

FAMILY SECRETS:

Esquisse Royal. 1887

BY MR. PRATT.

IN

FIVE VOLUMES.

SECOND EDITION; CAREFULLY REVISED.

VOL. II.

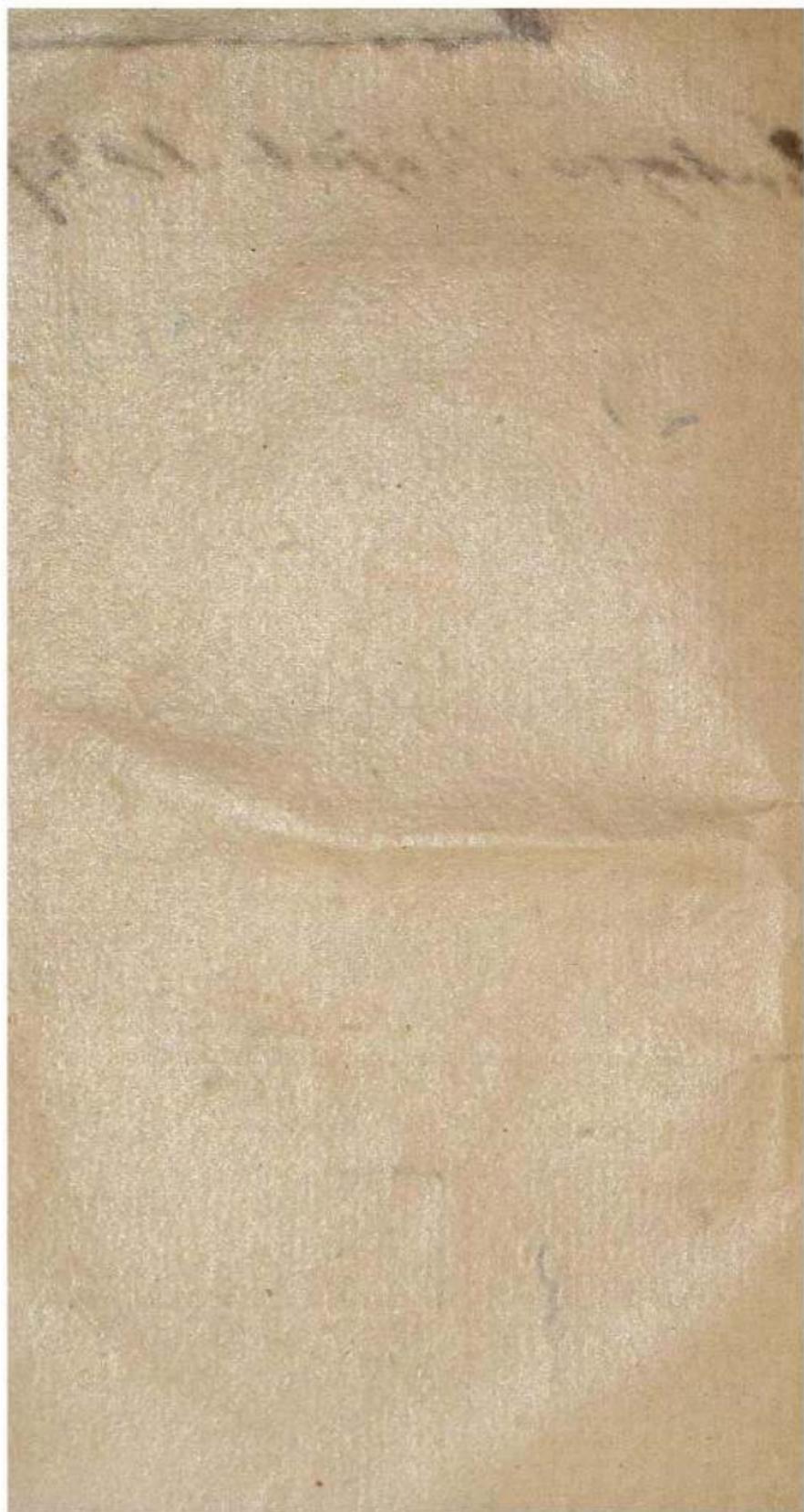
Here's much to do with LOVE, and more with HATE!

SHAKESPEARE.

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1798.



TO
MRS. COCKBURNE,
OF
MADRAS.

IT was the opinion of Mrs. COCKBURNE, that much of the literary matter which the author had some thoughts of offering to the publick, separately, in an introductory volume, with a delineation of some of the characters, and a design of the work, might be wrought, with better effect, into the work itself. He leaves the publick to judge how far he is authorised in adopting that opinion. The accurate and able manner in which this lady, at a very early period of life, transfused into the English language, as well the *profound* and *abstract*, as gay and elegant, "THOUGHTS" of the
a 2 celebrated

celebrated citizen of Geneva,*—where he “re-echoes, in the character of the *Genius* and *Representative* of human nature, and communicates to his readers that enthusiastick love of nature and virtue which glowed in his own breast,” at the same time that she has avoided intermixing the eccentricities and errors of what is excellent and useful in the writings of that exalted genius,—sufficiently evinces the sterling value of her observations. The author, therefore, has again ventured to incorporate *part* of what he had, indeed, twice before embodied and withdrawn, from a sincere doubt of his own powers to interweave it with *advantage* to the general interests of the book; for therein only can there be hazard. Of the POSSIBILITY of *raising* the general character of the English romance, by the interspersion of subjects of weight and sublimity, either in science or morals, so as likewise to raise the passions and affections of the fable, there can-

* Thoughts of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, translated by Miss Henrietta Colebrooke.

not be a doubt : and it has, indeed, been by several authors occasionally attempted, and with success to a degree, but with apparent apprehension. The author of these pages is, therefore, perfectly satisfied that the IDEA with which Mrs. COCKBURNE has honoured him, will receive the unequivocal suffrage of the professional criticks, to whom his attempt to realise it is submitted: And could he have a moment's apprehension of that IDEA meeting disapprobation, he would certainly not have subjected her to any part of the censure he may incur from his own failure† in the management of it.

But the obligation which the author owes to Mrs. COCKBURNE, on the score of literary arrangement, is not the sole motive for addressing to her a proportion of this work, and *that* without any previous solicitation. The selecting of a patron is, he conceives, amongst the *inherent* RIGHTS of literature, which, however, he is aware her delicacy would, in the present instance,

† See Advertisement to this edition, vol. i.

have disputed or denied: but there are privileges of an independent nature, the assertion of which should rest on our own judgment and discretion; and any *petition* to exercise these, implies a doubt even that they exist. The *freedom of election*, as to the choice of a virtuous person to exemplify a virtuous, even though it may be an unsuccessful endeavour, ought to be looked upon as amongst the most inalienable rights attached to the charter of literature. On that authority a writer should feel that he has

“ The world before him where to choose.”

And, on that authority, the author of these sheets takes leave to illustrate, by the conduct of Mrs. COCKBURNE, his attempted portrait of a female, which may serve as an example of the filial, fraternal, and conjugal virtues: and to sanction this illustration, he refers to that lady's family and friends, nay, to a yet stronger testimony—her OWN CONSCIOUS HEART!

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FAMILY SECRETS.

CHAPTER I.

TEARS OF JOY.

UPON the return of Olivia to the breakfasting parlour, which was immediately after she had placed Jenny more at her ease with her own family, she seated herself, even though her beloved Henry was in the room, between Mr. Clare and Sir Armine; and in that situation recapitulated, with great fidelity,—but with many comments and illustrations, supplied from that rich repository, her own good mind,—all that had past between her and the humble companion of her walk. Both the old gentlemen were much affected, and experienced, in their turn, the sensations, though perhaps in a less vivid degree, which had before been felt by Olivia; nor were those of Lady Fitzorton, who had a very tender disposition, less animated. But

what shall be said of the emotions of Henry? especially at the passages that depicted the virtue of Caroline Stuart, on whom Olivia passed an eulogy that would not have been unworthy of Henry himself!—regretting at every sentence, that the friendship formed between them in childhood had ever been destroyed.

Be it noted also, to the honour of Olivia, that in her recital she sunk upon her little auditory, probably in consideration of Henry's friendship for Charles Stuart, as many of the indefensible parts of the baronet's conduct as she could; or, rather, she gave to truth its most candid form. At this moment Partington entered the room, took a chair, and sat thoughtfully down. "To let the Atwoods meet the Stuarts, you know,"—said Olivia, addressing herself to Lady Fitzorton, and looking at the old gentlemen,—“would be little short of actual madness,—at least till matters are in better train; and to allow them to take possession of the cottage they mentioned, just at present, while left to the guidance
of

of their own resentments, would be as bad. Suppose then"—here she had a long whisper with her father, at the end of which she sprung up, and running to Henry, asked him if he was disposed for a walk to the poor deserted manor-house, that fine morning?—"My father," said she, "has given me a commission, which must be executed immediately."

Henry was rising to attend her, when Partington getting up, cried out, "Hold, hold, you little villain! I see you, and your old scoundrel of a father, are upon some scheme to trick me out of my vagabonds:—but it won't do:—I have settled the whole business. They are getting ready to go with me; and I have ordered your little message-cart, Armine, to come in tow of *my* chaise; and I had a good mind to have ordered your chaise into the bargain."

"And you might have done so," said Sir Armine, warmly,—“and my coach too.”—“And *my* curricle,” cried Olivia, putting on her cloak.—“And *all* our carriages,” added Mr. Clare;—“but then, you

must not cheat my poor Olivia out of her share of the Atwoods.—She tells me, the eldest daughter is to succeed the foolish young woman who is marrying off.”—“O!” exclaimed Olivia, “I cannot do without dear Jane;—she is the only woman in the world to replace Lucy:—and her child will be no hindrance; and the manor-house is really catching cold, for want of company.—You know, my dear Lady Fitzorton, you never let us live any where but with you, at the castle;—and we are ten times greater vagabonds, as Mr. Partington calls them, than any of the Atwoods.—So do not interfere with my part of the property, pray, Mr. Insufferable!”

“Be it so:—you are a sad fellow, though,” answered Partington:—“but as this is the case, my chaise and the cart will do.—I have sent the caitiff, true George, after Jerom and his Dorothy, as he calls her;—and I will go before, upon one of your horses,—not your mad-cap, Bucephalus, though, Henry; you have taught him some of your poetical flights.—Od’s pranks!

pranks! the high-mettled rascal would throw Apollo;—one would think he was making Pindarics, while mere mortal man was upon his back!—No, no, James's even-going pad for me.”—“Order white Surry for the field to-morrow,” quoth Henry, sportingly:—“But whither,” demanded Lady Fitzorton,—“are you going to carry the good folks?”

“To where all vagabonds ought to be carried—to a place of safety:—so don't ask any more questions:—look to the hussy and her brat, who are to go into your custody.”

“But shall we not,”—resumed Lady Fitzorton—“see them again before they go? I have not seen any but the eldest daughter and her infant yet.”

“No,” answered Partington:—“no leave-takings. The people are sick and forry;—and as to gratitude, and all that, time enough to settle these matters when our work is done. We are officers of *justice*, you know, and of course are responsible for our prisoners.

“ Meantime, it is easy to *suppose* the men and boys have made their bows, and the women and girls dropt their curtsies. I hate blushing and blubbering :—so good bye to you—I hear the carriages wheeling round ;—aye, and there I see steps on Steady,—your youngest villain, Armine, is leading him.—I shall have the vagabonds come whimpering, if I do not stop them.—Not a step, therefore, on your lives, you scoundrels, till we have got through the park.”

“ But promise me,”—said Olivia, following Partington to the door ;—“ you will leave *my* property ; I ought to go and settle that matter myself.”

“ Settle nonsense !” cried Partington.—“ I’ll tell the girl, she and her child are to be put into prison, by you instead of me.”

“ Oh ! but another thing,” said Olivia :—“ I would not have you go to the abbey, nor within sight of it, for the world :—you know not what may be the consequence.—Gracious !—Mr. Partington, you

are the best man in the world—*almost*—
but—but—are so precipitate—so——”

“ Did you ever hear such a saucy, vexatious, talkative, prittle-prattle, insolent, insufferable scoundrel, since you were born?” cried Partington, taking her hand and kissing it.—“ Why, you little impertinent villain, do you pretend to instruct an old rascal like me, where I am to go, and what I am to do?—Do I ask, how you intend to dispose of your share of the ragamuffins?—whether strangling, shooting, or only whipping, is to be their portion?—As to the abbey, do you suppose I will carry such a set of abominables before the worthy gentleman”—here he took off his hat, and bowed respectfully—“ who has been so kind to them, till they are in a proper condition to bring him to the gibbet?—But you have kept me talking here, while I could have got, with my whole crew, almost half-way to my journey’s end:—so ask no questions—stay, all of you, in this room, without ringing the bell, twenty

minutes, by Olivia's watch:—and God mend you all."

Saying this, he opened the door, and meeting Henry, he thrust him into the room also, crying out, "God mend you too, you scoundrel!"—then locking the door, gave the key to one of the servants.

"Here, firrah, if you let them out before the expiration of twenty minutes by the click of that pendulum opposite, to which I now station you"—pointing to the castle clock—"I'll anatomize you:—nay more, I will have an hole dug, chin deep, in the very spot where I now place you,—and turning you into a sun-dial, with a brass plate nailed to your head, make you learn to keep time for the rest of your life!—Stay, here comes George,—you are released, firrah,—this rascal will serve my purpose better.—Here, Mr. Scoundrel," said Partington:—"twenty minutes to a moment, keep this key,—then open that door,—and have an eye to the windows too; but as I know you to be a thorough-paced

paced villain, and therefore to be depended on,—you may move about a little, just to stretch your legs.”

Partington mounted Steady, after a short conference with Jerom and his mule, who now came up,—packed the Atwoods into the carriages—and George took his station.

CHAPTER II.

THE SERVANT THE MASTER.

THE Clares and Fitzortons had too sincere a veneration for the virtues of this excellent man, not to let him conduct them in his own way.

Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton could not, however, but smile at the conceit of their own castle being converted into a jail, and one of their own servants into the jailor;—and they were puzzling themselves, to know in whose custody they were placed, when a voice, which they knew to be that of true George, addressed them through the key-hole.

“ Pray, my ladies and gentlemen, don’t be angry ;—I hope you will be pleased to be shut up for as long a time as Mr. Partington has ordered ;—not that I mind being *’natomised*, a pin’s point ;—but, says he, you are a scoundrel of honour, George,—this was in a whisper—shaking my hand at the same time—your worship knows his way.—So I am sorry I can’t let you out, my ladies and gentlemen : but I know, if I did, he would never call me a scoundrel again,—though, mayhap, I should be more of a scoundrel then than I am now.—The time will soon be gone ; fourteen minutes and almost a half now.—They say, time has wings : but I think, I never knew him creep so slow in my life.—I wish I could tell you any pretty story, or sing a good song, or do any thing, to keep your honours in spirits, while you are my prisoners. As for that, had your honours been confined in a dark room, you would have been better off than poor me, or Mr. Partington either :—for there was such kissing and crying with the old folks, on leaving Jenny and
her

her child behind,—and Jenny, I believe is hardly out of her fits yet!”—“In fits!” answered Olivia:—“let me out this instant—no—run and tell her—I will be with her in—a—very few minutes.”—“I can’t go to tell her, miss, though I had rather be in fits myself, than she:—yet I mayn’t budge till my time is out.”

Among the other good qualities of George, he had one well worthy the adoption of all his party-coloured brethren,—to wit, that simple but rare property of doing what he was ordered.

“But here she comes with the child in her arms, and the tears all about her pretty face:—now I can tell her, miss,—nay, for that matter, in about another minute and three quarters you may tell her yourself.”—Here he entered into a short conversation with Jane,—looking alternately at her and at his watch,—then he exclaimed—“Huzza!—Huzza!—the time’s out! the time’s out!”—and he vaulted in the air as if he himself had gained his freedom after years of slavery.—He unlocked the door,

entered the room, and entreated their honours' pardon, on receiving which, he went comforted away.—Olivia hastened to her charge—Henry was about to take his share in the business, when his father requested him to stop a few moments, as he had something to communicate, to which the presence of his mother, and their mutual friend Mr. Clare, could be no objection,—being, indeed, parties concerned. “No,” added he, recollecting himself,—“it will do rather better to-morrow morning.—I forgot a few points which I have to adjust previously with *you*, my dear Clare.—To-morrow morning then, Henry, we will have our conference; the result of which, I trust, will be as perfect happiness to you, as can be expected in a world like this.”

Henry stood irresolute, whether to speak or not;—and, while he was balancing, Olivia came back, light as the gossamer, and said to him in undeniable accents,—“Now, then, for our walk to the manor-house,—and Jenny Atwood will be of our party: the air will do her good;—and besides,

sides,

sides, she will be wanted,—or if she should be fatigued, my good papa has commanded me to take the coach going and coming, if necessary:—and why should not dear Jane, and you and I, Henry, have an airing this morning, as well as the rest of the Atwoods and Mr. Partington?—We will be back by dinner time, sir,”—added she to her father—and then distributing, to the rest of the family, her little careffes, with a grace perfectly her own, as she always did before she went out,—she took her Henry’s arm: and as Jenny Atwood modestly declined the carriage, they all three walked through the park of Fitzorton, and to the manor-house of Clare.

CHAPTER III.

ESCAPES.

THIS little excursion was productive of an event, which had well nigh brought about that very explanation which Henry had
had

had so long desired, yet dreaded, should take place.

Olivia had, at this first setting out, arranged Jane Atwood between Henry and herself,—each insisting upon taking an arm; but soon after, Olivia made a little alteration by putting herself in Jenny's place, declaring “That she was resolved to have the charge all to herself.” Whether this was the whole, or only in part, the reason for the change, it is impossible for us to say, but it was that which she thought fit to assign; and there was no time to dispute it; for just as the trio had gained an eminence in Mr. Clare's park, Jenny was led by curiosity, or some other motive, to ask, “Whether the fine seat to the right did not belong to—to—to—”

Perceiving her falter, Olivia relieved her by saying “Yes, that is the abbey: but we shall have a better view of it presently;—yet the manor-house will be quite jealous if you give the preference, Jane, to the abbey.”

Henry

Henry suppressed a sigh as he directed his view to the latter.

“And I suppose, then, that forest,” resumed Jane, with increased emotion, “is—is—is—the one I have heard—so—so much about?”

“You are right,” answered Olivia: “those are the abbey woods;—but I would have you to know, our dear little groves and shrubberies will supply you with more fragrant flowers and enchanting walks;—do not you think so, Henry?”

Jane appearing faint, Olivia proposed resting a few minutes in one of the small alcoves. Hither they repaired:—Jenny and Henry sat on the same bench,—perhaps by accident, or out of respect to Olivia; for they left to her one which commanded an extensive prospect, whereas theirs had nothing to recommend it but an indistinct view of the abbey, and a skirt of its forest.—Olivia did not profit by this mark of their politeness, rather preferring a seat on the same bench;—and, no doubt, by a like chance, or compliment, thinking she had sufficiently

sufficiently asserted her claims, placed herself by the side of Henry;—almost at the next instant her attention was drawn to some pencillings on the opposite pannel of the wainscot;—she rose to read them.—Henry, impelled by a sudden recollection, caught her gown, and gently drawing her towards him, she again sat down, without in the least suspecting there was any other motive in the mind of Henry than that which, to her own, was the most delightful—the sweet thought of Henry;—and she would have left the alcove, without, perhaps, thinking of her former intention, had not Jane Atwood, as she was going out, exclaimed, “Good heaven! here are the names of that angel, Miss Caroline, and Lady Stuart! and—and—” had Olivia permitted her to stay another moment in the alcove, she would have discovered the rest: but that amiable girl, believing she could not get her away too soon, hurried out, protesting, “That they should not have time to settle their business, and be back by dinner.”—She took, however, the
first

first opportunity, when they had got into a path which did not admit their all walking together to assure Henry she was doubly indebted to him for his considerate goodness in preventing her from running on to, perhaps, fatal discoveries:—"Generous Henry! you feared Jenny, who finds, alas, but too many occasions to speak of Sir Guise, would have been led, by seeing the names of his fair daughter, and deceased wife, into a train of thought, that it is not for her peace she should indulge.—But I wonder we have never observed these names before;—indeed, it has not been the manor-house summer this year;—the castle has made us truants from this our other home. I do not think," continued Olivia, availing herself of being behind Henry, in this narrow pathway, and Jenny's walking before, the grass on the opposite side being left for mowing, and almost ready for the scythe,—I do not think any of the family has been in that alcove since July was twelvemonth, when, you remember, we all dined and passed the day there.

there. I do not remember any pencilling then; and it is odd enough, how the names of the Stuarts should be there, as none of them, except Charles, would be likely even to come upon our grounds, since our unfortunate quarrel, you know.—Is it not strange, Henry? But hush,” said she,—“Do not answer me now: dear Jane will think we neglect her:—stop, let me pass you and join her:—but do not loiter behind.”

Saying this, she bounded beside him at a place where the grass happened to be scanty;—and, like Camilla, seemed scarcely to bend the blade.—Thus did Henry escape a discovery of an imprudence, which the excess of disappointed love alone could excuse;—for, had Olivia put her first design into execution, or Jane continued to go on, the following verses would have been found pencilled, in a smaller character, immediately under the names of Caroline, Lady Stuart, Sir Guise, and Henry:

O potent Love ! that thy true sighs
Could reconcile antipathies !
Ah, then, thy rosy bands should join
Henry and faithful Caroline.
Then too, their long-contending fires,
Warm'd by thy soul-cementing fires,
To thy pure shrine should incense bear,
And parents aid their children's prayer.
Ah ! try then, Love, thy potent sighs,
To reconcile antipathies !

This effusion escaped Henry in one of his tender migrations ;—for there was scarce a spot on any one of the estates, which had not received some memorial of his disappointed passion—and in not a few places his muse had been called upon to celebrate the fair object of his afflicted heart—except in those exigencies, when he was really too much distracted by his passion for Caroline, to indulge his passion for poetry, or even to know that the fictions of poetry had a place in his heart ;—so entirely was it at those times rapt by the realities of love. Happening to be one day sitting in the alcove which we have just left, when he was far from happy, yet as far from
being

being hopeless,—the precise state of mind, perhaps, which admits a poetick description of real feelings, his thoughts took that turn, in prose, which he afterwards versified in the manner we have seen. The warm-breathed prayer, for the moment, soothed the woe: but how he suffered such a tell-tale evidence, in which “his hand appeared against his heart,” to remain, we know not:—certain, however, it is, that a future hazard, from the same cause, was put at defiance: for the verses were rubbed out so effectually the same evening, that not a trace was left for the searching eye either of curiosity or jealousy.

