

THE
HUSBAND AND THE LOVER.

VOL. I.

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THE

HUSBAND AND THE LOVER.

3541

AN HISTORICAL AND MORAL
ROMANCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

“ ——— In the morn and liquid dew of youth,
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then :—best safety lies in fear.”

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTERS

FROM FATHER THEODORE,

TO THE

YOUTHFUL GUARDIAN OF SABENA
DE MONTRESOR.

LETTER I.

PARDON me, my lord, if I say, *that* which appears to you a subject of congratulation, fills me with anxiety and regret. Are you aware what you have done? You have delegated to another, a right solemnly intrusted to yourself—a right you were bound sacredly to preserve. And to whom have you transferred the authority thus bequeathed? To one, you will reply, who loved the mother of this orphan child—to one, whose boundless power enables her to bestow on this sweet object of our soli-

itude every earthly good—but *happiness*, my lord!

Well have I studied the character of this child of my affections, and know that the bosom of retirement and peace, is the only soil in which her native virtues can safely flourish. Can I then, without trembling, learn, my lord, that on quitting her convent she is to become the inhabitant of a court?—the inhabitant of a court!—with no disinterested adviser—no maternal friend to guard her from being betrayed by those very virtues which adorn her character!—where the sensibility—the sweetness of temper—the artlessness which have for years formed the charm of my life, will be turned, by the malignant and unfeeling, into weapons against herself.

Nor am I consoled by the assurance that the Queen mother has undertaken to procure her an establishment suitable to one under her avowed protection.

Far rather would I have beheld my Sabina united to the object of her *own* choice, living on her paternal estate, and surrounded by those affectionate dependants, who witnessed and shared the happiness of her parents. I would have seen her, by a steady perseverance in that plan of judicious but liberal economy practised by her father, restore to the house of Montresor its original splendor. Such were the dreams in which I once fondly indulged, while my sorrow for the loss of my friends, was alleviated by beholding this their sweet memento, happily sporting around me; and as I daily developed in her genius, her simplicity, the affecting candour of her mind, some new and endearing claim to my affection, I have dared to think that heaven in its mercy meant, through her, to gild the evening of my days with that sunshine denied to my morn of life.— But fallen, and frustrated are my hopes!

THEODORE.

LETTER II.

It is in vain, my lord, you seek by detailing the splendor which awaits my child, to blind me to the perils, by which that splendor is environed. Her wild and innocent playfulness, which I was wont to contemplate with so pure a pleasure while near me, now returns on my memory, only to fright from thence the fearless delight it once created.

Excuse, my lord, the foreboding terrors of one, to whose soul, happiness has come like a beam of lightning, which is seen, and is then no more. The wife of my affection was snatched from me, even at the moment I was, unsuspectingly, rejoicing over the emotions awakened on first becoming a parent. Her precious relic survived its mother, only long enough to make me feel her death.

a second time. From the despair occasioned by this double stroke, I sought consolation in the bosom of religion. The duties imposed on me by the holy orders I had entered, first made me acquainted with the Count and Countess de Montresor, in whose friendship and society I once more began to taste of peace; and in their infant, found an object to fill the dreadful void the loss of my own had occasioned.

The Count's summons to the field of honor, first introduced misery into that abode, which had been, till then, the mansion of felicity. You, my lord, who saw him fall, and watched over his dying moments, well know how dear to him were those beings he intrusted to your care, one of whom so soon followed him to an early grave, that it seemed to double the importance of the surviving charge. To me it rendered her tenfold dear;—while your condescending to as-

sociate me in the sacred office, which had devolved on yourself, by throwing her more immediately under my personal care, taught me fully to appreciate the value of a creature so rarely gifted. The task of cultivating her ductile mind, became to me a dream of pleasure. I taught her the native language of my lost Sidney, and loved to listen to her soft accents as she addressed me in it. But let my soul forget the past. By degrees she so intimately entwined herself around my heart, that she became the sole object of my earthly affections.

My lord, if I have not roused you to a sense of the dangers of that plan you have adopted for your ward, I trust I have offered, in the tenderness which presses on my heart, some apology for the liberty of my remonstrances.

THEODORE.

LETTER. III.

WRITTEN THREE YEARS AFTER THE
PRECEDING.

THE events, from the contemplation of which my soul shrinks, have then at length taken place—Sabina has quitted her convent—is irrevocably contracted to a *stranger*, and has already entered on the career of dissipation ! May the result of your plan, my lord, convince me of its wisdom.

THEODORE.

The consequences of that plan so repugnant to the feelings of Father Theodore, will be found detailed in the following Pages.

THE
HUSBAND AND THE LOVER.

CHAP. I.

THOSE acquainted with the delightful scenery which embellishes the borders of the Seine, will enter into the feelings of the youth, who now approaching its banks, beheld for the first time, its cultivated hills, rich woods, and smiling vales, softened by the light of a clear moon, and refreshed by a thunder storm, which had just past off.

Though this stranger was of the age when novelty gives a charm to every object in nature—and light-hearted fancy,

paints them in the vivid colours of hope and pleasure—a degree of pensiveness stole into his mind with the recollection of his native land, as he compared it with that he was contemplating; and for a moment, he felt something like regret at having quitted it.

But so elastic are the spirits, which have never been depressed by sorrow, in the happy period of early life—that a thought—a word—a sound can rouse hilarity and banish care! The pensive moments of youth, are but as the light clouds of summer, scudding over the meridian sun, which veil for an instant the heavenly orb, but in the next, it again streams forth with additional splendour. So brightens the fair face of youth as the transient fore-taste of his destiny, is driven from his imagination by some joyous idea!

The distant song of frolic gaiety, borne to the ear of Sapieha on the even-

ing breeze, caused a total revolution in his feelings ; and presently he perceived a market boat making round one of those majestic sweeps, which give to that celebrated river its beautiful variety.

As the boat approached, its well plied oars beat time to the merry roundelay, sung by the passengers on board. Sapiaha, re-animated by the cheerfulness of the happy songsters, joined, as the vessel danced gaily by him, in the exhilarating chorus, till the song sunk to a murmur, and the boat was lost in distance. He now turned from the lovely prospect, and with bounding steps bent his way towards his hotel. As he was carelessly surveying, in his road thither, the houses which he passed, his attention was suddenly caught by remarking a female issue from a door which stood open opposite to him ; and after vainly making a signal to some one within to follow

her, return, and conduct from the mansion a young lady, who appeared with reluctance and shrinking timidity, to traverse the street with her companion. Although she was closely veiled, there was in her air, a certain grace and dignity, which led him to conjecture that she was of no mean rank : and he continued to keep his eyes fixed on them, as they walked at a short distance before him, in the same direction he was himself going.

The females passed the hotel at which he was about to stop ; and Sapieha paused for a moment to consider if he should indulge the curiosity which urged him to continue following them, or check an inclination which his sense of propriety whispered him was unjustifiable. While he stood irresolute, he perceived a gentleman, who appeared in a state of inebriety, rudely seize the younger female, and endeavour to force

her from her companion. It was in vain they implored him to desist, their terror seemed but to encourage his insolence. Sapieha thus called on, darted forward to their rescue, and drawing his sword, insisted on the immediate release of the lady.

The tone of menace in which he spoke startled the assaulter, and induced his instant obedience; but on his loosing his hold, it appeared that his captive had fainted. By this time a crowd had gathered about them, and the elder female distracted by her fears, wildly intreated Sapieha to save them. The youth assuring her she might confide in his honour, proposed conducting them to a place of safety, in which they might remain till the fair stranger was recovered, and the crowd dispersed. To this considerate proposal she eagerly consented, and Sapieha taking the still lifeless lady in his arms, led the way to

his hotel, into which the elder followed him.

Having carried his charge up stairs, and gently laid her on a couch, he was about to remove her veil, and to summons the domestics to her assistance, when her companion stopping him exclaimed:—"Generous Chevalier, may I hope that your honorable protection of two helpless strangers will be extended still further, by forbearing to call any other witness of my imprudence, and swearing, should chance again introduce you to this lady, that you will not, by recognizing her, betray our secret?"

"I solemnly promise all you exact," replied Sapieha impatiently. The person to whom he addressed himself now applied such remedies as were at hand for the restoration of the fair unknown, and he assiduously gave her his assistance.

Deeply as the youthful Chevalier

was thus engaged, he could not help observing the uncommon loveliness of her features. How then did this admiration gradually increase, as with returning life “the pure and eloquent blood” slowly mantled on her cheek, and again dyed her lips with rosy freshness!

On the perfect return of the lovely stranger’s senses, she found her hand clasped in that of her affectionate attendant, whose looks were fixed on her with earnest solicitude.

“My dear lady,” said she softly, “how are you?”

“I scarcely know,” was the reply. “For Heaven’s sake, Camilla, where am I? what has happened to me?”

“If you will listen patiently, my dear lady, I will give you every satisfaction you require.” She then briefly related what had occurred to them; concluding her narrative with a compli-

ment to their champion, and a request that her auditor would testify her sense of the obligation he had conferred on them."

On saying this, she beckoned the youth, who approaching with the utmost respect, expressed the pleasure he felt in having been the happy instrument in rescuing them from their rude assaulter. He finished this modest address, by requesting permission to ascertain whether the crowd, who were drawn together by the affray, had dispersed, when he would see them home in safety.

This obliging and delicate proposal was gratefully accepted by his protégées; and Sapieha, after entreating them to pass the time of his short absence in composing themselves, took his leave.

There was an open frankness in his countenance, which irresistibly inspired confidence, and contributed greatly in

diffusing serenity over the sweet features of her, to whom he more particularly addressed himself.

What would have been the feelings of the excellent father Theodore, could he have imagined that the young lady, who with an air of so much mystery, had been strangely perambulating, at an hour so improper, the streets of Paris, was that child of his affections, for whose future destiny he was so deeply interested—and her companion, that very Camilla, who having been brought up under the patronage of the late Countess, and greatly attached to that lady, he hoped by continuing with Sabina, from whom she had never been separated, might serve, in some measure, as a guide to her inexperience. The terror, however, with which the first knowledge of this event, so calculated to overwhelm him, would have been somewhat lessened, could he have over-heard

the following discourse, as it would have convinced him, that the expedition, which had thus thrown her on the mercy of a total stranger, owed its origin solely to imprudence---not guilt.

CHAP. II.

No sooner had the Chevalier closed the door after him, than the younger female, turning to her companion, exclaimed: “Imprudent Camilla! to what terrors and degradations has my following your advice exposed me! Good God! what can the Baroness think, if she misses me! and what an opinion will the Marquis de Briscacier, conceive of his affianced bride, should a partial knowledge of this affair reach him!”

“My dear young lady,” replied Camilla in a voice of contrition, “pardon me, in consideration, that my agony of affright has scarcely been exceeded by your own. Had I foreseen the humiliating adventure which has befallen us, for worlds,

would I not have urged you to the step you have this evening taken. But I bless Heaven! that we are now safe! let me entreat you therefore to compose your agitated spirits, and trust me, no further mischief will happen. Pray endeavour to divert these unpleasant thoughts from your mind, by informing me, while we await the return of the Chevalier, what destiny, the Egyptian Sibyl has promised you? Let me, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing, that she has relieved you from the suspense which induced you to consult her?"

Here Camilla paused, and fixing her inquiring looks on Sabina, waited a reply.

For some time she vainly waited—tears started into the eyes of her young companion, and sighs burst from her bosom. At length she said, in a plaintive voice—"Would to Heaven I had

never listened to the predictions of this woman! and yet," she added, endeavouring to force a smile, "I ought perhaps rather to blush at the credulity which tempted me to consult her, than place any confidence in the oracle she delivered to me."

"Indeed," observed Camilla in a tone of pique, "I can never myself feel ashamed of that credulity, as you are pleased to term it, in which the great Henry shared: this you must acknowledge is evident, from his having caused the nativity of the Dauphin to be cast.* But will you not tell me what happened to you, from your leaving me in the anti-room, to your rejoining me after your interview with the Sibyl?"

"You must remember," said Sabina,

* Henry the 4th obliged La Riviere, his first physician, to cast the nativity of his son.

Vide Sully's Memoirs, Vol. 3, page 99.

“ with what reluctance I followed her emissary, when informed that I could only be admitted alone into her apartment; and had you not made me ashamed of the weakness of leaving the house, without accomplishing the purpose for which I had encountered so many difficulties to reach it, I should have positively refused to follow her. She led me up several flights of steps, when after passing through a long narrow passage, lighted only by a single lamp, we stopped opposite a closed door. My conductor thrice knocked distinctly on it, a hollow voice from within exclaimed—“ Enter,” on which the door, untouched, flew open: my companion grasping my arm, led, or rather dragged me into the middle of the chamber, and instantly disappearing, the door closed with a noise which made me start. I cast my eyes around me, and perceived that the walls were hung with black, on

which were described various incomprehensible figures. Spheres, telescopes, with skins of hideous animals, were confusedly scattered about. The obscurity which pervaded the apartment on my first entrance, was gradually succeeded by the most brilliant illumination; and directing my eyes to the upper end, I espied, seated at a table, on which were placed pens, ink, paper, books, and curious instruments, a venerable figure, whose countenance expressed the most impenetrable gravity. She was clad in black, and held in her hand a white wand, with which she waved me to approach. I certainly felt myself impressed with awe and terror, by the solemnity and stillness which reigned around; and it was with sensations, which scarcely permitted me to breathe, that I obeyed her mysterious command. I had advanced to within a few paces of the place where she sat, when she pointed

with her wand to a circle described around her, motioning me to stop. I complied—when rising she approached me, and stretched out her brown and shrivelled arm. In obedience to her silent direction I had drawn off my glove, and presented her my hand; she fixed her wildly penetrating eyes on it, and was on the point of breaking the silence which she had hitherto preserved, when the sentence that hovered on her lips was suspended by a tremendous clap of thunder. It broke over our heads with a crash so terrific, as for a few seconds to deprive me of all consciousness; but gradually it rolled off—its awful rumbling became fainter and fainter, till it quite died away.

The Sibyl then grasping the trembling fingers, which she still detained, thus addressed me:

“ Long is the line of misfortune which thy palm exhibits—the fatal sisters are,

e'en now, employed in weaving the dark thread of thy destiny—and ere Luna shall thrice become a crescent—thy heart, yet uncorroded by grief, shall feel its first approaches, by receiving at once the arrows of love and sorrow.”

I started, and would have withdrawn my hand, but forcibly detaining it, she continued,—“ Lady, thou art young and innocent, and know not yet the waywardness of the female heart—thine will betray thee, and rejecting him whom thou art bound to love, it will become the victim of him it should disdain.”

I was about to address her, but with decision she said, —“ Lady, I have done.”* Immediately waving her wand,

* The author is indebted to a friend for this description of mummeries, which she herself saw exhibited at the house of one of these impostors whom she affected to consult. The reflecting

the door again flew open, my former guide appeared, and led me back to the room in which I had left you. You see therefore that so far from giving me any satisfaction on the point respecting which I was desirous of consulting her, she has suggested a new subject for uneasiness, of which I had before no apprehension."

Sabina, in drawing out her handkerchief to wipe away the tears which, as she uttered this, again filled her eyes, dropped a small case that was entangled in it. Camilla instantly picked it up; and, desirous for the present of giving a turn to the conversation, which she found, if much further pursued, might totally unfit her lady for regaining their home, said, after examining it for a moment: "Mademoiselle Stanhope

mind must be sensible how artfully they prepare the credulous, to receive as oracles, the absurd rhapsodies to which they there listen.

would give much for this resemblance of you ; it is certainly an admirable likeness : but I am persuaded it will possess equal value in the estimation of him for whom it was drawn."

"What can be the reason," interrupted Sabina, on whom the impropriety of her situation now painfully pressed---"What can be the reason that the Cavalier does not come back?"

"I am at a loss to guess," replied Camilla, rising hastily, and going to the window. "It is very dark, and I think wet."

"Surely we had better endeavour to find our way out of this house," observed the now agitated girl; "let us, without losing more time, be gone."

At that moment a clap of thunder, still louder and more terrific than that she had just described, shook the apartment—the rain in torrents washed the casements—and heavy gusts of wind,

rushing through the passages of the mansion, made them both direct their eyes towards the door, in the expectation that some one was in the act of opening it.

Camilla, with much anxiety, observed, in the pallid countenance and quick respiration of her young charge, the excessive dismay which assailed her, and bent her every thought to restore her presence of mind and resolution. This she imagined might most effectually be accomplished by diverting her attention from her own very unpleasant situation, while the violence of the storm obliged them to continue in it.

As she cast her eyes around the saloon, in search of something capable of producing this effect, she remarked a small case lying in an open book not far from them; she hastily approached it, and found it to be a miniature well worthy inspection. She advanced eagerly

towards her lady, and putting it into her hand, asked if she had ever seen a more remarkable physiognomy. But Sabina heeded not her words—her every sense was at that moment completely absorbed in listening to footsteps, which were ascending the stairs leading to the saloon.

The sounds were now distinctly heard by them both, traversing the passage, and approaching the door of the apartment in which were the fugitives.

“Can that be the Cavalier’s voice?” tremblingly asked Sabina, as the tones of a man audibly struck her ear.

The reply of Camilla was for a moment checked by a loud laugh, which evidently proceeded from a second person, to whom it appeared the discourse of the speaker had been addressed.

At length she exclaimed—“Merciful Heaven! what will become of us? I am certain neither of those voices is

that of our deliverer!" And as she spoke the sounds still drew nearer.

It was in vain they sought some other avenue through which they might effect their escape; but a ray of hope was afforded Camilla, by observing a large screen, she had not till then noticed, which was placed before a recess at the upper end of the room. Behind this, without a moment's hesitation, she conveyed her trembling mistress and herself.

Scarcely were they concealed, when the door was thrown open, and the persons in discourse entered the room.

Sabina's limbs trembled with a violence which made her apprehensive that they would not long sustain her; she grasped the arm of Camilla for support, and, while she retained her own breath almost to suffocation, she felt alarmed least the respiration of her companion should discover them.

After she had passed some minutes in this situation, the excess of her terrors began in some measure to subside, and she strove to recover her presence of mind, to seize the first opportunity to effect her escape. She had mentally ejaculated a prayer for that blessing, and began to admit some hope, when suddenly she fancied she heard one of the gentlemen advance towards the screen. This alarm brought back all her former weakness—she gave herself up as lost—and was preparing, in mere desperation, to rush from her concealment, when she was checked by the sound of a voice, so full, so clear, so sonorous, that in any other situation, than the cruel one in which she found herself, it would have conveyed to her heart the feelings of esteem, confidence, and pleasure. In despite of her apprehensions, Sabina listened with something like interest, as the speaker proceeded in a conversation

evidently began before they had entered the apartment—and in a few moments she became all ear.

“Thus far, Olesko,” continued he, “my inquiries have succeeded; and I have besides learnt, that the tournament, of which we have heard so much, is in honor of a protégée of the Queen mother, whom her Majesty is about to give in marriage to the Marquis de Briscacier. This nobleman is the particular favorite of the young King, who, as a peculiar mark of his esteem, intends presiding in person over the festivals with which it is to be celebrated; and has ordained, that all who enter the lists shall appear habited in the costume of some particular nation, that it may in appearance perfectly resemble the tournament of ancient times.”

“When,” asked Olesko, “is this tournament to take place?”

“In three days,” was the reply,

“ provided the Marquis is returned from the army, where he has a command; he was expected this evening—report speaks highly of his honor, generosity, and bravery: but for his delicacy of sentiment—to that I doubt his claim.—Would you believe it,” he continued, with animation, “ he has never seen the lady to whom he is so shortly to be married?”

“ Has never seen her!” echoed Olesko, in a voice of surprise.

“ Never!” repeated the Chevalier; “ and what will perhaps equally surprise you, the Marquis is thrice her years, and has not testified any desire of marrying; on the contrary, a disappointment he experienced in early life is thought to have destroyed all inclination to form any new engagement.”

“ What then can be his motives for putting this restraint upon his inclinations?”

“ The royal pleasure, brother—the Marquis is a *courtier*. ”

“ And is the lady too a courtier ? ”

“ The lady, I presume, can scarcely yet be said to have any fixed character, since she has been removed but a few weeks from the convent in which she was educated. Her father, the Count de Montresor, died in the field of honor, and bequeathed to the youthful protection of Prince Charles of Lorraine, who watched over his dying moments, this his only child. The Countess passed her infancy in the court of Philip IV. of Spain, and received, during that period, many marks of kindness from Anne of Austria; she survived her lord but a few months, and thus the sole charge of the orphan devolved on Charles of Lorraine, who for some years suffered her to remain at the Chateau de Montresor, in Lorraine, under the care of an accomplished priest, and a confidential ser-

vant of her late mother's, till she was of an age to require the assistance of Parisian masters. He brought her himself to this capital, and presented her to the Queen mother, as the child of one whom she had once honored with her friendship. Her Majesty received the young lady graciously, and undertook, previous to her quitting the convent, to provide her a suitable match.— You may well smile, Olesko, at her Majesty's idea of the word suitable; but crowned heads do not always construe its signification in the sense we feel it."

"Perhaps the young lady, whatever may be her other advantages, wants those personal attractions which might have commanded a more youthful lover possessing the other recommendations of the Marquis."

"Quite the contrary; I am told she is esteemed remarkably beautiful: but

at the tournament we shall have an opportunity of judging; and, at the same time, perhaps, distinguishing ourselves by our skill in tilting; till after which experiment, I propose delaying to present our introductory letters.—Do you not think it will be truly chivalric to owe our first acceptance here to our conquering arms?”

“Surely you do not mean to enter the lists, unless the wound you received in the cavern of the mountain is healed?”

“The trifling inconvenience I experience from that accident, does not damp the ardour I feel, to win from some charmer of this far-famed court, a scarf more decorative to my shoulders than this black one is to my wounded arm.—But where is Sapieha?—Did he not accompany you on your observatory rambles?”

“He did; but while we were con-

versing in one of the pavilions in the Tuilleries, to which we had repaired on the coming on of the storm, the moon suddenly broke from a cloud, and he as suddenly burst from his shelter exclaiming, ‘Heavenly! glorious!—a subject for the pencil of Poussin!’ and, hastening towards the Seine, he was in a moment out of hearing. It is of no use to wait supper for him; he will probably remain contemplating the beauty of the softened landscape, till something new attracts him, or turns his thoughts towards home—so let us to supper.”

On saying this, both Chevaliers immediately arose, and quitted the room.

A convulsive sigh from Sabina, proved with what emotion she listened to a discourse, of which she had herself been so unexpectedly the subject. Though relieved by the departure of the strangers, she did not immediately venture to

speaking; and, checking the exclamation she saw bursting from Camilla's lips, continued listening with painful earnestness to their retiring steps, till all was perfectly silent.

Another full sigh then seemed to ease her bosom of part of its load of terror, and she asked her companion, in a whisper, if she remembered the way which conducted them to the apartment they were then in.

Camilla thought she did; and, with timid steps, issuing from their concealment, they reached a staircase, which branched out in opposite directions about mid-way. Here they paused, doubtful which path to chuse; but felt their courage revive, by perceiving, through a sky-light above them, that the storm had again passed off, and the moon shone brightly. While they consulted on what course to pursue, they

were induced, by the gleam of a distant lamp, to take the left, which conducted them to a long passage.

As in breathless silence the fugitives stole through it, they heard the Chevaliers voices in cheerful discourse, which was frequently interrupted by the laugh of gaiety.

They now arrived at a door—but the hope it at first sight gave was damped, by Camilla's saying, it was not the one through which they had entered.—“Try it,” whispered Sabina.—She obeyed; and the lock sprung back with a loud and sudden shock.

This alarming noise transfixed them motionless to the spot—as motionless as prudence herself could have wished; for, as the Chevaliers conversation instantly ceased, it was evident their attention had been attracted by the sound, and that the death-like stillness which

succeeded it, alone prevented their enquiring into its cause.

In a few minutes, to the inexpressible relief of the wanderers, the voices were again heard in careless converse; and Camilla, cautiously lifting the latch, discovered that she had removed the barrier which separated them from the street. Sabina, in speechless gratitude, bounded past her; and with steps so light, so swift, that snow would scarcely have betrayed her, she reached, with her companion, the hotel of the Baroness.

Tremblingly, and impatiently, she awaited Camilla's applying a key, with which she had furnished herself, to the private door. The moment it was opened, she again sprang forward, and rushed to her chamber; where, throwing herself into a chair, her perturbed spirits found relief in a passionate burst of tears.

Her companion, in the mean time, stole to the hall, where the Baroness's people, late as was the hour, were still regaling themselves. She staid just long enough to ascertain that their excursion was unsuspected; and then hastened to console her lady, and assist her in undressing.

