2031

Wanderings of a Goldfinch;

OR,

CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

" I shall not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau,
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least, in fable."

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1816.

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To her Royal Highness

THE PRINCESS MARY.

Madam,

The gracious permission granted me to send this volume into the world under the sanction of your Illustrious Name, exhibits the most unequivocal proof of your Royal Highness's benevolence, and creates the surest pledge of my unceasing gratitude, for goodness and condescension so unmerited.

I have the honour to remain

Your Royal Highness's most obliged

and most devoted servant,

MARY ANNE M'MULLAN.

London, April 22, 1816.

MAHARAJA BERFOOT'S

PREFACE.

THOUGH the Altar of British literature is adorned by the historian's laurels,—graced by unfading wreaths from the gardens of Parnassus,—and enriched by academic beauties from the Greek, the Roman, and the Italian groves; —while the Arts and Sciences have erected Temples for themselves, immortal as the Empire they distinguish: yet, under the cheering sun-beam of Royal and Illustrious patronage this simple floweret, plucked by an obscure stranger, from the

wild, uncultured shores of a western county, is unassumingly strewed in the path to that hallowed fane.

Invention has exhausted itself in apologies for such humble offerings.—In this instance, let it only be remembered, that while the Oak, the Cedar, and the Pine, in their stately altitudes, demand a proportionate tribute of admiration; the secluded violet, and the lowly hepatica, are not crushed by those who descend to the examination of their unaspiring petals.

The writer must entreat pardon for any inaccuracies that may be discovered in the quotations.——At a great distance from books, she had no resources, but such as

memory supplied: nor has the work been polished by that critical revision, which more leisure would have allowed, or more time devoted to its composition, would, perhaps, have made less requisite.

She thinks it possible, likewise, that plagiarism may have been unconsciously committed: but the Reader will admit, that "faded ideas float in the fancy, like half-forgotten dreams; and imagination, in its fullest enjoyments, becomes suspicious of its offspring, uncertain whether it has created, or adopted."

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MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S

THE

Wanderings of a Goldfinch,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE doctrine of the Metempsychosis has had its advocates, and its opponents;—its believers, its converts, and its sceptics.

Without entering into its merits, or seeking to expose its absurdities, it will be enough, for the purpose here intended, to observe, that, as much has been said in favour of the "Morality of Fiction," it may be possible to derive some little moral be-

nefit from the mixture of fact with fiction. " Which is which," the reader will doubtless be enabled to discriminate.

The history of my wanderings must commence with the recollection of the lively delight I experienced, on my first successful attempt to wing my flight through the clear and balmy region of a summer atmosphere, in a district celebrated for the beauty of its groves,—the cultivation and the fertility of its land.

Attached to no kindred, restrained by no tie, I flew from the bower of the fair to the haunt of the sportsman, with the confidence Eden's garden might have inspired; and paid with the joyous notes of my morning orison and my evening hymn, for the fruit which I tasted, or the bud that I detached.

The ungenial season of winter limited my excursions, and lessened the modulations of my song: but returning spring revived my " native wood-notes

wild," mating me with another of my species, gay and volatile as myself.

We sought scenery such as a poet's glowing fancy only could depict, and brilliant as the touches of an Italian pencil—trees perfumed to our organs, sweetly as the breezes of the far-famed spice-islands; —parterres decked with all the florist's pride.

Ah! why were these days evanescent as they were delightful! Why was the duration of our bliss so transient!

Guided by the impulse of an unfortunate curiosity, I became a prey to an insidious snare, and was presented to the amiable daughter of the parish-rector, who had expressed a wish for a singing-bird.

Can I ever forbear to shudder at the recollection of my heart's cold and hopeless trepidation, when, with plumage torn and ruffled in attempting to escape, a chirp of agony my only note,—I was

committed to the fair prison of a lady's hand, and from thence transferred to a wiry confinement, that barred all possibility of regaining my freedom.

Sad and sullen passed the early days of my captivity. Deeply I lamented the being heir to that golden plumage which excited the admiration of my possessor: vainly I regretted the power of warbling those strains which had made me an object of desire.

To no purpose was the most inviting food displayed; alike unheeded the crystal vase, filled with the limpid produce of the fountain; and untasted the saccharine temptation from the breakfast-table: so adverse was my nature from reconciliation to a mode of life which excluded freedom, and so valueless every proffered gratification in a state of captivity.

Happily, after a short period, my sensations of disgust began to subside. Time promised to teach me submission to the endurance of evils, which I dared not hope it would remove.

It had first been a resource, and then grew into an inclination, to become an attentive observer of all that passed among that superior order of nature in which I was destined to move; and it most undoubtedly tended more to the moderation of my regrets, than any self-reasoning power I could possibly have employed.



CHAPTER II.

THE residents at the rectory consisted of the pastor, his sister, and his daughter. His only son had, I discovered, chosen the hazardous career of a nautical profession, in preference to the lessons of *alma-mater*, and the quietude of clerical duties.

Monotony and her companion *Ennui* might be supposed to reign in such a circle:—yet it was far otherwise. Though their mornings commenced before noon, and were not devoted to the assembling of idle visitors, to descant on the errors and occupations of the absent;—though no porter stood in the hall, to attend the scientific rap and consequential ring of the distinguished card-dropper, and to repulse the diffident solicitation of the needy;—though no crowds of Fashion's superfluous retailers, and Taste's unnecessary finishers, attended by the humble

bearers of the parcel and the band-box, here exhibited their useless baubles:—yet had every domestic virtue room for exercise; and not a day was added to the mighty accumulation of those gone by, without bearing the record of the performance of some benevolent act, or the suggestion of some philanthropic wish during its course.

The sensible conviction of being secluded from all the pleasures and pursuits most congenial to my nature, was no friend to repose. The declination of day's golden orb no longer invited the desire of slumber,—for no longer had I the joy of seeking the deep concealment of the forest, or the friendly shelter of the garden, so bountifully accessible to my species. The evening now saw me perched on the cross-stick of the cage, without any disposition to forgetfulness. As I had not then been an inhabitant of an aviary, nor admired as the selected favourite of a pupil in ornithology, I naturally thought the manner of appropriating the evenings at the rectory perfectly consistent with the dictates of good sense, and of that pure religion, which was as frequently

the subject of their conversation, as it was the vital principle of their actions.

In the mean time my tuition was not neglected; my docility enabled me to acquire all the mechanic movements to which my fair possessor trained me. The doors and windows closed, I was occasionally permitted to alight on the chair, or rest on the hand of my delighted preceptress.

"Robina," said the rector, addressing his daughter, "here is one of your brother's flattering effusions to you, which I found in the study this morning among some of his first books." The blush of modesty glowed on Robina's cheek at hearing her own praise, though written by the partial pen of a brother, and thus read by an affectionate parent.

Who comes with sweetly pensive mien,
With placid look, and eye serene,
In habit clad of Spring's soft green?
Robina!

Who's voice is that we love to hear,
So mild, impressive, kind, and clear;
What name is that for ever dear?
Robina!

Who fears no path across the moor,
To bless the wretched and the poor;
But early seeks the hovel door?
Robina!

Behold the nymph the Muses love,
Harmonious as the spheres above;
With heart as soft as Venus' dove!
Robina!

While pleasure, show, and giddy noise,
The modern, thoughtless belle employs,
Who stops to think of higher joys?
Robina!

When chaste attractions spread their charms,
When innocence feels no alarms,
A vestal's joy thy bosom warms;
Robina!

When temporal pursuits are o'er;
When nature dies, and time's no more;
Who to her native heaven will soar?
Robina!

"Dear Charles!" sighed the father, "it appears a longer interval now since we heard from him, than has been usual since he was stationed in the Channel."

My morning lesson of a new imitation of the flageolet had just been completed, and I was tenderly restored to the cage, when the arrival of a newspaper more than confirmed the rector's solicitude. He read in a voice scarcely audible :—"Second Edition. After our paper had gone to the press, a despatch from our correspondent at Plymouth informs us, that his Majesty's ship Persepolis had that moment made her number, and was coming into the Sound in a very shattered state, accompanied by a large frigate, apparently her prize."

Involuntary tears filled every eye;—they looked

towards each other for hopes, which though all breathed, none could confirm.

" I will trust," said the rector, at length, " that the Almighty has covered my son's head in the day of battle. Until such a marked dispensation of Heaven's mercy may be made known to us, be it our occupation, as it is our duty, to prostrate ourselves before the divine fountain of hope and consolation, and ask His support in every trial that may await us."

He then withdrew; and his sister caught a portion of that happy elasticity of mind which Robina soon recovered, and saw no vision but Charles a hero!—Charles crowned with laurel!

CHAPTER III.

OH! speak ye, who can, the tremblings of anxiety, —the thrillings of expectation,—the desire, yet dread of the next day's post.

"Here is a letter,—and it is from Charles!" Again and again they read the hasty lines, "We have this moment anchored in Plymouth Sound, with our prize, a fine frigate, which we had the good fortune to fall in with a few days since; just as we were growing very dispirited for want of something to interest us: not having seen a sail of any description for a week before. Our loss has been rather severe; but thank God, I have escaped unhurt! I must refer you to the gazette for particulars, and to a long letter which I shall despatch to my uncle, Sir Annandale;

its technical phraseology he can interpret to you. There can be no doubt of our first Lieutenant being promoted, when I shall, in all probability, succeed to the vacancy. You must not therefore think of a visit from me now. My future success must greatly depend on the continuance of my present exertions to give satisfaction; and for that purpose I must be indefatigable. I do not forget that it is more than a year since I had the happiness of embracing you all, and of visiting the home of my youth; daily more endeared to my memory by ten thousand sweet recollections."

Every heart rejoiced; each countenance reflected delight. The domestics partook of the joy produced by this happy intelligence, as they would have shared the regrets of ill tidings, and hastened to offer their honest congratulations, which no fastidious display of superiority repelled. The gardener, in the fulness of his joy, recurred to several well-remembered incidents in the life of the young mariner, ere, according to his humble expression, "he betook himself to the seas." The old servant's

mention of that period in the annals of his master's family, produced a sigh, which shewed how impossible it is for a father to forget the day that separates a darling son from his embrace, and launches him into a participation of the perilous chances of contagious example, and the influence of seductive vices: but the absorption was only momentary,—the danger had been escaped, and all became joyous exultation. How clearly did the rector's smile exhibit that exquisite feeling of proud and laudable satisfaction, which a parent only can experience for the son of his hopes, the object of his heart's best earthly attachment! The evening revived the recital of a thousand little incidents which live only in the records of the faithful heart, to prove to each other (what not one of the party had ever dreamed of doubting), that he, so fondly loved, was indeed worthy all the affection they bestowed.

"What chord is that in human nature," said the rector's sister, "which, when thus exquisitely touched, requires the aid of something like an implied apology for the expression of feelings,

which are natural as the vibrations of the heart, and of which the non-existence betrays either a defect, or disorder, in the rational system, as truly as impaired circulation would in the animal one."

On the following day the rector's brother, Sir Annandale, appeared at the rectory; and his unequivocal expressions of pleasure evinced how warmly he partook of the general joy.

CHAPTER IV.

AN outline of the group, thus assembled to dwell with untired attention on the merits of their youthful hero, is all an humble bird dare attempt.

Connect the enjoyment of an "elegant sufficiency," with a strict personification of the "village preacher:"—imagine the landscape of a "modest mansion," where the graces of simplicity pervaded the beauties of cultivation,—and you will do justice to my simple sketch of the rectory.—Here "remote from towns" my protectors taught the rustic peasantry, who sought and gained their smile. The soldier on his crutch, the beggar on his staff,—were cheered by the bounty, and improved by the counsel of the divine.

His sister, a widow in middle age, had an ap-

pearance more marked by sorrow, than enlivened by the steady presence of cheerfulness. Yet it was not the wearisome repinings of discontent, nor the fretful tones of impatience, that characterized the tenor of her days. The resemblance was rather to the autumnal tints of forest scenery; where, though a pensive sensation is experienced, you nevertheless

"Could seek, and tell again of all its charms."

The warmest benevolence, joined to the most guarded prudence and economy, made her a finished example to her niece; who had delighted to conform to her precepts, and be guided by her counsel.

It would honour the pen of the ablest delineator to pourtray the excellencies of such a pupil as Robina; who

——— "beautiful as sweet!
And young as beautiful!—and soft as young!—
And gay as soft!—and innocent as gay!—"

was gifted with a mind intuitively sensible of the importance of instruction. To give her lessons, was a pleasure, not a task: but it required the nicest observation, and the most delicate sense of

female excellence to guard against even the possible exuberance of virtue; against the too impulsive exercise of impressions, which, though angelic in the detail, and pure as the primeval days of creation, when "the morning stars sang together" over the planet they illumed,—yet, passing through the medium of the most perfect mortality, become objects of solicitude to the tenderness of affection. Fervently attached to her family, she bloomed like the myrtle among the recesses of the Appenines: yet her sweetness was not "wasted on the desert air." Essential to a father's earthly happiness; an affectionate solace to her who had religiously and zealously performed a mother's duty to her infancy, and who still watched her progress with all a mother's affectionate attention; a beloved sister; and the happy dispenser of a million of minor blessings to the poor, the sick, the helpless, and the aged:—was not the morn of such an existence very far from a wasted portion of creation's excellence?

Sir Annandale had attained the exalted rank of an Admiral in the British navy. His figure, manly

and erect, combined with a noble deportment, presented a model of perfection for the pencil of Guido, or the chissel of Praxiteles. His look beaming with intelligence and fire, yet displayed the union of mildness and urbanity with the majesty of command: and it might be said

> " The Lion incensed was a Lamb to his rage,
> The Dove was an Eagle compared to his smile."

His expression was that of a man habituated rather to decide, than to dispute; yet he had not risen into higher consequence in life by his distinguished skill and bravery as an officer, more than he had endeared himself to all ranks in the service by his kindness and steady attention to their welfare.

Liberal, generous, humane, and conciliating, his domestic life might have been,—deserved to be,—the acmé of human felicity: but, unfortunately, at an early period of his life, whilst inconsiderate (as young voyagers commonly are) of the essentials requisite to qualify the bride for the remoter character

of an agreeable companion for declining life, he obeyed the impulse of an attachment inspired by his fair partner at a ball,—asked,—and obtained a wife; who danced elegantly, sung divinely, and played like a daughter of Apollo. However, the novelty of her being distinguished as the Hebe of fashion's assemblies soon passed by, like all other novelties of youth and beauty. Time, in its regular effects, abridged the lady's capacity for pursuing these attractive arts to their former extent, and of enjoying them with the former zest. Moreover, other dancers had introduced other steps;—waltzing had not been included among the accomplishments of her day; and though preposterous examples were not wanting of subjects, certainly beyond the *second* climacteric, whirling under the tuition of a German, or French proficient in that art; yet the respect which could not be withheld from such a character as Sir Annandale, forbade in his lady so extravagant an attempt. Others touched the harpsichord;—nay more—strung the lyre of the "monarch minstrel," with as much grace, and, still more attractively, with a finger *younger* than hers.

The sweetness of her vocal music was rivalled, not by one or two imitators only of the Catalani, but by the multitude of new scions from the schools of melody and song. It must also be acknowledged that there are certain *extra* trills very apt to obtrude their graces on a glottis of fifty years practice.

A stranger, unhappily, to any solid resources that might compensate for these failures, and atone, in some measure, for the absence of youth's captivating embellishments (which she had yielded to the flattery of believing were all a woman need acquire), she became a prey to imaginary vexations; ever splenetic and repining, instead of rejoicing in the enjoyment of those numerous blessings that surrounded her.— Thus had her husband frequent occasion to lament the prevalence of that system of education, which, providing only for one season of life, left its succeeding ones vapid and unprofitable. Sir Annandale wished, and often endeavoured, to interest her attention, by recounting some of those naval achievements in which he had borne a distinguished part. When geography, politics, history, philosophy, or

even any branch of the belles-lettres, was the subject of his conversation, and which application to study in his leisure hours, had adapted him equally to discuss,—she evidently derived no pleasure, and seldom ventured one remark that bespoke an intelligent mind.

Rating her servants, and suspiciously observing every human being that might dare to enter the park, or rest beneath one of the trees; thereby expecting to detect a poacher, or discover a stranger on whom to vent her spleen: she might be said to move more like the dragon than the sylvan genius of the woods; for woe attended even the child who presumed to pluck a primrose from the hedge, or approach sufficiently near to inhale the fragrance of her shrubs.

Guarding the demesne with a jealous eye, and fond of frequently new-modelling her part of the establishment without interruption, she seldom accompanied Sir Annandale in his visits to the rectory, and on the present occasion he came, as was most usual, alone.

CHAPTER V.

SUCCEEDING communications from Charles brought the confirmation of his hopes for ascending to the first lieutenancy. The ship was quickly refitted for service and left port with sealed orders: the coast of America proved their destination.

Twice had the globe revolved on its axis since I began to harmonize my humble strain within the narrow precincts of a cage. No anxiety found entrance at the rectory, but for the safety of the beloved Charles; and his letters were so full and so frequent, as to afford every possible satisfaction from a distance so remote, and from a scene of warfare so hazardous.

Spring reappeared with all its wonted beauty: nature rejoiced in all her works. "The blackbird

mellowed his pipe," and flew past the window where I was imprisoned, with notes that seemed to pity my detention. The robin twittered to amuse my solitude: even the monotonous cuckoo called me forth to freedom and to song. The gaily-painted butterfly gloried in its liberty; the insect crawled in safety, privileged from the destructive tread, and permitted to describe any circle to which its locomotive power could extend: but the imprisoned bird tasted not that blessing, without which all others are but miseries disguised.

Robina danced, sung, and was happy as youth and innocence could make her. The blossoms were not sweeter than her graces; nor could a thought spring in her bosom which might not be inscribed in characters of light on Heaven's unclouded concave. Too liberal in her disposition to endure selfish seclusion, she was seldom without some select female companion, suited to her own age, with whom to pursue her studies and divide the overflowing rapture of her heart; she was fond of poetry even to enthusiasm; yet could not mistake ver-

satility for strength of talent, and never attempted composition, except when, for the amusement of her companions, she would invite, propose, refuse, or comply, in rhymes like these.

On opening rose-bud rests the bee,
The cuckoo chaunts on yonder tree,
My goldfinch warbles, as if free,
To cheer sweet Caroline!

Reviving sun-beams bless the day,
The blossoms perfume every spray,
Each gentle zephyr seems to say
Come, lovely Caroline!

The breeze steals o'er the glassy stream,
Whisp'ring a soft Elysian theme!
To share this rapt'rous noon-day dream;
Haste, charming Caroline!

The fragrant primrose decks the vale;
The gilded cowslip; hawthorn pale;
The woodbines—all their sweets exhale,
To welcome Caroline!

Fair emblem of thy spotless mind,
Is simple wreath of flow'rets twin'd;
So artless, playful, fair, and kind,
Is gentle Caroline!

The cooling grotto's rustic seat,
Will here refresh thy wearied feet:
No longer let me thus entreat;
But come, dear Caroline!

That month, whose celebration is so dear to the rejoicing villagers; so welcome to the city milk-maid, and so ardently expected by that wretched and neglected race, who strain their almost infant voices in the emphatic repetition of the monosyllable, "Sweep,"—now gave its earliest flowers, its sweetest blossoms, to adorn and to delight, in the grove and in the meadow. The park of the rich, the way-worn common of the poor, had each their respective beauties: if the lotus delighted to spread only in the enclosed fountains of the great, yet the lily towered high in the pool that refreshed the meadow of the little.

The family with whom I dwelt was not austerely repulsive to harmless amusement. May-garlands and its decorated pole, preceded by a band of untutored musicians, were allowed to pass in the procession of rustic pageantry over the glebe; and they had just concluded their complimentary duty to the revered pastor and the ladies, when a despatch from the post-office announced the return of Charles to England, and his intended speedy appearance at the rectory; where this intelligence diffused a joy which can only be felt. The father ejaculated a sentence of pious and sincere gratitude to the divine protector of his son; the aunt's fond maternal solicitude was displayed in her desire to have every comfort prepared for his reception; that after the dangers, the toils, the privations of a sea-life, he might enjoy all the luxuries of home. The sister, animated by the sweetest expectancy she had ever known, now ran over the symphony of her favourite song; then caressed her pet bird; and again reviewed the sketches in her port-folio which she deemed most congenial to her bro-

ther's taste. All was the preparation of an affection ardent as natural; which associated the highest idea of bliss with an arrival so impatiently expected.

MAHARAJA BERFOOT'S

CHAPTER VI.

MY residence at the rectory had continued long enough to teach me the character of the expected sailor: for whether their conversation was desultory, or connected, it seldom left him entirely out of its bearings.

I learnt that he was endued by nature with a quickness of capacity; with a soul for enjoying all the refined pursuits of intellect, joined to a disposition perfectly concomitant with the feelings of a mind so wrought. The progress he made in all the acquirements natural to his age, had displayed a precocity of genius, which it was only to be apprehended the imputed habits of the profession he had chosen would interrupt, if not entirely destroy. His studies having been regulated by the most affec-

tionate father, the harshness of a pedagogue had never inflicted on him the stripes of correction for a false conjugation, or an error in syntax; while, probably, some fault, of a colour and complexion to tarnish the after-conduct of life, if it did not receive applause, would incur, at least, no disapprobation; but be considered as the invention of an ingenious school-boy, to accomplish a favourite project.

The education both of Charles and Robina was that of the heart; which, viewed as certain of being either the prime mover of virtuous conduct, or the deceitful inventor of excuses for all the shades of vice, a strict examination was made of every early impression it received; and the participation of such amusements and occupations only as might tend to preserve its purity, was allowed. It was not deemed sufficient to go through a periodical routine of instruction, and then, closing the book, leave numerous avenues and opportunities of admission, by the medium of the senses, for ideas and impressions, which are as unfriendly, comparatively, to the wel-

fare of youth, as the effect that would be produced on vegetation by a week of summer-warmth during the frosts of December. "Childish gaiety," that apology so readily resorted to by indolently fond parents, had ever been denied admission here; and in all the recreations of their childhood, no mischievous device was ever practised, to injure the human, or inflict pain on an inferior creature.

Thus mild, merciful, amiable, and ingenuous in disposition; ardent, spirited, and honourable, in principle and in action, did Charles imbibe a desire of becoming a sailor, and of emulating the heroic acts his biographical readings had taught him. A high respect for his uncle's character tended also to confirm his decision; and the admiral was gratified beyond measure when he heard of the selection his nephew had made.

All proper arrangements concluded, Sir Annandale and the rector prepared to conduct Charles to the port of his embarkation. The grief of Robina

at this first separation from the dear companion of her walks—the sharer of her studies—the brother—the friend—the depositary of all her thoughts,—was not to be expressed. She met his image in all her pursuits, and could not immediately persuade herself that it was possible to live without him.

" And is he gone?"—On sudden solitude
How oft' that fearful question will intrude.
" 'Twas but an instant past—and here he stood!
" And now"—without the portal's porch she rush'd.—
And there at length her tears in freedom gush'd,
Big—bright—and fast, unknown to her they fell;
But still her lips refused to send—" Farewell!"
For in that word,—that fatal word—howe'er
We promise—hope—believe—there breathes despair!

Such extreme sensibility was natural at her age, and the inseparable attendant on so susceptible a frame of mind: but how many pangs are spared to the cold, the apathetic sons and daughters of mortality, who part with family—with friends—with

country—and with home:—not once turning to bless their household gods, or to offer the humble tribute of a tear! They start, like my irrational species from the nest, and return to it no more; but build another—forgetting home and kindred!



CHAPTER VII.

THE anguish Charles endured was, I learnt, most acute: but his feelings were not of such a nervous sensibility as that which characterized those of Robina. The novelty of the journey,—the conversation of his father and his uncle, with the first view of a seaport,—all conspired to give his mind such a fresh accession of ideas, that the regret he felt to lose the friends he was removed from, was already mingled with the anticipation of the delight he would experience, in describing to them all the impressions his new situation must create. On his first introduction to

> " The little wooden-world within!
> The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy,
> The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
> When at a word the tops are manned on high;"—

his youthful heart bounded with delightful astonishment. "Is this, Sir Annandale," said he, "the school that formed our naval heroes;—was such a construction as this, the scene of their glorious achievements;—did the hammock once afford a place of repose for Nelson; and does the cockpit boast that every Admiral was once a Midshipman; and shall I regret the temporary privations I must endure in common with the rest?—Never!—I must be a sailor!"

The rector was delighted to repeat to his sister and to Robina, every incident connected with his son's embarkation, and to make them acquainted with Sir Annandale's injunctions.

"You are about to embark," said the Admiral, "not merely in the profession of a sailor; but on the ocean of life. Too many, making the same experiment, not only soon blunder in their reckoning, but drift from bad to worse; until they are finally wrecked on those rocks, which a small share of common discretion in the outset would have taught

them to avoid. Some, falsely imagining it essential to their profession to become rude and boisterous, like the Atlantic during an equinoctial gale, have commenced with despising all cultivation of their intellect, and never aimed beyond keeping a log, or attempting to scrawl pointless caricatures of their superior officers. However, my dear boy, I have no fear of your becoming, in any degree, such a disappointment to the hopes and expectations of your family. Ever keep in mind this salutary truth, that those who command you, have themselves been commanded; and that he who knows how to command, knows also how to obey. Remember, that the only fair and direct channel to distinction and respect is through an unvarying regard to the dictates of honour and of truth. Be solicitous to maintain a steady perseverance in the cultivation of those sentiments and principles which it has been your father's care to instil; recollecting that the name and duty of a sailor is no more incompatible with the rational character man was destined by his Creator to sustain, than that of any other profession. Finally, I would

have you cautiously avoid those democratic principles sometimes promulgated in ships of war, by subjects whom improper conduct has kept in the rear of all honourable distinction. When a young man devotes himself to the public service, his whole attention should be constantly occupied in the best means of serving his King with loyalty; his country with patriotism and fidelity. Retain the highest sense of your religious duties, without becoming a fanatic, or making yourself ridiculous by abstract and occasional fits of monastic devotion. When you attain rank, and may have occasion to exercise that most unpleasant part of command, the inflicting of punishment, let it not be done in the moment of anger; but let the sense of justice be strictly tempered with mercy.

For myself, dear Charles, I will only say, that I began my naval career when about your age, and was, therefore, enabled to form a better judgment of the profession, its necessary discipline and occasional disagreeables, than, possibly, those can who come into the service at an earlier period, and have imbibed

only borrowed notions, on which their powers of reasoning have never been employed.

I have ever made it a point on all occasions, from the situation of a Midshipman to the rank of a Post Captain, to volunteer my services, either in boats or on shore, where most likely to meet the enemy. When in command, it has been my invariable rule never to allow any considerable part of my ship's company to proceed on services of such a nature, without leading them myself. I do not boast of this, because many others have acted on the same principle; and the example will, I hope, always prevail. Before an action, I always fervently recommended my immortal spirit to its divine Creator, and devoted my life to my country's welfare. If I had fallen in the glorious conflict, I should have met the death I most covet: if I lived, and succeeded in the duty I attempted, I was sure to advance in the profession I am inseparably attached to. I have been in all the great naval actions of a long and arduous war, and have received only ten or a dozen scars. I have, therefore, no right to complain; but am

grateful to my Sovereign and to my country for the rank which I hold, and for the honours that have been awarded to me. I trust my last breath will be spent in that service to which my whole life has been devoted, and that you will never hear it asserted, that your uncle became an Admiral and then forgot the situation of subordinate officers, or the welfare of the British seaman."

The young sailor faithfully remembered these early lessons, and giving due importance to his uncle's advice, became a fine and finished youthful character of the officer and the gentleman united.

The affection which had woven so sweet a link in the childhood of Charles and Robina, acquired solidity with their increased years, and now united them in the strongest bonds of reciprocal attachment. Their minds were similar as their persons—

"Her's the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day."

This perfect congeniality of disposition; his cultivated acquaintance with literature, and with music; his refined taste for the softer adornments of life,—all prepared him for the fullest enjoyment of that home, which his presence now made so blest; for the harbinger of his approach had scarcely reached the rectory, when the welcome voice of Charles was heard in the hall.



CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW days had elapsed, and the thousand welcomes of an affectionate family had not ceased to vibrate on the ear of the son, the brother, and the nephew, when the rector suggested the propriety of taking an early moment of returning those numerous attentions their neighbours had vied in shewing since Charles's return. For, with no wish to detract from the kindness of any motive emanating from superior intelligence, yet, even an humble bird could not help observing, what an active sensation is produced by an addition to the number of possible conquests among unmarried sisters and disposable daughters.

To particularize a neighbourhood would be too

tedious; especially as the inhabitants of this district had no striking features of peculiarity.

> " Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
> They kept the noiseless tenor of their way."

One exotic family is all that shall be noticed. A few miles from the rectory stood a very charming retreat, which but a few months before had become the property of a family, who having means, very patriotically preferred contributing to the national revenue, by entering a carriage, and all the *et-ceteras* thereof, on the assessor's bill, to following the example of their progenitors, and trusting to those feet, on which no taxes are levied.

" A carriage in town," said the rector, " or in its immediate vicinage, adds nothing to the naturally inferred consequence of the proprietor; and unless some very extraordinary form or fashion in the construction of the vehicle happen to be introduced, not one among the countless throngs in Bond-street or Pall-Mall inquires, ' Whose equipage is that ?'— but in the more remote districts of the country, a car-

riage is the very *ne-plus-ultra* of prosperity; the pinnacle of greatness."

It must be, therefore, almost superfluous to add, that these exotics were admissible into all circles of their neighbourhood; for neither in town or country is it deemed quite essential, or always convenient, to measure want of intellect against weight of specie!

The residents at the rectory, not affecting singularity in matters of no moment, had to receive a return visit from the family of the *ci-devant* Mr. Jacobs, dealer in second-hand articles of all denominations; but now yclept Solomon Jacobus, esquire.