CHAPTER IV.

ALARMS.

AS Henry and his fair companions were ascending the flight of steps which lead to the front of the manor-house, Olivia observed, “That two persons on horseback
were

were near the paddock," which was at the distance only of a few paces from the back of the mansion.—Olivia, with Jenny, ran to the edge of the steps to see; and Henry followed, as the persons on horseback were passing the great gate,—the iron-work adjoining to which, ran the full length of the house and court-yard:—Jenny cried out, "Oh heaven! there is my guardian angel herself!—there is Miss Stuart!—I should know her from a thousand!—that is she, madam!—the beautiful lady on horseback!—and the person with her, is good Mr. Dennison:—I must, indeed I must go and pay them my humble respects."

She was down the steps, and round to the iron railing, in a moment, exclaiming, at every step, "Heaven bless your ladyship!—God preserve you, Miss Caroline, and you too, Mr. Dennison!"—They were returning from their morning ride round the parks, by the public road, which encircled the three estates.—Olivia, hearing the name of Caroline, impelled by the recollected fondness of infant days, and by

venc-

veneration, to see a lady, for whose virtues she bore such respect, ran with no less speed:—and Henry, agitated by a thousand emotions, rather flew than ran, to behold the cause of all his bliss and all his anguish. Caroline having stopped her horse on the first hearing of Jenny's ejaculations, recognised the person who had uttered them, but had scarcely time to exclaim, “Whom do I behold?—Is it possible?—Can it be Jenny Atwood?”—before the sight of Henry and Olivia put all her ideas to flight. “Dear associate of our blooming hours!” said Olivia,—“has chance at last permitted me again to offer, personally, to your virtues, that tribute, which Henry Fitzorton has a thousand times heard me pay you,—and which my secret heart had mingled with my constant prayers for the choicest blessings of heaven upon the good?”

Caroline was about to reply, but was so visibly affected by the emotions of admiration and astonishment, excited by the unexpected sight of, perhaps, the three persons

sons upon earth most calculated to raise those emotions,—and, possibly, by some other not undelightful reflections,—that she could not utter a word, and with great difficulty kept her seat on the horse: and when Dennison reminded her, “That Sir Guise must be within a very short distance, as he heard the gate shut, which belonged to the cottage, where they had left him conversing with the labourer;—and as the sudden sight of Jane might occasion some disturbance,” the good old man recommended a separation of the parties for the present.—“Gracious heaven!” exclaimed both the ladies, as if inspired by the same wish, and vexed at the same disappointment,—“How cruel!”—“I have ten thousand things to say,” cried Caroline.—“And I a million!” observed Olivia.

“Sir Guise Stuart coming! did you say?” questioned the trembling Jane Atwood.

“O how long my heart has ached for this meeting! But you shall hear all from our dear Henry,” said Olivia to Caroline.

—“And

—“ And I hope some favourable moment will arrive, when—but at present this deserving object of your attention might make it, perhaps—”

“ I hear the sound of the horses' feet.” cried Caroline :—“ Barbarous fortune !” —“ Ride on, for goodness' sake, miss,” exclaimed the alternately flushed and pallid Dennison, guiding her horse from the railing again into the road.—“ Jenny Atwood, get out of sight, I charge you :—my master is just behind.” Then beckoning Henry towards him, the old man whispered—“ Joyful news, dear young squire ! joyful news ! you'll hear it soon ;—but master must not see Jenny :—we shall be in a peck of trouble again if he does :—joyful news ! joyful news !”

The rapidity with which all the parties conversed and separated, and the characteristic actions and looks of each person, were such as to exceed our powers of description. Dennison and Caroline were soon out of sight ; for when they had past the iron rails, the interposing trees and
thick-

thickening hedge-rows, shut them from the view. Henry and Olivia, though scarcely able to support their own emotions, were engaged in carrying, rather than leading, poor Jane Atwood into the house;—where they were no sooner arrived, than the hapless victim of love and conscience almost fell on her knees; burning, at the same instant, with her blushes, as she implored permission to be taken where she might just have a glance, one glance, at Sir Guise, without being herself seen;—promising, that it should be the last request she would ever dare to make concerning him:—“and, oh! pray, pray consider, whatever be his faults he is the father of —.” Then seeing Olivia give a half assenting, half denying look, betwixt compassion and reluctance, as she raised her up, —the hapless girl followed to a chamber in the second story, without seeming to want any of the strength or life which had before left her;—and, running to the window that looked into the road, she clasped her hands together, crying, “There—

there—there is—there is—the father, alas! of my poor—poor—dishonoured——” and without finishing the sentence, fell senseless upon the floor, lost to the view of what she had so earnestly supplicated.

It was not easy to recover her: for when she had any return of life and reason, her quick sensibility of shame for the confusion she had caused, and the weakness she had betrayed, produced such terrifying relapses, that had not True George been dispatched to the manor-house, to say dinner waited, and gone back with his usual speed, seeing the posture of affairs, and asking no questions, but taking it for granted the coach, with which he soon had returned, would be necessary,—it is not probable that they would have regained the castle that day.

When Olivia and Henry had leisure to separate the reflections which the foregoing scenes had crowded upon them, a new light was thrown over many old subjects.—First, it appeared very clear to them both, as it afterwards did to the whole family,

family, that such was the dominion Sir Guise Stuart had still over the affections of Jane Atwood, it would be highly improper, and indeed impossible, to place her at the manor-house, or any where else in the neighbourhood of the abbey. Secondly, Olivia was struck with the increased personal beauty and graceful manners of Caroline, set off as they were by an ineffable kind of smile, which seemed to open, upon the person addressed, the warmest and most brilliant rays of her heart and understanding;—indeed, she saw Caroline also, under the influence of unusually happy feelings, proceeding from the joyful news that Dennison hinted at; she therefore, gently reproached Henry for not having done her justice:—she doubted whether, even his candid mind had not suffered the insults received from the father, in some small degree, to create a prejudice against the daughter;—but this idea was done away on her reconsidering the matter, “for,” said she, with the most unsuspecting simplicity, “if this were the case, it would have operated equally, and

perhaps more so, to the disadvantage of the son."—She then tried to account for the matter in many other ways; and it ended in her reasoning, as usual, to her Henry's credit: she told her own heart—and the intelligence communicated to her cheeks a suffusion of that beautiful bloom, which is produced by conscious pleasure,—she told her own heart, that the tender partiality which Henry entertained for herself, made him blind to much greater perfections in every other woman.—This settled the point to that heart's content; and he was again honourably acquitted, as to prejudice, but found guilty, sweetly guilty of injustice:—yet love pardoned him even that offence; "For in truth," said she, "injustice to Caroline is love to Olivia."—It is at any rate, very certain, that, amongst all her ways of investigating this want of rhapsody in Henry, on a subject whereon she thought its whole scope would have been warranted,—she never once hit upon the only cause to which it might have been attributed, and to which a thousand other young ladies

ladies would, most likely, have assigned it. —Reader, whatever be thy sex, in the degree that thou art armed with knowledge of the world,—or art arrayed only in that natural innocence, which has no suspicions or concealments, and which may long be the amiable victim of its credulity, without at all supposing it is so,—thou wilt pronounce upon this part of Olivia's conduct and character. If thou hast the world's wisdom about thee, thou wilt condemn her as a silly girl wanting penetration, where the most stupid are said to be sharp sighted;—but, if thou art endowed with that unsuspecting quality we have mentioned, proceeding from unpractised innocence, thou wilt love her for possessing that, which, wert thou united to congenial virtue, would make thy home a paradise, and thy partner such as the old poet has described, where he observes, thou mightest

“ Lay thy sleeping life within her arms.”

But, whether thou believest such excel-

lence natural or not, we can only re-assure thee, such was the excellence of Olivia Clare:—and if thou art a man, the worst we wish thee is, that thou mayest be convinced of its possibility, by marking such another woman for thine own.

CHAPTER V.

PERPLEXITIES OF LOVE.

IN the progress of the evening after these occurrences, Jenny, by the tender assiduities of Olivia, became much more composed, though at the first sight of her own little one, she burst into a flood of tears, amidst which she told the infant, she had encountered her name-sake—she tried to impart to it a share of her own emotions,—and concluded by asking the poor babe,—as if it were of an age to feel and reason on its misfortune, “Whether it would be possible for Sir Guise to look upon that innocent face, without kissing, loving, and affording it some protection?”

But

But the greatest difficulty for the historian of these pages is, to enter into, or explain the result of Henry's sentiments and feelings on the various incidents of this eventful day, every hour of which, as indeed of several preceding ones, had gradually wrought him to a tension of thought and sensation, almost too oppressive and tumultuous for his reason to sustain.—Every time he beheld Olivia, he witnessed not only her particular attachment to himself, but the general excellence of her character.—He saw all that is most graceful, and most worthy, uniting in her disposition:—he perceived that she was so guarded by the ingenuousness of her own heart,—it would have required none of the refined arts of a hypocrite to deceive her, in whatever most concerned her peace, even for her whole life together:—he observed, that her faith was so entire in him, that, as he never did, and indeed never had opportunity to intimate her affection was not returned,—it is doubtful whether any thing but the strongest confirmation of positive

proofs could have persuaded her to believe it. For his deepest mysteries, she had an explanation supplied by her love, and satisfactory to her reason;—and, for his very languors,—(we will not use so chilling a word as coldness,—it was perhaps, not possible to his nature)—for his languors, her own delicacy suggested an apology, or rather a vindication. Her warm encomiums on his Caroline evinced the superiority of her soul to that petty jealousy, which too often takes alarm at the charms of another woman;—and her behaviour to the poor Atwoods, more especially to the dishonoured Jane, notwithstanding her trespass in a point which few females can pardon in each other under any circumstances, no, not even where their conscience tells them, for the most *selfish* reasons, they ought to have a degree of fellow feeling;—was a fresh instance, amongst innumerable others, of her liberal and forgiving spirit;—placing her conspicuously on the list of the truly good, though not in the catalogue of those whom Mr.

Addison

Addison has emphatically called the "outrageously virtuous."

These considerations, re-inforced by those which, as auxiliaries, he placed before his eyes,—the family arguments in her favour, such as the similarity of religion,—the ardent hopes of both their parents,—the reward which so much constancy, such unwearied tenderness and goodness claimed from him;—with the sad reverse in case of his remaining insensible, or undecided,—the misery, perhaps, the death, of Olivia's father, and of his own parents,—the despair, perhaps the distraction, of Olivia herself, should she discover not only that she had not been the object beloved, but that he had all along loved another;—these reflections, we say, with the impressions left on his mind by the keen observations and cautionary hints of his brother John, had, at intervals, since he returned from the funeral of Lady Stuart, almost reconciled him to the idea of surrendering up his love, as a sacrifice to his friendship, gratitude, and filial duty.

At times, he even pleased himself with the proud triumph he supposed he should feel on such a sacrifice, and thought, for a moment, the felicity of many ought to outweigh, in a generous mind, all considerations for the happiness of one.—To encourage him in these sentiments, he now paid more than his wonted attention to the words and actions of Olivia,—expatiated on her various attractions, personal and mental,—talked to others, and to himself about her, and absolutely set himself seriously down to the task of trying to ripen his affectionate friendship for her into love,—at least such a degree of it, as would guard her from his own wandering feelings, should they join their hands:—the natural effect of all which was, that although he did not make Olivia more in love with him, because that was impossible, he riveted the affection she sincerely felt for him, in a manner that death alone, and that her *own* death, could break the chain. But, alas! the very attentions which we have observed Henry had imposed on himself, were im-

posed

posed as a *task*, and—like other forced formalities, and coercive lessons, which *must be learned*,—turned the whole into a reluctant, but necessary toil.

And, indeed, those efforts in favour of Olivia were always made by Henry after several days' absence from Caroline: but the bare mention of the name of the latter, the sight of her miniature, or even the most trivial circumstance that had allusion to Caroline, would, in a single moment, level with the dust the laboured fortification he had built in his fancy, for the reception and defence of Olivia.

CHAPTER VI.

ONE OF THE FAMILY SECRETS IN DANGER.

THOUGH Henry neither spoke, nor was spoken to, in the momentary interview he had with Miss Stuart at the manor-house,—the sight of her, and perhaps another look, of which *he* only knew the sense and sentiment, convinced him, that his

heart was neither a convert to Olivia, nor an apostate to Caroline.

While yet in this disposition, the hour appointed for his interview with his father approached, and he determined it should also be the hour of his long smothered confidence :—but, what was his surprize, what his disappointment, when, betwixt the time of True George's coming into his apartment, to announce his father's being prepared to receive him in his chamber, and his ascending the stairs, to obey that summons, his mother hastened, in much disorder, to say, the interview must be postponed ! as a sudden return of his poor father's complaint made it impossible to speak on any subject in which his feelings were interested ; but that, if he found himself not sufficiently recovered in a day or two, he would depute *her* to communicate his sentiments, “ which, I am sorry to say, my dear Henry,” added she, “ are of a nature not to brook delay ;—and I am not without my fears, that something he has just heard respecting you, Henry, has been the chief
means

means of bringing on a fit of the illness, to which you know he is unfortunately subject."

The trembling Henry, after expressing the most sincere sorrow for his father's sudden attack, earnestly entreated to know how he had been the unhappy cause?

"I have received your father's strong injunctions," replied Lady Fitzorton, "not to breathe the subject either to you or to any of the family till farther notice, and must now return to his chamber, for, alas! Sir Armine is all this time in extreme pain." Turning round, however, as she was going out at the door, and looking stedfastly,—“Henry,” said she, “if the intelligence which has reached us be true, your own conscience will point it out: and if false, it will acquit you, and leave on your mind no other regret, than that your father *must* suffer from the misconception, till it can be done away.”

Henry's bosom instructor told all, and more than all, perhaps, of the tale to which his mother alluded;—it did not hesitate a

moment to suggest to him, that the fatal secret of his heart was beginning to circulate. He still suspected it had come to the ears of John; and he did not at all doubt but it was now rapidly making its progress through the castle.—The first wish of his soul, we have seen, was that this *might* be the case: but all the feelings of gratitude, of delicacy, of duty, and, as it will speedily appear, of interest,—made him desire the discovery should be attended by those *preparatory explanations*, which, if they could not exculpate, might qualify his conduct.

Indeed he began now to suspect that the secret was already more spread than he had before supposed, though it was plain, from Olivia's whole demeanour, that it had not yet been communicated to her.

While he was thus ruminating, Olivia herself, who had been giving her assistance to Henry's mother, to mitigate the sharp agonies which his father had been enduring, came running into the room, and presented a letter to Henry,—saying,

as she delivered it,—“ I hope it will prove a cordial to your spirits, which I know your father’s sickness must depress;—it comes from the abbey,—and who knows but our good stars may be working together so far for our good, that Sir Guise may permit his angel of a daughter to be upon the same terms at the castle, as are enjoyed by his son Charles?—For know, my Henry, I am a great dreamer, and I have had a sort of vision about this:—I see ’tis a lady’s hand.—I would lay any thing, we shall find that our Caroline is the writer;—but even if it should be so, and my dream *should* come true, we must keep it to ourselves, and not say a word of it to any of the family,—because it will be so delightful to have the secret between us, and divulge it just at the time we have brought about a reconciliation.—Ah! Henry, if you and I should, after all, be the means of such a happiness, how comfortable will it be to all parties!—for it is such a shocking thing for neighbours to bear malice for so long a time!—and though, perhaps, we
can

can do little good with Sir Guise, we might put up with a great deal from him, to be in friendship with Miss Stuart.—Do, then, read the letter, and tell me what it says,—that is, if it goes at all to my last night's dream."

Henry, who knew at the first glance, that the letter was directed at least by Caroline, had been trying by every means in his power to conceal his agitation,—when a servant came to desire Olivia's immediate attendance upon Lady Fitzorton. She had scarcely left the room when the trembling and impatient Henry opened the billet, which contained these words:

"Scarcely can I hold my pen,—such is the satisfaction of my heart, to inform you I write by the command of my father, to invite you to the abbey, where we may enter into the particulars of the extraordinary, but endearing and renovating encounter of yesterday morning,—an encounter which presented to my view three persons I had long most anxiously desired again to behold,—Jane Atwood, my lovely playmate

playmate Olivia, and Henry Fitzorton.— Do not write any thing in reply to this hasty billet, part of which is confidential, —but *come yourself* to-morrow noon, the time appointed by my father to receive you. You will imagine how I rejoice in a reconciliation betwixt my father, and my brother's dearest friend.—Ah, Henry! gues the emotions of Caroline Stuart."

He had just finished the perusal, when True George came hastily into the apartment, presenting another letter,—“Just brought by the post, your honour: and I came with it as quick as I could, because I believe 'tis from 'Squire Stuart, the lieutenant, and I thought it might bring your honour good news.”

Honest George was partly right in his conjecture;—it brought tidings at once of the most pleasing and painful nature.— Charles acquainted his friend,—“that he would listen to no terms of accommodation with his father, unless the restoration of Henry at the abbey was made the preliminary condition of the treaty;” observing to
his

his father, that—"he had plainly discovered the strange conduct of Caroline had originated in her father's cruel commands."—Then followed these expressions:—"If you ever, Sir, hope to see the face of the son whose heart you have almost broken,—re-invite my injured friend to your house, where I have my good colonel's leave to give him the meeting, and shall hope to be at the abbey almost as soon as this letter: and in a full confidence of your treating my friend as he deserves,—I am your dutiful son Charles Stuart."—"Go then, my dearest Henry! hasten to re-assume your privileges"—so the letter went on—"It is but returning to a happiness I owe to you in kind.—Ah! I owe to *you* far more than I can ever pay, till my sister is your own!—but pardon the vanity of my affection, if I consider her hand as a recompence in full, even for all your pain, for all your goodness,—even for the last—the *commission*:—and yet that *disinterested* office is so—but I accept it—from *you*,—yes I accept it with tears—of *joy*: your
brother

brother John too ! noble, generous, manly John ?—how shall I ever settle the account with him ?—You know not the professional service he too has done me ; my colonel, I find, and your military brother, have been in correspondence for my honour.—The former swore, and, by a hero's oath, the god of war !—it would be sinful to conceal it from me, though our glorious John had enjoined it ; yet as I did not promise, 'tis no breach of trust, you know ; and 'tis fit a man should know his real friend.—I have no second Caroline, my Henry, to offer John :—indeed I know but one more such woman in the world :—Oh ! if Caroline could call *her* sister !—but it is madness to think that way ; yet such an alliance would bind up all our wounds. It can never be, —those wounds *must* flow, though the life-blood of Charles mingles in the stream. Had the heart of my friend been captive to my Olivia,—pardon me for the weakness of calling her what she will never be !—I think my own would have been guarded from captivity ;—or reflections on the
prior

prior claims of my dearest Henry would have made me look upon his *choice* with the eyes I look upon my sister, or, as you yourself, Henry, look upon Olivia: or if a tender idea had at any time obtruded, I would then have expelled it as a traitor, encroaching on the rights of sacred friendship and mutual love. But, as I know your heart is another's, as I know the love is not reciprocal, and as I feel she is dearer to me, than the breath I now draw in deep and bitter sighs, Oh! how peace would return to us all, Henry, did Olivia experience that sentiment for me, that she cherishes so fondly, so fatally, for my friend!

“ Accursed fortune!—yet, by heaven, I would rather unite myself to a fiend who loves me, than to a seraph who could not give me her heart. They talk of a war, Henry! would it were come!—selfish, cruel, murderous, as is the wish to thousands of the human race,—I cannot but exclaim, would it were come! My fatal passion seems to gain such strength, as to
render

render me weak to every other tie,—even to that which holds me to my species. It is not without difficulty, I conceal my sufferings from the excellent colonel:—“ You droop, Stuart,” said he to me this morning, taking me by the hand, but with a smile of encouragement: “ you droop, my lad.—I am no talker, Charles: but do you want any thing within my compass?—I do not desire to clog you with obligation: I shall therefore only ask, would you borrow?—I have heard your father is not so liberal as his son is deserving.—Or is there an enemy here” (laying his hand on my heart) “ got into the breast-work, and in possession of this little fort?—Is there mutiny within?—I do not, however, ask for love secrets; and if I did, you, perhaps, might be disobeying orders even to your colonel;—Cupid is greater than a generalissimo, and takes command of all the armies in the world,—field-marshal, my lad, of the universe.—But how is this? I hear you are going to give me up;—your friend Henry Fitzorton, I find, has procured

cured you an advance;—I wish it had not taken you out of this regiment: but”—“I wish so too, sir,” said I.—“But,”—replied the colonel,—“it takes you to one in which that Henry Fitzorton’s brother John is captain, and may one day have the command;—and so, as it moves you only from one friend to another, I must learn to be content.”—The generous man shook me by the hand, and walked away. I shall bid adieu to him, and to many of my valuable brother officers, with infinite regret;—and, be assured, amongst all my cares, I am not insensible, that your generous heart, assisted, I cannot but think, by your good father’s heart, should have fixed me in the regiment of John Fitzorton.—Why, Henry, have you interdicted the subject?—but alas! military and every other ambition, but that which cannot be gratified, is, I fear, dying in my bosom:—an unfortunate passion alone lives there;—it will consume me, Henry; I shall grow insensible to every thing else;—no, surely, the affection I have for my Henry Fitzorton will survive
the

the general wreck, and holy friendship be preserved entire, amidst the ruins of Charles Stuart.”

So various were the emotions which the perusal of Caroline's billet and this letter occasioned, that Henry could scarcely read to the end. Love, friendship, pity, hope, fear, admiration, joy, and sorrow, took possession of him by turns; and at the conclusion, they all seemed to be at war in his bosom. His friend Charles, his brother, his parents, Olivia, and Caroline, tyrannized at once.—The empire was long divided, long contended for:—but love, as is generally the case in such dispositions, asserted its dominion, looked upon all other passions as usurpers, and re-assumed its sovereignty on the throne of his affections.