It was in vain, however, that she sought to soothe Sabina, by assuring her their evasion was unknown to every one. That ingenuous and innocent girl was so unhappy at the recollection of the duplicity she had been prevailed on to practice towards her protectress, and so humiliated by the insult to which her too great facility of temper had exposed her, that she told Camilla there was but one way open to her, by which she could hope to regain her self-esteem—that of confessing the whole affair to the Baroness in the morning,

and trusting to her indulgence for pardon.

But her alarmed attendant so firmly opposed this excellent resolution, and brought such plausible arguments to prove that her dismissal and disgrace would be the certain consequence, that at length Sabina, touched by her grief, bewildered and overcome with fatigue, promised all she required, which was, never to reveal the affair, either to the Baroness or the Marquis.

Confident that she would not violate an engagement, into which she had so solemnly entered, Camilla retired; and the lovely Sabina soon forgot her uneasiness, in sleep.

While she is enjoying her repose, let us examine a letter which she had written to Prince Charles of Lorraine, soon after quitting her convent, and enquire what could have induced her to commit

an act apparently so incompatible with the open ingenuousness, of which that letter was characteristic, in so rashly undertaking this clandestine expedition with her attendant.

LETTER

YOU condescend to assure your too happy Sabina, that you are anxious to know what impressions have been made on her young and inexperienced mind, by scenes so new as those on which she has just entered.—Ah! my more than friend, all, all I owe to your benevolent care!—You opened your protecting arms to receive me a friendless orphan—dried the infant tears, which the loss of my parents caused to flow—cherished the returning smiles which your tenderness had courted back to dimple my cheeks; and by uniting in yourself all I had lost, taught my young heart where to bestow that love,

the first possessors of which the grave had snatched from me.

Can I ever lose the remembrance of the unremitting indulgence with which you soothed my little cares?—the fond caresses you lavished on me?—never!—It is to your generous efforts I owe the interest with which her Majesty honors me, and to which I am indebted for the splendid establishment she had destined me.

But the sweet recollection of the many claims you possess on my gratitude, steals my thoughts from the purport of my letter, and, losing the present in the past, I delay obeying your injunction, to inform you ‘of all I have seen, felt, and anticipated, since her Majesty signified to me her intention of removing me from my convent.’

I will now confess, that I received her commands to prepare for my departure with joy; for I loved not the

rigid formality of a monastic life, and ever regretted being shut from those enchanting views of nature, which in my early days I had so rapturously contemplated. I anticipated then, with eager hopes, my emancipation from walls, which had hid from me the delights of a world, painted on my memory in the most captivating colours!

The long wished for day at length arrived: and the Baroness de Bonneville, deputed by her Majesty, came to receive me from the Lady Abbess.

Alas! I at that moment felt how nearly joy is allied to sorrow!—mine was now lost in the real grief of bidding farewell to my companions; for whom I had never felt so lively an interest as at this instant. I pitied all whom I was to leave behind, and was unable to conquer the emotions which oppressed me, till long after I had passed the convent gates. But when I looked around me,

and once more viewed the azure vault of heaven, bounded only by the round verge of the horizon, all sensations, but those of rapture, were quickly dissipated, and my eyes filled with tears of delight.

‘ My dear child,’ said the Baroness, mistaking the source from which they flowed, ‘ why weep you?—If I have taken you from friends who are dear to you, it is my intention to supply their place; and, now that I have seen you, my own inclination, as powerfully as her Majesty’s commands, prompts me to receive and treat you with the tenderness of a mother; for know you are to be my guest, till the solemnization of your nuptials shall have rendered you mistress of the noble mansions of the Marquis de Briscacier.’

The mention of the Marquis aroused in me ideas less tranquil than those with which I had first listened to her; for on

him I felt my future destiny depended. How knew I that he would view me with the eyes of approbation? Might not the commands of his sovereign influence him to conceal it, even should I be so unfortunate as to inspire him with antipathy. I shuddered as these thoughts rapidly passed through my mind; but at length summoned resolution to ask the Baroness if she was acquainted with him?—‘Not intimately,’ replied she; ‘but report speaks highly of his character: he is passed the prime of life, but still retains a very pleasing exterior, joined to manners distinguishingly graceful: you may regard your destiny as not less fortunate than it will be splendid.’

‘If I should have the happiness of proving not displeasing to him,’ said I, with timidity.—‘My dear,’ replied the Baroness, smiling, and regarding me earnestly, ‘I think you need not alarm

yourself on this subject ; I can perceive nothing in that face calculated to awaken unpleasing sensations: banish, therefore, all such apprehensions, and believe me when I predict, that the Marquis will esteem you as the choicest gift his sovereign could bestow on him.'

Greatly soothed by the encouragement thus given me by the Baroness, I looked with a lightened heart from the carriage window;—we had just entered Paris—my eager eyes devoured the motley objects which once more saluted them: the crowded streets—the splendid equipages—the magnificent hotels—all charmed me:—every thing which met my view inspired animation and delight! 'How enchanting,' exclaimed I, 'ever to live among such happy beings as those I see! How different the glad looks they exhibit, from those I have this day left!'

Such were my feelings, when the carriage stopped at the Baroness's hotel, to which she kindly welcomed me; and, after making me partake of a repast prepared for us, insisted on my retiring to my chamber, whither she kindly dispatched to me a cordial of her own composing, recommending it as one well adapted to tranquillize my spirits, and insure to me repose.

My sleep was profound, and the next morning I opened my eyes only to new scenes of wonder and delight! Such, my beloved protector, is the present happy situation of the child of your adoption!—‘But where are those expressions of regret, at leaving behind you that friend so beloved—the amiable Sidney Stanhope?’ I think I hear you ask. ‘Has my Sabina, in the new pleasures which have presented themselves to her giddy eyes, lost all re-

membrance of that amiable girl, whose society has sweetened her hours of seclusion ?'

No, dearest and best beloved of protectors; but, in the gaiety of her heart, she determined to *surprise* you. That friend, so highly prized, will soon, very soon, be restored to your

SABINA MONTRESOR.

I am very angry with myself at observing, on looking over my letter, that I have not once mentioned my obligations to the good Father Theodore; but I have not forgotten them, though the busy scenes by which I am surrounded, prevented me, just then, from thinking of that early friend: were not the Baroness waiting to take me out with her, I would burn my

letter, and endeavour, in another, to do justice to the gratitude I feel towards that excellent man, to whom I owe so much.

CHAP. III.

And thus happily was passed that and the succeeding day, by the lovely and innocent Sabina, under the protection of the Baroness, who studied to divert her thoughts from dwelling too anxiously on the scenes which were to follow the arrival of the Marquis de Bascier; which event was now daily expected.

She succeeded, without difficulty, during the day, which was spent in a round of amusements, equally novel and attractive to the young and gay. And of the next day, but at night, in the solitude of her apartment, or accompanied only by her faithful friend,

CHAP. III.

AND thus happily was passed that and the succeeding day, by the lovely and innocent Sabina, under the protection of the Baroness, who studied to divert her thoughts from dwelling too anxiously on the scenes which were to follow the arrival of the Marquis de Briscacier; which event was now daily expected.

She succeeded, without difficulty, during the day, which was spent in a round of amusements, equally novel and attractive to the young and gay mind of the sweet girl; but at night, in the solitude of her apartment, or accompanied only by her humble friend,

Camilla, all her hopes and fears returned with redoubled force; and she found relief in disburthening to this faithful creature, her over-anxious heart.

It was after she had been thus engaged one evening, and had evinced more than her usual solicitude on the event of her first interview with the Marquis, that Camilla said, "I am told there at present resides in this city a person who possesses the gift of foreknowledge; she calls herself the *Egyptian Sibyl*; and the wonderful accuracy with which her predictions have in every instance been verified, has impressed me with the fullest conviction of her meriting the high fame she has acquired.

"Now, what I advise, my dear young lady, is, that, without informing the sibyl whom you are, you allow her to cast your nativity, which will at once relieve you from all suspense."

“But how is this to be effected?” enquired her auditress.

“Very easily,” was the reply, “if you will allow me to manage the matter.—To-morrow evening plead an inclination to retire early to your chamber; there I will meet you, and so arrange the business, that I will conduct you out of the hotel, unknown to all within it. In the meantime, by ascertaining the house in which this sibyl resides, and the best way leading to it, I shall be enabled, without difficulty, to guide you thither.”

“Indeed, Camilla, I cannot think you advise with your usual prudence, in recommending me to take such a step, unknown to the Baroness,” observed Sabina.

“Trust to me this once,” rejoined Camilla, with earnestness, “and I will answer for every thing’s turning out according to our wishes.”

Camilla ceased not her importunities, and relations of instances of the sibyl's supernatural powers, till she had wrung from her lady a promise of being guided by her; and Sabina, the next evening, in pursuance of her instructions, taking an early leave of the Baroness, retired to her room, where she was met by her attendant, and safely conducted to the residence of the prophetess; the result of which we have already seen.

CHAP. IV.

THE morning following Sabina's nocturnal expedition, as she was seated tête à tête with the Baroness, at breakfast, that lady observing in her young charge a languor unusual to her, was on the point of enquiring the cause, when she was prevented by the entrance of a domestic, who delivered to her a note : as soon as the servant was withdrawn, and the Baroness had ran it over, she said,—

“ This, my love, is from the Marquis de Briscacier, who arrived late last night at his hotel. He tells me that he has just had an interview with the King, who means to honor his favorite by presenting him to you in person this afternoon. He

adds, that his Majesty declines listening to the cause of his long protracted arrival till they are both in the presence of her, who is equally interested with himself, in hearing the most satisfactory reasons for it; so you see, my dear, you must summon all your resolution for the occasion, that you may acquit yourself with proper grace and dignity."

But this advice was more easily given by the good Baroness, than followed by her young favorite; whose agitation increased as the hour drew near which was appointed for the fearfully anticipated interview. When in the afternoon she joined the Baroness, in the saloon, that lady felt perfectly easy respecting the approbation her young friend could not fail exciting.

Sabina possessed in an high degree that intuitive taste, which unites in dress, elegant simplicity with an air of dignity, rendering grace itself more

graceful. On this occasion it was perfectly adapted to her age and peculiar style of person; and the air of timidity, and a total unconsciousness of her own enchanting appearance, rendered her, in the eyes of the Baroness, the sweetest creature she had ever beheld.

Taking her hand, she was about to address to her words of encouragement, when the rattle of carriage wheels announced the approach of their expected visitors. Briefly, therefore, recommending her to exert her fortitude, she advanced to receive and welcome the guests, and then introduced her young charge to the King: who in his turn presented the Marquis, saying, "Lovely Sabina, you are indeed a recompence worthy the friend who has rendered me such important services." And as he spoke, taking her hand and placing it in that of the Marquis, he thus addressed

that nobleman: "Receive, as a mark of your monarch's regard, this inestimable gift; and be assured, Briscacier, that, did I not believe you would fully estimate the possession, I would not be the instrument of bestowing it on you; but I well know your virtues. Sabina, in my friend, I give you a protector worthy of your acceptance; he will guard and cherish you."

The Marquis received on his knee, the half-retiring hand of Sabina; and, in low accents, entreated her kindly to confirm his happiness.

She would have spoken, but the words died away in inarticulate murmurs; and the King, observing that her trembling limbs could with difficulty sustain her, led her to a seat. Secretly he admired the modest timidity which so rarely accompanies such transcendent loveliness, and considerately addressed himself to the Baroness, with a view of

giving time for the recovery of her scattered spirits.

He had soon the pleasure of observing, that his project had been attended with success; for Sabina, gradually regained her self-possession, and found herself able to take some part in the conversation; while from time to time she stole a furtive glance at the Marquis, whose countenance impressed her young heart with respect, not unmixed with awe.

He appeared to have passed his fortieth year, without having lost his claim to personal attractions; time had mellowed only, not impaired these advantages; and confirmed the easy dignity of his manners, which was his striking characteristic.

As Sabina observed these graces, she ceased to wonder at the high favor he enjoyed with the youthful monarch; who having conversed a considerable time

on indifferent subjects, said, turning to the Marquis, “ Well, Briscacier, are you prepared to answer the heavy charges of disloyalty, both to your liege lady, and your king? How will you explain this point? You shall be your own advocate; the sweet Sabina, and myself are your accusers, while the Baroness, who is the least interested party, shall pronounce as judge.

“ Sire,” replied the Marquis, gravely, “ you have already generously pronounced my free pardon, even before you called upon me to offer any thing in extenuation of my seeming fault.”

“ How so?” interrupted the King, “ did I not, on the contrary, threaten to call you to a strict account in the presence of these ladies?”

“ You did, my liege, in *words*; but had not your heart decided my acquittal, you would never have conducted me to the happiness I now enjoy.”

“ Ah!” observed the Baroness, “ I see conscious innocence in every line of the supposed culprit’s countenance ; and believe I may pronounce sentence, as his Majesty has done, without listening to his defence. What say you, my love ?” turning to Sabina, on whose sweet face a smile was hovering. All eyes were instantly bent on her ; while, as the deepest blushes carnationed her cheeks, she forced herself to say, “ Far be from me the presumption, of doubting the justice of that sentence his Majesty has evidently pronounced.”

“ And thus are you fairly acquitted,” exclaimed the King, “ on a supposition too flattering to me, not to compel my ready acquiescence ! but, believe me, Marquis, I was not aware that my sanction would operate so powerfully in your cause.”

“ To convince you, sire, that in this

instance it has not been misplaced, if I have your permission, I will exculpate myself, from even the shadow of offence; and relate to you a very singular occurrence, which had nearly deprived me of the possibility of ever becoming its historian.

“ At the time your Majesty’s first courier arrived at my quarters, I was absent on an affair which nearly concerned the success of your arms. It was in consequence of some important information, which had been secretly conveyed to me, that I resolved to go in person to ascertain its truth. For the better securing the continuance of that tranquillity and good order, which then reigned among my troops, I determined to leave them in ignorance of my departure; and enjoined those officers to whom I was obliged to communicate my measures, to observe the strictest secrecy

on the subject; giving them to understand that I would never pardon the least breach of this injunction.

“It was during my absence on this expedition (the object of which I shall at a fitter time lay before your Majesty) that your first intimation, on the subject of my recal, reached the army. My aid-de-camp, doubtful how to act, in a case against which I had not provided, allowed the courier to depart without having ventured to acquaint him that my absence must preclude the possibility of his bearing back the immediate promise of obedience which your Majesty expected from me.

“In the interim, little suspecting what had been passing at my quarters, I prosecuted the object of my journey; and was retracing my steps, when in consequence of having had a nearer road pointed out to me, by which I might save some leagues, I struck into it.

“Anxious to reach the place, where I was informed I might pass the night, I hastened forward: but I imagine my guide had wilfully misinformed me; for, on arriving at the top of a high hill, just after sun-set,* I found myself on a round plot of level ground, of considerable magnitude, encompassed entirely with rocks of prodigious height, and extremely steep on every side; from whence no pathway was discernible, except that by which I had climbed to the summit, that could lead me from this rocky inclosure.

“This sight much disconcerted me, as I knew it would be perfectly dark before I could regain the foot of the hill. While examining, with careful anxiety, all around, if any way had escaped my observation that would enable me to pur-

* The circumstance of a person being decoyed into such a subterranean abode, in the mountainous part of Spain, is true.

sue my journey, I observed a large white dog issue from a narrow crevice in the rock, and immediately disappear---not so quickly, however, but that my eye marked the way he went ; and with all the expedition I could make, I followed his track, conceiving hopes that he might belong to some inhabitant of those gloomy regions, and be pursuing his way home.

“ Presently I saw him again ; he was then standing still at the further end of the plain, as if waiting for my company. As I advanced to within a few yards of this animal, he again vanished, and on my arrival at the place on which he had halted, I perceived a hollow covered way, cut into the solid rock, and at some distance within, a sort of air-hole, which gave light to this subterranean passage.

“ Following the animal into the cavity, I found, on proceeding a few paces, a turning, which became at every step

darker. I hesitated whether or not to go on; when I was again tempted to venture forward by imagining I saw a glimmering light at a distance.

“On proceeding, I became convinced that this passage led to a subterranean habitation; for distant voices and the joyful bark of a dog, now caught my ear. With renewed hopes, I quickened my steps, and soon discovered, that there was actually a sort of house, excavated by human labour, in the very heart of the rock.

“Entering the apartment, I immediately asked and obtained permission, of the persons I found there, to pass the night in this shelter; and soon after stretched myself on a bench, where sleep had nearly overtaken me, when I was startled by the sound of a loud voice, that I had not heard before, which was roughly demanding of the people of the place, who I was.”—

“ ‘ We know not,’ replied they ; ‘ he says he is a soldier returning to the army in Flanders.’ ”

“ They now entered into conversation in a low voice, but some sentences which caught my attentive ear, made me apprehend I had fallen into the hands of banditti. Feigning the slumber which had been put to flight by my suspicions, I was soon too well convinced of their justice. The party approaching me, I started on my feet, and had scarcely time to draw my sword, in the resolution to sell my life dearly, when I was attacked by these ruffians. Notwithstanding the energy, desperation lent me, I could not long have maintained a combat so unequal, but must have fallen, had not my good genius, at the moment my strength was failing me, sent a Chevalier to my assistance, who rushed into the midst of us, sword in hand, exclaiming, ‘ Base assassins, forbear !’ — ”

“ In this act he received a blow on his arm, which one of the miscreants had aimed at my head, while I was guarding myself from a similar attack on the other side.

“ We were quickly joined by two other Chevaliers, with their domestics ; which re-inforcement enabled us to put the traitors to flight. I regret that we could not secure them ; but they so suddenly effected their escape, through a subterranean passage we had not perceived, that we had no means of preventing their evasion.

“ After passing a considerable part of the night in the most diligent search for them, we gave up this object as hopeless, and all returned to the scene of our late action : I there expressed to the courteous strangers the high sense I entertained of their valorous interposition.”

Sabina, who from the first mention of the subterranean cavern, listened to the

Marquis with an earnestness, the cause of which she could scarcely define, no sooner heard mention of the Chevalier's appearance, than she uttered an exclamation, which to any one acquainted with her adventure the preceding evening, must have betrayed her belief, that the strangers, whose conversation she had in so singular a situation over-heard, and the rescuers of the Marquis, were the same. As every one present, however, was ignorant of the cause of her emotion, it was attributed to the deep interest she took in the safety of her lover. He acknowledged this supposed compliment, by a look expressive of his gratitude; while he received one of smiling congratulation from the king, who requested him to conclude a relation so extraordinary, and inform him who were the Chevaliers to whom he stood so much indebted.

The Marquis thus continued. “ I much regret, sire, that in this particular I cannot satisfy you, since I am equally unacquainted with their names and rank; the former of which I very earnestly entreated they would make known to me, but this they politely declined, and having bound up the arm of my first deliverer, we quitted together the subterranean recess.

“ On emerging, we found the day had dawned; and, as the light strengthened, I observed, with pleasure, the appearance of my companions. The wounded Chevalier I thought the most striking young man I had ever seen; and there was a commanding superiority in his manners, which convinces me he must be of distinguished rank.

“ When, on taking leave at the bottom of the hill, he vaulted on his horse, unmindful of his wound, and bowed his

adieu, there was a lofty gracefulness in his air, which I never saw exceeded but in one individual."

The smile which just then played over the countenance of Louis, convinced Sabina he had *understood* the Marquis's application; but she could not penetrate into the real feeling which caused it. On afterwards asking the Baroness's opinion, that lady confessed she thought it doubtful whether it proceeded from his being pleased with the Marquis's compliment, or that he was amused at so courtier-like a trait in his friend.

"I should have rejoiced to see our tournament graced by this Knight of the Cavern, and his associates; and am sorry you were not able to ascertain whom they were," observed the King: "but go on with your narrative."

The Marquis proceeded. "This *Knight of the Cavern*, as your Majesty very hap-

pily denominates him, speaks our language with such purity, that had not other circumstances convinced me it could not be so, I should have taken him for a native of France.

“The second Chevalier, whom I take to be his brother, has none of that commanding superiority in his manners which distinguished my favorite, and his accent was certainly that of a foreigner.

“The third was quite a stripling, and appeared to be a protégée of the others. They were well attended, and told me, that they had on the preceding evening, like myself, ascended the hill in search of a nearer road; leaving at its foot their horses, under the care of a domestic, where we found them the next morning. The same dog which had led me into danger, guided them to my rescue.

“Having parted with these strangers, I soon discovered the road I had missed,

and the next evening rejoined my troops without further adventure.

“On my arrival there I found your Majesty’s mandate, and, full of gratitude for your gracious intentions in my favor, I set off for Paris. It was after my departure that your second courier arrived at the army; and I should have anticipated his re-appearance here, had not a vexatious accident detained me some time on the road, in spite of my impatience to push forward. It was in consequence of this accident, that, by preceding me a few hours, he gave some color to the charges of disloyalty preferred against me.”

“You have so clearly defended your cause,” said the King, “that I call upon the Baroness to confirm, in form, my verdict of honorable acquittal.”

“And I pronounce it with pleasure,” said the lady, “in which sensation I see my young friend participates.”

Sabina's looks testified her assent.

The king then told them that he had, in concert with the Queen mother, settled that the nuptials should take place in three days; and the ceremony be immediately followed by the tournament, and other festivals, which were to throw additional splendor on the solemnity. Then, attended by the Marquis, he departed, both highly charmed with the beauty and unaffected simplicity of the young creature they had just left.

Sabina, on her part, after having received the congratulations of her protectress, retired to her chamber, where she found the affectionate Camilla impatiently expecting her. She related the gracious reception she had experienced from Louis; and the respectful admiration with which the Marquis had inspired her: but was too diffident of her own attractions to suspect that the impression she had made on him, ex-

ceeded what her most sanguine wishes could have led her to hope.

She also accounted for his protracted absence, by relating the adventure of the subterranean cavern. Here the agitation with which she had listened to the latter part of that event, recurred, and she said earnestly, “Camilla, I cannot doubt but the Chevaliers, whose discourse we last night overheard, were the deliverers of the Marquis; and it cost me much to conceal my knowledge, that they were actually in this city, and purpose attending the tournament, when his Majesty testified so lively a curiosity concerning them. I trust,” continued she, sighing, “this will be the only act of duplicity I shall ever have to reproach myself with.”—

Fatigue now reminding Sabina of the lateness of the hour, she retired to bed; not, however, to enjoy her usually soft and peaceful slumbers. Confused images

of subterranean caverns, banditti, tournaments, Marquisses, Kings, and handsome Chevaliers, successively passed in review before her fancy, and she gladly, as soon as it was light, shook off the sleep which had perplexed her, by presenting her with such incongruous objects.

On the morning after the Marquis's introduction to Sabina, the young King made him relate to the Queen mother, at her drawing-room, the singular adventure with which he had the evening before entertained them; the whole court took, or affected to take, a lively interest in the detail, and expressed curiosity respecting the noble stranger, in speaking of whom his Majesty again gave him the appellation of the Knight of the Cavern—an appellation by which he was, from this circumstance, principally distinguished during his abode in France.

The three successive days were passed by the Marquis in giving every possible demonstration of his desire to please his destined bride; and the engagement he had at first entered into, from policy, now became his dearest wish.

On the part of Sabina, gratitude for the flattering testimonies of regard and approbation which he lavished on her, rendered the Marquis interesting in her eyes, and prevented its often recurring to her mind, that he had numbered more than thrice her years.

Surrounded by bustle and preparation, worshipped like a divinity, and scarcely left a moment to herself, it is not surprising that the sibyl, and her predictions, with the unpleasant event which attended her expedition, were for the present banished her memory; and that the only impression left by that adventure, was, a lively curiosity to know

if the Knight and his companions would really be present at the tournament.

Thus rolled on the intervening time, between her first introduction to the Marquis, and the important day which was for ever to unite her destiny with his.

CHAP. V.

IN Paris all was pleasure, mirth, and gaiety—every soul appeared inspired by the cheerfulness of reviving spring, and exhilarated by the prospect of amusement; *enjouement* sat on every face, and scarcely had the day began to dawn, when high and low, with delighted expectation, prepared to follow the Knights, who were this day to contend for the prize of skill.

A goodly sight it was to see such numbers of youthful and noble personages brilliant in jewels, and graceful in form, attended by a long train of gallant dependants (as squires) in splendid habiliments of divers fashions; some bear-

ing the plumed helms—others the glittering spears—others again the shining bucklers of their lords. While the fiery steeds, who bore those lords, pawed the ground and champed their golden bits, as if proud of their burthens.

