelaide, "I should have lost seeing you to-day, Montagu, since we are going home immediately."

This speech of Adelaide's, so expressive of their disunion,—of him, as some stranger,

some mere acquaintance,—and herself, as belonging to other friends, struck with the terrible shock of horrid anticipation of eternal separation to the heart of Bouverie ; who mechanically inquired,—

“ Why she went so soon ? ”

“ Because,” she replied, “ Sir Charles and Lady Longuiville are going to accompany me to evening service, in my own little sequestered church, and then to dine with me, in friendly trio.”

“ So, so,” thought Bouverie, “ she ceases even to expect me ; and with what composure she submits.”—“ Why only a trio, Adelaide ? ” he said.

“ Ah ! Montagu,” she responded, with a painful sigh, “ I must cherish no hope,—for repeated disappointments tell me it is vain,—of that addition to our party which most I wish for.—But pray, dear Montagu, tell me ere we now part, is Thursday a day agreeable to Lady Marian, for the little dance she claims from me ? ”

“ Perfectly. She has commissioned Thornley to go to Castle-Cottage, and tell you so, this evening.”

“ Alas ! ” thought Adelaide, with another

painful sigh, “ you are not returning this evening, or you could have performed this mission for her.”

At this moment Captain Warren arrived, to summon Bouverie to a consultation, at the other extremity of the fort, relative to a field-day Lady Marian was kindly projecting, to rescue the Z—— militia from an embarrassing engagement.

Bouverie felt an inexplicable degree of painful reluctance he could not conquer, at the idea of quitting Adelaide; but although certain of direfully offending Lady Marian, by daring to linger one moment after receiving her summons, he persevered by the side of his wife, until he conducted her to the equipage of Sir Charles Longuiville, now drawn up at the entrance to the fort.

As the carriage moved away, and the heart-wrung Adelaide kissed her hand in adieu to her adored husband, he internally murmured—“ She asked me not when I should be at home!—expressed no wish to see me there!—Oh! Adelaide!—my own wedded Adelaide! have I then, as I merit, lost your once tender affection?—Have those repeated disappointments you glanced

at, taught you indeed no longer to expect me; and this mortifying philosophy, so resignedly to sustain my absence?"

And now, in melancholy pensiveness, Bouverie gazed wistfully after the barouche, as long as he could discern a fold of Adelaide's drapery; and then, with a groan-clad sigh, he took the arm of the amazedly observing Warren, and silently and slowly paced his way to the impatient and dreadfully alarmed Marian.

As Lady Marian had encountered the mortification of not attracting one stationary gazer, even after Adelaide's departure had unchained the pedestrian faculties of the admiring multitude, she soon complained, the power of the unimpeded sunbeams was subduing her; and ordering the carriages up, set out for home in the curricule with Bouverie; but in such indignant ire with him, for his alarming truancy, she deigned not to utter one word to him, until they reached Bulverhithe; when from Bouverie's correspondent silence, and from his never having glanced even one look at her, to discover if she was relenting from

her just displeasure; her ladyship began to entertain dismaying apprehensions of having injudiciously awakened disgust, by allowing a little of her natural temper to evince itself before her idol; and after a few moments' deliberation, she determined to adopt the subduing gentleness of her hated rival; and with a voice of well-managed tremulous emotion, she implored, in the most fascinating terms of melting contrition, her Bouverie to forgive the irritation of a wounded spirit, almost agonized to madness, in the torturing jealousy his long lingering with his wife on the fort had awakened.

Upon Lady Marian's soon perceiving she had melted this adored paramour a little from his appalling threatened apathy, by this new line of conduct, she pursued it through the day; and even with tears, the apparent inspiration of sudden penitence, again and again implored him to forgive her; and the alarm once given of the torturing fact of decreasing passion, her agony of terror at losing him was no longer feigned; and every art and blan-

dishment of her long practised allurements, she called up to assail him ; and could she have restored the reverence of esteem for her to his bosom, she would have proved more successful in her aim.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WITH the bright orb of day, Adelaide arose the following morning, to draw plans for the arrangement of her supper-room, for her ball, and to give the necessary directions to the people engaged to carry her plans into execution; and after having despatched that business, she prepared herself to accompany Lady Longuiville to view the military operations of that morning.

'The ground chosen for this day's manœuvring was at a sufficient distance from Hastings, to sanction the early hour, necessary for marching from Fairlight, to stand as an excuse for the tallowchandler's wife, and cheesemonger's daughters being disappointed of their esquires, and their melody the preceding evening: and to prove that no offence was taken, the whole set arrived in two small gigs; the fair ones in the most attractive style of fashion; and the men, in their Sunday array, making many a debtor's heart to bound through the day, for having spent,

at a watering-place, what ought to have been paid to some creditor in town; while, to evince they had not been acquainted with military to no purpose, the *belles* directed spouse, and pa,

“To drive the *shays* to the right hand of the general.”

The day was auspiciously fine, the country picturesquely beautiful, and the manœuvring uncommonly interesting; but as it chiefly lay in storming and defending, and became so diversified, that after the line had passed the general, Adelaide saw but little of him her eyes strained to view; whom with justice she thought became his full uniform better, and appeared more gracefully at ease, on horseback, in the career of all the day's exploits, than any one of his numerous, handsome, and elegant cotemporaries.

Yet in all the bustle of rapid skirmishing, Montagu contrived sometimes to lead his division near to his lovely wife, to give her a graceful salutation, *en passant*; which not escaping the warily observing Lady Marian, filled her with new jealous terrors: but direful would have been the

augmenting pangs she would have writhed from, had she known that Bouverie, wilfully eluding her carriage, on its return, had rode a great part of his way homeward as one of the numerous escort that attended the equipage of Lady Longuiville, and that his hand rested on the barouche at the side next Adelaide.

Our heroine scarcely expected Montagu home that night, and the event proved her correct in her conjectures; but in the morning, hope once more fluttered in her bosom, and, "Surely, surely, he will come to breakfast with me," her heart whispered a hundred times, as she dressed; but when arrived in the breakfast-room, a note was delivered to her from her truant husband, filled with apologies for not visiting his home for that whole day, as the 'Fair Penitent' was to be performed that evening, and the rehearsal of a new farce, substituted for the 'Citizen,' through the caprice of Lady Dinwood, would occupy part of the morning, while his not knowing a line of the character in it assigned to him would confine him the remaining hours to Marino to study the part.

“Ah!” sighed Adelaide, as she ended this billet, expressive of regret,—“I could bear your absence, Montagu, heroically, for this day, did I not know, to-morrow and to-morrow, some new device will be practised to divide us.”

At length the post arrived, and Dennis entered, almost flying, and with a countenance the harbinger of joy, exclaiming in rapture, as he appeared with a packet,—

“From your own jewel of a guardian, *darling!* and sure ’tis kilt with joy I am, to be the bearer of one kind letter to you, any how!”

Adelaide had long felt unhappy at not having received one line from Falkland since her marriage, as several weeks more than necessity required had elapsed since she might have heard from him, and she began to cherish a painful apprehension of his being offended at her becoming a wife, without waiting for his sanction to her union: the sight, therefore, of this packet was welcomed by a burst of sensibility’s joyful tears, and in tremulous agitation she pressed it to her lips, to her heart, alternately, for several minutes, ere her suscep-

tibility permitted her opening this heart-prized treasure.

But when she opened it, and read its beautiful and affecting lines addressed to her and Montagu, feeling subdued her, and with bursting heart and streaming eyes she in anguish lamented her dear guardian's high-raised hopes, of her marriage proving an auspicious one, being, like her own, so cruelly blighted.

The ship which had taken the account of Adelaide's marriage to Falkland had been detained by adverse winds and some incidental disasters some weeks longer than a prosperous voyage would have waisted her out in : but when it did at length convey the welcome intelligence of his long fondly cherished wish being realized, by the union of the child of his tender care, the idol of his paternal affection, with the man, whom from the universe he would have selected for her, his heart was so filled with genuine rapture, that he delayed not one moment unnecessarily to write his approbation, his congratulations, his joy, his blessing : and although he did so, in the enthusiasm of his ardent feelings; yet all was

so sweet, so touching in kindness; he portrayed with such affecting animation, that chastened yet exquisite happiness this union was to ensure to them both; giving them peace on earth, and bliss in heaven; that none but an insensate child of apathy could have perused it unmoved.

Adelaide, therefore, this beautiful, this sublimated, portrait of happiness with Montagu, reared by her guardian's sweet fancy's visions, so reversed in reality, almost subdued to read, and in poignant anguish she wept,—and still wept the more as she thought of how this letter must pierce the heart of Montagu,—until the hasty footsteps of Obearn, impatient and alarmed at her nursling's not having summoned her to tell her news of Mr. Falkland, arrested her tears, to save herself the necessity of evasion to account for them.

But although Adelaide was not weeping when Obearn entered, she promptly saw she had been shedding tears abundantly, and in augmenting alarm she eagerly demanded, “ Was Mr. Falkland ill ? ”

“ No, thank Heaven ! my own Norah ; and this first of human beings is coming

home, to bless us all with his presence, the moment a successor, whom he has written home to request, is sent out to relieve him."

This interruption to Adelaide's tears led her to a determination of combating with a renewal of them, lest they should impede her preparations for her ball, which she resolved to devote that whole day to, since she was doomed to no interruption through it which she might not parry, as Montagu was to be a fixture at Marino, and Lady Longuiville's expectation of her husband's sisters and brother would detain her at home for the morning, while in the evening her ladyship was to attend the travellers to see the performance of the 'Fair Penitent,' which Adelaide conjectured, truly, had been substituted for 'Romeo and Juliet,' to exclude her from that evening's representation.

As our poor heroine augured, on the following day there was a new device in regimental business to detain Bouverie at Marino during the morning; and a grand rehearsal of Romeo and Juliet, in the evening; with the usual *petit souper*, to chain him there for the night; and when these

arrangements were made known to her, in a note from Bouverie, having no longer a hope of seeing him, to negative her quitting home, she ordered her carriage; and went in it to pay her compliments to the Misses Longuiville; whom she found pleasing, interesting, pretty, young, and elegant.

But even had they not been so, Adelaide would have gifted them with every perfection; since this day she seemed particularly disposed to be enchanted with all around her; for the note of Montagu had proved a most exhilarating cordial to her spirits. Long she had believed the attachment in his breast for her resembled the winter sun, which sometimes shone, but never warmed: the note of that morning emanated rays, like summer radiance; and on the light pinions of hope, our heroine now felt herself soaring to scenes of future happiness.

As a further elevation to the expanding wings of this soothing hope, ere Adelaide had quitted her dressing-room on the morrow, Montagu was with her, who had been panting to fly to his home, from the

moment the voice of caution had dismissed him from the presence of his too-long adored Marian, on the rising of the orb of day, in the vain hope of discovering his happiness there; since at Marino it was no longer to be found; for guilt had poisoned its own fruition; and the idol, whom his esteem had deified to pagan adoration, had now sunk herself to demonstrative conviction, into a very frail mortal, not worth the sacrifices he had made to gain her,—her, whom, while deified, his heart had portrayed his own total destruction, a cheap purchase of.

But still in the quest of happiness he deceived himself; for in his home he found it not; since conviction of his own unworthiness, humbled and embarrassed him before his injured wife; whose mild excellence, whose fascinating perfections, seemed now each passing moment to expand in influence upon his heart, like the increasing circles of a pebble's ruffle upon the bosom of a tranquil water; and no longer, with even the semblance of ease, could he address her; since his honour's fancied bonds to the siren, who had se-

duced him from that earthly paradise he had possessed, and flown from, set its seal upon that confession he panted to make, that he might sue for mercy and forgiveness.