CHAPTER VI.

AUGMENTED INVOLVEMENTS AT THE
CASTLE.

IT was in this crisis that Olivia re-entered the apartment, eager to know the contents of Caroline's billet, and to convey to Henry the intelligence of his father's being much better;—she never omitted any communication, which she supposed might obviate pain or promote pleasure.—“Well!” said she, with vivacity,—“is my dream out!—does Miss Stuart mention any thing of our yesterday's adventure?—does she honour her playmate with her remembrance?—does she notice Jenny Atwood?—and is there any chance, provided our little plans succeed with all our fathers, of Olivia and Caroline ever becoming friends, invested with the privileges of Charles and Henry?”

What a cruel string of questions,—each kindly conceived, and sweetly delivered!—

Henry

Henry was, however, collected enough to satisfy her, who attributed all the emotions of his ardent love to sentiments of glowing friendship;—and she entered into the reconciliation of the families in general, and the long-desired intercourse of Caroline and Olivia, in particular,—only in a less degree, and on a much more disinterested principle than himself.

“Miss Stuart,” said Henry,—“is so earnest to hear more of Jane, and to pour forth the tribute of praise to Olivia, that she has even persuaded Sir Guise to give me an invitation to the abbey, where I have not been, you know, since the funeral of lady Stuart;—and Caroline has written in the most impatient terms, to acquaint me with her father’s acquiescence.”

Here Henry pretended to rummage his pockets for the billet itself, and expressed some surprise what could possibly have become of it,—though we are afraid there was very little reason for surprise,—the said billet being, probably, not only in his pocket, but often in his hand, during the

affected search ;—and, no doubt, he could have produced it with nearly the same degree of difficulty, as the taking the hand which held it, out of the aforesaid pocket.

But Henry *simulated*, you see, reader ;—this letter having again thrown out the explanatory bill, he predetermined to withhold the billet, and was, accordingly, inspired with a due degree of wonder, what could have become of it.

“ Never stand looking for the letter,” observed Olivia, who appeared always fated to help him out of his embarrassments, unconscious that she was thereby plunging deeper into her own :—“ Never stand looking for the letter !—For heaven’s sake ! go to the abbey directly :—I have heard you say, Sir Guise is a passionate, capricious creature, and has his starts of rage and reconciliation ; and who knows how soon he may change his mind again ?—then we shall all be at a loss for such another opportunity.—Beside, your good father is better, and you can go with perfect ease ;—I need only say to him, you are taking
your

your beloved wood walk,—(you can go to the forest, you know)—and that you were quite in spirits at the thought of his mending so fast.—I am sure every word of all this will be true.”

Henry now observed, “That an epistle was just come, also, from Charles,”—and without any of that surprise or difficulty attending the production of Caroline’s billet, he drew it from his pocket.—“See,” said he,—“Olivia, what a packet!”

There were one or two passages which he could wish to have read to her, as descriptive of his friend’s passion for herself,—hoping, the knowledge of it might lead the way to something favourable;—for, although his own passion, so far as it depended on Caroline, was now in a better train than it had been for a considerable time,—he felt the situation of his faithful Charles, as one of the most oppressive of the many heavy drawbacks upon his newly-revived hopes.

Unfolding, therefore, the packet, to see whether it was not possible to bring

out something like an explanation, of two passions, of which Olivia had, as yet, no suspicion;—he was hastily running his eye over the pages, in order to separate the communicable sentiments, from such as could not safely be read aloud,—when Olivia repeated her wish, “That he would repair to the abbey,” promising to hear his friend’s account when he returned.—“You provoking thing, you!” cried Olivia,—“I feel that I shall love the sister as well as you do the brother;—and here, you are so taken up with your friendship for the latter, that you are losing the only opportunity which may happen this age, of bringing me and the former together.—Upon my life, I shall again suspect you have taken some unwarrantable prejudice against that sweet girl, and do not love her half so well as you ought.—Set off this instant, if you would not have me feel confirmed in this hard suspicion.”

Olivia drew him, betwixt sport and seriousness, towards the door, where Henry exclaimed—“Ah! Olivia, if you knew the condition

condition of that excellent young man, Charles Stuart, at this moment, your gentle heart would pity him.”—“ His condition !” answered Olivia:—“ good heaven ! has any thing befallen him ?” —“ He is, and long has been, suffering all the tortures of an hopeless passion !” —“ Then I pity him, indeed !” said Olivia, —“ for I do really think, were such a misfortune to have happened to me, it would have broken my heart.—I know myself, Henry, so well,” added she, —“ it would have killed me ;—and, indeed, the certainty of that would be my only consolation.—Poor Charles !—he is an amiable creature.” —“ He is one of the noblest young men upon earth,” answered Henry, —“ and would make the best woman in it the happiest.” —“ What, then, prevents the lady of his choice from being so ?—Can she be insensible to the affection of such a lover ?” —“ I do not believe,” replied Henry, —“ though it has been of some standing, and they have been very often together, — that she yet so much as suspects his passion.”

sion.”—“ “ That’s very strange,” said Olivia :—“ you ought to do all you can to assist him, my dear Henry ;—I am sure the kind youth would do the like good office by you ;—nay, he has spoke to me of you an hundred times, not in so animated a manner, indeed, as you deserve, but very, very warmly :—he perceived your virtues wanted no advocate !—I protest, if I knew the lady, I would try all the force of my little eloquence, to win her heart for him.—Why does not his divine sister exert her powers !—Can any one resist her ?—Methinks, we should all confederate, combat, and conquer in his cause :—are you not of this opinion ?”

Here was another home question, asked in the utmost simplicity of Olivia’s heart, which sincerely ached for Charles.—Henry turned round, and walked away to the window.—“ I do not wonder that you are uneasy,” continued Olivia :—“ but what can be the reason of the lady’s indifference ?—Is she already engaged ?”

“ Fatally

“Fatally so, I fear,” replied Henry.—
“That’s terrible!” answered Olivia.

“And to a man who is himself betrothed in the most solemn manner to another,” cried Henry.

“Worse and worse!” rejoined Olivia:—“and does that other lady return her lover’s passion?”

“Entirely!”

“And, I suppose, the gentleman’s affection is as great.”

“It is, alas! it is.”

“I know not, then, what can be done for your poor friend: for the case seems to have shut out all service, all good offices.—I do not see a single opening to promote his suit:—for who, you know, would attempt to divide two hearts already united, to make *any* third happy?—Make the case our own a moment, my dear Henry:—we should never bear even the *sight* of the wicked seducer of the affections of Henry and Olivia, for instance, even though we were both perfectly convinced, all his or her arts would be vain.—I protest, my

blood runs cold at the very thought of such a monster!

“Nevertheless, the condition of the unhappy Charles,” added Olivia, after a recovering pause, and finding Henry much disturbed,—“is dreadful indeed!—And I am not surprised at the misery I see you are suffering on the occasion;—I now clearly perceive that your sympathising heart has made this one of the strongest sources of your late, alas! too frequent, melancholy;—I cannot blame you for it; it fills my own breast with grief; and I weep that I cannot mitigate it.”

Henry was extremely affected, more especially as Olivia now applied all that her tenderness could devise, to give him comfort;—and, though intended to promote a very different emotion, to fill up the measure of his despair on his friend’s subject and his own, she took his hand, and carrying it to her lips, where it received a chaste and delicate pressure,—“How infinitely grateful am I to you, my beloved Henry!” she exclaimed,—“and
how

how grateful ought we both to be to heaven, for exempting us from those agonising trials, which are, and must be, inseparable from hopeless love!—Oh! that your friend could experience the felicity which is permitted you and me, Henry, to feel at this moment, with the sanction of both our dear parents upon our heads!—I cannot feel my blessed state, without the tears of joy gushing from the fulness of my happy heart.—I see you share my sensations;—long, long may the sacred sympathy continue! and may these drops——” she wiped away the tears which were running along Henry’s pallid cheek, —“ may these drops of overflowing felicity be the only ones Olivia’s tenderness or your own shall bring from your eyes!”

“In pity, cease, Olivia!” cried Henry: —“I can bear no more!”

“Let us separate a little while,” answered Olivia, with the most bewitching accents:—“compose yourself, my dearest friend, and then pursue your walk:—the air will restore you; and be sure you try

to make Caroline love your Olivia, as Charles does Henry, when we are all friends."

Olivia now made an effort to rally her spirits, that she might recover those of Henry.

"When we are all friends, and mixed together, you, I, Caroline, and Charles,—we may beguile the latter of his griefs:—at least, our loving endeavours shall not be wanting;—I insist, therefore, upon your setting off; and I will give you, as you have so great an undertaking in hand, leave of absence for the whole afternoon."

Olivia was again leading Henry out, when recollecting herself, she cried, "But stop a moment: I have had something of yours in my pocket these two days:—your brother John sent it me;—and it is very charmingly finished indeed! My father says,—and so does yours,—it is much more like than when you saw it before; but, for my part, I really think it a thousand times too handsome."

Before Olivia had finished her prefacing speech,

speech, she had taken out of her pocket, and unfolded, a little parcel, which proved to be that miniature of herself, which the conflicting John had painted for Henry, and which was now re-given, by the lovely original, with a grace, and at a moment, which might have ensured its welcome, almost from an enemy,—much more from the deeply penetrated, though unfortunate Henry.

As he received it from Olivia, she said, “Tell the truth, now, Henry,—does it not flatter me greatly? Yet do not tell me so: for I should weep, if I were to think your fancy and affection could not draw as partial a likeness as any painter in the world!—so take it with you; and, as I cannot, with any propriety, go with you to the abbey just yet, let it be my substitute;—and be sure you shew it to Miss Stuart, and tell her that I send it as my representative; and if it could speak, it would soon make out my dream:—do not forget this, I charge you.—So now I will go to poor Jane.—I

declare, Henry, I can never get from you, and must run away at last."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROGRESS OF HYPOCRISY.

HENRY had an anxious desire to make his personal enquiries after his father, but was afraid to encounter him.—Under the different impressions, therefore, of that tender father's displeasure,—of his brother John's silence,—of Olivia's overwhelming goodness,—of Charles generosity, and distress,—of Caroline's summons,—and of Sir Guise's mysterious invitation,—he once more took the road that lead to the abbey;—at the sight of which mansion, after again reading Caroline's billet, as he past along the great avenue, his heart began to resume its accustomed emotions;—and, as he approached within view of that little window already commemorated in this history, those emotions increased;—and, by the time he gained the grand portico,
late

late so sternly closed upon him, and now to be so wide opened, by *authority*, they totally absorbed every other consideration.

Henry's conduct at the funeral,—his defence of Sir Guise,—his attention and delicate consideration at the awful ceremony which preceded the affray,—wrought very powerfully in his favour with Caroline; and she was truly desirous of an opportunity to pay him her heart's acknowledgments;—indeed, such desire began to take possession of her the very hour she bade him, or rather looked him, an adieu, and had continued increasing ever since.

Her transport, therefore, at having the power to receive him now by her father's consent, may more readily be imagined than described. To imagination, then, we shall leave it:—but, notwithstanding Caroline's impatience, we are sorry we are unable to grant them, or our reader, the pleasing interview, till we shall have discovered the means by which that consent was obtained;—for the packet of the late en-
sign,

sign, now lieutenant, Stuart, unfolds but a part of these means.

When the hate of Sir Guise Stuart for the house of Fitzorton was at its height, he began to conceal it in apparent kindness, immediately after the funeral.—As he sat at breakfast the succeeding day, “Caroline,” said he,—“your brother having thought proper to leave us at such a time to ourselves, we must comfort each other as well as we can.—This is but a melancholy house at present, my dear:—suppose we were to leave it, and walk out a little into the air:—it may be of service to us both.”

He took her hand, and they walked into the garden.—Meeting Dennison upon their return into the house, Sir Guise exclaimed, “Tell the gardener to be particularly careful of those myrtles in the corner of the hot-house,—they were the favourites of your poor lady.”—“And one of them, I see, is drooping,” cried Caroline,—“as if it mourned her loss.”—“Good Dennison, let *this* be remembered:” continued Sir Guise.

Guise. Having said which, he held his handkerchief to his face, and shed as many tears as were consistent with his grief. Caroline had herself noticed these myrtles, as she past the green-house, and bestowed upon them many of those drops of real sympathy, which might give her father the hint to counterfeit, thinking that as good as any other piece of hypocrisy, to advance his plan.—A more perfect example of genuine and affected sorrow hath rarely been seen, than what the father and daughter then exhibited.

Dennison, like Caroline, was touched by the novelty of this conduct.—They were soon convinced it was not the start of the moment, by an increase of good humour the next day, and so on, in succession, as well to the rest of the servants, as to Dennison:—and at length the whole kitchen pronounced their master to be, *bona fide*, a new man:—prior to which, Charles had written, but not by Caroline's medium, such letters of reproach and menace to his father, that, possibly, the fear of that which they threat-
ened

ened being put in execution, might have some weight in bringing about this marvelous reformation.—The baronet, however, without communicating the contents of the letters to Caroline, answered them in the most unexpected manner, to the entire satisfaction of Charles, who thereupon wrote the letter to Henry, which has been communicated in a former chapter.

But this was not all.—The conduct of Sir Guise was of the most general kind, and extended even to Father Arthur. He made ample confession of the errors of the past, promising as large atonement in future.

And in regard to Caroline, he was every day proposing some little plan of consolation,—gave her one of his favourite horses,—and not only allowed Dennison and another servant to attend her, but often accompanied her himself, more than once introducing the name of the Fitzortons, and particularly Charles's favourite and her own, without any other allusion to old grievances than observing that it was a
great

great pity when neighbours could not agree:—there were always faults on both sides.

This happy change was attributed by all to the salutary impressions made on the good baronet's conscience when he came to reflect on the fate of his lady. In private discourse of this matter among themselves, Dennison observed, "it was a long lane that had no turning:" and that "it was better late than never."

Father Arthur gave the praise of this conversion where he thought it due,—to the great restorer,—and took more than his accustomed delight to visit at the abbey. For the past week, indeed, he had been an inmate, often wandering in the woods of Stuart, so well calculated to inspire and cherish meditation, till the hour of repast, which he would take with the family,—and then, devoting an evening hour to private prayer, which was his invariable custom, he would remain in social endearment, yielding to all the felicities of his mind and constitution, till bed-time.

The happiness of Caroline was indeed extreme;—her gratitude to her father was in proportion;—and had she not now and then retired to her chamber to shed a tear of regret to think that her dear mother lived not to witness and to share this blessed alteration, her happiness would have been without alloy; for, besides the above felicity, a prospect of reconciliation opened once more on the houses of Fitzorton and Stuart. She even had the comfort of hearing, and being herself permitted to mention, the name of Henry with due respect:—her brother was made partaker of her joy,—and her favourite Father Arthur, no longer withheld his visits on the score of shunning the house of strife, where he had so often found it impossible to be a peacemaker.

CHAPTER IX.

PROSPECTS CLEAR.

THE abbey door was opened to the summons of Henry Fitzorton by the good and trusty Dennison, who gave him a thousand welcomes as he entered, and ensured it to him afterwards in the following words, which, after the fashion of the speaker, were delivered as he led the way to the object of Henry's wishes.—“ Joyful news, as I told you, dear squire!—the old gentleman, and God be praised for it, has renounced the Devil and all his works. He's clean and clever another thing,—and he makes us all weep for joy, more than he used heretofore to make us cry for grief. He has made young master happy also!—Miss Caroline is e'en almost aside herself,—and my old wits are about to take leave of me:—and for the matter of that if I thought master would be at his old tricks again,

again, in the way of relapses as they call 'em I had rather bid them good bye now ; —for if the Devil should come into the old boy any more, it would be worfe than before, your honour knows.”

“ True, very true !” answered Henry, who shaking Dennison heartily by the hand, exclaimed in the words of Othello, thinking perhaps rather of his approaching interview, than the old man’s description of Sir Guise, though it would well apply to both, —“ If I were now to die, my dear Dennison, I were now to be most happy !”

“ See what it is to be a scholar !—Learning is better than house or land, after all,” quoth Dennison ;—“ but here,” added the old man, opening the door of that very apartment from which, some weeks before, Henry had been expelled,—“ here is that which is better and prettier than house, land, and learning, put 'em all together !”

Sir Guise and Caroline were both in the room, and both rose to receive Henry. “ Mr. Fitzorton,” said the former, bowing familiarly, “ I had promised myself you would

would have obeyed a lady's summons more willingly ; in which case I should have had more of your company :—but some business calls me out :—I must therefore leave Caroline in the double charge of doing the honours of my welcome and her own.” Sir Guise, repeating his bow, went forth.

The lovers did not for a long space enter into discourse. Henry held Caroline in his arms ; and Caroline, perhaps for the first time since she became sensible to the thrilling power of his magic touch, did not shrink from his embrace. In this situation they gazed on each other with so perfect a joy, that they were deluged in a flood of those tears which at once enrich and give relief to heart-felt felicity.

Having remained, as we have said, several minutes in this situation, Caroline, with a frankness that demonstrated she was superior to the little pride of giving pain when it was consistent with her sense of right to impart pleasure, assured Henry that as the happiness of now telling him, as far as words *could* tell, how dear he was

to her, was derived from her father's goodness, she hesitated not to confess it was the only truly consolatory moment she had experienced since her mother's death,—and, but for that ever-lamented event, would perhaps be the most blissful period of her whole life. When she had said this, her beautiful hand was presented in a way that justified her sentiment.

Anxious to satisfy her heart, in the midst of its own happiness, about that of others, she then made inquiries after Olivia and Jenny Atwood, by observing, “that she never should quite forgive either Henry, or her brother Charles, for the niggard manner in which they had both described Miss Clare, who,” said Caroline, “is absolutely a grace,—a love,—a cherubim! —I have thought of nothing else, Henry, except yourself.—Do you know, she has grown out of my recollection. Ah! in times long past, I remember we flew about our forests, and her and your father's parks, like wood-nymphs:—but, to behold her, in a few years, shot up into such
a noble

a noble yet elegant creature !—I declare, I am surpris'd that my brother and you have not both lost your hearts."

The tell-tale in Henry's cheek might literally be said too often to put him out of countenance,—and either obstruct or contradict the story.

"Even so as I live !" exclaimed Caroline, "and I suppose you are rival friends!—come, be honest, Henry: have I not a shrewd guess?—Indeed I had a suspicion before, as to my brother: but must confess, I—I—I—yet, as I said, it was inevitable! it was—that is,—pshaw! how ridiculous I am! I cannot speak plain to-day.—But, do tell me, Henry, which is to be the happy youth? The all-conquering Henry Fitzorton, doubtless!—Alas, poor Charles! and alas, poor Caroline! prithee inform me,—" (here, on viewing certain changes of colour in Henry's countenance, her own underwent more serious alterations) "do, I—I—I—*beseech* you, instruct me, which of you claims my—my—felicitations?
which

which my condolence!—But—no—you may save yourself the trouble:—I perceive who I am to congratulate! You—yes—yes—you—are the happy man, Mr. Fitzorton: I—I—I—give you joy.”

A few minutes previously to this conversation, Henry had, in obedience to Olivia's wish, presented, with proper comments as he delivered his message, that lovely girl's miniature;—but even this, as it turned out, was an addition to his misfortunes;—for as Caroline surveyed the well-imitated countenance, her own actual visage coloured to crimson;—she admitted the excessive likeness, the extreme beauty:—she even pressed it to her lips, and declared it represented an angel in beauty as in graces: yet her voice faltered, her eye filled with tears, her lips quivered; and, lest it should drop from her trembling hand, she laid it down.—Henry saw, with strangely mingled emotions, that the sublime Caroline could fear and feel a supposed rival.

Henry could not but make the discovery

covery with a proud and heartfelt consciousness, that he was most dear to her whom he adored: but he still found himself daily more and more entangled in the web of his perplexing destiny. While a sensation like this was oppressing him, he fixed his eyes on those of Caroline, and exclaimed:—“ Good Heaven! when—when shall the unfortunate Henry be understood by any body ?”

“ He *is* understood,” answered Caroline, taking his hand, and raising the back of it to her lips:—“ and thus I solicit forgiveness for the—I hope—almost only unworthy emotions, begun in sport, and continued to seriousness, that ever my bosom harboured.—Oh! may they never more be its guests!—how has Caroline dared for a moment to express a doubt of Henry Fitzorton’s faith, his oaths, his honour? I see and acknowledge the justice of his reproach: the accusing spirit arms his countenance! Yes, well may that deep indignation which overspreads his face, be kindled against Caroline! Would she had

been as incapable of a base suspicion, as he is of the treachery that would warrant it!—and yet, Henry, the strongest test of our affection is the weakness of our fears, even when we are assured they are without a shadow of foundation! But, as indifference never felt those fears,—nay, as indeed nothing but the most unalterable love was ever guilty of this weakness, if guilt it can be called,—surely my Henry will forgive it.”

Henry caught her passionately in his arms, still struggling with his emotions: and Caroline,—feeling that the supposed crime of accusation could not be too effectually done away,—entered at once into the plan of happiness, which he earnestly hoped would result to both families, from her father’s present favourable disposition towards them.—“Surely, my dearest Henry, this may be improved;—our beloved Charles may have his share in the accommodation;—I have a whisper for you about him, and the lovelier original of this lovely similitude:—I will tell it you, when you have entirely sealed my pardon, and reconciled

ciled me to myself. Should it be any way in your power, I know how readily you will promote the happiness of *your* friend, and *my* brother."

These expressions Caroline accompanied by such atoning smiles, and by those little endearing attentions which are of such immeasurable magnitude in matters of affection,—that, had Henry really been as displeased as he had been delighted, and but half as much in love as the reader knows he was,—he must not only have forgiven but forgotten all her offences. But, some farther questions which Caroline put to him, by way of finishing the whole,—tore open again all those wounds, and made them bleed with renovated fury.—“How—ah how, my Henry,” said she, “even now *my* father, Sir Guise Stuart, is not averse to our happiness,—how is *yours*,—how is Sir Armine Fitzorton to be reconciled to accept of—of—of——?”