The place appointed for the rendezvous of the Knights was the palace-yard, where the great Earl Marshal waited to see them pass in review before him; and, according to the usages of the days of chivalry, to hear proclaimed the forms of combat. At a signal given, the herald at arms, at three several times, bespoke silence—then in an audible voice he thus addressed them: “His Majesty ordains that every Knight shall here swear, upon his honor, that he will on this day fight for fame, not for hate—that no private quarrel shall instigate him to take advantage of the tournament to gratify revènge, hatred, or jealousy; but that each shall faithfully conform to the

laws framed by the wisdom, love of order, and generosity of our youthful monarch, and sovereign lord, Louis the 14th.

“Furthermore.—The Tourney shall be allowed but two careers of the spear; yet an unhorsed Knight may again rise from off the ground, and try to regain his honor on foot.

“I am also commanded to call upon you, Sir Knights, to recollect that a noble emulation in displaying skill, strength, and agility, or a generous acknowledgement of superiority where exhibited, will equally claim the applause of the great and good. Now Knights proceed—fight without malice—conquer without arrogance.”

Here the trumpet sounded, and a symphony of martial instruments burst in sublime harmony on the ear, as ranged two and two, by the Earl Marshal, the noble cavalcade began their march

for the plains of Luciennes—the field of honor.

Beauty ornamented every window, and every balcony; and smiles with flowers were liberally showered on the gay and gallant nobles as they passed before them.

They had no sooner quitted the streets, than every house poured forth its inhabitants; all impatient to follow in their train.

On arriving at the course, they found the King (who declined entering the lists against the bridegroom) already awaiting them. He had just witnessed the celebration of the nuptials between the Marquis de Briscacier and Sabina, which was performed in the Queen's private chapel; and was now seated upon a superb throne, prepared for him within a railed balcony, and surmounted by a rich canopy, starred with plates of burnished gold, which reflected the rays of

the sun with dazzling lustre. Near it, was a magnificent pavilion for the Queen mother, by whose side, as the heroine of the fête, Sabina sat.

On seats below on either side, were the Princesses of the blood; and beneath, the nobles and ladies of the court in attendance. In another pavilion, on the other side of the King, were the Princes of the blood, with the nobles of the court in waiting, all dressed in the most sumptuous habits of the time.

The Knights now approached to salute the King.

First, as it was his day of jubilee, rode the noble, happy bridegroom, mounted on a jet black barb of great price, whose flowing mane and tail were confined by chains of silver and bows of pearl. His saddle was of white velvet covered with a silver net, and studded with the same gems.

The Marquis was dressed in a surcoat of white velvet, embroidered with silver, in imitation of armour, fashioned like scales;* his helmet was also white, and worked in the same pattern, with the addition of a border of roses in rubies. His plume was *colour de rose*, and his scarf, embroidered by the hand of Sabina, was like his plume, the colour of happy love. His bride, secretly admiring his military air, and elegant salute, returned it with a smile of approbation.

By his side rode Don Juan, the natural son of the Queen's brother, and high in favour with her Majesty; to

* At this time, though *armour* had not entirely fallen into disuse, it seems to have been reluctantly worn by the youthful military; since the commanding officers found it necessary to issue peremptory orders, for their using it in battle. On such an occasion as the present, they imitated the appearance only.

whom he was on a visit, in consequence of the suspension of arms between France and Spain.

He was dressed in the curious garb of a Marcoman, as far as it could be made to resemble it with costly materials. His cuirass, which reached his knees, was formed of strips of brown velvet, plaited to imitate matted bark; the shoulders were thickly embroidered to represent plates of steel armour; he wore flesh-coloured stockings for naked legs, and sandled half boots, clasped in several places down the middle, with polished steel. His mantle was of sable, and his head was entwined with a wreath of green enamelled leaves. His shield was painted to resemble his cuirass, a rope of silver encompassing it. He bestrode a noble dappled grey German war-horse.

Next came the King's brother, Monsieur, whose effeminate taste had directed

his choice of a Moorish dress. The short close vest of zephyr blue satin, exactly fitting the body; the long fine muslin trowsers; the bare arms and neck, encircled with chains of topaz; the full silk sash fringed with diamonds; the white clear turban twisted with strings of topaz, and the light blue plume, suited so admirably with his youth, fair complexion, and delicate features, that he might have been taken for the cup-bearer of the Gods. He gracefully managed a Persian courser, whose trappings were richly adorned with gold. The shield he bore was small, and imitated the sun in the full splendour of his rays.

With him came the hero of Rocroi, habited in a Spanish dress, except that he wore on his head the hat, ornamented with a profusion of large white feathers, which had been the leading signal to victory in that memorable battle. He was mounted on an Andalusian courser

of great beauty, taken in the same celebrated action, and which seemed to partake of the high spirit of his conqueror. The haughty air of the nobleman who bestrode him, the triumphant expression of his countenance, the graces of his person, his eyes full of fire, and his noble address, inspired Sabina with the belief that this must be the Marquis's Knight of the Cavern; and when with a graceful bow he had passed on, she ventured to ask the Queen whom he was?

It was the Prince de Condé, the admirer of Angelica de Montmorenci Boutville, a lady highly distinguished for her wit and beauty; of the latter, you can yourself judge, if you follow with your eyes those of the Prince. That pensive Knight who now approaches us in a Swedish dress of black, covered with black bugles, is the Count de Chatillon, his unsuccessful rival. In

this nobleman are revived the courage and genius of his ancestors, to which he joins a modesty affectingly expressed by his motto.

Sabina read,

“ Her love yields to merit, and dooms mine to sorrow.”

“ Does not your Majesty think,” said Sabina timidly, “ that a mind capable of so much generous esteem for a favored rival, wants only opportunity to prove it great ?”

“ I believe,” returned the Queen, “ that Chatillon possesses qualities as amiable, though not as splendid, as the Prince de Condé ; but the glory which beams from the actions of his rival as a warrior, will ever eclipse the less dazzling virtues of private life.”

The gay—the witty—the dissipated Count de Grammont next came prancing

on a little horse, half English, half Welch, which seemed as merry and as frolicsome as his master. His steed and himself were dressed in the costume of England, from which country he was but lately arrived. On his shield he bore the characteristic motto of

Love and Pleasure.

The Viscount de Turrenne accompanied him, clad in the ancient German dress. The vest and short trowser were formed in one, and composed of marten's skins. Starops, or buskins of the same skin on his legs. His mantle, with a hood, was of satin, bordered with dark fur. He wore a helmet like his vest spangled with gold; his shield of varnished wood, was framed with the same metal; and he rode a mouse-coloured Hungarian charger, of high mettle and beauty.

Courtenai, the degenerate scion of a noble stock, had been reluctantly forced into the field by Mazarine; who was desirous on every occasion of bringing him forward, in the hope that example might light a spark of emulation in his soul, and render him worthy of one of his nieces. It was with this, as it proved vain hope, that he had prepared for him an Irish dress, calculated to set off his really good figure, and to draw on him encouraging admiration.

It consisted of a truss of scarlet velvet, fastened at the ankles with clasps of gold. His corselet was worked in gold shells—his vest, composed of the same materials as his pantaloons, was quilted to imitate the thrum jackets of the ancient Irish. Over his shoulder he wore a mantle of purple satin, richly bordered with a foliage of foil, and fastened with a magnificent brooch, in the middle of which was a large ame-

thyst. Similar ornaments fastened his plume, and his barrad of scarlet velvet. He bore a wicker shield, and was mounted on a bright bay English hunter, richly accoutred.

The Knights had now all passed on to the barrier, and the troops assembled to form it, were just going to receive the word of command to close—when suddenly three strangers appeared at a distance, hastening full speed toward the field.

As they approached within sight, all eyes were attracted by the two foremost, and fixed in admiration of the superior nobleness and majesty of their figures, the splendour of their dress, and the unrivalled grace with which they managed their fiery coursers. Those coursers were milk-white Arabs, of exquisite beauty, and matchless—except with each other. Their pride was displayed in their towering crests—their strength in

their broad deep chests—their fleetness in their clean bony legs—and their dark eyes rolling in liquid fire beneath their snowy brows, betrayed their untamed spirit ; while their red nostrils issuing smoke, and their elastic bounds expressed their impatience of the admirable skill, which controlled them.

The two Chevaliers were dressed exactly alike, both in the Polish costume.

Their vests and tight trowsers were of green velvet ; the appearance of breast-plates was formed by an embroidery of polished steel rings. The gorgets were fashioned with diamonds ; one shoulder of each Knight was covered with a network of strung brilliants. On the other was fastened, by a superb star, the muzzle of a fine panther's skin, which formed their mantle, crossed the back, and was fastened on the right thigh. They wore Polish bonnets, the elegant feathers of which were tipped with brilliants, and

played gracefully over their manly brows. Diamond studs fastened their buskins—blazed in their belts—on the manes of their horses, and on their housings.*

The shields of these noble strangers were of polished steel, enamelled with gold, and magnificently set with jewels. On one of them was painted, the moon reposing its soft beams on the placid surface of a silent stream, expressing the mild and even tenor of the bearer's disposition.

The shield of the other Knight, exhibited the figure of a lady, whose features were concealed by a veil, which a flying Cupid was extending its little

* The whole appearance of these Chevaliers evinced that they were well aware of the splendour with which those of the nation, whose costume they had chosen, always habited themselves, and adorned their horses on all public occasions. The Poles, it is said, ever did this, even at the expense of years of painful economy.

hand to seize, and round it were these words,

LOVE SHALL LIFT IT.

This Knight possessed a tall and exquisitely formed figure ; his face was a fine oval—his features regular—his aquiline nose gave dignity to a frank and open countenance*—his dark eyes were full of fire and sensibility—and there was an impressive loftiness and grandeur in his air and manner, which irresistibly inspired respect and admiration.

The other Knight bore to him the likeness of a brother ; but he was not quite so tall, nor did he possess that majesty of mien which so eminently distinguished the former ; still there was in his figure, in his manner, in the tone of his voice, a native sweetness, which

* The description of this distinguished Chevalier is strictly historical.

created interest and captivated attention. His dark grey eyes were expressive of sentiment and feeling ; and his Grecian nose strengthened the naturally pleasing cast of mildness and seriousness, which were the characteristics of his countenance.

The third was quite a stripling, yet of manly demeanour and very pleasing appearance. He was also dressed in a Polish habit. It was made of straw-coloured velvet, ornamented with silver; his mantle, bonnet, and plume were of the same colour, the former fastened to the shoulder by a large topaz ; the housings of his chesnut steed, corresponded with the simple elegance of his dress. He did not enter the lists.

The Chevaliers, finding on their reaching the barrier, that the tournament had been delayed only on the notice of their approach, waving the ceremony of proceeding to the throne to salute the King,

merely gave in their names to the herald at arms.

The trumpet then sounded for the last time, and the combatants wheeling to the right and left, with their lances in their restes, vanished from the barrier to make one general charge. With viewless velocity the smoking coursers, "speed the middle space;" and with a concussion which shook the solid earth, "horse met horse, and man encountered man!"

Under the powerful arm of the elder Polish Knight, Courtenai kissed the ground; and Chatillon made Grammont curse his luckless stars, and bless his nimble legs, which found their way to the ground before his head.

Both these Knights declined a second career. In the last, the elder of the strangers, was in his turn obliged to yield to Chatillon, while the younger unhorsed Turenne, and the Prince de

Condé made Monsieur bend to his saddle bow.

The two careers of the spear being finished, the remaining Knights dismounted, to continue the contest with the sword.

The Marquis de Briscacier soon brought Don Juan on his knee, and was immediately challenged by Chatillon, who, after a well conducted contest, yielded with a sigh, of which love, not fame, was the source.

The Prince de Condé instantly took his place; great skill and address were shewn on both sides: but the ardent desire of shining in the eyes of his fair bride, could not prevail over the nervous arm of the more fortunate Prince; yet with a liberality that graced disgrace, he complimented the skill of his antagonist, and retired.

The Knight who bore on his shield

the picture of the veiled lady, now challenged the conqueror. So equal, for a time, were the dexterity, suppleness, and strength, exhibited by these Knights, in their exquisitely skillful contest, that astonishment, admiration, and anxiety sat on every countenance, as with mute attention they awaited the doubtful issue!

At length the Prince grew warm, and thrown off his guard by his own impetuosity, was, after a struggle, in which he had nearly forgotten the oath which bound him to a friendly trial of skill, disarmed by his temperate and accomplished adversary.

On the termination of this combat, so every way honorable to the Polish Knight, a rising murmur threatened to add to the Princes mortification, by bursting into that general applause, of which he had been accustomed to be

himself the object; but ere it could spread, his well remembered services buried it in respectful silence, till he had quitted the field.

The judges of the tournament now conducted the Polander in form to the pavilion, in which the lovely Sabina sat as lady of the fête; and presenting him to her, he was on the point of bending one knee to receive the destined prize, and her arms were extended to throw over his neck the brilliant chain—when he suddenly reeled, and would have fallen to the ground, had not the Marquis de Briscacier, who at that moment entered the pavilion, by catching his arm, prevented him.

His friends now hastily approaching, with great anxiety supported the Polander; the elder of whom attributing his indisposition to a wound he had recently received, and which *ought*, in

prudence, to have prevented the exertions he had been just making.

They immediately bore him into the open air, where in a short time he recovered from the vertigo which had so unseasonably attacked him.

The Marquis de Briscacier had discovered, what no doubt the reader has anticipated, that this noble Chevalier, and his deliverer from the assassins of the cavern, were one and the same.

As soon as he was sufficiently restored, the Marquis took his arm, and conducting him to the King, exclaimed with generous warmth: "Sire, behold in the victor of the tournament my deliverer, and your Knight of the Cavern."

The noble stranger, at a loss to comprehend this speech, and surprised at the title by which the Marquis introduced him, could only *look* an inquiry, and make a silent obeisance to his Majesty.

Most graciously did the young Monarch receive and compliment him on his bravery and skill; then recalling to his memory the critical situation in which he had assisted the supposed soldier, he presented him to him in his real character, adding, "The preservation of his valuable life in the subterranean cavern, makes me also your debtor. Let me therefore hope that you will grace my court, as you have graced my tournament, and open opportunities to me for testifying my gratitude and esteem."

The stranger now turned his astonished looks on the Marquis; and beheld, beneath the splendid dress of a nobleman, and in the favourite of a King, the poor soldier, as he had believed him to be, whom he had rescued from the assassins in the cavern of the mountains.

Surprise brought back the rich bloom on the Knights cheeks, which his late attack had driven thence; and he ex-

tended his hand to the Marquis, in token of the friendly disposition towards him which this recognition created.

The King then begged he would not be so much his own enemy, as to delay his introduction to the amiable young Marchioness, who would receive double pleasure in bestowing at the same time the meed of honor on the hero of the day, and the preserver of her husband.

With a bow to the King, which in its dignity seemed to make acknowledgement a favor; the stranger suffered the Marquis to conduct him to the bride, whom the latter thus addressed: "Lovely Sabina! may I venture to call upon you to assist me in paying the debt of gratitude which I owe to this valiant Chevalier, and to add your esteem to that with which he has inspired me?"

"I am happy, my lord," said the blushing Marchioness, "in receiving from one I so much honor, a task so con-

genial to my wishes." And as she gracefully threw the prize around his neck, she added, " May this, chain within the bounds of safety the ardent spirit to which we are so much indebted."

Tones, with which her memory was familiar, now struck upon the sensibility of the Marchioness, and startled her, as in the tremulous accents of unconquered surprise, the Polander answered:—

" It shall at least, Madam, chain my heart your grateful captive."

The Marchioness returned this gallantry with a smile merely—and the stranger rising, quitted her; but returning again in a few minutes accompanied by the other strangers, he introduced the first as his brother, Count Olesko, and the stripling (in whom Sabina instantly recognized her nocturnal protector) as his cousin the Chevalier Sapieha—and requesting the Marquis would honor

them by a particular introduction to the King; which boon that nobleman cheerfully granted, and acknowledged his obligations to them also.

On returning from the performance of this ceremony, the Knight of the Cavern said, "Now Marquis have the goodness to point out to us the Baroness de Bonneville, to whom we bear letters which will sanction the generous confidence and respect, which unknown and unrecommended, has been so nobly bestowed on us?"

"I intended," said Sabina with animation, "to have bespoken that revered friend's esteem for the deliverer of the Marquis; and I can assure you that title will anticipate the welcome your letters may claim."

The court now left the field—the Polish Knight rode on one side of the car which contained the Queen and Sabina, and the Marquis on the other.

They had not proceeded far, when they were met by a courier, whose smoking steed proclaimed the urgency of his business.

Halting at sight of the Marquis, he presented to him a packet—on opening which, a strong shade of vexation and disappointment appeared on his countenance, which he evidently struggled to conceal.

After a few minutes given to this effort, he turned his horse, and joining the King, exclaimed,—“ Ah, Sire! I know your goodness will lead you to sympathize with my feelings, in learning, that just as the cup of felicity is offered to my lips, I am forbid to taste till a superior duty is fulfilled. An alarming mutiny calls for my instant departure to the army under my command—any delay may terminate most fatally the truce from which you hoped for such honorable terms of peace. Pardon, gra-

cious Sire, my answering the indulgent permission, I see hovering on your lips, before you give it expression. I ask not a single day—*your* service requires my absence, and to that I willingly make the sacrifice of present happiness, to return to that *uninterrupted* enjoyment of it, which a consciously neglected duty would not allow.”

“Go Marquis,” said the King much affected—“the man who can conquer his passions from a motive so laudable, is a conqueror indeed! to whom those who only conquer others, must yield the palm.”

To this flattering compliment, Louis added the request of seeing him before he set off; but the Marquis entreated to be allowed to devote the few hours he could spare, to the conducting his bride to her future home, and convincing himself that there was nothing wanting in it, that could in any way

contribute to her pleasure and comfort. He then kissed the King's hand, and returned to acquaint the Queen with the event which had taken place.

That Princess expressed her regret with much feeling; and condescendingly commanded that her car should be driven to the Marquis's chateau, previously to its conveying her to Paris.

On arriving at its portal, her Majesty favored him with many kind wishes that his absence might prove of short duration. And he in return begged she would have the goodness to obtain the King's permission for the continuance of the festivals; that Sabina might not be disappointed of the pleasure they were calculated to afford her.

"She is of an age," added he, "to enjoy them, and I would not have my unlucky departure deprive her of any of those innocent amusements she had promised herself. Your Majesty will

therefore confer a real obligation on me, by sanctioning with your approbation the Marchioness's joining in the recreations of each day."

The various and novel sensations which had with such rapidity succeeded each other in the bosom of the Marchioness, flushed her cheeks with a more than usually brilliant carnation, and lent new lustre to her charming eyes, as the Marquis led her into his magnificent chateau, which had been fitted up anew for her reception.

"Lovely Sabina!" said he, as soon as he had conducted her into one of the apartments. "Lovely Sabina, reign mistress here as absolutely as you ever will in the heart of him, whom you have this day made the most envied of men! A cruel, but indispensable duty tears me from you; yet I will endeavour to derive consolation, even in this trying separation, from the belief that the mo-

tive is approved by you ; and that the sacrifice I make to his Majesty, will evince how, above all price, I esteem the gift he has bestowed on me, and the boundless gratitude with which it has inspired me. Heaven protect and cherish you ! The kind Baroness has promised to continue your guest till my return, which God speed ! If in surveying this place, you should observe some objects which may testify how devotedly I have studied to please you, allow them to speak in favor of him, who, after the duty he justly owes his King, lives but for you."

A timid doubt of the manner in which she ought to address her husband, kept Sabina silent—and when his horses were announced, her increasing embarrassment made the Marquis spare her a longer adieu, by affectionately embracing her, and hastily leaving the room.

He was no sooner out of sight, than

Sabina dropt into a chair, and asked herself whether she was perfectly awake ! so like a dream did the change in her fate ; the sudden banishing of her husband, and the finding herself alone in a splendid mansion of her own, appear to her.

In this bewildered state of mind she might long have continued, had she not been recalled to the realities of her condition, by the arrival of the Baroness, who came to re-conduct her to her own hotel, where it had been agreed she was to remain till the entertainments were over.

On the road the Baroness had met the dejected Marquis, who stopping for a moment, took the opportunity of correcting the remissness he had been guilty of towards his preservers. In the grief of parting from his bride, he had forgotten to desire, that she would be his substitute, in shewing them every

grateful attention, and friendly hospitality in her power. This wish he now desired the Baroness would convey to Sabina, and encourage her in fulfilling it, by setting her the example.

As she conducted the charming bride back to Paris, that lady repeated to her the request of her lord; and taking from her pocket the letter which had been presented to her by the Knight of the Cavern.

“ This epistle,” said she, “ is from Count Zolkiewski, an old and much esteemed friend of the late Baron. He is a Russian nobleman, not more distinguished by his rank and shining talents, than he is endeared to me, by the recollection of his friendship for my regretted lord. He speaks of the three Chevaliers in terms of the utmost affection, and recommends them, during their abode in this country, to my peculiar

attention, as youths, in whose behalf he is nearly and deeply interested.

“ ‘ It is in obedience to their noble father,’ writes he, ‘ that they travel incognito, and hide under fictitious names their real rank, which be assured is not less noble than you will find the merits of the dear subjects of my panegyric. Possibly you may think the whim of my friend, an unaccountable one; take then in his own words the reason he assigned for exacting this proof of his children’s obedience.

“ ‘ It is my wish, my sons, that you should owe to your *own* merits, rather than those of your ancestors, that respect in foreign countries, which I trust you will ever receive. Convince me, then, that you are indebted for it to the former, by foregoing those claims which the latter would undoubtedly secure to you.’ ”

“ You must agree with me, my dear Baroness, that a motive so praise-worthy, ought to be inviolably respected.”

“ You see, therefore, my love,” continued she, folding up the letter, “ that it is equally incumbent on both of us to play the good hostesses, to these young strangers.”

In this observation Sabina readily agreed; at the same time deeply blushing at the thought, of how very strange an opinion the Chevalier Sapieha must have formed of her nocturnal excursion; and resolving to take the first opportunity which occurred to explain that affair to him.

CHAP. VI.

THE Baroness, by the Queen's orders, attended Sabina to the Palais Royal, then her Majesty's residence—from thence that Princess, conducted the bride herself to Versailles, where a ball concluded the entertainments of the day.

They found on their arrival, that some of the expected guests were already assembled; and the Queen, the young Marchioness, and the Baroness, repaired directly to the great gallery, which was fixed on as the ball-room for the evening.*

To assist the King in conquering a

* Vide Anquetil.

species of diffidence which he at first felt in the company of strangers, the Queen mother had introduced a degree of freedom at court, which astonished those, who remembered the strict etiquette, exacted by Louis 13th and his minister Richlieu.

The policy of Mazarine induced him to second her Majesty's plan; and in order to reconcile the courtiers to his despotic sway, he likewise rallied around the throne, "*Les graces, les plaisirs, et une magnificence eblouissante, inconnue jusqu'a lui.*"

The system of banishing from the new court, the *genante* forms of the *vieille cour*, had all the effect the Queen could have hoped; it encouraged Louis to display that easy graceful affability which was afterwards his characteristic; and which when equally remote from repulsive haughtiness, and debasing fa-

miliarity, wins the heart, while it inspires it with respect.

Of this effect, Sabina was perfectly sensible in her first interview with the King; nor was she less alive to its influence on this evening: when the youthful monarch, instead of waiting in state to receive her homage, rose immediately on her entrance to pay her that attention he felt due to the sex in general,* and to her, on this occasion, in particular.

Gallantly taking her hand, he led her to a seat at the upper end of the gallery, and placed her near the Queen mother.

All the apartments of this vast edifice, lighted, and thrown open from one to the other, appeared to the dazzled

• Louis never passed even the female servants of the court without touching his hat.

St. Simon.

sight of the bride, as she looked through the long vistas formed by the open and illuminated doors, like an enchanted palace!

The innumerable lights multiplied themselves to infinity in the magnificent mirrors which hung in every room; while the crystal ornaments caught and spread their rays in endless directions from their diamond angles.

This entertainment exhibited all that regal splendour, elegant taste, and unbounded liberality could produce, in the most brilliant court in Europe; and the captivating manners of its sovereign diffused over every one, gaiety, harmony, and an earnest desire of pleasing.

Even the defeated Knights, forgetting their disgrace, seemed to have recovered their good humour.

Chatillon, the pensive Chatillon! had decked his face in the smiles of revived hope, for the noble-minded Prince de

Condé, affected by the generous compliment paid to him in the motto on the Count's shield, had procured for him the hand of the celebrated Angelica, and appeared by transferring his attentions to another lady during the evening, as if he seriously intended making the sacrifice of her preference in favor of the Count.*

The King, who made the Knight of the Cavern (as we shall continue to style him) the particular object of his care and notice, with the air of a person who is certain of communicating pleasure, informed him that, as victor of the field, he had a right to the fair hand of the lady of the festivals.