Adelaide saw in the dejected aspect of her husband, in his unsettled, consciously averted eye, and embarrassed manner; that the languor of his air, and pallid hue of his countenance, were the effect of mental, not bodily, malady; and though alarm for his health was hushed, her heart bled with tender pity; yet she affected not to observe what his every look and action forcibly portrayed; while her manner to him only wore an increase of touching kindness, which thrilled its fascinations through his bosom, making misery still more agonizing there; for it failed in the auspicious effect of encouraging him to disclose that secret of the cause that severed two hearts, which nature stamped in tenderest sympathy, which Adelaide saw for ever hovering on his lips; but which, honour to Marian, stood iron sentinel over; urging it back to the stronghold of that citadel in

his bosom, where all was anarchy, misery, and blasted peace.

With the ineffable sweetness of a cordial, tender affection, that had never experienced provocation for diminution, Adelaide accepted Montagu's offered assistance in her arrangements for her ball; or voluntarily gave him some task to perform for her; and although his eyes wistfully gazed after her wherever she moved, and upon her, whenever she was stationary, when they could escape her respondent recognition, yet he felt himself too much a culprit for daring the attempt to press the beautiful hand that often came in contact with his, during their mutual employment in the decoration of the supper-room; where, on first being introduced, Bouverie started in dismay, well aware his infatuated attachment had left him no means to pay for such a beautiful display of taste and elegance; yet he would not wound one feeling of his enchanting *Ciceroni*, by a comment that might imply a censure upon such apparent expense; but confined himself exclusively to admiration of what he there beheld.

“Do not you think, Montagu,” she said, smiling, “that I found very prompt and skilful artificers to execute so expeditiously and so beautifully for me, this representation of a Nereide’s grotto?”

“Indeed I do,” he replied, in unfeigned amazement at what she suggested.

“And further: do you not think me a very thoughtless, extravagant girl, for embarking in all this unnecessary expense?”

Bouverie would have given worlds to kiss the beautiful mouth that, with archly dimpled smiles, invited his censure upon her economy; but the internal conviction of unworthiness, restrained the spontaneous impulse; and with a faint endeavour at an animated smile, he replied—

“You know, all alarms of that nature have been hushed in my breast, by my knowledge of your interest with supernatural agency.”

“Which, in the form of Mrs. Groves, the housekeeper at Roscoville, aided me this time; for although but a young soldier, I performed the part of an old one, on this occasion; for remembering Ambrosia told

me, her mother never allowed her ball-rooms to wear the same appearance even twice, I naturally concluded there must be some of her fancy hangings still on the premises at Roscoville; and in consequence wrote the morning after my ball was first proposed, to Mrs. Groves, sending her the dimensions of the barn I wished to disguise; and having won her favour most completely, by never allowing the wagon to return, without a present of fish, or some little proof of my recollection of the trouble she was taking for me, she exerted herself to a miracle; sending me not only these beautiful hangings, but this floor-cloth to correspond; with a variety of elegant ornaments for the tables, which have contracted my trouble and expense surprisingly."

Bouverie, who sensibly felt a fast increasing interest in all that interested Adelaide; and pleased with her economical prudence, which her large fortune and expectations bound her not to practise, made numerous inquiries relative to the putting up the hangings, when he learned all the ingenuity his lovely wife had

evinced in her device, for contracting the wild roof of the barn into regular arcades ; which added considerably to the beauty and natural appearance of her grotto ; where, too, the exquisite taste, combined with the wisdom of safety, she displayed in her curious contrivance for the necessary effect of a diversity of light, called forth Bouverie's most animated eulogium.

“ But,” said Adelaide, blushing at his praise, and turning in timid sensibility from what gave rapture to her heart, “ change your praise, now, dear Montagu, into congratulations ; since, to crown my present arrangements with comfort, at least to myself, there is not a rat or a mouse to be found about my grotto ; for they were all despatched last week, in preparation for the grain.”

Until about one o'clock Montagu and Adelaide remained uninterrupted in their united employments ; which, from being so aided, were to her rapturous pastime ; in which she could be sensible of no fatigue ; but to him were the tantalizing remembrances of how sweet might

have been that happiness he had so like a maniac destroyed.

But just at one o'clock, as Montagu was intimating a tender wish that his lovely wife would permit him to take her out in the curricie, to counteract the effect so much fatigue, in her beautiful arrangements, might have upon her; Major Gayville was announced; and Bouverie, in no very willing mood, proceeded to the drawing-room, to receive him.

“Major Gayville,” as the zealous friend of Bouverie, whose Platonic attachment to Lady Marian he acknowledged his wife had confided to him, “was now come,” he said, “to intimate to him, what in honour and conscience he thought he ought; that the not to be concealed mental anguish, his absenting himself that morning from Marino, without accounting for the cause to Lady Marian, had overwhelmed her with, would unquestionably subdue her into a similarly dangerous attack, to that she had so recently experienced; or, at least, awaken suspicion in the general’s mind; of her attachment to another.

“An attachment,” which the major, with much sophistry, proceeded to say, “that although he could not morally defend, yet he must pity; as he had seen how Bouverie, the most fascinating of his sex, had encouraged that weakness in her susceptible bosom, by the most flattering attention that man could bestow on woman; even by the most marked and unequivocal preference; the most intoxicating dereliction of a wife, the most beautiful of her sex; and arrayed too in all the charms of extreme youth and bridal attraction. It was therefore no astonishment, that love, overlooking every precept of morality and prudence, had arisen to an enthusiasm in the breast of Lady Marian, which could now admit no control; or that the most fatal consequences must be apprehended to her mind, or frame, if sudden caprice of inconstant man’s veering fancy was now to lead him so rapidly to forsake her; or awaken in her mind a prospect of such an impending calamity.

“And although,” he continued, “he thought they ought to combat with their

imprudent passion; yet it ought to work its weaning efforts by degrees; and not by harsh instantaneous measures, such as no gentle nature, no idolizing susceptibility, like Lady Marian's, could sustain; and therefore he was come to advise his dear friend to go without delay, to console her for his truancy of the morning or he would find her incapable, from anguish of heart, to attend Mrs. Bouverie's ball in the evening; which might lead to some suspicions, fatal to her fame; if not some fell catastrophe to her life ere morning."

Never did Machiavelian statesman more subtilely draw his arguments to deceive, than this wily ambassador of a worthless woman. The honour, the gratitude, the humanity, of the feeling-hearted Montagu, were all successfully assailed; and to save Marian from detection, and from despair, he now felt all those powerful voices calling loudly to him, to tear himself from Adelaide; "who loved him not like Marian; who had made no sacrifice of her hopes, even of eternity, to him, like Marian; who held no claims, like her, upon

his honour, to save her fame, nay, her existence."

And though now with Adelaide, his every feeling of tenderness, fast awakening from their intoxication of infatuation, seemed anxious for ever to enchain him; yet this idea of the claims which Marian's love and sacrifices had upon him, led him to inflict the misery on himself, of quitting Adelaide, and the disgrace—for now, as infatuation's power was passing off, he felt it as torturing disgrace—of inventing falsehoods, to excuse his unexpected absence from her; and with a promise to Major Gayville of returning to Marino the moment after he had fulfilled an engagement to take his wife out an airing, he ordered the curricule to the door, and then returned to Adelaide.

Our poor heroine, the moment she heard of the arrival of this satellite, augured mischief from his visit; so that she was something prepared for the grief of hearing the general had sent for her husband, upon regimental business of importance; yet she turned pale with sorrow, and tears started to her eyes, when Montagu, blush-

ing and hesitating, in conscious duplicity, told her so; and that he must leave her, for some hours, after they had taken their projected airing: but as Bouverie's eyes were fixed on the ground as he uttered this pretence, he saw not her emotion; and not daring to trust her voice at that moment, lest the effort should betray her into a burst of tears, Adelaide spoke not, until she had acquired firmness for a steadier delivery; when she mournfully said—

“Then you will not be allowed to dine with me. I suppose?”

“I fear not.”

Adelaide heaved a convulsive sigh, and hastily quitted the room, to equip herself for her excursion.

Full of mental inquietude, this miserable pair set out on their airing: but although poor Adelaide was keenly wounded at Montagu's so readily falling into Lady Marian's plots to draw him from his home, yet his manner to her, through the morning, had been so like growing tenderness, that so much hope had been awakened in her bosom, she could not permit this one re-

lapse into the long established custom of considering Lady Marian's will a law, to extinguish all its cheering rays ; therefore, from their bright influence beaming through her heart, she was enabled to rally her powers to the exertion of those talents she possessed to charm in conversation ; and she so beguiled the flight of time for the fascinated Montagu, that instead of one hour's airing, he extended it to two ; and when he returned to their cottage, the amazement he expressed at the rapidity with which those hours had glided by, operated like a cheering cordial, on the heart of Adelaide ; yet still, as he was about to leave her, she could not resist the temptation of saying, with mingled seriousness and gaiety :

“ Tell that general from me, he is too unconscionable ; and in studying his own convenience, seems to forget continually your having a wife, who selected you from all mankind, because she loved you ; yet ere one honey-moon had seen its successor's wane, he took you from me ; and still detains you from your murmuring helpmate, for days, for weeks ; imperiling us, through

this constant separation, with present indifference; and preparing for us a life of future apathy. Tell him from me, that had he a daughter in my place, he would not thank the man who, for his own views, thus lured away her husband from her."

This was the first sound, like murmur, that had escaped the lips of Adelaide to Bouverie; and the delicacy it was couched in, avoiding even the shadow of a glance at Lady Marian, as the cause of her too justly founded complaint penetrated to his heart, with more resistless effect, than all the expostulations, in the power of argument, or reproach, in which the name of Marian had been hinted at, could have done; and in this moment of subjugated feeling, he seemed to forget all Marian's claims; for clasping his wife to his bosom, he enthusiastically exclaimed—

"No future life of apathy awaits us! No, my own Adelaide! I will break from my inthralment, and—I—I—I hope, in time—we may be happy," he falteringly added, after a sudden recollection of the direful entanglement that had at present rendered him unworthy of the pure,

as lovely being, he was united to, thrilled with horror through his bosom, and unclosed his arms from encircling Adelaïde; when faintly he bade her adieu; and in pitiable distress quitted the being, with whom, he now felt conviction, his perfect happiness could ever be established.

CHAPTER XIX.

ADELAIDE, puzzled, perplexed, fearing, yet hoping, and in all the tortures of incertitude, relative to the precise cause of Montagu's inconsistency of conduct, sunk down in a seat; and in defiance of those ebullitions of tenderness, emanating through that morning from her husband's bosom, inspiring her with hopes of coming affection, she burst into an agony of tears, and wept, until a fear of Obearn discovering her so employed, led her to make the effort to restrain that flow of grief, awakened by the evident conviction of something mysterious existing to withhold her husband's confidence, his hovering affection from her; some direful evil to make him wretched!

And now poor Adelaide, to vanquish her tears, had sedulously to seek active employment; and wandering from room to room, to see that all was arranged with elegance for the woman who made her wedded life commence in misery, she

strove to forget the heart-piercing look Montagu had cast upon her, in the moment he departed; and often and often she congratulated herself, that, in pity to the too apparent unhappiness of her husband's mind, she had withheld from him the perusal of Falkland's letter, through fearing its present effect upon a mind but too much oppressed by the weight of some direful sorrow.

Had not Adelaide feared to wound the affectionate feelings of Dennis, and, through his communication, those of Obearn, she would have sent the elegant little dinner she had ordered, when she had fondly believed Montagu was to partake of it with her away untouched; since it came before her, like the tantalizing ghost of promised happiness; and in kindness to these beloved, humble friends, she strove to eat, whilst her heart was too full for appetite to tempt her to it.