Caroline held down her head; and a very different hue—the hue of fear—usurped her cheek.—“Even now that Sir Guise is be-

come fully sensible of his son's exalted merits,—how will the venerable father of such a son," said she, "be persuaded to give his honouring hand to Caroline?—I suppose it has been impossible for my Henry even to glance at this circumstance: but possibly—for I know your generous sollicitude—possibly you may have employed your brother John, who, I am sure, bears good will to Charles, and must adore you;—or your brother James may have undertaken to sound your father on this subject:—or the sweet Olivia herself, who has a face and figure to convert hate into love,—by the bye, I cannot think how you came to prefer me to that angel;—'tis well for *me* that love is blind:—I say, Henry, it may be that you have got that charming creature to speak in favour of Caroline; though I think, 'tis as strange that she should not love you, and that you should not love her—heigho!—well, how I run on! yet, methinks, I should like to owe the greatest happiness upon earth to Olivia. And poor Jane Atwood!—I blush to think my selfish heart

heart has so long neglected her: she is an old acquaintance of mine;—but it is impossible to express my astonishment, when I saw her with you and Miss Clare,—though, to say the truth, we every one of us appeared to be planet-struck.—Do explain all this.”

Caroline had hardly ended her interrogatories, before Dennison came to the door, rather stealing in than delivering a letter, which, he said, was brought from the castle, in great haste, by Mr. True George, and that he believed it required an answer.—Dennison, however,—having, like George, an high veneration for the privacy of all true lovers, and especially these,—no sooner perceived they were in earnest discourse, than he immediately withdrew, saying he should answer the bell the moment their honours thought proper to ring.

CHAPTER X.

PROSPECTS CLOUD AGAIN.

LET the reader go back to the state of Henry's mind, previous to the receipt of this epistle, and he will not wonder that the additional anxiety it produced, was too vehement to be concealed from Caroline,—who, suspecting some misfortune had happened at the castle, earnestly entreated he would break the seal.—He obeyed with a trepidation that denoted he knew not in whose presence he was about to commit this rash act : and having read it to the end,—in the progress of doing which, Caroline vigilantly watched the varying emotions and passions that took possession of his countenance,—he rose, traversed the room, and stamped with a vehemence which surpassed all former displays of his known enthusiasm.—It was a sudden access of insupportable phrenzy :—he smote his breast, earnestly supplicated pardon of Caroline on his knees,—then flung from her, deplored he had ever seen her,—and execrated his

own being.—“ My hour is at last come ;
—long desired, long fought,—it is now
arrived.—Death, sudden death, would be
relief,—mercy,—blessedness !” —The af-
frighted Caroline, who lost all her usual
presence of mind, wanted power to con-
sole him ;—speech, colour, motion, and al-
most life forsook her ;—the disordered soul
of her lover now having ascended its tre-
mendous climax, he caught her hand, and
again smiting his bosom, exclaimed,—
“ Oh Caroline ! ill-fated Caroline !—the
utmost malice of antipathy never equalled
this constant, this cruel conspiracy of love
and affection, to which I see it is the de-
termination of my whole family to sacrifice
the lost, the agonizing Henry !—But you,
and you only, can prevent it, Caroline.—
Behold ! read ! from my dear inhuman fa-
ther !—I am bound !—I am at the stake ;
the fires are kindling around me !—and my
peace, my happiness, my heart itself will
be consumed, if *you* do not this instant de-
vise some means to save me from being
led to the hated altar.”

Caroline took the fatal scroll, and read it with such pauses and ejaculations, as its contents were well formed to create.

HENRY FITZORTON, ESQ.

Beloved Son, *Fitzorton Castle.*

“ OLIVIA,—the pride of all our hearts, the ornament of both our houses, and the glory of Henry, the sole possessor of her love,—having informed me you are gone on a visit to the abbey, to explain the story of Jane Atwood, I take the earliest opportunity of my being able to hold the pen, to tell you I rejoice to find, by a letter from our excellent John, this instant come to hand, that the report is groundless, which insinuated the clandestine disposal of your heart, where your hand must never be given, without forfeiting all claims to the affections of your family,—‘ Believe it not, sir,’ says John in his letter, ‘ neither attempt to trace the *infamous falsehood* to its source:—a life most dear to us all might be sacrificed to a worthless slanderer. Eject the aspersions, even out of your and my mother’s bosom; forget it ever gained entrance

entrance

entrance there;—blame almost your own credulity, as I did mine severely, and take Henry to your arms.’

“Olivia is in my chamber while I write; and seeing that some tears had got unawares into the furrows of my cheek, she has been kissing them off without inquiring the cause: and did she know it, how would her sweet eyes stream in sympathy!—but, I told her, and truly, that I now wept for *joy*, and for love of her dear Henry, to whom I was sending agreeable tidings.—‘Are you, sir?’ said she.—‘Then, for heaven’s sake, make haste, that he may get them speedily:—had I wings which could aid me to fly half as fast as my wishes, he should have what you have *already* written: and ere he had read those, I would come back to carry him the remainder.’—Henry, I wish not to disparage any amiable woman, whether the daughter of friend or enemy:—but, excepting her who gave to me the blessing of *your* life, Olivia Clare surpasses all I have yet seen: and I can truly say, I love her as well as if

she were my own blood;—I do not think it will be possible to appreciate her more when she is your wife,—which I hope, and trust God, she will be in a few days. You know not how busied Mr. Clare, the too generous Mr. Clare has been, to hasten the hour of your felicity; but sickness and infirmity, you know, my dear boy, are loitering agents in the affairs of love.—Olivia has lost all patience at this length of letter, and seems to think I never shall have done.—‘Old men are so tedious!’—I can see that expression written on her lovely face. She has been herself to light the taper, has laid some of her own wax, and a seal which bears *true* love’s motto—‘*Always the same*’—close to me, and has many times told me your privy counsellor, True George, is ready. Therefore, I must hasten to bless you, and bid you farewell.

“ARMINE FITZORTON.”

CHAPTER XI.

RECAPITULATION.

WHILE Caroline was reading the fatal letter, the disastrous Henry sat rocking himself in a chair, with his hands spread over his face.

Caroline now perceived that she had before spoken but too prophetically,—that she had been long supplanting another woman,—and that woman an inmate of her lover's family,—each, and all of whom, with the concurrence of her own father, approved of the alliance.—She had not, for some time, the power of utterance, or of motion;—but vainly trying to fold up and return the packet, she let one of the sheets fall to the ground, and begging Henry's pardon, attempted to pick it up;—then tottering towards the nearest chair, she sunk into it, and remained in tearless consternation; at length she made an effort to rise, with intent to leave the apart-

E 6 ment:

ment:—Henry observing her, rose also, and throwing himself at her feet, “I perceive you look upon me to be far more culpable than I am,” said he; —“and you impute to treachery the effect of dire misfortune.—I call, therefore, as well upon your justice, as your humanity, to hear me.”—Without waiting for her permission or reply, he recapitulated, as clearly as he was able, the whole secret history of his situation with Olivia,—with the long train of mysteries, perils, and penalties, that had attended it, from the first moment of his discovering the family designs, to the very instant of his taking leave of her at the castle. He then took a retrospective view of the insurmountable difficulties that had hitherto been placed in the way of his explanation of himself, either to his own father, to Olivia’s, to his brothers, to Olivia herself, or to Caroline. He enumerated the fundry and manifold attempts he had made towards this, to each, to all,—and the ways and means by which all his purposes were defeated.

The forcible manner in which he painted these sad truths, and the agonies he had endured, from this necessary suppression,—his abhorrence of all duplicity, notwithstanding the appearance of having acted the part of a dissembler,—the nights he had past in the forest, when the castle was irksome, and the abbey shut against him, —brought a shower of tears from the lovely eyes of Caroline.—Her wisdom, goodness, and unalterable affection, he declared he must now regard as the supporting pillars that were to sustain him against the anger of his parents,—the resentment of Mr. Clare, and the displeasure of his brothers;—all of which, however, he might consider as unfair and unwarranted, since they had, though with generous intentions, ensnared him, without his consent or concurrence, given or implied in any manner whatever.—Chiefly he relied on his Caroline for counsel, how best to break the affair to Olivia, for whose peace of mind, he swore he would sacrifice every consideration in the world, but the honour, faith,
and

and eternal happiness of his own.—He then observed, in conclusion,—“that her brother Charles *only* shared the sorrows of his heart;—and, he was confident his friend would aid her to remove them.”—To all this, Caroline only said, faintly, “I am extremely unwell; you must suffer me to depart:—the terrifying circumstances which you have related, and which I have read, shall, when I am able to think, be duly considered.—But, oh! if you ever wish me to have the power of thinking again do not detain me now,”—She left her chair with great difficulty,—in tremulous accents bade Henry adieu,—and quitted him in a state, compared to which, probably, many of his former situations of mind, thought at the time to be intolerable, were consoling.

He did not, however, remain long in this condition;—for a gentleman entered the room soon after, who came, in this crisis, as a comforter,—being his second appearance in that character.—This was no other than Sir Guise Stuart, who was
extremely

extremely surpris'd to find him alone, and equally concern'd at seeing him so much out of spirits.—Henry, hereupon, notwithstanding his former ill-luck when he tried to gain the baronet over to his interest, was now so thoroughly convinc'd of the sincerity of that gentleman's reform, that he repeated the heads of what he had said to Caroline,—acquainting him with the abrupt manner in which she had gone out of the room, and conjuring him, by all those things which have most weight with good friends and fathers,—namely, honour, humanity, and the dread of plunging his own child, and the man she loved, in ruin,—to use his strongest, dearest influence, to persuade his daughter to give him such an answer, as, with his own intercessions and explanations at the abbey, might bring about the general satisfaction, and their particular happiness.—All this Sir Guise very kindly promis'd to do;—“And, surely,” said the amiable baronet,—“if I am ready to forget my wrongs, and acknowledge my share of error in the subjects

jects that divided our families,—Caroline may contribute her part to the good work.—As to poor Miss Clare, that, to be sure,” cries Sir Guise,—“is the worst part of the business; and there is no foreseeing how Caroline may take it;—or, if she could be brought to pass it over, who knows but the lady’s father, and yours, and all your family, might consider it a stronger objection to an alliance with our house, even than our other domestick hostilities:—however, depend on it, nothing shall be wanting on my part consistent with my friendship and my own honour.”—After this, Sir Guise stayed consoling Henry for a considerable time.—Caroline’s waiting-woman coming into the room to enquire whether Mr. Fitzorton was gone,—the considerate baronet said in a whisper to Henry, while he beckoned the servant to stop,—“Had not you better hear her answer now?” Henry eagerly assenting, the maid was directed to say, her lady’s company was earnestly entreated for a few minutes;—and, while the girl was going on this message,

fage,

sage, Sir Guise himself departed, saying, at this exit, and with right dramatick effect, “It will be best to leave you together;—I may be some check upon her;—and it is necessary, you know, to have her own undisguised sentiments;—after which, in the degree that they oppose our own, we may take our measures.”—“You are too good, Sir Guise,” said Henry, cordially taking his hand, and drawing it towards his bosom.—As Sir Guise went out, he cried, still dramatick, and at the edge of the scene, —“I must away:—she will surprize us:—I will take a turn in the garden:—there is yet half an hour’s light; and as you certainly will not think of leaving us till after supper, an opportunity may occur for your telling me what she says;—hush—I hear her coming down stairs;—this door, however will conduct me into the garden by another way.—Be sure you tell me all that passes.”

Caroline, re-entered the room almost in the same moment her father had left it.—She had been in tears.—Her
visage

visage was pale, and her limbs yet trembled. With less interruption, however, than she had herself apprehended, she at length addressed Henry :—“ Though I expected, from my maid’s report, to find my father with you, I rejoice,—alas ! why do I talk of rejoicing ? It is—it is best you are alone,—I know not, whether what I feel at this moment, Henry, deserves so harsh a name as woman’s weakness ;—but I am ready to confess, that the tenderness which is the cause of it, is almost too much for me to bear. Alas ! the preparation of a whole life, for a history like that you have told,—and for supporting the event which I—I—I foresee, will—must—result from it—”

“ What event ? ” cried Henry, catching her hand, and looking as if he anticipated the most dreadful of all the evils which can happen to man. “ Do not interrupt me ! ” resumed Caroline, answering his look of impetuosity and terror, by one of energy, that commanded his patient attention.—“ You will not take an undue advantage,
Henry,

Henry, of the tenderness I have, even at a crisis like this, avowed for you. Ah! what an hour have I past since I left you! Alas! this apartment seems to be marked out by our ill fortune, as the spot where I am to meet varieties of wretchedness!—Here was my poor mother struck with that which proved her dying disorder!—Here was asseverated a father's curse! Here! O! why have I forced upon me the remembrance of these successive calamities?—they unfit me to endure the present:—alas! it is so sudden, so unexpected!—it has fallen upon me in so cruel a moment!—Pardon me!—I feel altogether unequal to the conversation I would wish to hold, or the conduct I ought to pursue:—this last dire blow has left me nothing but powerless tears!" Such tears, indeed, fell from her eyes, in overwhelming torrents;—and, Henry, instead of drying them up, could only augment the torrent. Relieved, however, at length, Caroline observed, "that the impression left on her mind by the past intelligence, would be eternal:—that, amidst

amidst all her selfish regrets, and the agonising ideas that gave them birth, she had sense and honour enough to be convinced Henry Fitzorton and Caroline Stuart were now placed beyond—so far beyond the possible reach of each other, that, even if her father were to lay his sacred commands upon her to marry, she should, in this second instance of her life, think herself justified in disobeying him.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE STORM INCREASES.

CAROLINE paused and wept.—She then recapitulated his situation,—placed before him all the strong parts of his duty, and her own,—shewed, in new points of view, the irresistible claims that Olivia, her father, and both the families had upon him ;—she observed, that, though strange impediments had combined to prevent him from an earlier explication, those very impediments had given force to the pretensions of Olivia, who,

who, never suspecting any impediments had existence, had been cherishing a pure affection. She gently upbraided Henry, for supposing that she herself would deign to become his wife, under the corroding consciousness of having made *any* other woman, who had so many superior claims, unhappy,—but more especially Olivia Clare, the friend of her earliest youth.—“ Misfortune has, I hope, inured my heart to bear what would probably break that of Miss Clare, who has been bred up by every smiling power, in the lap of indulgence,—the pride and joy of two respectable families, and has perhaps never known any disappointment but what I have already occasioned.—Ah, Henry! how would she hate your Caroline!—alas! yours, did I say?—how would she contemn the cause of all the delays and mysteries which have involved her in one eternal maze, did she know that Caroline Stuart had, like her evil genius, so often robbed her of Henry’s dear society!”

“ And will it not,” said Henry, starting

up with violence,—“will it not be far worse, to give my loathing hand to Olivia,—and the after-proof come out, that she has been the cause of all my misery and yours?—and, though she never can have my hate, she never had my love, and would *then* be the bane of Henry’s, of Caroline’s, and of her own happiness.”

“No such proof,” cries Caroline, more assuredly,—“need ever happen.—You are too good and generous, to treat any woman who sincerely loves you, unkindly;—and kindness from Henry Fitzorton, will be in the place of a warmer sentiment:—nay, it is, in him, a sentiment more tender than the love of an ordinary mind.—At all events, it is in your power to make Olivia Clare the happiest of women!—But Caroline Stuart, whom you have now acquainted with your situation, you could render even more wretched.—There remains nothing for her but accommodation to those severe trials in which, alas! her whole life has been past. Oh! I blush not, though I weep, to say I would not yield up the prospect,

spect, which delusive hope recently spread before me, on weak surmises,—or let any visionary clouds, that might gather to darken it, prevail.—No!—I would embrace whatever might dispel the surrounding darkness!—But, cast your eyes on every side; and you will see the fatal necessity of taking our resolution.”

“Hold!” exclaimed Henry:—“I see the point you aim at:—your resolution would not effect the general peace, to which you would thus sacrifice your own happiness and mine.—I warn you, that it would subvert it.—There is a cause still behind.”

“Alas! alas! there can be none,” interrupted Caroline, still bathed in tears:—“there can be no cause, why I should not here solemnly bind myself by the most irrevocable vow never more to see Henry Fitzorton,—the pride, pleasure, and passion of my soul,—till—till he is the husband—of—of—”

“The husband!—of whom?” exclaimed Henry:—“of Olivia Clare? Oh monstrous! monstrous! Oh God!”—exclaimed Henry, raising

raising the convulsing form of Caroline into his arms,—“yes, this barbarous effect, even of the very *thought*, is a fresh proof, dearest life, that, were Henry Fitzorton the husband of Olivia Clare, he would be the most perjured traitor to love and friendship!—he would be the most perfidious viper, to sting and wound every breast most dear;—and Caroline Stuart would become accessory to all his fraud, to all his treachery. Alas! my love,” continued he, still holding and still caressing the unresisting, the almost lifeless Caroline,—“there is yet another fatal mystery to be explained.”—“Reserve it,” said Caroline, faintly:—“I can hear—I can bear no more.”—“Remember,” said Henry,—“remember that I bid you beware, as you would avoid the despair, the destruction of all that is precious to your blood,—beware of coming to any resolution which shall preclude you from acting as your future duty may prescribe. Your brother can disclose the rest.”

Caroline had been several times waving her

her hand, as a sign for Henry's leaving her, assuring him, by such broken sentences as she could utter, that he might depend on her doing what she thought was right,—but that she could not answer to what a degree her illness might augment, if he persisted in the conversation any longer, till she was more recovered. Henry, went mournfully but hastily out of the room, and met Sir Guise Stuart gliding from an adjoining apartment. He appeared, however, somewhat confused and agitated. Few words, therefore, passed between them; and those purported, on the part of Henry, a request to defer the particulars of his discourse with Caroline, on account of her sudden indisposition, till the next day, alledging, that as his father was confined to his chamber, it would be expected he should sup at the castle.

With this requisition the worthy baronet readily complied,—expressing less curiosity than might have been expected: and very civilly demanded of Henry, whether he chose any of the servants to attend him;

and, on his courtesy being as handsomely declined, they parted.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TEMPEST AT ITS HEIGHT.

THIS truly amiable and as truly unhappy Caroline remained without words, and almost without sense, long after her lover's reluctant obedience to her repeated requisition. The first thing which struck her when she felt herself somewhat collected, was Olivia's miniature, which Henry had left on the table in his general agitation. Her examination of this led her to account for several of the mysterious expressions which fell from Henry towards the close of his conversation; for, on his way to the abbey, Henry had pencilled on the paper that had been the envelope of the picture, and which remained also on the table, "This shall be a transfer to dear Charles." Thus, not only the words of her brother, which were
once

once overheard and asserted to her by Denison, but those which Charles himself dropt the same morning previous to his setting out to join his regiment, were brought forcibly to her mind.

It was hence apparent that her brother loved Olivia; and not less evident that Olivia had fixed her entire affection upon Henry; and finally, that both Henry and Charles were, nevertheless, in the strictest friendship. But, although this discovery developed the maze one way, it involved it in another, beyond all her power to unravel; one inflexible truth pressed on her in a more unrelenting shape even than it had before,—that whether Henry and Olivia were or were not to be united, Henry and Caroline could never join.

In this state of perplexity, her father entered the room; and although he was in some perturbation from a cause yet untold, he saw his daughter's dejected countenance with parental regret, and observed on it, that, as the occasion had in some measure been related by Mr. Fitzorton, he would

not give her the pain of again telling the story, but do every thing in his power to make her happy; saying at the same time, she must be sensible, as well as Henry, how ready he had been to sacrifice himself to their felicity, though he could not take upon him to answer for events, and that he relied upon both her and Henry doing him every justice with his son Charles.

The deeply-afflicted Caroline acknowledged that his goodness was written in the tablets of her heart, and that she was sure Mr. Fitzorton and her brother would ever retain a due sense of it; then entreated her father's indulgence to retire for the night.

Sir Guise granted this petition also, as willingly as he had done the other, and after saying he hoped a good night's rest would set all right again, desired her to hope the best, called her his dear Caroline, and bade her adieu.

Since the burial of Lady Stuart, Caroline had succeeded to the chamber in which that amiable woman died; her motives in giving that chamber the preference to every

every other in the house, proceeded from the sincere affection which attaches itself to whatever brings to mind the venerated though departed object. But since her father's turn of behaviour, she considered the prospect from her former apartment as both literally and figuratively clearing up, and had therefore moved into *it* again. But now that it was overcast by another cloud more dark and menacing than any of the former, she settled the plan of a third alteration even as she was ascending the stairs,—sent her woman for her night-dress,—and directed her steps once more to the room of Lady Stuart.

All that was heroick about Caroline was subdued. She had not only exerted, but exhausted, whatever the natural strength or acquired energy of her mind could supply, to support her in the last discourse she had held with Henry; and from the weariness of a soul more harassed than the frame that enclosed it, she had scarcely gained her mother's room ere an extreme faintness overtook her, and she fell down in a swoon,

in which, without any violence,—indeed, scarcely without any sound or motion,—she remained till the maid whom she had sent into the other chamber came to restore her,—or, more properly speaking, till persecuted nature by a temporary suspension of life restored herself.

When this amiable but unfortunate girl was again left, at her strong desire, alone, she cast a mournful look over the apartment, and derived some little comfort from reflecting that her dear mother, who breathed her last in it, was now in her peaceful tomb.—“That is some comfort yet!”—said she:—“it is the cordial drop thrown into the bitter cup of my despair!”

Taking from her pocket that handkerchief of which her eyes but too much stood in need,—she felt the little packet that Henry left with her, whether discreetly or not, we cannot now stop to consider, for her brother.—Her confusion, at the time it was first shewn her, did not allow her to observe it accurately,—scarcely, indeed, to take it from the paper in which it was
wrapt,

wrapt, or to do more than lay it again on the table:—indeed, she did not, as yet, know whether it was intended for her inspection;—for she seemed now to have no memory of any thing but her own weighty sorrows. On taking it up again, however, it slipped from the silken envelope which Olivia had folded round it.—She once more examined the resemblance of the innocent girl who had already been the cause of so much anguish to the families which she so anxiously desired to see happy.