A doubtful expression flashing from the eyes of the Knight, made his Majesty ask whether he had already engaged

* This turned out to be case, and Chatillon married Angelica; but on her becoming a widow, the Prince renewed his addresses.

himself, or if he wished to decline dancing altogether. "Though perhaps, Sir Knight," added he, in a tone of raillery, "the *veiled lady* has prohibited the disloyal and unsentimental gaiety of mingling in the dance, during your absence from her; however well pleased she may be, at your winning trophies to lay at her feet on your return!—or—"

A sudden change in the countenance of his auditor, denoting vexation, made the King suspect that his *plaisanterie* was ill-timed; and shrinking from wounding the feelings of another, he suddenly changed his manner, and in a tone, grave, yet friendly, said, "Am I really to seek another partner for the Marchioness?"

"Sire," replied the Chevalier with recovered cheerfulness, and a look of acknowledgment for the delicacy which had checked the King's bantering, "I should ill deserve the Chivalric title

with which you honor me, were I to resign the right my arm has this day won : that of being the *Caveleiro Servante* of the peerless heroine of the festivals."

The Marchioness quite new to the world, and so unassuming as never to have conceived the possibility of a lady's taking offence at another being preferred to herself, yet felt a portion of proud displeasure, of which till now she had never been sensible, at this conversation ; which, as it partially reached her ear, gave her the unpleasant impression of her being *forced* on the Knight of the Cavern as a partner. His concluding sentence therefore, though uttered with the warmth of sincerity, scarcely reconciled her to the acceptance of him.

But the same pride, which at first tempted her to reject, determined her to *accept* his hand, when the King led him up to make the tender of it.

His Majesty himself was no stranger to caprice. At this very time, though deeply enamoured with Mademoiselle de la Motte D'Argencour, he suffered himself occasionally to be seduced, by "*Les agaceries et la coquetterie précoce,*" of Marie Mancini, the Cardinal's niece, into giving her the preference. Yet she had no personal charms that could excuse this preference. Her complexion was of a yellow brown, her neck and arms long and scraggy ; and though her teeth were good, her mouth was large, and her lips thin. Her stature was tall and straight ; but her eyes were fierce without brilliancy.

Mademoiselle de la Motte was, on the contrary, remarkable for the beautiful regularity of her features—the clearness and delicacy of her complexion—*et plus belle encore par sa naïveté, ces graces et sa gaieté.* And the King was very greatly alive to the attractions of both

her person and character. He admired also that self-respect, which made her receive his attentions with a mixture of deference and pleasure, which neither partook of abjectness, or insolence.

How unaccountable is the influence which that ever changing, ever whimsical deity, *Fancy*, possesses over the minds of men!

The Countess de Soissons, sister to the former of these ladies, was also a candidate for his Majesty's attentions; it may well be supposed therefore, that much heart-burning, between these three ladies, was concealed beneath the courtly veil of *bienséance*.

The Countess was the partner of Count Olesko, with whom she appeared so much pleased, as to rouse in him a spirit of gallantry; that his brother, (who observed it with pleasure) determined to encourage, as an antidote to that seriousness of character, which

increasing every day, threatened to degenerate into melancholy.

Sapieha danced with the amiable Duchess de Mercœur; another of Cardinal Mazarine's nieces, highly and generally beloved for her eminent virtues.*

Nothing could exceed the admiration excited by Sabina and her elegant partner, as they led off the dance. The Graces themselves seemed to dictate every motion, and to have selected them purposely to display their own powers of attraction! Yet after two dances the Marchioness, fatigued in mind and body, sighed for repose; and though she could not with propriety quit the ball, she begged to be excused from dancing any more.

The Knight of the Cavern immediately led her to a seat, and placing himself next to her, gallantly said, he

* She died young, deeply regretted by all who knew her.

greatly preferred, to the amusement they had just quitted, the pleasure of her conversation for the remainder of the evening.

The young Marchioness bowed her acknowledgments; but in consequence of their both being equally strangers to Paris, the one from long seclusion, the other from his very recent arrival, they could give each other but little information respecting the individuals by whom they were surrounded.

Their conversation, therefore, fell first upon countries, then upon books—each displaying to the other refinement, taste, and knowledge. Sabina thought that she had never met with so agreeable a companion; and this opinion was strengthened when she learnt that added to the possession of five other languages—he was perfect master of the English. Pleased at the discovery, she expressed in that tongue her hope, that

he was an admirer of Shakespeare. But instead of answering this question, he repeated with enthusiasm,

“What she does
Still betters what is done.
When she speaks,
I’d have her do it ever—
When she dances, I wish her
A wave o’ the sea, that she might ever do
Nothing but that ; move still, still so,
And own no other function: each her doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what she’s doing in the present deeds,
That all her acts are queens.”

The Marchioness greatly charmed, turned towards the Knight with the intention of noticing, if any lady present, had excited the animation with which he uttered this : but to her surprise she perceived his countenance overspread with gloomy displeasure ; and in the next instant, equally regardless of his

engagement to herself, and forgetful of the wish he had a short time before expressed, of devoting the evening to her conversation, he started from his seat, crossed the apartment, and led to the dance the deserted Mademoiselle de la Motte—except Angelica and herself, by far the handsomest woman at the ball.

The King now retired to the billiard-room ; and the Queen having formed a card party, of which the Baroness de Bonneville made one, Sabina, after the sudden desertion of the Knight, was pleased at Count Olesko's joining her.

The transient gallantry inspired by the *coquetterie* of the Countess de Soissons, which had for its object not the Count's admiration, but the hope of exciting the King's jealousy, soon gave place to his natural pensiveness ; and he evidently shewed, that he felt it a relief to be dismissed by his light-minded partner, who,

on seeing the King quit the apartment, immediately seated herself.

The mild, rational, conversation, with the *consistent* attentions of the Count, though wanting the brilliant wit—the impressive eloquence—and the endless variety of his brother, were still so pleasing and acceptable to the Marchioness, who had for a moment experienced the unpleasant sensation, of feeling *alone* in a *crowd*; that in gratitude for his timely approach, she mentally pronounced him to be at least more *amiable*, if not more distinguished than his brother.

The Knight of the Cavern devoted himself for the rest of the evening to Mademoiselle de la Motte. And Olesko, more and more pleased with Sabina, as he compared her with the frivolous Countess de Soissons, continued his attendance on her, and by that means secured to himself the pleasure of leading

her to the supper-table, and occupying a place near her.

Poor Sapieha, who previous to his setting off for Versailles, had spent his time in conning over all the lessons *on etiquette, l'usage du monde, et les petites soins*, which the Knight of the Cavern had given him, and by which he firmly determined to be guided in his conduct throughout the evening; had hitherto, as he thought, succeeded *a merveille*, and hoped to receive as much praise and admiration from his cousin for it, as he had generously bestowed on himself.

Supper being announced, he presented his hand to his fair partner, and assiduously led her through the hall of war, without suffering himself, either to look to the right, or left, at the tempting paintings which adorned its sides. The Temple of Apollo caused a little *égarement d'esprit*, but quickly recollecting himself, he resolutely turned his eyes

from the four seasons, and even the pictures of Guido, and fixing them on the charming countenance of the Duchess, vowed he would withdraw them no more from that interesting object, till they were safely arrived at the supper-table. And he actually did keep this vow through the little gallery—the saloon of Mercury, and into the middle of the cour de Mars; when, unfortunately, thinking it necessary to give energy to a gallant speech he was making, by throwing up his eyes to Heaven, the God of war, seated in his car drawn by wolves, caught his view, and instead of bearing witness to the truth of his speech, betrayed his senses! for his eyes now became traitors to his will—he first took only a glance, then a full view, became *distract*, and finally dropt the Duchess's hand, before the famous picture of Darius, at the feet of Alexander.

The Duchess de Mercœur, who had been much diverted during the evening with the evidently *new-taught* court breeding of her youthful beau, which, whenever he caught himself relaxing from, instantaneously stiffened his naturally easy manners and his playful ingenuous muscles, was curious to see how he would recover this *faux-pas* in politeness; and therefore forbore to give him any intimation of her departure, but silently slipt out of the apartment, leaving him to follow in dismay, when he should awake from his reverie. But no Sapieha re-appeared! On finding himself alone, and recollecting the solecism in good breeding, of which he had been guilty, he concluded his reputation as a man of gallantry and fashion to be gone for ever; and therefore thought he might as well make the passion for painting, which had led him into

this treason against the laws of etiquette, comfort him under his disgrace; and with this intention, he turned back, and examined every room in rotation, till ending with the cabinet of jewels and antiquities,—its vicinity to the hall of plenty, where the company supped, conveyed to him the voice of gaiety and pleasure: and he hesitated for a moment whether he would not brave the worst, by throwing himself on the Duchess's mercy.

But he was too young to feel this to be an easy task; on the contrary, the more he considered the matter, the less resolution he found to bear him through it; and he at length made up his mind to return a *solitaire* to his home—where he so ruminated on, and exaggerated his inattention to the sprightly Duchess, that he resolved to avoid her dreaded raillery, by ab-

senting himself from all the other amusements, at which he should be likely to meet her, except the masquerade ; there he thought under a disguise he might venture to encounter her.

CHAP. VII.

THE next morning, the cheerful, happy court of the young and amiable Monarch of France assembled at the Tuilleries. From these walks, so justly esteemed as the most pleasant in Paris, the different parties embarked on the Seine, in elegant barges, gaily painted, and covered with awnings of various colours. A fine band of music in one boat, and attendants with refreshments in others, followed the splendid fleet.

The regal barge, in which were the King, Queen, Sabina, the Duchess de Mercœur, the Baroness de Bonneville, and Mesdemoiselles de la Motte, and Mancini, was fitted up with great mag-

nificence. Its awning was of purple silk, lined with white, and fringed with gold; the seats were covered with cushions of the same materials; and its sides, to the very water's edge, were of burnished gold! The King was himself surprised at the elegance of the barge-men, who were dressed in jackets and trowsers of white satin, fastened with tassels of gold. This vessel led the way, and as it moved, threw a dazzling brilliance round, and appeared to roll in floods of light!

The morn was beautifully fair, and as the eddying breeze gently waved the foliage of the woods and groves, which clothed the banks of the river, they stole fragrance from each opening bud, and imparted the pillaged sweets to the senses of the fair and noble mariners, as they glided down the smooth tide!

A tranquil silence had succeeded to

the first joyous salutations of the day, and the lively congratulations on the fineness of the weather, when it was gradually disturbed by a flute, whose melodious tones swelled upon the yielding air. Its notes, at first, gently rising in slow succession, till they were strengthened by the full harmonious band, to a higher nobler strain.

The skilful rowers, who had for a time rested on their oars, now with well-timed strokes, beat the responsive measure on the trembling wave.

Again there was a pause, and again, the soft melody of the flute breathed on the listening ear of silence! who, charmed with a voice, that now, by claiming union with the instrument, gave expression to its gentle notes, checked her flight, to enjoy the liquid tones, which impressively conveyed to the mind of taste, these words :

“ On a day (alack the day,)
 Love whose month is ever May,
 Spy'd a blossom, passing fair,
 Playing in the wanton air :
 Through the velvet leaves the wind,
 All unseen, 'gan passage find ;
 That the lover, sick to death,
 Wish'd himself the Heavens breath.
 Air, (sighed he) thy cheeks may blow ;
 Air, would I might triumph so !
 But, alack, my hand is sworn,
 Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn ;
 Vow, alack, for youth unmeet ;
 Youth so apt to pluck a sweet,
 Do not call it sin in me,
 That I am forsworn for thee.”

These vocal sounds, rising from the bosom of the regal barge, made the royal party direct their eyes, first at each other, and then towards the boatmen, amidst whom they, at the same time, discovered in the songster the Knight of the Cavern ! who with his brother, were disguised as rowers.

The King greeted them with flattering expressions of pleasure, at finding such an agreeable acquisition to their party. "Come," said he, "and receive the thanks of these ladies, for your gallant attentions to them."

As they advanced to pay their compliments, the Knight bowed to Sabina with the deprecating air of one, who is conscious of having merited an ungracious reception; but in the pleasure she had derived from listening to the charming air he had just sung, and in recognizing in the selection of the words, an admirer of her favorite bard, she entirely forgot the abruptness with which he had on the preceding evening quitted her, and she returned his compliments with equal sweetness and grace, joining in the general encomiums passed on his fine voice, and masterly execution.

The Duchess de Mercœur, then smilingly asked, what was become of her *attentive* beau Sapieha.

“He is,” replied Count Olesko, whose ear was not scientific enough to discover that it was Sapieha’s flute which he had heard. “He is so very much in disgrace with himself, that he is self-banished from the amusements of the day.”

“I am very sorry for that,” returned the Duchess, “for I can assure you, that the happy turn of his countenance, his humour, and the *naïveté* of his manners, have greatly interested me in his favor; and though he must learn *les manieres du monde* most certainly, yet I would not condemn him to seek them in solitary confinement! Pray tell him, that is not the way to acquire them.”

The Knight was silent, though he well knew that Sapieha was not soli-

tarily doing penance ; he instantly knew that it was his flute which had so sweetly filled the pauses of pensiveness that succeeded, at intervals, to the swelling sounds of the whole band. It was indeed to this youth so unexpectedly breathing his favorite melody, that the Knight's premature discovery of himself and brother, was to be attributed ; for there were in this simple but touching air, some tones which struck upon the most sensitive fibres of his heart, and made him spontaneously give to them the effect of their appropriate words, and by so doing, betray himself.

After the first compliments were over, he took a seat near the Marchioness, and admired with her the beauty of the scenery they were passing through, till the images of the calm and happy quiet, which appeared in the shaded groves, the silent vales, and meandering streams

which stole through the peaceful plains to pay tribute to the Seine, joined to the plaintive murmur of the distant band, which had preceded them, to await their landing at St. Cloud, lulled even the impetuous feelings of the Knight, into meditative tranquillity.

As the last strains of the instruments were lost in air, Sabina interrupted his reverie by saying, "I begin to think, that all dispositions alike acknowledge the magic power of music! since even your lively mind yields to its softening influence."

"Say rather, that you are surprised my turbulent spirit should be *humanized* by its soul-dissolving harmony. Ah! Madam, the joyous heart, whose dearest hopes have never been violently torn from it, is ill calculated to pity that despair which such a misfortune engenders in one of too keen sensibility. May

sorrow never teach yours, how greatly music is capable, even in a bosom so lacerated, of diffusing over it a temporary calm, that its magic can still awaken in it for a moment, delightful sensations. Sensibly do I experience, that it is the language of the soul—that it is far more eloquent than words—that it breathes to the heart the sweetest, the most intelligible expressions.”

“Indeed, Chevalier, you do me injustice,” said the Marchioness, in a tone of the gentlest pity: but the Knight allowed her not to express the benevolence which hovered on her lips; he again, with the air of an offended person, quitted her, and joined Mademoiselle de la Motte, who was once more a suffering witness of the King’s *devoirs* to Marie Mancini.

On arriving at St. Cloud, they found a sumptuous repast prepared for them; and as ceremony and distinction were

banished in this little *fete champetre*, every one seemed to be perfectly united in sentiment, and to concur heartily in contributing, by their gaiety and good humour, to the pleasures of the day.

Nor was Sapieha without his amusement, though he continued concealed under the habit of a musician.

The gardens were replete with captivating views; the Seine running close under them, formed a beautiful and magnificent canal, which watered a long terrace, planted with rows of trees on each side. Groves, saloons, labyrinths, water-works, and an orangery in an exquisite taste, embellished these delightful gardens.

To a part of the grounds situated on the top of a hill, and commanding a charming prospect, Sapieha carried some refreshments, and seating himself by the side of one of those *jet d'eau's*, which are considered as master-pieces of

their kind, he regaled two of his senses at the same time.

This enthusiastic and amiable youth became lost in admiration of the genius of man, while contemplating the effects of the sun-beams playing in the most beautiful prismatic tints, on the clear crystal stream which issued from the fountain, and fell around, like the sweetest, softest dew ! and Sapieha was himself even in his exile from the charming society, who were enjoying themselves in luxuries, under a superb tent, an object of envy and admiration, since, in his own innocent pursuits, and unadulterated taste, he found a constant resource against the irksomeness of solitude, and the depression of ennui.

From the situation he had chosen for his *refectory*, he was able to observe when the company prepared to embark. On seeing them assemble for that purpose, he descended the hill, and imme-

diately took his seat in the musicians barge; soon after which, the little fleet pushed from the shore, and returned to Paris.

That evening was given to recruit the fatigues of the preceding day, and enable the party to enjoy the pleasures of the following.

CHAP. VIII.

THE sun had no sooner mounted his dew-distilling car, and painted with orient beams, the heavens and the earth, in his own gay and joyous colours, than the merry horn of the archers sounded a *reveillé* to the bowmen of the day; and all, at the ear-piercing sound, sprang from their couches—some with revived spirits—some with renewed hopes—others with new-born feelings—others again with the ardour of enterprise!

The prizes to be contended for, at this exhibition of skill, were—for the best shot in the target, an arrow of gold;

and a crown of myrtle and lillies, formed of pearls and emeralds, for him who should, with his arrow, hit a dove, which was by a long string confined to the top of the standard.

The forest of St. Germain was to be the scene of these feats; and the gardens of the palace, that of the *déjeuné* which was to precede them.

Beautiful was the appearance of this charming *séjour*; when the Queen mother, accompanied by the lovely bride, arrived at it on the festive morn.

The sky beamed with unusual splendour; and a gentle breeze, impregnated with the scent of the flowers and herbs, curled playfully on the surface of the Seine, which flows at the foot of the eminence on which the palace stands.

Art and nature had united in rendering the gardens enchanting! fruitful valleys and pleasant eminences—deli-

cious parterres and green refreshing thickets, on every side struck the view. The shadowed walks were ornamented with temples, grottos, and statues; and the earth with the flowers of an early summer!

In one of the temples, commanding a pleasant prospect, both of the river and country, the company assembled to breakfast. It was hung with festoons of the finest and choicest flowers; and its corners were decorated with small fountains, which played into vases of porphyry, various perfumed waters:—while every luxury, from each part of the world, suitable to the repast, appeared on the tables, to tempt the appetite, and please the senses.

Sometimes was heard from one of the grottos, its nymphs, playing charming rural airs on an organ!—at others, Orpheus would serenade the party with

his flute, and by his magic powers animate rocks, woods, birds, and beasts.*

At a late hour, notwithstanding his determination to the contrary, on the evening of the ball, Sapieha appeared, led like a culprit between his cousins; who partly by persuasion, and partly by force, had directed his reluctant steps to St. Germain's.

After paying their respects to their Majesties, they conducted him to the feet of the Duchess de Mercœur; there, to await the sentence she should be pleased to pronounce on his desertion: they, however, entreated, that in consideration of his head being as light as his heels, she would in her clemency, forbear to pass one likely to try very greatly its solidity.

Sapieha attempted to apologize, but

* These artificial objects are set in motion by water-works.

finding that nature was more powerful than art; and that word them how he would, his speeches expressed, in spite of him, as plainly as truth, that his misdemeanour arose from his preferring pictures to the Duchess's conversation, fascinating as he wished her to believe he thought it—he suddenly broke off an unfinished harangue, dismayed at discovering that, *les ruses de flatterie*, in his unskilful hands, turned into weapons against himself.

This consciousness, and a feeling of ridicule, joined to a confusion, rendered infinitely droll from the native archness of his features, gave so ludicrous a cast to his countenance, that the Duchess could no longer retain her mock gravity; but giving way to her inclination for mirth, she extended her hand to the disconcerted Sapieha, and raising him up, assured him she was so highly pleased and satisfied with the eloquence

of his *no* apology, that she not only forgave him, but appointed him her *cicis-beco*, during his stay in Paris.

Sapieha's distress soon changed to rapture at being thus released from the awkwardness of his situation; and taking an offered seat near the Duchess, he participated in the joy and festivity which prevailed throughout the company, with a spirit that banished from his memory the little mortifications which he had experienced on first joining it.

Breakfast being over, the cheerful notes of the bugle-horns summoned the Toxopholites to repair to the forest with the fair witnesses of their skill. Each archer was dressed in a uniform of green silk, forming a close jacket and pantaloons, lined with white, and trimmed with a green bugle fringe; a white silk sash with the same coloured tassels; green bonnets and white feathers. This

dress, though more simple than any of those worn at the tournament, was equally elegant; nor was it less calculated to display a fine figure; and the golden quivers enamelled with green, gracefully suspended across the shoulders, with belts ornamented in the same manner, gave dignity to the tall and well proportioned forms who wore it.

On arriving at the appointed spot, the ladies found a Persian silk tent prepared for them, just opposite the pillars against which the target was hung. Over it waved a superb banner, which bore the figures of Mars and Cupid, encircled within a wreath of lillies and laurels: and on the top was perched a Barbary dove, who, unconscious of danger, was pecking and pluming itself, as if proud of shewing its beauties to the God of the silver bow, whose victim he was destined to be.

“What,” asked Sabina, addressing

herself to the Knight of the Cavern, who had just then for the first time that morning paid his compliments to her; "What can induce that sweet little dove to choose a post so full of danger? I hope it will soon take its flight to a safer place, or I shall receive no pleasure from the skill to be exhibited."

"That dove," replied the Knight, "is placed there purposely to be shot at, as a mark."

"Is it possible," exclaimed Sabina, "that pleasure can be associated with such barbarity, when an inanimate mark would answer full as well. But I hope it is not too late to change this cruel intention; oblige me, Chevalier, by endeavouring to get it done: do not let the amusement be disgraced by giving unnecessary pain e'en to the 'poor beetle.' I entreat you, Chevalier, try to rescue this poor little victim."

"Be under no apprehension, Madam,

for his safety," answered the Knight, "trust to my skill in archery, when I assure you, (and he added this with a slight shade of youthful vanity) that I have not yet seen one of my competitors, who has either carried, handled, or strung his bow, with that masterly air, which could create in me the slightest dread for the safety of this object of your pity."

Sabina tried to believe this; yet when the lots were cast, and the shooting began, she became anxious, and watched with trepidation the flight of every arrow, till she beheld it lodge in the target, or fall at the foot of the standard. Seeing this so often happen, she at length began to feel confidence in the Knight's prediction, who was not, however, quite correct in the opinion he had formed of his competitors; several good shots had been made; and the wizzing of many a feathered foe, had caused the

poor bird's heart to flutter in unison with that of the kind compassionater of his fate.

It had however escaped injury, when the Knight's turn came to try his skill. As he prepared to obey the summons, Sabina said reproachfully—"And will you really condescend to owe to the torture of that poor little inoffensive animal, the petty triumph of shewing at its expence a superiority comparatively so insignificant."

"Ah! Madam!" said the Knight, and after a moment's pause he added, "I would instantly decline the contest in obedience to your wishes, were I not confident of fulfilling my promise, when I say fear not for the bird, since the name of *my love* is written in the fairest characters on the wings of every dove. "Nor shall one feather of this be injured."

Then quitting the Marchioness, the

Knight unslung his polished bow—with graceful ease he strings its stubborn strength—he fixes the arrows head, and then with manly nerves he draws to his chest the well-tried string; quick from his hand it parts, and in a moment, “th’ impatient weapon,” cuts the air, fraught with glad liberty to the trembling captive. The cord which enchained it, was alone cut!

Sabina clasped her hands with a look of pleasure, when she saw the poor dove expand its wings towards heaven, and in airy circles of delight, hail recovered freedom! but this pleasure was of short duration, for she observed the Knight take precipitately from his belt another arrow, and aim it at the little victim. The scream which involuntarily escaped her testified her disappointment, but could not arrest the flight of this second arrow, ere it had arrested that of the dove, which fell at her feet—unhurt!

The Knight on its first release perceiving a ring at the end of the cord which encircled the birds leg, with exquisite dexterity had sent the last arrow through it to its head; the weight had, as he intended it should, brought the little flutterer to the ground, by which means he secured it. *!!!!!!*

When he advanced and presented his peace-offering to Sabina, the tear of pity still crystallized her soft eyes as he said, "Accept in its own living emblem the symbol of innocence and constancy? whose image shall henceforth adorn my shield, and be my device in war and peace, as emblematic of its bearers character."

The whole party, alike astonished, and charmed at the admirable skill, evinced by the Knight in performing a feat so infinitely more difficult than hitting the bird, unanimously called upon the judges of the game to award to

him the highest prize, for having made the *best* shot in this dexterous contest.

When kneeling to the Marchioness to receive it, he said,—

“At the tournament, Madam, ambition alone inspired me with ardour to bear off the prize—to-day I have been animated by a different motive. In the eager wish of excelling I have been actuated, not by the pride of shining as the most skilful, but of appearing the most deserving a prize which is rendered to me invaluable, by believing it is with pleasure bestowed by you.”