“But Montagu will return with Lady Marian;—I shall see him again this evening,” whispered hope at length through her heart; “and I will no longer despond. I will awaken my cheerfulness; I will

strive to be animated; and, by every strenuous exertion, toil to save our mutual happiness, by rescuing my poor Montagu from that dangerous woman."

But poor Adelaide knew not how ingenious in misconception men could be; and that the very firmness she had endeavoured to exert in the morning to spare her husband's feelings, was turned in hostility against herself; for Montagu construed it as proof of languid affection for him; as illustrative of the indifference she talked of, as having already arisen, on her part, through their constant separation.

But nothing of all this apprehension of Adelaide's languor in affection entered his mind, to chill the kindling flame awakening in his bosom for her, until he arrived at Marino, where the alarmed Marian awaited his return, decked in all the soft-seductive languor of one subdued by sorrow, and armed with all the pity-moving complaints of a heart just waiting for the mandate of his dereliction to break; and so alluring were her beauties and her arts, so softening the sympathy of compassion she awakened, that Bouverie, ere the din-

ner-bell summoned them to join the family, began to pronounce himself the most ungrateful miscreant under Heaven, to suffer his heart to know an abatement of its passion for her; and the most besotted fool who ever trod the path of vexatious disappointment, to cherish those symptoms of tenderness, awakening in his bosom for his wife, who would love him according to the rules of duty and philosophic calmness; never with that fervour of idolatry, which alone he believed could satisfy his heart.

Lady Marian was much too subtile not to discover the lost ground she had thus judiciously regained; and although internally exulting, and confident of ultimate success, she yet concealed her hope and joy under that alluring tone of softness which had effected so much for her: yet her alarm became again no longer assumed, when she found Bouverie must return home to dress for the ball, since Lee, and all the toilet appendages, were at Castle Cottage, from whence they could not be recalled; therefore there was no appeal.

When Montagu returned to his home Adelaide was at her toilet; and though shackled by gratitude and elated vanity to the adoring Marian, he yet, by an impulse he even strove to restrain, while it forced him onward, became a candidate for admission to his wife's dressing-room; and his petition was complied with.

Adelaide was dressed, all to her ornaments; and was standing with her jewel-box before her, wondering which Montagu would think most becoming to her, and advantageous in adornment to the white crape-dress she wore, her beautiful pearls, or not less beautiful suit of emeralds, when he entered; and the joy of his returning sooner than she expected, and the hope his instantly seeking her awakened, mantled her before but slightly rose-tinted cheeks with the most brilliant blushes.

Bouverie, in prompt scrutiny, beheld this glow of animated bloom; and although his heart felt its loveliness, it yet felt the infliction of a pang from it, in conviction that she had not grieved for his absence, as the interestingly wan Marian had done.

"Your roses bloom so brilliantly to-night, Adelaide," he hurryingly said, "that you will have no occasion, I perceive, to borrow *rouge* from any of your fair guests."

"Perhaps not," she replied, with an expressive smile; "although roses which spring from the heart, bear fluctuating tints."

"What can she mean?" thought Bouverie: "surely it was not my approach which gave that sweet blush to her cheeks? Alas! and should it even have been so, I must remember still, my absence blanches the cheeks of Marian; miserably involved being that I am!"

"Montagu," said Adelaide, recalling a ray of her natural vivacity, "as you chose me, I am but too ready to pronounce your taste transcendent, therefore pray select my ornaments for me, that I may defy criticism, as I rove about, in the public eye, as 'Mistress of the Revels.'"

"As the Nereide of your grotto, I would give you pearls from your own element," said Montagu, stealing enraptured glances at her from beneath his half-closed eyes, for he dared not raise them

to encounter the mild orbs of her he had so cruelly deceived—"but that I have never seen you in your emeralds, and I think they will become the lilies of your neck, break the monotony of colouring, and serve as a brilliant foliage for the brightly blushing roses on your cheeks."

Adelaide, with a tender smile of affection, and a brightened blush of timid vanity flatteringly encouraged, took forth her diadem of emeralds, and placed it amid the luxuriant tresses of her hair. Obearn placed the necklace in its destined station; and Montagu, snatching the bracelets and armlets, adroitly clasped them on, as initiated at the toilet of Lady Marian, yet not now daring to claim the reward her ladyship was prone to grant,—a kiss of the beautiful hands he had decorated; for though beauty, he felt, was here surpassing he presumed not to play the lover whilst his own sense of unworthiness rankled in his heart, and while the claims of Lady Marian were busy with their suggestions, to crush this rising tenderness for his wife.

At length, almost pronouncing himself a monster of ingratitude to Marian for al-

lowing the charms and virtues of a woman who felt no excess of adoration for him, thus to lure his tenderness from her, he unwillingly retired to dress; when, the moment he left Adelaide, she, in her turn, became the theme of accusation against him, and her claims so hung upon his heart, and her injuries so writhed his conscience, that scarcely a more miserable man could be found in existence than he was, when he descended from his toilet to join his fascinating wife.

Lady Marian, in full conviction of Adelaide's female acquaintance in the neighbourhood being more circumscribed than even her own, never once thought of inquiring from Bouverie, "What ladies were to grace Castle Cottage ball?" but secure of there being her own party, and the Longuivilles only, she had determined, for the purpose of annoying her hated rival, not to dance; and had instructed Mrs. Gayville to be equally unaccommodating, to make the dearth of dancers appear still more absurd, in the immense Gothic ball-room.

Her ladyship also intended, that her own

party should go very late, for the purpose of throwing the spell of dulness on the scene, by the small assemblage of ladies, in Lady Longuiville, her two sisters, and Mrs. Bouverie, amid a host of disappointed men, all *ennui* at the long-continued fatigue of hours spent in expectation of more females to grace the circle : but Bouverie's return to his home before her, reversed the order of things ; she could not hazard him so long in the society of Adelaide, without her presence, to counteract her dreaded influence ; she therefore was amongst the early arrivals, and soon had the mortification of seeing so many of the first families in the neighbourhood enter, that whether she danced or not, could neither mar, nor make the ball.

From Bouverie's constant dedication of his time to Lady Marian, his secluded wife had been compelled to negative every invitation she received from those families around, who had visited her in consequence of her introduction to them at Melcombe Park : and therefore she had almost feared to ask them to her ball, believing they would follow her example ;

but, to her great surprise, she received not an excuse from any individual, so that she had the pleasure of collecting more youth, beauty, and fashion, at her ball, than country balls often boast, to the infinite chagrin of Lady Marian; and as there were so many women of rank superior to her own present, she dreaded the necessity of *etiquette* would call Bouverie from the continued influence of her machinations; yet even in this alarm she found a consolation, since, if he was thus drawn from her, he would be equally so from the contagion of Adelaide's poisons.

Lady Marian augured truly; for she had only a just portion of Bouverie's attentions; or rather, we ought to have said, less than any other of his guests, since, anxious to fly from the misery which oppressed him, he was assiduous to shun the two beings who occasioned it; and while Marian and Adelaide appeared the least attended to by him in the assemblage, they occupied, alternately, his every thought.

Gratitude and shackled honour still leading him to the pensive love-lorn Marian,

while the most animated admiration, and heart-inspired approbation, impetuously bore his tender feelings to rest upon his wife; whose sweetly impartial, unremitting, attentive conduct to her guests, fascinated all, as much as her elegance and beauty charmed.

Yet still, even in this overflow of tenderness arising for Adelaide, a dangerous interest preponderated in favour of Marian, for her fancied superiority in attachment; since she, not knowing there was to be so brilliant an assemblage, had arranged her complexion to appear alluringly pale and languid, to win upon the pity of him she madly adored; while the real alarm she felt in her apprehension of his decreasing idolatry, gifted her with a look of disquietude, an unsettled air, that no art could have portrayed so effectually to soften the feelings of Bouverie; whilst his wife, in constant exertion to attend with unfaltering *politesse* to her numerous company, had no time allowed her to recur to her bosom's griefs; while the perpetual action of her varied attentions, her occasional dancing, with the of-

ten awakened blush of her native timidity, gave brilliancy to her bloom, whilst the continual running fire of *en passant* lively dialogue she was engaged in, as she moved from one group to another, gave to her countenance and air a tone of unavoidable animation, that led Montagu to believe, love in her bosom was a calm companion, which could know nothing of the acute misery that wrung his heart and Marian's.

As the wary Marian had manœuvred to secure Bouverie as her partner for the supper-set, she had the transport of being conducted by him to the Nereide's grotto ; where a greater sensation had never been awakened in the bosoms of any individuals, of admiration and amazement, than was here excited ; all wondering how Mrs. Bouverie had discovered such large and beautiful rooms for her use.

Major Gayville, at length, impertinently curious, cut a hole in the hangings, to discover what they concealed ; when, proud of the secret he had penetrated, publicly announced, " That the Nereide had *grottofied* a common barn !"

Lady Marian, in despite of her impellent policy to appear amiable in the eyes of Bouverie, had been panting the whole evening for an opportunity of being malicious to Adelaide ; and now irresistibly propelled to indulge in her wish, uttered a cry of terror, and sprung from her seat, exclaiming,—

“ A barn ! Oh, heavens ! It is thronged with rats ! and they will rush out upon us, to devour these viands ! ”

And ere Bouverie could announce her fears were groundless, she had flown from the fear-inspiring barn to the drawing-room, followed by Lady Dinwood, who did not like the correct aspect of the party she had unwittingly taken her place among, and by one or two ladies more, who thought it interesting to be easily alarmed.

Adelaide sent Sir Charles Longuiville and Captain Hope to assure them their migration was unnecessary ; but nothing could convince those who determined to close their eyes upon conviction ; and as Bouverie had joined them upon the same mission, the fair fugitives entreated his interest to obtain for them some provisions,

there to feed in comfort ; since to the barn, nothing short of force could reconduct them.

Sir Charles and Captain Hope returned to the grotto, to announce how unsuccessful their embassy had been ; and Bouverie went to issue orders for a supper to be laid in the drawing-room, to join which he was soon lured by the siren Marian ; and as Lady Dinwood was very witty and very amazing, unceremoniously announcing the influence of the full moon upon her whimsicalities, she soon attracted a constellation of those *beaux* who had no superior allurements in the supper-room.

Among those drawn to the migration from the grotto, by the eccentricities of Lady Dinwood, was a Captain Crosby, of the Z—— militia ; a man of immense wealth, just emerged from his minority, and wild with impatience to spend the cash he knew not the uses of ; and being full primed with animated spirits, he was perpetually engaged in frolic ; and anxious above all things for notoriety, the most extraordinary adventures were those he was now in eager quest of, for the delightful purpose of being talked of.

Lady Dinwood, from her congeniality of propensity, instantly became a magnet of resistless attraction to him ; and aiding and encouraging each other, they at length became the Punchinello and his wife, who convulsed the whole room with risibility, save Lady Marian, who was too love-lorn, and Montagu, who was too miserable, to be influenced by them ; and from one absurdity to another, they at last commenced a dispute upon which could play the rattle longest, without cessation, or suffering *ennui* to assail their companions.

This amicable dispute could only be decided by wager, which they promptly arranged in the wild imagination of their eccentricity. The bet, one hundred guineas, to be determined by umpire, three on each side ; who were, in recompense for the toil of watching them from that moment, until the sun next went down, to be entitled to receive from the loser a masquerade, to cost, if the lady failed in her exertions, two hundred guineas ; but if even a fraction, more or less, could be proved on her bills, she was to submit to

the sentence of total silence for one calendar month ; yet, as a favour, it might be fixed for February, if she properly petitioned for it : while, if the gentleman proved the unfortunate defunct in spirit, the masquerade given by him was to cost the precise sum of five hundred guineas and eleven farthings ; if more, or less, he then was to portion off fifteen couples for the altar of Hymen, all mutually lame, blind, or deformed, in the course of fifteen weeks, or pay five thousand guineas to Lady Dinwood.