It is not an easy matter to describe the mixed sensations that took possession of Caroline as she attentively looked on this picture:—how distinct from those she felt on receiving that of Lady Stuart, and the two others, from the hands of her dying mother!—At Olivia's she looked, and to Olivia she spake, as if it were the original—“Beautiful author of the misery which awaits us all,” said she,—“dear play-mate, when life was young,—wherefore are we rivals?—Yet, how was it to be avoided?—how could it be possible for thee to live

in the presence of my Henry—of *thy* Henry, and his thousand virtues, and not give him all thy heart, even, alas, as I gave him mine?—And what but that pride which must now be severely humiliated, could so long blind me to the certainty of this?—But how is it that his own has escaped the magick of thy merit and thy charms?—how has it been possible for him not to return thy passion?—Yet love is capricious; else had thy empire been unquestioned.—Ah! had thou honoured my dear unhappy brother with thy affection, —for now I see into the source of his long concealed distress!—Yet, thou art not my rival, but my associate in grief.—Even the irreparable loss which Caroline must sustain, will be no gain to thee, Olivia!—We must both be wretched—wretched in the extreme!”

The breath of her sighs had dimmed the crystal of the miniature: but her tears falling fast upon it at the same time,—“Heaven knows,” continued she,—“I would not willingly obscure thy sight or happiness;

nor wouldst thou mine!—Ah! that we could relieve the misfortunes which I foresee are in store for us both!—for indeed, Olivia, to thy painted image I may, without fear of wounding thee, confess, Henry Fitzorton cannot be more dear to thee, than he was—than he is—and, I fear, ever, ever must be to ——”

She pressed the miniature to her bosom, without finishing the sentence.

In the struggle of these emotions, she ad turned the miniature on the other side, which presented several little devices, done with Olivia's hair, such as Cupid and Hymen binding Venus with her own cestus;—and, underneath, a motto in pearls, suitable to the design;—on seeing which, she uttered many more sentiments expressive of her feelings; in the course of which, she adverted, for the first time since the death of her mother, to the circumstance of her own and brother's miniatures, which she knew had been in Lady Stuart's possession, and not spoken of at the time when she received the other, on the very bed which

was now spread before her.—Thinking, however, they were deposited in some of her mother's drawers, into which she had not yet examined, all thoughts respecting them soon subsided.—That of her mother, however, she drew from her bosom, which had been its “most delicate lodging” ever since, and kissed it fervently,—then returning it to its tender but now trembling throne, she resumed her attentions to Henry and Olivia, who appeared by turns to occupy her entire soul.—It is beyond question, that her affection for the one, notwithstanding all increase of misery and impediment, was now at its height;—and her pity for the other, derived, perhaps, partly from fellow-feeling, was no less extreme.

The sense of her father's unwonted kindness, the sincerity of which was not for one moment doubted, relieved her much;—she thought it far better that her sorrows should flow from any but the *domestick* fountain, whose waters of strife indeed are the most bitter we can possibly taste.

She then adverted to her brother,—and
again

again taking up Olivia's picture, she exclaimed, in a softly rebuking tone,—“And thou also are the unhappy cause of my dear Charles's affliction,—a youth scarce less deserving thy adoration than Henry himself!—But for his love of thee, O insensible! he, at least, might have been happy; and in this dread hour of my own woe, I might have looked up to him for comfort, courage, and pity.—He will now, alas! be absorbed by his own griefs.”

She had no sooner uttered these reproaches against Olivia, than she turned several of a more bitter kind, and with as little reason, against herself, whom she accused of cruelty, folly, falsehood, and madness. She next pressed the miniature to her lips, and bestowed on it a kiss, in token of her reconciliation and repentance.—In short, she proved in every reflection, that she was in love, and in despair.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTINUES TO RAGE.

WHILE the picture was yet at her lips, the door was opened by her woman, who, seeing her mistress not yet in bed, first announced, and then ushered in, Charles Stuart.—“Dearest sister, forgive my impatience:—I am this instant dismounted from my horse,—but your father telling me you had retired to your chamber at this early hour, I was alarmed, especially as he said our beloved Henry had passed the afternoon here, and had but just left you.—I should have thought such a *tête-a-tête*,—for my father intimated he had left you together,—under such smiling prospects too, would have kept sleep from your eyes for this week to come!”—“My dear, dear Charles!” cried she, tenderly embracing her brother,—“sleep was never farther from them than at this moment:—or had they been closed, surely nothing but the sleep

sleep of death could have rendered me insensible to the arrival of my ever good and affectionate brother." — "Sleep!" answered Charles, surveying her countenance:—"no—those eyes, I perceive, have been but too much awake!—For heaven's sake, what is the matter?"—"Is not joy, as well as grief," returned Caroline,—“the cause of tears?”—"Ah! my sister," cries Charles, "but that pallid countenance, that desolate air, and the galled borders of those weeping lids, demonstrate a far different cause than that of joy. I thought to have found you and my friend as happy as mutual love and a father's authority could make you; and I came, with all the speed of friendship for him and affection for you, to devise some means that might incline those towards your happiness, who might be averse to it. And that miniature in your hand! Has our beloved Henry at last given it to you?—I chid him once, that he had not done it before, and called him a loitering lover."

"No,

“No, truly,” said Caroline, sobbing with stifled emotions: “It is not his.”

“Not his!” returned Charles: “surely nothing can have happened between you, to make him return your own!”

“My own?” exclaimed Caroline.—
 “Yes, Caroline,” said Charles: “I found yours with mine, on that very bed soon after our ever-lamented mother had expired, and gave him both with the benediction of her dying breath, still warm upon them. He was entitled to the gifts: for, now that saint is in heaven, who upon earth can love Caroline and Charles, like Henry Fitzorton? I will not think any thing could induce him to give it back:—let me see!—perhaps he has presented you with mine:—but could that make you weep?”

“It *is* yours, Charles,” said Caroline,—
 “and left with me in trust, to present to you the moment I should see you.”

Caroline gave the miniature to her brother, who, on the first view, exclaimed—
 “Gracious heaven! what do I see, my dear Olivia? Tell me, sister, I conjure
 you,

you,—tell me, have our happy destinies been so run together, that while heaven knows how disinterestedly I have been labouring for the felicity of Henry and Caroline,—they, by some yet unknown good fortune, have been promoting the happiness of Charles and Olivia?—Oh! if I could flatter my heart that this dear, dear resemblance of all which is most precious, was given by the loved original, to be presented by Henry to Caroline, and by her to Charles!—but that is impossible:—I rave!—alas! it is no wonder!—I love:—forgive! pity me!”

Here, instead of ending his rhapsody, he fell to kiss and caress the miniature,—ejaculating as he gazed, “Is she not an angel, Caroline?—did you ever behold such a brow?—such an eye?—such a lip?—she certainly inspired the artist! who is he?—I could worship him!—why do you not speak?—Oh my foreboding heart! you are weeping still!”

Caroline felt the utmost regret at the sad necessity of dissolving the charm that bound

up her brother's senses, or rather at restoring him to sense, out of that sweet delirium that carried him beyond the bounds of reason, into that delicious phrenzy, which, to such dispositions, in such situations, affords bliss superior perhaps to what reason ever gave.—Finding, however, that he was still impatient,—nay, that he stamp'd and raved for explanation,—she at length reluctantly cried,—“ Alas! Charles, would I could continue the delusion till it could be realized!—I grieve to say our disappointments are reciprocal: yet your friend Henry desired that picture might be given,—but told me, you would explain the impossibility of the original ever becoming *his* wife!”

“ *His* wife!” reiterated Charles.—Friendship forbid!—Should I live to see that day!—but I conjure you to tell me all:—if the happiness—the life of your brother be matter of concern, conceal not a tittle of what I perceive is now labouring in your bosom.—The sudden sight of this miniature has indeed hurried me to a sweet
oblivion

oblivion of all my cares ;—but I now return to the curse of my reason, and the certainty of my despair !—Olivia !—Olivia !—my delight !—my destruction !”

He now again renewed his attentions to the picture,—swore, that, with whatever intent it was put into his hands, it should never go out of them more,—and concluded with asseverating, that, unless Caroline immediately satisfied his heart in all it panted to know, he would quit the abbey that moment, and repair to the castle, to demand of Henry a full explanation.

The wild and extravagant manner in which he spoke, terrified Caroline ;—but looking at him with a softness that might have extracted the sting almost from despair itself,—“ Alas ! my brother,” said she, “ could my life procure to you and your friend Henry the bliss you have lost, it should be laid at your feet !” —She then explained all that had happened in the conversation betwixt her and Henry : and when she had brought down her narrative to the deposit of the miniature, she observed,

served, that she referred, for the particulars respecting Olivia and Charles, to Charles himself.—“ Our dear father, however,” said Caroline, “ deserves our warmest acknowledgments on this occasion:—he has shewn such indulgence, that my grateful soul avows he has made ample reparation for all former mistakes;—nay, I feel assured, that, as much as in him lies,—oh! that his power were now equal to his generous inclinations!—he will promote the loves of Charles and Olivia. I am persuaded he will.—If for Caroline he could condescend so greatly, what exertion will he not make for the felicity of his darling son?—But, as yet, my brother, I am to learn how far you yourself are interested in this matter.—I long, yet dread to hear!”

“ O Caroline!” replied Charles,—“ if I have hitherto concealed from you the secrets and the sorrows of my heart, it was from the same generous motives that actuated my beloved friend to keep them from you.”—He then related at length the story of his unfortunate attachment,—the
friendly

friendly behaviour of Henry,—and the noble conduct of John Fitzorton.—He enlarged upon the cruel kindness of the whole family to him,—confessed that his visits at the castle, like those of Henry at the abbey, were the consequence, rather of love than of friendship:—he particularly dwelt on the manifest impossibility of his ever becoming, in any measure, dear to Olivia, till the passion of Henry for Caroline was declared;—yet acknowledged that he did not see, though he had revolved it ten thousand times in his mind, how such a declaration was to be made:—he averred, if so heart-rending an event as the union of Henry and Olivia were to take place,—though heaven could witness that his friendship for the former could be surpassed only by his love of the latter,—he would not, dared not, think on what might ensue! —“ Oh Caroline! for the sake of pity, friendship, love, suggest something:—my brain seems turning as I speak to you.—My sister and my friend alone are in the confidence of my affliction!—it involves themselves!

themselves!—it will spread to all who belong to us!—Caroline, weigh the matter well:—I am distracted.”

He broke from her, and hurried down stairs, leaving his sister more perplexed than ever:—the miniature of Olivia had wrought him to a curiosity, whose gratification had proved worse than the mystery of his sister's distress.—In short, she perceived, that Charles had been long as violently in love with Olivia, as Henry could possibly be with herself:—but with this strong and unfortunate difference in the returns of the passion,—that Olivia was not sensible to, indeed was not conscious of, the tenderness of Charles;—whereas Caroline felt in the bottom of her tyrannized heart, in despite of her disappointment and despair,—that it beat only for Henry.

It was no less apparent to her, that her brother and her Henry had been generously, but unavailingly, playing into each other's hands, to prosper their affection by imparting favourable impressions of each other to the beloved object;—and that,
although

although the interest of Charles, was not, thereby, in any measure advanced, Henry had not acted with less zeal, consistent with the caution it was thought right to observe, than Charles; in fine, that the friendship of these young men was equally noble, generous, and indefatigable.

CHAPTER XV.

HYPOCRISY TRIUMPHANT.

THE vigilant Sir Guise was upon the stairs to receive his son when he came from Caroline's apartment;—solemnly protesting, the supreme delight of his life would be to see his offspring as happy as their own wishes could make them,—which was an exact compromise betwixt sincerity and deceit; for in the case of Charles it was true, and in that of Caroline it was false.

“It is needless, my dear Charles,” said this affectionate father,—“to give you the pain of repeating your discourse with Caroline:”

line:—I have heard too much already for my peace, and I see you are much affected.—This letter, indeed,” added Sir Guise, “is, of itself, a history of the plans carrying on at the castle:—but do not read it at present: to-morrow morning you will be more able to take measures in behalf of your poor sister, and counteract their stratagems.”

Charles received the letter; and seeing it had been written by Sir Armine,—indeed it was that brought to the abbey for Henry, and left there in confusion,—“I must read it, sir,” said Charles, “though every sentence were a poignard, and my life-blood should flow from the wounds.”—He perused the fatal epistle which had already been the cause of so much distress: and when he came to the passages, that mentioned the state of the preparation for Olivia’s marriage, he burst forth into the most extravagant gestures and expressions.

“Have you come to that part,” said Sir Guise, “where Fitzorton insolently talks
of

of the disgrace and *infamy* of an alliance with our family?"

Charles replied to this question, only by a wild, insensible kind of stare.

"And did you take notice, my dear boy, of the saucy air which the proud-hearted John gives himself,—insinuating, that an union with the Stuarts would be pollution?"

"O Sir! breathe not an accent against John Fitzorton,"—answered Charles, recovering himself.—"He is the second young man in the world; and his brother, my friend Henry, is the first;—my obligations to both are infinite; and I love Henry next to—— but, perdition! if he marries her!—it must not be!—I will sooner put an end to both their lives,—to my own!"

Charles crushed the paper between his hands,—then opened and read it again.

His father began to fear he had carried this exploit too far:—he saw with terror these violences increase,—and did not know how soon they might be turned upon himself.

"What

“What is this I see?”—questioned Charles, taking a light to read the passage more clearly.—“Who is this?—Jane Atwood!”

“Jane Atwood!”—reiterated Sir Guise, who,—in his eagerness to shew his son, doubtless for some good reason, this letter,—had forgot what he would at present have concealed:—but after the confusion of a moment, he exclaimed with admirable presence of mind,—“Yes, they have, I understand, hunted up that infamous hussy, in order to fortify themselves with fresh malice, and do me fresh mischief in the county.—Think, Charles, what I am ready to do for the happiness of you and your sister, when I am willing to pass over even this mean insult!—his low paltry revenge!—Jenny Atwood, you know, is the girl, who I told you, ran away from her parish with child, and then put it round the country forsooth, that I was the father of the brat.—You remember the impudent story, I dare say: but heaven knows, I forgive them all:—nay, my dear son shall

even carry my advances to them, for the sake of my children's happiness;—and, indeed, for that of my own, I will meet my bitterest enemies on the road of reconciliation, more than half way:—as to Jenny Atwood, old Fitzorton, and the furious Mr. John, I will,—I ought to be,—I am at peace with them all.”

Sir Guise now strung together, and strewed around his pious harangue many an holy text from sacred, and many a moral axiom from profane history,—ending with this asseveration:—“Yes, Charles, I repeat, I forgive them all.”

Whether his beloved son was sufficiently collected to hear any part of the foregoing speech, or was a sceptick as to its sincerity, is uncertain:—he only replied to the passage that had reference to Jenny Atwood;—and to that he said with some difficulty, but with a marked, though obstructed emphasis,—“As to the poor girl, by whatever means she found her way to the castle, sir, I am sure she will *there* find those who will pity and protect her.”

“Then you did not expect this marriage would take place quite so soon,”—interrupted the Baronet, willing to shift the discourse:—“I should not wonder if they were to hurry Henry into it so soon as to-morrow,—especially if they should, any how, hear what confusion *we* are in about it.”

“To-morrow!”—raved Charles,—“What! Henry and Olivia!—marry! to-morrow?—does this accursed, this murderous letter say so?—Have you heard—did Henry dare to intimate—’Tis well I am come thus opportunely for the ceremony!—I will be there!—yes! depend upon it, I will be there to-morrow!—damnation!”

Sir Guise felt himself now in a worse scrape than ever, and wished he had let the conversation take its course even about Jenny Atwood.—Charles tore one of the sheets of the letter with a vehemence bordering on phrenzy,—put part of the fragments into his mouth, and champed them between his teeth.

The affrighted Dennison came in, saying,

ing, his poor young lady had, in a great fright, rung to know what was the matter, and whether her presence could be useful? — Charles rose, — shook the old man by the hand, — begged him to entreat his sister's forgiveness for such unseasonable disturbances; and that if she would try herself to get a little rest, he would withdraw to his chamber, and not utter another complaining syllable, though his poor heart should burst in his bosom. "Bear this message to her, good fellow," said Charles, "and tell her you saw me going to perform my promise: — but let me be called early." Then taking a candle, and bidding Sir Guise respectfully a good night, he went into his bed-room without thinking of any refreshments after the fatigues of his journey, or the greater weariness of contending passions.

Dennison shook his head, as he went at full trot upon his commission, observing as he ascended the stairs, — there must be a place of comfort, by and by, seeing that here upon earth there was none, — that high

and low, rich and poor, can get no rest in this world for the soles of their feet:— and seeing, besides, that if this had been intended as a place of happiness, his young master, and mistress, and 'squire Henry, would be as merry as their days were long.

Sir Guise Stuart's morality was all in soliloquy, for he immediately went to bed, though we have our reasons for thinking, not to sleep.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PHRENZY OF PASSION.

THE meditations of Henry Fitzorton on his second expulsion from the abbey, and partly by that very clearing up of affairs so long dreaded, and desired, were not more enviable than those of Caroline. His night scenes, indeed, from this place, were generally gloomy enough; and some evil planet seemed to rule his destiny whenever he passed along the grand famous avenue, by which he now again sought the castle.

His

His old habit of holding conversations with himself returned strongly upon him, as he reached the pathway at which the first fatal declaration of his love for Caroline took place. "Since that moment," cried he, "ah! what has been my life, but a succession of mysteries and misfortunes? I am driven from the castle to the abbey, and again from the abbey to the castle, only to be made more and more the sport of my malicious stars! If a gleam of hope breaks upon me from Caroline, it is instantly clouded by Olivia! If I labour to teach my heart to sacrifice itself to the latter, the former seems to pronounce, that my peace and my vows are broken for ever! Here the misery of my bosom friend! and there the desolation of my own family! Even the approbation of Sir Guise, which I thought a blessing beyond my reach, is no sooner obtained, than another impediment starts up to render that blessing of no avail! I have left those consecrated walls again in despair; and what awaits me at the place to which I am directing my steps? If I

unravel the like mysterious causes there, the like effects must ensue,—the tears of Olivia! and the wrath of my dear—dear—father! If I remain silent, which I have already done but too long, that silence will be again adduced in proof of my consent to their disposal of my revolting heart!”

All this time True George was within a few paces of Henry, but said not a word: whenever his master turned, or made any transverse motions, the faithful servant, who had the legs of a hare though he had not the wings of a bird, was on the opposite side in a moment: his custom, when there happened, as in the present instance, to be any trees or hedges, was to keep as near to them as possible; and in case of necessity, he was in, over, or under them in the twinkling of an eye.

In truth, this honest fellow, independent of the veneration he bore to Henry for his book-learning, and especially for his quotations from the poets, had long suspected, and for some time past looked upon him, to be absolutely mad; and from the various
folilo-

soliloquies he had overheard, in which the name of Caroline was so often mentioned, he had set it down that this injury on his poor master's brain had been occasioned by his being crossed in love. But his sense of honour was naturally too great to breathe the discovery which he thought he had made, to any second person upon earth; and his fear of offending, and indeed, of making his master worse, had, in like manner, restrained him from speaking of it to Henry himself. In the day-time, George was pretty easy, thinking Henry sufficiently safe in the society of his friends or relations: but, from the very instant that the evening drew in, he was as assiduously upon guard, as if it was his turn to hold watch on the toll of the curfew; and he attended his master's motions, from night-fall even until bed-time, making it a constant rule not to leave him till he was ordered to take away his light.

This general assiduity had not a little endeared him to Henry, whose gratitude for every degree of kindness shewn to him,

whatever was the rank or station of the obliging person, was lively and sincere. Hitherto, however, George's nocturnal attendance had escaped the discovery of his master.

The dexterity and management with which the poor fellow kept sentry upon Henry, is curious.—If any sentence dropt towards evening, signifying his master's design to take his moon-light stroll, or retire to bed earlier than usual, on the pretence of sudden indisposition,—or, if he saw Henry more than usually merry or sad,—(for, so well had he studied him, he looked upon both these extremes as symptomatick)—he was from that instant at work.—He had long known, that no impediments of weather could prevent his master's going forth, when the wandering spirit seized him.—If then the night was stormy, or likely so to be, George would be provided with his "comfortables," as he called them, according to the state of the element.—He would be as restless in the kitchen, or servants' hall, as his master in the parlour,

or drawing-room.—George was as great a favourite below stairs, as was his master above ;—and his fellow-servants found it difficult to make him sit down to a dish of tea ; or, if they prevailed, and his hour was almost come, he would swallow it in haste.—The maids jeered him upon this :—one said, he was like a troubled spirit ;—another likened him to a bad conscience ;—and the butler, who was a great scholar, to the perpetual motion.—Rachael, one of the house-maids, who was suspected to have a kindness for him, tossed up her head, and said, “ She supposed, the poor devil was in love,—and that he had some lady or another, who met him every night in a fairy bower :—but for her part, she never knew any good come of forward huffies who went skulking after fellows in lanes and alleys.

None of these gibes or jeers, however, had the smallest effect upon George, who heard them out, if he was certain of his master ;—and if not, he would often leave

them in the midst of their irony, and pursue his designs.

In short, George made use of as many stratagems, and was as much put to his shifts, to avoid being seen or suspected by his master, as his master put in practice to escape the detection of Olivia, whose custom of becoming, as heretofore, the companion of his wanderings, he had for some time as much as possible prevented.

George, however, was himself in no small hazard of being discovered, as he was now following his master to the abbey;—for when Henry had got almost to the castle gate, after cursing his fortune at every second step, he all at once wheeled round, exclaiming, in the language of Romeo, whose destiny he considered, at the moment, in some respects similar to his own,—

“ Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out !”

This he uttered with a rant of natural grief, more truly felt, but with much, also,
of

of the wildness and extravagance of the theatre.

Henry then asked himself, why the Montagues and Capulets should be thus at variance?—Then answered his own question. “My only love sprung from my only hate!” cried he. “Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!”

Henry traced such a resemblance to his fate in this celebrated love story,—and rose so high in his heroics, as he ran parallel betwixt himself and Romeo, and Caroline and Juliet,—that he was to the full as much distracted as they could have been.

“No!” ejaculated he, “’tis past! Oh; never more must I hope

“To kiss the wonder of *my* Juliet’s hand,
Or drink delicious poison from her lips;
Then I defy you, stars!”