As the dew drops of sensibility gemmed the glowing cheeks of the Marchioness, a smile of pleasure and approbation graced her expressions of admiration, at the feeling and delicacy with which the Knight had vanquished her little displeasure. Her lovely face then re-assuming all its cheerful graces, she archly said—“I see, Chevalier, you

have a method peculiar to yourself of paying your court to our sex. You, from policy I believe, begin by offending us, that we may the more sensibly feel how greatly you can oblige by your atonement."

"And you Madam," replied the Knight in the same animated tone of pleasure, "by your enchanting candour would disarm of her power to wound even malice herself. Good God! do you believe any one ever premeditatedly offended you?"

"Indeed I but jested, I fully acquit you of ever harbouring such an intention," replied Sabina, and she extended her hand with a conciliating smile, as she added, "assure yourself Chevalier, that had it been really so, the respect you have shewn this day to my *woman's* feelings, would have more than secured your pardon—would have given you a claim to my esteem, even though the

Marquis de Briscacier had not before bespoken it in your favor."

"Pardon me," Madam, returned the Knight, forbearing to take her offered hand, "if I can never consider as gratifying any sentiment built on the opinion of another."

A blush crossed his cheek as he spoke, and bowing coldly he retired.

What a singular temper! thought Sabina, as she observed him join the archers, who were preparing to attend the ladies back to Paris; where the masquerade was again to call them together in the evening.

CHAP. IX.

As the Queen had signified her wish that *her* party should appear without masks, Sabina simply wore a close robe of white satin, fastened below the bosom with a diamond belt ; her luxuriant hair was confined with a net of the same brilliant gems.

The Marchioness's expectations of pleasure were highly raised, and the condescending kindness of the Queen, in promising that she should not quit her for a single moment, removed the only drawback she had apprehended in this evening's entertainment; that of being accosted, when alone perhaps, by some impertinent mask.

At an early hour all the splendid apartments of Versailles were again thrown open; and soon afterwards filled, as by magic, with characters of all descriptions and of all nations. The novelty, variety, and beauty of the scene, increasing every moment, made such quick demands on the admiration of the young Marchioness, that distracted between so many different claimants, she knew not where to fix, till a group of dancing girls advanced towards her, led by *Pleasure*, whose light and airy figure, flowing hair, and elastic step, truly personified the goddess of heart-easing mirth; nor were her gay companions less able representatives of her attendants, *merry jest, youthful frolic, wanton sport, and mountain-loving liberty.*

They were slightly covered with the finest, clearest muslin, thrown over close vests of satin, and made in the Circassian costume, which gave ease and grace

to the motion of every limb. *Pleasure* was distinguished by a crown of flowers, silver buskins, and a wand wreathed with wild roses.

When arrived within a few paces of Sabina, she fell back, and two of her companions bearing between them a beautiful Indian basket of pierced ivory, passed on, and laid it at the bride's feet. The group then began a ballet, (the nymphs accompanying the music with their tabors, castenets, and cymbols) with an animation, which, while it expressed the hilarity, and happy gaiety of their dispositions, by no means detracted from the elegance and taste, with which they executed it.

When it was finished, *Pleasure* approached, and taking up the basket, presented it to the Marchioness; who, on raising the silver gauze with which it was covered, perceived an artificial bird, formed of various coloured jewels, which

extending its wings, and swelling its little throat, surprised and charmed her, by warbling an air full of wild melody; and on ending his task, began pecking the fruit and flowers, with which the basket was filled, as if to reward himself for his song.

“Accept, noble lady,” said *Pleasure*, “this little songster, who tired of woodland freedom, seeks the luxury of your protection.”

Sabina delighted as she was with the present, felt evident reluctance at the idea of accepting it from a stranger. This induced *Pleasure* to unmask, and in doing so, discovered under this female attire, *Monsieur*, the King’s brother.

The Queen pleased with this gallantry of her son, added her commands to *his* request, that the Marchioness would not reject his offering; and she complied with a sweetness all her own.

The gratitude however, his attention

had created, raised so lively an interest in his favor, that she could scarcely forbear entreating him, to lay aside the perverse taste, which led him so frequently to disguise himself in a dress unworthy of him; and she secretly condemned the Queen, for encouraging a folly, the policy of which she was totally at a loss to understand.*

This group was succeeded by a Minstrel, dressed in a robe of green, gathered at the neck into a narrow gorget of diamonds, and fastened before with a clasp of gold. His robe had long sleeves, slit from the shoulder to the wrist, and lined with white; his doublet sleeves were black, confined at the wrists with bands of brilliants; and from his belt, which was set with jewels,

* La reine sa mere aimoit a le voir habillé en fille, et permettoit qu'il se montrât ainsi publiquement, entouré de jeunes courtisans travestis comme lui.

St. Simon.

hung the key of his harp. Around his neck he wore a golden chain, to which was attached an elegant badge of his order. His ruff was of the finest lace; his hyacinthine locks curled brightly over his well-turned head; and he carried his harp with grace.

The Minstrel made three lowly courtesies to the Queen's party, to attract attention; which her Majesty observing, humoured him by this address:

“ Say, gentle Minstrel, art thou come to sing the deeds of our heroic Knights, and dexterous archers; or seekest thou some fair one, more deserving the efforts of thy muse?”

“ Lady,” he answered, “ I tune not my lyre to the rude notes of war. Sometimes I sing the return of spring, which restores verdure to the trees—to the meadows the enamel of the flowers—and melody of voice to the nightingale. Some-

times I celebrate the power of love; and its penetrating influence embellishes my song; for I am a lover, and lovers alone, while they charm the ear, can touch the heart. Sometimes I sing of Fancy and Desire, of the inconstancy and caprice of women, probing the leading passions of their minds."

"Give us a specimen of thine art, good Minstrel, in favor of the newest subject, Fancy and Desire?"

The Minstrel bowed obedience, tuned his harp, and in a voice, rich in sweet tones, but evidently feigned, thus began:

"Come hither shepherd's swayne:

'Sir what do you require?'

I pray thee shewe to me thy name.

'My name is FOND DESIRE.'

When wer't thou born Desire?

'In pomp and pryme of May.'

By whom, sweet boy, wer't thou begot?

'By fond Conceit, men say.'

Tell me, who was thy nurse ?

‘ Fresh youth with sugred joy.’

What was thy meate and dayly food ?

‘ Sad sighes with great annoy.’

What had'st thou then to drink ?

‘ Unsavoury lovers teares.’

What cradle wert thou nursed in ?

‘ In hope devoyde of feares.’

What lulled thee then to sleepe ?

‘ Sweete speech, which likes me best.’

Tell me thy dwelling place ?

‘ In gentle heartes I rest.’

Do either tyme or age,

Bring him unto decaye ?

‘ No, no ; Desire both lives and dies

Ten thousand times a daye.’

Then Fond Desire, farewelle,

Thou art no mate for mee ;

I should be lothe methinkes to dwelle

With such a one as thee.”

I suspect the *Minstrel* conceals the lively *Grammont*, whispered the Queen, and that he is willing to shew us by those

fanciful lines of the Earl of Oxford, that if he has not learnt more morality in England, he has at least learnt that poet's language!

Here the Minstrel was joined by a Troubadour, and a Cupid attended by Mercy: this last character which was a very interesting figure, was dressed with elegant simplicity; but Cupid was still more excellent.

His mask was painted with admirable skill. His sandals were studded with sapphires; his robe ornamented with flowers of the most beautiful colours, and perfumed with fragrant essences. Wings of the softest feathers, extended behind his back, and on his head he wore a chaplet of myrtle. His bow and arrows were unornamented.

Most striking was his whole appearance; and Sabina, from his height and elegance, suspected him to be the Knight of the Cavern.

The Troubadour addressed the Minstrel with—"Well met gentle friend; I have been seeking one of your order, to give to my compositions the advantages of voice and music; I pray thee go with me?"

"First," replied he, "let me pay my grateful devotions to my inspirer: and present to him my humble petition, that he will graciously take into consideration a lover's anguish, and solve his painful doubts." Then bending gracefully to the God, he said:

"Tell me in pity, if Mercy, who follows in thy train, will ever assist me with the object of my love? Alas! I have as yet felt only its thorns. Inform me, I beseech thee, the *source* and *progress* of that tender passion? How it is lighted up in the heart, and by what means it can there so slyly insinuate itself? In what way it sets sleep at defiance, and wages

war with the elements; burning in water, and freezing in fire.

Tell me, I entreat thee, how it can bind without chains, wound without scars? How also, happens it, that an enemy considered so cruel, should be so kindly fostered?"

"Does not your Majesty," asked Sabina, taking advantage of a pause which followed this rhapsody. "Does not your Majesty think this language extremely bombastic?"

"You must recollect," replied the Queen, "by whom it is spoken. It is perfectly in character with that of the minstrels and troubadours of former times. Had you ever read their productions, you would have been enabled to enjoy, as I do, the humour of this mask; who, in my opinion, supports his part to admiration—but attend, the God of Love is about to answer him.

“Minstrel,” replied Cupid, “though thy questions savour of folly, as the soft eyes of Mercy plead for thee, I will endeavour by mine answers, to enlighten thine understanding. It is not impossible, but that after having suffered thee to languish long, thou may'st touch the heart of thy fair one, provided thou remainest constant in thy passion.”

The Minstrel here with affected rapture, snatching the robe of Cupid, and sinking on one knee, pressed it to his lips—while the God thus continued:—

“Attend now to the *source* of love. It arises from the heart, where it is fostered by the *will*, after having been conceived by the *imagination*. Its food is *hope*, and it encreases by the persecution of rivals, as it springs from the tenderness of desire, when delightful confidence is joined with this tenderness, it is in its perfect state.”

“ Alas !” exclaimed the Minstrel rising, and sighing deeply, “ how far, very far, am I, from even the hope of enjoying this perfect state.”

“ What is the name of this relentless beauty,” asked the Queen, desirous of prolonging the scene for the amusement of her party. “ Will not an invocation to mercy, induce her to obtain from the God of Love an arrow dipt in the balm of pity, with which thou might’st penetrate the heart of thy cruel mistress? Say Minstrel, who is thy fair one?”

He answered in recitative.

“ Among a thousand flowers, in a spacious garden, I have chosen the fairest. Heaven made her to resemble its own beauty, and her eyes are painted with its celestial blue. The sweetness of her countenance is heightened by tenderness, the dignity of her charms by humility—and with the Knight of the

Cavern I can say—*‘Her name is written in the fairest characters on the wings of every dove.’* But in my song only dare I make known my flame, and before I can hope to kindle a reciprocal one in her bosom, I must number thrice her years.—And yet I could tell my fair one.”—

His fine voice swelling into a gay air,

“That crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together ;
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care.
Youth like summer morn,
Age like winter bare.
Youth is full of sport,
Age’s breath is short :
Youth is hot and bold,
Age is weak and cold.
Youth is nimble, Age is lame,
Youth is wild, and Age is tame.
Age I do abhor thee,
Youth I do adore thee,
O, my love, my love is young :”—

Age, I do remind thee,
That youth will ever find thee,
Full of aches, and cares, and gloom,
Let thy love, thy love be young.

The words of this song were repeated with peculiar emphasis by the Minstrel, and pointedly addressed to Sabina, who, without exactly knowing why, felt herself much disconcerted.

When he had concluded them, the Queen turning to the Marchioness said, "Do you know who is the author of those words?"

On her replying in the negative, her Majesty added—"I thought you, who are so conversant with the English poets in general, and with Shakespeare in particular, must have known this to be a sonnet of that great bard's. It is published in his work, entitled, 'The Passionate Pilgrim,' which principally relates to the loves of Venus and Adonis. The lines with which our mask has just

amused us, are supposed to come from the mouth of Venus; who is weighing the comparative merits of the youthful Adonis, and the aged Vulcan."

While her Majesty was giving this explanation to Sabina, the eyes of the Minstrel were fixed on her with a penetrating earnestness, which covered her with confusion, and she gladly turned to a Mentor, (who had approached them in time to hear the latter lines of the song) as he said,—

"Do not allow this Minstrel's fascinating lay, to warp your youthful judgment, and lead you to confound with sensual pleasure, the more refined enjoyment of the tender passion."

"Cease thy calumny, cold reasoner," returned the Minstrel, with well counterfeited warmth, "I would not warp that heavenly mind, for the 'sea's worth.' Say, captivating deity!" turning to Love, "hast thou not seen at thy altars, those,

who to the *vigour* of youth have joined the *solidity* of age."

"Yes, Minstrel," replied Cupid, "I can boast of having received at my shrine, votaries, who, yet in the bloom of youth, have known, as well as those past the prime of manhood, how to reconcile the sentiments of the *heart*, with those of the *understanding*. Such have I, with inexpressible delight, united in my bands; convinced that their homage must ever be more refined, more zealous, more worthy the auspices of the God of Love, than that, lighted up by the unbridled passions of youth, or in the cold bosom of age! Fear not me," addressing himself to Sabina, "but guard against the usurper of my name, who, under the speciousness of his appearance, conceals his treachery."

The Marchioness had at first been really much amused with the conversation; but as it proceeded, she became

inexpressibly confused and hurt, at finding the masks so particularly singling her out to point their observations at. She was considering how she could effect her escape from the room, when to her infinite relief the Minstrel interrupted the discourse, by saying to the Troubadour, "I am now ready to be the medium of thy poetical effusions to its object, if thou wilt shew her to me." Then taking his arm, the whole group passed on to the other apartments.

And now was exhibited a scene which greatly surprised every one, and for sometime appeared incomprehensible to the Queen. A person entered, wearing four masks, exact likenesses of four different noblemen of the court, one of which represented the Count D'Evreux, a young man of great merit, and every way calculated to charm, where he wished to do so.

This astonishing mask, concealed

under a long loose robe, the machine which enabled him to turn his faces at pleasure. The singularity of the character drew all eyes upon him, and excited general curiosity as to his aim, in thus doubling the visages of Janus! That some malice was intended, was instantly suspected by the veterans of the court; but on whom it might fall, created very unpleasant sensations in the bosoms of more than one present.*

Some gentlemen wishing to see how this extraordinary mask would vary his faces in a minuet, requested him to dance; on which he immediately led out a lady, and greatly amused the spectators by the dexterity and humour with which he presented her with a new partner at every turn.

The minuet ended, he approached an

* This circumstance really happened at the masquerade given by Louis XIV.

Vide St. Simon.

amiable young woman, lately married, who was suspected of having entertained an early partiality for the Count D'Evreux; and presenting to her view *his* likeness, requested the honor of leading her through a minuet.

The lady, after a moment's hesitation, complied.

During the whole dance, the mask contrived to turn the Count D'Evreux's face so apropos, that his partner never for a moment lost sight of it. On observing this, she became extremely agitated; and in the hope of shortening a scene which rendered her an object of general attention, she offered at the first turn to give hands. Her persecutor advanced, raised his arms, withdrew them, and slowly retiring, began another turn. At the second, she again flattered herself he would accept her repeated offer; but to her increasing dismay, it was answered by the same feint on his part,

and his continuing with the same cruelty to keep Count D'Evreux's face, *vis à vis* to hers.

The scene now became serious, a dead silence prevailed throughout the assembly, and it was not till the malicious mask had made the unfortunate lady suffer this martyrdom, during a period long enough for dancing three minuets, that he released her. The additional agony she had suffered, from the apprehension of her husband's appearing, while she was thus exposed to calumny, was indescribable; and this misfortune would undoubtedly have happened, had not a generous friend prevented him from entering the room, by feigning business of importance, on which he wanted his advice. By these means keeping him engaged in conversation, till the tormentor had satiated his cruelty on the object of his revenge.

To the spleen of a disappointed lover,

was generally attributed this inhuman trick; and the immediate departure of the mask, after having performed his part, seemed to confirm the conjecture.

Soon after his disappearance, and before Sabina had recovered from the surprise into which she was thrown by this strange scene, she was startled by a Mercury, who with an agile bound, possessed himself of a seat next her, which the Baroness had just quitted, in order to take a turn round the room with an old friend. He addressed her with the declaration, that though till then invisible, he had been hovering the whole evening near her, in the design of protecting her from insult.

The Marchioness with much sweetness thanked him for his good intentions, but observed that his guardianship might have been more beneficially exerted towards the unfortunate lady, who had received one so gross.

“ I fulfil but my commission from Jupiter, in selecting you as the object of my peculiar care,” said the messenger of Jove. “ It was by his ordination also, that on a bright moon-light night, I once, under the figure of a youthful Chevalier, rescued you from a nocturnal danger.”

“ Good God!” exclaimed the dismayed Marchioness, entirely thrown off her guard by surprise.

“ Be not alarmed sweet lady,” replied Mercury; and as he spoke removing his mask, discovered the face of Sappieha; who now gravely addressing her, begged permission to explain the cause of his not immediately returning to her on that evening, and seeing her safely home as he had promised. “ On leaving you in the saloon,” said he, “ I walked into the street, where I had not taken many steps, before I was seized by five or six ruffians, who accused me to the

patrole of having broken the peace ; and I was under the necessity of going with them to a magistrate, to exculpate myself from the charge—but have since discovered they were the domestics of the villain who insulted you. Many hours elapsed before I could free myself from this perplexing affair ; and I was more *concerned* than *surprised*, to find on my return home, that *you* had left it.

“It was with equal pleasure and astonishment I recognized after the tournament, in the heroine of that brilliant day, the lady for whose safety I could not help feeling much anxiety. Yet I should never have presumed to recal to her memory the recollection of the night on which I was fortunate enough to assist her, but from an irresistible desire of explaining the cause of my not returning to fulfil my engagement.”

The Marchioness now in her turn, though greatly embarrassed at the neces-

sity, ingenuously told him the object of that expedition, adding her assurance that an acquaintance, which had been at first formed on her part, under such inauspicious circumstances, should in future be cultivated by her with pleasure.

Sapieha warmly thanked her for the condescending elucidation she had given of that affair, and said, he was from the first moment of seeing her, assured, that no improper motive could have led into so unpleasant a situation, a lady, whose countenance was the very emblem of innocence; adding, that he had religiously kept his vow to Camilla, of never mentioning the adventure, even to his cousins; thinking he had no right to entrust to any one a secret, not his own, and the nature of which, till that moment, he was ignorant.

“My good Sir,” said Sabina, charmed by the delicacy of the youth’s behaviour,

“you can now add but one obligation more to those you have already conferred upon me, which is, to dismiss the transaction entirely from your memory. And now let me inquire, if the Chevaliers, your cousins, are amongst the company this evening?”

Sapieha answered, “That Count Olesko was, but that his brother, on their return from the archery, had declared, that he should not accompany them; though, as he certainly in the morning intended it, they were at a loss to guess the reason of his change of plan.”

At this moment the approach of the lady whose place he occupied, made Sapieha rise to resign it to her, and mingling in the crowd, he was immediately lost to Sabina's view.

The Baroness now acquainted her with some particulars she had just learnt, respecting the lady who had that evening been so cruelly treated.

Without ever having merited the slightest imputation on her character, she had certainly been, before her marriage, greatly attached to the Count D'Evreux, an attachment which had at first been sanctioned by her parents; but, on receiving the offer of a more splendid establishment, they had forced her into the arms of her present husband.

Sabina's kind heart bled for her misfortunes, and this first knowledge that there were beings, capable of delighting in inflicting misery on a fellow-creature, instantly destroyed the magic of the scene, and made her obey, with satisfaction, her Majesty's signal for retiring.

Through the medium of the Baroness, she conveyed, that evening, to her royal patrons, the desire of passing the remaining time of her Lord's absence in the retirement of his chateau; that lady remarked with pleasure how highly it was approved by them.

The next day, therefore, she returned, accompanied by her kind friend, to that sweet seat, the transient view only of which had created so much admiration.

The afternoon was lovely, and the Baroness having pleaded a wish of devoting it to the examination of some papers, she had brought with her for that purpose; the happy bride gladly availed herself of the liberty this gave her to taste some of the beauties which every part of the surrounding pleasure-grounds afforded to her view. Let us leave her awhile sporting amongst them, and take a short review of the history of her guest, with whose character it is necessary to become better acquainted.

CHAP. X.

THE Baroness de Bonneville, who possessed from Nature much sweetness of character, had, at an early period of life, been united to the Baron by her parents; and for many years enjoyed all that happiness with him, which a similarity of sentiments and affection, founded on mutual esteem, could bestow.

For many years after their marriage, they had principally resided at court, during which period she had become a great favourite with the Queen, near whose person she held a distinguished post; and after the departure of the Countess de Montresor, had supplied

the loss that Princess had experienced by this event.

Beloved by each other—favoured by their sovereigns,—possessing youth, health, personal and mental attractions, who would not have concluded the Baron and his lady to have been perfectly happy. Alas! it is the lot of man to sigh for some object which is unattainable!—Such was the fate of this noble pair. They passionately wished for children; but this blessing was denied them; and though endowed with every other human good, their hearts repined unceasingly, that this one was withheld from their eager wishes.

Deeply as they both felt this subject of regret, it was at length swallowed up by a still nearer misfortune. The Baron, during an engagement with the enemies of his country, in which he had greatly distinguished himself, received

an incurable wound, which, though it did not immediately deprive him of life, rendered him, for the remainder of it, a prey to the most excruciating tortures. His lady, abandoning all considerations but those of soothing his sufferings, retired with him to his paternal seat, which had been endeared to him by the happiness he had in his early days enjoyed there. In that noble retreat he had passed the first months of his union with the sole object of his affections, and it was with that still-beloved being he was desirous of passing there those which remained to him.

Now did the Baroness exhibit her inexhaustible goodness of heart, in softening those pangs, which were slowly, but surely, conducting her lord to a better world. The nature of his sufferings often rendered strong opiates necessary, the effect of which generally terminated in long and profound sleep. It

was during these intervals of repose, that the amiable Baroness's mind took a turn, which ever after gave a new colour to her character. Wholly absorbed in the wish of alleviating the situation of a being so dear to her, she occupied every leisure moment in studying medical treatises, and perusing the works on chymistry she found in the library of the chateau. Gradually the study became interesting to her; and her acquisitions in this species of knowledge were rendered inestimable in her eyes, in the course of a few months, by the temporary success which attended some of her affectionate experiments in the Baron's case. Whether or not he derived all the relief from them which she flattered herself he did, is uncertain; perhaps the pleasure he observed the belief gave her, induced him to conceal her error, if it was really one; but it encouraged her to persevere in the turn

she had taken, and within a year after her retirement, she became the Lady Bountiful of the neighbouring hamlets; and thus was the object of that pride with which she had, in earlier days, noted the admiration her personal attractions excited, changed to one not less gratifying in her maturer years—a great confidence in her skill, and a belief that, where known, it was universally admitted and applauded.

The Baroness, soon after her marriage, bestowed on her favourite attendant a handsome portion, whose charms had captivated the affections of a son of Esculapius, residing near the chateau. The issue of this union had been one son, to whom the Baroness stood sponsor; and, on the sudden death of his father, had charged herself with the expense of his education, and undertaken to provide for his future fortune. She had regularly received favourable ac-

counts of his docility and improvement, from the seminary at which he had been placed ; and now learnt that he was of a proper age to be removed from it. One day, as she was busily engaged in her favourite study, an idea struck her, which the longer she considered, became more and more eligible in her opinion. It was to send for her young protégé, Dupuis, and undertake to initiate him herself, in the first rudiments of chymistry ; and if she found in him any genius for that science, she resolved to give it every advantage, as a preliminary step to the scheme she afterwards meant to adopt for him. This plan was no sooner digested, than the youth was summoned to his patroness, and began his pupilage under her direction.

He was amiable, well informed, and for his age, endowed with an uncommon share of penetration ; his mother had early impressed him with the neces-

sity of yielding to every wish of the Baroness, and scrupulously concealing each thought and feeling which might militate against her pleasure. Acting upon this principle from his childhood, it became habitual to him ere his establishment in the chateau ; and during his residence there, his patroness's goodness strengthened the ardent desire he before felt of testifying, by his obedience, the boundless gratitude with which she had inspired him. This sentiment, however powerful, did not blind him to the weak parts of that lady's character, it only furnished him with an amiable motive for flattering it ; convinced that by so doing, he injured no one human being, but on the contrary, promoted the innocent amusement of his benefactress. He encouraged a pursuit which had long been her sole recreation, and spared not his expressions of surprise at the astonishing progress she had already made,

unassisted, but by her own abilities. She, on her part, found him of infinite use in some of the experiments with which she at times amused herself; and discovered an aptitude in him, which made her sanguine in the expectation, that he would one day do honor to her lessons.

He had been nearly two years a resident at the chateau, when a stop was put to their further progress, by the rapid decline of the Baron; who had now become so ill that his lady never quitted his apartment. In less than a month from this period he expired in her arms, and left her so wholly absorbed by grief and regret, that she abandoned herself entirely to the indulgence of them. With the life of her lord, she lost the spur, which had hitherto animated her in the pursuit of what she hoped might be beneficial to that dear object of her cares; and now that he no longer ex-

isted, she shrunk from the occupation with disgust.