The umpire fixed on by her ladyship, on her part, were Colonel Bouverie, Captains Warren and Thornley ; those selected by her mirthful competitor, Lady Marian Harley, Mrs. Gayville, and Mrs. Warren.

The opponents in this contest for pre-eminence in whimsicality, agreed to act so far in concert, that they were neither to seek rest, or even drop their eye-lids, until the sun next sunk beneath the horizon ; that they were both, on quitting Castle Cottage, to adjourn to Marino, where they were to act their vivacities for two hours ; then to walk arm in arm to Hart-

ings, muttering their wayward fancies the whole way; then to adjourn to a public breakfast, at her ladyship's house; from whence, about two o'clock, they were both to sally on donkeys in a race to Fairlight, where they were to give their mutual recitations and imitations in the mess-room, and then adjourn to the Swan Inn, to a dinner, given for the occasion by Captain Crosby, where they were to vie in entertaining the guests until the sun went down.

As a lady had done him the honour of electing him a judge in her cause, Bouverie could not in possibility decline it; but he much wondered Lady Marian could agree to so fatiguing and unfeminine an undertaking, through a protracted scene of folly, dissipation, and annoying frivolity; but she promptly pleaded an excuse, that silenced all his censures.

“For,” she said, “it was to be present where necessity must enchain him for so many hours, that induced her to brave such annoyance and fatigue; since in his society only could she now exist.”

This new proof of the adoration of his

Marian, led Bouverie once more to a painful contemplation of the contrast in the affection of his wife and paramour ; and he was employed, now deifying Lady Marian, as the goddess of love, and ingeniously tormenting himself with searching out proofs of his wife's affection for him being merely that imbibed from friendship, when Adelaide, attended by Captain Hope, entered the drawing-room, to pay her civilities to the emigrants assembled there.

Wounded to the soul at Montagu's forsaking his more respectable guests for the invidious Lady Marian, and pierced through the heart at his leaving her, timid and inexperienced as she was, solely to do the honours of a ball she had given wholly to oblige him, for the entertainment of her rival, that he might dedicate himself exclusively to the society of that dangerous rival, Adelaide entered the room ; and in her natural resentment to Montagu, her manner to him betrayed an evident shade of formality, when he, in jealous retaliation, met her formality with frigid reserve, that almost wore the aspect of aversion.

Poor Adelaide, nearly subdued from her efforts for firmness by her husband's heart-riving manner to her, now apparently listened to all the communications presented to her ear, relative to the pending wager; but her thoughts were rivetted on Montagu, and his inconsistency of conduct towards her; one moment awakening her hopes to the fullest glow of happy expectation, only the next to plunge her more deeply into the gulf of anguished disappointment; nor did one word addressed to her, make its way to her comprehension, until she heard Montagu was to attend these notoriety-candidates through their undertaking.

Instantly the resentment of Adelaide was vanquished by tender anxiety; and now, only remembering her husband was unhappy, and certainly not well, deplored his being subject to such fatigue, in a tone that was subduing every doubt of her tenderness for him, in the mind of the enraptured Bouverie; when the warily observing Marian, laying her hand in gentle pressure upon Bouverie's, reminded him, that he was infringing his duty, as

an umpire, by attending to any one but Lady Dinwood and her opponent.

Adelaide, now provoked out of her natural gentle forbearance, resolved to subvert the plots of Lady Marian as long as she remained at Castle Cottage, by declaring, "The vigil of the umpire could not, in honour to her, commence, until her ball was ended; since she had first engaged their individual aid, in adding to, whilst they received pleasure from, the present scene; nor could she either permit the powers of Lady Dinwood, or Captain Crosby, to be libelled, where she reigned Lady Paramount, by the insulting suspicion of their requiring observers to see they adhered to their accustomed practice of being unfalteringly witty and entertaining;" and having with considerable exertion uttered this decree with firmness, she turned to Captain Hope, told him she was ready to join the *corps de ballet*, and hurried away, to conceal her rising feelings from the observation of the malicious Marian.

Bouverie, in the full glow of those emotions awakened by Adelaide's evident in-

terest for him, would have followed her to the ball-room, had not the wily Marian instantly performed a swoon, which, from having omitted her *rouge*, she managed very naturally ; and at a more convenient season she could not have arranged it, since all had flown off after our heroine to the ball-room, except Lady Dinwood, Mrs. Gayville, and Captain Warren ; so that the pity-assailing movements of the scene had no restraining veil thrown over them ; and when she judged it time to come to herself, in soft languishment, she scrupled not, from fear of invidious remarks, to rest her head upon Bouverie's supporting shoulder, and whisper to him,—

“ That it was horror which had so suddenly subdued her, in the apprehension of a tarnished fame, through detection ; since the look his wife had cast upon her, as she retired, told her forcibly she cherished suspicion of her.”

When Lady Marian evinced to her friends she had fainted long enough for her purpose, the peeress flew off to the ball-room, lest, she said, people should conceive she was resting her spirits ; and as

Mrs. Gayville and Captain Warren had secrets of their own to talk of, while their presence was necessary as a sanction, they interrupted not the further progress of the artful Marian, in the effect her swoon of sensitive delicacy of feeling had made upon the pity, the interest, the honour of Bouverie, who remained thus spell-bound by this enchantress; forgetting his courtesy to his other guests, until they were all nearly departed.

Lady Dinwood and Captain Crosby whirling into the drawing-room together, in the grotesque measure of a caricature waltz, first disturbed this *partie carrée*, when Bouverie learned that all the guests were gone, except the wager adherents, and a very few more.

“For even the Duke of St. Kilda and Captain Hope had departed,” Lady Dinwood said, with a sneer, “in their anxious wishes for every impediment being promptly removed to the *delectable* Mrs. Bouverie soon seeking the refreshment of balmy sleep.”

Montagu, now in shame and contrition at having been lured thus into reprehension

sible omission to those who had honoured him with their company, and not a little indignant at the sneer with which her ladyship mentioned the departure of his grace and Captain Hope, he, scarcely knowing what he articulated, demanded,--

“Where, then, is Adelaide?”

“With one foot in the grave, as I have already told you,” replied Lady Dinwood, laughing; “but cherish *Hope*, as your fair lady evidently does.”

“I do, madam, with *Faith*, and even with *Charity* to ; since I place to the rattling contest you are engaged in all you have uttered ; not to the unkind wish of meaning to alarm me ;” returned Montagu, with more marked displeasure than had been expected ; proving to all around him, that he held a disposition within him to war against all who should presume to imagine a censure against the propriety of his wife in all things.

The wary Marian promptly penetrating, that Bouverie meditated an escape to this dangerous Adelaide, eagerly manœuvred to detain him, until a very elegant *déjeûné* was brought in ; at which, when they

were all seated, and no Adelaide appeared, Montagu broke through every impeding spell, that would have severed him from her, and in trembling impatience went to seek this interesting truant, whom he found in the ball-room, seated at breakfast with a small party, who had rallied round her, from different causes; Lady Chatterfield, who dreaded the quizzing of Lady Dinwood, in her now unrestrained career of frolic, and thought it sound policy to keep out of her way; Miss Scribbleton, who knew she could have no chance of being attended to, where her sister and Captain Crosby were the objects of universal gaze; Mrs. Warren, who chose to remain where the majority of men were to be found; Colonel Lonsdale, and Captain Thornley, for the gratification of being where they might gaze with hopeless admiration upon their beautiful hostess; Colonel Redoubt, detained by an accident happening to his carriage; and a few officers of the Z—— militia, waiting to attend Captain Crosby through his undertaking.

“Dear Adelaide,” exclaimed Bouverie,

“ why were we not to take this refreshing *déjeûné* all together ?”

“ I thought, Colonel Bouverie,” she mildly, but gravely replied, “ your party would prefer a select breakfast, as they did a select supper.”

“ Ay : there’s for you ! take that rap on the head, my youngster !” cried the matter of fact Colonel Redoubt. “ Ay ay ! let wives wear the looks of angels or diabolicals, they will comb our locks when we deserve it. Ah, my lad ! was Lady Ann Redoubt here, and I to take myself off from my own table to attend upon any of your gay flirting beauties, and leave her to the toil of entertaining above a hundred individuals, egad ! she would trim my jacket well for me every time she thought of it : and that, by the way, would be incessantly, until I committed some new trespass : and not only that, but she would take to her bed for a month, at least, through the fatigue I inflicted on her, with a couple of physicians to attend her ; and bring me in a bill for medicines and advice, egad ! enough to make me tremble at offending her again !”

"Oh, well!" said Adelaide, smiling, "I will not be so hard upon my colonel this time, in consideration of its being his first trespass: I will only take to my bed for a few hours; my physician, apothecary, and nurse, comprised in that efficacious friend, Somnus; and the only bill I shall produce to him, is a bill of health."

Montagu, who had been sensibly hurt by Adelaide's first speech, was now so subdued by the sweetness with which she parried Colonel Redoubt's implied censure of his truancy, that, the most contrite of penitents, he sat down by her, and falteringly asked her for some tea.

Adelaide instantly presented him a cup, with a hand, though tremulous, not more paralyzed than the one which received it.

"Indeed, Colonel Redoubt," said Bouverie, after he had recovered a little from the emotion his wife had awakened in his bosom, "I did not voluntarily desert the majority of my respected guests, or leave Mrs. Bouverie to such unaided toil: but I was completely trepanned into transgression during supper; and, since then, my duty in humanity made an exile of me,

in affording my assistance to Lady Dinwood and Mrs. Gayville, in recovering Lady—a—Lady Marian Harley from a most alarming swoon.”

“Lady Marian swoon!” exclaimed Lady Chatterfield, with a sneer of incredulity, since Lady Marian had completely lost her favour, by some pointed shafts of ridicule, during her visit at Marino. O—h!!! what, I suppose, then, she omitted her *rouge* this evening for that purpose!”

“Oh, Lady Chatterfield! is it not rather uncandid to surmise even so unfair a supposition?” said Bouverie, piqued for the ingenuity of this long-adored siren.

“Nay,” cried Lady Chatterfield, “I rest my justification upon your own reason, colonel. If Lady Marian absolutely swooned, she could not, in nature, feel equal to the possibility of continuing in her resolution of sitting up all night, and attending my niece Dinwood through all her wild freaks to-morrow. What say you, Mrs. Bouverie; do you think it possible?”

“I think it very impossible, madam, to judge of other people’s capabilities,” responded Adelaide, blushing deeply at such

an awkward appeal to her; "or what a good stock of animal spirits may carry any one through."

"Yes," cried Miss Scribbleton, who had, like her aunt, imbibed hatred to Lady Marian, and from a similar cause; "but our dear and charming friend is not in spirits now to carry her through any thing;—at least so she wishes it to be understood."

"Probably," said Lady Chatterfield, "she may have some plan to effect by pallid looks and low spirits,—*some one's* pity to move.—A trip to Buxton, perhaps, at heart, which she wants to work upon the general's commiseration to come into. We have heard of such stratagems ere now, Colonel Redoubt. However, ladies who are in the habit of wearing rouge may as well omit leaving it off for an auxiliary, since it only serves to make them look hideous, repelling that interest they wish to awaken; not like you and me, Mrs. Bouverie, and, indeed, my niece Eleanora, who are rouged and blanched by 'Nature's own sweet and cunning hand,' which makes feeling speak eloquently by the com-

plexion. Lady Marian now, to-night, remained undeviatingly ghastly through the evening; while the exits and entrances of Colonel Bouverie made the York or Lancastrian badge to appear alternately on the cheeks of his wife; and indeed, Colonel, I must say, no wonder if you are spoiled, to have a wife like yours, in the midst of the homage of evident adorers and universal admiration, with all her thoughts monopolized by you, her spirits actuated by your presence or your absence! Oh fy! my dear, you ought to tear a leaf out of your friend Lady Marian's book, and learn from it, not to be such a Goth as to regard your *own* husband!"