At the end of this rhapsody, he set off at full speed, as if carried away by the sentiment:—and he had, indeed, so absolutely made the case his own,—forcing it to

apply where it did not, and appearing almost to think he was the identical Romeo, where it did,—that, had not the darkness favoured,—at the sight of a man running as fast as he could towards the avenue, and then hiding behind the trees in the vista,—George would have had good reason to say, with Mercutio, “A plague o’ both your houses!”

When George thought all safe, he ventured from his hiding place,—but not daring to risque another scene of the same kind that night, suffered his master to go into the house first; and then stealing softly round to the back gate, of which he had a key, he was in time to slip on another frock, and get into his master’s chamber, soon after Henry had rung his bell.—The family, and even Olivia, had given up all thought of seeing Henry for the night, and had gone to rest,—one of the servants having observed, while waiting at supper, that young ’squire Stuart was just arrived.—George, glad that he had escaped so well, went to bed, but not without strong suspicions

cions that his poor master would not be long out of Bedlam.—Nay, the honest fellow began to debate with himself, whether it would not be better, at once, to tell the melancholy, or rather raving, state in which he often saw him, to his family, for fear worse should come of it.—“Who knows but he may lay violent hands on himself, before one is aware?” said George:—“and then what is to become of us?—Heigho!” sighed George:—“Love’s a sad thing.—I suppose Jenny Atwood is a-bed and asleep now.—Well, God bless her!—and God bless us all!—Heigho!—I’ll go to bed too.—I hope I never shall be so much in love.—Heigho!—Yes, I dare say Jenny Atwood is asleep.—Heigho!”

George repaired to his truckle bed, which was in a closet adjoining his master’s, where he had begged, long before, he might sleep,—to be within call,—in case any thing should happen in the night.

The good fellow quietly undressed himself: but the affair of Romeo and Juliet, the Montagues and Capulets, had quite
settled

settled with him his master's madness, which he now considered as incurable : and his last words that night were, " Ah ! poor dear gentleman ! it's all over with him now, sure enough.—What a terrible thing love is, when it comes to this !—Heigho !—The Lord deliver us !—I wonder how Jenny is to night.—I hope I never shall love at this rate !"

CHAPTER XVII.

RESOLVES AND IRRESOLUTIONS.

WHATEVER roses' hope might strew on the pillow of Olivia, that of Henry was on this night lined with thorns.—When, for an instant, he dropt into a transitory slumber, all the images of a disturbed imagination and tortured mind rose to his view.—At one moment his fancy represented him tossing in the ocean, at another labouring in mud ;—sometimes his ears were assailed by the shrieks of both Caroline and Olivia, falling in the general ruin ;—and
sometimes

sometimes he beheld his friend Charles pointing a dagger at his bosom.

In his waking hours, he often resolved on a stratagem to escape the union of Olivia, by an elopement with Caroline,—and projected this so as to form a double plot, including the flight of Olivia with Charles.—The violent emotions accompanying this idea, extravagant as it was, operated with such force on his burning fancy, that he suddenly started upright in his bed, and exclaimed, “Would it were morning!—I will be at the abbey by day-break!—Surely, Charles is by this time arrived!—If not, I will go post to meet him!—Were he at the end of the earth, I would travel towards him!”—Then pressing his repeater, which hung at the bed’s head, he found, to his infinite mortification, that it was only two o’clock.

The sound of his exclamations had pierced the ear of the trusty George, who had himself been kept awake by his own reflections, partly about his master, and partly about himself;—for the havock he had

had witnessed in a human breast by disappointment in love, made a very strong impression, and convinced him more fully of a truth he had before begun to suspect, in regard to his own heart.

George was certainly much alarmed at the state of his master, yet no less struck at the prodigious effects of the passion itself;—and as well from the dread of his being one day reduced to the same condition, as from the hope that he should not,—each lover commonly making himself the *happy* exception to a general rule,—he was effectually kept from closing his eyes.

The moment, therefore, he heard Henry's concluding asseveration, that, were Charles at the end of the earth, he would travel towards him,—he leaped out of his own bed and was at the side of his master's, just as the watch had repeated the inauspicious hour.

“For goodness' sake, what is the matter with your honour?—Can I do any thing for your honour myself?—Shall I go for the doctor?—Shall I call up the rest of the servants?”

servants?—or the family?—I fear your honour is very bad.—How is your honour's head?—Hot—very hot—all of a coal!—your honour is in a high fever!—let me strike a light.”

“No,” answered Henry, “not so, honest fellow.—I know you love me, George.”

“Love you, your honour! Yes! though *my* distracted senses, too, should forsake me,—‘I’d find,’ as the play says, and as I have heard your honour say,—‘I’d find some interval, when——’

“Go then to bed,” said Henry: “rise at the first peep of dawn:—run to the abbey;—ask if Lieutenant Stuart is arrived, and bring me word, unknown to any body.”

“He *is* arrived, your honour: our coachman told me he saw him ride by the park pales about ten o’clock last night; which must be soon after we—we—that is, after your honour left the abbey.”

“Arrived!” answered Henry. “Then let my own horse and your’s be saddled,
and

and in the stable, ready to mount, by four o'clock. Leave me now; and be sure you are not after the time, my good George."

"I'll make very sure of that, your honour, by not going to bed any more.—Try to get a bit of rest yourself, dear good sir; and I will call you to the click of the quarters, so that you shall be on horseback as the clock is striking."

George,—knowing this to be the best mode of arranging the business, both for his master's ease, and his own,—did not wait for any objections thereto,—but commending Henry's lost wits to God, shut the door of the chamber, and returned to his own.

At the time appointed, with an accuracy that marked the exactness of his character, he had not only done his work in the stable, but in the house also; for he had made a fire, boiled the kettle, had a dish of coffee, and all his *comfortables*, smiling upon a table, in what was called the hunting parlour, to greet his master, on coming down stairs,

stairs,—and by calling Henry a few minutes earlier than the specified hour, had allowed time for taking the refreshment.

Henry, however, having had leisure to reflect on the inconsistency, ingratitude, and even impossibility of carrying his wild scheme into execution,—told George that he had altered his mind as to setting out so early, but should perhaps ride or walk to see his friend Mr. Stuart in the course of the day, and would try to sleep an hour or two now, that he might be ready to attend his own family at breakfast;—and cordially advised George to do the same.

The joy of our worthy domestick, on seeing his master unexpectedly composed, was so great, that he sunk involuntarily upon his knees, exclaiming with much fervency, “The Lord be praised!”—then drawing the curtains, and closing part of the shutter next to the bed, that the light might not prove unfavourable to his master’s slumbers,—he went on tiptoe out of the apartment, reiterating in whispers,—
“The Lord be praised! the Lord, of his
infinite

infinite mercy, be praised !—He may do yet.”

Henry's fixed resolution, however, was,—let the consequence be what it might, or whatever involvements it might bring upon the abbey, or the castle, or both,—to make a full and free confession of the past and present, and long-established state of his affections, in the course of that very day,—and, indeed, at all hazards, to prevent his union with Olivia Clare, even if the loss of Caroline Stuart, and his own ruin, should be the issue of the explanation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HERO OF THE CANINE RACE.

AFTER turning this, at length irrevocable determination, as he called it, into various shapes,—how best to proceed in it,—whether to begin by discourse with Olivia, with James, or with his mother, whose heart he knew was his own,—or whether
to

to make his confessions, and his "round unvarnish'd tale deliver" in presence of the *whole* family,—he lay for some time in a state betwixt sleeping and waking.

Out of this dozing Henry was aroused by a scratching at the door, as from the foot of a dog:—this was presently followed by another, and that again by a whine, which spoke, as plainly as any language, that, whoever might be the petitioner, he earnestly desired to be admitted. As Henry was going to the door, he was saluted by the barking of the said petitioner, accompanied by a smart pat against the pannel of the door, indicating that, having done with supplication, the said pat might be considered as a sort of threat to effect a forcible entry in case of longer resistance. —On opening the door, who should make his appearance but little Fitz,—so was he called,—the favourite and almost constant companion of Caroline Stuart!—It had been Henry's gift to that young lady, who was grown so fond of it, partly for its own sake and partly for the donor's, that she

never

never suffered it out of her sight without feeling uneasy.—It had been present, of course, at all the scenes of joy and sorrow which had passed between the lovers, and therefore was much in the good graces of both.

But, how to account for this unexpected visit, Henry could no way conjecture.—However, little Fitz came at the right moment to receive a hearty welcome;—for Henry no sooner beheld his visitor, than he hugged, kissed, and called him as many endearing epithets, as if it had been Caroline herself.—The fancy of Henry, always ready to encourage the illusions of his heart, soon gave to this delightful “airy nothing,” more than “a local habitation.” He called the dog dear little name-sake:—indeed it was at his own desire Fitz had been so honoured;—“For,” said Henry, “it will make Caroline then think of the donor.”—He assured little Fitz, that he was more grateful for his attention now, than at any former period of their friendship for each other, as he was convinced he came
on

on purpose to comfort him in the hour of his despair:—"But how did you find your way to my chamber?—and how long hast thou been sitting at my door, poor fellow?—And why didst thou not address thyself to me before?—So thrive my soul, as I would share with thee my bed and board, sooner than with the finest object amidst the works of creation, thy mistress alone excepted."

He continued this rhapsody much farther, and kindled in his course, till it is to be doubted whether he did not really expect regular replies to those interrogatories.

But, whatever impression this enthusiastick address to little Fitz might make upon *him*, it sunk peculiarly deep into the mind of True George. The door being open when the dog entered, he heard quite sufficient to convince him that the few hopes he had before entertained of his master's wits being restored, were now over, and that the unhappy gentleman was ten times more distracted than ever.

The various questions he heard put to

the dog, gave George the strongest apprehensions even of raving madness: but when Henry, with the utmost extravagance of voice, talked about sharing bed and board with the dog, and giving him the preference to all the objects of created nature, except Caroline,—the poor fellow could hardly contain his sorrowful emotions, which, in despite of himself, forced their way between his teeth, as he muttered “ Alas! quite gone!—mad as a March hare!—Lord have mercy upon us! —If I thought the case would ever be mine, I’d hang myself at once out of the way! Oh Jenny!—Jenny!—All this for a dumb beast!—very well in his place! I would not hurt a worm!—but a worm is a worm;—and a dog is a dog,—and a dog is a beast of the field;—and what is a beast to do in a man’s bed, except a Christian gives him a pat, and away, or so, to get him down,—as much as to say, ‘ If you please, sir, off my bed, and make room for your betters?’ and, to be sure, Christians are better than dumb beasts at any time; and

if

if they a'n't, more shame for 'em.—Poor soul!—quite lost indeed!—gone for ever!—O merciful father! for pity, how mad he is!”

Most of this speech was delivered as George walked to and fro in the long gallery, which extending the whole length of the bed-chambers, Henry heard only the words which began and ended it—viz. “quite lost!—mad as a March hare!—gone for ever,” &c. To which he replied, “What's that you say?—who's there?—George?”

“Yes, your honour,” replied George, giving the matter a turn for fear of making his master worse,—ever an uppermost idea,—“'tis only me, sir.”—“Gone for ever—and mad as a March hare—what are you talking about?” said Henry.—“Little Fitz, please your honour.—I found, after we—that is, your honour—got home, he had followed us—followed you, that is—from the abbey; so I let him have a night's lodging in my room, knowing he was Lady Caroline's dog, and made him a

snug birth in the corner: and when I got up he was off; and I was saying to myself, —says I,—he's gone—he's lost—and if he is, it will make Lady Caroline as mad as a March hare.—But I see your honour has him safe; so it's all well. But breakfast waits, your honour.”

“ Well then,” said Henry, “ give this dear little fellow something to eat; and keep him out of sight till I can walk over with him to the abbey; and be sure you let him have what he likes: for, d**n me if I don't love him almost as well as if——”

“ He shall be taken good care of, your honour, depend on it,” interposed George, lifting him from the bed, and walking off with him under his arm, before Henry could finish his asseveration.

It was in the present case a yet farther confirmation, when, before Henry had left his chamber, little Fitz had given George the slip, and again paid his respects to the lover of Caroline. And at the time of this his second appearance, Henry was offering his devotions to Caroline's miniature. This,

he told Fitz, was the picture of her they both adored. "But, you happy creature," added Henry, "you will be fondled by the original when I, perhaps—" He then fell to caressing the spaniel and the picture by turns, and concluded, by exclaiming, as he was going out of his room, "Dear, precious resemblance!—never—never—will I part with thee!—not death himself shall snatch thee from me!"

The chamber-door was all this time wide open, and the above words were heard distinctly, and the speaker of them seen, by Lady Fitzorton, Mr. Clare, and Olivia,—the two latter at that instant coming from Olivia's chamber, where the former had, as usual, given her a gentle summons, to see if her daughter, as she always called her, was ready to go down to breakfast; and they met Mr. Clare as he was shutting the door of his apartment.

The trio were all of one mind, as to what they heard and saw. Olivia blessed herself, and cried,—“Dear soul!—how he honours my poor gift!—See madam,”—turning to

Lady Fitzorton,—“ought I not to be proud?”—“It gives me almost as much joy as it does you,” replied her ladyship: “for as he was not prepared for our coming, as you see by his agreeable confusion, we may be sure his careffes of the picture are—

“Warm from his heart and faithful to its fires.”

“Hey, Henry!” exclaimed Mr. Clare, “what signify your profings, to a bard caught in so poetical a situation?—There’s a quotation for him, that describes him in his own way.—For my part, I say nothing:—but were I Olivia, I should be little pleased with the cold compliment paid to my inanimate picture, when the original stood blooming like the morning before him, without his so much as offering to—”

“Come, madam,” said Olivia, “shall we go down stairs?”—“With all my heart, my dear,” answered Lady Fitzorton:—“Mr. Clare *will* have his joke, you know.”

“You’ll

“ You’ll follow, Henry,” said Olivia, blushing delightfully and tripping down stairs. “ Is your friend Charles come? and, pray, how fares my sweet play-fellow, my sweet friend?”

Olivia recollected it might not be quite prudent to mention Caroline’s name at that instant, and so made the best of her way.

Henry had seldom been thrown into a more awkward situation. The mistake of the miniature, which, on being discovered, he put hastily out of sight, was so extremely natural, and so impossible to be then explained, that he was utterly confounded; and his complexion now almost as nearly resembled the carnation as Olivia’s: a circumstance which literally gave a still stronger *colour* to the supposition that the picture he had been so transported with, was the one that Olivia had ~~presented~~.

CHAPTER XIX.

SUSPICION, CANDOUR, CONFESSION, AND
CONCEALMENT.

SIR Armine Fitzorton, who stood in the great hall which led from the chambers to several of the apartments, encountered Henry as he came down stairs, and received him with an ardour of affection and applause, to which nothing but Henry's consciousness of not deserving it, could have rendered him insensible.

“It is surely decreed,” said Sir Armine, embracing Henry, “that my life is to be preserved by one or other of my children. Twice has it already been in danger, and twice have my sons rescued me!—Here, Henry, is the accursed scroll, whose contents, had they been true, would have been far more fatal than the injury which this aged frame received from Sir Guise Stuart's horse: for I am convinced they would have broken mine and your mother's heart.—Henry, therefore, merits, in a still greater degree

degree even than our beloved John, the title of *his Parent's Preserver*.—I am grateful and I am happy.”

The venerable man threw his arms round Henry's neck, and wept;—a circumstance no way inconsistent with the transport either of gratitude or happiness, and which nature often adduces in proof of both.

The heart of Henry, though throbbing with love of Caroline, was by no means unmoved by such an appeal to it. It is more than probable indeed, that at such a moment his heart had little to do with Caroline, or with any thing in this world but with the sacred object in his embrace.

“Oh sir,” exclaimed he, “I cannot,—indeed I cannot bear it! Spare me, I conjure you; for I feel powerfully, that these tears, and the goodness which occasions them, will be more fatal than that paper, whatever it may suggest.—I cannot speak!—my dear,—*dear*, father! I cannot speak!”

“I perceive, my child, thou canst not.—Blessings upon thee! Let us hasten then

to those whose affection for you is equal to my own."

They proceeded towards the breakfast parlour, the door of which was at that moment opened by Olivia, who began to be impatient of Henry's delay.—“Your tea will be quite cold, gentlemen,” said she, complainingly.

Sir Armine turned his face gently from her, and said, “Give me your hand, Olivia, and let us take a turn or two before we go in.—There, Henry! do you follow my example.”

Henry took the other hand, and they all three traversed the hall for the space of some minutes,—Sir Armine attempting to hide strong emotions, and Henry labouring in the same way. Both were unsuccessful; Olivia perceived they had been in tears, and indeed still discovered some which had lodged in the furrows of Sir Armine's cheek.

“Heavens!” said she, “what can these mean?” wiping them softly away with the back of her hand:—“and yours, Henry,

are not quite dry," said she, removing them by the like action.

"Why should we endeavour, my son, to conceal the effects of our transport from any one, but least of all from her who has a right to share them?—Daughter," continued Sir Armine, "what you have noticed in our countenances, have been produced by the joy of our hearts;—and it was churlish in us to wish to rob you of your just division. This our Henry has—but no matter, —I charge you to love him better than ever, and if he proves to you as good a husband, as he has done to me a son,—as I am, thereby, the happiest of fathers, so will *you* be the most blessed of wives. Ask no more questions, but let us to breakfast."

"It is very unfair, however, of you," said Olivia with all imaginable sweetness, as if betwixt sport and earnest, "to have all this transport to yourselves: for I would have you to know I am as fond of weeping for joy as either of you, and am now almost ready to cry with grief, at your cheating me in this cruel manner. And as to being

more fond of this creature than I ever was before, I am sorry, sir, at the necessity of disobeying you in this particular; for he very well knows, that—that—”

“Knows what?” questioned Sir Armine.

“That it is impossible,” whispered she; but the whisper was conveyed in another of those stage tones which had so amply been discussed in one of the family conversations; for, when she mentioned to Sir Armine the impossibility of loving Henry *better* than she had done, she certainly intended her lover should hear. Indeed, she resigned her hand to his caresses while this reason was communicated; and gliding herself between Henry and Sir Armine,—the former in almost an oblivion of every thing but his filial love,—she drew them into the apartment.

As they entered, little Fitz had placed himself in Oliva's chair, and thinking, perhaps, he had waited long enough for his breakfast, was helping himself very cordially to some bread and butter, that stood commodiously near him;—Lady Fitzorton

and

and Mr. Clare having entered into a serious *tête-à-tête* at the other end of the room.

Olivia, therefore, running to him, said, "Oh! but I forgot, Henry, to tell you about this dear little dog:—he is quite taken with me:—I think he likes the castle better than the abbey.—What is his name?—I see by the collar, he belongs to—to—to—to—to—"

Olivia checked herself on a cautionary hint from Henry: and, though she could not guess the motive of that hint, as the name of the dog's owner was no longer proscribed, her Henry's wishes were always followed by prompt and smiling obedience.

As Sir Armine advanced towards little Fitz, Henry's agitation was so extreme, he involuntarily took hold of his father's coat, to prevent his examining the collar.

Olivia was taken up with considering the beauty of the animal, so that Henry's situation escaped her;—but Sir Armine gave him such an interrogating look as sent his very blood into his face to answer it.

"Let me see, Olivia!" said Sir Armine,

stooping down, as if to read the engraved letters.

“Indeed, you must not, sir!” cried Olivia, turning the collar round, till the engraved part was hid under the dog’s throat.—“Dear sir, he does not choose to tell the name of his owner: besides, ’tis a Family Secret:—or, perhaps, he means to change his situation.”

“Then he ought to bring a character from his last place,” said Lady Fitzorton, now first joining in the discourse.

“Very true,” said Mr. Clare:—“so pray Mr. what’s-your-name, whom do you belong to?”

“Don’t mention Sir Guise! say, he belongs to Caroline,”—whispered Olivia to Henry, “and—and—”

Judge, reader, if this was not helping this lame dog over the stile, with a vengeance!

“If you must know,”—said Olivia,—“the little fellow belongs to Miss Stuart: only, you know, we are not to talk about it, as, perhaps, some other person’s name
may

may be on the collar :—and though I know you are all too good ‘to turn your *enemy’s* dog out of doors,’ without his breakfast, I—I—in short, I had half a mind to steal him, and love him for his mistress’s sake.

“If you will but help me out, this will do nicely,”—added Olivia to Henry,—*not* in a stage whisper.

“Miss Stuart!”—said Mr. Clare—“then you ought, I sure, to be jealous, either of the dog or his mistress; for I saw Henry almost devouring him with kisses.”

“And I could kiss him myself,”—said Olivia,—“for he’s a dear and a love; and if I did not think it would break Miss Stuart’s heart, I *would* steal him. Yes, I would, you dear thing!” added Olivia, renewing her careffes :—“not that I saw Henry kiss him at all.—It was something else I saw him kiss.”

The bloom which accompanied this observation, covered the cheeks of Olivia, and was inexpressibly beautiful.

“Admitted,” said Mr. Clare, pleasantly :—“but, methinks, a lover of mine would
not

not a little anger me, if he were to salute the prettiest cur in the world, and my picture, in the same breath;—however, as that is your business, not mine, you must e'en settle it between you.

“ Let you and I, Lady Fitzorton, finish our breakfast as fast as we can, and go on with our conversation, which, as is but too often the case, a puppy in favour has interrupted.”

With all these reliefs, Henry had collection enough to say, the dog was a favourite at the abbey, from whence it had followed him, as it had done more than once before, though not perhaps noticed;—but that, as often as it did, he sent it back immediately, knowing what search there would be after it,—as he would have done now, had he discovered it in time.

Henry now patted the dog's head,—and said, “ he supposed, if he did not send or take it back soon, there would be a search-warrant after it.”

Breakfast now went on smoothly, except that Sir Armine and Henry rather overact-
ed

ed their parts,—the former being too talkative, and the latter too taciturn,—yet both equally anxious to conceal their sensations.

The engraving luckily escaped ;—for the collar bore these words :—“ LITTLE FITZ ; the gift of HENRY TO CAROLINE.”