As soon, however, as the first transports of her grief subsided, ever kind and considerate, she sent Dupuis to Paris, that he might there derive all the advantages which the best masters could give him. The youth followed with ardour the plan his benefactress had marked out for him ; and never omitted giving her minute accounts of the progress he made during the three first years of her widowhood, which she passed at the chateau. As the lenient hand of Time gently healed her wounded bosom, and almost imperceptibly stole away the agonizing pangs which had wrung it, she began, though unconsciously, once more to take an interest in what remained to her ; and at length felt that the epistolary communications of Dupuis broke agreeably on the dull uniformity of her life, by

furnishing her with matter to engage and divert her thoughts from the gloomy subjects on which she had so long dwelt.

As he never failed to detail the particular courses of his studies, and describe minutely the new experiments which engaged him, the Baroness's attention was, by the perusal of these descriptions, drawn back to the bias from which it had been so cruelly diverted; and by degrees it once more regained all the empire over her, which it had lost.

This change had not long taken place in his patroness, when a letter she received from Dupuis, determined her on quitting, for awhile, the retirement in which she had partly resolved to pass the remainder of her life, and once more visiting Paris—that seat of her juvenile gaiety and splendour! Her protégé informed her that the young King was

about to found an establishment, where public lectures were to be given on botany, anatomy, and chymistry. His wish was to obtain, through her interest, the appointment of lecturer on the latter science; for which situation he flattered himself he should shortly be fully qualified. The Baroness, who was greatly pleased at the prospect of obtaining a situation so eligible for him, and one so exactly coinciding with the hopes she had entertained for his advancement, resolved to try if, by her presence, she could revive that regard which the Queen had formerly so unequivocally testified for her; and, through her interest, secure the appointment for Dupuis. With these views she arrived at court; and there met with a reception so gracious, as equally cherished her hopes, and flattered her pride. The Queen listened with interest to the little details she exacted from her, of what had passed

during her absence; and expressed such unaffected pleasure at seeing her once more grace her circle, that the Baroness consented without reluctance to pass at least some months in the metropolis.

Here she found Dupuis, not only greatly improved in person and demeanor, but fully capable of becoming, in his turn, instructor to her, whose willing and admiring pupil he had originally been:—yet he still preserved so much respectful diffidence, in the display he made to the Baroness, of his acquirements, that he answered her most sanguine expectations, without wounding her self-love. This young man, pleased at again seeing his benefactress take an interest in his pursuits, spared no means within his power, to revive in its full force the ardour with which she had once engaged in it, and ere long succeeded to his wishes. She determined, under his inspection, to fit up a labora-

tory where she might pass uninterruptedly her leisure hours in a study, which she felt would now form her greatest amusement; and they were in daily consultation on the subject, when one morning, as she was paying her accustomed respects to the Queen, that Princess, after briefly relating to her the little history of Sabina, and recalling her early acquaintance with her mother, communicated to her the projected alliance between this interesting girl, and the Marquis de Briscacier, the preliminaries of which were already arranged. She concluded this recital by informing the Baroness, that she had fixed on *her*, as the friend to whose care she wished to intrust Sabina, till she was consigned to the arms of her future husband. That lady accepted with pleasure an office by which she could evince her duty to the Queen; and resolved to postpone her own plans for the present, and give up

her time entirely to her interesting charge, till after the conclusion of the marriage ; when she should be left to the undisturbed pursuit of them. The abrupt departure of the bridegroom had broken in a little, on these intentions ; as she could not refuse his earnest solicitations, to be the guest of the Marchioness till his return. She however consoled herself with the thought, that in the retirement of the chateau, she might find sufficient leisure to consult with Dupuis, and give him the necessary directions, to have every thing completed by the period of her return to her hotel. In the meantime, she resolved on devoting some hours of each day to the study of a new work on chymistry, which he had lately put into her hand, with the view of better qualifying her to enjoy with him the experiments they purposed making, as soon as the apparatus she had ordered should be completed.

It was for the purpose of revising her notes on this treatise, that she had declined accompanying Sabina in her evening ramble, and she was intently engaged in this occupation, when her delighted hostess entered the apartment; who had passed the time of her absence, in wandering through the shrubberies—examining the flowers—inhalings their fragrant odours—enchanted—enraptured with delights so new to her!

“Ah! my dear madam,” said she, “in what an Eden am I placed!—never till I visited this spot, did I feel in its full force, all the glowing charms of nature, in their endless variety! But I see I interrupt you—pursue your employment, and I will take one more peep at the sun from the terrace, before its disk has quite sunk below the horizon.” And away she tripped, waiting not the reply of the smiling Baroness; but continued her course till she reached the borders

of the Seine. The red glow of the departing luminary of day still touched its waters, and lingered in the west—its parting gleams appeared reluctantly expiring—and the melancholy purple of evening slowly stole over the landscape. She ascended the steps of a pavilion which stood at one extremity of the terrace, and thence watched the moon as it rose from behind a wood which skirted the grounds on the other side the chateau. Its shadowy light gradually overspreading the scene, revived, in softer tints, the beauties surrounding the eminence on which she stood; and its beams danced on the waters, as they majestically rolled past her, in rippling murmurs.

So enamoured was the Marchioness with the charming scene, that she quitted it with regret; and, on her return, expressed in animated language, to the Baroness, all the pleasure it had afforded

her; gently insinuating her surprise that that lady should prefer her *studies*, to participating in the sweet pleasures she had derived from her ramble.

The Baroness heaving a deep sigh, thus replied, "At your age, my love, and on just emerging from the seclusion of my convent, I was not a less enthusiastic admirer than yourself, of all that was new to me, and lovely in nature; but the tumultuous passions, the quick sensations which once agitated my bosom have subsided. Time, and severe afflictions have subdued them: such scenes as charm you, not unfrequently recal powerfully to my memory those images of my past happiness—now, alas! for ever fled—and tear open anew wounds scarcely yet closed. Believe me, Sabina," continued the Baroness, solemnly, "permanent enjoyment is not the lot of man, in this vale of tears, yet is it greatly in his power to avoid much unavailing regret

by directing his mind to some occupation, which will divert it from dwelling on, and constantly recurring to irremediable evils. Let me engrave this maxim on your memory ; you will doubly respect it, when you reflect, that it was impressed there by one, whose tutor has been sad experience ! It is acting on this principle, that I pursue a study, which for the time, abstracts me from even the consciousness of my misfortunes ; and by doing this innocently, I feel I am as much performing my duty as following my inclination. And now that I have honestly opened my heart to you on this subject, I will tell you, that it affords me much gratification, to observe, in how high a degree you possess that taste, which will enable you to pass the hours delightfully, which it is my intention, occasionally to steal from your society. Suffer me, then, whenever I retire to the study adjoining the

library, whither I shall order my books and papers to be carried to remain there uninterrupted. I shall return to you with double pleasure, after these indulgencies."

"My dearest madam," said the Marchioness, taking, and affectionately kissing the hand of the Baroness, "how kind you are to treat me thus ingenuously; be assured, your every wish shall be most scrupulously observed."

"I thank you my child," returned the Baroness, the temporary sadness of whose countenance had given place to the usually benign serenity which adorned it, "I thank you my child—and as we now perfectly understand each other, and have with mutual satisfaction settled our future plans; I will tell you, that to-morrow, I promise myself the enjoyment of a pleasure, for which I expect to be wholly indebted to yourself."

"Then I shall indeed more than par-

ticipate it with you," said Sabina ; " but pray of what nature may it be ?"

" Did you not mention a pavilion on the borders of the Seine ?" asked the Baroness.

" I did ; on the steps which lead to it, I stood some time, and it was my wish to enter it, but the door was locked."

" Well," replied her friend, " to-morrow you shall be gratified by a view of the interior, till when you must suspend your curiosity."

CHAP. XI.

BREAKFAST was scarcely over on the following day, when the Marchioness, reminded her guest of the promised pleasure, and in a few minutes they were on their way to the pavilion. The approach to it, now that it was illumined by all the splendour of a meridian sun, revealed new beauties to the enraptured mistress of this enchanting spot. The Baroness, to avoid its too scorching rays, conducted her through that part of the wood which sheltered the building on one side. The air was refreshed by rivulets which the hand of taste had conducted thither, to wander amidst its green recesses:—their gentle murmurs

soothing the mind to the most voluptuous repose.

As they emerged from these delicious shades, the pavilion stood fully disclosed. It was an octagon building of white stone, supported on pillars of Parian marble, which formed a colonade round the exterior of the edifice ; and was decorated with the choicest plants, in vases of exquisite workmanship. The dome of this temple of taste, was supported in the interior by columns of similar materials ; between each of which were windows and niches, the latter, alternately ornamented with Venetian mirrors, and paintings by the first masters.

The Marchioness's eye following that of her conductress, discovered in the first niche a beautiful representation of "The Zephyr's shedding the morning dew." That which adorned the second, was "Aurora in her chariot, with Cupid strewing flowers before her." The third,

which claimed their attention, was the "Birth of Love;" which the Marchioness lingered in the contemplation of, for some time after the Baroness had passed on to the fourth. Perhaps a confused presentiment of the emotion that fourth would occasion, made her dread interrupting the sweet repose which filled her bosom. The Baroness, however, did not long allow her to enjoy this calm; hastily calling her, she said, "Tell me, my love, what is your opinion of this painting?"

Sabina cast her eyes on it—it was a *Sibyl* kneeling at the feet of Apollo!—she started, "Ah!" said the Baroness, "I perceive I am right, the resemblance strikes you also."

Sabina's ingenuous countenance *did* indeed undergo a change too remarkable to escape notice. The *Sibyl*, on whom her eyes were instantly rivetted, conjured up recollections so painful, as to banish the

pleasure which before animated it. "*The fatal sisters are e'en now employed in weaving the dark web of thy destiny,*" again rang in her ears—and the humiliating adventure she experienced on her return, with regret at the promise she had given, of still concealing the imprudence from the kind-hearted Baroness, passing rapidly through her mind, were reflected on that mirror which unconsciously displayed its every emotion.

Her friend, however, wholly unsuspecting of the truth, recalled her presence of mind, and directed her attention from the *Suppliant* to the *Divinity*, by saying, "As you appear to have conceived so great an antipathy for the Knight of the Cavern, that even his resemblance is offensive to you, I am sorry I have pointed out that, which might not otherwise have struck you. Do you think you should yourself have remarked it?"

"Before I answer that question, my

dear madam," replied Sabina, endeavouring to shake off her uneasiness, "I must request you will amend your expression. I certainly feel no *antipathy* towards the Knight, nor am I aware I have ever given you reason to imagine it. I think his temper extremely capricious, several instances of which I have myself experienced. Surely then, it was natural in me to remark this, when you asked my opinion of him; but I hope my manner of doing so, was not sufficiently severe to justify your suspecting me of harbouring such a sentiment against one, who has conferred so great an obligation on the Marquis, and consequently, on myself."

"Well, well," said the Baroness, smiling at her young friend's earnestness, "we will *suppose* the amendment you require: now, pray give me your opinion of Apollo?"

"I fear you will listen to my critique

as coming from a prejudiced person, yet I will venture to be honest. The features, undoubtedly resemble those of the Knight, but the expression is infinitely more pleasing; for the painter has, with admirable art, diffused an almost divine complacency over the face of the god, which I doubt, if even your ladyship will contend, is the characteristic of the Chevalier's."

"That arch look and tone," returned the Baroness, laughing, "shall not deter me from supporting the cause of my favourite, whom, I half suspect, owes some part of the uncommon interest with which he has inspired me, to the very *caprices*, with which you charge him."

"Had any one but your ladyship told me, that ill-humour was a passport to your regard, I should have treated it as a libel."

"And, generally speaking," replied

the Baroness, more seriously, “you would have been right, my love, in so doing; but when, as in the present instance, I believe it to originate in a too keen sensibility, I confess it rather disposes me to *commiseration* than *anger*.”

“But do you imagine this to be the source from whence springs the restless impatience of the Knight?”

“I do; and on combining the several corroborative circumstances, which have fallen under my observation, I feel persuaded that he is smarting under the effects of some tender disappointment.”

“May I ask to what circumstances your ladyship alludes?”

“Undoubtedly; and I will willingly tell you, not only in the hope of making you a convert to my opinion, but in *vindication* of that opinion.—That veil which covered the features of the portrait he bore on his shield at the tour-

nament, I believe to have been a romantic expedient, to hide from vulgar eyes, the face of some lovely woman of his own country to whom he is attached; and the air of unhappiness, which clouds his fine face, proceeds, I fear, either from some disappointment connected with her, or sorrow at his separation from a being, who probably equally mourns his absence; and like himself, cherishes some sentimental symbol of her lover: though it is possible she bears, with more *patience* her share of this misfortune. You will generally find, my love, that *our* sex endures the evils of this sad world, with far more resignation than *mighty man*! This I attribute to education, not nature. From our cradles, *we* are taught the lesson of submission; while the lords of the creation, are so early impressed with high ideas of their own consequence, that they end by thinking themselves ill-

treated, on finding they cannot as easily command *fate*, as they have been accustomed to do their mothers, sisters, and wives !”

“ My dear madam,” said the Marchioness, “ if your conjecture respecting the noble stranger be true, as I now believe it is, how hasty and uncharitable have I been in the disadvantageous opinion I formed of those inequalities of temper, which have made him appear in a less amiable light than the Count his brother.”

“ The Count,” replied the Baroness, “ is indisputably a very estimable young man ; but I agree with the Marquis in the opinion, that he must ever lose on a comparison with the Chevalier, who I hope will find means to remove your little prejudices in his disfavor, before the return of your lord. But I have not yet shewn you all the gallantries of your excellent husband, who let me into the

secrets of a temple dedicated to the idol of his affections."

She then discovered to Sabina, that the paintings and mirrors, formed doors to recesses, some of which were stored with the most elegant and admired authors, in each language, of which he knew her to be mistress. In others, were disposed pencils, colours, pallets, and all the necessary apparatus for drawing; and the last, contained a choice collection of music. A harp, with several other favorite instruments were tastefully arranged in this enchanting pavilion; where nothing had been omitted which could render it the chosen retreat of refinement, delicacy, and sentiment.

The Marchioness's heart overflowed with gratitude, at attentions so unexpected, yet so perfectly conformable with her ideas of a lover's solicitude to charm the object of his passion. Tears

started into her eyes, and for a few moments she was incapable of speech.

The Baroness, observing how deeply her sensibility was affected, and wishing to give a new turn to her feelings, requested her to try the harp, which stood invitingly before her.—She complied.

Its fine tones, lengthened and increased by the echoes of the lofty dome, produced an effect at once novel and enchanting. She played over and over again some of her favorite airs, accompanying them with her sweet and clear voice; and repeated in every pause, “This building is so admirably adapted for music, that it shall in future be my temple of harmony.”

And she kept her word, for in no other place could she afterwards fancy it so completely enjoyed.

The pavilion became at every future visit more and more delightful to her;

and while the Baroness passed at least half her days in her study, the Marchioness felt at full liberty, to pursue her amusements, in her favorite retreat.

Thus, tranquilly and delightfully, *stole* away the first week of their abode at the chateau ; during which period, the Baroness, more than once, remarked that she wondered the foreign Chevaliers had not availed themselves of her pressing invitation to visit them, in their retirement.

One morning as she had just repeated this observation, and added, “ But I suppose they are more agreeably engaged ; the gaieties of Paris are better adapted to amuse at their age, than the society of two hermits like ourselves,” she was interrupted by a servant’s announcing the Count Olesko, and the Chevalier Sapieha.

They were received with pleasure by

the lovely hostess and her friend ; who, after the first compliments were over, inquired why the Knight of the Cavern had not accompanied them, adding, “ I imagined he possessed more gallantry than thus to slight persons, who are so desirous of cultivating his acquaintance.”

“ Alas, madam !” replied the Count, “ indisposition alone, could so long have withheld my brother, from paying his devoirs where they are so justly due.

“ He has been confined to his chamber ever since he had the honor of taking leave of you. The exertions of the tournament, I believe, irritated his wound, and the subsequent entertainments diverting him from giving it the timely attention it required, it has opened anew, and occasions him considerable uneasiness. I have been obliged to use all the influence I possess over him, to

induce his submitting to the confinement, which his surgeon assured me, was necessary to his cure."

As the Marchioness listened to this intelligence; her benevolent heart smote her, for the severity with which she had judged his little foibles; and eager to repair an error the moment she suspected it to be one, with earnestness, expressed the interest she took in his recovery; charging the Count with many friendly messages to him indicative of the pleasure she should derive, from being personally assured of his perfect restoration.

"Pray tell me Count," said the Baroness, after a few minutes consideration, "has your brother's indisposition been attended by considerable irritability of nerves, and restless nights?"

"Indeed," replied Olesko, "he has suffered greatly from the distressing

symptoms you mention, and has not yet entirely shaken them off."

"If that be the case," returned the Baroness, "I shall charge you with some drops of admirable efficacy in such disorders; ten of which I must request he will not fail to take every two hours. The discovery of their extraordinary virtues, is entirely my own, and I have often witnessed the most beneficial results, from a perseverance in administering them. You must remember, my love," continued she, turning to the Marchioness, "the first evening you passed with me, I administered to you some of this elixir: I had remarked how much your nerves wanted composing, and I was still more confirmed in my opinion of the excellence of this medicine, when I met you, on the following morning, perfectly tranquil and serene."

The Marchioness gave her smiling

assent to the Baroness ; to whom Count Olesko expressed the high sense he entertained, of her goodness, in taking so lively an interest in his brother's health ; when the lady retired, to write the proper directions to be followed by the patient.

“ It is but just,” said Sapieha, looking archly at the Marchioness, “ that the Baroness's skill should be exerted in healing those wounds, her fair friend so mercilessly inflicts !”

His continuation of this speech, was checked by a look from the Count, which reproved its flippancy. Sabina, however, who remembered with gratitude the respectful deference which marked his conduct towards her, in a situation that by many would have been thought to sanction improper familiarity, with much drollery said, addressing the Count, “ I have heard that the very *air* of Paris is apt to inspire in your sex to-

words mine, *ces politesses, testé même d'un peu de polissonerie*; and I perceive it has already began to operate on the character of your cousin; I doubt not we shall soon admire in him also, *ces manieres aisée*, which usually accompany them."

Sapieha bowed with an air of gravity which left it doubtful, whether he felt reproved by the Marchioness's observation, or had really assumed so much of the Frenchman, as to receive as a compliment, whatever could possibly bear such an interpretation.

Here the Baroness, entering with her elixir, gave a turn to the conversation, and the gentlemen soon after took their leave, promising very shortly to repeat their visit.

In a few days after, the Baroness received very favorable accounts, both of the docility and amendment of the invalid; who, Count Olesko informed her,

was so much restored, as to propose accompanying them the following morning to the chateau. He did so; and was greeted by both the ladies with a satisfaction so animated, as rekindled in his fine face, a portion of that fire, which, on his first entrance, languor appeared nearly to have extinguished.

“My good Chevalier,” said the Baroness, extending to him her hand, “I need not inquire if you have obeyed my injunctions, I see the benefit you have derived from following them. I think I have reason to rejoice in that fortunate visit of the Count to us, by which means I became acquainted with your indisposition; but for this lucky event, you would still have wanted that consoling elixir, to which he informs me, you principally attribute your convalescence.”

“It has proved so consoling to me,”

replied the Knight, "that I have named it the *Elixir of Hope*."

"I am greatly pleased with the idea," rejoined the Baroness, "it is exactly expressive of the effect I have seen it produce. By tranquillizing the spirits, and soothing bodily irritation, it prepares the mind to receive and cherish the cheering influence, which the belief of perfect recovery imparts."

During this conversation, the Marchioness was engaged in observing the alteration which had taken place in the countenance of the Chevalier:—she contemplated it with interest, as she mentally repeated, "The Baroness is right; he is certainly smarting under some tender disappointment, which his heart deeply feels. I have been as unfeeling as inconsiderate in attributing to unamiableness of temper, those starts of acute sensibility, which have resulted from a too

quick sense of his misfortune. How little indulgence have I shewn one, to whose valour I owe the life of my husband. But I will in future evince that I am capable of estimating the obligation, by atoning for the want of sympathy, he has hitherto experienced from me."

As these thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of the Marchioness, her soft eyes, beaming with pity, were fixed on the object who occupied them; while his attention was given to the Baroness; and she felt affected almost to tears, at the change which so short a time had wrought in him, when her attention was happily drawn to a gayer subject in the lively Sapieha, who, with abrupt earnestness, entreated that she would allow him to exercise his idle pencil, in delineating some of the enchanting *paysages* which the grounds surrounding the chateau furnished.

“Most willingly,” replied the Marchioness, “they are indeed enchanting, and had my abilities, equalled my admiration of them, I assure you they would not have remained so long unattempted by me.”

“Although landscapes are not the style in which the Marchioness most excels,” said the Baroness, “she speaks too modestly of the powers she possesses, in mimicing even inanimate nature.”

“What then is her favorite style?” asked Sapieha eagerly.

“Figures,” replied the Baroness, “and if I *dared*, I would presently shew you a very interesting group, which she has, without assistance, since her residence here, designed and executed, *I* think, most charmingly.”

The Chevaliers all entreated to be allowed a sight of it? In vain did the blushing Sabina beg to be excused, she

was soon overruled; and the Baroness promised them that in the afternoon, they should be indulged both with a view of the drawing in question; and the Temple of Harmony, in which it had been executed.

“But what news bring you from Paris?” added she.

“What I am certain you will be very sorry to hear,” replied the Count, “the unfortunate issue of a duel between the Marquis de Sevigne, and the Chevalier D’Albret, in which the former was killed. The intelligence reached Paris last evening; and I am told, threw a gloom over the whole court, which appeared greatly to sympathize in the distress, of that admired, and highly accomplished woman, Madame la Marquise.”

“How vain, and inadequate are human institutions,” observed the Baroness, “to check the mad passions of man! I hear with infinite regret that the

Marquis, in defiance of our laws, has sacrificed that life, which was due to his country. I pity Madame la Marquise most sincerely for his loss ; but still more, that this misfortune cannot be alleviated by the reflection, that he gloriously fell in his monarch's service. My young friends," continued she, "avoid following so pernicious an example ; and remember you have no right to sacrifice to private pique, those lives, to which your country have so just a claim."

"Ah madame !" exclaimed Sapieha, "while listening to the persuasive eloquence of your tongue, who could refuse promising to pursue its dictates ! In future, whenever I am doubtful of myself, I shall invoke your goodness, to cover me with your powerful *Ægis*."

This sally of Sapieha's made the Marchioness cast an expressive glance at Count Olesko, who, perfectly comprehending its meaning, forbore to com-

ment on his cousin's *Parisian* improvements, but by a good-humoured smile.

In the afternoon, the Baroness attended by her somewhat reluctant friend, conducted their impatient visitors to the pavilion. Nothing could exceed the animated rapture, with which Sapieha's eyes devoured its various beauties; and so completely was he hurried away, by the pleasure they imparted to him, that he forgot, for a time, the purpose for which he had walked thither.

In the meanwhile, the Baroness pointing to the painting of Apollo, asked the Count Olesko, whom it resembled?

The Knight of the Cavern was standing at that window which commanded the Seine, and appeared to be pensively contemplating its waters, now slowly, and almost imperceptibly stealing between its enamelled banks.

The Marchioness was at the opposite extremity of the building, from

whence, with a critical scrutiny, she alternately regarded the figure of the God, and his supposed likeness. As her eyes dwelt for a minute on the face of the latter, she thought its expression not less benign, than that of the divinity, and she secretly resolved, never again to be so hasty in forming her judgment; since, in this instance, she was convinced, prejudice had rendered it erroneous.

“You do not tell me,” repeated the Baroness, “if you know any one, of whom this picture reminds you? the Marchioness was instantly, and forcibly struck with the likeness; cannot you see it, Count?”

“Yes,” replied Olesko, “it is my brother.”

On hearing himself named, the Chevalier approached them, and inquired the subject of their discourse. On their repeating it, he modestly disclaimed what, he said, he regarded as too highly

complimentary:—then turning to the Marchioness, he asked, if they might now hope to be favored with the treat promised them?

The Baroness, on this hint, took from one of the recesses, the port-folio in which the drawing was deposited, and presented it to the Chevaliers.

It represented a sylph-like figure, whose attitude, and lovely features, were alike expressive of wonder and delight, sweetly attempered by timidity, at sight of a youth, who in a kneeling posture appeared addressing her; a venerable and majestic form, was regarding with evident pleasure, this charming pair; while a winged cherub, who was hovering above them, seemed to rejoice, and take a lively interest in the scene.