At this very moment Lady Marian herself appeared, leaning on the arm of Captain Warren, "come," she said, "to inquire how the fair mistress of their revels found herself after her exertion?" Instantly Bouverie arose, resigned his seat by Adelaide to her ladyship, and precipitately fled from the room into the grounds, there to contemplate upon the delineation Lady Chatterfield had presented to his view of his wife and paramour, and to think over,

in his enraptured fancy, the amiable conduct of the former both to himself and when invited to join in censuring the latter.

Lady Marian having left her party, they all quickly followed her to the ball-room, where the Momus votaries played their pranks and uttered *bon mots* until the arrival of the carriages that were to convey them to Marino, when Bouverie was called for, who, having been last seen escaping to the grounds, Captain Crosby undertook to call him in, which he set about by an admirable imitation of the huntsman and hounds in all their vocal notes through every evolution of a chase, to which Lady Dinwood acted as a most accurately and pleasingly managed echo.

By this exploit they succeeded in drawing Bouverie from his cogitations, who returned so deeply impressed with a thorough conviction of his misdemeanours towards his inestimable wife, that, in all the humility of true penitence, he dared not touch her hand, though he panted to clasp her to his bosom, when he said, adieu! and in the moment, now of anguish to him, in which he found himself compelled to

leave her, all he could articulate, without betraying his feelings to the wary Marian, was, to express a hope that Adelaide would join them at Hastings as soon as it was possible.

CHAPTER XX.

At length Adelaide was in her bed; and as Obearn was retiring, she called her back to kiss and bless her, as for many a happy year she had done at their nightly adieus; when, as Norah complied, the sympathetic drops she left upon the cheeks of her adored nursling overset at once the firmness of our poor heroine, who wept incessantly the misery of her now firmly established belief, that the affections of her husband could never be recalled by her from Lady Marian, until downright mental and bodily fatigue closed her senses in a deep repose.

Obearn visited the bed-side of her beloved child twice ere she awoke; and fearing, from the hectic bloom on her cheeks as she slept, and from her heavy eyes when she unclosed them, that she was feverish, she made those anxious inquiries which led Adelaide to acknowledge that her head ached excessively, and her sleep had not refreshed her; when her

apprehensive nurse prevailed upon her to give up all thoughts of going to Hastings, and to remain in bed a few hours longer; by doing which, she might ward off a fit of illness, possibly coming on through fatigue or cold, from the preceding night.

“Then I must sit up in my bed to write a note of apology to Lady Longuiville, for not accompanying her as I promised,” said Adelaide; “but I must not say I am not well, my nurse, for that would—might make poor Montagu uneasy, as he could not come to see what was the matter.”

Accordingly she sent her excuse to Lady Longuiville, pleading in it the remaining effect of her last night’s fatigue making her unequal to endure the exertion of encountering the tumult of Lady Dinwood’s and Captain Crosby’s making.

By the tender nursing and judicious treatment of Obearn, her child arose to her dinner, so much recovered, that every apprehension of coming illness happily subsided.

Late in the evening a note from Lady

Longuiville arrived, pleading the extreme fatigue herself and party had sustained, in attending the Hastings' tumult, with the late hour of their return, for not having called upon her, and concluded with saying, the competitors had done such honour to their cap and bells, and had fooled it to such perfection of equality, that it was adjudged a drawn bet; but, of course, the particulars she would learn from Colonel Bouverie.

But Colonel Bouverie appeared not to give those particulars; for, not knowing of Adelaide's indisposition, his heart imbibed the most indignant jealousy at her suffering any fatigue to detain her from the spot where by necessity he was chained to, and where he had expressed a hope to see her; and, in dangerous contrast, the love of the adoring Marian arose to view; and now aiding his fancied cause for suspicion of his wife's affection, he rather, in the lofty pride of one insulted, met the wishes, than waited to be entrapped by Marian to stay that night from his home.

Bouverie arose the following morning as miserable as man could be, who felt

himself bound by honour, pity, and gratitude's ties, to continue in a transgression he repented of, and to wear the semblance of an affection, now no longer the genuine one of his heart; for Marian had lost, completely lost, his respect; and every hour the fading of his attachment proved how baseless was the fabric of mere passion's adoration. The sight too of General Harley was now become poison to his peace; and every kind word and look he greeted him with, a barbed arrow through his conscience.

And thus, while his conscience writhed under its heavy load of misdeeds, his heart pined for a tender, indissoluble re-union with his wife, whose charms and virtues arose more brilliantly before his imagination, upon the destruction of that exalted base of all Lady Marian's fancied pre-eminence; and though thus Marian had sunk in his estimation, and Adelaide had risen, and that his now fully awakened monitor within him strongly propelled the measure, he knew not by what means to break from this unfortunate, as reprehensible, connexion, consistently with all the

claims he fancied Lady Marian had upon him.

His jealous ire against poor Adelaide was now borne down by the almost painful anxiety he felt to see her, and behold once more her fascinations of mind and form; and shrinking from the idea of being shackled by some new spell at Marino, he stole away immediately after breakfast, to take a solitary ramble, to give an uninterrupted scope to thought upon the embarrassments he had involved his happiness in, and to meditate upon the possibility of reconciling Marian to the termination of their culpable attachment.

But far on his road he had not gone, when out of an intersecting path started Lady Marian, who had from her dressing-room window observed his flight from Marino, and the course he had taken, which, though circuitous, she doubted not would ultimately lead him to his home; when, in all the frantic terrors of alarmed jealousy, she sallied forth alone to impede his way, which she successfully did, by entreating one moment's conference; when, with all the pity-moving

blandishments of her arts, she, in anguished tears, implored him not to forsake the woman he had taught to stray; and then proceeded, with all her winning policy, to work upon his generosity to yield her a new pecuniary supply, to save her from the disgrace of her husband's being immediately arrested for a debt which her weak partiality to her brother had led her into leaving unpaid, to yield him assistance.

“ Oh, my Bouverie! my adored, my idolized Bouverie! what—what is to become of me?” she continued, after reading to him the threatening letter of an importunate creditor, “ if you cannot devise means to assist me, and save me from a yet even more direful disgrace than the arrest of my husband through my means; for, alas! this insolent dun is Coleman's brother; and if I do not send him the money immediately, I know by her impertinence upon the subject I shall irritate her,—into whose power we have so fatally thrown ourselves,—to disclosures; and then must ensue the destruction of my fame, with your utter ruin, through the

vengeance of Harley, in suing you for damages."

Bouverie, pale with dismay, and panting with the pangs of tortured conscience, falteringly deplored his inability to aid her, but by again applying to usurers to raise the sum by ruinous interest.

"Alas! my life! my soul!" she replied, throwing her arms around his neck, and sobbing most naturally upon his bosom, "and must I, who would yield my life to make you happy, must I involve you thus! Oh! how could I, vain fool that I have been! permit your generous adoration of me to expend such sums in costly presents for me? But it was my fond wish to make my form still more captivating in your eyes that urged me to accept such expensive adornments; and, my love, my madly doating love, must plead in excuse for my extravagance."

"I grieve to add pangs to your already keenly wounded feelings, Marian," he replied; "but I must acknowledge, it had been wiser, whilst you knew this heavy debt lay heavily on your honour to your husband, had you restrained your fan-

cies ; and neither permitted me to give you a ball this week, or purchase those sable skins for you ; which sums, even this week expended, you so well knew, that justice had a better claim to : however, as what is past cannot be recalled, inform this creditor his demand shall be paid next week ; for immediately after this ball to Adelaide is given, I will go to London, and raise this money for you."

And now, as Lady Marian was so subdued by her feelings, it was not in humanity to permit her return, in such a state of agitation, to Marino alone ; and when arrived there, she found consultations necessary, upon the letter she must send to disarm the threatened hostility of the brother of Coleman ; her gratitude to Bouverie wanted, too, to breathe its dulcet enchantments ; and her griefs and alarms required the balm of his loved presence to compose, to enable her to get through her performance of Juliet that evening ; and so the balm to poor Adelaide's griefs and alarms was withheld from them ; for Bouverie was detained by the spells of art the whole day from his home.

Adelaide, pale and dejected, yet still interestingly lovely, set out at length to fulfil her engagement of accompanying the Longuivilles to Marino. Her bursting heart told her, "that home was her best refuge to hide her sorrows in:" but a sort of desperate firmness seemed to lead her on to the place she should behold her husband in, to see how he would deport himself to her; to learn whether he could, or would, make any excuse for two whole days of absence; in short, to aim at the discovery, if Hope was ever more to be an inmate of her bosom.

The anxiety of the neighbourhood to view the performance, fully meeting the wishes of Lady Marian, her little theatre was thronged to an overflow; however, Adelaide and her party were excellently well accommodated with places, which our poor heroine had the gratification of hearing Bouverie had secured for them.

"Oh!" cried her bounding heart, "he thought of me, then!" and this revival of hope recalled the faded bloom to her pallid cheeks, whilst a gentle glow of gratitude sprung up in her bosom, aiding the tu-

mult of her feelings, almost to the subjugation of her firmness, when Montagu, as a Montagu, appeared, adorned in the most becoming costume for stage effect.

One glance alone had rising feeling permitted her to take, when her eyes swiftly sought the ground, and her head sunk on her bosom, to hide the starting tears of tender emotion of admiring sensibility; so that she lost the anxious look which Bouverie cast upon her, the moment the first flutter of spirits, on presenting himself before an audience, permitted him to look for her, whom, in despite of his spell-bond to Lady Marian, he had dressed with so much care to please; and whom, as his Juliet, his heart told him he could now break, with the most animated fervour of truth, all the tenderness of Romeo to.

But, alas! for Adelaide's misery, through the evening, her downcast eyes and averted face were construed by him into strong proofs of indifference, that could allow resentment to operate over interest for his appearance and performance, and lead her in disdain not to honour him even with one look; and now, in all the proud ire

of jealousy's most lofty indignation, he determined to retaliate by averted looks, nor once to deign a glance at her; except, indeed, through the loopholes in the green curtain; and that not Barry's fame, living or posthumous, should transcend his, in personating the animated lover of Juliet.

And never did actor's determination more successfully meet its aim; for in him was happily combined the most perfect gentleman and most ardent lover; and whilst he played in nature's interesting semblance, many a whisper buzzed around,—

“That Mrs. Bouverie ought to have been the Juliet.”

Lady Marian, in attempting this youthful, enthusiastic, love-stricken character, thought only of the passion it portrayed; and in her wish of appearing in the eyes of Bouverie a very Juliet, she forgot her age, her size, her style of beauty, unfitted her for this juvenile votary of romantic love; and she who enchanted in Calista, (as far as such a character could enchant,) now only excited universal regret that

such a Romeo had not a more appropriate Juliet.

The conflict of Adelaide's feelings during the first four acts of this play almost subdued the efforts of her firmness to conceal them. Individual suffering destroyed her interest in the story, with her sympathy too in this first tragedy she had seen represented:—for each impassioned love-scene of her husband's with her rival seemed, from the jealousy-propelled exertions of his histrionic excellence, as having every thing but fiction in them; and often, and often, her direfully wounded indignant heart repeated,—

“Was it only to give me a thorough conviction of his heart's dereliction that he secured for me this all-seeing situation?”