By a visitor of very communicative disposition I had heard it related, that he had originally been a Jew: but from pure love to the moving monument of "fat, contented ignorance," designated by the rustics Madam Jacobus, he laid aside the Israelitish unbelief, for the semblance of the Christian faith; and was plodding on much below mediocrity in business, when foreign intelligence announced to

him the acquisition of a very considerable property, by the death of a brother, who had, fortunately for Solomon, never heard of his recantation. Almost at the same time, fortune (who like her eldest daughter, delights in showers), turned one of the great prizes from a lottery-wheel into the pocket of the hopeful heir of the Jacobus family; commonly called Mr. David. This overgrown booby, disguised by his tailor as a man of fashion; habited in the undress costume of a military officer; with an outside coat *befrogged* like the margin of those masses of mud and water, which, though green and stagnant, are denominated "fish-ponds," by the "designers of ornaments for pleasure-grounds;" had been bred to no occupation but that of keeping the ledger: and having had no view beyond the mere application of the measure and the balance, his acquirements had barely kept pace even with so humble an employ.

In Miss Belinda Jacobus, I understood, were combined the flippancy of a milliner's apprentice, with all the accomplishments that generally adorn

those girls, who, after long and intimate association with a vulgar servant, are sent for a period of two or three years to a "fashionable seminary for young ladies," and, drilled for six months afterwards, in taking "finishing lessons from the most approved masters."

I was very curious to observe such a group. On their entrance an apology was offered for the senior Jacobus, who "having been made," said Madam, "a justice of peace this week, and being *wery asthmatical*, he had *catched* a cold, and not able to bear *no* close carriage, was afraid to *wenture* in the open *chay*." "Dear! what a pretty bird," exclaimed Miss Belinda; "if it is fashionable to have birds, I will endeavour to get one."

Before this compliment to my charms, or inquiry what fashion might sanction as to my species being incarcerated, could receive Robina's reply, Madam, addressing the rector's son, said, "So you have had a long journey to old England, Sir?" "A long voyage certainly," replied he; "above three thou-

sand miles." "*What!* all that *vay vithout* stopping?" "Yes, Madam, as our resting was not requisite." Turning to Mr. David, he attempted conversation, and removing a very curious specimen of fossil from the mantle-piece, asked his opinion of it, adding some trifling remark on mineralogy, and concluded by observing that he had procured this natural production whilst detained in a port of Cornwall, some time before.

"Pray, let me look at it," cried Miss Belinda; "I have heard so much about Cornwall, where the people don't eat, drink, nor sleep, like those in London, but live hundreds of miles under ground, making tin and copper. Papa has got an old piece of money, with a frightful head upon it, called Caius Gracchus, and 'pa thinks he must have been a Cornishman."

The young lady's volubility ceased. Mr. David added not a syllable, but looked volumes of vacancy.

After a wearisome half-hour, it may be imagined

their leave-taking was a great relief to the risible muscles of those who remained.

The proposition was now resumed of sending an invitation to their circle of acquaintance: "and on the succeeding day," added the rector, "let the poor be most hospitably regaled." These were not the suggestions of dotage, nor the self-flatteries of ostentation; but the pure, the genuine feelings of happiness, at seeing a son return after an absence of three years, and still continuing all that the most affectionate and solicitous parent could have desired or anticipated.

No preparation, consistent with the invariable harmony and good order ever paramount in the arrangements at the rectory, was spared for the entertainment and accommodation of the invited; for unrestrained by pharisaical pride, or fastidious scrupulosity, there was not a family of consequence in the vicinity with whom they maintained not an interchange of civilities. In preparing for the festivity of the day, I had first been removed from the

breakfast parlour to the drawing-room, where the bronze figures reflected no discredit on the artist's skill, nor on the purchaser's delicacy, by the fashion of absolute exposure of symmetry being a little departed from. There was an elegant display of paintings—for the rector had travelled, had the nicest classical taste, and was a connoisseur in the art; at the same time he was so feelingly chaste in the choice of his subjects, that a vestal might have admired his collection without a blush. Finally, to secure my safety, I was removed to a small, but charmingly neat apartment called Robina's study.

The *fête* lasted long beyond the midnight hour: but as it was not usual in this family to descant with satirical freedom on the manners or conduct of their guests, I am unable, from any part of their conversation the following day, to detail what passed.



CHAPTER IX.

SIR Annandale, addressing Charles one morning, said, "You promised in the hasty letter which announced your having quitted the Persepolis, to be more explicit on the subject when we met. Suppose we give this opportunity to the discussion."

"Most readily, my dear sir; for, having ever kept in view your excellent counsel, and made it always the guide of my conduct, I am assured that, had it been possible for me to have asked your opinion at the moment, you would unhesitatingly have sanctioned my removal.

First lieutenant of so fine a frigate, while commanded by a brave and distinguished officer, my situation was truly enviable, and we all sincerely regretted the wounds he sustained in the action, did

not permit his leaving England with us; for, going on the very station most to be desired, what might we not have expected; what might we not have essayed to do! To our extreme mortification, the succeeding captain was not the man adapted to realize every hope formed of the Persepolis. Frivolous yet pompous (if terms so contradictory can be reconciled), his whole demeanour was marked by a littleness of mind which gave no promise of a laurel ever gracing his brow. Practising gesture, attitudinizing, and speaking in theatricals, were more his studies, than the glory of his country or the capacities of his ship. However, the war commenced: we quitted port for a three months' run over the finest cruising ground we could have chosen. In the course of a few days the discovery of a warlike vessel at some distance animated us with joy. The report was instantly carried to the captain, with a degree of energetic zeal that ought to have been his highest gratification. The ship was cleared for action;—silence reigning absolute;—every officer and every man at his post;—and every heart fraught with hopes of glory. But the delay occa-

sioned by his dilatory and undetermined conduct, with a haze that arose, befriended the escape of the chase, and was a lamentable finish to the glory we had anticipated. We returned to the port we had left in less than a month, with the loss of the ship's foremast, owing to injudicious management in a gale of wind, and without a single capture to console us. I gladly embraced an opportunity of joining my present ship, the noble character of whose captain is well known. With a steady system of discipline, and the most perfect knowledge of the service, he places such proper confidence in his officers, as to rely on their strictly executing the orders they receive. Under his command every thing we attempted succeeded, and not a service did we engage in, without afterwards receiving the approbation and thanks of the commander-in-chief. Whether attacking the floating-batteries on the Patuxent, or exploring in our boats the fortifications of the Potowmac; blockading the Penobscot; penetrating the obscured and hazy atmosphere, so prevalent in those seas, or enduring all the rigours of

cold and privation; yet were our duties cheerfully met, and zealously performed."

"I am satisfied," my dear Charles, "replied the Admiral; "you did right in changing from the Persepolis to the Arragon; and as there are not many objectionable characters in posts of high command, you need scarcely fear ever meeting another such mortification. Now, if you please, we will take a look at your father's intended improvement in the school-room for the poor."

CHAPTER X.

"AUNT," said Robina, "two strangers are coming up the lawn with Sir Annandale and my brother."

These strangers were introduced as two of Charles's former messmates: and they presently proceeded to acquaint him that, being paid off, they had agreed to sojourn awhile in that neighbourhood, having heard its beauty highly praised, and hoping also to find some sporting amusement.

"An inclination," said one, who was an officer of marines, "which has occasioned a very laughable occurrence this morning: though the loss of our guns is not so very diverting."

"The loss of your guns," said Sir Annandale,

" how so: did you start a pursuer, instead of a pursuit, and throw them overboard in the chase?"

" Not exactly that, Sir, though nearly as bad. Our being strangers may, perhaps, apologize for having presumed to approach, rather closely, the borders of a demesne in this vicinity: but as our intentions were merely those of harmless ramblers, the present company, at least, will I hope acquit us of any premeditated offence. We began our land-cruising keenly, I admit; certainly not with much external appearance of sportsmen, having no appendage either of horse, hawk, or hound. However, we were presently brought up by a very abrupt question, from a singular looking man (in a strong provincial accent), of 'Who we were?' Unaccustomed to such interrogatories, my companion, the doctor there, as abruptly demanded by what right he presumed to inquire. 'By what right, young man? By the most distinguished of all rights, by the King's; or, which is the same thing, by His Lord-Lieutenant's most honourable commission given unto me, Solomon Jacobus, of

Nightingale-place, Esquire, making, constituting, and appointing me, Solomon Jacobus, as aforesaid, Esquire, a worshipful magistrate of this county: by which right I command you to lay down your guns, unless you can produce proper commissions deputing you to use them.'

" Commissions! Solomon Jacobus, Esquire, as aforesaid, *et cætera, et cætera;* aye, that we can, and from the same office that supplied our St. Vincents, our Duncans, and our Nelsons; and that would have authorized our burning all the Dutch ships in the Texel, could we have got at them, as we did the other day the town of Washington: and surely they are of sufficient validity to authorize our dowsing a sparrow's topsails, or running down a snipe!"

' O! now I understand you; sailors, I suppose, come here to spend two or three shillings a day, and annoy all the gentlemen, nay, even the magistrate, by destroying the fences, *which are as good as new*, and breaking down our park-palings.'

" ' You mistake the matter, we only wish to remember the smell of powder, and to teach it to you ;' when we discharged our pieces close to the old boy's ear. He uttered a tremendous yell, which, with the report of our guns, brought some half dozen fellows about us, and a scuffle, in their attempting to disarm us, would very likely have been attended by serious consequences, if, at the moment, a gentleman had not approached, whom, from his appearance, we judge to be a clergyman. The assertion that we had discharged guns in presence of the magistrate could not be disputed : that it was done with a malicious intention, was not quite so clear : but, conforming most readily to the clergyman's advice, we resigned our guns, until further examination, gave our cards, and were returning to the village, when we had the pleasure of falling in with you."

" A circumstance," said the Admiral, " at which I greatly rejoice ; since if this litigious and ignorant magistrate,

' Drest in a little brief authority,'

should persist in his resolution of being troublesome, the testimony of my brother to prove that your present hostilities are only exercised against blackbirds and snipes, may tend to extricate you from any disagreeable consequences in the shape of expense, or personal trouble, which some paltry practitioner of the law might make a job of."

Sir Annandale had scarcely ceased to speak, when the rector entered, accompanied by the magistrate. The former gave a bow of recognizance, as Charles introduced his messmates: but Solomon Jacobus, Esquire, looked most wrathfully; and had extended the organ of speech to commence a philippic, when the admiral addressed his brother, saying, "You were, no doubt, the mediator this morning, whom these gentlemen have mentioned, in their account of an extraordinary conversation they had with Mr. Jacobus."

"Yes, yes," vociferated the enraged Esquire, "extraordinary indeed. I was within an ace of being slain, killed, cut off from the face of the earth,

and that on my own estate, by *these here* youngsters, had not the alarm given by my servants brought the rector to my assistance."

" Pray, Sir, moderate your alarm now," cried Charles; " under this roof you are in no danger from these sons of Bellona."

" I don't ask, Sir, who their father and mother *vas;* and I am not afraid of the smell of powder, for I *vas* too long a soldier for that. Five years I *vas* in a company of *Wolunteers:* aye, Sir, and gay enough I *vas* too in *them there* days; but you have seen my son, and he *vill* be just such another soldier as I *vas*, soon as he gets into the local, *vhere* he shall have a Captain's company."

Like the Persian glass-man, the old *wolunteer* had now lost sight of present grievances; the Admiral and his brother, taking advantage of the pacific moment, succeeded in qualifying the matter so far as to obtain the magistrate's promise to reconsider it, and to return in the evening and sup at the rec-

tory, bringing his son, Mr. David, with him. Duly in the open *chay* came the expected pair. After a long renewal of the morning's conversation, the matter was adjusted, and the whole party took their seats at the supper-table.

Very tall, and uncommonly thin (answering to the vulgar idea of a *lank* figure), was the Captain elect. Remarkable for his stupid taciturnity, he seemed this evening less afraid of inhaling an accession of air, and really made many humble attempts at speech.

Preparatory to taking his knife and fork, he lifted his coat over the back of his chair, and turned up the cuffs. A specimen of little-minded economy, which spoke his character and early habits beyond all which Hogarth's pencil could pourtray.

This heir of military distinction, addressing himself to Robina, began with, "I don't like the country much; do you Miss?"

" Yes, I do", she replied; " and am sorry that any person should not, who has occasion to reside in it."

" I am not *forced* to stop with pa', Miss; I have *something* of my own, and can go up to Tooley-street again, whenever I *likes*. There a'nt no plays here, nor nothing. I used to go always once a year to Drury-lane, and *wery* often to the Circus and to *Ashley's*; and I saw the *sallymander* eating fire, and them there *Hinjans* taking the snakes up in their hands like a roll of tobacco. The last play I *vent* to, *vas* called *Wenus* Preserved. *Vas* not you never to a play, Miss?"

This question was the finale of David's rhetorical exertion; he leant against the back of his chair (without the risk of injuring his new coat), and fixed his grey, unmeaning optics fully on his auditress; who, struggling with the laugh good manners obliged her to suppress, laconically replied, she had been several times in London, and at the theatres;

but had never experienced any regret at returning into the country.

The good humour and conviviality of the reconciled Esquire prolonged the visit to a late hour, and ended in a request that the officers would spend the next evening at Nightingale-place.

The next day, Sir Annandale and his lady took leave of a house so much more suited to impart happiness than their own, which, though splendid and elegant, was not blessed with an agreeable *lady commandant ;* and it is pretty well understood, to birds as well as men, what a drawback on domestic enjoyments such a circumstance occasions.

The rector also left home on that day respecting some clerical duty, so that it was the first interval since Charles's return, that the party had been reduced to a trio.

It would be no easy matter to define the high

sense of bliss which actuates the bosoms of sensible and endeared connexions, thus meeting after long separation, and enjoying the remembrance of the past, enlivened by the still dearer happiness of the present; and if they do venture a glimpse beyond that blissful present, it is gilded with the richest tints of anticipative fancy.

Few among her sex could he better adapted to maintain conversation than the rector's sister. Luminous in her ideas, and eloquent in their expression, she was always prepared to join in any subject, consistent with that retiring diffidence and unassuming modesty which constituted the principal traits in her character.

The evening closed in the concord of sweet sounds. Gladness reigned in each heart, and the "spirits of an higher sphere" might have mingled in their harmony.

I agree perfectly in opinion with Lady Morgan, said Charles, that "man is so much the creature of

situation, so dependent on the tone of his natural, for the enjoyments of his mental being, that the scene which glows, the odour which intoxicates, the sound which ravishes, have each a power no strength of intellect can resist; and sorrow is soothed, and bliss exalted, as external objects play on the imagination, or influence the senses."

"My aunt's soul of feeling," said Robina, "ever pays a tributary tear to the highest emotions of her joy;" and as she kissed away that tear, Charles added, "Now, my dear aunt, say no more, '*Faut-il donc que j'aime si tendrement, et que je sois si tendrement aimé!*'"

CHAPTER XI.

THUS passed the time "a clear unruffled stream" until it brought the period very near for Charles's resumption of his public duties; but a departure so dreaded, a separation so very painful, even in the anticipation, was kept out of sight as much as possible. Yet come it must, and no avocation could solace Robina's aching heart, nor dry her tearful eye.

The pet-bird had become such a favourite with Charles, that an offer was made and accepted, that I should exchange my warm and comfortable apartments at the rectory, for the more confined accommodation of a cabin.

Taking a most tenderly affectionate leave of his family, my new master stepped into his father's carriage, which was to convey him to the next post-

town,—received me from the hand of his sister,—waved his adieus once more, and thought it no disgrace to his character as a man to vent in tears the feelings which overwhelmed him. He then felt how truly he could "scorn the proud man that is ashamed to weep."

Though the strength of his local attachment felt no abatement yet; after a journey of nearly three days, a glimpse of his ship riding proudly at her anchors, rekindled all that enthusiasm for his profession which had lain dormant during an interval passed in the domestic enjoyments of his home; and in the fulness of his heart he could not forbear exclaiming

"Who would not brave the battle-fire!—the wreck!
To move the monarch of her peopled deck?"

The extraordinary novelty of every object that now surrounded me; the strangeness of every syllable, and of every sound, threatened, for a day or two, the annihilation of my faculties.

Having seen my master in his private character only, I could not have given him credit for the power of entering so fully into the busy scene, and attending to the almost incessant demands the numerous avocations of his professional duty imposed.

From solicitations to go on shore, to reports of coming on board; from announcing the hours of breakfast and dinner, to the regulation of the nightly watch; from painting the hull, to blackening the yards; from lowering boats, to the hoisting of them up: in short,—from the earliest duty at day-dawn, to that of midnight, all seemed to wait his affirmative nod, or negative monosyllable.

At length the ship, fully equipped,

"Only waited now the fav'ring gale."

My master's voice, as he returned from the deck, roused my attention from a reverie into which I had fallen, as I imagined the probable events, accidents, and dangers of the expected cruise. "Well, gentlemen," said he, "no more visits to the shore this

trip; there is, at last, every appearance of a favourable breeze coming on, and I have the Captain's orders to have all ready for a start at day-light in the morning."

"O! Sir," exclaimed a young officer, throwing aside his violin from which he had been extracting the most discordant sounds, "perhaps the Captain won't come on board so very early; and I was just about to ask leave to go ashore: I should like to get one game at billiards more, or another gallop on a hack Rosinante."

"You will not, indeed, Sir," replied my master; "for although the Captain is strongly attached to his interesting family, yet his zeal for public duty will surmount all private feelings, and, I am certain, a very early hour of the morning will see him on the alert."

I saw no expression in Charles's countenance that betrayed the smallest regret at the prospect of leaving port; yet a sensation of chastened joy per-

vaded his tones when, resuming the flute, he thus addressed it,

Sweet soother of my cares! to thee I fly
To calm stern duty's turbulence,—and sigh
Through thee those cares away. Thy air-born tone
Can thrilling rapture to the nerve impart,—
Can imitate love's wish, and misery's moan,
And lighten of its load the burden'd heart.
While o'er thy form my trembling fingers move,
Untaught by art, in "native wood-notes wild,"
No sad remembrances of hopeless love
Dispel the soothings of thy influence mild.
The world's chill apathy has never driven
My wand'ring footsteps from the haunts of men—
Nor to despondency my soul is given,
For music lures me back to joy again.
Not for the noisy clangor of the wire,
Or brazen-throated tube, would I resign
Thy milder harmony; which, like the lyre,
Can make thy master's varied feeling thine.

"How's the wind?" "Northerly, Sir." "That's well!—loose the fore top-sail,—fire a gun,—and order the Captain's boat to be ready."

Such was the intelligence the succeeding morning conveyed to me, before its early hour could be well said to have met the orient beam. A mist, which had for a day or two past obscured the horizon, now began to disperse; the sun arose in more than usual splendour; the first breeze was cheering as the breath of Heaven on my first emerging from my native nest; a period now most forcibly brought to my recollection—for, displayed fully to my view were hills clothed with verdure, the fir, the beech, the stately oak, and humble underwood, all resembled the scene of my early freedom, which, though so long lost, could never be forgotten: the vallies glittering with dew-drops, and vocal with the hymns of praise; no tube destructive to my species; no fawning voice, nor alarming call from hunter, horn, or hound, broke on the stillness of the air; the mountain-ash spread its scarlet-covered branches, and the convolvolus twined around them, in perfect security:—for birds only were yet in the woods.

While I was elevating my strain to emulate the sky-lark's exulting note, Charles re-entered the

cabin, and in a meditating mood opened the door of my cage, held his finger to receive me, and bestowed the customary tribute of his praise on my plumage and my song.

"The Captain is coming, Sir," reported a midshipman, and withdrew with the quickness of light. My master sighed, "'Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, captivity, still thou art a bitter draught.' Genius of Sterne, pardon this reading of thy line;" then kissing me for Robina's sake, restored me to the cage, but omitting to secure its entrance! The servant's presence succeeded the master's, and his task of adjusting the cabin furniture completed, he retired without closing the cabin window!

My sight tantalized with the beauties I could only hope to see but for another moment; my master's apostrophe to captivity still vibrating on my ear; every disagreeable conviction of a ship being totally opposite to my nature and enjoyments; the preparations to unmoor deafening every other

sound : I approached the unguarded apertures, and once more yielding to impulse, effected my escape from the ship, which, though an ark for my preservation, was nevertheless the place of my confinement.

CHAPTER XII.

ONCE more a denizen of air, I roamed delighted. In rapture indescribable, and in the plenitude of liberty, I stretched my pinions through the clear expanse; though many were the kind remembrances I cherished for the fair Robina; and many were the wishes I warbled, that prosperous breezes might waft her brother through the voyage of life.

The verdure of summer began to give place to the sombre tints of autumn; even winter had spread his mantle of hoar-frost, and yet I had not, since my emancipation, reposed twice on the same tree: but the long period during which I had been sheltered from exposure to the chilling season, had incapa-

citated me for meeting its rigours, as I could have done in my original state.

From leafless trees and condensed streams, I was obliged to approach the abodes of mankind.—Recovering, by degrees, my former acquired habits of familiarity, I pecked the grain scattered for the domestic poultry, and the crumb dispensed by the benevolence of the infant rustic.

A prodigious fall of snow sadly damped my energies, and abridged the extent of my ærial excursions. The broken casement of a cottage seemed to offer me a shelter:—to gain a momentary respite from the season's inclemency, and to recover my exhausted strength, I inconsiderately entered.

At the instant, a woman applied a *hat* to the aperture through which I had found access, and exultingly calling her child, cried, "Come here, Johnny, I have caught a bird!"

Fluttering—panting—hopeless and desperate—I

darted against the casement—rushed upon the beam—and sought some crevice for escape: but in vain. The cell, though mean and miserable, was a castle that barred all egress to efforts weak as mine.

My capture finally effected, "Johnny" was despatched down a ladder (which was used in the double capacity of a staircase, and to facilitate approach to the highly-piled faggot-wood), to bring a lantern as the vehicle of security for my detention and removal: for, as their prize was distinguished by the appellation of a goldfinch, it was determined that I should be consigned, for an interval, to the obscurity of this horn vehicle, which I fancied, would scarcely serve to make "darkness visible" to the nocturnal traveller.

By this mode of conveyance I soon reached Sir Paragon Tinkler's lodge-gate; there to be deposited with the boy's grandmother; until it should be ascertained whether I might be desirable in Lady Tinkler's aviary.

"Go thyself, Johnny," said a creature resembling the witch of Endor, "mayhaps thou wilt get a morsel this cold weather." The boy obeyed, and on his arrival at Paragon-hall, the prize was transmitted to the housekeeper's room, where sat a female busily engaged in attendance on a small quadruped.

A few moments explained to me that I was in the presence of the housekeeper, the butler, and her ladyship's woman. Honoured by the approbation of these important personages; the butler, on his leaving the room, was requested to send Ben, to ask Tom, if Peter would run into the aviary department for a cage.

My removal being accomplished in due time by the active exertions of the butler, aided by Ben, Tom, and Peter, the bell summoned an inferior female domestic; who was ordered to pick up a few potatos and put into the boy's lantern: "And remember you don't forget to give that beef I spoke

to you about this morning, to the spaniel for her dinner; poor thing!"

Though the boy had shewn me no mercy, yet I did think he could have dined on beef as well as that spaniel, on whom it was so feelingly bestowed.

The rector's sentiments recurred to my recollection. "I would protect the irrational part of the creation from every degree of cruelty, and would neither consign my dog to the *Grotta del Cane*, nor give him to the experimental philosopher's exhausted receiver: but I would not exalt him to be my table-companion; nor suffer him to become the object of a solicitude, inconsistent both with my nature as a man, and his station as an animal."

"Nannette," said her ladyship's woman to a girl waiting her orders, "*l'huile de rose ne vant rien; apportez moi l'huile de jasmine.*"

She then anointed the hide most delicately with

the oil of fragrance, and very carefully brushed the teeth of this "*petite chienne;*" lifted the darling Delia on her arm, and taking the cage containing the singing-bird in her hand, ascended to Lady Tinkler's apartment; which did, indeed, appear devoted to the assemblage of all that ever issued from the repositories of elegant decoration.

Her Ladyship, young and remarkably beautiful, was reclining on a Grecian couch, examining a drawing of heads, legs, wings, &c., belonging to the various orders of my species. Delia was laid on an *ottoman* at her ladyship's feet; while my little heart began to palpitate with fears of dissection. For the present "*le petit oiseau*" was placed on a stand more splendid than any he had ever before occupied; but which he would gladly have exchanged for freedom on the limb even of a "scathed oak."

Her ladyship, with the indispensable languor of fashion, expressed her gratification at the gloss of my plumage, and the proportions of my form; and

despatched her footman with compliments to Mr. Elfin, to request that he would look in during the day.

Mr. Elfin, a young man of prepossessing person, speedily appeared, and bowed most obsequiously to the honour of her ladyship's commands.

" You are extremely attentive, Elfin—though it was early to detach you from your study; yet wishing to make a new arrangement in my aviary, and also to shew you this new-comer, with whom I am vastly pleased, I want both your advice and opinion, knowing you are a proficient in Ornithology."

" Only an amateur, my lady; but desirous of improving beneath your ladyship's genius !"

With a degree of attention of which I thought so humble a subject unworthy, he looked at me; examined my beak, and would fain have tempted me to sing.

" Really, Lady Tinkler, I think the creature may be found worthy admission to the aviary: it appears to possess capabilities, and, with your ladyship's permission, I will exert my best endeavours for their improvement."

Lady Tinkler, after issuing orders and counter-orders with much irresolution, finally deferred the purposed new arrangements until another day, and added, " I am really sorry, Elfin, that Sir Paragon has not yet had any opportunity to give success to your wishes: but be assured he has every possible inclination to serve you."

Is it thus, thought I, that a nature so superior, endued with rationality, and evidently moving in a respectable sphere of life, does, for the sake of becoming a place-man, pursue the despicable occupation of a bird-fancier; when, by the proper use of his talents and capacity, he might have adorned the roll of fame, or the page of history! But I had not then discovered that Mr. Elfin was dispeller

of *ennui* to Sir Paragon and Lady Tinkler; the satirical buffoon, and *Delia's* fond caresser: all this was he, for the sake of patronage—by-and-bye.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE morning's repast had just ended, when, the novelty of my charms not having quite ceased, I was again introduced to her ladyship. At the same moment a note was presented, on the silver medium of conveyance, to her ladyship's delicate touch, who read,

" The widow of the late Captain Benbow, solicits the honour of Lady Tinkler's condescending attention for a few moments, at any time most convenient to her ladyship."

" I really wish the poor would try to discover the ' sweet uses of adversity,' and not tax one with their complaints. Carry my compliments to Mrs. Benbow, and say I will endeavour to see her at three, or four o'clock, if she can call then." About

the appointed period for this interview, her ladyship's medical adviser, Doctor Berkshire, was announced.

"This visit is very opportune, doctor; you know how wretchedly nervous I am, especially when any thing distresses me; and, at this moment, I am obliged to admit the widow of an officer who served under my father's command. She, no doubt, comes to solicit; and it is really very painful when one has no power of being useful."

Mrs. Benbow was shewn up;—her appearance and address were those of a modest, diffident, and sensible woman. Obviously struggling with the most unpleasant feelings, she began to explain the cause of that solicitude which occasioned so presumptuous an intrusion on her ladyship, to whom she politely offered every possible apology.

I could collect from the circumstances Mrs. Benbow related, that her husband had served for a very long period as a subaltern officer in the army: until, on obtaining the notice of Lady Tink-

ler's father, General Trewarren, he had risen to a company; and, ultimately, to a staff-appointment at the island of Goree; where his existence terminated. That possessed of no pecuniary resource, beyond the scanty pittance of her pension, it was desirable that her daughter should withdraw from the participation of an income so insufficient; and, being very anxious for her going into the world respectably, she earnestly entreated Lady Tinkler's benevolent patronage in aid of their interests.

"I do recollect something of your daughter, Mrs. Benbow, and would be very happy to meet your wishes: but there is no vacancy in my establishment. However, you may leave your address, though there is but very little chance of my finding any opportunity of recommending her."

Mrs. Benbow then asked for General Trewarren's address, and her ladyship vouchsafed to go to her boudoir to seek for her father's letter, that she might ascertain when he intended to leave Ireland.

"Thus cold," said Mrs. Benbow, "is my repulse from one of nature's apparently most finished pieces of workmanship! Thus has conformity to the whimsicalities of fashion, taught her to waste the sweet sensibilities of youth and female tenderness on an aviary of birds, and a Malaga whelp!"

The benevolent Doctor Berkshire desired Mrs. Benbow to call at his house the next day. She was grateful for the proposal, adding to her reply that, were her daughter a foreigner, no obstacle could possibly have existed to the immediate concession of Lady Tinkler's patronage. "Not that her ladyship is singular," continued Mrs. Benbow, "in her preference for a governess from the mountains of Switzerland, or the banks of the Seine. For, to the exclusion of many worthy and well-qualified English women, whose altered fortunes have rendered their personal exertion a duty of the first magnitude, Fashion admits no indigenous merit into its establishments.

"It is not, Sir, for my limited capacity to presume

to question the degrees of right and wrong: but if those terms have really any fixed meaning attached to them, it may be asked, should aliens enjoy the comforts of that country which is allowed to be inferior to none, either in native elegance or acquired refinements; while its own most dependent, and most neglected subjects, are undeservedly debased to servile occupations? drudgeries to which these flattered foreigners would most likely have been liable, had they not been too wise to remain at home, when England so invitingly opens her mansions for their reception, and fears her daughters might relapse into the old, stubborn, English virtues, if not trammelled in those pseudo-notions which characterize the morals of the nineteenth century."

Doctor Berkshire began to say, "I can excuse your warmth on this subject, Mrs. Benbow," when Lady Tinkler re-entered with the General's address, and the petitioner retired.

"Ah! little favourite!" sarcastically observed Doctor Berkshire, as Lady Tinkler renewed her

attentions to *Delia*, " if all thy species, exported from the Spanish territory, are so fortunate as thou art, how must it be regretted that the ill-fated Cervantes did not become canine, and visit England also!"



CHAPTER XIV.