Sapieha exhibited his wonted impetuosity, and without exactly comprehending the subject, praised with un-

bounded enthusiasm the drawing; which he unhesitatingly pronounced to be a *chef-d'œuvre* in its peculiar style. Olesko, in less florid language spoke also warmly of its merit; but the Knight of the Cavern remained silent. When his cousin, by having exhausted his own rapture, was at leisure to remark this, he called on him to agree in the assertion, that it was faultless.

“Do not my good sir,” said the Marchioness, with modest grace, “do not force the Chevalier to an alternative so distressing, as pronouncing what he probably thinks would be an unwelcome truth, or praising that, which he deems unworthy of commendation. Believe me, Chevalier,” continued she, addressing herself to the Knight of the Cavern, with a timidity which gave inexpressible sweetness to her soft accents—

“The full sum of me, (to term in gross)
Is an unlessoned girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; and happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn!”

“Spare not then your friendly critique,
but allow me to derive some profit, as
well as much confusion, by the Baro-
ness's partial opinion, and consequent
representation, of my little sketch.”

During the time the Marchioness thus
spoke, the Knight regarded her with an
air of deep interest, and appeared unac-
countably touched, either by her words,
or the manner in which she had ad-
dressed him; after a short struggle he
was on the point of speaking, but was
evidently checked by indisposition, for
a deathlike paleness suddenly overspread
his face, and made the ladies apprehen-
sive he was about to experience an at-

tack similar to that they had witnessed after the tournament.

“ My poor Chevalier,” said the Baroness, “ I perceive you are still far from well ; your walk has fatigued you—pray repose yourself awhile on this sultane. I am sorry your nerves have not yet entirely lost their late irritability. You will oblige me by continuing my drops, till they have wholly conquered these troublesome attacks. Sabina, my love, favor us with that charming little air you played to me the last time I was here ; my friend Sapieha, or I am much mistaken, will thank me for giving you this hint.”

Sapieha, who did not understand the native language of Shakespear, had been at a loss to guess the meaning of the passage, which had been applied by the Marchioness to his cousin ; and now gladly caught at the opportunity of in-

roducing a subject from which he should not be excluded. With this view, springing eagerly forward, he placed the harp before Sabina.

After a prelude, whose chords seemed struck by the finger of harmony, she accompanied with her voice, a rondo, full of tender pathos, with a sensibility which rendered it enchanting; the sweet modulations in which it stole back to the subject, after a finely-executed cadence, were such, as taste blended with science, could alone have inspired: and the pause of admiration which followed her concluding chords, evinced how deeply her auditors had been affected by it.

Sapieha, first broke the magic spell, which seemed to have bound up their faculties, by his repeated exclamations of applause, and earnest entreaties that the Marchioness would repeat this divine rondo. But with a smile of good humour she changed the pensive strain, for

one so gay and airy, as completed the intoxication of the youth. He started up with an evident intention of echoing, with his steps, the sprightly notes ; but recollecting himself, again took his seat, and reined in his transports.

The Marchioness now rising, proposed their return to the chateau ; but remarking that the Knight was still engaged in examining the drawing, she was suddenly struck with the idea, that her female figure had reminded him of the object of his affection—the *veiled lady*—and that this was the real cause of his agitation. With a view to discover if she was right in this conjecture, she said to him :—

“ The features of my Miranda are taken from life ; they are those of a beloved friend, who is still a resident of the convent from whence I am so recently come.”

The Knight fixed on her face his pene-

trating eyes, now expressive only of softness; and with a gentleness of voice and manner, she had scarcely ever before remarked in him, asked if the other figures were also taken from life.

“It was my *endeavour*,” replied the lady, “to delineate in Prospero, the instructor of my infant years, the good father Theodore, to whose indefatigable perseverance, I owe the first rudiments of that language, which enables me to taste the charms of the immortal Shakespear, in all their original beauties; and to which, I feel, no translator can do justice. I attempted, but feebly have I executed it, to give his countenance the expression of benign pleasure, with which I remember my early friend, once regarded me; the impression it made, young as I then was, can never be effaced. He had often threatened to take from me a pet bulfinch, given me by Prince Charles of Lorraine, which too

frequently entirely diverted my attention from lessons, in the attainment of which, he wished to see me employed. Disregarding his serious remonstrances, I passed once a whole morning, which I ought to have devoted to the performance of a task the good father had assigned me, in teaching my darling bird, to sing the last bar of a tune, the first part of which he had before acquired. So entirely was I absorbed in my occupation, and so enraptured at his having nearly caught the last note, that I observed not the entrance of my preceptor, who had come in the expectation of finding me busily employed with my book. The first intimation I received of his approach, was, seeing my bulfinch seized by a hand from behind me. Shrieking with terror and surprise I caught the arm of father Theodore, and struggled vehemently to disengage my bird; but *my* force, when opposed to

that of my tyrant (as I that moment thought him) was as ineffectual as were the efforts the poor little prisoner made, to disengage himself. Roused by the fear that my sweet pet was irrecoverably lost to me, in the energy of distress, I addressed to the father these words, in my then very imperfect accents, "Ah! it is excellent to have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant!"

The good man's momentary anger, was completely disarmed by these lines of his admired bard, uttered by a little being, whom he fondly loved; and whose infant mind it was his first delight to form. He instantly released the trembling prize, who flew eagerly to his panting mistress. In the first transports of recovering my pet, I thought of nothing but bestowing on him a thousand caresses; but presently, on lifting my eyes to those of father Theodore, I perceived him contemplating us with ten-

der interest, his countenance glowing with that benevolence, and soul-touching expression, which I have vainly wished to delineate in that of Prospero. "Dear father Theodore!" continued the Marchioness, tears trembling in her eyes, "how fondly did you press me to your generous bosom, when, forgetting my bulfinch, I rushed into your arms!"

"Charming enthusiast!" cried the Knight of the Cavern, "how soothing to the good father must be the knowledge that he has inspired, in such a bosom, sentiments so animated as those which guided your pencil, when portraying that affectingly benevolent face. But may I venture to give you my critique on your Ferdinand?—or is *he* also the copy of a valued friend, whose image is hallowed by some cherished remembrance?"

"Ah! no," cried the Marchioness with vivacity, "you need not spare him,

since I can truly assure you, he is entirely the production of my imagination."

"What a confession is that!" replied the Knight of the Cavern, "even your inspired pencil could nor depict a passion you have never felt!" Sabina's looks demanded an explanation. The Knight continued—"The Ferdinand of Shakespear was *mortal*, yours is as angelic as the mind which created him. *His* burned with the most ardent *love*, the expression of which passion, I in vain seek, in the fine features of *your* Prince of Naples."

The animated tone of the Knight startled the Marchioness, and confirmed her in the belief, that his own heart was a prey to that tumultuous passion; and coupled with recollections and observations she had made on his demeanor, left her no doubt but that it was equally violent, and hopeless.

These thoughts kept her for a time silent; during which period the Knight regarded her fixedly, as if to read what passed in her inmost soul. Abashed by this scrutiny, she turned from him, and joined the rest of the party, who, during the above conversation, had been deeply engaged in discussing the merits of Apollo.

On their way to the chateau, the Knight walked by the side of the Marchioness; and now evinced as much desire to prolong the topic they had lately been discoursing on, as he at first seemed averse to speak on it. He again recurred to Miranda, and asked many questions, respecting the original, with much apparent interest.

"Her name," replied Sabina, "is Sidney Stanhope—her country England; she is happy in having been educated by an accomplished mother, before her arrival in France; and does honor to the

maternal instructions that amiable lady has bestowed on her. Her father ranks highly in the British army. On his being ordered to a foreign station, in which he expected to remain some years, his lady resolving to accompany him, consented to his wish of placing Sidney in the safe retreat of a convent, during their residence abroad. Fortunately for me, *mine* was the one selected for her. On first seeing this dear girl, I was touched by the profound sorrow which oppressed her at parting from parents, to whom she was devotedly attached. I exerted my endeavours to divert her mind from dwelling too much on their recollection, and was so fortunate as to succeed. In gratitude for my good intentions, she gave me her warm affection:—and it is through her assistance that I have perfected the attainment of that language, the first difficulties of which I had conquered under the pa-

tient instructions of father Theodore. On my relating to her the events which had endeared to him every remembrance connected with her country, we discovered, with mutual pleasure, that that worthy man had been known, and highly valued by Mrs. Stanhope, to whose only, and fondly loved sister he had been united; the premature death of whom had thrown that shade of tender melancholy over his mind, which now so characteristically marks it."

"And have you never seen this excellent man since the discovery?" asked the Knight.

"Yes.—On first learning this intelligence from me, he hastened to embrace the niece of his regretted wife; whose manners, he thinks, so strongly resemble what her's were, that it was long before he could conquer the emotion they first occasioned him. He has since paid us several visits, and takes a lively interest

in our friendship. It was with pleasure he learnt that Sidney and myself always conversed in her native tongue, to which she was fondly attached, from its having been that in which her mother was accustomed to address to her the overflowings of her maternal heart: and the pleasure we mutually derived from reading together the charming poets of her country, almost equally endeared it to me. My friend used to delight in the idea, that she should make me quite an English girl; and, as such, present me to her father and mother on their meeting. You must perceive then, Chevalier, that my heart and imagination, could not fail being filled with this dear friend's image, when I endeavoured to pourtray a character, whose sweet sentiments she has so often recited to me."

"And where is now this charming lady?" asked the Knight with animation.

“ In our convent still ; immediately on my receiving an intimation that I was to quit it, we wrote jointly to her parents, who knew and approved our friendship, entreating them to allow her passing some time with me ; and we are both anxiously expecting this permission.”

The Knight remained for a few minutes silent ; then rousing himself from a fit of abstraction, he said, “ But your æriel, you have not yet told me if he owes his cherub features, to your creative imagination : I guess he does.”

“ You divine well,” replied Sabina, “ and I suspect you can give me some good reason for doing so ?”

“ I wish,” said the Knight, without noticing this observation, “ I wish you would allow *me* in the absence of the accomplished Sidney, sometimes to recite to you those passages, which you have been accustomed to listen to, with

sensibility, from *her* lips !—and teach me her very tones, and accents.”

Surely, thought the Marchioness, if a fancy figure like that of Apollo, can exhibit a resemblance, not to be mistaken, of one whom the painter never saw ; *my* Miranda may recal as strikingly, the absent and regretted object of the Chevalier’s affection ! How can I otherwise solve the mystery, of his taking so deep an interest in her, whom I have reason to believe he never beheld !

“ Am I too presumptuous in indulging this hope ?” asked the Knight, and he uttered these words in so affectingly persuasive a tone, that the Marchioness found it to be irresistible. As she looked at him, his fine eyes entreatingly bent on hers, powerfully seconded his petition, and she answered somewhat archly, “ I see, Chevalier, you anticipate the accomplishment of mine and my Sidney’s hopes ; if you really think your conde-

scending to be first my pupil, will give you an interest with her, to which your merits do not more justly entitle you, far from me be the cruelty to reject a suit so modestly preferred."

"A thousand, thousand thanks!" cried the Knight, pleasure lighting up his expressive countenance.

At this moment the Marchioness turning back to see what could detain the rest of the party behind, observed that the Baroness and Count Olesko, were attentively viewing a fine subject for a landscape, which Sapieha was informing them, should be the very next effort of his pencil. Not content with their commendations alone, on his taste in selection, he requested the Marchioness and Knight would sanction it by theirs also. They gratified him with the assurance that nothing could be more happily chosen, for the peculiar style in which he informed them he meant to execute

it: and they proceeded to the chateau highly delighted with their afternoon's excursion.

The gentlemen soon after took their leave.

“I think I scarcely ever saw three more engaging youths,” said the Baroness, as Sabina and herself stood viewing from the windows of the saloon, the Chevaliers, who mounted on their noble steeds, were winding round the road that led from the chateau. “They are all equally amiable, though so different. Count Olesko, imperceptibly wins the affections, by that gentle suavity of manners, and mild seriousness of countenance, so expressive of the native goodness of his heart; and he at the same time displays a correctness in his way of thinking, which satisfies the judgment. He often reminds me of Count Zolkiewski whom I used greatly to admire! My friend Sapieha, while he interests

by the *naïveté* of his character, amuses by that *étourderie*, which keeps one on the tip-toe of expectation, of some extraordinary sally of his excursive imagination."

"Yet," interrupted the Marchioness with warmth, "not even Count Olesko himself can possess a nicer sense of honor, or more refined delicacy, when called upon for its exertion, in a proper cause!"

"Bravo!" said the Baroness, "I see his sprightly graces have created for him all the interest he could wish with a lady of your nice discernment. But for my patient, though last, not least in my estimation, his manners do, I must confess, somewhat savor of caprice; yet there breaks forth at times an ardent impetuosity, which, without offending, bears down all opposition, and gives him, whether we will or no, an absolute empire over our minds. Did you ever note

the affectionate deference which his brother, though his senior, always shews him? He is no common character, and where many great and striking excellencies are to be found, we must pardon *one* of an opposite nature: yet I firmly believe this one might be traced to some sorrow hidden in that proud heart of his, which I would fain see banished thence. Excuse me, my love, if what I have said appears a little reproach on the severity with which you the other day judged him."

"Indeed, madam," replied the Marchioness, "you cannot more condemn that hastily formed opinion of mine, than I now do myself. Before our walk to the pavilion, I had recanted it, and the observations I have since made, force me doubly to feel how unjust it was."

She then related to the Baroness the idea which had struck her of the Knight's recognizing in Miranda some resem-

blance to his *veiled lady*, mentioning the earnestness of his inquiries respecting her friend; and concluding with the wish, that she should very soon be enabled to enjoy the happiness of introducing him to one, so every way calculated to make him forget his present attachment, supposing it to be of the hopeless nature they imagined. The Baroness's reply was checked by the entrance of a domestic, who delivered to the Marchioness the following

LETTER.

“ Our wishes are accomplished, my Sabina ! the much-desired permission is arrived ; and to-morrow your friend will be for a time restored to you. Does the smile of joy play on your lip at this intelligence ? Alas ! why must it be banished thence by what remains to be told ? yet you must know it. Read the

enclosed letters, and then judge how torn and divided is the heart of your
SIDNEY STANHOPE."

The Marchioness eagerly snatching up the letters which had dropped from that she had just perused, opened one from Mrs. Stanhope. It ran thus:—

LETTER.

"I truly rejoice, my beloved child, in the very happy prospect which is opened to the amiable Sabina Montresor; that friend, who by so long constituting your happiness, has endeared herself to your fond mother. You have our full approbation to pass some time with that charming girl; may the friendship which endears you to each other end only with your lives—and may she find in the Marquis de Briscacier, a mind not

less congenial with hers, than that of my darling child.

“ A letter to the Lady Abbess will accompany this, imparting your father’s and my wishes respecting your visit to the sweet bride ; do not, my love, delay enjoying the happiness you will derive from this indulgence.

“ And now let me ask, will my Sidney rejoice at a near prospect of again forming the happiness of the most devoted of mothers ? or will she shrink with terror from the dangers she must encounter, ere she can hope to be again pressed to that maternal bosom, which has so long mourned its absent blessing ?

“ The essential service your father’s assistance proved in capturing the island of Jamaica from the Spanish nation, has induced his *own* to appoint him its governor. The certainty, that this event must greatly retard our return to Europe,

and consequently place at a considerable distance the hope of again embracing my child, plunged me into so profound a melancholy, that your father has resolved on allowing you to join us here, provided you feel no disinclination to the plan.

“ In the full confidence that you will not, we have concerted the means most eligible for your accommodation with Madame Duval, a friend who is now in France. As soon as she has accomplished the business which carried her thither, she will rejoin her husband in this island, and kindly undertakes to give you her protection, till she places you under that of your parents.

“ What answers my Sidney's heart to this proposal? Beats it in unison with ours?—and feels she all that impatience to throw herself into her mother's arms, which that mother does to encircle with them, her long lost treasure?”

The other letter was from General Stanhope. It represented to his daughter the very delicate state of his lady's health, adding his firm belief that her presence and filial assiduities could alone restore it.

A few lines in the hand of Miss Stanhope, were subjoined to this epistle:

“ You see, my Sabina, all is settled. In my own heart I feel what at this moment passes in yours; but let me entreat you will spare me the sight of that uncontrollable sorrow, with which I fear, a misfortune so unexpected, will overwhelm you. Do not forget, that to the grief your friend shares with you, in anticipating our separation, is added much anxiety for the life of the best, and dearest of mothers. And now, my friend, attend to those words of comfort I can still speak to you. We have yet some months to pass together; let us not embitter them, by constantly repining,

that they are like all earthly happiness, limited."

The Marchioness, wholly overcome by intelligence so inconsistent with her late hopes, entreated her guest to excuse her retiring for the night. That lady readily consented, truly sympathizing in the disappointment of her charming hostess.

Sabina passed the whole night in tears, and early the next morning re-perused these cruel letters, which she felt had destroyed all her fondly cherished hopes, of enjoying perhaps for years, the society of her much-loved friend.

With a new accession of sorrow she now run them over, till stopping at the concluding words, "We have yet some months to pass in each others society," she repeated them with a sudden start of pleasurable surprise, as if the preceding evening they had wholly escaped her.

How elastic is hope in the bosom of sixteen!—how rapid the transitions from grief to joy!—that congenial inmate once more resumed its place in that of Sabina.

“Ah!” cried she, “I am not *quite* the desolate being I fancied myself, I shall not lose my friend for some months; perhaps six, it may be twelve; and who knows but in the meantime Mrs. Stanhope will regain her health, and give up the idea of exposing her daughter to the perils of that frightful voyage!”

As these thoughts passed rapidly through her now tranquil mind, she laid her head on her pillow, and in a few minutes sank into a profound^e repose; from which she was awakened, at a late hour, by the object who had occasioned her sleepless night.

We will not detail the mixed sensations, with which these charming girls passed the first hours of their reunion.

The sadness which was at first expressed in the mild eyes of Sidney, instantly communicated itself to those of the Marchioness ; but her friend felt consoled at observing, that pleasure at their meeting predominated over the sorrow, which she had dreaded to find had swallowed up every other sentiment in the bosom of Sabina ; and soothed by this observation she soon felt cheerfulness stealing back to her own.

They passed the whole morning in rambling together through a part of the pleasure grounds ; the Baroness having intimated her wish to spend hers uninterruptedly. Nothing could have been more desirable, than the liberty this gave them ; as they had a thousand things to ask of, and communicate to each other ; and so absorbed were they in their conversation, that till the bell of the chateau announced the hour of dinner, they thought not of returning thither.

The Baroness was much interested by the sweet girl, whom her hostess presented to her on their entrance. She was two years older than the Marchioness, and their stature and figures were not dissimilar; but the countenance of Sidney expressed a native pensiveness, which was by no means the characteristic of her friends:—yet it so exactly suited the soft and delicate turn of her features, that a painter of taste would have selected her, to personify *resignation*; while Sabina's displayed all the playful sportiveness, and lively graces, which ought to distinguish that of *Hope*.

In the afternoon the Marchioness led her friend to the pavilion, where she listened with pleasure to her congratulations, on the elegant mind which the Marquis had displayed in fitting up this delicious retreat. “How happily will my Sabina's life glide on, beloved by, and

under the protection of such a partner," said the amiable Sidney.

"Could you believe," asked the Marchioness, "that this lovely temple presents to me an object, which often disturbs my repose?"

"Indeed I cannot:—I see nothing here but what is calculated to *create*, instead of interrupting pleasure!"

The Marchioness pointing to the Sibyl, said, "Behold it there!—and listen to the explanation of what must without a clue, be incomprehensible to you."

She then detailed the particulars of Camilla's, and her visit, to the Egyptian Sibyl, and repeated the prophetic words she had there heard, adding; "I can never look at that painting, without recalling them to my memory, and in doing so, I feel I know not what terror which depresses my spirits and overwhelms me with sadness!" These words were followed by a deep sigh; when

looking at her friend, she felt surprised, and somewhat disconcerted, to observe, instead of the tender sympathy she expected to find in her eyes, a smile playing round her rosy lips. Sidney instantly perceiving that the Marchioness was hurt, affectionately said, "I scarcely need I think, assure my friend, that she cannot experience a real sorrow, in which I should not share; but in the present instance I can so easily dispel the cloud of error, which obscures her excellent understanding, that she must pardon my not having treated the subject with gravity. That the credulous Camilla should place confidence in the rhapsodies of such impostors, I am not surprised; but I did not expect to find in my Sabina so great a weakness; pardon me the expression in consideration of the motive which impels me to shew you the affair in its real light. I have heard many wonders recounted of this celebrated prophetess,

but I listened to them, from the first, with disbelief; and a singular instance which has lately come to my knowledge, of the arts she uses to discover the situations of those who consult her, has fully justified my discredit, of her supernatural powers."

"But how is it possible, in my own case," asked the Marchioness, "she could know that in the humble pedestrian who visited her, she beheld a person honored by the protection of such illustrious friends?"

"I cannot discover," answered Sidney, "any thing in her oracle, as you call it, which implies such a divination, it would have been just as applicable to almost any other young lady as yourself; but allowing it to have been particularly suited to your situation, might not her artful assistant have drawn from the good Camilla, some clue by which she was enabled to unravel your little his-

tory ? Recollect, my Sabina, the agitated state of mind in which you had listened to her, conscious how improperly you had acted, in undertaking such an expedition, fearful of discovery, and terrified at traversing for the first time such crowded streets. In what an excellent state was your imagination, to receive seriously, all the intended impression from the various mummeries you there saw exhibited !”

“ Enough—enough, my friend,” interrupted the blushing Marchioness, “ you have cured me of a folly which has, I assure you, sufficiently punished my allowing myself to be guided against my better judgment, by the simple Camilla ; and I am now fully sensible, how powerfully the circumstances you have enumerated, operated in fixing the impression, I at the time received. How greatly am I obliged to you for having effaced it.”

“ And if I have really done so,” replied Sidney, “ I am more than repaid for my endeavours.”

She then related to the Marchioness, those arts of the Sibyl, to which she had before alluded ; and if any doubts had still lingered in the ingenuous mind of her friend, the complete exposure of this woman’s contrivances, would have dissipated them.

Having fully and satisfactorily discussed this subject, they changed it to that of the Chevaliers, with whose several merits Sabina endeavoured to acquaint her friend. That young lady replied, “ I am greatly pleased with their different characters, such as you have described them ; and do not doubt but Count Olesko, and the Knight of the Cavern (whose name alone must ever recal your obligations to him) are possessed of all the recommendations you

ascribe to them ; but for the Chevalier Sapieha ! his admirably delicate conduct towards you, in the whole of the affair you have related to me, was such, as proves him to be endowed, in a high degree, with those qualities which dignify the man, and realize *my* ideas of *unpreux* ~~X~~ *Chevalier !*”

“ And yet,” said Sabina, “ much as I like, and feel obliged to Sapieha, I should be sorry were you to prefer him, to his cousins, on a personal acquaintance with them :—but I must not forget to mention one claim, that the Knight of the Cavern, has on your partiality, which, if I am not much mistaken, my friend will find irresistible ! He is master of your native language, and admires our Shakespear with an enthusiasm not inferior to our own.”

“ Indeed !” rejoined Sidney, “ that recommends him greatly as a compa-

nion, and will make me regard him as a kind of countryman. But of what nation are these Chevaliers?"

The Marchioness observed, that the Baroness and herself *suspected* them to be Russians, as a nobleman of that country, highly esteemed by her guest, in a letter of introduction, with which he had furnished the youths, spoke of them in terms that implied their relationship to himself. She then repeated the motives which actuated them, in concealing their real conditions, and Sidney admired the father who could think so liberally.

Although the friends were sitting near a window of the pavilion, they did not notice that the setting sun had almost withdrawn his last rays from the summits of the distant hills; and the sombre grey of twilight was fast creeping over the scene—the birds had retired to their evening shelter—nothing broke the stillness of the hour, but the low murmuring of

the waters. *Tranquillity* seemed to have chosen this spot for her favorite abode; and gradually she shed her sweetly soothing influence over the two votaries who were at this moment acknowledging, and enjoying her gentle power! It was while thus enrapt, that the finer emotions of their souls were roused, and they lifted their eyes to heaven, in whose blue æther now twinkled myriads of stars, in silent devotion!

Sabina, at length, entwining her arm round that of her friend, silently led her to the chateau.

They were hailed with pleasure, by the good Baroness, who instantly dissipated the delicious spell which had enchanted them; and recalled to them the sublunary concerns of life, by introducing common topics of conversation. She informed them that during their walk, she had been visited by Dupuis; to whom she had promised, that in the

course of the next week, she would personally inspect the works, which were going on at her hotel, under his directions.

“This I can now do with perfect satisfaction to myself,” continued she, addressing the Marchioness, “since I shall leave you in such charming society.”