But at length the tomb of the Capulets unclosed on the form of Juliet in her semblance of death; and in all the tragic pathos calculated to wind round the feelings of an audience, Bouverie now was transcendently great; and had not Adelaide's own sufferings writhed her heart, she had been drowned, like many ladies present, in sympathetic tears, for the fatal

catastrophe of these hapless lovers : but, as it was, she sat and gazed in silent, motionless, despair, until Romeo fell, in all the natural horrors of a well-dissembled death; when his tender wife, new to such scenes, felt it as no delusion ; and now, in all the agony of her long-smothered anguish, believing him at least in a swoon, and severely hurt by his fall, she started to her feet, and, aiming at a rush forward to his aid, exclaimed in a tone of agonized alarm, which thrilled to the heart of almost every hearer,—

“ Oh ! Montagu ! ”—when overpowering feeling subdued her, and she fell back, with every faculty suspended, into the ready arms of the heart-wrung Duke of St. Kilda.

The voice of Adelaide in her exclamation, with the promptly reiterated cry of “ She has fainted ! ” instantaneously reanimated the apparently defunct ; for Bouverie, unmindful of appearances, or of his Juliet’s plaintive wail, sprung like a harlequin from his recumbency into the area where the audience sat, and, darting like a maniac to

Adelaide, received her lifeless form from her agitated supporter, when, clasping her in his arms, in all the agony of one who believed his dearest hopes in life were annihilated, bore her rapidly out of the theatre, followed by the Longuivilles, the duke, Monro, and several officers.

The curtain now was dropped by the attentive prompter, Colonel Lonsdale, and Lady Marian carried off, to have an hysterick, which was no counterfeit, out of public hearing, which, the moment she had power, she judiciously accounted for, as arising; from dismay and chagrin at being deserted so ridiculously by Romeo at such an awkward moment, destroying at once the effect of her best scene, for which she had been reserving all her powers.

The swoon of Adelaide continued long enough to evince to every spectator collected around her, that Bouverie was as great an actor now as he had been upon the stage; or else, that in heart he was most adoringly attached to his wife; since no one could portray more tender interest, more anguished alarm, than Montagu, as

he supported her lifeless form, and gazed on her countenance, now clad in the pale semblance of everlasting sleep.

But at length the revolting streams of life began again to retint her lips and re-animate her aspect, and Monro announced she was recovering; and in a moment more her eyes unclosed, and fixing in earnest gaze on Lady Longuiville, she suddenly started from her husband's bosom, exclaiming, though still in a tone of tremulous languor—

“ Oh, tell me of Montagu! What has befallen my husband?”

“ Nothing, my own Adelaide, but the anguish your alarming swoon has occasioned him,” Bouverie softly replied, drawing her tenderly back to his support.

At the sound of his voice Adelaide turned her head with quickness, gazed for a moment in eager scrutiny, and perceiving he had no appearance about him of any fatal catastrophe, burst into tears of joyful emotion, and hid her head upon his palpitating bosom; until a prompt recollection of the numerous spectators surrounding her, recalled her, in blushing

confusion, from her affection's retreat, and led her, as she hastily endeavoured to dry her tears, to make her apologies for all the trouble and confusion she had created, and for the kindness she could well divine had been shown to her during her insensibility, which, she feared, was a most *mal-à-propos* indisposition.

“For, if I remember correctly,” she continued, “Juliet had not died, when I made this unfortunate commotion; who, I fear, will scarcely forgive me for such a merciless reprieve; so pray, I beg of you, Montagu, return, and let the performance proceed; for I am quite well now, perfectly able to walk to Sir Charles Longuiville's to await my carriage: for I cannot venture to behold any more of your acting to-night, Montagu, if I ever can; for, indeed, it was too natural for my nerves to sustain.”

At this moment Thornley, who had been a most excellent representative of Mercutio, arrived from the prompter, to inquire “how Mrs. Bouverie did? and if the colonel could perform in the entertainment, or must have his part read?”

"It must certainly be read," said Bouverie, panting to get rid of all the world but Adelaide.

But Monro interposing, "assured Bouverie there existed no necessity for his spoiling the performances for the evening, further, since there was no danger of Mrs. Bouverie' relapsing; although he should certainly advise her not returning to the theatre, but to go home the moment a carriage could be procured for her, retire to bed, and take a soporific, which he should send her; since composure of spirits was absolutely necessary for her, after a swoon so evidently the result of too much sensibility."

As he was told composure was necessary for Adelaide, Montagu felt conviction that he must not dare to accompany her home; since, after the unequivocal proof she had thus evinced of tender attachment to him, he felt it as an impossibility his being one moment alone in her presence without betraying to her the dire secret which bowed him down with misery, and which had militated against their happiness so long and cruelly; and as Adelaide herself en-

treated him not to disappoint so large an audience, he acquiesced solely through apprehension of agitating her, who, on her part, construed this ready compliance into his anxiety to be again near the too fatally fascinating Marian; and who, in consequence, returned not with kindred sympathy the tender pressure Montagu gave her hand in the moment of his quitting her at the prompter's call,—the only adieu he could offer her before so many witnesses; and who now retired to dress for Sir Charles Racket, in dismay at the inexplicability of Adelaide's frigid farewell, after the unequivocal tenderness she had before evinced; and, not pleased with such caprice, although conscious he had set her many an example of it, he prepared for the performance of a lively character, as dispirited as mental misery could make him.

Nothing could induce Lady Longuiville to re-enter the theatre while our heroine remained at Marino; who, however, as speedily as possible, returned to her home in a carriage ordered from Sir Charles Longuiville's, accompanied by her ladyship's own respectable woman.

CHAPTER XXI.

ADELAIDE made no delay in complying with the advice of Monro, to go promptly to her bed, for she longed to close her eyes free from interruption, that the scenes of the evening might re-pass before her vision ; and to ruminate upon all that had occurred on the stage, and all that arose after she had fainted, to operate upon her hopes and fears ; but in this eagerly coveted contemplation she had not been long engaged, when the soporific began to take effect ; and in her dreams only could she see the fascinating Romeo, the dreaded Juliet ; until she unclosed her eyes at seven o'clock next morning, and beheld her Montagu seated by her pillow ; and who now, in the tender tones of heart-resident interest, inquired, “ how she found herself ? ”

Monro, from observing symptoms so unequivocally inauspicious to his friend's dearest hopes, evincing themselves about Bouverie, resolved to delay his again see-

ing Adelaide, until some of Lady Marian's poisons should operate against this growing tenderness, and therefore issued his positive mandate for Bouverie's not returning to his home that night, since the performances could not end until a very late hour, when, should the noise of his return disturb Mrs. Bouverie, the soporific she had taken might become a hurt rather than a benefit.

Bouverie upon this plea became amenable to the decree of Mr. Monro, and in the path of temptation he remained, where the gay supper, the champaigne's exhilaration, the witchery of Lady Marian, again prevailed, and Adelaide was again forgotten ; but when the moment of caution arrived for him to seek his own apartment, the remembrance of the purest child of heavenly innocence who slumbered, neglected, in his cottage, or, perchance, wept on her pillow the hours of his absence, seemed to meet him at his chamber-door, and twining round his heart and awakening every dormant virtue in his bosom, seemed once more to arouse him to abhor the connexion he had so fatally formed.

And now full an hour he passed in all

the direful pangs of penitence, and in profoundly thinking upon every plan in possibility for extricating himself from Lady Marian to return to Paradise and Adelaide : but his erroneously-cherished belief of Marian's claims still planted thorns in the path of his eagerly panted-for projected happiness ; and at length the consequence of his meditation was, a determination not to disclose his direful transgression to his wife, lest her purity's sublimation should lead her to abhor him for it, but to set off, immediately after the regimental ball, by the Hastings coach, for London, where he would instantly summon Mellifont, to consult with him how, with delicacy and caution, he could withdraw from Lady Marian.

At length Bouverie's faculties for reasoning were overpowered by the influence of a deep slumber, in which his waking thoughts still haunted him with the miseries he had brought upon himself, in which Adelaide, the object of his eager pursuit, flying from him to the arms of the Duke of St. Kilda, formed the principal feature ; until, in some new flight of his slumbering

fancy, he saw her sinking with his grace in a boat, when a shriek, so loud and piercing struck his ears, it awoke him ; and instantly he started from his pillow, appalled with apprehension of Adelaide's being in distress or danger ; and in all the agony of the most powerful alarm, fearing the soporific might have proved too potent for her, he dressed with rapidity, and flew off in all the terrors of affection's conjectural apprehensions, bounding over hedge and ditch to his home ; where the first object he beheld was Dennis, opening the windows for the day.

The aspect of Dennis, though serious,—which it now always was, in sympathy for his *darling's* wrecked happiness,—yet spoke nothing to alarm the trembling Bouverie, who imbibed sufficient courage from it, to instantly inquire how his wife did ?

“ Faith, your honour, better nor could be expected, after being murdered with fright last night, thinking,—the *darling* innocent of the wide world !—that it was kilt your honour was. Owing to the stuff Mr. Monro (and good luck to him !) gave the jewel, she slept like a top through the

night; though, for that matter, 'twas but a troubled sleep she had of it; for she would never be easy for starting and calling your honour's name, as if to be saving you from the clapper-claws of mischief!"

Montagu, subdued by this intelligence, darted by Dennis, to make his prompt way to Adelaide; when, suddenly recollecting he might disturb her, he returned to know "If she was up, that Dennis had learned all these particulars?"

"Och! sorrow up is she up, your honour! no, nor awake either, as Norah just *tould* me, who sat up the whole blessed night with the *darlingt*; and as to the way I came to be knowing the particulars was, *caze* myself never wint to bed at all at all, that I might be able to creep every hour to her door, to ask Norah how the jewel of gems did? and to be in readiness set, in case the grief should be for us to be wanting him, to bring the doctor.

"Ah! what a lesson for me! and how I envy you, good Dennis! for you have nothing to smite your conscience relative to this, indeed, jewel of brightest gems!" thought Bouverie, as in caution's silent footfalls he

made his way to Adelaide's bed-side; where the sleeping semblance of seraphic innocence he there beheld, struck in such contrast to his heart, that he shuddered in self-aborrence for that depravity of inclination which had infatuated him into transgression; which, much he feared, could never allow him to be deemed, even by himself, worthy of a reunion with this sweet as lovely child of fascinating purity.

When Adelaide unclosed her beautiful eyes, the lively blush of joy and bashfulness which mantled her youthful cheeks of blossoming perfection, forcibly added to that striking contrast which was rapidly bearing down every impediment to reinstating his inestimable wife in that place, or even to one of still more tender adoration, which she had held ere he quitted her at Seaview to join his regiment in Ireland.

As Adelaide assured Montagu she was fully equal to the undertaking of breakfasting with him and accompanying him to church, he at length retired, to permit her to arise and make her toilet; which when she had completed, and joined her anxiously expecting husband, she soon

again perceived that some mystery hung about him which had power instantly to restrain, as if by the influence of magic, the now perpetually recurring spontaneous ebullitions of affection's tenderness.

As the Longuivilles had learned to prefer the quiet of Adelaide's little sequestered church, they called, on their way, for her; and were most happy to find her husband was to accompany her; but who, after service was ended, pronounced his positive negative to her forming one of the party formed to proceed to the fort at Hastings, since he was apprehensive of its proving too much for her, after her severe indisposition the preceding evening.

"But fainting is not so very destructive to the strength of fair ladies, colonel," said Mr. Longuiville; "for Lady Marian Harley performed feats after her terrible swoon at Castle Cottage, enough to subdue any dragoon at Bexhill."

Bouverie blushed, as thus reminded of the circumstance; which recalling to his recollection the sweet forbearance of Adelaide, when invited to join in censure of her

rival, now stole an admiring glance at her; and thought, as he did so, that she would perform no feats but such as were consistent, feminine, and correct, in truth and delicacy.