SIR Paragon Tinkler, a young and a fashionable baronet, returned during the day, and after some common-place observations, communicated to his lady, as a matter of the utmost importance, that the poney had been sent from Tattersall's, and fully answered his expectation; that he had resolved on running Cleopatra at the next Epsom races, and would bet her against the best of Lord Longstall's stud. "Well thought of," continued the baronet, "I must write a line to Lord Basil, as he is not yet gone to Brighton, and must request him to look in at Christie's to get that head by Caracci: I may as well offer the other fifty, the thing is, upon the whole, worth three hundred guineas, when one is endeavouring to form a decent collection."

" I think so, Sir Paragon," replied her Ladyship; " and at the same time pray write a frank for me to Lady Newtown: I must trouble her to call at Squibb's, and if that wax model of St. Cecilia, coloured (as it is supposed) by the Empress Josephine, remains unsold, I wish to have it; if she can purchase that, and the preserved humming-bird for fifty pounds, I shall be satisfied."

Sir Paragon resumed the conversation, by saying, that he must dine with Lord Longstall and could not return until the next day; recommending Lady Tinkler to engage Elfin at chess for her evening amusement. " I wish sincerely, Isabella, you could overcome these nervous attacks, and visit more; the neighbourhood is very desirable."

A servant attending the bell, received the baronet's commands to order the people at the lodges of Paragon-hall, not to admit beggars in any shape. " I was beset near the grand entrance this morning by

a sailor's widow and her brat; so that, between public charities and private donations, one cannot keep a guinea."

"Yet," thought the feathered listener, "neither public nor private charities cost you one head of Caracci!"

CHAPTER XV.

"CHECK-MATE."—"True indeed, Lady Tinkler, I yield to your Ladyship's superior skill: but 'tis really very discouraging to be always driven off the field by the ladies. I encountered a very interesting girl lately, a Miss Benbow, and have been more than once vanquished by her."

"Elfin, observe, your knights are on the bishops' squares."

"I ask pardon my Lady; now they are right, I believe; proceed if you please."

"Is this Miss Benbow handsome, Mr. Elfin?"

"Not remarkably; but who, that has the good fortune to know your Ladyship, can think of beauty

in another?" — However," continued he, " Miss Benbow is, I must confess, rather above the *mediocre* class. She is, I understand, gone into Scotland, as governess and companion in the family of Doctor Berkshire's sister."

" Check to your king, Elfin," exultingly cried her Ladyship; adding, " I recollect something of Miss Benbow: her father was patronised by mine, and their regiments being stationed at Limerick during the same interval, while we were both very young, I sometimes associated with her."

" Miss Benbow still remembers with pleasure the interval passed at Limerick, and expresses the most affectionate respect for your Ladyship; at the same time, alive to the humility of her present situation, has forborne to recall the circumstance to your Ladyship's remembrance. She did, indeed, request me to find a favourable moment of assuring Lady Tinkler of her good wishes; and the day preceding her departure for the north, added to her request, that of presenting these lines, which, she said,

would remind you of her, who was once your ladyship's favourite rhyming friend.

Before Mr. Elfin could finish speaking, Lady Tinkler began to express her sincere satisfaction to know Miss Benbow was provided with a situation, and was so exceedingly rejoiced to hear of her welfare, that it really astonished the simple faculties of my uninstructed mind. I had never before understood that total indifference produced exceeding rejoicing; or that a mode of behaviour little short of contempt to the mother, exhibited any thing like an interest for the welfare of the daughter; and though I was only her Ladyship's *petit oiseau*, I yet fancied there must be some inaccuracy in my titled mistress's diction.

The chess-table removed, Lady Tinkler ordered her harp from the music-room, ran a finger of graceful harmony over the strings, and breathed a strain of the most finished melody.

For a moment I wished Sir Paragon could have

heard these heavenly tones; but immediately recollected it was very probable Lady Longstall might be as highly accomplished. When Mr. Elfin had made his parting bow, her Ladyship did attempt the uncommon exertion of reading Miss Benbow's manuscript, while I became attentively mute.

CHAPTER XVI.

TO THE ZEPHYR.

THE Æolian music of the Zephyr's wing,
A thousand long-lost sweet ideas bring ;
Each rapt'rous feeling vibrates on the soul,
As thus its notes so tremulously roll.
Joys, long entomb'd, its diapasons raise,
And memory wakes by such reviving lays ;
The days of childhood and the hours of love,
Still meet remembrance in this leaf-clad grove :
And though, green Erin, I have said " Farewell !"
Yet in my heart lives gentle Isabell.

To retrospection even hope resigns,
And mental vision to the dream inclines :
Imagination's ever-active power,
Lends all her charms to the enraptured hour !
With sounds celestial fills her votary's ear,
And bids each form in heavenly hues appear.

Inhaling life-balm from the vernal morn,
Extracting bliss from notes on ether borne,
Pleas'd Fancy, like the insect in the beam,
Or like the basking tenant of the stream,
Plays o'er the senses, captivates the soul,
While every feeling yields to her control.

Oh! that these dear illusions would but stay,
Till Memory's annals marked one happy day!
But list! rude winds the Zephyr's breath destroy,
'Twas ever thus, my true and fancied joy!

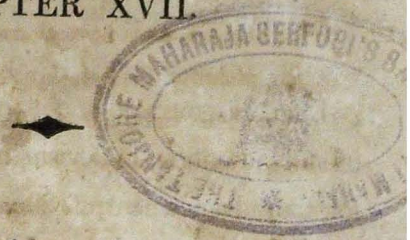
Return, sweet Zephyr! be not thus in haste;
Of Woe I've drank, the cup of joy would taste!
Thy sounds I'll wait at eve, at early morn
Thy breathing altar pensively adorn;
Weave Sharon's rose-buds in the simple wreath,
With every floweret from the perfumed heath.
Here peaceful streamlets glide beneath the hill,
Here all is beauty, unobserved and still—
No echo nearer than yon hermit-cot,
No step, save mine, in this sequester'd spot—
Here, whisp'ring Zephyr, let thine altar be,
From noise, from pomp, from idle glitter free:
Fancy, illumed in all her rays divine,
The only priestess at thy hallowed shrine!

Ah, knowst thou, Zephyr, I am soon to roam,
Far, far away, to seek another home?
No list'ning ear will wait thy accents then,
Nor seek the Æolian crevice in this glen:
Such magic sounds have charms but for the few,
Then, plaintive Zephyr, breathe one kind adieu!
And waft the sigh, that bids my bosom swell,
Before Lodona's happy Isabell!

When dreary Winter sends his rigours forth,
Car-borne on icy breezes from the North;
Of thee I'll think in many a highland scene,
Or where the Alps of Pentland intervene.
Absorb'd in soothing visions of the mind,
By musing nursed, by solitude refin'd,
On thought's swift pinion, lo! I'll visit here,
And, in idea, dry the parting tear!
Review each walk,—attend the peasant's tale,—
Mark each lov'd spot,—then rest in Zephyr's vale!

When memory wakes from this delightful theme,
And shews such bliss a fleeting, rainbow dream,
The plaid wrapt closer, and a bright'ning fire,
Shall bid the demon of despair retire!

CHAPTER XVII.



FOR the purpose of improving my capabilities, I was now submitted to Mr. Elfin's daily instruction, and regularly conveyed from the aviary to the small drawing-room, or to the *boudoir*. The preceptor had not long exerted his skill for my improvement, when one morning the baronet addressing his lady, said, "I have just heard, dear Isabell, of the chance of an appointment for Elfin, in the suite of Lord Auchindinny, who, before making the definitive arrangements for his voyage of diplomacy, is gone into the north. As Elfin has rather a good address, I will give him a letter of introduction to his lordship, which he had better present without delay; and whether it may have the desired effect or not, the job of providing for him will be off my

hands. Besides, as I shall have two, if not three, disposable seats after the next dissolution, perhaps Elfin may serve me in that sort of negotiation somewhere in the north."

Elfin, all gratitude and homage for the baronet's friendly attention, in devising this promising scheme for the advancement of his interests, made immediate preparation for his journey to Edinburgh, to present himself to Lord Auchindinny. But he had still one favour to solicit; "would Lady Tinkler allow his taking the pet-bird to Scotland, that he might enjoy the satisfaction of continuing to pupilize the docile creature?"

Many an important change, to more important beings than myself, is thus brought about by means too insignificant to enter the number of reasonable calculations.

I rewarded my new protector's kindness by resuming the tameness, and all those tractable habits, which had delighted my first dear preceptress.—

Pleased at the success of his imagined skill in my display of movements which he had never taught me, he could not refrain from communicating in a letter to his patroness, "The sweet little bird improves rapidly, and I delight in the extraordinary docility of his nature. Your ladyship will soon, I trust, condescend to receive the *protegé* from the hand of her devoted Elfin."

Among the many mutabilities of this mortal life, it was not decreed that Mr. Elfin should realize the anticipated pleasure of restoring me, or of deriving aught beyond visionary success in his embassy to the peer.

"Lord Auchindinny," said my master to a morning visitor, "fed my hopes with ambiguous promises and uncertain prospects, until his lordship was about to leave Edinburgh for London, when he expressed the greatest regret at not being able to meet Sir Paragon Tinkler's wishes in my behalf; for the treasury had left him so little patronage in the selection of his suite, that the only tolerable thing

he could command, had been long promised to a relation of his own."

So burst the bubble of that expectation, leaving its dupe devoured by spleen and dissatisfaction. His attentions to me, of course, declined, and my tuition stood entirely over. As Mr. Elfin was debating on his future pursuits, I, likewise, began to practise foresight; and, considering that I had no prospect but of returning to an aviary, where my companions would be as heterogeneous a crowd as the feathered tribes of the globe could produce; or that possibly, to make the matter worse, I should be discarded from the list of her ladyship's favourites, and be again consigned to the limits of the *lantern;* I resolved on escape, without casting one "longing, lingering look" towards Delia, or my lady.

My diverting manœuvres and my simple song, had interested a servant belonging to the *flat* on which my master resided. She often gave me an airing to the apartments of her mistress, who was no less gratified with the "*canny* English bird."

During the next treat of the sort I succeeded in detaching my feet by degrees from her grasp, and not having to apprehend the impediment of a closed door at the lower termination of the *stair*, I extended my wings, and quickly left the beautiful perspective of George-street far beneath me. I only heard the exclamation, "Wae's me, Maggy, the birdie's awa'!—God's sake, run, tak' the creature again!"

Ineffectual was the command, and useless the wish to recover me. Liberty I valued more than life, and change of place I naturally sought with avidity. All that I had hitherto seen appeared tame and spiritless, compared to the majestic castle that at once seemed to say to the groupes in Prince's-street,—"I guard, and I adorn."

"Come to the Calton-hill," said an inhabitant of Edinburgh to an English student, both of whom I had seen at my late master's. These I followed, and heard their remarks on the noble monument of the immortal Nelson, which crowns the summit of

one of nature's grandest and most mingled works of beauty.

" Where is Holyrood-house?" inquired another English stranger of a gentleman that was accompanying him through those meadows, which are contiguous to the city. Having often heard this Scottish palace named, the question interested me, and I pursued their route, until they paced the extensive area of Holyrood, and conversed on subjects connected with its history and decline. The Caledonian spoke of its former consequence and splendour with all the nationality attributed to his country; but the Englishman seemed to triumph yet more, when, in reply to an observation on the character of the unfortunate Mary, " Scotia's queen,"—" Ah!" said he, " it was for my countryman to vindicate her character, and to throw some light into a picture which every other historian, except Hume, had darkened even with imputed ill intentions, where facts would not fix obloquy strong enough on the most ill-fated of her sex. Whitaker, with the feeling of an Englishman and the elegance of a Thucydides, en-

tered the lists an almost solitary champion of her, whose life had proved, and whose unjustifiable execution confirms to after ages

> ' That every woe a tear can claim,
> Except an erring sister's shame.' "

" I am glad," said the Scotchman, " that Whitaker was an Englishman ; for the country that pre-judged the sovereign of another by eighteen years confinement, and then sent the executioner to release the victim, owed something to absolve a conduct so far apart from the chivalrous spirit of Britain."

" Let us not lose time in discussing the barbarisms of antiquity," said the student ; " I would rather observe how handsomely the national hospitality of your country was exhibited, when this palace became the residence of the expatriated royalty of France. Pursued by regicides,—driven from thrones, from courts,—nay more, from the very land of boasted chivalry and refinement ; it

was for your less famed, but more happy metropolis, to give refuge and welcome to those fugitives; which, if in after times they should ever approach as invading foes, each heart in Scotland would become a Wallace,—and every hand a Graham!"

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE gentlemen now entered the palace, and as I was become one of the "birds of Scotland," I continued my flight among those scenes of romantic beauty which were so often read of at the rectory. I delighted to attune my strain in the land that heard the latest minstrel sing; and, though

> "The little flower that loves the lea,
> Might well my simple emblem be,"

yet, thought I, in a land where, it is said, nature's shrine has more votaries than carry offerings to the temples of art, may I not become a favourite harmonist in the bower of some Ellen Douglas, or some Helen Marr?

More sublimely happy than I had, perhaps, ever been at any former period, I now flitted along

the track of the Pentland hills;—watched the lustre of the evening sun-beams on their summit, and then changed the direction of my flight towards a forest.

The morning's earliest dawn renewed my excursive propensities, and having learned to be an attentive listener to human voices, I soon discovered that I was then perched on the ruins of Roslin-castle; where I joined the society of other feathered ramblers, who met no difficulty of ingress and egress through the dilapidations time has effected in its once beautiful chapel.

Did I not rest my humble feet on the "Gentle Shepherd's" cenotaph in the shades of Pennicuick*; and did I not pour a most plaintive monody to the memory of Burns! Through Roslin's groves—through Dryden's parks †—on the turrets of Melville

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* The elegant seat of Sir George Clerk, Bart. M.P.

† The extensive domain of Dryden is the property of Sir Alexander Lockhart, Bart. and is situate between Roslin and Lasswade.

castle, and on the palace of Dalkeith, I met no rude repulse. The warbling competitors of the north neither hunted me from their society, nor despised the talent of a stranger. Yet, in preference to all other sports, my pinions were most frequently closed among the shrubs of Rosebank*; a shade of safety—a paradise of sweets:—where the traveller finds hospitality without ostentation; and the cheerful offer of kindness without the sense of obligation.

Wearied with a long ramble among hawthorn fences and sweet-briar hedges; I was perched on the bough of a beautifully spreading larch, attempting one of Robina's favourite strains. Ever alive to the feelings inspired by praise, and mending my song to merit the encomiums of some ladies who were resting under its shade, I ran over all the modulations my humble powers could accomplish.

"I never heard so sweet a bird," said one, apparently the eldest.

* The Northern Tourist will recollect with pleasure this beautiful Villa, the residence of Mrs. Miller.

" Not in Scotland you meant to add, Miss Benbow," replied another, good naturedly; " you know we forgive your prejudices."

" Indeed, my dear girls, they are so few that you may extend the royal sceptre of mercy towards me for that imperfection, with little danger of being accused of superabundant clemency. You are, at the same time, right in believing that I cherish a strength of local attachment, which I am persuaded no distance or time can efface. But, assure yourselves, I entertain no prejudices against any country, much less against this; a part of the same island in which I first breathed, and on whose friendly soil I am more than compensated for all I quitted in England; except,—Oh! except my mother's morning smile, and evening look of love!

In the elegant language of an admired writer, you have often heard me say, " Love of country! Oh! for ever distant from the soul of genius, from the heart of feeling, be that cold philosophy, which endeavours to lessen thy influence on the affections

and the mind! which paints thee as the dream of erring fancy; as the brilliant vision of enthusiastic, but mistaken virtue!" And never have I learnt to draw any invidious distinction between the southern and northern divisions of Britain. That strong prejudices should have existed before the union, and even for some succeeding years afterwards, is not surprising; because the frequent national wars, and almost incessant continuance of hostilities on the borders, were not, could not, be immediately forgotten. But now, in the superior ranks of society, those prejudices are remembered no more; and whenever you may visit England, if you should hear a proverbial reflection, or a sarcastic allusion applied to the Scotch, it will proceed only from some illiberal and unenlightened mind.

Possibly, you have never heard that the inferior inhabitants of our English counties entertain prejudices against each other, on many occasions, fully as marked as against this more remote part of the empire. In the course of my readings I have never met any observation on the circumstance; but my

own imagination attributes the existence of such an unnatural feeling to the traditional accounts of the many separate states into which the kingdom was once divided.

" Dear Miss Benbow," said the youngest of the party, " you have made me so pleased by your kind assurances that Scotland is not disagreeable to you, that may not your favourite Juliette solicit, without chance of refusal, your permission to copy the verses you were writing yesternight."

The compliment is so very flattering, Juliette, that (since you have discovered my rhyming propensity) they are at your service.

CHAPTER XIX.

JULIETTE's impatience to read something new, gave the Goldfinch a lesson likewise.

MOONLIGHT.

How sweet this bank, when Cynthia's lovely beam
Illumes yon hill, and glitters in the stream;
Her placid light bestows a healing balm;
Come, Cynthia, come, while every thought is calm!

Emerge, lov'd planet! from that veil of clouds,
Which, envious, now thy peerless beauty shrouds;
These eyes, that wait to hail thee and admire,
Have marked the twilight and its shades retire.

The morning ray with renovating force,
May kindle day, and brighten nature's course;
But yet my pensive, melancholy mind,
To love thee, Cynthia, ever was inclined.

Bear witness, guardian spirits of the eve,
(In whose existence I must still believe)—
No thought impure this silent hour employs,
Nor one idea brings forbidden joys!

Whilst thus I muse on Cynthia's heavenly charms,
A holy hope subdues all weak alarms;
Each breeze is hush'd—'tis solemn stillness round;
To fancy's view this spot is hallow'd ground!

Serenely flows each undulating wave,
And only whisper to the beach they lave;
The peaceful skiff harmoniously glides by;
While faint is heard the sentry's hourly cry.

The undaunted seaman at his duty plac'd,
By firm fidelity and valour grac'd,—
Will fondly look on such a night as this,
And think of home, and cherish hopes of bliss!

The soldier exiled to a foreign strand,
Will bless the beam that lights his native land;
And should the morning call him to the field,
That soldier, may the prayer now offered, shield!

To watch thy beam, fair regent of the night!
Oft absent friends at this soft hour unite;
And still they look, and still they sigh adieu!
Until thy crescent form again they view.

Is there an eye that only wakes to mourn
The loss of joys that never can return?
Is there a heart where grief's sad feelings dwell,
Torn by remembrance of a last farewell?

Oh! let them haste this moonlight scene to meet;
It beams with sympathy refulgent, sweet!
Oh! let them think that all beneath the moon,
Is like her, transient, and must vanish soon!

CHAPTER XX.

AS this interesting party proceeded from "brae to burn," their unnoticed attendant hopped from bough to bough; and at last rested on a tree, the branches of which adorned the present residence of her, whose welfare had given Lady Tinkler so much pleasure!

Creation's most invigorating hour, when nature, in the dress of beauty's thousand tints, opens the blossom and expands the flower, to meet and hail returning light and life, recalled the woodland choirs to activity and to song.

My conductresses, indeed my new friends (for such I already deemed them), did not leave the pure air of the garden long unenjoyed. They

were accompanied by the parents of Miss Benbow's pupils. Another gentleman also joining the party, saluted his mother and his sisters. I listened attentively to their conversation, which, though it neither noticed Tattersall's horses; nor Cleopatra's racing; nor Caracci's heads; nor Squibb's busts; nor bird's capabilities: yet was it sensible, natural, and refined. Although the humble stranger was uninvited and unknown, yet he soon discovered that the proprietors would pardon his harmless intrusion; for they were the instruments of heaven's bounty to the poor and the distressed. The widow's plaint was not disregarded, nor her infant's poverty despised; the "remembered beggar" held not the hand of solicitation, and drew it back without the boon he craved.

My confidence increased; I suspended my flight when near the windows, and alighted on the shrubs that adorned their margins. There was such a similitude of spontaneous kindness, genuine urbanity, and guileless enjoyment, between the family at Kirk-hill and the rectory, where my first impressions of the

human character had been received, that the most fastidious criticiser of my wanderings, will surely forgive the desire which prompted my quiet and cautious entrance at the hour of closing the windows, and taking possession of a concealing fold in the drapery of the curtain, until the morning spread its innumerable invitations, and the busy domestics opened the windows to admit the refreshing zephyr. I then re-sought the garden, the grove, the aspiring forest-tree, and the humble shrub. Many were the sprightly strains of mirth and music which I witnessed, echoed by walls, *not* decorated by festoons of Flora's artificial sweets; many the festive dance, on floors, *not* chalked to rival Chinese skreens; many the charming evening circle, without rude riot, or refined dissipation.

" Alexander," said Mr. Linlithgow to his eldest son, who was puzzling little Donald after dinner with an anagram, " I met an old college acquaintance of yours this morning, with some Edinburgh '*bas-bleus*,' a Mr. Elfin, who is also acquainted with your uncle, Doctor Berkshire. He dines here

to-morrow, as his stay is short in the north; so I hope you will remember this engagement."

The communication was pleasantly received, and when Mrs. Linlithgow added some trifling commissions to her eldest daughter's domestic orders, the observer on the rose-tree at the window, fancied all the young ladies smiled interrogatively, except Miss Benbow; and she neither looked inquiry, or expressed a syllable.

Could my song have been interpreted, they would have known, that a little fugitive was then full of self-congratulation at having found access at Kirk-hill before this invited Mr. Elfin, who first solicited the possession of me, and then neglected the innocent incumbrance!

Neither the company of "merle" or "mavis; the far-stretched wood; the downy nest; the ripened fruit; nor the bursting calyx of the seed my tribe delight in,—could detach me this day from the garden of Kirk-hill.

Similar to that impatience, which the mindless of one sex feel for the echoes of the dice, and the automatons of the other for the exhibition of the rice-toys, the paper hearts, and painted diamonds; were my frequent peeps for the opened window.

However, my desires were anticipated; before the after-dinner chance, to which I had looked for their accomplishment, Alexander led his friend along the garden terrace-walk. My former master mentioned his having before seen Miss Benbow, and that he thought her very beautiful. "I agree with Mackenzie," replied Alexander, "that there is nothing about a woman's form, merely (were she formed like the Venus de Medicis), that can constitute a fine woman. There is something in the look, the manner, the voice, and still more the silence of such a one as I mean, that has no connexion material; at least no more, than just to make us think such a soul is lodged as it deserves." Their conversation then recurred to the past; the tonsor, the gown, mathematical triumphs, and learned disputations:

until Alexander jocosely said, " Now, Elfin, what have we severally been doing, since we left Greek to the schools and Euclid to the Cantabs?—I very candidly confess that my departure gave me unfeigned joy; for my father promised me a soldier's coat and a warrior's sword, to hew my way through the ranks of war. Behold me then, Elfin, a son of Mars; just come home, to lose, for a few short weeks, the echoes of artillery in the dulcet melody of my sisters' voices, and then return, like a true Highlander of Ben-venu, to the field, which a Highlander never yet disgraced."

" Happy Linlithgow! would that my father had sent me to the field—or to the ocean—to the counting-house—or even to the plough, rather than to the pursuit of patronage and promises. You know my destined course was forensic; my father, being a borough-man, had views for me, as he thought, and the representative engaged to bring me forward. With a father's ambition for the advancement of an eldest son, I believe mine, in the sanguine colour of his fancy, drew a portrait of me in the chancellor's

robes, or a judge's wig. But the cultivation of an acquaintance with distinguished characters, and forming high connexions were proper, in fact absolutely necessary, to the completion of these wishes."

" The pursuit of this shadowy plan brought me hither to my Lord Auchindinny, who, like my Lord every-body else, does not seem to want candidates for more than he has to bestow."

" My father lives not to share my disappointments. His death leaves me a small share of a small property, to be divided among a tribe of brothers and sisters. Had I never learnt

" To lose good days, that might be better spent,
To waste long nights in pensive discontent,
To speed to day, to be put back to-morrow,
To feed in hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;"

I might now have been on the road to independence by industrious exertion. " Why, my good fellow," exclaimed Alexander, " I thought Scotland

only had its Sir Pertinax :—pardon the jest, and for the future, look only to your own resources. You have education, you have talent; and though I do not wish to see you become a plodding attorney,—yet even that is preferable to suing smiles from an April face! What intentions have you now formed for pursuing the most fickle of all her fickle sex?" "None, my good Alexander, for, I am truly at my wit's end!"

"Wait a *wee*, then, honest *mon*, ere you do determine.—I will consult my father." They were now summoned to dinner, when their unobserved spectator winged his way, modulating his voice to the praise of freedom and independence; pecked his simple fare; moistened his beak in an undisturbed stream; "blessed his stars and thought it luxury;" then returned to his favourite station on the mignionette-box at the drawing-room window, to wait the usual opportunity for admission.

Mr. Elfin's former mistakes at the chess-table induced me to suspect that he thought less of the

" Queen's moves", than of Miss Benbow's northern journey. His " sidelong looks" were now correspondent. " Love !" a passion which he who never felt was never happy, and he who laughs at deserves not to feel; a passion which has caused the change of empires, and the loss of worlds; a passion which has inspired heroism, and subdued avarice." But Madame de Stael has said, " There is a great mystery in love," and my humble genius not pretending to solve mysteries,

" I may not, must not sing of love."

Habituated to trifling with the sex, and descending, occasionally, to the purlieus of nonsense for their amusement, Mr. Elfin thought himself pretty generally certain of success. Here, he discovered that fine-drawn compliments and deified commendations, were not the best pioneers to clear the outworks towards good opinion. He commenced with Miss Linlithgow, led her to the instrument, and extolled her skill in a strain of compliment, certainly well-expressed; but, submitted

to the alembic of common sense, left a mere *caput mortuum.*

The " bonnie lassie" requested him not to waste such extravagant praise on a performance so simple. " Recollect, Sir, that you are now among Caledonians, in the ' land of the mountain and the flood ;' and it is impossible to secure so much delicate farina of compliment from the breeze of our bleak climate : —do not, therefore, throw so many pretty sounds to its chilling air."

" You must reserve your best compliments," said Alexander, " until you hear Miss Benbow's minstrelsy."

Miss Linlithgow, standing beside her friend, was now plucking a blossom from the mignionette, and in an under tone said, " I shall not make a conquest of yon *Sassenach.*" Her brother then approached, saying, " Come, Miss Benbow, ' Strike the harp in praise of Bragela.' "

In the course of the evening Alexander requested Mr. Elfin to lengthen his visit to another day, in which all the family joined with unaffected sincerity: Mrs. Linlithgow adding, " that her son's friend must not be deemed a stranger there; nor should his presence be any restraint on the usual evening festivities."

" You know, Elfin," continued Alexander, " that our old acquaintance Horace says, ' *Dulce est desipere in loco ;*" and the evenings at Kirk-hill are certainly governed by that classical opinion."

Perched on a bush of variegated holly the succeeding morning, I perceived Mr. Linlithgow and Mr. Elfin take several turns on the terrace-walk, and heard the former thus address my late guardian :—

" I am not surprised, Mr. Elfin, at Alexander's account to me of your vexations, in pursuit of that which, like the *ignis-fatuus*, still allures and

eludes; and I regret your having wasted any portion of your time in becoming a place-hunter: but as these regrets are useless, I would, assuming the privilege of an old man, teach you to extract good resolutions for the future, from the disappointments of the past.

" In the line you have hitherto pursued, I really apprehend that the chances are very much against the best abilities (and I am disposed to give you every credit in that way), unless the weight of very powerful and active advocates are thrown into the scale.

" If, on your return to London, you should find my gloomy predictions likely to be verified, I will keep in view for you a voyage to Antigua; where I have some property of essential importance to the interests of my family. I am not dissatisfied with its present returns: but private sources of information give me reason to believe there are some well-grounded causes of complaint against my legal adviser (or, as we apply the term here, my man of

business). I have it therefore in contemplation to propose your going thither, ostensibly, for the inspection of my accounts: but, in reality, to practise the profession for which you have been so liliberally educated.

" I will furnish you with letters of recommendation, not to earls and viscounts; but to merchants and men of consequence in the island: and if, on consideration, you think the thing worth your acceptance, write to me on the subject. If you accept, and success attend it, I shall rejoice in having suggested the scheme: if you decline, I trust it will be for some certain good. At present I have only to add that, as a matter of course, I become banker for the expenses attending your voyage; so turn it in your mind, and let me know the result of your deliberation."

" My dear Sir, no deliberation is requisite. I accept, gratefully accept your liberal proposals. Should this hasty conclusion lead you to imagine me rash and inconsiderate, I would entreat you to

conceive for a moment, the misery of nursing expectations, like the "shadows of a shade," created only to be destroyed.

"Candidate, perhaps, for an appointment which I may know myself qualified to fill;—rivalled by some blockhead,—and then put off with another promise, under the excuse of a prior application, or stronger claim on the patron's services:—thus tantalized and mortified, the life of a porter is preferable. It is true I am honoured by cards of invitation for dinners, *dejeunes*, harmonics, and *conversaziones:* but, my dear Sir, I waste my slender patrimony in the unavoidable expenses of appearing in such circles."

"Well then, Mr. Elfin, accompany me to Edinburgh to-morrow, and I will introduce you to a gentleman from Norfolk, who has realized a very comfortable independence by the legal profession in a West-India island."

Mrs. Linlithgow and Alexander now coming up,

Mr. Linlithgow observed, " that he had invited Mr. Elfin to rest a few days longer in the north." " I am glad of it," said the lady ; " and I hope he will continue to partake, with pleasure, the *barley-broth* of Kirk-hill."

My old master made his best acknowledgments, and Alexander proposing a visit to an extensive manufactory in the neighbourhood, the party separated.



CHAPTER XXI

"YOUR letters this morning were, I hope, acceptable, my dear," said Mrs. Linlithgow, addressing Miss Benbow; "and brought you good accounts of your mother's health."

"They were all welcome, my dear Madam, and I blush at having been so taciturn with you, on the subject of my correspondents and connexions: particularly as we have not long had the honour of being known to Doctor Berkshire.