The following morning, Sabina asked the Baroness if she would accompany them in their walk; but that lady pleaded as an excuse her desire of passing it in her study. As soon as she retired thither, the friends gaily tripped towards the pavilion, where they had resolved to enjoy their favorite occupations together, that day.

“Now,” said the Marchioness, taking up the volume of Shakespear, which contained ‘The Tempest.’ “Now shall you, once more read to me the scene, from which I have formed this little sketch; and we will consult together,

and try if we can discover the faults, which the Knight of the Cavern, whom I suspect to be a very Knight-errant in love, has pointed out in my Ferdinand. But no, I think I would rather have you exercise *your* pencil in endeavouring to correct them, while I recite to you the words of the poet. I *should* like," added she archly, "to present to him the Prince, corrected to his satisfaction, by *your* hand!"

"Indeed," said Sidney, "I will not risk spoiling that handsome face; in which I cannot see a single blemish. If the Knight of the Cavern is so fastidious, let him give a specimen of his own skill, in depicting one more perfect."

Sabina was leaning over the shoulder of her friend, and the looks of both were fixed on the drawing—when a voice, replying to the observation which had just fallen from the lips of Sidney, startled

them. It said, "How very imperfectly were the Knight's remarks expressed, if they could bear such a construction!"

They turned round, and beheld the subject of their conversation, standing at the door of the pavilion; who now approached, and saluted them, with all that indefinable grace, which, while it plays round the fancy, fascinates the reason, and takes captive the heart!

The cheeks of the fair friends were deeply suffused with the blush of surprise; the Marchioness, however, soon recovering herself, presented to the Knight her companion, saying, "When so lately I mentioned to you, my friend, Chevalier, I scarcely hoped so soon to enjoy this pleasure."

"And I," replied the Knight with an air of gallantry, which the ladies thought infinitely became him—"And I, on en-

tering this building, anticipated but *half* the gratification I now experience."

Sabina, with much satisfaction, remarked, that as he uttered this, his dark eyes sparkled with a brilliancy which she had scarcely ever before seen them exhibit; and which strikingly evinced that his heart was not just then suffering under the distress, which had hitherto appeared to weigh down his naturally towering spirit.

"It was not then your *intention*, Chevalier," said the Marchioness gaily, "to first introduce yourself here, in the character of a *listener*? Have a care how you ever put your self-love to such a proof!"

"My conscience acquits me of the design," returned the Knight in the same tone of raillery; "I can therefore honorably avail myself of what has accidentally met my ear, to rectify a trifling mis-

take you have led this lady into ; and which cannot fail to impress her with a very unfavorable opinion of my judgment."

Then turning to Sidney he said, "Such as Miranda first thought Ferdinand your lovely friend has certainly pourtrayed him, '*a thing divine*,' the fault *I* found was—he is *too* faultless."

"If that be your only objection," interrupted the laughing Sidney, "we will spare you any farther explanation, since you will not easily persuade me, that interesting hero *can* be represented too perfect by mortal pencil, at least to please *us ladies!*"

The Chevalier bowing with an air of mock humility, and gravity, replied, "Far from me be the presumption of endeavouring to controvert arguments *so conclusive!*—you must, however, pardon my having ventured to hazard an opinion, in opposition to judges so supe-

rior. But did not the Marchioness's observation just now import, that you are also an adept, in this charming art?"

"I think not," replied Sidney, "at least, if it did, her partiality greatly over-rated my abilities; for so little reason had I to be myself satisfied with those I possessed in her favorite style, that I now confine my attempts principally to a department so inferior, that except in the eye of a naturalist, my productions would have no attraction."

"Pardon me," interrupted the Marchioness, "how many delightful hours have I passed (though no naturalist) in watching the delicate touches of your pencil, as it gradually developed the pretty insect you were depicting, while I listened to your detail of its characteristics, till interested in its little history, and by degrees seeing its soft wings exhibit their downy plumage, I have

trembled, least it should expand them, and disappear from my admiring eyes !” And Sabina’s countenance glowed with the several feelings she had described.

The Chevalier now turning those regards from her ever-varying countenance, on which, while she spoke, they had dwelt, to the more placid one of Sidney, said in a tone full of softness, “Of whom did your friend learn that bewitching enthusiasm, which gives such irresistible interest to all she says, that the emotions of her hearers are hurried on with a rapidity scarcely inferior to her own ?”

“I know not,” said Sidney affectionately ; “she is the same creature I first saw her, in spite of the efforts I have sometimes made, to render her a fitter inhabitant, for this lower world.”

The momentary pause, which succeeded this speech, was interrupted by the Marchioness ; who opening a port-

folio which lay on the table, said, “ Look here, Chevalier, and tell me, if I have too warmly praised these nicely finished drawings ?”

“ Come hither, Olesko,” exclaimed the Knight, to his brother, who at that instant entered the pavilion, “ and feast on these interesting objects—will you.” Addressing Sabina, “ Will you confer on my brother the honor of presenting him to your friend ? She will find in him one well qualified to estimate her minute delineations, of that perfection, which the careful observer discovers, in the most apparently, insignificant works of the great Creator !”

The introductory ceremonies^o over, Count Olesko applied himself to examine the contents of Sidney’s port-folio, with the eagerness of a person, who is pursuing his favorite recreation ; and by his judicious remarks shewed that he was conversant with the subjects he

there found illustrated. With a delicacy of manner, which charms more than the most unqualified praise, unaccompanied by that grace, he ventured to point out some errors, his scientific knowledge enabled him to detect; and this ingenuousness enhanced the value of the commendations he passed on the general correctness, with which they were executed.

Sidney listened with modest and pleased attention to his remarks. At length, she said, "I presume, Count, Natural History is a favorite study of yours; have you long pursued it?"

"Even from my boyish days," replied Olesko, "my mother very early implanted in me the taste, alleging, that the best preservative to guard the young mind from the cruelties in which my sex too frequently indulge from thoughtlessness, was teaching it to feel how evidently the Deity has manifested proofs

of his divine attributes, in all into which he has breathed life.”

“ It was from *my* mother also,” said Sidney, her mild eyes glistening with the tear of recollection—“ It was from *my* mother also that *I* acquired my little knowledge in this interesting science.”

Olesko contemplated this proof of filial tenderness, with sympathetic emotion ; and thought he never saw so sweet a countenance, as that he then regarded.

Sabina, who had attended with a lively interest to the passing scene, now turning to the Knight of the Cavern, said, “ Had I known, Chevalier, the early lesson of humanity with which your mother imbued your juvenile mind, I should have been saved the fears I entertained for the life of my dove, on the morning of the archery. I assure you I attach much value to that present, since it reminds me, that bravery, and heroic

qualities, are perfectly compatible with mercy."

"I should be unworthy the grateful ardour which animates you at the recollection," replied the Knight, ingenuously, "were I to allow your persisting, in what is wholly an illusion. My early days were marked by too ardent and impetuous a temper, to bear that gentle control, which has so happily influenced my brother's milder disposition. No! it was to the irresistible empire which transcendent loveliness possesses over the heart of man, that you must attribute an action, which I feel with pleasure was approved by you."

The Marchioness's cheeks were suffused with a deep carnation at the warmth with which this was uttered; but recollecting he must have alluded to the empire which the fascinating charms of the *veiled lady* had acquired over him, her colour heightened to a painful de-

gree at the consciousness, that she had for a moment, appropriated to herself a compliment, by no means intended. To conceal her confusion she turned to Count Olesko, and attended to the reply he was making to some remark of Sidney's.

"I am happy," said he, "from my own observation, to be enabled to contradict an assertion, the establishment of which, appears to render the cruelties of man to man, if possible, still more disgraceful to him. He is *not* the only animal in the creation, who preys on his own species. I have often seen some of the caterpillar kind, particularly those which live on the oak, seize on one of its less powerful companions, and inflict on it a deadly wound; after which it has feasted with unconcern on its prey.*

* For this, and every other trait of Natural History introduced in these Volumes—See Buffon.

A superficial observer would have been justified in concluding these caterpillars fitted only to live on leaves and plants; but I, who have passed whole hours in studying their temper and economy, can disclose a more just history of their characteristics."

"You have greatly surprised me by this information," returned Sidney; "it is the first suggestion of the kind I ever heard, and proves my remark to be erroneous."

"How very accurately you have delineated this *Muscorum*, or yellow hairy bee!" said Olesko—"This species build their nests in mossy ground; and the skill displayed by them in their construction is admirable! I remember once, when a boy, having pulled one to pieces, and conveyed it to a distance, for the purpose of enjoying the pleasure of seeing their operations; I then stationed myself in a fit situation to observe their

movements. The bees soon formed themselves into a line, which extended from the place from whence I had taken their nest, to that on which I had laid the moss; the first insect then taking some of the downy substance in her mouth, cleared it bit by bit with her little feet, and then conveyed the unravelled moss under her, to the second, which, in like manner, passed it on to the third; proceeding thus, they formed an uninterrupted chain of moss, which was finally wrought, and interwoven with the most admirable dexterity, by those bees, whose province it was, to form the nest. When this task was accomplished, their next care was to guard their nursery from becoming the sport of the elements; to shelter it from which, they threw over it an arch, composed of a kind of wax, which was tenacious, though thin in substance."

"Ah!" cried the Marchioness, who

in the interest this little detail had awakened, entirely forgot the painful confusion with which she had at first begun to listen—"You did not, I am certain, *again* destroy the work of those delightful little labourers. Your having inspected the formation of their nursery, could not fail endearing it to you. What a charming contemplation! Did *you*, Chevalier, participate with the Count in this amusement?"

"Madam," replied the Knight, "even to gain your good opinion, I cannot *seem* the thing I am not, rather should I say—the thing I *was* not. While my excellent brother was thus rationally employing his leisure, I reprobate that I made it *my* pastime to seek out, and *destroy* those little fabrics, with all their embryo inhabitants, never having till this moment felt, how inexcusably wanton was the act."

"And yet," interrupted the Count,

seeing the ladies start with resentment at this declaration, "I could relate such instances of humanity, which his heart exhibited at the very period to which he alludes, as must obliterate the blame attachable to a thousand such thoughtless frolics!"

The Knight was much affected by this proof of affection in his brother, and his voice expressed that he was so, when he exclaimed, "It is not in the benevolent nature of that best of friends, to endure shining for a moment at the expense of one so infinitely less worthy."

The ladies were sensibly touched by this mutual proof of fraternal generosity; and there was an ingenuousness in the Knight's conduct, which, on a moment's reflection, completely reconciled them to him, and made them more pleased with the candour he had displayed in acknowledging errors he might so easily have concealed, than displeased to find,

he had not always been *quite* so amiable as his brother?

The Marchioness, whose sweet face expressed all the sensibility, which this little scene had aroused, with a smile, said, “Chevalier, I have not forgotten that we have no testimony but your own on which to convict you of *cruelty*, while I have been a witness to, and possess a living proof of your humanity!” But finding that this address had rather encreased, than tranquillized the Knight’s emotion, she turned to the Count and said, “May I ask you to favor us with some other traits of insect sagacity, or instinct, which has fallen under your observation?”

“I obey you with pleasure,” replied Olesko, “and will give you the detail of the mode by which another species of bees fashion their nurseries. I mean the *Centuncularis*, or leaf-cutter—I have reclined whole mornings patiently watch-

ing their movements, on this important occasion. They form their nests in holes about the length of a tooth-pick case, in the ground, which they excavate for that purpose. Some make them with the rose-tree leaves—others with the horse-chesnut. It was with surprise and pleasure, I observed how dexterously these industrious little animals, destitute as they were of mathematical instruments, cut out circular pieces adapted for the bottom or lid of one of their nests; while they shaped others into ovals, and semi-ovals, which formed its sides, and in each of these recesses they deposited an egg, with prepared food for the young bee, as soon as it should be produced.”

Here the entrance of the Baroness, escorted by Sapieha, made the party rise to greet them.

“ Pray let us not disturb you,” said the lady; “ you must know you owe the pleasure of my company to this,

Chevalier; while, on the other hand, to *me* you are indebted for his."

They begged an explanation, and the Baroness thus continued—"I was regarding a distant object, which I took for Dupuis, through the telescope which stands in my study window, when I accidentally espied this gentleman, deeply engaged in sketching his landscape. Suspecting that he had not come alone, and tempted by the loveliness of the weather, I resolved on joining him and inquiring into the affair. You see therefore *he* drew *me* from my study, while the pleasure of attending me hither seduced *him* from his favorite pursuit."

The Marchioness could not resist repeating with an air of irony, "*Favorite* indeed! since it possesses superior attractions to the company of that sex, of whom he *professes* himself so devoted an admirer!"

“Come, come,” interrupted the Baroness, “I will not have ^omy beau disconcerted by raillery, which, in this instance, he does not deserve ; since he has been assuring me that his motive for not earlier paying you his compliments, was a desire of *securing* to himself a welcome, by laying at your feet the efforts of his pencil.”

“The Chevalier Sapieha,” said the Marchioness, with serious warmth, “*ought* to feel assured that he can never want any additional claim, to those he already has to my friendship and esteem !” She then presented him to Sidney, and his countenance brightened with pleasure, as the conversation, for some time, turned on his drawing, which was generally approved.

“Now,” said Sabina, “as a reward for your industry this morning, you shall be indulged with an inspection of

this port-folio; which your cousins have been examining with much interest."

While Sapieha was thus engaged, Count Olesko, addressing the ladies, asked if they had walked the evening before on the banks of the Seine. On their answering in the negative, he said, "If you would do me the honor of putting yourselves under my guidance at sun-set to day, I will shew you a phenomenon well worthy your observation?" They very thankfully accepted his offer, and soon after returned to the chateau.

Sapieha's curiosity was very strongly excited, to discover with what amusement his cousin meant to recreate the ladies; and he watched with considerable impatience, the decline of that luminary, whose sinking to the lower world, was to be the signal for action.

At length the moment arrived, when

the Count proposed their departure ; and Sapieha, resolved not to lose with the Baroness that character for gallantry, which he persuaded himself, he had in the morning established, with much alacrity, offered her his arm, which she graciously accepted ; and Sidney could not refuse Count Olesko's modest request to honor him by taking his.

The Knight of the Cavern now approached the Marchioness, and with an air of diffidence said, “ May I, madam, presume to offer you an arm that has committed acts, the bare mention of which so lately made you shrink with horror from its owner ? ”

“ Ah ! say not so,” returned the Marchioness, distressed at observing how much he appeared agitated. “ Can I ever forget that to the bravery of *this* arm (and she accepted it as she spoke) I owe the life of the Marquis ? ”

“ Pardon me, madam, I had forgotten

that circumstance," replied the Knight, in a tone so unlike his first address, that the Marchioness attempted not to keep up a conversation, in which she fancied he felt no inclination to bear a part.

They had thus proceeded some way, when their silence was broken in upon by a pair of nightingales, who were from a neighbouring thicket, answering each other in those long drawn notes, whose clear and mournful tones must ever touch the heart of sensibility. The Knight's was not impenetrable to their influence, and in a mild voice he exclaimed, "Happy little songsters ! yours are not the voices of complaint—you are each happy in your tuneful mate, and know not the acute pangs of hopeless love !"

"Heaven preserve you from long experiencing them," said the Marchioness, completely thrown off her guard by the

desponding tone in which this was uttered.

“ Could I but inspire *pity* in the object of my hopeless passion, *that* in such a bosom would be much, I should feel my situation far less insupportable !”

“ This cherished being lives then ?” said the Marchioness.

“ She does—but not for me—she is insensible to my love !”

“ Pardon me, Chevalier, if I say, that possibly the impetuosity of your affection, has prevented you from exerting those powers to win her, which, provided she loves not another, I cannot persuade myself she would forever resist.”

“ I firmly believe her *heart* to be wholly untouched.”

“ Perhaps then a veil, not less impenetrable than that which hid *her* features at the tournament, conceals from its

mysterious mistress the real state of yours."

"And do you advise my withdrawing that veil?" asked the Knight with quickness.

"Indeed, Chevalier, I am ill-qualified for the office of an adviser in a case so delicate; I scarcely know what prompted me to speak on it," replied the Marchioness, confused at recollecting she had done so; and increasing her speed, overtook the rest of the party just as they had reached the end of the serpentine walk they were traversing; the opening of which disclosed to them a view of the Seine.

What a phenomenon here presented itself. The thickest descent of flakes of snow in winter, equalled not the myriads of winged insects which saluted their astonished gaze! The whole air seemed alive with this new-born race! and the earth itself was covered with

millions which had fallen ! “ Good God ! ” exclaimed Sidney, “ is not this an illusion ? Pray, Count Olesko, explain ? ”

He replied—“ These insects are ephemera, and must be regarded as a striking instance, of the delight, with which nature sports in infinite variety ! That she should have ordained a tribe of flies, whose duration extends but to a single day, appears surprising ? but how must our wonder increase, when we discover, that multitudes of this kind are born and die in a single hour ! Observe this ephemeron ? ”

“ Ah ! it is a delicate little insect,” said Sidney, “ and though smaller than the butterfly, greatly resembles it in shape, but that its wings are thinner and more transparent, from their not being covered with that painted dust, which adorns those of the former.”

“ Is it not a pity,” asked Count Olesko,

“that the sports and gambols of this endless multitude of little strangers, are so shortly to have an end? Within too hours, the whole swarm will fall to the ground, and cover it, like a deep snow, for several hundred yards on each side the river. So fragile is their nature, that every object they touch becomes fatal to them; they die instantly if they even hit against each other! Many, after fluttering awhile, drop without seeming to have received wings for any other purpose, but to gratify an idle curiosity.”

“Would I were one of those happy triflers,” said the Knight mournfully; “who after opening its eyes to take a momentary peep at the miseries with which this planet abounds, closes them for ever!”

“My brother,” said the Count tenderly, “how little are you aware of the towering spirit which animates you! I, who have noted it well, feel that it would

disdain to quit the tenement it inhabits, till it has first marked with glory the track it is destined to pursue !”

“ Really, Chevalier,” cried the Baroness, “ if you interrupt the Count’s pretty history with any more of these *nervous* remarks, I shall prescribe you a double dose of my *elixir of hope*, on our return to the chateau.”

“ How gratefully will I hail its balsamic succour,” replied the Knight; “ but proceed Olesko.”

The Count thus continued—“ These flies, in their first, or reptile state, are granted a long term of life, compared to its latter duration ; being from two to three years. They are, while autilia, inhabitants of the water ; but when they arrive at the state for transformation, they wait only the approach of evening to shake off their old garments. Scarcely are they lifted above the surface of the fluid in which they have hitherto lived,

than their sheathing-skins burst, and through the cavity which it thus forms, the fly issues, who at the same instant unfolding its wings, raises itself into the air, and the female hastens to drop its eggs back again into the water. Of all insects, this appears to be the most prolific; and it seems there is a necessity for such a supply, as in the aurilia state, it is the favorite food of every kind of fresh-water fish. In vain do these little animals form galleries at the bottom of the river, whence they never remove; many kind of fish break into their retreats, and thin their numbers."

"It is singular," remarked the Marchioness, "that, I who have several evenings walked on this terrace since my residence at the chateau, should never have seen this phenomenon before!"

"It seldoms occurs more than three evenings in the year," replied the Count; "and those in the midst of summer.

Some observations I made last night, during a solitary ramble on the margin of the river, prepared me to expect the sight which this presents to you ; and our morning's conversation suggested to me the idea, that it could not fail of being interesting to you."

" You have judged very rightly," said Sidney. " Pray is this astonishing spectacle confined to the Seine alone ?"

" By no means ; it is to be seen in equal perfection on the borders of the Rhine."

The party now, on the proposal of the Baroness, bent their steps towards the chateau, returning in the same order they had set out, except that the Knight walked silently by the side of the Marchioness, without again offering her the arm, from which she had withdrawn hers, on joining her friends at the end of the avenue.

He was roused from an absent fit, in

which he had been indulging, by Sidney, who, looking back, said, "My Sabina, do you observe the effect of those moon-beams trembling on that foliage?"

The queen of night had been some time risen, and at that moment threw her silvery light on the angelic countenance of the Marchioness, touching it with inimitable softness.

The Knight looked at her, as if expecting she would make some observation; but finding she interrupted not the silence, he repeated, "Sabina!—*my* Sabina!—what an invaluable privilege does your friend possess, in daring to pronounce those sounds so in unison with all that is endearing and precious!"

"I knew not," said the Marchioness, surprised at this new start of singularity—"I knew not, that it was a favorite name of yours; does it bear any affinity to that of"—she abruptly checked herself,

and the Knight continued with animation—"It is *hers*—by that sound, so fascinating, is *she* called. Oh, I could weary echo with its repetition! Madam," he continued, in a less impassioned voice, "I cannot forget that you just now deigned to shew an interest in my fate. You will greatly soften its rigour, by sometimes permitting me to breathe, into that gentle ear, sorrows, in which, though but for a short moment, you have made me feel you *can* sympathize. Will you pardon the many instances of savage caprice by which I have proved the sweetness of your disposition, and not attribute to a natural ferocity of heart, actions, which are the offsprings of despair!"

"I should truly rejoice," returned Sabina, "to see your mind restored to its proper tone; but it appears to me, Chevalier, that if your hopes are as desperate as you at times represent them,

a far wiser measure, than indulging useless regrets, would be endeavouring to banish an object from your thoughts, who seems cherished only to fill them with bitterness."

"No ;" said the Knight, "there *are* moments, when she sheds into this bosom such ineffable delight, that for worlds I would not, at the expense of *one* such moment, release myself from years of suffering ! Even now, your condescending to allow me but to speak of her, imparts a portion of that happiness, which all that relates to her, excites in this devoted heart."

In saying this, he respectfully drew within his arm the hand of the Marchioness; who was gratified to see that pleasure once more adorned his fine features; and no longer felt a shadow of resentment for those passed deficiencies in politeness towards herself, for which he

had just offered an apology sufficiently ample.

“And is Count Olesko the confident and encourager of your love?” asked Sabina.

The Knight sighed deeply—“He has never felt that passion,” said he, “consequently knows not the severity of the wounds it can inflict; how ill then must he be qualified to treat them with indulgence? In *man* I should vainly seek the soul-soothing sympathy, which resides only in the bosom of your gentler sex, with whose very nature, pity is so interwoven, that you can compassionate the weaknesses of ours, even when you have not been taught *that* compassion for them, by discovering kindred ones in your own hearts. While I listened to the interesting narrative of your bulfinch, and noted the angelic expression which beamed from that soft countenance, I

beheld there *all* I required in the bosom, into whose recesses I panted to pour my hidden sorrow."

"Shall I tell you," asked the Marchioness, "what impression some part of your conduct that evening made on me?—or rather may I put a question to you, connected with the idea you then inspired?"

"Most certainly," returned the Knight; "what is there you *could* ask which I should hesitate to answer."

"Say then, have you not discovered a something in my Sidney, which reminds you of her you love?"

"She does indeed!" exclaimed the Knight, "and so strikingly, that it is impossible I can ever again separate their images in my contemplation of either."

"Then confess, ingenuously, Chevalier, that you have this evening felt disap-

pointment at the companion whom chance has allotted you ?”

“Mistake me not,” said the Knight solemnly; “your friend reminds me of her I love; but still she is not that object. And so far have I been from envying the pleasure Olesko has evidently derived from her society, that I have been indulging the hope, that her graces will awaken his dormant sensibility.” And added he with fervour, “May that excellent being taste all the exquisite bliss which love can impart, unchecked by those corrosive cares, which, when unrequited, it creates.”

The subject of this ejaculation now with his companion, turning back, joined them, and the conversation became general. In a few minutes the party arriving at the chateau, the Chevaliers departed on their return to Paris.

At supper, the Baroness informed

her young friends, that she had fixed on the next day, but one, for visiting her hotel ; and as it was her intention to pay her duty to the Queen, she should not return to the chateau till the following day. Sapieha had engaged to attend her to Court ; and she had promised him a sight of her laboratory.

On the appointed morning the Baroness sat off for Paris, and the friends on their usual stroll.

Deeply engaged in conversation, without having formed such a design, they found themselves near the favorite pavilion, which they had not visited the preceding day ; reaching the steps, they were ascending them, when they perceived a person apparently buried in a profound sleep, under the arcade which surrounded the edifice. On tip-toe they softly approached ; one arm thrown across the face concealed his features ; but an object saluted the eyes of the

Marchioness, which quickly revealed to her on whom they were now gazing.

The vest of the sleeper, either from the heat, or the posture in which he lay, was thrown open at the breast, and discovered, suspended there, a miniature !

Unconquerable curiosity made the fair intruders stoop to examine it ; and the Marchioness, though she dared not breathe it, thought—now shall we behold the features of this mysterious lady !

END OF VOL. I.

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