Besides Bouverie's apprehension of too much fatigue for Adelaide, he also feared encountering Lady Marian at Hastings, to lead him into new transgressions, by trepanning him away from his wife; and equally dreading her coming or sending any of her emissaries to the cottage, he determined to take his *cara sposa* a long round in the curricule.

But, although he planned this *tête-à-tête* airing, he almost dreaded it; for, alone with Adelaide, he knew his heart would be constantly on his lips, ready to make confessions; which, until after his consultations with Mellifont, he wished to avoid; for until he had withdrawn from his fatal connexion, he could not plead for his gentle wife's mercy and forgiveness; and still more dreading a *tête-à-tête* dinner with her, when her fascinating attentions would inevitably subdue his self-possession, he gladly acceded to Lady Longuiville's re-

quest to him and Adelaide, to join her *en famille* party that day.

“ I shall indeed be most happy to accept your ladyship’s kind invitation,” Bouverie replied, “ both for pleasure to myself, and for the comfort to me, of leaving my sensitive novice in stage catastrophe, in such cheerful society for the evening; since I am unfortunately under the necessity, I am sorry to say, of accompanying Colonel Lonsdale and Captain Warren to ——— to-night, where there has been some direful misconception of an order of the general’s, relative to some of the military works; and where we must be to-night, in readiness to correct those errors, when the workmen commence their labours on the morrow.”

When Montagu and Adelaide proceeded on their excursion, she could not resist the impulse of deploring the immensity of fatigue, the long truancy of Captain Cliff occasioned to Bouverie.

“ Since my Adelaide so kindly deplores the fatigue I sustain,” said Montagu, “ I am grieved to pain her flattering anxiety, by confessing to her that I am compelled by necessity to encounter more;—even to

take a trip to the metropolis, in quest of cash, to—to—for our house expenditure, and to pay for our late ball.”

“The ball is already paid for, Montagu.”

“Paid for!” repeated Bouverie, in astonishment mingled with alarm; “surely, surely, my sweet Adelaide was not so imprudent to draw upon any serious fund, to indulge my reprehensible folly in attending to the very inconvenient frivolity of the ladies of Marino?”

“Do not be alarmed,” she replied, “since I only receded from a repented of piece of extravagance.”

“How, my Adelaide!” exclaimed Bouverie, distressed by a pang of bitter retrospection; “no more ornamental fancies, I trust, relinquished for my follies?”

“It was a matter of no sort of consequence, believe me.”

“Then why conceal it from me, my ever ingenuous Adelaide? Tell me, pray tell me, and convince my self-condemnation, that it may be comforted.”

“Why, what a curious animal my better half is!” said Adelaide, blushing as she smiled; “not contented forsooth, until he

developes all my secrets ! So then, since you must learn my extravagance, know, that upon my first coming hither I was tempted by Mrs. Harper to give ninety pounds for some remarkably fine black sable skins.”—

At the mention of sable skins, Bouverie started in anticipating alarm ; a start which conveyed its influence through the reins to the horses ; when they bounded so sympathetically, that the alarm they awakened in Adelaide’s bosom prevented her observation of Montagu’s emotion.

“ It so happened,” she continued, “ that about a fortnight since Mrs. Harper informed me, “ if I repented my bargain, my fur-merchant would gladly repurchase them, as he had been offered an hundred guineas for the skins by a lady whom he had first offered them to, but who then declined buying them ; so, when I found we had our ball to give, I gladly exchanged my sables for my very welcome ninety pounds, when my fur-merchant sold them for one hundred and ten guineas to this wise-acre woman ; who, finding there was any delay in getting them, sent to offer him

ten guineas more, to tease me out of them !”

The betraying agitation of the heart-rived and conscience-wounded Bouverie increased at length so perceptibly, as Adelaide proceeded, that conviction came to her bosom of who the lady was, and who was the purchaser ; and though, from Montagu's evident distress, she cherished hope of his not having known to whom the sable belonged when he bought it for this worthless woman, yet she could not, in nature, avoid now feeling a pang of chagrin and concern, to find how Lady Marian had duped both husband and wife for her own gratification.

When, at length, they returned from this airing, Bouverie rejoiced he had flown out of the way, since he found Lady Marian and a large party had been to the cottage to visit ; that then Major Gayville had been in quest of him ; and afterwards, Fitzpatrick had arrived with a note, to say, “That the general wanted Colonel Bouverie on important business, and therefore he must dine at Marino.”

“Must !” repeated Montagu, with an

angry frown upon a brow that nature had formed to index one of the sweetest tempers she ever gave to mortal,—“better chain me to them, as their slave, at once.”

The dinner at Sir Charles Longuiville's passed so pleasantly, and Bouverie was so much like his former self, that every one, as well as his fascinated wife, experienced regret when Thornley arrived to say, “The general wanted immediately to see Colonel Bouverie, relative to the business that was taking him to ——.”

“Well, Bouverie!” exclaimed Sir Charles, “you are the best subordinate in Europe, to leave your wife, without a volley of blessings on the general's head, after beholding such regret on her countenance! I declare, was Louisa to look only half as sorrowful, if I was about to leave her, I think nothing less than a file of men could tear me from her.”

“Oh!” said the blushing Adelaide, “the reason I looked so sorrowful about it is, that Montagu is certainly not yet recovered from the effect of the terrible illness he had at Malta; and I cannot but grieve at having him every moment in attendance

upon the general, leaving me no opportunity to prove my skill in nursing him."

"Take my advice," said Lady Longuiville, "and run off with him to some lonely castle.—De Moreland will not answer, being near a watering-place, and not moated:—I have one in Yorkshire, very much at your service, where I tamed Charles, and metamorphosed him into the docile being he now appears."

"Ay, so you say, Louisa," returned Sir Charles, smiling affectionately upon her; "but Mrs. Bouverie knows I was always very tame and docile."

"Not you, indeed!" replied her ladyship, "you were as wild as a man of the wood, no more under my management than the wind, until I caged you in my lone castle, where not a door or a window could you open, or long-winding passage explore, without my initiating you into the mysteries of them; when, soon finding I was all you had to trust to for aid and comfort, you became my shadow as soon as you grew afraid of your own."

At this moment Thornley announced, "that he saw Warren coming with a fresh

summons, and entreated Bouverie not to get him into disgrace as a successful Mercury ;” when, with reluctance, so evident that it drew tears of sympathy to the eyes of Adelaide, Montagu bade the party he was leaving adieu, and departed with Thornley to Marino, where he was detained by the artful management of Lady Marian a full hour, to listen to her complaints for his long day of cruel truancy from her, ere she permitted his departure for ——— with Colonel Lonsdale and Captain Warren.

As the visions of brightly-arrayed hope were the companions of Adelaide’s waking and sleeping thoughts through the night, she arose the following morning in all the bloom of loveliness such promise of future happiness could adorn her with; and in all the flutter of susceptibility’s emotions she sat, in momentary expectation of her husband’s return, until Richard arrived with the horses, and a note from his master, stating, that he had only just returned from his inspection of a complication of blunders, and having a long statement to make to the general, he should be under the necessity of remaining at Marino until after dinner:

Although many causes combined to silence the tongue of Bouverie in speaking the ardours of the passion springing up in his heart for Adelaide, yet, in writing, he felt not these restraints, having not her fascinations to fear, in luring him to disclose the terrible secret of another's transgressions combined with his own, which oppressed him ; he therefore wrote this billet, guided by the fast-growing tenderness of his bosom; and as this was the very first decided *billet-doux* she ever received from Montagu, it almost inebriated her with rapture ; and in the buoyancy of hope, now arisen to almost certainty, of her husband's affections, she forgot at once all his offences, every former grief ; in short, all things connected with her late misery, but that, in sorrow she had bent before the Throne of Mercy for relief, and that there a tribute of her gratitude was due, for this fair prospect of her coming happiness.

Adelaide's mind and aspect possessed such sympathy, that the state of one was promptly reflected by the other ; and now her natural spirits, emancipated from melancholy's bondage, in the light measure

of gladness flew to their former station in fascination's bright illumination, through eyes, on cheeks, in smiles, proclaiming the general peace now ratified within; and though she had not the lord of her affections with her to gild the passing scene, she hesitated not to order her carriage and take a salutary airing to benefit her looks against Montagu should see her at the ball; for on this evening the military ball was to be given to her; and though her dinner was lonely, and her happiness too great for appetite, Dennis removed the nearly untouched viands without his usual groan-clad sigh, since he saw the canker of sorrow no longer preyed on the heart of "*the darlingt.*"

Bouverie was most unwillingly detained by the soft wailings of tenderness, fearing dereliction, and by the most artfully-managed blandishments of Lady Marian, at Marino, until so late an hour, that there was no time allowed him in possibility to spare from his own toilet to seek an interview with Adelaide at hers.

As this very sumptuous ball was given expressly in bridal compliment to our he-

roine, she, in return, paid due honour to such a flattering attention, by attiring herself in the superb lace-dress, the gift of Montagu, ornamented by the most magnificent set of her brilliants ; but her eyes, illumined by long truant happiness, outshone her gems ; and when Bouverie beheld her, his heart felt as a truth what his lips spontaneously uttered, “ that he had never before beheld a beautiful dress so adorned by its wearer ;” and as she blushed and smiled in timid joy at his approbation, the pangs of conscious unworthiness,—the remembrance of Lady Marian’s claims,—all, every impellent to reserve and distant worship were subdued, and, in defiance of the presence of Obearn, he clasped her to his admiration’s fluttered bosom with all the tenderness of an adoring heart.

CHAPTER XXII.

Two mounted dragoons were in waiting to escort the carriage to the scene of this evening's gay revel, an attention paid by the givers of this splendid *fête* to each party of ladies who promised to attend it; as the temporary rooms for the occasion were erected in a romantically sequestered spot, which, without such aid, might have been difficult to find.

As no anxiety existed relative to the road they were going, Bouverie, having once broke through the restrictions of his conscience, now hung enamoured on the accents of his wife, or uttered his love-strains with all the fervour of tender adoration; strains so new to Adelaide from him, that she heard them with all the blushing, fluttered embarrassment of a novice in such sounds; yet, ere they reached the scene they were approaching, her tones had caught such tenderness from his, that, encouraged to a belief of finding from her the clemency of affection, he ven-

tured to intimate his having a painful confession to make at some future opportunity, which would require all the beneficence of her mercy and her love to pardon.

“And when that opportunity arrives,” said Adelaide, “perhaps I can exonerate you from this painful confession, by acknowledging I have long been a sympathizer in the direful grief that oppressed you, the fatal cause which estranged the affections of my husband from his adoring wife! My mercy has, therefore, long been yours, Montagu; so that, all you have to plead for is, *my* confession of how I came to penetrate your distressing secret.”

“Oh! my tender, merciful wife!” exclaimed Bouverie, hiding his head upon her bosom, as if to conceal the burning blushes of shame and contrition which mantled his cheeks from her view,—“is it possible you can, in such sweet, forgiving accents, tell me, you know all,—all my dire transgressions?”

“My own Montagu!” responded Adelaide, “I will tell you nothing to-night that can agitate you. Consider where we are going, to be gazed at as bride and bride-

groom ; and although a little flutter of spirits might be suitably becoming to us, yet as the mighty emotions of the mind are not always embellishments to the aspect, I think we may as well dismiss them for the present, and to-morrow recall them, should we feel so disposed.”

“ Oh ! to-morrow, my own kind and merciful Adelaide ! ” exclaimed Montagu, with an agonizing sigh of regret, “ I shall not be with you.”

And now an explanation ensued, relative to his having arranged to go from the ball to Hastings, there to set out in the coach for London.

“ Alas ! ” said Adelaide, “ such fatigue after every ball must quite subdue you ; and in the moment my wedded happiness appears to bless me, my life’s treasure will be snatched away.”