"I have felt and, I trust, duly appreciated the delicacy which has withheld every member of your amiable family from leading me to a discussion, on which you must naturally have been desirous of information: but, dear Mrs. Linlithgow

here is my mother's letter ; do me the favour of a perusal. By your permission, I will retire, to give little Donald a drawing he wishes to copy."

I kept my place on the jessamine covering of the summer-seat, whilst Mrs. Linlithgow read to her daughters Mrs. Benbow's letter.

" My dearest Harriet,

" Extreme solicitude for your welfare keeps you perpetually present in every affectionate fibre of my heart; inducing me to write to you thus frequently: but you will not think an apology requisite.

" To tell you the deep, the painful anxiety this separation occasions me, is not possible: at the same time a contrariety of sensations pervade my heart; for I rejoice, with tears of gratitude, over your dear letters, assuring me of your success in having obtained a situation, which must convince us both of the immutable promises of that Divine Being, in whom the widow and the orphan may safely trust.

" To many of our former acquaintances, my dear girl, I have no doubt but it creates some remarks and surprise that I have allowed you to attempt this undertaking, at such a very junior period of your life; whilst I have, according to common supposition, the pecuniary means of keeping you with me. Circumstances of this nature, do not, I am sure, demand an explicit avowal; such is your faithful, your reposing confidence in your affectionate parent. Yet there are some occurrences in our little domestic history, of which you are uninformed: and I am desirous that you should know how to appreciate properly every motive by which I am actuated. When very young, I became the wife of your lamented father. Though not highly portioned, I was not poor. His long services as a subaltern officer, you already know: but not the bitter pang your mother endured at his being debarred the power of purchasing higher rank by the total failure of a house, in which, as a place of undoubted security, my father had deposited my fortune just before his death.

" I had an uncle, rich but avaricious, proud, and unfeeling. He had neither wife, nor child; and you were then an infant. With all my solicitation I could only obtain from him the promise, that if you lived, he would incur the expense of any education for you, beyond what I could myself instruct you in.

" This will account to you for the means which enabled us to cultivate that intellect Heaven gifted you with; for when you were old enough to receive superior education in some of those acquirements in which I am deficient, the teachers employed were paid by my uncle.

" After struggling for several years with the many difficulties imposed by your father's very scanty income, he was noticed by Colonel Trewarren; who had been a subaltern junior to him. Soon after the Colonel's promotion, he was good enough to obtain your father's advancement to a company; and during a three years' station in Ireland, you know a constant intercourse was maintained between his

family and ourselves. The General's daughter and yourself, being of the same age, were exceedingly attached; and I was happy to observe it, knowing our dependent state, and that her probable future rank in life, should yours not advance, might give her an opportunity for enjoying the 'luxury of doing good.'

"But her inclinations have not kept pace with the liberal promise of her early youth. Your father's exertions to procure a staff appointment proving, alas! successful, he took leave of all this world contained of his affections, for an African settlement.

"Willingly, happily would I have accompanied him; but could Harriet go? No! the idea was inadmissible. Imagine then, dearest girl, the sorrow of your parents' hearts. Your care and preservation outweighed all other considerations, and the mother devoted herself to the child. The fatal news of your father's death, and its consequences to my health and happiness, are too recent to need repetition.

But for your consoling voice, could I have sustained the shock! But for your sake, my beloved, would I have breathed a wish for life; or should I have felt one cord attaching me to its continuance? For your sake, alone, I roused from grief's sad torpor, and struggled with the oppression of a breaking heart! Yet feeling the precarious tenure on which my frail life hangs, and possessing nothing to bequeath to you, but my heart's sole and only affection: many were the days of hopeless misery; many the sleepless nights of agony; many the desolate and 'dark imaginings' of my woe-fraught mind—that so young, so artless a girl, should be left to the rude blasts of poverty in a merciless world. Well can every affectionate mother imagine the struggle between the tenderest attachment, and the most opposing sense of duty that dictated our separation. The resolution almost annihilated the reasoning faculty. In a moment of gloomy despondency I communicated to the dear object of my solicitude, the painful sacrifice which her interest, her welfare, demanded. Heaven only witnessed the distress of those moments, when almost overcome by your solicitations,

I could have clasped you to my bursting heart, and have defied all but death to part us.

" Yet, in another moment, I beheld you consigned to obscurity—deprived of every possible opportunity of making friends to supply my loss. I beheld my life fade away, and Harriet in the lone cottage, a prey to grief—to poverty—to the scornful sneer of the wealthy—to the coarse pity of the untutored.

" My heart bled to refuse those sighs, to resist those tears, which asked no happiness beyond tender devotion to my comfort. Even at this moment your affectionate entreaties to work at the meanest occupation for my advantage, rather than be separated, rather than be excluded from my society, still vibrate in my ear.

" But I loved you too tenderly, my Harriet, to have one thought of self.—I recollected her who had been your youthful friend; unknown to you, I applied to Lady Tinkler for her patronage. Your natural diffidence and humility would have shrunk

from attempting to remind her of an acquaintance, which only her condescension ought to renew.

" Lady Tinkler's reception was repulsively cold; but my application interested the most benevolent, the most liberal of men, who happened to be present at the interview I had solicited.

" By Doctor Berkshire's own request, I made known to himself and family, those motives which influenced me to decide on a separation from all that attached me to this scene of affliction and dismay.

" I pass over the life-rending moment that pronounced the decree I had so anxiously, so desperately sought.—I dare not trust myself to think of the unutterable anguish of my soul at our sad adieu! But Heaven has supported me—and has protected my heart's dear Harriet—has conducted her to the pleasure of elegant society—to the participation of enjoyments, naturally desired by the young, the innocent, and happy.

" Think not that I can, for an instant, be persuaded that you would not leave all these gratifications for your mother's cottage. However, my dear Harriet, the flattering hope of your future prosperity comes over my senses, like the beams of morning dispelling the shades of night; sometimes teaching me to think, that the setting sun of my existence will be cheered by the knowledge of your prosperity, and that my last look will be that of the highest satisfaction, rewarding the privations I now endure.

" My prayers ascend to the Father of mercies for blessings on our benefactors—for those who treat my dear, my gentle Harriet, with the kindness a mother's partiality believes is fully merited.

" The impression renewed each day for nineteen years, cannot be erased; and you are, I am convinced, incapable of cherishing a thought which the 'recording angel' may not write in Heaven's chancery, unblotted by a tear. Continue every praiseworthy effort to deserve the kindness and consideration by which you are honoured at Kirk-hill; and

knowing your mother is now a 'widowed, solitary thing,' write often, very often, and cheer her with the only happiness she can receive—the assurance of your health and welfare.

" I continue all the intercourse with my uncle which his narrow mind allows; but I am afraid to calculate even on the possibility of his ever relaxing into the common feelings of humanity. It would, therefore, only be deceiving myself and you, were I to say that I can hope for any thing beneficial from him.

" Once more, adieu, dearest Harriet! While life is lent me, be assured I can have but one earthly joy, one fervent prayer—and that is, for the dispensation of heavenly mercy to bring you again to the arms of your affectionately devoted mother,

H. B."

The tear of unaffected sensibility was not dried on the cheek of Mrs. Linlithgow and her amiable daughters, when Miss Benbow returned. " Dear

Harriet," said the former, holding her to the most benevolent heart, " 'it requires not time, nor proof, to make virtuous hearts coalesce; there is a language without sounds, a recognition independent of the visual organ, which acknowledges the kindred of congenial souls almost in the moment they meet.' Behold then a mother! for should the Almighty dissolve that natural tie, before my daughters have to lament such a loss, their mother will become yours. Never quit our protection until another home become more desirable to you; remember not the storms of adversity; Kirk-hill is not high enough to invite the tempest, nor so low as to fear the overwhelming tide."

" Yes," added the daughters, " she will love Scotland, and live with us; and she will become as dear to us, as we are to each other!"

Miss Benbow could only weep her gratitude. The susceptible heart, especially when joined to a refined understanding, has some feelings to which language cannot give sounds. It is then a tear be-

comes the silent witness, seen and appreciated by those few, whose good works demand so genuine a tribute!

The evening returned, and I resumed my concealed station; no trace of sadness remained, and every countenance brightened at the reel.—Alexander sung with his sisters—danced with Miss Benbow; Mr. Linlithgow had his favourite Scotch ballads; Margaret instructing Mr. Elfin in a method of laconic compliment; Ellen's charming compliance with the wishes of all the group; Mrs. Linlithgow looking as delighted as she felt; Donald and Juliette puzzling each other with every childish device; and all wishing that Robert could take a peep at them from Madras; may, in all probability, be presented as a general sketch of the bliss at Kirk-hill.

CHAPTER XXII.

"A POOR English woman and her little boy were stopping at the gate, Mamma, and I have shewn her into the kitchen: she gave me this paper to bring to you." "An Englishwoman and in distress, dear Juliette," said Miss Benbow, hastily approaching Mrs. Linlithgow; who, surrounded by anxious countenances, read the petition Juliette had conveyed to her.

THE SAILOR'S WIDOW.

AH! gentle stranger, if thine heart
Hath ever felt Affliction's dart,
Canst thou resist this orphan's look,
"One writ in sour Misfortune's book"—
Sure mild benevolence is thine,
As grief and penury are mine;

And though it bring the pearly tear,
Kind stranger, deign my woes to hear.
A broken heart, a wasted form—
No shed to shield me from the storm;
Immured within yon ruin'd pile,
I sooth my orphan's griefs awhile;
And nought to my sad heart so dear,
As power to dry that orphan's tear!
The dearest husband of my youth,
With love, fidelity, and truth,
Three fleeting years had blessed the life,
Of me his happy, faithful wife:
And Heaven, to crown our short-lived joy,
The blessing sent of this dear boy!
Who sweetly look'd, and sweetly smil'd!—
And many an anxious hour beguil'd!—
Till brightest hopes dispell'd each fear,
And every promis'd bliss was near.
My longing eyes were soon to meet
The pendants of the Baltic fleet:
But, pitying stranger, can I speak
The grief that bids my heart-strings break!
On dreary Jutland's stormy coast,
Brave Reynolds and his gallant host,

When nought availed their lives to save
There sank beneath the cruel wave!
My widow'd heart, my joyless mind,
To grief, to wretchedness consign'd,
In Misery's annals mark the day,
And weep the shades of night away!
I've reach'd the depth of human woes;
My ebbing life draws near a close:
That life's last hope, my heart's last prayer,
"Oh! let this child your pity share!"
The bounteous still in Britain's land,
Whose hearts with sympathy expand,
Will mourn those buried in the main,
As much as those in battle slain.
In kind compassion then bestow,
Some human aid to cheer our woe:—
For, stranger, distant is the cell,
In which my infant boy must dwell!

"Juliette, dear," said the excellent Mrs. Linlithgow, "bring her hither immediately, that we may ascertain how best to serve her. Miss Benbow, have the goodness to propose such inquiries, as

may elucidate the nature of this rather extraordinary application.

The sailor's widow entered.

"Take a seat.—You are from England it appears—so is this young lady—and we are all desirous of doing you the best service we can. Juliette, bring a cake for this poor little boy."

Miss Benbow approached the petitioner with a look of sympathy, and addressed her in the tones of kindness.

"Is this your writing?"

"No, Madam,—a gentleman's:—but I am the unfortunate subject of it. I beg permission to add, that it was my destiny to marry a sailor, which so incensed my father, a farmer of the middling class, that he shut his doors against me for ever.

" My husband was a native of Inverness; and his mother being anxious to see the widow and the orphan of the son she tenderly loved, proposed, indeed entreated my going thither, and sharing her humble means. I, however, did not comply with her request immediately, as I had hopes my father would relent: but his death destroyed these hopes—he continued obdurate to his last moment.

" My husband's mother again repeated her wish; and I resolved to place my child in her care; feeling that my health was very doubtful.

" I proceeded by water from Devonshire to Portsmouth, and pursuing my way from thence to London, partly on foot, assisted by any chance mode of conveyance that might offer; I was taken ill in a small village on the road, and reduced to the deepest distress. ' Go,' said my hostess, ' to the Rectory; there you will be assisted, and advised for the best.' Thither I repaired. The Rector's son was a naval officer, and at home. I shewed him some

of my husband's certificates; he recollected the name, and having sailed with him. My distresses were charitably relieved, and, before I departed, the Rector's son gave me the lines, madam, now in your hand; and advised me, should any further distress befall me before I could reach Inverness, to solicit the aid of any family who had connexions in the navy.

" Continuing my way, slowly, weak, and weary, I had nearly reached London, when my dear little boy became dangerously ill. My prayers for his life were heard :—but his recovery found me deficient in the most necessary means for completing the journey. I inquired if any naval gentleman lived in the neighbourhood, and was answered in the negative : but that a rich baronet, whose father had been an admiral, had a seat very near.

" I approached the gate of Sir Paragon Tinkler's park, anxiously waiting the hour of his morning ride.

(The listening bird could not but think, that if titles and distinctions were hereditary only in proportion to the feelings of compassion and benevolence, there would not be quite so many visible signs of invisible merit.)

" With all possible respect and submission, I solicited his perusal of that paper: but he spurned me from his gate—saying, ' beggars found no access there.' My heart swelled at the name of beggar:—and, though contending with distress and poverty, my tears could scarcely cool its injured feelings.

" Even if death had stood in all its horrors before me, I could not again have asked relief from him.

" In these moments of despair, a lady passed, and condescended to speak to me:—heard my tale and relieved me:—expressing regret that she could do no more.

" The day was fine, though cold; my dear boy, who was only beginning to recover, loitered in the road, and we were resting on a bank, when the same lady returning, accompanied by a gentleman, whom she called Doctor Berkshire, was pleased to speak to me again. The doctor, with humanity that I never can forget, inquired the particulars of the child's recent illness, and my reduced appearance. To the latest moment of my life, I must pray Heaven to reward his benevolence: his daughter visited my miserable abode, supplied me with comforts, rejoiced to see our recovery, and then enabled me to pursue my journey.

" I entered London a desolate stranger; my total ignorance of every person, and of every place, subjected me to imposition. After being repeatedly mis-directed in my way to the wharf frequented by the Leith passage vessels, I did, after some days, succeed in finding one; but was deceived by the discovery, when too late, of having embarked in a coasting vessel, when I had thought to get on board a smack.

" My voyage was, therefore, lengthened; and the frequent waiting for winds and cargo, delayed our arrival at Leith until yesterday. My journey is yet long; my money is again exhausted. I saw that young lady at the gate: she spoke kindly to my little boy; it encouraged me to beg leave to speak to the family, and I hope, ladies, you will pardon the liberty I have taken."

" O certainly," replied the whole party. " Margaret," said Mrs. Linlithgow to her eldest daughter, " give this needy traveller the comfortable refreshment she must require."

Miss Linlithgow took the orphan child's hand; the sailor's widow followed, and Miss Benbow, unable to conceal the feelings this simple recital had excited, quitted the room with Juliette, and joined Miss Linlithgow.

On Mr. Linlithgow's return, the event of the morning was related to him. " Janet, love," he replied to his wife's solicitude, " we must en-

able this poor widow and her child to proceed in some better way than on foot: and don't you think it will be right to give her a letter to my brother at Inverness? he will, probably, have the power of recommending her to such employment as she can undertake."

The admiring Goldfinch extolled these "tender charities" in his softest strain; and then, in search of variety, stretched his flight across the surrounding country.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"I HAVE him," cried a youthful archer. Instantaneously I dropped to the ground, and the shock suspended for awhile my senses:—anguish alone renewed them. "I have broken thy wing, poor birdie! but I am glad thou art not killed."

These accents of mercy were not uttered without sincerity; the "birdie" was taken up, with the humble implements that had occasioned his disaster, and carried to a cotter's abode.

"Shew kindness to the poor dumb animal," advised the mother, "and put aside yon mischievous contrivance. The poor beastie canna' escape now; just put him into the berry-basket yonder, and set it in the sunny window."

The humble basket, the sunny window, the scattered meal, and the broken cup of water, soon effected my restoration; and I chirped a note of gratitude for the kindness that had been shewn me, rather than of reflection on the sport that had made such kindness necessary.

An hour-glass stood in the window, to which I was fastened by a string round my leg when released from the basket. Ah! thought I, how many times will that sand run down, ere liberty, or any joy, is again restored to me! "Will ye sell that wee birdie?" asked a youth passing by; "I will give a few pence for it."

The archer accepted the pence; the purchaser lifting his hat, put me between that and his head; and the hat being manufactured from the coarsest straw, I reached Leith without danger of suffocation. "Here," said the purchaser to another sailor, "I have got a singing-bird. Yon woman at Wapping, where we stop, says there are no birds but nightingales in Scotland, and then she sets up

a cry like an owl; but now I think we shall shut her mouth."

An article that might, perhaps, once have been a family cage, now became the place of my captivity.

My embarkation followed, and the master of the vessel permitted my suspension in the ladies' cabin, if they had no objection.

"No, by no manner of means," replied a voice, very dissimilar to any I had ever heard at the Rectory, or at Kirk-hill.

The ladies' cabin was most inconsistently fine; painting and gilding did their utmost, while the cushion-covered seats answered the purpose also of assisting the entrance to the upper tier of shelves apparently; but the crimson draperies withdrawn, I saw they were accommodations for "steeping the senses in forgetfulness!"

There were several female passengers, all cheerful and talkative, excepting one.

The vessel was yet scarcely moving, and the loquacity of her who had first acquiesced in the proposal of my sojourn in the cabin, was unbounded. "Come, come, young lady, don't be down-hearted, we shall have a good passage, no fear; for my husband, Mr. Parkout, says, that Captain Cawdor is the *most skilfullest* man in the employ."

The lady to whom this consolatory address was made, answered only with a sigh.

"You have often been in these kind of vessels, I suppose, Mrs. Parkout," continued a third, by way of keeping up the chain of discourse.

Mrs. Parkout's reply to this inquiry, led to a prolix and most uninteresting detail of her family history and motives for having made a voyage from London. The preparations had been, it seemed, important,

by her adding,—" So you see I went over to Cheapside and Fleet-street, and got a few fashionable things; for I did not choose to appear like nobody in a strange place, and then I *comed* away."

The vessel was now passing Inchkeith, according to report brought by a lady who visited the deck. The distance from that land where a Wallace fought, a Fletcher spoke, and a Buchannan wrote, rapidly increased, while I vainly wished for the stillness of the bough, even when rocked by the wintry gale. Mrs. Parkout's complaints of annoyance from the swinging of the huge wicker bird-cage, after some repetition, summoned the steward of the vessel, by whom I was removed into the other cabin.

The wind moderated, the sea became smoother, the ladies played cards, the gentlemen sang, and all dined together at the mess-table. Though there was little probability of my becoming an unconfined spectator of London, yet I very attentively regarded the conversation of two gentlemen passengers, who seemed quite familiar with the scene we were ap-

proaching; and their advice and directions to a youth who was about to make his *debut* in the "congregation of cities," as they aptly termed it, I determined to treasure, whether I could profit by it or not.

On the third day after leaving Leith, the Comet, Captain Cawdor, anchored in the Thames.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHAT a sad mode, thought I, of making my first visit to this far-famed city. I shall enjoy none of its beauties,—its parks,—or its buildings.

On the Comet's anchoring, all the passengers became full of anxiety and bustle to collect their luggage, and to reach the wharf. The scene of confusion soon abated,—for all could go except the imprisoned goldfinch!—once the pet of nature's fairest work; the almost companionable favourite of Robina's brother; the selected pupil of a genius in ornithology:—now the property of a ship-boy, who, from "the high and giddy mast," hailed his messmate on deck, to hand the bird-cage into the boat, where he would be also, in a minute.

The lad was in the act of compliance, when, jumping into the boat, his foot slipped, and he, with his charge, was precipitated into the water! but happily, the wicker cage was buoyant, or this disaster must have proved fatal to its tenant.

Immersed in an element so new, and involved in a dilemma which seemed to admit no chance of rescue, I clung to the upper rods of the cage. Had I possessed a voice sufficiently powerful to call for aid, it could not have been exerted, so completely was every faculty absorbed in terror and distress! In a few moments I was extricated—for, as I was floating down the river, a wherry passed, and the waterman took me up.

Soon as he landed, he opened the cage. "Away with ye," said he, "I have enough to keep, without birds; the cage, to be sure, may be worth carrying home."

Drenched with water; my heart palpitating between the hope of life, and the fear of losing it;

my wing still very unequal to its usual extension; how little was the remembrance of my former beauty calculated to console in this hour of adversity. But I recollected a line often repeated by the rector;

"Beware of desperate steps—the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away."

I summoned all my feeble power, and, at length, reached a house on the banks of the river. Betwixt it and the water grew, or stood rather, a few miserably stunted trees: these afforded a shelter until the morning ray returning, cheered and refreshed the exhausted voyager.

Never can these humble notes express my wonder and astonishment at the magnitude, the splendour, the opulence, the pomp, the meanness, the misery, the poverty, the sufferings, I from day to day observed, admired, or commiserated and deplored!

An epitome of every thing in the creation, both

natural and artificial, seemed collected in this Tyre of modern times.

From royalty in state-coaches, to the crippled beggar drawn by dogs; what an assemblage of variously constructed vehicles, for exhibiting beauty, hiding deformity, accelerating speed, and dispersing wealth, for accommodating the indolent, and gratifying the proud!

Behold the merchant importing the riches, the ornaments, the necessaries, and the superfluities of one quarter of the globe; and his contemporary exporting them in exchange for the timber, the furs, the thousand other commodities of another: and what a scene of commerce, of prosperity, of labour, and of perseverance, is here presented to every observer!

From the weighty contractor in Smithfield, to the humble northern drover; what an host of dealers in the flocks and herds of Britain!

From the exalted feeder on all the dainties of England, assisted by every foreign luxury, down to the plebeian cellar-dinner; what a population of epicures, gourmands, well-fed, half-fed, and half-famished beings!



CHAPTER XXV.

FOR many weeks I flew over this vast metropolis in perfect safety; decoyed into no trap; attracted to no one particular spot; unsought, perhaps unobserved, by any human being.

I saw the *pavé* crowded with passengers in perpetual motion of current, and counter-current. I saw innumerable vehicles whirling in every direction. I heard, from the hour of matin to the shades of midnight, sounds proclaiming the sale of every thing nature appears to require, or artificial desire to crave, in a language known only to the initiated, and which would have drowned the congregated notes of every bird that has flown since the days of Adam!

True to the first impressions of my nature, and to the instinctive delights of my species, I sought the trees, though scanty and dusty, in preference to the houses, which were, apparently, dirtier.

I alighted on the Chinese-bridge, and at the same moment heard two ladies inquire, before they ascended its steps, whether they would have to pay for crossing it. This question was proposed to a gentleman on the spot, who answered it in the negative.

" This is then, I believe, the first object of curiosity that can be seen *gratis* in London; for the British Museum is not open. So tenacious are even the door-keepers of your churches, that, one must suppose, they fear lest a prayer should be ejaculated within the walls *unpaid* for."

" You are strangers, I perceive, ladies," added the gentleman, and continued to converse with them as they proceeded.

" This is not a bridge of Tilsit, Sir?"

" No: but you, perhaps, think the ornamental appendages would have suited the caps of some who assembled at Tilsit, to be duped by the other symbol —the dragon."

" O Sir, he was partial to bridges. Jena and Lodi were long the theme of his panegyrists; while his humanity, so frequently insisted on, was very characteristically displayed when, in preference to leaving his army to the flames of Moscow, he buried one half in the snows of Muscovy, and drowned the remainder under the bridge of the Beresina."

" The speculations of his accommodating mind may now be turned to the drawing of plans of a bridge, or a balloon, that will carry him from St. Helena to the continents of Africa, or America."

" Yes, ladies; for while British officers are his guardians, he will find that fidelity is their crest—

honour their motto—loyalty and valour their supporters; and that Dante's inscription might, with propriety, be engraved over his gate,

" ' Hope, that comes to all, comes not here!' "

This party now separated, and I resumed my perch on one of those boughs which formed my general place of observation. Reflecting, as intensely as my finite capacity allowed, on the strutting vanity of the young man, and the decrepid motion of the old superannuated beau; comparing the studied artlessness of the damsel just from school, with the decorations of her grandmother in flaxen ringlets and beauty's bloom (of *Ninon de l'Enclos*) on the whitened parchment of threescore years,—and deeming their designs equally deceptive; I really did suspect that the minds of town-bred gentlemen, and finished ladies, were not a whit nearer perfection than their persons. But, oh! how delightfully were these reflections, one day, interrupted by the sight of my dear, rational, estimable master, the rector's son, in the avenue nearest to me, and hearing him

receive congratulations on his being promoted to the rank of Captain. In the highly-wrought vanity of my feelings I chirped a note, which I fancied he might understand, and, in the excess of my joy, determined to alight on his arm; till recollecting that captivity, even in its mildest form, is still a "bitter draught," I contented myself with hovering about him, until he mingled with a crowd under the extended pinions of the *Sea-horses* * ; where I lost him.

The innumerable recollections this circumstance assembled, made repose impossible. With a restlessness not to be subdued, even when day declined, I quitted the bough and made a chance flight among the scenes of evening bustle. Attracted by a glare of light in an extensive pile of building, I ventured to approach; but my stay was only momentary: for I discovered, by attending to a few intelligible sounds, that I was near the pit door of a theatre. The performance had not commenced; but, said a

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* *Vide* the entrance to the Admiralty.

critic to his country-looking associate, "It will be an overflowing house to night; you can have no idea, Sir, of any thing ancient, or modern, to be compared to our taste in theatricals; we study novelty, Sir, and we pay for it. Our ancestors had no spirit, no liberality; in fact, no souls for any thing superb such as we moderns display!"

"Pray, Sir," said his companion, whose appearance was certainly very rustic, "would not Shakspeare have thought himself richly remunerated for all the plays he wrote, to have received such a sum as a favourite actor, or actress, may now realize in a season, by shining in a few of his characters?"

I did not want curiosity to attend to their conversation, and to have observed the performance would have gratified me infinitely; but every avenue began to fill, and disaster having made me cautious, I hastened to escape through an aperture in the upper part of the building.

To another casual flight during my sojourn in the

metropolis, I was again indebted for a fresh accession of ideas. "To the opera," was ordered by numerous voices, as I flew towards the park I had left in the morning. There was no difficulty in my getting a peep of curiosity. The house was not very crowded, and as many seemed to have attended less for auricular gratification, than for the exercise of volubility, there was little trouble in collecting all I wanted to know. The *dilletanti* will, no doubt, smile at the erroneous notion I had very nearly formed; as I really did, for a few minutes, imagine that some anatomical lectures were to be elucidated by reference to living female subjects; so accommodating for such a purpose was the deficiency of their habiliments. But when a musical dialogue began in a tongue, to which my poor capacity could attach no meaning, I strangely and stupidly fancied it must relate to diseases of the optics; and, from the general use that was made of eye-glasses, that all the audience were afflicted with *Myopy!*

A mistake of so serious a nature would have made me very much to be pitied; however, when

the ballet commenced, I was soon convinced, by the exclamations of admiration and applause, that I was a spectator of an amusement which to enjoy requires a most refined understanding, and a more exquisite knowledge of human attitudes and grace, than an inhabitant of the woods could possibly have acquired!

CHAPTER XXVI.

DEBATING, the next day, on the periodical flight of many among the feathered tribes, I admitted the flattering persuasion of being able to find the groves of my native district, by exerting those capabilities which the ornithologist had discovered in me.

Ever governed by the impulse of the instant, I looked for the dawn of the coming morning with restless impatience:—paused not to see the children of industry carrying bread to the idle; nor waited till the "hack on the road," was lashed into speed by the weather-beaten driver: but away I flew on the wings of presumptive happiness.

Each day I changed the direction of my flight:

every point, and all their obliquities, were alike tried without discovering the place of my search. Surely, thought I, that hill will give me a glimpse of the village smoke: that forest will be a leading object: but night returning, my pursuit closed in disappointment.

On each succeeding day, I watched the autumnal hopes of the husbandman safely conveyed to the granary, or reared, as monuments of plenty, in the field; saw the oak leaves buoyant on the breeze, and the beech in its livery of brown; observed the hawthorn and the wild-rose presenting their scarlet-berries, and the sloe its sable fruit; without finding one branch whereon I had ever rested in my happier days.

"Stern Winter" came, and pointed to every form of animated nature, the necessity of retreat from his rigours. Even the plants shrunk colourless beneath his withering touch, and were concealed from the curiosity of the botanist, by the universal drapery of virgin-snow.

Pierced with cold, and weakened by hunger, my persecuted species fell easy victims to the city-sportsman's pleasure, and even to the speed of the truant school-boy.

Though neither of these evils befell the once pet-bird, yet he felt his wants on the frosted spray, and applied his beak to every appearance of the softened snow; but so seldom found the supply his nature craved, that his strength failed: he at last sunk on the snowy pile—unable to elevate his diminished weight, or spread his once glossy wings to the keen and piercing gale.

Quivering—panting—outstretched, lay the admired warbler: but still preferring poverty with freedom, to a gilded cage and confinement; I made an effort of expiring strength, to escape the youthful hand that was stretched to lift me from starvation, or a less lingering death.

The effort was futile.—I felt the gentle grasp of an angelic benefactor in the form of a beautiful

boy; who, placing me in the bosom of his coat, conducted me to warmth, to food, to comfort, and to repose.

No act of human benevolence, ever afforded more sincere gratification to human feelings, than did my preservation to George; who, anxious to see me enter at once into the plenitude of enjoyment, visited the cage with momentary diligence for my welfare; consulting all the household on the food most likely to gratify and to restore the object of his solicitude.

Every grateful sensation of which I am susceptible was thus excited; for I received kindness, unborn of any interested motive, and generous care, without the prospect of reward.

In all former situations, my song and my plumage had made me desirable to my possessors, except when struggling in the Thames;—and then I was thrown to the liability of every probable danger.

Neither note nor plumage inspired thy kindness, benevolent boy! it was mercy guided thy steps toward me, and humanity influenced all thy conduct.