Mr. Clare and Lady Fitzorton disappeared :—Olivia soon followed, and ran up stairs with the spaniel in her arms ;—and almost in the same instant she had so done, True George came whistling through the hall, calling at every step, “ Little Fitz ! —Little Fitz !” —The door of the breakfast parlour being left open, George came to the threshold, put his head into the room, still whistling for, and calling after, Little Fitz.

“ What’s that you say,”—questioned Sir Armine,—“ about Fitz ?”

George instantly perceived his error, and trying to repair it, answered—“ Nothing, an’t please your honour,—but that I was looking for the little spaniel that had strayed from the abbey, and I was saying to myself, says I, (God forgive me for fibbing ! *aside*)
if

if he should be lost, the person he belongs to might go into *fits* :—that's all, your honour :—and—and—Jenny Atwood said,—‘ she thought she knew the dog, and—and had a bit of a fancy to see him again,’ your honour,—that's all.”

“ And that's enough,” said Sir Armine :—“ go, and shut the door after you.”

George obeyed the word of command in much perturbation.

Sir Armine spoke sternly, and rose himself to shut the door, even while he was giving orders.

CHAPTER XX.

A TENDER FATHER SACRIFICES A DUTIFUL CHILD.

“ **HENRY**, I wish to look at Olivia's miniature,—that which John painted for you.”

Forgetting, perhaps, in his confusion, he had left it with Caroline, for a purpose the reader may remember, Henry put his hand
into

into his pocket, as if to feel for it; and not finding it there, his agitation increased.

“I—I—I— must have left it, sir,” stammered Henry.

“I mean that,” said Sir Armine, “on which you bestowed, as your mother told me, so many careffes this morning.”

“That, sir?” cried Henry, his breath almost gone.

“The same,” rejoined his father.—“Mr. Clare asserted, you have heard, it more than divided with you the fondness you discovered for Miss Stuart’s spaniel!”

“Heaven! sir! what a comparison!” said Henry with vehemence.—“Spaniel!”

“Yes, Little *Fitz*,” observed Sir Armine, looking searchingly at Henry.

“But, to leave comparisons, fetch me the picture:—perhaps it may be left in your chamber; it may be even at this moment on your pillow.—It ought, by the laws of love, let the original be who she may”—here his eyes seemed to penetrate into the very heart of his son,—“it ought, I say, to be always within reach of your lips.”

lips. Perhaps it is so now,—your bosom companion! Let us see! and pray, sir, what is this?”

His father pointed to a small piece of ribbon which had, perhaps, in his endeavour to conceal it from the party who surprised him at his chamber door, insinuated itself on the wrong side of Henry's shirt: and pulling at it abruptly, that bosom-secret, which had literally been so long suspended, would then have come forth, and Caroline's well-painted resemblance stood confessed, had not a little contest ensued between the parties.

Henry defended the passes to his breast with his hand, which grasped the frill of his shirt, and perhaps, the mystery underneath it.

Sir Armine renewed the attack, saying sarcastically,—“What can be the meaning of all this?—Is it not Olivia's?—Is it not the ‘counterfeit presentment’ of one who is alike dear to us both?—The fair object of the father's choice, as well as the son's! what other *could* be cherished in
Henry's

Henry's bosom?—Is it not Olivia Clare's? and if I am any longer denied the pleasure of paying it my tender respects, I shall ring for Olivia herself, and ask her consent."

Sir Armine, without letting go his hold, made a step or two towards the bell.

Henry, aiding his father's intentions, tore open his shirt in a kind of phrenzy, and cried, "It must—it must be explained! The hour is come!—thank heaven, the hour is come!—I am the sport of every accident, and will here accumulate or put an end to my misery, and all its mysteries, at once."

"Have a care!" said his father, preventing Henry's design;—"have a care! your father's happiness, your father's life, and not singly his, but the happiness and life of a man venerable as myself, of *her* likewise, who gave life to you,—and more than the existence, probably the self-destruction, of the innocent Olivia——"

Sir Armine panted and paused.

"These, my son, are in your hands, as entirely as if you were our fate,—Beware then!

then!—I tremble at the omens I have just seen!—Deep plots are discovered by trifling occurrences.—Heaven forbid I should be right in my present forebodings!—oh, if I were!”

Sir Armine’s looks and accents seemed to anticipate and confirm the sentiments he was about to utter.

“If I were, loss of fortune and of life would be as the *tender mercies* of God, compared to what is reserved for the houses of Clare and Fitzorton.”

Henry falling at Sir Armine’s feet, exclaimed, “That God is my witness, Sir,—if the loss of *my* life could prolong the happiness of yours, and of my mother’s, *but one day*,—with a prayer as earnest as ever came from the heart of man, I would invoke my death this moment,—invoke it thus on my knees, a posture befitting a son to receive it!—But there are circumstances which would make my existence so hateful, so dishonourable in my own eyes—This picture, sir, could it speak—” Here he drew it half from his bosom.

“Forbear,

“Forbear, Henry, forbear!” answered Sir Armine, closing his eyes, and averting his head:—“I will not look on any thing that may ——”

“I have forborne too long,” resumed the madding Henry:—“enthralled by inexplicable events, I have been too long involved in a thorny labyrinth;—and this, O my honoured, my almost adored father!—this is the crisis at which I must *force* my way out of it:—Hear me, sir! hear me with patience.”

“Henry!” interposed Sir Armine,—“let me not listen to what would, must, and ought to turn that heart against you,—If you have in your bosom any passion, which has made its way by stealth, to effect the havock of soul and body, and derange every pursuit of duty, and devotion,—and, if you rashly carry the resemblance of the unhappy, ill-fated object of that passion in your breast,—let the consideration you owe to the united lives and fortunes of united families, aid you to expel the intruder.”

“I was

“ I was silent, sir,” interrupted Henry ;
—“ because I could not explain :—but I
did not promise ——”

“ It is still in your power to derive additional virtue from the very sufferings, by which such complicated misery to the aged, and to the young, may be prevented,” resumed Sir Armine.—“ For my own part, I here declare to you, dearest Henry, that, were my individual felicity, were my single life, the only points of destruction which would result from what I tremble to name, I would give up that felicity, and that life, a sacrifice to you—a willing sacrifice !

“ It is enough, my son, I will not expatiate, I will not remonstrate, or reason.—Any attempt to subdue you by the force of argument, would lessen you in your own eyes, even more, perhaps, than they would disgrace you in mine.—I would rather leave every thing to your own graceful duty, and good principles ;—and, that I may give you an opportunity of exerting these, I thus raise you from the earth, fold
you

you in my arms, and leave with you *in trust*—what?—all that ought to be most important to you on earth.”

In vain did Henry attempt to detain his father;—in vain did he struggle in his embraces,—in vain lift up his streaming eyes, and exclaim, “Cruel, cruel perversity of fortune!—Detested dissensions! which have thus placed one duty in opposition to another!—Accursed domestick feuds! which set even the virtues at variance with each other!”

At the end of these disordered, and almost frantick ejaculations, Sir Armine cried out, “I have heard too much.—Half of this indecent violence would distract the rest of my family, and murder Olivia!”

He then rushed out of the room,—perhaps forgetting he had been exhausting himself in similar paroxysms.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN ATCHIEVEMENT OF THE CANINE
HERO.

BY means so apparently insignificant, was this long-delayed and long-projected discovery brought about: and Sir Armine was strongly confirmed in all his former suspicions, by the simple circumstances of the miniature and the spaniel.

“ Thus bad begun, and worse remain'd behind :”

for Henry had, hereby, also, more fully convinced himself that the disclosure was likely to be attended, in its progress through the families, with worse mischiefs than had resulted to them or to him, even from the concealment, disastrous as it had been.

But one of these mischief-makers, namely, Little Fitz, was destined to be the small, but important, instrument of several other discoveries ;

discoveries;—for, while Henry was in the midst of the above distressing reflections, Olivia and her canine companion, with whom she was, by this time, on the best terms possible, returned into the breakfast parlour, where she no sooner perceived Henry alone, than she took up the dog in her arms, and said, “Do you know, my dear Henry, that this little fellow had like to have thrown poor Jane Atwood into hystericks?—He followed me into her sitting-room, where she and your George were *tête-à-tête*; and on perceiving the dog, she caught him up, kissed him as much as we have done, and said, ‘it was the very spaniel that was with Miss Stuart, when she and Sir Guise paid her a visit in London, and that she heard Caroline say, she would not have any thing happen to it for half her father’s estate;’ adding, that it followed her wherever she went, and shared her very bed.—But I have another reason for loving it,’ said Jane. ‘Pray pardon me, miss! but what is constantly in the sight of—of—of an absent friend,

you know, miss, is always dear to us.'— Her hesitation made it difficult for her to speak.

“ I declare, Henry, when I heard the poor girl say this,—though I was sorry for having been the occasion of her shedding tears on a subject I have constantly endeavoured to keep out of her mind,—I loved her the better for her tenderness, though I knew it was improper for her to indulge it.—Ah! I know by my own feelings,” continued Olivia, “ that, had you but touched a flower, a leaf, or the most trivial thing you can imagine, my fancy and heart would hold it consecrated from that moment;—and, indeed, it would be estimable beyond all price. This locket, for instance,—though that is not a well chosen example either, because it is not a trifle, and is very dear;—I have assured it of my affection, a thousand thousand times.”— Here she took what she described from her lovely bosom, and forgot, most likely, for the instant, that Little Fitz was in the world.

“ I have heard, or read, Henry,” conti-

nued she, "that it is unsafe, or unwise,—some have pronounced it foolish, and philosophers, I am told, have called it indelicate,—for a woman to express the extent of her tenderness, to the man she loves, even if he be most amiable.—Now, that has always appeared very strange: for it is one of the sweetest, I feel, likewise, it is one of the most innocent pleasures of *my* life, to declare how much I esteem, love, and honour my dearest Henry.—Where can be the peril of trusting with all his powers, the man who has long given you an equal degree of confidence and affection in return?—I should hate myself, if, situated as we are, I could coldly repress a sentiment, the declaration of which might produce to Henry but the smallest added proof of my attachment.

"But how I am running on?—I know not whether you ought to be angry or love me the better for it.—Do set me right; decide for me, Henry."

Before this question could be replied to, True George came to say, Lieutenant

Stuart was in the blue room, and begged to speak to Squire Henry, before he paid his respects to the family.

“Run to him this moment!” replied Olivia.—“I see, Henry, you are out of spirits.—He and I will make you quite well and happy: and if he assists me in doing that, I will forgive him even for robbing me of this little fellow,—for I foresee he will take him.

“But, alas! he is, you say, out of spirits too; then I will nurse and comfort you both.—Be very particular in your enquiries about Caroline, Henry.—I suppose he is just come down: but you drive every thing except yourself, out of my head.—I forgot that you must have seen him last night at the abbey.—I wonder what he can have to say to you alone.—Shall I leave the dog?—No—he *will* go with me, you see.—I declare Caroline would be jealous of me, if she were to know it.—If you had but seen the face of True George when Jane fondled the dog—‘I have no notion of people kissing puppy dogs,’ muttered he:—‘they could

could do no more to christians.'—But suppose we take off the little fellow's collar—then, you know, Sir Armine—” Henry caught at the hint,—slipped the strap from the buckle, and put the tell-tale in his pocket.

“Delightful!” cried the unsuspecting Olivia.—“Now I think we shall be a match for the old gentleman's curiosity. But I have forgot to look myself;—let me see!—no—now I think of it, your friend is waiting for you while I am prating.” She then exultingly left the room.

The meeting of Charles and Henry was extremely affecting. They ran into each other's arms, and forgot, for a while, their sorrows in their embraces.

“Beloved, unhappy friend!” cried Charles,—“I feel, that even hopeless love, since you must have been innocent of my despair, would have wanted power to dissolve our friendship!—Dissolve it!—No—my poor breaking heart would rather have flown to that friendship for succour and support,

support, as the only good it could expect in the hour of its despair!

“But I do *not* despair, Henry: for although I have heard, seen, and read all that might be distracting on this subject, my friend,”—Charles here held out a letter—“still our fate is suspended by one precious hope—”

“On that letter?” questioned Henry.

“From my father,” replied Charles.—“It proposes,—in a language so humiliating, indeed, that though, as I said, all depends thereon, I am at a loss whether, as a son, I ought to be the bearer—It proposes, Henry, an accommodation between our houses, on your father’s own terms.—It paints in glowing colours, regret for our long dissensions, and holds out a general amnesty to each offending party.”

“Whatever be the result,” continued Charles,—“the motive which led Sir Guise to this signal kindness, has more than atoned for all that I have suffered from his former conduct; and, though I greatly fear,
because

because I greatly love, lest his generous effort should be in vain,—I shall remember the intention with my dying breath.—Yet, wherefore should I entertain an unworthy doubt of the success?—If the aggressor can sue for pardon, the man whom he has offended, can much more easily forget his wrongs; — and Sir Armine Fitzorton, I trust——”

“Alas!” interposed Henry, “I have to paint a scene which blasts that hope in the bud.”

He now related what had recently past with Sir Armine, in consequence of the discoveries brought about by Caroline’s miniature, and Little Fitz; and added thereto, by way of filling up the gap in their history, all that had fallen out to oppose the progress of their ill-fated loves, since they parted.

When he had closed the narrative,—at several passages in which Charles shuddered with apprehension, especially at the proofs of Olivia’s rooted attachment to his friend, though Henry mentioned as few instances

of these, and touched those few as lightly, as possible.

Charles exclaimed, "Notwithstanding all this, something whispers me, a sudden and unforeseen good will result from the operation of this epistle on a heart so noble as your father's. Consider, my friend, we live in a world of wonderful revolutions: and, amongst the infinity of changes and chances that surround us on all hands, who can tell but from this source may spring my happiness with Olivia, and yours with Caroline?"

Until the mention of Caroline's name as a party in this matter, Henry, notwithstanding the constitutional and habitual intemperance of all his feelings, could not help considering his friend's hopes as the mere offspring of a mind violently agitated by the passion that most strongly believes it can reconcile impossibilities; but now he found out, all at once, there was much sound reasoning in his friend's observations; and he indulged a credulity that shewed he was again in a disposition to believe every thing

thing practicable, which favoured his ruling passion. He exclaimed "Oh, my friend, if the exertions of your now generous father should have influence with mine,—and if the same kind star that induced the divine Caroline to look favourably on me, should dispose the gentle Olivia at length to incline an auspicious ear to the suit of my friend—"

"O, if such bliss should be in store for us!" interrupted Charles: "for I can with truth inform you, Henry, that my sister's affection for you, in despite all that has past, is greater than—in short nothing but the returns which are made by your own heart—and the ardent and unspeakable tenderness with which mine throbs for Olivia, can truly indicate how much you are beloved by Caroline Stuart."

"Let us lose no time!" exclaimed Henry, with the utmost impatience. "Sir Armine ought to have had the important letter long ago. Give it me, my friend:—no,—deliver it yourself.—Yet, that may

not be right.—Let us think a moment what is best to be done.”

A gentle tap was now given at the door, on opening which, a voice, more gentle than the summons, said,—“Forgive my interruption of you, dear friends: but I long to ask Mr. Stuart how he does: and it is not fair of you, Henry, to keep him all to yourself in this manner, when I will answer for the whole family being rejoiced to see him,—as well as this little fellow,” pointing to Fitz,—“who, you see, asserts his claims to a share of his company, as well as you, Mr. Henry.”

This sportive reproach ensured the fair speaker a cordial welcome; and both the friends seemed to be animated by the same sentiment, namely, that of making Olivia a party in the reconciliation; for they both exclaimed, at the same instant, with very little variation in the expression, and both with equal fervour, “Good heaven! who so proper, so likely, as Miss Clare, to assist us with her counsel in this exigence?”

“I beg,”

“ I beg,” repeated Olivia, “ instantly to be made acquainted with the nature of it, if either of you suppose there is a probability of my being useful !” Henry, perceiving his friend too much agitated by the presence of his beloved mistress to proceed, informed Olivia of Sir Guise’s wish of being reconciled to the family, and his almost supplicatory letter to effect it.

“ And who can tell, lovely creature,” said Charles, almost forgetting himself, “ but that, if it were presented and supported by such an advocate, it might succeed, and then—”

“ And then,” exclaimed Olivia, “ it would make us three of the happiest families in the world ! you know. I dare say, Mr. Stuart, your friend Henry, who, I suppose, keeps nothing from you, told you my heart throbs again to embrace my ever-remembered Caroline. Methinks I feel for her a sister’s love.”—“ A sister’s !” ejaculated Charles. “ Good heavens !—what a thought !—I will pledge all my hopes of happiness here and hereafter, she

would rejoice to call you by that endearing name!"—"Do you think so?" said Olivia.—"Then we shall be all as one family! and this little fellow too," added she, patting the dog upon the head,—"see! here is the dear creature's spaniel!—Make much of him, Mr. Stuart.—If he could tell your sister how I have fondled him,—you know the old proverb—but what have I to do with proverbs at such a time as this?—I see you are both ready to quarrel with me for loitering on my commission.—Prolper it, good heaven!"

"Give me the letter then this moment! —Give me the letter this moment!" added Olivia, taking it from the trembling Charles: "and I could almost worship the hand of the bearer of such overtures."

The sweet girl held her own hand, in a way that would have made a novice in the little courtesies of life understand that it might be seized with impunity. Charles conveyed it in a disordered manner to his lips, from which Olivia drew it away, and left the room, saying, "You young soldiers
are

are so used to carry every thing by storm, that the destined object of your attack has no hope of escaping, when 'tis a poor damsel like myself, but by running away."

Now, though all this was only the play of a friendly and benevolent heart, happy at every prospect of promoting happiness, and at being chosen as the instrument to reconcile alienated minds, the two friends were no sooner left again to a *tête-à-tête*, than they derived, even from the alacrity of their embassadress, a fresh supply of hopes that fortune was turning in their favour.

Charles was too much transported with his having, almost for the first time, ravished, or rather received as a free-will-offering, the beautiful hand of his mistress, to think of or feel any thing but the tumult into which it had thrown him.—He therefore only seized the hand of his friend, and carrying it to that side where nature has thought proper to place the heart,—he cried,—“God of feeling, how it beats!—did you ever feel any thing like it, Henry?”

To

To which question his friend observed, in the words of his favourite Shakspeare,

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men ;”

perhaps, Charles, we have now taken it

“ at the flood ;”

and if so,

“ It will lead on to” more than “ fortune.”

In honest prose, his friend assured him he was almost weak enough to subscribe to his opinion. They then proceeded to increase this delightful phrenzy by every means in their power. Superstition itself is not more credulous than love, when, in the very bosom of despair, hope, as if by stealth, darts but one ray upon it.

“ And if, after all our disappointments,” cried Henry, whose heart was an admirable sophist, and could, when warmed, overturn the most elaborate philosophy and reasoning, “ if, after all our miseries, this unexpected

pected chance should be the ground-work of that temple of felicity to which we might at length conduct our destined brides,— shall we not—?”

“ Shall we not both go out of our senses with joy ?” questioned Charles. “ Brides ! O Henry ! how often have we known one happy change lead on, and prove as it were the harbinger to, another ! And when fortune *does* bring her atonements, she is frequently, like a long tyrannous but at length yielding mistress, as kind as she had been cruel.”

The self-deluding friends then enumerated all the instances their memories could furnish of one unexpected piece of good luck producing or having been followed up by others no less unlooked for. Charles related a story of two young people coming together, whose parents, friends, and fortunes, were all in opposition to their dearest hopes.

Henry, bringing the matter more into point, said, he had read somewhere the history of a lady in love with a gentleman
whose

whose heart was otherwise engaged; notwithstanding which, after a course of hopeless years, she was married to the object of her affections, by an accident that had induced the gentleman to transfer his passion from his former love.

“And why should not this be the ultimate event in the case of Charles and Olivia?”

Such was the romance of their hearts, that they could not stop, or indeed stoop, to examine whether this was not a mere rhapsody of the affections in the hey-day of youthful blood. Indeed, the wisdom of reason and of common sense is so unwelcome and disgusting to lovers of this character when the heart is in this sort of delirium, that it sincerely adopts the maxim of the poet, by pronouncing it “folly to be wife.”

CHAPTER XXII.

A LESSON FOR PARENTS.

TO this delusion of a fond and love-sick imagination, then, did Henry and his friend deliver themselves up so entirely, that they had sketched out, and communicated to each other, several of the delicious plans of happiness which it was agreed upon, should take place when Charles became the husband of Olivia, and Henry of Caroline. The soul of poesy was at work in the bosom of Henry. His fancy performed miracles. His head and heart were both on fire. The enraptured Charles caught the flame; and both enjoyed

“ Those painted clouds that beautify our days :”

while reason, half-blushing half-smiling, withdrew; and that species of madness, which indeed can never endure so stern a power, resumed its reign. The prospect of felicity

felicity seemed to approximate as our young friends looked upon it, and to brighten as it advanced: all the impediments which had so long stood like a dead wall of separation betwixt the abbey and castle, were, by the help of reconciling fancy, removed; and in its stead 'a verdant wall,' like that of paradise, up-reared its florid head. The turrets seemed to smile on each other,—the trees on each estate appeared once more to form their branches into true-lover's knots, and extend their 'marriageable arms' till they embraced both houses: the very flowers of the different gardens were, as by instinctive amity, disposed to waft fragrance to each other, 'stealing and giving odours:' and that this courtesy might be the more expeditiously done, Henry's muse was commanded to create a zephyr on purpose, commissioned to bear upon his balmy wing the rosy sweets of Fitzorton to the abbey, and with no less celerity to fly back with the violet perfumes of Stuart. Meantime, Henry had stationed the loves and graces, of which he had a warehouse, in
different

different parts of the groves and gardens, to twist flowers and wreath chaplets, to adorn the brows of Caroline and Olivia. Nay, he had placed Cupid in one part of the forest, aiming a new dart at the tender bosom of Olivia, in favour of Charles, and had set old Hymen at work, in the sacred form of Sir Armine, to build a nuptial bower to be ready for that double marriage which was to complete such infinity of happiness.