Bouverie felt new repentance awakened in his bosom, by Adelaide’s mournful tones at having so rashly promised Lady Marian to quit his home at this precise period to obtain pecuniary aid for her extravagance, and what, he feared, he might almost term her frauds, upon the unsuspecting confi-

dence of her husband ; and now, in all the innovating tenderness of his heart for Adelaide, he strove to lull her painful apprehensions relative to his health, by assurances, that mental inquietude was now his only ailment ; and then hastened to implore her to follow him to London the moment he wrote for her to set out.

“ For, the instant I procure cash,” he said, “ I will apply for two months’ leave of absence ; and then, my own, my now justly appreciated Adelaide, you will, in the sweet, forgiving mercy of your gentle nature, accompany me to De Moreland Castle, where, although it is not moated, and is near a watering-place, I trust we shall find in it the magical influence for establishing conjugal felicity, as powerfully as the Longuivilles experienced in their Yorkshire castle.”

At this moment they obtained the first view of the land of magic they were now approaching ; when Montagu, apprehensive of having no future opportunity for a farewell embrace from Adelaide ere he set out for town, clasped her tenderly to his bosom ; and the reluctance with which his

arms unfolded to release her, seemed prophetically to augur the direful separation impending to divide them.

And now they entered the scene of revel, over a beautiful temporary bridge erected across a wide canal, admirably adapted, by its architecture, for an advantageous display of a splendid illumination of coloured lamps, commencing from the surface of the water; and from this bridge they entered a romantically situated hop ground, through which a carriage road had been made, winding judiciously, for the united purpose of displaying the beauties of the scene, and to effect a safe and easy ascent and descent of the picturesque inequalities of this extensive ground; every part of which was illumined by wreaths of variegated lamps, interwoven with the luxuriant hops, encircling the poles; and this meandering road at length terminated in a commodious sweep before a superb temple of Moorish architecture, illuminated externally in the most brilliant style, bearing on each minaret the initials "A. B."

The interior of this building, through every apartment of a complete suite for a

ball, was fitted up in a most magnificent style, according with its architecture ; and in every part, where the effect would answer, appeared the initials of our heroine, supported by the loves and graces.

Twelve servants, in rich liveries, of the Duke of St. Kilda's, summoned from town for the occasion, with six of Sir Charles Longuiville's, lined the entrance-hall ; and the six stewards of the evening waited in the vestibule to receive the blooming bride, and conduct her to Lady Longuiville, who, most splendidly attired, appeared to the most striking advantage, as an elegant, polite, and indiscriminately attentive, mistress of the revels.

All the company who had attended Adelaide's ball were invited to this, with the addition of every person of fashion and respectability in the neighbourhood, whom the officers of the ——— Hussars had even the most trifling acquaintance with ; so that it was most numerous attended.

Although Lady Marian Harley resolved on a late arrival, Lady Dinwood determined on an early one, that she might the longer indulge in the rapture, to her, of astonish-

ing so large an assemblage by her daring eccentricities; and elated by the flattering homage of her counterpart, the handsome Captain Crosby, into the highest altitude of her whimsicalities, she ordered her own equipage, and arrived at the ball soon after our heroine, resolving to astound by the audibility of her loquacity; and, accompanied by Mrs. Warren, and Captains Crosby and Thornley,—

“Heavens!” exclaimed Lady Dinwood, the moment she was seated, on seeing a remarkably diminutive woman enter, in a blaze of jewels,—“Heavens, Crosby! do observe that glow-worm creeping up the room.—Mercy avert it be not trod upon!”

“But what be those who make the accompaniment for her?” demanded Mrs. Warren, tittering at two uncommonly plain women, the companions of this blazing Lilliputian.

“Why, my dear, specimens of hideousness, from the land of deformity,” returned Lady Dinwood.—“And lo!” she added, on perceiving a new group enter, gayly attired in colours not inapplicable to her simile, and all chattering together, loudly

and shrilly, as they proceeded up the room, "and lo ! ye bird-fanciers ! here has arrived a flight of Java sparrows for you !"

"I am not fancier, for such birds as chatter much so, for prevention to my doing that much pleasant, lady-like pastime, for myself ; but I have very much fancy to know, what for order this is ?" said Mrs. Warren, directing the attention of her companions to a lady enveloped in a large embroidered French shawl with an immense sun-flower emblazoned in the centre.

"Not a Virgin of the Sun, I presume," said Thornley, smiling, as he perceived the lady was indisputably a matron.

"Certainly not, boy !" responded Lady Dinwood, with attractive audibility ; "but I pronounce her to be of the order of good housewives ; a thrifty soul, who has insured her clothes at the Sun Fire-Office, and wears the office-mark upon her back, ready to prove her claim, should an accident occur in this illuminated scene."

It was now thought expedient by the stewards for dancing to commence, to put a period to Lady Dinwood's rude annota-

tions, by giving her more active employment ; when Adelaide, as a bride, to whom the ball was given, was led to the top of the room by Sir Charles Longuiville, as commanding-officer of the corps that paid this compliment to her, to open the ball with him.

Not until the third dance had commenced, when Adelaide was the partner of the enamoured Duke of St. Kilda, and Montagu of Miss Longuiville, did Lady Marian arrive, splendidly arrayed in all the seductive wiles of an alluring display of beauties, and with all the sweet, soft, inthralling languishment of a deep designer, resolved on rekindling that passion she once had made to blaze.

But neither her countenance nor attire now obtained the admiration of Bouverie : the delusion of her magic was past ; she had un-deified herself in his estimation by her descent from that sacred temple where his imagination had long enshrined her : and eagerly his eyes turned from her to seek his wife, in her to behold what could never satiate, could never disgust,—Innocence attired by Modesty !

The eyes of Bouverie directed those of the wary Marian to the attraction they roved to from her, and beheld Adelaide in such radiance of beauty and attire, that even, although vanity bore a potent influence in her mind, she almost feared she was eclipsed; but one certainty, however, was clearly proved, that of Bouverie's inconstancy, and a humiliating conviction of how she had lost her power: "For Adelaide," she sighed, "is still the same she was when I triumphed over her; while I only am changed, in his belief, and that, alas! through my own incaution in unfolding to him, not half a libertine, the true character of my passion."

And now wishing, if possibility would permit it, to rectify this error in her management, she stilled the rising impetuous tumult of her envy, jealousy, and rage, and assumed at once the meek aspect, the retired and humble demeanour, of a heart-rived penitent; and not until Bouverie, softened from the harsh annotations he had made upon her appearance by the interesting turn her countenance and manner had assumed, importuned her to it, would she join the dancers.

Bouverie, who merely danced to banish thought, which would, if indulged, unfit him for society, felt it would be a savage inattention not to request the hand of Lady Marian for one set, at least ; and although he experienced every sensation but pleasure when she stood up to be his partner, though he writhed in torturing compunction to think how love for him had destroyed her right to appear in the same circle with his wife, and that the keenest pangs of anguished sensations thrilled through his bosom when he beheld her familiarly accosting, under the mask of hypocritical virtue, the immaculate Adelaide, yet soon by her address and exquisite acting she won upon his tender pity, and almost led him to renounce his late conviction of the impurity of her heart.

Adelaide, admired, followed, and adulated, to a degree that must have intoxicated a weaker mind, had her whole heart monopolized by Montagu, her vanity feeling triumph, only as she believed the homage offered to her would operate on her husband towards her ; and his growing attachment, her now firmly-cherished

hopes of future happiness with him elated her more than all the flattering incense of the adorers and admirers now thronged around her, contending for the honour of her hand in the dance, or even for the common notice of her urbanity.

All that could be worked upon to awaken the mortification and excite the jealousy of Montagu, from Adelaide's courtesy-impelled conduct to those who obtruded on her attention, was judiciously seized upon by the Machiavelian Marian ; but although she tortured and wrung the heart of Bouverie, though she had raised herself many fathoms in his esteem from the abyss she had precipitated herself into, she could not make him again the bending slave of passion and of her, nor teach his heart to lose one glowing particle of its adoration of Adelaide, now reared on the firm basis of her fascinating virtues.

At length the moment for supper arrived, and a more elegantly sumptuous one was never given by taste and opulence ; and the Duke of St. Kilda, exactly calculating how to time his second engagement, was the partner of Adelaide for the set which

entitled him indisputably to sit by her during this banquet.

Lady Marian could devise no method at this supper of engaging Bouverie to herself; but she contrived to seat herself next to him, when by the beauty of her conversation she strove to captivate all around her, as a toil for Bouverie; but in this attempt she failed; for Adelaide was the fashion of the day, had awakened pity, as a neglected wife, and, from this neglect, hopes and wishes had been introduced into the minds of many who surrounded her inimical to their bestowing one particle of admiration upon Lady Marian.

Montagu at supper was comfortless and sad, ten thousand times wishing himself unmarried, that he might have the power of sitting by Adelaide as her lover; and, though firm in reliance upon the propriety of her conduct, he yet felt angry with every man she smiled in courtesy upon; and the most sincere delight sprung up in his mind when the ladies all arose from table, to return to the ball-room; but how did that delight swell up to rapture, when Adelaide, with careless seeming, di-

rected her path of movement precisely to where he stood, and, as adroitly as ever Marian managed, linked her arm with his, and drew him off, a willing captive, from the enraged Marian, who mentally swore "that evening should be the last Bouverie and Adelaide should ever meet, to walk in love's tender link together;" and as this vindictive vow passed solemnly in her Court of Conscience, she contrived closely to retrace their footsteps, and, to her further rage, dismay, and determination to take prompt vengeance, she heard their dialogue.

"Oh! Montagu!" Adelaide softly whispered, "how I always wish myself unmarried, at a ball; since, it is so very provoking, that the only man I wish to dance with, I am divided from by the odious law of custom."

The look that Bouverie beamed on his wife, as he told her, "he had had sympathetic wishes and regrets with her upon the subject," proved a fresh stimulus to the raging vengeance of Lady Marian.

"I have been calculating," said Adelaide, "and find, to my sorrow, I cannot hear from you before Thursday morning ;

and what an age that will be to exist in uncertainty of how you bore the fatigue of your journey after the toils of this night's revel !”

“ You shall hear by Wednesday evening's coach, my life !” he replied, with a look and in a tone of rapture at this anxiety, “ and I fondly hope by Sunday's post to be enabled to announce to you upon what day I implore you to join me in London.”

“ That day shall never arrive, so help me vengeance !” muttered the raging soul of Lady Marian.

“ When, I as fondly trust, my adored, my mercifully forgiving wife will make no unnecessary delay in coming to heal the wounds of my long tortured heart.”

“ Not an hour shall elapse, after you summon me,” responded Adelaide, “ until I am on my road to my own Montagu.”

They now had reached the beautifully illuminated hall, from which the doors into the different apartments opened, when Montagu proposed to Adelaide to enter the card-room to continue their *tête-à-tête*, until the gentlemen from the supper room appeared to renew the merry dance.

But not a moment were they allowed this mutually coveted *tête-à-tête*; for Lady Marian led in an overwhelming tide to disturb them, in Lady Dinwood and a numerous audience of females to hear her ladyship's recitations, which now continued until the dancing candidates appeared from the banquet to claim their partners.

At length Adelaide, who felt reluctance to depart, only as it would give the signal for a separation from Montagu, in consideration of the moment he must, through necessity, be ready for the public conveyance to town, took leave of her munificent entertainers with a sweetly grateful acknowledgment for the highly-appreciated compliment they had paid her, and set out for her home, almost drowned in tears, in sad presentiment at Bouverie's departure: who, at the same moment, proceeded in his curricule to Hastings, as dejected as a sorrowing heart could make him.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.