" Well, dear Eliza, I begin to think our poor bird will yet recover: look, he is fluttering about the cage for the first time since his arrival in a land of strangers.

" How delightful will it be, when spring returns again and he is quite recovered, to restore his liberty."

" A happy thought, dear George, and we will make a memorandum of the determination; because it is not a common thing to release without ransom.

Come, little captive! smooth thy wing,
And wait the sweet return of spring!
I'll then thy liberty restore,
Ah! do not now its loss deplore.

On soft compassion thou hast claim,
Thus rescued from the fowler's aim.
I saw thee on the snowy wreath,
Deprived of e'en the sheltering heath;
I watch'd thee with a pitying eye,
Make many a vain attempt to fly;
Then gently seized thy shiv'ring form,
And placed thee in my bosom warm!
Haste, timid warbler! mend thy strain,
And do not of thy fate complain:
But chirp a sweet inviting note,
That may be heard in "bush remote;"
And if thou hast a faithful mate,
She'll hear that note with breast elate;
And on love's swiftest pinion fly,
To bless thy watching, anxious eye!
Fear not, should such a guest intrude
To bring thee joy in solitude,
That such kind consort shall restrain
Thy promised flight o'er hill and plain:
Oh, no; you shall not long repine,
But cheerly hail Saint Valentine.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THIS promised restoration to freedom and its joys, consoled me for the temporary seclusion ; indeed, I had reason to rejoice in my preservation.

" The little goldfinch would not be quite so safe at Mrs. Brompton's," said my benefactor; " some of her vile cats at Grimalkin-abbey would soon devour him."

That impulse of self-preservation, which never departs, either from rational or irrational natures, whilst consciousness remains with the one, or life in the other, always operated upon me, most forcibly, when that treacherous race of animals was named. To have escaped the murderous effects of their destructive spring, I felt yet among the happy.

A lady, whose arrival was subsequent to mine, inquired who this Mrs. Brompton was, of whom George so often spake.

" She is," answered the mother of my friend, " a very singular character. George has such a strong antipathy to cats, and Mrs. Brompton such a determined predilection for them, that he has named her house Grimalkin-Abbey.

" I have known," she continued, " but few persons, " whose perversion of intellect is more to be regretted than this lady's. Her birth was, I believe obscure. She married a widower, a *bon vivant* I apprehend, to whose children, by a former wife, she became a very unpleasant step-mother. She travelled a great deal with her husband, read much, observed more; and these acquirements, grafted on a naturally firm texture of mind, wound up the nerve to a tension, which is ill suited to the narrowed means occasioned by her widowhood.

" Their residence was in Wales; and it appears the

mode, then prevalent in the remote counties, of retaining some traces of the feudal system, led to the maintenance of a long retinue of domestics, and to the assumption of consequence, which has now happily faded into the more agreeable refinements of modern elegance.

" A diminished income, and an establishment extremely mean and miserable, naturally excludes those guests whom she boasts of having formerly entertained; whilst her pride and despotism expel every thing in the shape of a domestic, after a week's attempt to make her treatment sufferable. She dresses in a most grotesque style; but her manner, when moderate, shews her acquainted with the ceremonies of polite life. She converses on literary subjects with remarkable acumen, and really gives one an idea of her being a very companionable woman, until any remark on servants may chance to occur; when the phials of lunacy seem opened; she goes to the drawer of a palsied old table, for a list of the retinue she formerly kept at Chirkden-castle; traces the family genealogy to

the Saxon invasion; and positively talks herself into a phrenzy.

"I met her some weeks since, and accompanied her to her house, which, from a pompous remembrance of the Welch castle, she determines shall be large; though its tottering lamp-post and its sinking rails, bespeak the proprietor's faded consequence. Having no servant to unclose the portals of her mansion, she was obliged herself to be the bearer of its key.

"Our entrance was greeted by cats of all ages, colours, and dimensions. On the remnant of what was once a carpet lay, reposing in a basket, a senior favourite, with its neck enveloped in flannel, being, as she said, '*sorely afflicted with cold and asthma.*' 'Dear Cecilia' had also been indisposed, and in succession Kitty, Fanny, and the whole tribe were assembled to welcome '*mamma,*' who had just ordered some veal to make soup for them.

"All feelings of attachment for her fellow-creatures are thus merged into mistaken compassion for

a 'rejected race of animals.' Such is her phrase and her apology; but, truly, I never witnessed a more mortifying proof of the imbecility which pride and misanthropy produce in the human mind.

"However, here comes a visitor of a very different cast, with whom you cannot fail to be amused."

I had recovered the capacity of being amused also; but the whole catalogue of my observations and amusements, never presented any subject so extraordinary both in figure and costume as now entered. Antique, and all phrases synonimous thereto, convey but an imperfect notion of this Mrs. Nantucket.

"Well, Mrs. Clovis, I suppose you have been pestered too with a pack of hungry hounds collecting money to build another chapel; for my part, I think we have preaching-houses enough. But there's no end now to learning and improvements, pride and grandeur. Every body must read and write, forsooth."

After pausing to recover breath, she continued,

" I am sure, if my poor dear husband was to come upon earth again, he would not know his gardener's children from my Lord Duke's; and I am informed 'tis equally bad throughout England. In my younger days good tallow candles afforded light enough for the Esquire; but now spermaceti even won't do. A new-fangled thing is introduced, I hear, excluding candles and oil, to illuminate us all with something invented by the *alchymists*, as they were formerly denominated. I am happy to say, my door is shut against all such improvements. I go to none of their conventicles; but ride to church, when I can hire a horse cheap, and am very comfortable in the good old way except when my nieces come over to visit me; then my house is turned over and over; all my old china taken out of the closet and placed about in piles here and there; the glazed pictures dismissed from the dining-parlour; my pier-glass removed from its old station to be put over the mantle-piece:—in short, the place looks more like an upholsterer's lumber-room,

than a house for Christians to live in; and all my servants are employed for a week, after such visitors are gone, in putting things to rights again.

" Unluckily too, these nieces of mine have come into the world since nerves have been the fashion; and when an attack comes on, no medicine in my house, nor from the shop over the way, is of any use; no, Doctor Penmarks must be summoned to talk jargon to them, and write an illegible prescription, leaving the ladies delighted with his ease and elegance."

The rest of the company had scarcely time to reply to Mrs. Nantucket's remarks, when she again engrossed the conversation.

" I suppose, Mrs. Clovis, you have heard that the barber down the street, whose head you say always reminds you of the Saracen's at Snow-hill, has sent his daughter to learn music. To amuse the Sunday-morning customers, no doubt. If such people had tuned a penny Jew's-harp in my younger

days, it would have been thought a marvellous piece of presumption. But 'tis of no use talking; the world is altogether gone mad, since that vile revolution happened in France."

Unwearied as my strains have often been, yet this old lady's volubility surpassed all example of perseverance. Her auditors were amused with the singularity of her opinions; "which though," said Mrs. Clovis's friend, "they display no sentiment, according to the usual acceptation of the term, exhibit all the bigotry arising from a superficial observation of passing events."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I HAD, by this time, learned that I was an inhabitant of a village in Essex, and an inmate in the family of an officer serving abroad; who had fixed his residence here from economical considerations combined with a wish of their remaining near town.

It was a remark at the rectory, that a village is like that subterraneous cave, called the Ear of Dionysius; nothing pases in it, or near it, but it is instantly known.

This village of Rivermill seemed to prove the justice of the aphorism. Its periodical assembly —its book-club—and its card-parties, were alike atended by all the beauty, fashion, and conse-

quence, that could be brought together; alike individually ridiculed, and collectively burlesqued.

Assumed importance gave the dance (held "where the sign-post caught the passing eye") all the consequence of a court-ball. By dint of good-luck, and the assistance of lanterns and pattens both for ladies and gentlemen, the dancers' heels might esape contamination from the unpaved streets in their approach to the assembly-room, while the friendly *papillotes* preserved the crisp of each carefully-turned curl.

Similar assumption of importance gave the reading subscribers all the literary information that can be gleaned from title-pages;—and the card tables, "in a chair-lumbered closet, just twelve feet by nine," all the scandal collected, arranged, and detailed, since its last weekly return.

"I wish," lisped the daughter of a superannuated underling from a government department, "that we could exclude trades-people from our assemblies."

" It would tend infinitely to the attraction and respectability of the thing," suggested a draper's daughter, who had married a clerk in the commissariat, " if we could obtain better music."

" What book is in reading now, Roxalana?" " 'Pon my word, I don't know.—I read nothing but La Belle Assemblee, and a French novel now and then." " Whose card-room is it to-night, Seraphina?" " Miss Evergreen's, and all the beaux will be there."

" Pray how many of these scarce articles can you collect?"

" They are easily enumerated : there's Commodore Copenhagen, — Prose, the Curate, — young Carp, the apothecary,—and, I was going to say, Case, the attorney; but he, unfortunately, is married."

" This village," said Mrs. Clovis, " contains altogether about five hundred inhabitants ; and they

make, at least, five different classes of society; from the regulators of the full-moon assembly, to the gleaner of cresses for the sallad of a dress dinner-party:—an event which affords inquiry and dissertation for all ranks during the ensuing month.

CHAPTER XXIX.

To many an expecting girl, and long-waiting damsel; to the humble versifier, and the lover of puns and acrostics, in all their diagrams; to many a dauber of Cupid's arrows, and disguiser of the human figure; the festival of "Sweet Saint Valentine," is almost as important as that of Januarius to the Neapolitans, or Rosalia to the Sicilians.

Yet by none of the animate creation was it more ardently desired than by the imprisoned bird. This day of my promised restoration to freedom at length appeared. The first ray of light that penetrated the apartment, I hailed as the renovating promise of gladness.

What then, thought the impatient harmonist,

must be the sensation experienced by the human captive; waiting for the dawning of that day which is to emancipate him from the cells of War's depôt — from the slavery of Morocco — or the fangs of iron-hearted persecutors!—to restore him to his home—his wife—to every dear, domestic tie!

"Farewell, pretty bird! if thou could'st think, thou woulds't remember George, thy preserver; and thou would'st also return to Rivermill again, should the next winter's cold threaten to destroy thee. Go—now thou art free!

"Creation's heir," I still hovered round "intent to bless" my benefactors, and I returned for several days successively, to breathe the strains of gratitude and love.

I was drawn to the spot by no curiosity; by no desire of *espionage*, beyond watching the avocations of the youthful "village Hampden."

The crocus had been succeeded by the polyanthus; and the hyacinth was giving place to the auricula; the "blossomed-bean flower" was exhaling its fragrance, before I resolved on extending my flight beyond the plains of Essex.

I saw George propping the carnations, ere they unfolded their variegated petals, and his sister Eliza equally busied in the parterre in which she also delighted, and I had not yet forsaken the supporting branch of the only tree their garden contained.

"Though this is a solitary apple-tree, Eliza, yet, when Edward came from Sandhurst-college, and was made an ensign, he desired it might not be destroyed, and he gave me a charm, as he called it, to preserve its life. I will repeat it to you.

Thou poor, secluded, solitary thing!
In blossoms drest to welcome beauteous Spring,
From all thy species absent and forgot—
Thou seem'st to thrive, tho' in a lonely spot.

The cluster'd beauties of the orchard grove,
Despise thy stature and contemn thy love ;
Not ev'n the humble rustic passing by,
E'er stops to hail thee with admiring eye.
Yet heed not ;—though thy blossoms should produce
No fruit delicious, nor autumnal juice,
Contented bloom within this lowly fence,
Expand thy buds—thy fragrant sweets dispense ;
Thy humble branches spread, secure from harms,
No axe shall touch thy solitary charms.

In quiet vegetation thou'lt remain,
When many a lofty beauty strews the plain ;
The blight destructive, and the wintry gale,
Will pass thee by—poor tenant of the vale !

Thus unambitious, peaceful and retir'd,
By few beheld—but by those few admir'd ;
The modest female meets the blushing morn,
Whilst crystal dew-drops glitter on the thorn,
With mind well-governed and a heart secure
From various ills the proud must oft endure ;
Her bosom guileless ; undisturb'd her rest ;
Her sabbaths holy ; all her wishes blest !

Compare the half-clad beauty of the town :
On what advances has she learnt to frown ?
Mid-day's parade—the theatre's display,
Can banish blushes,—and can peace betray !
Till quite forsaken, melancholy, pale,
By none receiv'd—by none believed her tale :
In vain she sighs the sad repentant prayer,
That e'er she breath'd the town's contagious air !

These friendly hints some nook obscure may reach,
And thou, lone tree, an useful lesson teach.



CHAPTER XXX.

I VISITED distant hills, and stretched across extensive plains, without recognising one human being to whom recollection could familiarize me: till one morning, while I was nestled in the thicket of a grove, sounds met my ear to which I could not listen undelighted.

A woodman and his wife rested with their burdens of fire-wood, beneath the sheltering branches of my retreat, and in the process of their conversation named the worthy, the interesting Miss Benbow! "How glad I am, that the old miser did not disappoint them in his last will; though death did overtake him in the same sullen silence in which he had lived."

" I rejoice," said the woodman's wife, " much for Mrs. Benbow; she will be so happy now her daughter is returned."

The dialogue, to which I was so attentively listening, now took another turn: but I had heard enough to convince me, that I was not very remote from the site of that place, so dear to the valued inmate at Kirk-hill. Nor, of course, could I be very remote from the gates of Paragon-hall, that admitted no beggars.

I saw a lady, pale as the spring's first primrose, and delicate as its fragile stem, solitarily strolling the " grass-grown path" of a cottage garden. Closer approach shewed me it was not the form I sought, but the silent and timid voyager in the Comet, who had not spoken from the moment of my introduction to the lady's cabin, except to suggest there being no necessity for my removal. There is something so indescribably sweet and natural in the sounds of a compassionate female voice, that it rests on the memory, and thrills at

every sympathetic touch, even of objects with which it could be presumed to have no immediate connexion. It is not, therefore, surprising, that my gifted power of reminiscence was tenderly awakened, by recurrence to a moment, not among the least interesting in the humble annals of a bird.

I became her constant attendant; I fluttered my wings, and hopped tamely at her feet. In the softest melody I could command, I saluted her morning-walk, and cheered her vesper ramble. If she smiled, it was a smile of sadness: but, most frequently, a tear thanked me for the entertainment I had wished and endeavoured to afford.

" No, my kind hostess, no. Present my thanks to the ladies, and say, I am incapable of accepting their friendly proposals." She added, in soliloquy, " Emma has done with all the charming, but deceiving associations of human intercourse."

I anxiously flew over the thatched roof of the cottage; and saw her my wishes so fondly desired; Miss Benbow! accompanied by her mother. Oh, could she but discover that an atom of animated nature is now in her sight, which has breathed the pure atmosphere of the Scottish mountains; —that has sung on the laurestinus at Kirk-hill; that has often been the attendant of her and the amiable Linlithgows to the abode of the poor, and to the residence of the rich;—that has followed their ramblings on the banks of the Esk—and has flown across its stream, as they climbed the rocky access to Hawthornden!

" I think, my dear mother, it must be the same person: but she disappeared so quickly from our vicinity, that it was impossible to proffer her any kindness. In the dialect of the north, the weaver's wife told us, ' the *daft* lady was aye pining.' ' What lady?' we asked.—' She who came to Jennie Bogle's the week before;'—and the next day's news reported her departure. Ellen Linlithgow

and myself glimpsed her once only, when there was such a touching sadness in her exterior, that it left an impression on my mind agreeing with the figure I yesterday saw for a moment again." "If it be possible, Harriet, we will console her; for, whether her distress proceed from 'mind, body, or estate;' the claim is equally strong from one frail, suffering mortal to another."

From my perch on the blossoming myrtle at the cottage-door, I saw Miss Benbow again enter, on the following morning; and I heard its mistress inform her that the lady had walked to the river-side. My flight did not exceed the fairy step of her, who was again, unconsciously, my conductress.

She delicately commenced conversation with the sad stranger, on the beauty of the walks, and the freshness of the day.

The stranger's replies were as laconic as the most finished grace of good manners would allow; she evidently wished to decline intercourse: but it was

equally as obvious, that she was a daughter of affliction; and Miss Benbow's solicitude to lighten the burden was displayed in a manner so peculiarly her own—so mild—so gentle—and so fascinating, that it stole into the recesses of the stranger's woe, almost before she became conscious of not being alone. Her replies lengthened, and she insensibly passed the rubicon which separates the ceremonious interchange of monosyllables, from the elegant freedom of conversation.

"I will yield to your lenient approaches:—I will receive your kindly-intentioned visit," said the stranger, and re-entered the cottage. Miss Benbow then returned to her mother.

"Are there any letters this morning?" "Yes, Harriet; and I was just recollecting how anxiously my heart has palpitated with expectation for the well-known footstep, the long-remembered voice of our village post-man; when, though absent from my sight, you, nevertheless, lived in every vision of joy my solitary heart dared indulge; even when

those visions were extended to the peaceful realms of futurity."

"This, my dear mother, is from Miss Linlithgow, and I must beg to read it to you before I break another seal."

"Ever dearest Miss Benbow!

"Your departure from Kirk-hill, occasions a gloom which no short lapse of time will be able to dispel.

"To say that we talk of you every day,—that we cannot find terms sufficiently expressive to convey to each other that esteem, which is both individually and collectively felt for you here,—is saying no more than you must be already convinced of. But there exists in the sensibility of female hearts, so many various sources of regret for the absence of a dear associate in all one's pleasures and pursuits, that not an hour can pass without their being renewed. Each walk that you preferred, we visit more frequently than any others: every flower that

received your care, seems to be more fragrant than its competitor; and Ellen says, all the plants in the green-house are become sensitive, and shrink from our touch, because it is less delicate than your's.—Yet we are not so selfish in our regrets, as to be unsusceptible of the most lively feelings of joy, at your acquiring that prosperity which so charmingly increases your capacity of indulging a benevolence, that will continue boundless in any station you may fill.

" My parents enter most sincerely into the participation of Mrs. Benbow's happiness; and will not admit the possibility of your forgetting the pledge you left, of again visiting Kirk-hill, accompanied by your mother.

" You know our domestic diary, and have often assured us that you thought its pages were so well occupied by satisfactions emanating from the heart, that the head found no opportunity of calculating on the more varied avocations of a fashionable world.

" When my dear father returned from York, with your parting *souvenirs* to Juliette and Donald, they were as vain, and yet as sad, in their estimation of your regards, as all the rest of the family were at his detail of your solicitude for our happiness.

" The continuance of your good wishes will, I am assured, increase every present satisfaction you enjoy, when you are informed that all here are well; and still more, that all arrivals, in the shape of folded messengers from afar, are harbingers of the most gratifying intelligence. Alexander's letter was presented to my father with the Gazette account of the battle; so that we were happily prevented a repetition of that wretched anxiety, which you so compassionated and consoled on a former similar occasion. He is promoted to a majority; and my dearest Harriet will enter not a little into the proud feelings of her northern friends, at seeing he is so handsomely mentioned in the despatches. Though Robert is not a man of war, yet the distance of his situation naturally makes us very much alive to

expectancy, when we read of an arrival from Madras: and we yesterday had the satisfaction of excellent accounts from him.

" Doctor Berkshire writes my mother, that you look 'admirably well.' Pray, Harriet, do not forget that Alexander is *not* your brother, though we have already numbered you among the sisters and daughters of Linlithgow.

" I must not omit to acquaint you that my *ci-devant* pupil in compliment, Mr. Elfin, writes most gratefully to my father, that he is going on prosperously in the exercise of the legal profession.

" Juliette requests I will say nothing about her progress in music, in Italian exercises, nor our trip across Queen's ferry, to make a visit in Fifeshire; these being subjects reserved for her intended epistle.

" Write to us as often as you can. This is not taxing you beyond voluntary performance; and I

shall judge, by the frequency of your despatches, whether English sincerity keeps pace with Caledonian expectations.

" A thousand loves and messages are pouring around me: but I have only space left to remind you that Margaret Linlithgow's motto is the twenty-fifth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Proverbs; and that she is ever, and in all truth, your faithful friend."

CHAPTER XXXI.

NO architectural genius had been consulted in adorning Mrs. Benbow's simple cottage; the trellis of which I now flitted through. It had neither octagonal door-lights, nor hexagonal windows; neither arched doors, gothic ornaments, stained glass, nor appropriate inscriptions. Although it was not the *cottage ornée*, yet it had been the abode of virtue and of innocence, whilst in poverty, and which, when transplanted to a richer soil, would flourish still more abundantly; uncondensed into apathy and chilling indifference,—too often the concomitants of prosperity.

No Doric pillars, or Corinthian wreaths, invited the gazer's admiration; yet here might the

shade of Cincinnatus repose—or a Leonidas bestow an approving smile! The cypress of private grief mingled with the laurels of the patriot's glory: but, though the orphan's tear bedew its leaf, the widow's sigh breathes no reflection unfriendly to its perpetuity.

And is this, indeed, the residence of a hero's family? One, who loved his country with ardour, and who gave his life to its service? And are there no traces of so glorious an exit, save in the penury of his family?

No coronet glittered on his brow; no armorial badge from the heraldic designer adorned his simple escutcheon; no gratulating shouts spoke the hero's approach; nor did admiring multitudes draw his chariot-wheels. No! he fell a victim to depopulating contagion, under the torrid zone. Yet it was his country's interest to maintain her colonial territory; and till pestilence unnerved his arm, his sword found not its scabbard!

But

" Shall one tear less sacred fall
Upon the grave of worth,
Because unblazon'd is its pall,
And titleless its birth?
Away, away the herald's scorn,
Full many a noble heart was humbly born!"

Such had been the reflections exchanged between Mrs. Benbow and her daughter, when a visitor entered; and, limited as my observations of human nature had been, I presently perceived this visitor was a *summer-friend*. To preserve the appearance of that condescending kindness, which is one of the most mortifying pangs that feeling poverty receives from callous pride; her attentions (according to Lord Chesterfield's definition) had been confined to a *vis;* indeed they seldom extended even that far, when it began to be supposed that Mrs. Benbow must be miserably reduced, or she would not have sent her daughter so far off for a living.

However, the possibility of the miser's relenting in death occurred, as it was ascertained that he had had several interviews lately with his solicitor; therefore the *vis* was lengthened to a *visit:* but it was now past all doubt, that the bequest had enriched them; consequently they were intitled to a *visitation.*

"My dear Mrs. Benbow, I really blush at not having called before, to offer my best services in assisting your equipments for the new residence. I can assure you none of your friends rejoice more sincerely than my family, at your acquiring the distinction you merit. I hope, Miss Benbow, you will be no stranger at the Woodlands; my daughters will be so happy to see you. They wish to consult you on the establishment of a winter-assembly bye-and-bye: it cannot, possibly, be arranged without your assistance. If you have forgotten any thing in your orders from town, which my house can supply, pray do not be ceremonious, but send to us for it."

After having uttered a tissue of similar professions, the visitor received the thanks so justly her due; and departed.

"What an effectual magnet is prosperity, my dear girl. From that lady's former constrained civility, a stranger must have supposed there existed in me some personal demerit. During your absence, indeed from the first altered aspect of our fortunes by your dear father's death, even the formal visits "were few, and far between;" and my home became "drearily secure from the intrusion of a friend." No invitations burdened my remembrance; nor was the language of kindness deemed compatible with the contempt my poverty excited. Without being very uncharitable, I may suspect, that had the barometer of my fortunes not risen, I might have made this cottage my sepulchre; or have learnt, like the desolate Robinson Crusoe, to domesticate some of the inferior animals for society."

Every day brought an increase of compliment;

one lady had just received an instrument from town, of which she would beg the favour of Miss Benbow's opinion. Another was translating from Metastasio, and would be glad of the honour of Miss Benbow's assistance on a difficult idiom.

It had not been in the power of adversity to make Mrs. Benbow and her daughter the crouching sycophants of those, whom fortune, alone, had elevated above them; for, had the best qualities of mind, or brilliancy of intellect, been deemed worth consideration, they need not have shrunk from competition with any by whom they were surrounded.

But, wanting the glitter of Mexican merit and Peruvian distinction, those gifts, which neither Mexico nor Peru can purchase, excited no remark, except such as envy and ill will prompted. The administration of every act of benevolence within the compass of their means, gave them a few advocates among the very poor;—otherwise, they were alike unnoticed and unsought; until the repentant act of the uncle gave them the essential for setting their

merits in a fair point of view. While deficient in that, the exercise of every Christian virtue made them acceptable only to their—CREATOR!

" In what is called the world, my dear Harriet, though you may possess stupidity by the ton, and even add some few grains of vulgarity to the amalgam; yet, if pounds sterling be opposed, depend upon it, the balance will not only render you admissible, but attractive to hosts of friends: while every mansion becomes the proffered home of those who can make their own residence as sumptuous in return."



CHAPTER XXXIII.

AS Mrs. Benbow and her daughter continued their remarks on the past, the present, and the future, the observer failed not to repeat his visit to the cottage of the fair unknown, but found her not in the garden. The brilliant wall-flower, and the modest heart's ease, flourished at her window; from whence she plucked the variegated produce of the latter.—" Heart's ease, art thou blooming here? Have thy petals a balsamic quality—will they sooth indeed—is there an opiate in their fragrance? If so, I will wear thee on my aching heart, for thou art lovely —thou art pure:—and Emma is uncontaminated by guilt! 'When I knew peace, I knew not thee, oh world!' But I gave that world my peace, my joy—and then it drove me forth a wanderer; a wretched,

hopeless wanderer,—to seek what it never will restore.

"Oh! had Emma been enumerated among the tribes of nature's lovely vegetation, to have flourished a few short hours in lowly bloom, and then, woven in the chaplet of joy or mingled in the bouquet of some happy rustic, have given perfume to the Zephyr's breath, and joined her kindred atoms! but away — these beauties bloom not for me! 'The church-yard yew round which my fathers sleep'— the 'mournful scabious' and the solitary flower shivering on the rock;—these, these form the only wreath for temples to which, calm pulsation is both night and day unknown. I cannot— must not meet Miss Benbow: though, I believe she is all in female form that Emma once could love:—but I will love no more. Let me write at once my refusal; before I repeat my visit to the river." I saw her apply the pencil to a page, on which her tears promised to confirm the traces, and I then resought the happy, peaceful retreat of Miss Benbow.

My faithful heart vibrated at the remembrance of the tuneful Robina, as I observed Miss Benbow training some branches of sweet-briar round the cottage paling, and, in the impressive tones of feeling's genuine impulse, repeating

" 'Mid the heath of the valley the violet blows;
Through the sands of the desert the fountain-spring flows;
And e'en on the briar-bush blossoms the rose,
With the breath and the beauty of morn."

" I will beg you, my dear mother, to hear the contents of my letter to Miss Linlithgow, and to suggest any thing, of which you may think it deficient."

" Dear and estimable Margaret!

" You have, perhaps, began to suspect that 'English sincerity' is not so thriving a plant as 'Caledonian expectation.' But, stop, dear Margaret—do not so much injustice to the affectionate

and grateful dictates of my heart's best feelings, as to admit a suspicion so injurious to them all. Be assured that my friends at Kirk-hill are the theme of our daily conversation; and that no prayer more sincere, or fervent, ascends to the Source of all Good, than is breathed from this cottage for the continuance of their happiness, in its most extensive sense.

" The aid of artificial mnemonics is not necessary to remind me that I am also indebted to dear Ellen and my favourite Juliette: but as yours has the priority, its claims must be first attended to.

" Not one pleasure resulting from my amended fortunes is so exquisitely enjoyed, as the intelligence of health continuing a fixed resident at Kirk-hill; and happiness, coming on the wings of ' folded messengers from afar," as her companion.

" The best apology I can offer for having delayed to write, is an account of my recent avocations, and the demands on my time. You are aware,

dear Margaret, that the acquisition of fortune formed no part of my anticipations, even in the most remote degree. But, that he who so coldly looked at distress and 'passed by,' should have bequeathed to us independence, still appears a dream to me. My mother is, however, so fully convinced of its reality, that she determines on forming an establishment consistent with her improved means; believing such an arrangement will contribute more fully to my gratification. And so it does—because, her power of doing this not only delights my very heart of hearts, but enables me to solicit some guests from Kirk-hill, without subjecting them to the narrow accommodations of the cottage we have hitherto inhabited. Yet the cultivation of its garden, and the many sweets nature breathes through its simplicity and plainness, endear it to me so much, that I have obtained my mother's consent for its still being made our occasional residence. We have, notwithstanding, been much occupied in modernizing my late uncle's house, and in preparing it for our reception, before

the winter-season makes all these matters less easy in the accomplishment.

" A short letter, I knew you would not be satisfied with, I therefore waited to fill this extensive folio sheet: yet, were I to attempt to express my gratitude, the pages of an Alexandrian library might be filled, and much remain unsaid.

" Believe me, dear Margaret, I have not yet hailed that day on which my abode with you commenced, without recalling to my closest recollection, the humble, dejected, and dependent Harriet Benbow, received, welcomed, and beloved by those on whom she had not even a shadow of claim. Humanity cannot, surely, produce a being so totally degenerate, as to be capable of forgetting such kindnesses:—but much less possible is it for me to become that ingrate; for my first, my dearest earthly desire is, to be still kindly remembered by those, so closely interwoven with every dream of bliss my fancy loves to sketch.

"You will recollect the '*daft* lady at Jennie Bogle's,' whom Ellen and myself once caught a transient glimpse of. Some days since, I saw the same interesting figure, and the same saddened expression. We were, indeed are, very solicitous to offer any service or consolation to a solitary female, apparently yielding to the most consuming melancholy. It certainly bordered on presumption to attempt any thing like a presentation of our wishes; so promptly did she withdraw from intercourse: but the pleadings of benevolence must always have the first hearing, and I found an opportunity of leading her towards conversation. She made some allusions to her private history, from which I immediately shrunk: for, of all unpleasant feelings, none is more truly repulsive, than the apprehension of being suspected of idle curiosity leading one to the exercise of any kind intention or act. It has not been in my power for two or three days past, to look into the cottage where she is sojourning: and, until I had written to my dear Margaret, every other demand on my time must stand over.

However, this fair unknown shall not be forgotten in my future communications.

" You will scarcely imagine the satisfaction we experience at the intelligence of Major Linlithgow's fresh harvest of honours; and we beg to join in congratulations to you all. Your hint is very flattering, Margaret, but it is solely your own jest. Its similitude never entered any other imagination: but I can forgive you, since it assures me you are convinced the name of Linlithgow is among the dearest impressions of my heart.

" Say every thing that is grateful and affectionate for me to all your dear evening circle; and, whether this finds you in the shrubbery, or the green-house; enjoying the lively reel, or the harmony of sweet sounds; still may it be welcome from your faithful

HARRIET BENBOW.

" It would not be like a female finish without a P. S. so, as I have really forgotten to mention your

'*Sassenach*,' Mr. Elfin, this corner must suffice to say, that I am pleased at hearing he is successful: I am sure it delights your kind-hearted father.

La riverisco! Quando la rivedro?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WITH the volatility natural to my species, I sought a change of scene and visited more distant groves.

Summer shone refulgent; the digitalis tempted the school-boy's hand; the poppy brightened the abundant corn-fields; the rivulet presented its refreshing supply to the shepherd and his faithful dog; harmony was on every breeze, and every roving songster joined in universal concert.

" Henry, sit beside me," said an old gentleman to a boy, apparently about twelve years of age, who, in the artless gaiety of his youthful heart, had climbed to fasten a vane on the projecting branch of an elm-tree.

" My dear boy, however the varying breeze may direct its point, the sail will no more extend to waft your parent to his native shore. Henry, come and listen. It was on this spot your father wept his adieu on your infant cheek; it was only thus far your infant steps could then follow to gratify a father's pride."

" Oh, that I were a man to become a hero like him," exclaimed Henry; " to fight my country's battles,—then return to cheer you, and receive my mother's blessing.

" Tell me yet again where, and how my father died. I cannot ask my mother, because she weeps, and then my sister bids me to be silent."

" Henry, your father fought nobly, and died assured he had not bled in vain! The ship he commanded sailed triumphantly over the Atlantic; his officers were brave; his tars were faithful.

" In protecting the trade of Britain; in block-

ading the enemy's ports; in the northern tempest, and in the tropic heat; they shrunk from no service, or toil, which duty to their country demanded.

"Your fifth year had just commenced, when this dear and valued father hastened to take one parting glimpse of a family he loved so truly. Few were the days he could give to a retirement on which his anticipations fondly rested for long, long years of bliss, when peace should once more wave her olive-branch over the closed gates of Janus; for the husband and the father was nobly enrolled on the list of Britain's brave defenders, and domestic feelings must never interfere with the demands of honour and our country's glory. Let this spot, Henry, be ever sacred in your memory; it was your father's last injunction that you should be deeply impressed with his sentiments, and be made acquainted with the sacrifices due to any profession you may select. 'Should I return no more,' said he, 'tell him of my deeds in war! tell him where his father fell!'

" Along the coast of France, and where Biscay rolls her stormy wave, your father had long watched, long wished to signalize his name, and add another laurel to those numerous wreaths, with which the British navy and army have adorned the throne of their monarch, and immortalized the genius of their country.

" The glorious opportunity at length arrived. The enemy, confident in superiority, and trusting in his numbers, undauntedly met the fire of the British arms; sustained the fight, until his hosts were thinned—his masts destroyed—his hull a wreck; he then lowered the ensign of his nation, and resigned his sword to your father's conquering hand. He received this tribute of victory—he sighed a blessing on his family—and it was his last!

" Henry, so fell your father! Think of him in this tranquil scene of nature, and emulate his constancy in love! Think of him among the monuments of the brave, and emulate his deeds in war! Remember him, when surrounded by the proud

trophies of your country's conquests; and never let his sword be disgraced in your hand!"

Henry, in affectionate regret,

"Dropt tears, which angel eyes have shed
In sorrow for the sacred dead."—

But as instantly spoke through his grief,

——"I will not mourn
Upon the hero's laurelled urn."

For, whether my sword be unsheathed in the floating bulwarks of Britain, or in the not less gloriously contested field of some future Waterloo;—still shall my heart beat high when I hear the trumpet of fame recording the names of her sons!"

"Well said, my little hero! Shake hands with a soldier, and then tell me if this be the direct road to Worthing."

This unexpected address surprised Henry, and roused the old gentleman from the reverie he was indulging.

" I ask your pardon for this intrusion. Though I have, in using a sword against the enemies of my country, lost the arm that wielded it (as you may perceive), yet is my heart strongly in unison with the tones of glory ; and the animation which marked this youth's expression, acted so powerfully on my feelings, as I approached, that I could not withhold the involuntary tribute of my satisfaction."

There was a remarkable degree of fire and firmness in the soldier's elocution. His accent was not totally unlike that of the Linlithgows, which tended to increase my attention, and I descended to the stepping-stone of the brook, to observe him more distinctly.

" Sir," replied the senior, " spare your apologies. I perceive you are a gentleman, and the service in which, it appears, you have been engaged, demands

that respectful attention, which gentlemen always know both how to offer, and how to appreciate. You appear fatigued, and your accent assures me you are not a son of the south: pardon, then, an old man's curiosity, which would presume to inquire by what unusual route you have exchanged the scenes of noisy war for this peaceful vale in Sussex."

The officer seated himself on an adjoining bank, and acquainted his interrogator, that in consequence of losing an arm, he was retiring from active service with the rank of Captain; and that never having been in England, beyond a few days, was very desirous of seeing more of its beauties. He had, therefore, crossed from Dieppe to Brighton, and was now walking to Worthing, with letters of introduction to the family of an officer, who had been among his wounded companions at Brussels. Apprehending the distance from Brighton to Worthing was short, he had preferred this mode of going thither, to any which would have lessened the possibility of observing so much of the country.

"Have you been long a soldier?" asked Henry, with interesting quickness.

"Only seven years: but as you still appear desirous of conversing on warlike topics, resume your seat, and hear a soldier's history."

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN the northern province of the Emerald isle, very near the town of Belfast, stands the farm on which the first years of my life were passed. It was my father's wish that I should be trained to pacific pursuits.—I therefore proceeded to Carrickfergus, and crossed over to Glasgow, where I was entered a student in the university. The second season of my return dissolved the prospects which my father had indulged for me. I accompanied a relation on an excursion to Antrim, to see that stupendous production of nature, the Giant's Causeway. We there met two strangers, who, using the same freedom as I have just done, entered into conversation with us. They were military officers, and spoke with so much fervor of their profession; dwelt

with such delight on the description of the various countries they had seen, and the services they had been engaged in; that I was perfectly enraptured. We dined together, and my curiosity was so kindled that it soon tended to give our conversation the same tenor it had assumed, while we were resting on the basaltic pillars of Fingal. They told me of Seringapatam; of Egypt's burning sands, and Maida's glorious plain; of Abercrombie; of Baird; of Moore; and many others, of whose heroic deeds I had frequently read.

"We parted: but a desire was created in my heart, which neither the cold counsel of the aged, nor the tame-hearted dissuasion of the timid, could subdue. I turned from Virgil's peaceful Georgics to the lays of Homer, and the page of Xenophon. Each day appeared an age, until I could become the Hector, or the Achilles, of some future Iliad; or give my name to the historian's record.

"It happened that as I entered Londonderry, whither I had been sent on business for my father,

a regiment was marching through. The sight was so consonant with my recently inspired feelings, that it is impossible to describe the effect produced by the martial strains of a military band, on a mind so enthusiastic as mine. A tear started in my eye; my heart palpitated, and I was rivetted to the spot! Had I been, at that moment, possessed of a peaceful diadem, I would have exchanged it for an ensign's post; and have deemed the standard-bearer more enviable than a monarch in his robes.

" Every scene connected with the quiet progress of home became disgusting; every day spent in the solitude of the country, was reckoned as a blank. The hunter's horn, which had hitherto awakened me to my most active delight, would now bear no comparison to the sounding bugle, summoning to arms, and calling the sons of Erin, as well as of Britain, to deeds of valour and to the palms of victory. The noisy drum, the ' spirit-stirring fife,' formed the concert of my dreams, and I repeated the warrior's story, until ' I seemed the hero of the tale so glowingly described.'

" My father soon observed the new bent my inclinations had taken. He would have restrained my impatience, and have urged me to consideration; but the impulse was irresistible. Comparing me to Rasselas, he ceased to contend against my ardour, and told me, I should exchange the happy valley for the tented plain; procured a commission for me in the Prince's native Irish, and sincerely prayed I might never have occasion to repent the choice I made. Nor have I! The glory I pursued, I might possibly have acquired: as it is, I rejoice in the reflection that I have never been defeated; never yielded my sword into the enemy's hand; nor led my fellow-soldiers to scale that rampart which we did not ultimately win. No march appeared long; no toil, no danger to be weighed against the triumph of fixing the British standard where the enemy's flag braved our attack.

" Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and France, have presented in their turns opportunities for every veteran's skill, and every stripling's emulation. The colonel of the division I served in had

been school-fellow with my father, and he omitted no means of forwarding my wishes for distinction. I certainly looked towards a more distant return to the green hills of Erin: but I will not repine. Though war must have its victims, yet glory must have its worshippers; and I think my youthful days have been well spent, although I go home *minus* an arm."

Henry joined most cordially in the enthusiasm of the young soldier; who was invited to defer his further walk until the next day. This he very politely declined, and pursued his route to Worthing.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL BANGALORE

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE long interval I had now passed in security, banished all traces of fearful recollection. I fluttered from tree to tree about the rivulet; saw the peasant close the gate on the scene of his daily labour, and wearily enter the humble shed, where the toil-worn wife, and no less craving children, waited his participation in the simple meal. The evening was serene—and far from the bustle of pursuit, from "the crowd, the hum, the shock of men," I found a resting place close to the spot where the curate of the parish was in conversation with the village apothecary.

"By those in life's higher stations," said the latter, "it is frequently asserted, that happiness and content dwell solely with the poor. The verity

of this opinion is proved by no instance in the hamlets I visit, save one; and that is certainly among the humblest of the peasantry.

The parents are very old—their dwelling is very mean: but displaying that regard to nicety and good order, which proves their content with its narrow comforts, and that every blessing of their condition in life is properly estimated. Their children have been reared with the same unaspiring views. Two sons conduct the plough, another is at sea, and the fourth a soldier. The daughters have no wish beyond giving satisfaction to their employers, and appropriating a part of their earnings to the assistance of their parents. The morning finds them cheerful; the evening contented:—the sabbath brings them rest from toil, and gives them the desired season of rejoicing in the mercies they gratefully partake."

"Surely this must be a more reasonable, a more acceptable hebdomadal incense," replied the curate, "than the exhibition of the *rouge et noir*,

and the decision of points and bets, so disgracefully prevalent among some of the sons and daughters of fashion on that day, when, although the temples of Thalia and Melpomene are closed, yet is the altar of the Supreme accessible to all ranks."

I regretted their conversation closed so suddenly: but the observations I had heard created a desire of knowing the true cause, why such perpetual repinings were uttered by every passer beneath the trees I rested on. I therefore listened attentively about the hovels of the poorest, and in the walks of their superiors.

It must be admitted, that the first toil hardly for their subsistence: but my residence with rationality had taught me, that diligence in their respective duties, was the original and first command given to the human species. These labourers appeared fitted by the texture of their minds, and the robust form of their bodies, for the business they pursued. Discontent in this case must evidently then pro-

ceed from an ambitious desire to rise above the healthful and quiet station in which they are placed, to the avocations of another class of society; to guiding the pen, instead of the plough; and to the command of others, instead of governing their own aspiring minds.

So humble a casuist thought, that if the son attended the flock, as his fathers had done from all preceding time; if the daughters in childhood gleaned the farmer's field, as their mothers had been content to do; and, in succeeding life, served the dairy, and reared the poultry;—such occupations were more consistent with their happiness, and the intention of their being, than a transplantation into the merchant's warehouses and the "*Temples of Fancy.*"

It also appeared a more certain road to happiness, if the next description would not step from the loom and the anvil, to exercise talents in stations, to which such talents are very seldom

adapted: but teach the son to know that trade alone is his destiny; and the daughter not to look beyond a tradesman's means.

Would not such dispositions materially lessen the proportion of human evil, and prevent a recurrence to the arbitrations of comparison, which ever, in weak judgments particularly, extend the ambitious desire far beyond the possibility of gratification?——

"Pray assist me on a long journey, Sir," was the petition of a weary traveller to a farmer, who had just concluded an agreement with a woolstapler, for the fleeces of five hundred among his flock.

"Assist you? why you speak like an Irishman, and are, no doubt, a Roman Catholic. I give nothing to beggars of your description."

"Yes, Sir, I am guilty of the crimes you mention. I was born in Ireland, and bred in the reli-

gion of my parents; which was not, I believe, the same as yours,—for they would have given their last cup of milk, to relieve a poor fellow so maimed as I am."

"How dare you, an Irish papist, beg of me, an English Protestant?"

"I beg only your pardon, Sir: but when I was fighting at Talavera, where I missed the companion of this leg, they did not send me off the field because I was a Catholic, but because I was no longer serviceable. And when I enlisted in the army, Sir, I did not make it in my bargain not to fight for English Protestants, though they determine not to pity Irish papists; but, I hope, no offence.

My wing, formerly wounded by the archer, seemed to sympathize with the lame soldier, and I could not but imagine, how horrible must have been my fate, had I been then thrown into the ditch, because I was not a bird of Paradise!

In cheering notes, I wished the applicant better luck, and, soon after, I saw him fill an old peasant's tobacco-pipe from the box his poverty yet afforded. "Here is a jug of very small beer, poor fellow! but it is the best I have; and though you tell me you are not of the same religion as I am, yet charity is of no sect!"

If I am ever to undergo transmigration, let it be into the old peasant with his charity, rather than the farmer with his flocks! I remembered the conclusion of an evening conversation at the rectory, which was addressed to a visitor governed by strong prejudices.

"Superstition, and her offspring bigotry, are Hydras which exercise despotic dominion over a large proportion of the human race!

"In Spain they have a throne; in the East are seen in glittering Pagodas; and in Turkey, with the Alcoran for their manual, they guide the scymitar, and the bow-string!

"The Apis of Egypt; the rude statuary of the South-sea Islands; the Lascar procession; and the Laplander's Cave,—all attest the mind's sad slavery. They preside alike beneath the banian:—in the North-American wigwam—in the Arabic tent—and in the poor Hibernian hut of 'mud and misery.'

"Happy Britain! Though thy records yet trace the Druidical sacrifice of human victims; and days, more recent, have seen the blazing pile consume the mitred martyr; torture the faithful female; and vitrify the unborn infant:—though usurpation and fanaticism sanctioned, during a melancholy interval, the profanation of thy temples; and, though it must be regretted, that some few of thy inhabitants yet worship only an 'unknown God;' while solitary examples of apostacy, and irrational dereliction from the Believer's hope to the Deist's dark philosophy, have since been permitted to alarm the vigilance of the watchful:—yet shall the horrors of persecution no more return, to drench thy peaceful plains, and eclipse the glory of thy national establishment.

" Continue thy blessed associations for the universal propagation of truth. Let the shade of Buchanan rejoice in the success of thy messengers. Let the day-star of conversion teach the Hindû to extinguish the fire that encircles the self-devoted female. Let the sable Negro, and the degraded Hottentot, bless thy empire. Thus disseminating knowledge with an ardent spirit and a liberal hand, mayest thou be immortalized by thy public virtues —by the wisdom of thy councils—the bravery of thy sons—and the unspotted purity of thy daughters."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EVENING now began to close; the glow-worm lit a feeble lamp; the grass-hopper chirped in its beam; the melancholy note of the "moping owl" saluted the rising moon; each plant commenced its nightly respiration, while animated nature slept.

The branch on which Henry had erected the simple vane, afforded all the shelter which was needful for my limited wants; until the returning sun-beams brought light and life to all creation. Man, and the inferior animals, arose refreshed, and ready to renew their various duties.

Vegetation gave its crystal dews to the ray that demanded the pearly tribute, and myriads of atoms, full of life and bliss, began their ephemeral existence;

presenting the silent, but beautifully-displayed offering of joy. I was not among the last to join the concert of nature. Gratefully content, I tasted the streamlet, and sought the skirted corn-field for my morning repast; then floated on the bosom of air to that tranquil abode, which had not heard my song during the preceding day.

I revisited the wall-flower at the stranger's window, and warbled a solo, which was not in unison with her continued sadness; yet she moved not to alarm me from the place I had selected. Denominating happiness, a "puny, short-lived plant," she resumed the arrangement of some shells around a myrtle, which she soliloquized as refusing to thrive beneath her care.

I next extended my wings for Mrs. Benbow's happy retreat, where crumbs were scattered around the rose, the sweet-briar, and the honey-suckle bushes, for the dependent bird and insect.

The stillness of solitude was uninterrupted, when

Miss Benbow returning from a morning-walk, met her mother with smiles of mutual satisfaction, and proceeded to form into a bouquet the wild flowers she had been collecting. A child ran to the door, presenting a folded paper, which it was presumed, must belong to Miss Benbow.

" It was very careless to lose Miss Linlithgow's letter," and the paper was laid on the window-seat for a few minutes; whither the flowers, when arranged, were also taken. The supposed letter of Miss Linlithgow, was discovered to be another's writing, in pencil; bearing neither date, nor signature; yet they immediately concluded it to be the production of the melancholy stranger.

Mrs. Benbow read

THE WANDERER.

" Lady, forgive a stranger rude,
Who, though unbidden, dares intrude,
To cheer thy new-found solitude,
And ask, if hope dwells here?

Oft' wandering on the river's brink,—
Some call thee crazy : I but think
'Tis fate has broke some tender link,
Which claims thy frequent tear.

What wild illusion strange and vain,
Is reigning in thy fevered brain?—
How sad thy look!—how sad thy strain!
How sad thy mournful lay!

Pray take thy harp, and tell me all,
Beside this bubbling water-fall;
Its echoes will the tale recall,
Some future, pensive day."

" Stranger, thy sympathy is new,
Yet would I fain believe it true;—
But kindness cannot cure my grief,
Nor sympathy afford relief;
Thou must not hear my tale.

'Tis true, that in yon lone retreat,
I sought to rest my pilgrim feet;
'Tis true, I wander, heedless where,
Nor mind the chilly evening air,
Nor winter's ruder gale.

No wild illusion fills my brain,—
No visions strange of fancied pain;—
But hopeless misery draws the tear,
And sighs, for all the heart holds dear,
Consume the form you see!

Joy's balmy roses crown'd life's morn,
But from the wreath, ere noon, were torn;
I'll take the harp—but must not tell
What gives its tone the mournful swell
Of feeling's agony!

I often mark the river's course,
And loiter near its moss-clad source;
At eve I list the bulbul's note,
While echoes on glad ether float
Like sounds of other days!

Such sounds were heard beside the stream,
Where life had many a placid dream:
But rapid as the river's flow,
And transient as a meteor's glow,
The bliss my life displays!

You ask if here I mean to stay,
To breathe my wild unstudied lay?
No, stranger, no—I've far to roam,
To seek some new, some distant home,
To seek the peace that's fled.

I thought ere now to view the scene
Where Erin boasts her hills of green;
I thought to climb Plinlimmon's mount,
Or, near the Conway's murm'ring fount,
To find an humble shed.

Yet here I linger—here I dwell—
And cannot speak the last farewell!
But I must tune my lyre afar,
Before the morrow's western star
Reflects its evening beam.

That pensive star will Emma see,
And breathe a vesper prayer for thee,
When crossing mountain, heath, or vale.—
But ne'er repeat her wretched tale
Nor choose so sad a theme!

Stranger, adieu! I'll think of thee,
Yet dare not add, "Remember me!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"MAKE an immediate visit, dear Harriet," said Mrs. Benbow, "to this dejected Emma." Miss Benbow's ready compliance was scarcely pronounced, when the subject of their kind solicitude walked slowly towards their dwelling.

No simper of affected gaiety; no studied form of address, to display the conceived merit of the visit that had been purposed, was resorted to, in the consoling reception of this interesting female. She was received with a grace that can proceed only from mind. With equal elegance she met that kindness, which endeavoured to beguile, at least, one hour of its cares, and returned such an approving look of gratitude, as brought to the observer's re-

collection, a Madona by Raffaelle in the rector's drawing-room.

" Have you," asked Miss Benbow, " pursued your favourite walk by the river-side this morning?" The reply was affirmative. " I am inclined to accuse you of an acquaintance with the Muses, Miss Stuart, and that accident has given Harriet the substance of an interview you have recently held with one of the nine. I will hope, that you intend to cultivate some future intercourse with Euphrosyne, and let her pensive sister seek a less lovely votary."

The stranger blushed, and was silent: while her eyes betrayed a consciousness, which confirmed to a certainty Mrs. Benbow's idea, when the pencilled fragment was restored to her.

She continued to examine Miss Benbow's portfolio, and, meeting some views about the North-Esk, observed, with a sigh, that she had been twice in Scotland. Then selecting a melody, from

the music-stand, requested Miss Benbow to give her the strain of a verse, which she repeated in a voice that awakened the most touching compassion.

" But they, who have loved the fondest, the purest,
Too often have wept o'er the dream they believed;
And the heart that has slumbered in friendship securest,
Is happy, indeed, if 'twas never deceived."

I heard Robina's aunt once observe, that she agreed with Luther, in assigning music a place next to theology:—deeming it the best solace for a desponding mind. The accuracy of this opinion was now verified. Miss Benbow readily performed every piece she conceived most likely to gratify her visitor, until she

" ——— like the dewy star
Of evening, shone in tears,"

and obviously experienced that emotion, which only visits the mind when the shades of melancholy are beginning to retire before the dawnings of hope. Promising to repeat her call the next day, she turned over some Italian works, borrowed a volume of Petrarch, and took leave.

The benevolent widow and her amiable daughter rejoiced in having, even for the shortest interval, alleviated that woe, which they expressed a sanguine desire to remove.

Illiberal surmise entered not into their generous minds. The subject of their humane wishes was considered by them to be a female, apparently endued with more flexibility, than strength, of mind; and educated, more to gratify others, than to become dependent on her own resources in a day of trial: her manner modest, gentle, and attractive; her melancholy aspect, infinitely more touching and interesting, than the glow of rude health, associated with "the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind."

They aspired not to Utopian perfection: but where distress would be solaced;—poverty relieved;—or virtue improved; their wishes would extend to those whom their ability could not reach.

The ensuing morning I made my accustomed appearance at the stranger's abode. She was con-

cluding a letter, which I heard her give directions for being forwarded, with the Petrarch, to Mrs. Benbow's. Although I was not the dove of conveyance, yet, on the extended pinions of curiosity, I followed the messenger. The ladies (expecting their promised guest) hastily broke the seal of her presumed apology, which Miss Benbow read.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"HAD it been my happiness to have known you at an earlier moment of my life, the sympathizing kindness you have now displayed towards me, might have been anticipated by the pleasure of congenial attachment; for I feel it has been possible, that the amiable Miss Benbow and the unhappy Emma might have mingled in that friendship which is the 'cement of the soul.' Averse from a mysterious concealment, which ever implies something wrong, I have been most anxious to give you my 'life's sad story.' It has never yet been told, because I have long avoided human intercourse, and precipitately fled from every residence where my appearance was likely to excite interrogation. Seeking no consolation, I felt no desire to awaken sympathy; but resolved on perpetually changing my abode, in

melancholy silence, when your well-meant endeavours succeeded in restoring me to sensibilities, whose cheering beams had long been obscured by the mist of despair.

" Circumstances, as cruel in their nature as they are baneful in their effects, incapacitate me for the enjoyment of that society, of which the recent influence has, unfortunately, only increased the misery it was intended to dispel.

" Having been left an orphan at a very early age, the regulation of my mind received no attention, beyond that generally obtained in the common routine of a boarding-school.

" Quitting a series of instructions which, leaving the heart vulnerable to every vanity, had regarded nothing beyond the external show of elegant accomplishment; most unfit, and unprepared, I thus entered on the unrestrained indulgence of every favourite and fashionable pursuit. With sanguine disposition, and impetuous wishes, commenced

the career of an independence which had been anticipated with an impatience that knew no bounds. My thoughts were guileless, because my heart was pure; and, ignorant of society, unpractised in suspicion, I estimated every trivial kindness as a proof of friendship; and received every flattering tale as it had been the dictates of truth. Neither selfish nor illiberal in the distribution of those gifts with which fortune had endowed me, the frankness and candour of my nature made me accessible to all ranks. My merits were exalted beyond their desert, and praise was purchased at the sacrifice of economy. As my fortune was only ideally inexhaustible, the decrease of that principal attraction which had afforded the *fete*, the ball, and the rout, speedily diminished the number of all that had ' flattered—followed—sought—and sued.'

" Poverty, and the desertion of imagined friends, I might have borne: but base envy, and scandalous detraction, attributed motives to my conduct, at which my soul shuddered. A phalanx of self-constituted judges of morality, now summoned evidence

drest in their own colours, at every card-table and in every circle; and all agreed to condemn her, who, being no longer able to contribute to their pleasures, they were determined to hunt down and to destroy. Appearances, to which I had attached no consequences, were now arrayed in the armour of proofs; —deeds, which had proceeded solely from unguarded sincerity of heart, were wrought into tales, which I could neither gainsay, nor withstand.

" Too late I saw that even virtue must restrain its impulses; too late I discovered that the friendship on which I relied as the soother of my vexations, was also among the thorns of reproach; and 'my distracted mind wandered from the enjoyment of reason, without reaching the bliss of madness.' Those very few who might really love me, were too insignificant in number to rise in my defence; those who hated me, triumphed in my fall from that distinction which had excited their envy, and rejoiced in my expulsion from every avenue of hope.

" Tortured by the bitterest reflection on my past

folly, and incapable of enduring the agony arising from the mis-construction of every act of my life, I have become a wandering exile. The consciousness of being uncontaminated by guilt;—of no intentional crime ever having found room in my imagination; will not, cannot reconcile me to the shade in which malice has so inextricably involved me.

" Amiable and benevolent strangers! grant me your acquittal. Emma is incapable of deception. There are moments when her heart yields again to the softness of its first impressions; when her recollections dwell with self-applause on the exercise of those feelings, which have helped to banish her from a mis-judging world.

" Never was my heart cold to the application of the needy; never was my hand withdrawn from assisting the distressed. In the fervor of unchecked enthusiasm, I have flown to the relief of those who were ready to join in that condemnation which has made my life a burden, and embittered my days by unavailing regrets.

" Nothing remains, but your compassion for the victim of appearances. Seek me no more; endeavour not to call me back to that merciless world, which has so fatally deceived me. Devoted to misery and misanthropy, I can only find society among the humbler works of creation. No argument can justify the past; no voice of pity speak peace to my agonized feelings. Then, farewell! I bless your kind intentions with the warmest throb in my lacerated heart. It would learn to love again, but you must not venture to admit the persecuted, the rejected Emma Stuart."



CHAPTER XL.

ACTUATED by a portion of that compassion I had first experienced at the rectory,—had admired at Kirk-hill,—praised at Rivermill,—and felt confirmed by the Benbows,—I waited not to witness the effect this letter might produce on those to whom it was addressed; but hastily extended my flight back to the disconsolate Emma.

Could I have uttered sounds intelligible to human intellect, they would have breathed the soothing accents of consolation, and displayed the beam of hope in its brightest ethereal hue. Truly might it be said,

"Lost to the world by lot severe,
O what a gem lies buried here."

It was the first time I wished to possess the power of articulation: but I could only pour my simple consolation in a strain which, though imagination may understand, language cannot interpret. Thus, with useless compassion and vain regret, I was descending, when a hawk, darting through the air, marked me as his prey. I redoubled the speed of my flight: yet the destructive pounce was all but effected, when I dropped, entirely exhausted, at the feet of the lady I had been so anxiously observing. Her pitying voice banished my terror, and gave me confidence:—for mercy in its mildest, softest character, could not have found a bosom more replete with the sweetest pulses of humanity, than that on which I now rested.

"Art thou too persecuted by those of thine own species, and obliged to seek a refuge which thy nature never destined? If thou art distressed, dwell with me. If thou art forlorn, so am I! If thou canst attune thy voice to mournful strains

then can I mingle my notes with thine.—Rest safely from thy pursuers, and be the companion of Emma's wanderings."

In all former modes of my captivity, reluctance had taught me dissatisfaction. I had escaped from all the kindness that could possibly be dispensed, and I had longed for the arrival of the day promised for my emancipation from the last constraint I had endured. Now, I watched no opportunity of returning to hamlet, hedge, or tree. My song was only such as grateful sympathy inspired. Fed by the hand of the gentle Emma; protected by her care from every intruding enemy; I felt secure in the simply-constructed cage of rushes her fingers wove for my reception.

This was the first period in my existence when my presence became of any real value to my possessor. I was therefore elevated, in my own estimation, beyond that humble sphere to which I had hitherto been consigned.

Could Emma Stuart have given language to my song, it would have bade her accept the balm her new-found friends would administer; and to listen to the consoling voice of the generous Harriet Benbow. In vain my wish: for with the morning dawn, she determined on changing her place of residence. Another of those modes of removal, which I had began with Robina's brother and repeated with Mr. Elfin, now carried the solitary Emma and her simple, though highly-valued companion, a distance of fifty miles.

In my former journies of this description, nothing had occurred to interest me. The inns my masters rested at, served every thing they ordered, and often more.—"Money is the certain passport to civility, from the man and from his master," I remembered to have heard Charles say to a fellow-traveller, who laughingly added, "Without thy cheering smile to reward, oh, joy-inspiring Henry Hase, the artist might design a skeleton of himself! the poet's only feast would be his couplets! the historian might dine on

the shade of 'Macedonia's madman,' or the fallen fortunes of the Corsican! pedestrians might bet against their own shadows! the train of Thespis become the ghosts they sometimes represent! Italian harmonists trill their notes like swans, expiring! and Vestris caper lighter than the gossamer!"

"All-powerful coin!" ejaculated my present possessor, "that can purchase respect from the insolent — friendship from the world—smiles from the fair—and preference for fools—when wisdom asks and is refused! Yet man cannot do without thee! From the bright production of the British mint, or its paper substitute, to the humble Asiatic cowrie—what dost thou not accomplish?

"How many a highly-purchased patent of nobility would have remained a blank, but for thy influence! —how many a seat of distinction would be filled by unbought qualifications, which are now but a

feather's weight against the auxiliaries thou canst command—how many countries would have preserved their freedom—how many an African, whose bones have bleached on the soil his slavery tilled, would, but for thee, have died 'boasting his golden sands and palmy wine'—But for love of thee, how many a miser would die neglected, and want, in death, those charities his life denies to others!—How many a persecuted Rajah would have lived unmolested, without cause to execrate the name of Britain!—But for thee, Pizarro might have been susceptible of mercy!—Montezuma had not broiled—nor Atabalipa bent beneath the fury of the sanctioned assassin!—Many a slaughtered Inca would have prayed in peace beneath the spreading plantain!—and, but for thee, how many a burdened conscience would have slept in bliss!

"Yet thy power can produce effects very different from these: for, when dispensed by benevolence, thou canst give tuition to the blind—the

deaf—the dumb! and make the 'widow's heart to sing for joy!' Canst raise the sinking victim of poverty to renovated life! Canst lead the orphan to the gates of praise! Open asylums for distressed innocence!—for infant misery—and destitute repentance!

"The hand of liberality, guided by the expansive mind, can distribute thee in blessings: sending, by thy aid, the patient missionary, armed in the panoply of truth and breathing the accents of mercy, to circulate the sacred volumes of salvation among the uncultured Caffrarians—the prostrate children of the Sun—the worshippers of Jaggernaut—and the heathens of all lands. Thy instrumentality, thus employed, may ultimately lead the Hindû to renounce his caste; may shelter the rejected Pariah within the pale of Christianity; and consign the temples of Brahma and Vishnû to the fate of the Delphic oracle;—purify the recesses of the Elephantiasis;—exalt the spire of reformation in the groves of Asia—on the arid plains of Africa,

and in the remotest settlements of Columbia: maintaining in civilized Europe sanctuaries for the confirmation of those hopes, which look beyond the skies for fruition, and for the exercise of that devotion, which should ever ascend on the wings of universal charity and unostentatious benevolence!"

CHAPTER XLI.

APOLOGIES for intrusion were made at the moment the door of the apartment we occupied was opened, just wide enough to shew me the Rector, his sister, and the fair, the ever-dear Robina! The glimpse was transient;—but what a succession of restored remembrances were assembled in that instant!

I once more felt myself a captive! for though I loved the pensive, gentle Emma;—how much more congenial to my volatility was Robina, who was ever diverted with my tricks, whilst a saddened pleasure was all my present possessor could derive from me, or aught beside.

I was singing on her finger, when this most unexpected occurrence left me lost in surprise.

Curiosity, that stimulant which at once excites desire and leads to its gratification, had lost all power on the mind of Emma. Nothing could I therefore expect, or hope, from any inquiry she might otherwise have chanced to make. However, there are several gradations between hope and despair; and patience generally rewards her votaries.

Not more than an hour had elapsed, when one of those bowing appendages of an inn (who, it seems, never assume an upright position, except to a traveller declining the best accommodations of the *hotel)*, entered with the customary curved vertebræ, to present a very polite message from the family lately arrived, and to solicit the lady on whom they had been accidently obtruded, would partake of their dinner, and allow them to look at the bird they had seen in her apartment.

The first part of the request was declined: the second readily assented to. I was conveyed, in my simple rushy cage, to the presence of my first human

protectors;—the first from whom I had received kindness, and learned docility. I was much too happy to collect my scattered ideas very rapidly. Once more I was encompassed by the hand that had so often caressed me; again my head rested on her lip, and my breast met her soft cheek,—on which the only rose that bloomed, was that of youth and innocence, while her mind's purity was reflected in the lovely transparency of her complexion.

"That pet-bird," said the Rector to his sister, "reminds me of Robina's favourite, which embarked with Charles, and by escaping caused him much chagrin, and Robina some regret.

"Wert thou not valued by thy possessor," said Robina, "I should be tempted to wish for thee: but now I will restore thee safely to her."

My heart grew sad at the prospect of being for ever separated from those I so fondly loved, and my notes of gladness immediately ceased.

It is thus, that birds, as well as their superiors, have sometimes to lament cross purposes. But what was my lilliputian evil to those which every day imposes on beings more susceptible than my inferior order, and how many separations take place, notwithstanding, among intelligent natures, to whom such separations are not painful!

"That tie," said Mr. Linlithgow one day laying down a newspaper, "which surpasses all other attachment in description,—how speedily can its reality be dissolved!

"The successful suitor ties the Gordian knot, perhaps, with the silken cord of affection; or possibly purchases a bride by most liberal settlements; and it may be that her preference is sometimes secured by his rank. Raptures in the one instance soon subside; with the others even common attention fades, before the torch of Hymen has blazed through the round of congratulatory visits.

"The gentleman begins to 'covet his neighbour's

wife,' or the lady to think some passer-by more desirable than Potiphar;—preliminaries are soon settled;—the disciples of Solon and Lycurgus get their fees for pleading the exemplary virtue and super-excellence of the one, and justifying the crime of the other.

"Potiphar is remunerated for the crooked desires of his rib, from the purse of his rival; while the public morals sustain a disgraceful blow, by the exposure of indecencies at which an Otaheitian would blush; and from the coffee-house to the lowest rendezvous in town; from the noble landholder to the poorest peasant in the country, marriage becomes a jest, and exalted life a reproach to society."

CHAPTER XLII.

"SECURE me a place for Weymouth to-morrow," was Emma's order to the waiter,—and at Weymouth we were the next evening. Its beautiful bay displayed a smooth and clear expanse; scarcely an undulation was perceptible. A packet vessel lay peacefully anchored at a distance, and a few boats loitered near the beach: otherwise not a speck was visible on its surface, as the moon rose in the softness of female majesty, and threw her rays into a line of convergated brilliancy.

"This is too serene a view," sighed Emma, "for my unquiet mind: but I will winter somewhere on the sea-coast, and watch the tempest when it rages like the passions of the malevolent."

For the space of two days I was an inhabitant

of an hotel—when my kind protectress succeeded in obtaining lodgings in a very silent quarter of the town.

To me, the pursuits and amusements of the sojourners at Weymouth appeared perfectly novel. The beautiful esplanade was filled with fashionably-dressed gentlemen, in all the fripperies of the Gallic school, and fashionably *un*dressed ladies, who by frequent reductions from the purposes for which the silk-invested insect becomes a chrysalis, and the *gossypium* expands its calyx; agree to discountenance the effects said to be produced by imagination, and very *good-naturedly*, no doubt, leave little to conjecture.

Kind creatures! but yet a simple bird who has flown across Bond-street; loitered in the parks; perched in the opera; and peeped at a theatre, before he saw this boasted esplanade, would apprize you that it is possible to carry even a treat to extremes; and that, by-and-bye, a figure in drapery will be more admired by the lords of the creation, than the semi-nudes of the present day;

who may not unaptly be compared to my unfledged tribe, when they leave their oviparous concealment.

The exhibition of metropolitan horsemanship I had thought little of; having always found more amusement in the peripatetic groupes than among the equestrians; who, I suspected, provoked their horses into capers merely to astonish the ladies. Here, the receding line of the gentle wave left a domain of sand for the graceful display of the several "Symptoms of Horsemanship," on hacks, roaders, and "bits of blood!"——

Come, "peck the groundsil's feathered seed," said the benevolent Emma; "I should be very solitary without thee: yet I will not make thy company essential, lest ere long, either fraud or force should take thee from me."

Though it were only a negative kind of happiness I had now for several weeks enjoyed, yet no inducement should have tempted me to forsake my

preserver. As she placed me in the rush-woven cage, beside the window, how truly was one of Miss Benbow's favourite melodies realized in her, who did, indeed, appear like

> ———" the last rose of summer
> Left blooming alone."

yet, thought I, as she closed the door, and pursued her way to the public library

> " I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,
> To pine on the stem."

Ere Emma could return, how sadly was her prediction of losing me verified! I saw the window gently lifted by the coarse hand of a lazy mendicant; who removed me from the society to which I was so truly attached, and consigned me to the odious imprisonment of his bag; until he reached the Dorchester road, when he took out his stolen prize, to calculate on its probable value.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

CHAPTER XLIII.

IT was not likely I should long be the companion of mendicity; for though the wretch fed me, I knew my life was only valuable in proportion to the pence I might hereafter be bartered for.

My despicable possessor pursuing his rounds, I at length heard, with inexpressible joy, the sound of "Do you want a bird?" and looking through the interstices of the rushes, perceived it was to a "knight of the rainbow" (as Charles named the footman from Nightingale-place) to whom this question was proposed. But he, well-mounted, pranced proudly by; and I concluded myself, while in such company, beneath a notice so distinguished.

At the same instant a young man approached with drawing implements in his hand. He asked my

price, and was answered, " A shilling." He examined the contents of his pocket, and among some pieces of that vulgar, inferior species of coinage which never sullies the patrician touch, lay a solitary shilling! The artist looked at me, then at his slender finances; " with a countenance more in sorrow than in anger," declined the purchase, and walked on.

He, to whom the proposal was first made, now drew up the reins of his charger, and with all the comparative consequence of exalted station, said, he supposed I was not sold; " for that poor gentleman had enough to do, to maintain himself and his mother, by the paintings which he sent to London for sale." While apparently desirous of impressing the mendicant with a due sense of the importance attached to his present interlocutor, he added, that the painter could not obtain admittance to take sketches in the parks of Mintern-Magna, without his interest; and that he always had a due regard for the poor!

Could I have chosen my purchaser, it is needless to observe which it would have been: but the last speaker concluded a treaty for me; turned a little out of the main road, and gave me in charge of his wife, who inhabited a tenement near his master's mansion. Here I was to be reserved for the daughter Alciope, when she might return on Saturday night from the boarding-school, as it was considered I might be conducive to her amusement on the Sunday afternoon, by being used as a decoy to take more of my species, which might, by sale, turn to some account.

A few days elapsed in all the disgusting misery that can be conceived, when Miss Alciope returned for her weekly vacation, and gave the best specimen of her liberal motives, her benign principles, and her observance of the fourth commandment, by her anxious desire to put the cruel device against the feathered race in practice.

I was carefully removed by the crafty mother into a well-contrived cage, on the exterior of which

a plentiful portion of an adhesive compound was deposited, and then placed in the garden to allure others to captivity. My warning voice would have bade every wing avoid me, could I have been attended to; but in vain I chirped "depart;" the gilded outside, the abundant supply of food within; the apparent delights of such accommodations, attracted a young and silly bird. She fluttered about the cage, like a moth round the flame, and at last alighted on the inviting deception.

The expert Miss, whose boarding-school notions led her no further than to become an artful entrapper of the innocent and unwary, rejoiced in the success of her scheme; eagerly wrenched the captive's feet from the place of their detention, and opened the cage-door to introduce her to my society.

Such a moment was not to be lost! With the quickness of electricity, I escaped—mounted in mid-air, and sung defiance to my unintentional liberator!

CHAPTER XLIV.

THERE was little to engage my attention in the country around me. Extensive sheep-walks, and thinly-scattered hedges, still more thinly wooded, afforded none of those delightful retreats which I had so often enjoyed.

To attempt a return to her from whom I had been purloined, appeared hopeless, as she might have removed; or, if not, any design of approaching her, as she was now situated, the most probable accidents might frustrate.

I, therefore, stretched my course in a chance direction; and, after renewing my flight for two or three days, reached a grove unmolested.

Bounteous autumn began, by this time, to spread her rich supplies for the reward of human industry.

Every path afforded scattered blessings for the humblest of the granivorous train. I reposed in the foliage of a beautifully wooded hedge, and experienced more quiet contentment, than during any former unconfined period of my existence. I had nothing, except mere animal wants, to rouse me into action. I flew, without any motive, beyond the enjoyment of freedom. Time, in his advances, had greatly infringed on the presumption, the impetuosity, and the impatience of my desires. I felt fast approximating to that mental torpidity, which throws a shade over the brightest hues of intellect, and limits the most volatile description of animal life to the compass of efforts, which are almost attainable by those corallines naturalists have described, as connecting links between the animal and vegetable worlds.

" Ne'er tell me of glories serenely adorning,
The set of our sun, the calm eve of our night;
Give me back, give me back the wild freshness of morning,
Her clouds and her tears are worth Evening's best light."

Such was the tenor of my song, as I was perched on the acorn-covered branch of an oak, after having almost adapted my preceding strains to a monody on the departure of the early stimulants of my nature; when two men, passed near the branch of my support, conversing on a topic which could not fail to rejuvenate every principle of active delight.

The chief speaker I immediately recognised as the old gardener at the Rectory, who, with the garrulity natural to his age, was descanting on the merits of the family he served: acquainting his companion, that he had taken the opportunity of his master and the ladies going from home, to visit his eldest son, who was managing a little flock on the borders of Dorsetshire. "So as my young master, the Captain, was stopping in Weymouth harbour for a short time, the family went that way in going to London, and my son living in the track, room was made for me outside their travelling carriage; and I am now walking the last

twelve miles of the journey back, and hope to reach the rectory before the family have returned."

Thus, in the most unexpected manner, indeed beyond all admissible probability, did I become acquainted with the causes that led to the adventure at the inn, and to my having been, for a few dear moments, caressed by her, whose feminine perfection, glowed brighter than those stars, which now guided the gardener, and directed my flight close in his rear.

In the course of my former attention to human converse, I had heard a description of " *la maladie du pays* :" it was reserved for this moment to teach me, that I was also sensible of its effects.

I readily found the shrubbery, through which I often flew delighted in the first spring of my excursions, when life, and all its scenes, teemed alone with joy.

The dawn of a beautiful autumnal morning again restored that residence to my view, which still displayed kindness and hospitality to man—mercy and protection to every living form that sought shelter in its perennial Eden.

By having yielded to apathy, and relaxed in my perseverance, I had been withheld from the restoration of that felicity which for so long a period had formed the ultimatum of my desires. Had I continued my search, instead of hovering about the first grove open to my reception, I might long since have enjoyed the scenes of my earliest bliss; the spot that sheltered my unfledged helplessness!

With all that delightful crowd of sensations, which palpitate in the arteries of gladness at the realization of joy faded, even in perspective, I flew from tree to tree; from grove to garden, meeting some dear familiar object every moment. I breathed the notes of satisfaction, and

warbled the strains of rapture—in a word, felt once more *at home!*

"Dearest of all prosodial sounds! home! When fashion dictates the phrase, it is understood as the rallying invitation to the 'dear five hundred friends:' but, when feeling pronounces the word with that emphasis the heart only can dictate, what then does it imply?" said Alexander Linlithgow, in a conversation with his mother one evening.

"Ask the mariner," replied she, "who, long tempest-tost, or from the distant zone returns to tell his anxious wife and listening babes, the extent, the wonders of his voyage. Ask the soldier, who, in the burning clime of India, has counted many an annual sun rise and set in oriental splendour; but whose home was only to be found in the distant isle of Britain.

"Ask the toil-worn labourer:—the fisherman from his skiff:—the miner from his living cemetery:—

these can expatiate on the enjoyment—the rapturous sense, that short and simple word conveys.

" Expect not to hear its bliss described by those who have, along with many other sources of rational felicity, immolated it on the altar of Extirpation, and imagined they were divesting themselves of antique prejudice.

" Well, may the gentlemen of the long robe extol the sacrificial pile, thus raised by their enlightened clients : for the preparatory divorces imposed by the " twelve tables" of fashionable life, introduce those repudiations—the fruit of depravity, ripened in the hot-beds of dissipation."



CHAPTER XLV.

MY joy could not reach its zenith until the rector and his family returned: soon, however, their presence gladdened the scene their taste had so richly adorned.

They were accompanied by a gentleman and his sister; and in a few days the sailor's arrival was likewise announced, as a Post-captain, and Knight Commander of the order of the Bath.

Nothing could divert my attention from the garden, the shrubbery, and the windows of the rectory. Before the hour arrived that brought my daily gratification, I could wing my way to those cottages, where their benevolence and their charity demanded the gratitude, and the prayers of all who

benefited by their bounty, or witnessed its unwearied application.

I learnt that the guests who returned with the rector and his family, were Lord Valleyfield and Lady Augusta Sydney, son and daughter to the Earl of Greenlaw; who had been a fellow Oxonian with the rector, and between whom the friendship that began in their youthful days had never known any diminution.

I entered most fully into the happiness displayed on every countenance; and, stationed in the most favourite walks, daily increased the number of my ideas.

"What a charming woman is your aunt," said Lady Augusta to Robina, as they entered the green-house one morning. "Had she never any children?" "She had," replied Robina; "but they quitted a world which had so cruelly blighted their mother's happiness, before they were old enough to sympathize in her wrongs."

Lady Augusta appearing interested by her friend's introductory observations, the subject was continued.

" About the period of my father's marriage, she also concluded a matrimonial engagement with a gentleman of good fortune and connexions. A period of three or four years presented the most flattering promise of ensured happiness. At that interval, a gay baronet brought his still gayer lady into their neighbourhood. The mode of excluding the wife from her husband's attentions, was not then quite so prevalent as it is now; and my aunt exceedingly regretted the baronet's neglect of his lady; who was, on her part, equally careless and indifferent whether Sir Francis preferred Juno, or Minerva; horse-racing, or the gaming-table. Her ladyship was considered attractive, and succeeded in detaching my aunt's husband from his home more frequently than decorum could justify. Yet suspicion had not breathed a syllable derogatory to her fame, nor had not, it seems, ever entered any imagination, when my aunt had to lament her husband's

desertion, and Sir Francis his lady's infidelity. The sentence of the law pronounced a divorce; and Naples became the residence of those accomplices in guilt. My aunt had two lovely children; in the distressing confusion produced by the first intimation of the circumstance I have just related, her son, nearly three years old, was lost to her for ever; at least from that moment to the present, no trace of him could ever be discovered. A female infant remained, and was cherished as the last and only source of her earthly consolation: but the cold hand of death robbed her of this treasure, and agony and hopeless misery bent the wretched mourner to the brink of despair. My mother was in very delicate health at the time; she declined rapidly, and to complete the family distress, her presence ceased to impart further consolation; for she was removed from her earthly sufferings to the abode of perfect bliss.

" Charles and myself were at that time very young. My aunt removed to the rectory; and in soothing her grief, my dear father beguiled his own. Time, that

great softener of human affliction, alleviated her sufferings. She devoted herself to the care of Charles and myself; particularly superintending the progress of my education. During a lapse of several years her unfaithful husband was never heard of.

"We had just taken leave of my brother, who had landed at Portsmouth and spent a few days at home, when a message was brought from the adjoining town, soliciting my father to visit a sick gentlemen at the hotel. He instantly obeyed the request, and, to his infinite surprise, found the dying man was the husband of his sister! Repentance and compunction had driven him back to England; the lady, whose seductions had involved him in ruin, very soon forsook him for a Neapolitan Count. He entered into the Austrian army, seeking that death in the field, which has found many a faithful husband and affectionate father: but from him the invited ball was turned. Heaven permitted him to live, and endure further chastisement for the errors he had committed. After sustaining a variety of calamities, he came to solicit the compassion of the wife he had

so cruelly deserted. His fortune was exhausted, and his life evidently drew near a close. It would distress you too much, dear Lady Augusta, were I to give you a full idea of the sensation that was experienced when my father returned. My aunt's injured feelings, arising from a sense of the deep and unprovoked wrongs she had sustained, at first withheld her from consenting to visit the sufferer. But my father's persuasions restored the impulses of humanity to her benevolent mind, and she accompanied him to impart comfort where

'Sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed.'

He disclaimed all knowledge of the fate that had befallen his son. He received his wife's pardon, and then closed his ill-spent life. My father caused his interment in the church-yard of the parish where he died, and ordered this inscription to be graven on his tomb:—

'READER,

'This tomb covers the mortal remains of a man, who closed his earthly career in sighs of re-

pentance, for having yielded to the influence of passions, offensive to the Supreme Being, and injurious to society. Pity his errors, because thou also art human:—avoid his example, because thou also art immortal.'"



CHAPTER XLVI.

THE ladies had scarcely recovered their usual cheerful aspect, when Charles came with all the haste of his ingenuous disposition, to express his pleasure at having heard from a gentleman, for whom he entertained very considerable regard. When Charles was serving in the Serpolet, it appeared Major Linlithgow had been landed from that ship at St. Andero; and, during Charles's recent command it happened, that the Major embarked in his ship from Quebec for England.

"He was now on his way from Kirk-hill to visit some friends near town, and would certainly extend his tour to the rectory."

The name of Linlithgow;—the recollection of

Kirk-hill;—the prospect of coalescence among natures so congenial;—all united to form an atmosphere of brilliant expectation, which exceeds my powers of description.

November began to darken the expiring year: but I felt no alarm at the approach of "vapours, clouds, and storms." The plantations about the rectory would give me ample shelter; and the humanity of its inhabitants would supply food to the dependent harmonist, who might still carol the return of that festive season, when hecatombs are sacrificed to the feast, and charity dispenses the Christmas-food, the warming-faggot, and the welcome garment to age, decrepitude, and poverty.

"I desire," said Robina to the servants, "that you do not attempt to terrify or detain that Goldfinch, which is beginning to approach so familiarly." I profited by the hint, and found continual opportunities of enjoying every gratification, without the risque of losing my liberty, or being exposed to acci-

dent. From day to day I entered and departed, as inclination led me.

" Here, Sir Charles," said Lady Augusta, " is the music you requested a copy of; and, as I am seldom liable to the *Cacoethes scribendi*, will you do me the favour of writing, in this common-place book, some of those extracts your sister has selected."

" This is an original, Robina," observed Lady Augusta, the next morning on opening the book, which was placed on the piano-forte.

Oh Book! thy pure and stainless page
Is like dear woman's morn of age,
Ere yet the sable hand of care
Hath left its dark impression there,
Or Disappointment's pencil traced,
The memory of joys effaced.
And she, who bade me fill the leaf,
With rhyme of passion, joy, or grief,

Can, like thy polished surface shew,
A mind unchequered yet by woe;
Irradiate by the cheering light
Of youth's gay sun-beam, warm and bright;
Unwritten by the pen of sorrow,—
Undimmed by shadows of to-morrow.
Oh! may her cloudless page of mind
Remain thus brilliant, thus refined;
'Till love and joy, in symbol fair,
Inscribe their fond mementos there;
And retrospection con at last,
A register of blisses past!

Lord Valleyfield and Lady Augusta now quitted the rectory for their father's seat, in Devonshire. A conversation between the rector and his sister, as they walked through the shrubbery, confirmed my hopes that Robina would adorn a title of distinction, and her brother become a *Benedict* for the amiable daughter of Lord Greenlaw, before another return of the season, which they were all preparing now to welcome in a state of 'single blessedness.'

The jocund eve of Christmas brought Major Linlithgow to the rectory, whose arrival gave unfeigned pleasure to all its inmates.

Another year commenced its annual course: the icicle glittered at noon, and lost a portion of its solidity: the beautifully fantastic landscape melted from the frosted window: the streamlet wound its lucid way, and the feathered tribe resumed the notes of gladness.

But yet too transient was the continuance of the dissolving beam, to accomplish the noon-day promise. The sun's decline gave nature again to the empire of frost; and, as I hopped round the room to peck the scattered bounty distributed by the fair Robina, I heard Charles and his friend order their skates. On following their route to the glassy reservoir, the tenor of their communications, taught me the cause of Major Linlithgow's journey to England; and that in the ensuing spring, he was to escort Mrs. Benbow, and she who was included in

Margaret's affectionate heart, among the sisters and daughters of Linlithgow, to Kirk-hill.

All these prospects were blissful—were in unison with the enjoyment of every virtuous wish, and the continuance of all rational felicity.



CHAPTER XLVII.

I THOUGHT, often thought, of the solitary, the dejected Emma. She had resolved to winter on the sea-coast; to dwell, perhaps, on some

> ——————————" pitiless shore,
> With no parent to cherish, no friend to deplore :"

to meet the whirling tempest; — to watch the boisterous sea, and to cherish her melancholy mood by listening to the mournful tales of many a sad historian.

The day was stormy: rain in torrents, and hail in pitiless fury, drenched and deformed for an interval every shrub around me. The solitary security obtained by my species, I very gladly resigned for a visit to the rectory. With timidity never entirely to be conquered, I approached the

window, and was immediately admitted. Perched on Robina's harp, I mutely listened to the rector's observations, as he read a contradictory paragraph in a daily paper, to its preceding report of a scandalous anecdote.

" Oh! ye calumniators," said he, " who can distort deeds the most harmless, wishes the most inoffensive, into the forms your own base minds alone can image!—come ye to the participation of the storm—to the observance of nature's most destructive elements. But such a summons is unsuitable:—there is a sublimity, a grandeur in the roaring ocean, in the thunder-storm, and in the mighty wind, to which your grovelling minds cannot possibly be elevated.

" The deceiving quicksand, the devouring vortex of the Norwegian maelstrom, and the hidden, but destructive rock, under the gently-rippling tide, are better adapted for your admiration, and more congenial to the unnatural deformity of serpent-tongued detraction.

" Speech! humanity's proud prerogative! the grand distinction between man and animals! What was the divine intention when the oracular power was dispensed? Was it to trumpet forth the creed of infidelity; to dare the omnipotent Creator with sounds defying His justice, and despising His mercy? Was it to circulate the malicious tale, subversive of a neighbour's reputation? or was it given to insult the unfortunate; and seduce the innocent, by deceptive promises dressed in the semblance of truth?

" Listen to the well-taught infant lisping the hymns of praise, while its grateful parents thank their heavenly benefactor! Listen to the voice of compassion instructing the ignorant — consoling the afflicted—and reclaiming the depraved! Listen to the thunder of Cicero, and to the eloquence of Demosthenes, when British senators exhort Europe to rouse her torpid energies, and shake the despotic sceptre of usurpation from the grasp of a modern Caligula! Attend when Mercy sweetly advocates

the cause of suffering humanity in every region, and under every zone; snatching the scourge from the hand of the cruel; destroying the chains of oppression, and annihilating the existence of slavery: while Pity weeps over the mandates of Justice, and Hope half reverses the decree!"

The day of Major Linlithgow's departure from the rectory, announced Sir Annandale's appointment to the chief command of a fleet, and his nephew's nomination as his flag-captain. This intelligence gave the most entire satisfaction to those I was so diligently observing, and had always so faithfully remembered.

"I sprang on the viewless winds:" forgetting, in the enjoyment of the present, every misfortune of the past. No apprehension of snare, dart, or danger, restrained my tours: nor was caution considered in any scheme for my ærial visits; whether following the track of the ploughman, or hovering round the abode of his master. Happy elasticity

of heart, which can banish woe and heighten joy!

Anxiously expecting the first appearances of renewed vegetation, I carolled the early strain of joyful harmony among the abundant, though leafless branches of the buddleia, flourishing at the window, inside which the odoriferous verbina rewarded by its fragrance the frequent attention of her who had reared it. To enliven the place of her abode, I continued my modulations on the flowery sprays of the mezereon: from the limb of the sumach, or the arbutus, the magnolia, or the pine, I flitted to the enclosure,

"Where many an orange, cedar, myrtle, bay,—
And each sweet-scented shrub, perfumed the air."

"I have this morning replied to Lord Greenlaw's wishes for our visiting Devonshire, whilst his family are there: my brother and his lady are invited to meet us; and, I would recommend your

commencing the usual arrangements for the payment of your pensioners, and all similar matters, for an absence, probably, of several weeks."

Such was the rector's communication to the ladies, as I was accepting the accustomed donation in the breakfast-parlour.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

FREEDOM and volatility on one of those cheering days which sometimes mark retiring winter, tempted my excursion to Nightingale-place, to see the monstrous taste of its present proprietors; who had introduced from the rejected lumber about the metropolis, a Hercules with his club, a Cerberus in his many-headed horrors, a spouting Crocodile, and a pair of Sphynxes sufficiently non-descript to have been admitted among the Hindû deities; being totally unlike every other object, both in the true and imaginary world.

"There's nothing to be had to-day," said a poor woman to another who was approaching. Madam and the family *is* not coming from London till next week, and then, the servants tell me, there

will be fine doings; for one Alderman Woodhead is coming down to marry Miss Belinda, and before they go up from the country, the cook thinks there will be open-house for a day or two."

The desire of partaking the ostentatious display of their open-house was no inducement for my remaining in the groves of Nightingale-place: but the site was delightful, and amidst the over-done attempts at decoration, many spots yet remained to shew the superior knowledge of its former possessors, in the union of nature and art; for their improved taste had suggested numerous modes of beautifying a residence, which all the neighbourhood regretted should have been sacrificed to the infatuations of a gaming-table.

The week passed and found me still among the winged choristers of these plantations. From a liburnum that threw its wild, yet graceful branches carelessly over the park-wall, I was listening to a sailor, who, resting on the little elevation of the foot-path above the carriage-road, exercised the softest

notes of his hoarse voice to the glory of his profession, in a song which he seemed to have recently purchased.

Annoyed at subjection, and hating the day
Which confirmed the high hopes of Britannia's proud isle,
The mad despots of Gallia joined Spain's tarnish'd ray,
Forgetting our Nelson and tars of the Nile!

The heights of Trafalgar eternize the name
Of Britain's brave sons, still the boast of their isle;
But a tear glitters yet on the trumpet of Fame,
For in Victory's arms died the Chief of the Nile!

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

" Smack went the whip, round went the wheels," and presented the travelling equipage of the Jacobus family. The magistrate thundered from its window at the sailor, ordering him off his territories

under penalty of immediate commitment; then entered his domain in the plenitude of new-found consequence. The sailor did not renew the song, but told the hedges and their humble inhabitants, that he wanted no commitments, nor any thing else; for he enjoyed a good pension of eighteen pounds a year from the bounty of his King and the Lords of the Admiralty, and could find his way home, though part of his standing-rigging was carried away in action with the Yankees.

Perhaps the sailor who had lost a leg in the country's service, was fully as meritorious a subject for congratulation, as the "blown-up fool," who looked with self-complacency on the bend-wavy in a field azure, crest a ferret, which had been recently invented at the Herald's office for this mushroom Esquire.

Disgusted at the pride and tyranny of these minions of Fortune, which were so diametrically opposite to the mild condescension characterizing every action in the place I called my home, I

sought and found my way thither again, at the dawn of the ensuing morning. The joyful peals of the church-bells prepared me for some event of happy importance: the smiles and tears of the domestics placed it beyond conjecture.

The rector was preferred to a Prebendal stall! and though this would ultimately change the place of his residence, yet no dependent on his bounty, nor partaker of his benevolence, had reason to fear a diminution of their blessings, beyond the unavoidable loss of his daily presence.

CHAPTER XLIX.

PREPARATIONS for the Devonshire tour were complete; — and the wandering goldfinch resolved on following their route. The stages of the journey were not hurried; consequently no difficulty arose in the accomplishment of my wishes.

A week's stay at Bath, was gratifying in the extreme. In no other city had my strains been so cheerful, and so expressive of my satisfaction. Its crescents, its parades, public buildings, and general appearance, combine the beauty of the British metropolis, with the elegant neatness of the new-town of Edinburgh.

A gala night in Sydney-gardens would, no doubt,

present very different features of splendour to the enchantments of Vauxhall (which my sojourn in London had allowed me to observe); but the latter was too highly-wrought, to afford that moderate delight to my limited powers of enjoyment, which I think might be met in the former.

From dipping my wing in "the soft-flowing Avon," I pursued my way to the promenade of Orange-grove; where I had the exquisite gratification of seeing the prebend and his family grouped with the Benbows, Major Linlithgow, Margaret, and the seniors from Kirk-hill! I was now so rich in joyful feelings that time seemed to exceed even my swiftest flight. Since the commencement of my journey, I had experienced nothing like regret: and I know not whether it would be right to give my impressions that denomination, when on my next attendance to the ladies' conversation, I learnt their meeting that evening at the rooms, was to be succeeded by each party taking different roads on the ensuing day.

Four days after leaving Bath, the journey of my

guides was concluded for an interval, by their arrival on the destined spot. The county I had now entered, seemed intended for birds and bliss;—for those who love the forest—the hill—the barren heath, or the verdant valley. A short respite from exertion restored the pliability of my wings, and revived all my curiosity.

Admirable as was the Earl of Greenlaw's seat, yet my excursive propensities carried me beyond it. I caught a glimpse of the sea, and in that moment all my recollections revived. It was not far from thence that I had first regained my liberty! it was on the summit of that mount, I had looked back, and sung a farewell to the kind master, from whom I had escaped; and had seen the frigate rapidly stretching towards the pathless ocean.

No disastrous impediment obstructed my way. The winding Tamar's unequalled scenery, demanded my utmost admiration. The graceful slope of the declivities; the continuity of new and striking features at every change in its direction, presented

at one glance a summit for an eagle's rest; at another, spread an invitation for the stalking heron, the singing goldfinch, and the more diminutive wren.

Here frowned a castle in proud, primeval solitude, spurning the approach of every humble dweller; there stretched the mild plain, and the smiling valley; giving employment to the industry it so bountifully rewarded.

"The richly-skirted banks of the Thames—the Clyde—the Mersey—the Severn, and a variety of other rivers, display the decisive traits of opulence: the Esk now rushes through the bubbling linn; now flows in silent simplicity; then resumes its torrent; foams, falls, and joins the neighbouring sea;—but the perfect union of the beautiful and the sublime was reserved for the Tamar!"

Such was the observation of a gentleman to his companion, on their landing to take a nearer survey

of the surrounding scenery. "That is an antiquity," said the guide, pointing to a mansion encompassed by woods that seemed coeval with creation, "from the inspection of which you will derive singular pleasure. Cotehele is the property, though not the residence, of a nobleman, who, very liberally, orders its gates to be opened to the curious. This place is so often mentioned by the different tourists of the west, and so honourably recorded with the name of Edgcumbe on the page of local history, when loyalty had to contend with anarchy and rebellion, that I am desirous of your not hurrying through it too rapidly. You will be reminded of that period when

——'all were knights of mettle true,
With belted sword, and spur on heel;
They quitted not their harness bright
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest
With corslet laced,
Pillowed on buckler cold and hard;

They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barred.' "

I would certainly have attempted to follow these gentlemen, had I not presently been attracted by sounds borne on the bosom of air, soft and sweet as the requiem that announces the flight of an angel's 'sister spirit' to its heavenly joy. Naturally in unison with harmony, I kept a close flight along the beach, while a bark, containing the musicians, floated gaily down the river.

'High rode in cloudless blue the moon' ere their voyage ceased, when my flight terminated among the trees which so bountifully adorned the shores.

Soon as morning dawned, I beheld the navy of Britain divested of its hostile equipments, and reposing in the peaceful enjoyment of those honours

which its victorious arm has earned in every region of the globe.

If it were possible for an atom so insignificant to be susceptible of pride,—I should say such a feeling was inspired at the consciousness of my being a British songster; a title which I would not exchange for the plumage of the most brilliant foreigner Lady Tinkler's aviary contained.

CHAPTER L.

CREATION was dressed in the hues of light and beauty—melody was on every breeze, and love in every vale.

" Three miles from Mount-Edgcumbe, according to that milestone; Joe, that's good news, for we are not more than a day's journey from home, after we have found the ferry which, the man at the last turnpike-gate informed us, is close to the park-entrance.

Mount Edgcumbe I had frequently heard mentioned at the rectory; I therefore gladly pursued the route of these travellers, and soon found access to its classic groves. But my power of description fails: the ever-varying delights of this spot can only be known by being seen. Nature and art have

gone hand in hand through every path, and created the most exquisite beauties at every turn. Among scenes which display all that poetry and painting have combined to immortalize; from the attractions of its gardens to the refreshing odours of the orangery, and from one line of beauty to another, I was perpetually varying my course.

As I was pursuing my flight one morning among the obliquities of the sea-coast, ignorant of its topography, I made the gratifying discovery of being but a very short distance from the guides of my western tour, and the first of my human guardians.

Rejoicing, like Vasco de Gama, when he had effected a passage by the stormy Cape, I roved from day to day delighted with the bold, magnificent scenery of the rocky shore; so different in its character and appearance, from the tame and level expanse of sand Weymouth had presented.

Surrounded by objects so novel and all so in-

teresting, I could not but mingle in the regret expressed by the rector, one day, to Lord Greenlaw, that to mariners these coasts had often proved so fatal. "I have seen," said he, "Portland presenting a peninsula with which many a mournful story is connected. The peculiarly plaintive notes of almost the whole tribe of aquatic fowl, often give a pensive tone to the enjoyments of the sea-beach; while fancy makes each cavern, the grave of some shipwrecked voyager. There are few who have not heard of the barbarous western coast, where the struggling bark is oft driven by the south-west gale:—each friendly beacon then obscured by a cloud of mist — the rocky fragments displaying their black, terrific points, as the wave assails them in its foaming fury!—the tempest thus increasing, and the impenetrable darkness of night veiling every object — speedily are immersed in one common ruin, the vessel and the hapless crew! unless He who "rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm" speak peace to the raging elements, and guide those contending with the appalling danger to the haven of their wishes; thus rescued from the devouring

gulf, to praise their Creator's mercy, and marvel at 'His wonders in the deep.'"

I had witnessed the departure of the rector and his family from Devonshire, without experiencing a desire strong enough to induce me to quit the scene of my present happiness; for I had learnt by a conversation just before the day of their return was fixed, that they were to repeat their visit, early in the ensuing year. As that period approached, I anticipated with delight, the arrival of the noble family and their guests at Greenlaw; a desire which was soon happily accomplished.

CHAPTER LI.

"NOW from the lucid chambers of the South, looked out the joyous spring." The boisterous winds of March slept in the caverns of their rest; the horizon was clear; the expanse of ocean tranquil as the cerulean canopy which it reflected.

"Robina," said Lady Augusta, "shall we look at the sea this morning? My brother wishes to accompany us, and there is a cottage contiguous, which I am desirous of shewing to you. I know you admire content, wherever it can be found, and you shall see the goddess has a seat among our rocks, which, though beaten by the stormy wave of winter, are yet secure in their native stability."

I again became the unnoticed companion of this trio of earth's most perfect beings. They entered a cottage of so superior an order, that it might have been supposed the work of enchantment, reared by talismanic touch.

" While looking at this most romantic and detached situation," said Robina, " I think that if content were banished by all the world beside; if neither grandeur can secure her presence, nor splendour detain her as a guest, yet here she might find a safe retreat. Neither obelisks nor temples mark the surrounding hills, to intercept the course of thought in mounting to the realms of light."

On a projecting point was erected a signal-station, for communicating with the passing vessels; and that was the only elevated production of art which mingled with the sublimity of the rocky scenery.

An ancient labourer gently drove the moving skeleton of a horse, laden with sea-weed, slowly up

the intricate path-way of the cliffs : while the tempting samphire was unapproachable by the decrepid herbalist, who bent in the recesses to gather those aromatic plants which the browzing sheep had not quite consumed. These were the only human objects that gave life to the stillness of the scene ; until Lady Augusta and her friends, skipping across the rocks, marking mottos on the sand, moralizing and trifling alternately, gave the finishing variety of charms to a view, which presented such a fine combination of the solitary and the sublime.

Robina was delighted. She found new echoes in every cavern the encroaching sea had made ; named the rough hewn grotto " the Mermaid's Palace," and discovered at every turn some new and grotesque form, which imagination so readily lends to the masses modelled by contending elements.

" My attention is so engaged, Lady Augusta,

that I have not yet found a moment to express my high opinion of the lady we have just visited."

"Mrs. Evyson is indeed one of those blessings," said Lord Valleyfield, "bestowed through a medium which is not often estimated according to its true value. An antiquated maiden, is inconsiderately applied as a term of reproach: but, knowing Mrs. Evyson's excellence both of heart and mind, I sometimes incur ridicule for standing aloof when condemnation is pronounced on that class of females: therefore, Augusta, if you should consign yourself to celibacy, my appreciation of your merits will not be thereby diminished."

"Spare those assurances, my Lord," Robina laughingly replied, "or Charles will not deem himself your debtor; you know he is a sailor, and that is a name synonimous with fidelity."

"Even so," said Lady Augusta; "and should

Trussler's Synonimes be again reviewed, we will suggest that as an addition, at least."

My wish of learning more of Mrs. Evyson was not immediately gratified; but desirous of revisiting her cottage enclosure, where the perennial beauties of the shrubbery supplied the scarcity of those deciduous trees which seldom thrive very well, so contiguous to the sea, I took my flight across a field, that led to her residence, in which some labourers were employed.

At the instant a flock of rooks started in alarm at the report of a gun, whose death-dealing charge was directed at them;—but the anxious traveller, alas! shared the effects, and fell to the ground; wounded, but neither intentionally, nor severely!

I was, however, picked up with the rest; and, in the terror of the moment, expected instant death from the rough hand that grasped me.

"Here is a small bird, not much hurt; if you like to have him, you are very welcome."

Such was the rustic's offer; but to whom? Released from the horrible dread of instant strangulation, I ventured to look up, and beheld—Emma! The mild, the gentle, the compassionate Emma! who could not see the humblest of nature's works die unpitied!

Had she indeed then wintered on the sea-coast? Had she accepted a friend's attentions? Had the voice of sympathy been admitted to sooth her anguished heart? Oh! that I could have articulated these inquiries!—My preserver! My protectress! would that you knew the grateful, the affectionate impulse of those vibrations in my palpitating breast, which your pity now attributes to my terror.

Could even human prescience have anticipated such a delightful recognition! Can my feeble strains convey any idea how the nerve of perception communicated its exquisite feeling to the heart's full tide of gladness, when I found my merciful conductress was an inmate of that residence, whose singular beauties had invited the

second intentional approach, productive of consequences so important in the wanderings of a Goldfinch.

Care and kindness speedily restored my song and smoothed my shattered plumage. My whole routine of amusing movements, and harmonious modulations, were joyfully performed. The remembrance of freedom's uncontrolled pursuits, became almost extinct; and I readily submitted to be Emma's captive. My inclinations predicted a material change in their stimulus. I still loved my first dear preceptress with the fervor of truth; but she was "happy, if aught happy here," and could not miss, among all the blessings that surrounded her, the absence of so humble a favourite, which if remembered, was yet too trivial to create a wish.

It consequently became less a submission to confinement, than a cheerful desire to contribute the utmost effects of my acquired docility, to secure the

continuance of that companionable distinction, to which I was now advanced by the condescension of Emma and Mrs. Evyson; and to amuse them, as a small return for the protection I received.



CHAPTER LII.

NIGHT had several times thrown its shadowy mantle over every form of nature, without any circumstance occurring to instruct me how the happy association I witnessed, had been brought about.

At length the desired moment came which gave the explanation.

" Dear Mrs. Evyson, where did you obtain that amusing bird?" was Lady Augusta's inquiry, as I rested on the finger of the beloved Robina.

Mrs. Evyson's reply naturally included the name of Miss Stuart, and of her late mother having been much attached to the lady, whose roof now sheltered both my preserver and myself. I trembled

with suspense at a pause in the conversation, lest it should proceed no further: but Mrs. Evyson presently renewed the subject by observing, that Miss Stuart's absence that morning, would allow an opportunity of their becoming more conscious of the distinguished happiness they enjoyed, in not being freed from the control of natural friends; whilst unprotected youth, in its inexperience, is subject to innumerable dangers.

" You may, perhaps, recollect, Lady Augusta," continued Mrs. Evyson, " that about three years since, I made a tour into Shropshire, to visit some distant relations. It was at that period I first met Miss Stuart. Her mother's earliest years had been passed near a residence I then occupied, and, as a girl, she was remarkably attached to me; indeed, continued so after her marriage, though it removed her to India. The climate of that country injured her health, and she died on her return from Bengal to England. I was then in a situation more remote and secluded even than this, devoted to the care of my mother, and solely attending to the ad-

ministration of those comforts her declining life required. The circumstance of Mrs. Stuart's death was reported through the newspapers. I immediately addressed a letter of condolence and inquiry to Colonel Stuart. His answer was civil; informing me, in reply to my inquiries, that a daughter was left to him, and that as she was very young, he should take her again to India. Thus ended our correspondence, and I had no further knowledge of them until I visited Shropshire.

" The perfect resemblance of Miss Stuart's person to her late mother's attracted my instant notice, and induced me to mention the impression I had received. The result was, my conviction, that she really was the daughter of my deceased friend. I also learnt, that the Colonel did not take her to India, and that he had been attacked by hepatitis, which occasioned his death; leaving his daughter to a guardianship, which was to cease on her attaining the age of eighteen years. The extraordinary want of foresight in such a disposal was obvious to every body: for I found this fine,

interesting girl beset by flatterers and sycophants, in every shape. I trembled for the consequences. I presumed on the privilege of my age, and my friendship for her late mother, to obtrude my counsel on her ear: but she was too inexperienced to be convinced, that treachery could possibly exist in a world that shewed her such a smiling aspect. I made more than one attempt to offer some salutary truths; and might have succeeded, but for the machinations of the Syrens that encompassed her, who joined in ridiculing her attention to a 'prosing old maid;' and it is not surprising, that she could not 'stand the world's dread laugh, which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn.'

"After leaving Shropshire, I merely heard that Miss Stuart had outlived her fortune, given up her establishment, and was gone, with only one maid-servant, no one knew whither. My retired habits of life, admitted no hope of my ever meeting her again: yet she lived in my anxious remembrance, and, at the first moment I saw her, had kindled such a lively interest in my heart, that it would

have given me the most inexpressible satisfaction to have rescued her from the vortex, which, I saw, must ultimately prove destructive to her happiness.

" Late in the evening of that day, ladies, on which you last honoured me with a visit, a poor neighbour came to solicit a cordial for her sick child. As our hamlet does not afford a medical resident, I make it my duty, on such occasions, to visit the cradle of infant suffering, as well as the humble couch of age, and to consult my limited judgment on the propriety of determining, whether the degree of illness may render it necessary to require the attendance of an apothecary. Early, therefore, on the ensuing day, I repaired to the abode of my supplicants. As I entered, a young lady, who was tenderly removing the sick infant from the cradle to its mother's arms, finished her kind office, and was hastily retiring. ' Miss Stuart! Mrs. Evyson!'—For a moment all further articulation ceased. Every past occurrence seemed, in that instant, to have crowded on her recollec-

tion, and she fainted in the arms I extended to receive her.

" It was impossible to express my sensations: the tears of sympathy alone could assure her of the interest she retained in my heart.

" But three years before, I had seen her blooming and beautiful; when her smile was irresistible, and her very look beamed happiness. Now pale, melancholy, and dejected; her eyes no longer sparkled with joy, and her former smiles of satisfaction seemed consigned to lasting oblivion. I cheered her with the assurance that my friendship was undiminished, and, I succeeded in convincing her, that Truth has yet an abode on earth. I have restored her to the endurance of herself. I have brought her to my protection, and taught her to feel, and to acknowledge, that " God can temper the wind to the shorn lamb." Here Mrs. Evyson ceased, and the young ladies, visibly affected, took leave; promising to repeat their visit ere long.

Emma re-appeared, and, in a voice that no ear could disregard, apologized for having retired at the approach of strangers. " It is not their rank, dear Mrs. Evyson, from which I retreated, because the public estimation of their merit makes even title a secondary distinction: but, kind as you have been, and much as I have benefited by your kindness, I still am too dispirited to be an agreeable introduction to any of your friends."

The balm of consolation was never offered, nor the healing dews of human kindness given in more soothing and appropriate language, than in Mrs. Evyson's reply to Emma's apology.

" The weather this morning is symbolical of human life, my dear Emma; such a threatening cloud is thrown behind that brilliant arch, that we must not attempt our proposed ramble over the sands. However, I less regret being deprived of out-door recreations, since you begin to recover a

general capacity of being amused within. Come, attempt the piano, and try if the Goldfinch will catch a new note."

" You have, indeed, dear Mrs. Evyson, taught me a system of happiness to which I had ever been a stranger; for, you know, I did not remain near the excellent Mrs. Benbow, who, I am sure, would have endeavoured to do what you have happily accomplished.

> " I grieve not that on Pleasure's stream,
> No more I drive in giddy dream;
> For Heaven the erring pilot knew,
> And from the gulf the vessel drew:"

but I rather rejoice in having escaped that extremity of human evil, which I see it was very possible for me to have reached; and I begin to breathe in a conscious hope, that all these " judgments stern and great," will be made conducive to my everlasting good. When I discovered the exhaustion of my fortune, and proved the worse than desertion of all

my pretended friends, the world did not seem to present any possible refuge for me; and of recourse to a higher sphere, I had never learnt to think."

"Persevere, dear Emma, in detaching your thoughts from earth's transient enjoyments; until you have fully learnt to undervalue them as they deserve. The best gratifications here are only dispensed mediums, to assist our attainment of that perfect bliss, which the soul, as an emanation from the Supreme Intelligence, is, by its divine nature, qualified to partake. No situation in life precludes the exertion of active virtue; because there are none exempted from peculiar duties, and their just and regular performance is alike incumbent on the rich and on the poor. The path of duty is ever that of safety; and every departure therefrom creates a train of moral evils, most destructive, in their effects, to human happiness."

Mrs. Evyson's counsels came like the "still, small voice," renewing the peaceful structure of

true happiness, after the attractions of deceptive pleasure, and the succeeding tempest which dissolved their charms, had overwhelmed the whole mental fabric with dismay. On a card of invitation being presented for Mrs. Evyson and her young friend from Lady Greenlaw, the former complied with Emma's request of accepting it for herself only: as she would beg a little longer interval to prepare her mind for the mutual participation of that refined pleasure, which exalted rank, adorned by the social and domestic virtues, ever extends to all within its circle.

"While you are absent, I will complete the arrangement of the foreign works in the library, and remove the globes to the space we yesterday proposed."

Mrs. Evyson's acquiescence was expressed in a look to which language would not do justice; so cheering was the prospect of Emma's restoration to tranquillity. She took an affectionate

leave; reminding her of a book left in the grotto of shells, which she recommended to her perusal.

"Among its pages, you will discover, dear Emma, that other hearts have throbbed with anguish—that others' joys have not always kept that steady, uninterrupted course, which the quietude of advanced life might now give you reason to suppose."



CHAPTER LIII.

EMMA sought the book recommended by Mrs. Evyson, which was " Murray's Power of Religion on the Mind," and found therein a folded manuscript addressed to herself, which, to my great gratification, she read aloud.

" I trust, my dear Emma, you will never again wander into any of the various avenues of affliction. I am desirous of shewing you whence the only balm can be extracted for those wounds you have received in the thorny path of life, by disclosing some incidents of my youthful years. So faithful is my heart to its first impressions, both of joy and sorrow, and at the same time so imperfect is the degree of self-government I have attained, that I prefer this mode of communication to a verbal one.

" Almost forty years ago, the days of mourning for my father's death were consoled by the hope of my brother's arrival in England, from a classical tour on the Continent. He embarked—but was torn from us by the greedy wave: an event which threatened the final crush of my mother, and which bent my ardent expectations to the brink of chill despair.

" Every sweet arrangement the youthful fancy forms, before affection has ever learnt to stray beyond the dear circle of its homely joys, were thus suddenly destroyed. The grave could not give up my father: nor the tranquillized wave restore what its tempestuous fury had devoured! Soon as the wretched survivors could form any resolution, it was that of immediate removal from the scenes once so productive of every felicity: but now only calculated to torture, by conjuring up the 'ghosts of our departed joys.'

" In the shades of retirement we were blessed with submission to the decrees of Heaven, which

amusements of a lively nature have not the power of imparting, though they may occasionally veil the sorrows of recollection.

" A year elapsed, and my mother's health improved; for she had acquired the power of sustaining her grief from the hand that imposed the burden. She had led me, also, to the supreme source of comfort, and I learned to smile once more. A friend of my deceased brother found our residence, and became a frequent guest. Nature had done much for his person: education and science every thing for his mind. He loved me with all the ardour of sincerity, and with the frankness of truth; we exchanged the promises of inviolable fidelity. My mother blest with her sanction an union which was soon to be solemnized, and fondly declared all past afflictions would be compensated by my happiness. We returned to town; and the day was noted on the calendar of happy expectation, that was to make me a bride. But a cloud of more than Egyptian darkness intervened. The animated presence of him, in whom my soul delighted, was transformed

to a lifeless tenant of the tomb; by obedience to the legislations of those regulators of honour, who make deliberate murder the decision of dispute. Too well can 'busy, meddling memory' retrace the horrors of my situation, when I thus drained the cup of human misery. Death hovered—but withheld his cold embrace. With

> 'The last sob of life's decay
> When breath was all but flown'

I invited madness to the empire of my brain, that I might still indulge in illusory dreams of bliss: but in vain.—Despair kept stern possession of my faculties, and guarded every avenue against composure. Consciousness was perfectly mine; and feeling, more acute to misery than ever it had been susceptible of joy, tortured both soul and body beyond the power of endurance. I sank on the couch of excruciating agony; while my mother's tears gave that refreshment to my fevered cheek, which the sources of my own denied. Weeks, months lingered on, and my life hung in dubious

suspense. I saw my last surviving parent drooping over the misery she deemed incurable. I implored her to take me from every scene of my former felicity; to find some distant spot; to conduct me to the altar and consecrate me to the service of the Deity, who alone could fit me for eternal peace. We passed several months in continual change of residence. Nature every where assumed the dark hues my hopeless view continued to present. From the traverse of England, we rested some time in Wales, where Lord Greenlaw (to whom my father was well known) has a seat. To the kindness of his Lordship and the excellent Countess, I am inexpressibly indebted. They principally consoled my mother, by restoring me to the capacity of assuring her that I felt the Almighty had accepted my voluntary consecration to his service; and though the wounds I had sustained, could never be entirely healed, yet time would cicatrize them. Only by those who have been overwhelmed by the dark feelings of despair can it be imagined, of what a burden I was lightened, when nature appeared once more to my vision, in those reviving tints with which the

bounty of Omnipotence has so richly adorned her. Then, for the first time since 'my peace was slain,' tears found their way; and though joy bloomed no longer for me,—though I was convinced that my heart could never again throb with rapture, nor my ear welcome the notes of gladness; yet I returned to the exercise of filial duty; and when the slow, but certain mandate of mortality approached in the form of wasting atrophy, and threatened to terminate my mother's earthly existence, I hastened with her to the mild climate of Cornwall. I watched—I wept—I prayed. Her life was continued for a period longer than I had dared to hope; and her counsels, as my age advanced, confirmed the habits of reflection.

" I deposited the last attachment to kindred my solitary heart possessed, in the grave that received this dear, affectionate mother. Lady Greenlaw offered me a residence on this 'sea-beat shore;' and I concluded a treaty for the possession of the cottage we inhabit, during my life. Sixteen years have now

rolled on, without my heart acknowledging any peculiar attachment, though

'I know the value of the orphan's tear;
The poor man's prayer; respect from the respected:
I feel to merit these, and to obtain them,
Is to taste here, below, that thrilling cordial,
Which the remunerating angel draws
From the eternal fountain of delight,
To pour on blessed souls, that enter heaven.'

"I feel assured, dear Emma, that you were directed to my protection, by the disposing hand of Providence.

"Become no more a wanderer: but, in this secluded recess, seek and obtain that holy hope, which can alone enable us to endure, what the highest human efforts cannot control. Wait and cheer the closing hours of my existence, with the gratification of knowing you are restored to the joys of life; and, that those joys are built on a

foundation, which no storm of adversity, or persecution of mortality, can destroy. When the Creator's voice summons my immortal spirit from the frail tenement which it now inhabits,

'Wilt thou, sweet mourner! at my stone appear,
And sooth my parted spirit, ling'ring near?
Oh! wilt thou come, at ev'ning hour, to shed
The tears of Memory o'er my narrow bed;
With aching temples on thy hand reclin'd,
Muse on the last farewell I leave behind;
Breathe a deep sigh to winds that murmur low,
And think on all my love and all my woe?'

humbly trusting, that we shall again meet in those regions, where alone dwells the perpetuity of bliss.

"Be silent, dear Emma, on the subject of this communication, and on my request for your remaining with me; for I have acquired no more than woman's weak philosophy: and those feelings

which our conversation must inevitably excite, would be followed by an interval of sadness, very inconsistent with the cheerfulness I daily inculcate."

CHAPTER LIV.

TWO days elapsed, and the library arrangements were just completed, when Mrs. Evyson returned, accompanied by Robina and her young friends, to whom Emma was presented. The conversation assumed that elegant and desultory form, which is customary among those persons, whose minds have received superior cultivation.

Emma was led from herself; and joined in the dissertation on subjects of taste, with an ease that evidently delighted her benevolent protectress.

Months had flown by with a rapidity, greater than any I had ever been sensible of in any former

state of captivity. Each day, in its course, had presented some opportunity for the exercise of that active goodness which distinguished Emma and her friend. They had been Lady Greenlaw's almoners, and Lady Augusta's representatives; therefore, no poverty, or sickness, was neglected.

The refreshing breeze from the neighbouring ocean tinged my guardian's cheek with the bloom of returning health, and, on learning that Sir Charles and Lady Augusta, Lord Valleyfield and Robina, were soon to be united by the most sacred tie in the code of civil institutions, I harmoniously mingled in the joy these excellent friends expressed, and, with them, forgot all past misfortunes in the joy such intelligence imparted.

An intercourse both frequent and delightful, continued with the noble family of Greenlaw and the ladies with whom I dwell. The Earl's parliamentary duties now required his presence in London, and preparatory to the farewell they looked

in at Mrs. Evyson's on their return from the adjoining hamlet, and, in the course of conversation, Porlier, the Spanish patriot, was named. To an opinion expressed by the Prebend on that subject, Lord Valleyfield, in a firm voice, and with an animated countenance, added, " Happily, my dear Sir, in this favoured isle, any voice may hymn the praise of freedom, without danger of being incarcerated in the dungeons of an inquisition: for, where the sovereign power is ever exerted in the promotion of the public good, monarchy becomes the bulwark of patriotism; and even the humblest subject of a free government may presume to throw a random dart at vice, when the brightest examples of human excellence surround the throne, and shed lustre on the diadem of the British Empire."

" It is thus," said the Earl, " that Great Britain has not only been rendered invincible to the evil machinations of her powerful enemies, but, by her strenuous support in maintaining the free-

dom and independence of Europe, and by her arduous and successful endeavours to restore peace and tranquillity to the world, has raised herself to that proud eminence, which secures the respect, and demands the gratitude of surrounding nations."

The visit was prolonged far beyond the hasty salutations prescribed by fashion, and when the evening took Mrs. Evyson and Miss Stuart to the Earl's mansion, I rejoiced, though within the narrow precincts of a cage, at having been again caressed by my first dear preceptress; and at having seen the amiable Harriet Benbow included among the guests at Greenlaw,—in possession of all the bliss that earth can afford, by her union with the eldest hope of the Linlithgows.

Though I presume not on these trivial effusions affording so great a proportion of instruction, or amusement, as the publications of more superior *biped* travellers; yet, I shall not have sung quite in

vain, if, when disappointment clouds the brow of humanity;—if, when regret extracts the tear of anguish,—or a sigh of retrospection saddens the evening of life;—a recurrence to these simple Wanderings should beguile one moment of its care, or deprive one sensation of its pain, I shall still rejoice that, for my friends, I live to carol the matin strains of gratitude, and to assure my enemies, that I will learn the vesper solo of forgiveness.

THE END.



ERRATUM.

Page 265, *for* Montezuma, *read* Gatimozin.

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