But alas, while these children of imagination were triumphing in the visionary happiness that blazed about their eyes, reason and common sense, assuming soon the shapes of a father and mother, entered the apartment.—Sir Armine held the opened letter of Sir Guise in his hand;—"I suppose," said he, addressing the youths,— "you are both acquainted with the contents: your friendship, no doubt, indulges unlimited confidence; and I take it for granted, whatever is imparted to one, is, in effect, communicated to both."

Upon Henry's assuring him he had not
seen

seen the letter, and that his friend had only partially mentioned the general purport, Sir Armine gave it to Henry, desiring him to read it aloud.

“ TO SIR ARMINE FITZORTON, BART.

“ Dear, and long-offended neighbour,

“ THIS method of beginning may indicate the friendly disposition under which I write.—Both our sons, as well as ourselves, are the victims of our antipathy.—They have pleaded so often for our reconciliation, that I am unable any longer to resist their amicable intercessions.—The bond of union may perhaps, through the medium of our children, be yet more cemented between our families after this reconciliation, than if no fatal breach had ever happened:”

“ What does that mean ?” questioned Lady Fitzorton, looking at Henry.

Henry directed his eyes to Charles for the materials of an answer,—But, not finding any, was silent and embarrassed; for
Charles

Charles was at that instant consulting, for a like reason, the countenance of Henry.

“ Proceed with the letter,” said Sir Armine.

“ But more powerful advocates than even our sons have pleaded for putting an end to our family feuds.—Conscious feelings, my good neighbour, urge me to seek reconciliation.—I have lifted—O it was foul! my hand against mine ancient friend! and I could even humble my unworthy self in the dust of the earth.”

“ Should that have been said,—at least in that groveling way,—by the father of a foldier?” asked Sir Armine, darting his eye on Charles.

Charles blushed.

“ Young soldier,” said Sir Armine, “ let us quit this letter! it will agonize you more than any wounds you could receive in the defence of your country. I desire to converse with you on another subject.—Directly and at once, therefore, I shall demand of you, in the presence of my wife who has an equal interest in the matter, whether

whether you have any knowledge of a correspondence which is said to subsist between your sister Miss Stuart, and your friend here?"

"He has, Sir," answered Henry, relieving Charles, who stood irresolute.—

"He has the most perfect knowledge of it, and has done his utmost to ——"

"Not to promote it, certainly?" interrupted Sir Armine.—"He is of an honourable profession, and incapable of clandestine baseness."

"Baseness, sir!" exclaimed Charles reddening.

"Yes, young man," returned Sir Armine.—"It would be the last excess of baseness to aid and abet an intercourse which would render every individual of this house, except that rash boy, unhappy, and make him ungrateful and infamous. You are aware of your friend's solemn engagements to Olivia:—but he neglects her!—his friends!—his relations!—his God!"

"Solemn engagements, sir!" exclaimed Henry:—"I know not of any I ever made

to that lady : they have all been taken for granted :—and whatever may be the issue, I here disclaim them ;—I here declare, that my whole soul is, has been, and shall for ever be, betrothed only to Caroline Stuart, —even as firmly, and irrevocably as is that of my friend Charles to ——”

Henry checked himself a moment, and then proceeded—

“ Yes ! wherefore should a virtuous but unfortunate passion be thus hid from those who ought earlier to have known it ? ”

Lady Fitzorton, perceiving the emotions of Sir Armine were swelling into one of those dreadful extremities that sometimes tyrannized his bosom, would have drawn him out of the room, and made signs of silence to Henry, who, too much stirred to regard them with his usual respect, exclaimed,—“ No, madam ! silence has already wrought this mighty complication of mischief and mistake.”

“ Let me hear all ! let me hear all ! ” cries Sir Armine, his articulation almost buried in his sensations.

“ It

“It is heard in a sentence,” replied Henry, throwing himself at his mother’s feet.—

“The sister of my friend is not more precious to your son, than is Olivia Clare to—”

“To whom?” questioned Sir Armine, staring wildly, and stammering violently.

“To the unhappy wretch who now throws himself upon your mercy,” answered Charles, falling on his knees before Sir Armine.—“Miserable that I am!—the flame has long been consuming my vitals; and the life and death of us all depend upon some sudden changes in our favour.”

“A sudden change will soon take place,” exclaimed Lady Fitzorton.—“Look at my poor husband! you have already deprived him of speech!—you will destroy him between you! but his death shall be upon your heads!”

“I shall not die,” said Sir Armine, exerting himself after a deep struggle that shook his venerable frame, as if he were contending with death himself:—“I will not die! the young assassins shall not have that satisfaction.”—He paused for breath.

“Then

“Then I am to understand, sir,” continued Sir Armine, recovering his utterance, and staggering towards Charles, “that you and my son have availed yourselves of my permission to carry on your friendship for each other, independent of my just resentment *elsewhere*,—I say I am to understand—”

“No, sir,” interposed Charles, still keeping his humble posture,—“I have never yet dared to breathe my unhappy passion for Miss Clare, to herself, or to any other person but my friend, till within these few hours. Even the sister of my heart, from whom nothing was ever shut out before, did not suspect it.”

“That is still something,” answered Sir Armine, in a tone much softened.

Henry, still kneeling, perceived the favourable moment, and applied his whole artillery of moving eloquence, in the cause of himself and friend.—He briefly recapitulated the most important parts of the mysterious history of their unhappy loves,—he set the honour, generosity, and heroick

virtues of Charles, in the most affecting points of view, and concluded his harangue, by observing, while he held the lieutenant by the hand,—that if his father and mother were disposed to prevent unheard-of horror from overwhelming all parties, it could be done only by devising some means to bring about the double nuptials, on which they had set their hearts;—“any thing short of which,” says Henry, “I foresee, will bring desolation upon the three houses,—desolation, which, as an earthquake, shall swallow them.”

Lady Fitzorton, whose affections were much moved, tenderly wept over the young men.

Sir Armine gave a hand to each of the youths, and raising them up, addressed them, trembling as he spake, yet his manner and tone of voice determined.

“Suspect your enemy when he brings gifts; and have a doubly guarded eye upon your ancient foe, when he suddenly changes his frowns into smiles, are long-established maxims.—How far these are applicable to

Sir

Sir Guise Stuart in his laboured professions, I presume not to say.—As for you, Charles, when I have told you, that added to former impediments, you must pass to the arms of Olivia Clare through the blood of her father, my own, and the life of this afflicted woman,—I shall point to you the alternative of an honourable action, which will justify the trust I have long reposed in your assertions, however I may suspect the asseveration of others.”

Charles eagerly desired a farther explanation.

“Save us, dear youth,—save yourself, your sister, and your bosom friend,” said Sir Armine,—“by retreating from, if you cannot conquer, a passion, which it is impossible, without violating every law of friendship and hospitality, to indulge,—nay, which, were it sanctioned by our united suffrages and assistance, could not prosper with Olivia, whose happiness and life are contracted to your friend.”

Charles fetched a deep sigh, and shook his head, as if to express at once the diffi-

culty of complying with the request, and the too evident strength of argument in the observation.

“ Having done this,” continued Sir Armine,—“ your virtue will be complete; for you will have done all that in you lies to alienate this infatuated boy from farther pursuit of a sister, whose very tenderness, in this case, calls upon you to rescue her from herself;—for inasmuch as she loves, must she be wretched,—as it is no less impossible for her to be married to my son, than for you to wed Mr. Clare’s daughter,—unless at the sacrifice of every thing in this world, that ought most to be valued by an honest man.”

Perceiving Charles was absorbed in grief, and that Henry was about to speak—

“ As to you, Henry, I have to trouble you with a very few words:—let not your friend, who, I see, is contending with himself, but whose virtue will triumph in the end,—let him not surpass you.—Emulate him.—Your parents, aged and infirm, are before you.—Your union with Miss Stuart
would

would destroy both, would murder Olivia, and therefore make Caroline far more wretched, than the disappointment of her passion.—Dear—dear son,—child of my heart,—most favoured,—most precious,—save your family!—you know not half the claims that Olivia has upon you, though you know they are manifold.—I will not, in this moment, disguise that her father has preserved yours, preserved him from unexpected but utter ruin,—from imprisonment!—Behold, your weeping mother is borne down with sorrow, with love, with gratitude:—behold she kneels, kneels to her son:—your father joins her petitions, in a posture no less suppliant:—must we both supplicate in vain?—alas! look upon us, my son!”

The venerable pair were almost suffocated with their sensations.

Charles raised Lady Fitzorton.

Henry lifted his father from the ground into his arms, exclaiming, as he held him in his embrace,—“Live! live, my father!—let me alone be the sacrifice!—it shall be

so!—most willingly will I be the victim.—Do with me as you both see fit!” (here he embraced his mother) “dispose of my hand, my life, to your-wish:—I will not murmur. No destiny, no agony, can equal what I at this moment feel at seeing you in such a situation. And yet my friend,—my poor friend—”

Henry left his mother, and ran into the open arms of Charles.

“Take no thought of me!” exclaimed his friend: “I cannot bear to witness, much less to create, a scene like that which yet pierces my soul.—I will banish myself for ever.—My own sword should end me, if I could be the cause of such another, to those who ought to have shut the door which they threw wide open to give me welcome!”

“Sir!—Madam,” continued Charles, “as Olivia knows not yet of my unhappy love, I here swear to you,—although it may, and I hope it will break my heart,—I swear never—never—”

“Charles,” answered Sir Armine,—“I will

will have you bound only by the sacred ties of your own reason, friendship, and honour:—and thus, from my inmost soul, do I pour out my thanks.”

“In which are included,” said Lady Fitzorton, “my heart-felt acknowledgments.”

“My house is your own:” cries Sir Armine. “When your visits afflict you, or interrupt the generous task you have imposed on yourself, you shall be free to depart unquestioned; and whenever you return, our smiles shall welcome you.—Neither shall Henry be restrained from the abbey:—We submit him to your protection, to the guard of his own duty, wisdom, and virtue, and to the sacred office for which he will now again prepare his head and heart:—we yield him to the counsels of Caroline Stuart herself, who, from those traits of character and conduct you have at different times related, will, I am sure, when you explain to her more fully *our* situations, help us,—even against herself.

“Another word, and I have done,” ad-

ded Sir Armine:—"the care with which the fatal mysteries that have entangled us, have been guarded from Olivia and her father, my best benefactor, my *preserver*,—I consider as more than chance,—as providence.—If the peace of innocence be dear, oh! be jealous of dropping a hint that may lead to any discovery of what has past between us this day.—But let us part: we may be surpris'd.—Do not be seen at present, Henry! and do you, dear Charles, take to your father my best acknowledgments of his letter, to which I will return an early answer—it shall be such, I pledge myself, as is consistent with the new system of good-will, I hope mutually sincere, that again subsists between us:—but in the mean-time, I wish you both to peruse this paper, and to give me, when opportunity favours, your joint opinion of it."

"Hush! I think I heard Olivia's voice," said Lady Fitzorton.—"I got her to write some visiting cards for our next week's annual party, thinking she might be securely employed in that manner, while our conversation,

versation, which, I foresaw, would be interesting, lasted :—perhaps she has finished, and is returning.”

“Let us separate,” said Sir Armine, who led Lady Fitzorton out of the room, leaving Charles and Henry again together.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PROMISES MADE, BROKEN, RE-MADE,
RE-BROKEN.

DEPRIVED for some time of the power of speaking to each other, Henry and Charles could only express by signs, a mutual desire of perusing the paper left in their hands. Henry opened it, and found the obligation mentioned by his father.

It consisted in Mr. Clare's having advanced no less a sum than fifty thousand pounds, to replace the amount of what Sir Armine had lost within the past week, by

the failure of a banker whose credit he had generously attempted to save in the hour of an exigence that threatened destruction to himself and a whole family.

To prevent this threatened ruin, Sir Armine, who had been long in friendship with the banker, put himself to the last difficulty, but had scarce effected the accommodation before the banker was declared insolvent; and the news getting air, the person of whom Sir Armine borrowed the money, made sudden claim for a return of the sum, which was only borrowed for one and twenty days, to cover sudden losses which the banker had himself sustained. In this extremity Sir Armine confided the case to Mr. Clare, who immediately deposited the money, insisting it should not be considered as any part of Olivia's independent fortune, but what it had been his solemn design, out of his distinct property, to leave to his oldest, dearest friend, in case he should be his survivor, and if not, to be divided equally between his young friends, James and John.

Mr.

Mr. Clare had farther said, "that as Sir Armine had informed him he had no way of paying off the sum borrowed, but by trenching on those independencies, which, though dutefully surrendered, he knew his old friend considered only as a more solemn trust:—the advance of what he (Mr. Clare) had *willed* to be presented after death, would better be offered now; which, you know my friend," added Mr. Clare,—“will give me an opportunity of seeing an important article of my last will and testament performed in my life-time,—besides making Olivia one of the happiest girls in the world; for to tell you the truth, this is one of her plans, after I had thrice refused the offer of her own fortune: but that, I have determined, must come clear to one whom I have long considered as her husband.”

Both the young men were greatly affected at this act of generosity on the part of Mr. Clare, and were not so blinded by their passion, as not to feel it was a natural and strong, though not, perhaps, altogether justifiable inducement in Sir Armine, to

promote the match between Henry and Olivia:—for indeed, there is not any degree of family distress, though it may be pleaded as a palliative, can be admitted as a justification.

Following, therefore, the impulse of a similar sensation, they mutually deplored the cruel destiny which did not give them an apparent pretence to censure the event of which they were to be the victims.—On the contrary, they seemed to catch the spirit of chivalry which characterized the action of the good old Clare; and, warming by degrees, they worked themselves up to such a sense of the conduct they ought to pursue, that each resolved to strengthen the other, to the performance of the promise made to Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton.

And thus, for a time, in this well-conducted victory over themselves, they forgot that they were still passionate lovers.

Alas! how nature plays with her children! She seems to rank them even amongst her sports.

In

In the midst of all this heroism, a small circumstance happened, to convince the heroes that theoretical and practical philosophy are somewhat different.

Charles had a glimpse of Olivia, and Henry of Caroline's little spaniel, exactly as they had settled their point of resolution.—The sight of these objects shook the goodly fabric which imagination had reared in their hearts; and, from the pride of victors, they sunk, in a moment, to the condition of the captive that had only been dreaming he was free.

“Must I resign thee, beautiful Olivia?” sighed Charles:—“must I then relinquish the very hope of thy ever being mine?”

“O thou envied little animal!” exclaimed Henry to the spaniel,—“how wilt thou be fondled by my soul's dear Caroline, while I—must no more indulge the thought, even that I am beloved!”

Then, as if by sympathy, both the youths embracing, they came to another settled point, namely, that they were a couple of miserable fellows, who had no-
thing

thing left in the world that took the shape of consolation, but that one was as wretched as the other;—a conclusion, which, though not perhaps strictly generous, has been often thought comfortable,—proceeding, possibly, from a social idea; for few can bear to be happy or sorrowful alone.

Olivia and her canine companion soon joined the young gentlemen.—She was delighted to see them hand in hand, which she considered as the result of their mutual happiness.—Her spaniel, enraptured to behold two of his best friends, leaped alternately upon them, with every demonstration of gratitude and joy, but more especially upon Henry, who, we believe, was, of the two, the greater favourite: and Henry, in turn, received him with undiminished affection, and, indeed, appeared to be, either for his own sake or some other person's, more fond of him than ever.

Olivia, with an air of pleasantry, counterfeiting mortification, declared that “she should now, in reality, be jealous, and would, therefore, the less reluctantly suffer

fer

fer Charles to take her rival back to his mistress: "For," said she to Charles,—
"you see plainly, the little seducer receives Henry's first attentions; and I shall presently be but a secondary object.—To confess the truth," said Olivia,—
"I am a little jealous of you too, Mr. Stuart; for you and your friend, in your last interview with Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton,—who, by the bye, insidiously kept me out of their party,—have contrived to run away with their hearts, in a manner that throws poor Olivia and the rest of the family in shadow, quite into the back ground of our domestick groupe.—Nothing now, forsooth! but the praises of the two inseparables, Henry and Charles, has for the last half hour been heard through the castle!—'They are the best, the noblest young men in the world,' says the old lady.—'Excellent youths!' cries the old gentleman.—Why what have you done to deserve all these fine things?—But do not tell me.—I hate secrets.—The knowledge of them would only serve to increase my jealousy; for

for I suppose I should have the mortification to find you have done every thing to effect the charming reconciliation, which, I find, is to take place between our families; and I have been only the letter-carrier, you the ambassadors!—And you are to know, I am of so perverse a disposition, that I quarrel with the happiness of my best friends, unless I have been some way, ay, and *importantly*, the medium.”

The friends consulted each other's looks.

“Yes you may plot, and lay your wife heads together, against a poor feeble woman,” resumed Olivia, —“but I will have my revenge yet, and with interest too;—for, when we are all again as we should be, I am determined there shall not happen a single thought or word that shall make any one of us wish to part again, except under the assurance of a speedy return to each other, for the rest of our lives.—So, that being the case, I shall now go to your father and mother, whom I left in the garden, Mr. Henry,—and see if I can get back

some

some of my stolen goods—a little bit of their hearts again.

“Meantime,” added she, as she was quitting the apartment,—“do not forget, Mr. Stuart, to tell your sister, that if she be but half as happy as I am at the prospect of our amicable association, she will be *almost* as blessed as I wish her to be,—not that I should be quite contented till she was as happy as myself either.—As to you, little Mr. Fitz,—but you know my mind already, and so this parting carefs, and adieu, sir.”

Little is that reader skilled in the history of the human heart, who cannot suggest to himself the additional dilemma into which the two friends were thrown by this animated harangue.

When Olivia had departed, Henry caught hold of Little Fitz, and turning to his friend, observed, “From the bottom of my soul, my unhappy Charles, I regret that you and I ever came into the world!”

“Would’ to heaven, we were both out of it, my dear Henry!” answered Charles.

“If

“If we were both dead, all would be very well,” said Henry.

“You are perfectly in the right,” answered Charles.

Henry seemed solemnly to recur to a suspended idea. The expressions were trite, and, if considered as the language of despairing lovers, are ludicrous and unmeaning:—but, on the part of Henry, they betrayed the image that was but too deeply rooted in his mind.

The lieutenant, after a mournful pause, observed that, “as, either way, they must be both miserable, it would be better for only two persons to suffer, than to increase the number of victims.” Hereupon Henry, who had been holding the filken ears of Caroline’s spaniel to his cheek, and wiping away the tears which had dropt upon them, very gravely demanded of Charles, “What was his opinion of suicide?”

“To speak of it professionally, I think it the worst sort of desertion, and flying one’s country,” answered Charles.—“To speak of it morally, I feel it to be sinful;
in

—in sorrow, as in joy, such have ever been my sentiments.—I wish we were both in our graves, my friend, with all my soul: but I do not hold it right to gratify this wish by shortening our lives. Death would be a blessing: but could it be purchased by an action accursed?”

Henry gave a sort of dissentient shake of the head, but dropt the subject.

“I can endure this house no longer at present,” said Charles,—“and will therefore go home,—but without any hope of greater happiness when I get there.”

“I will attend you—part—of—the way,” says Henry, stammeringly dividing his sentence.

They went out, and Little Fitz was still in the arms of Henry. Scarce had they reached the park, when Charles asked, “Whether the family would not think it somewhat rude to go without his taking leave?—Very ill bred, certainly! do not you think so, my dear Henry?”—and he was walking again towards the house, without waiting for Henry’s reply. Then, as
if

if changing his mind, he turned, and took the path to the abbey, saying, with a dejected voice, "It was not material."

They now walked arm in arm, and Little Fitz, being set down, ranged the hedges, and traversed the grounds,—far the happiest being of the trio.

They soon gained the never-to-be-forgotten grand avenue, from which the abbey and the castle could be viewed distinctly in all their parts.—It would be no easy matter to decide, whether Henry gazed more earnestly at the one, or Charles at the other. They both stood fixed, midway betwixt both edifices, employing themselves with the view of objects in the most opposite directions; and, feeding their separate unhappiness by all those tender thoughts which they had resolved, but a few minutes before, to consider as the forbidden fruit of their hearts, and therefore never to be tasted.

Charles declared, "That this nursing an unfortunate passion was extremely wrong; and, if they were wise, they were now taking
ing

ing their last look of the devoted castle, and the ill-fated abbey."

"Very true," said Henry:—"here then let us—yes—after we have taken another look, let us separate—at least for the present.—No,"—added he,—“I will go with you, my friend, just as far as those trees on the left—for there—and then—and then—”

"Yes," observed Charles, gazing.

"True, my friend, and — th — the — then——”

Henry absolutely stuttered, and was dragging at the arm of Charles, as he spoke;—Charles, in the same degree, hanging back, as the other pressed forwards. Just as this see-saw situation ended, Charles recollected he had left his stick at the castle, “He would not lose it for the world. It was a gift.”—One of his gloves too was missing. This, indeed, he had, the instant before, taken off and put into his pocket.—So he strode back some paces, pulling his friend, whose turn it now was to linger behind.—“They will be taken
care

care of," said Henry.—" You will walk over again soon, you know, or—or—or *I* can bring—bring—bring them—myself—to the ab—ab—abbey."

" *I* walk over again to the castle!—*you* bring them to the abbey!—Alas! my friend, have you so soon forgot our solemn resolutions? Exert yourself," cried Charles,—" bravely.—What a noble pile is Fitzorton Castle, my friend!"

" The abbey, methinks, is a more attractive object:—such grandeur, so many awful charms—so many—only look at it as the sun falls on the western turrets:—a long and eternal adieu, thou sacred mansion! farewell, for ever!"

Henry walked towards it with hasty strides, all the while he was speaking.—" Yes! Adieu! thou venerable edifice, whose very ruins are dear to my soul!—and ye, O conscious woods, who have often witnessed my sighs and tears—my fervent vows, and bitter execrations, against persecuting fortune.—But chiefly thou, Oh heart-enshrined bower!"—

Henry quickened his steps, till he almost ran.

“Thou receivedst my first trembling declarations of a passion that has not hitherto for one moment,” continued he,—“and *shall* never quit, my troubled breast!—and thou, oh well-remembered tree, whose tender bark is still, I trust, faithful to those names, which, alas! must never, never be united!”—

The spirits of passion and of poesy were now at work; and Henry, desirous that his feet and tongue should keep pace with each other, had got to the side of the very tree of which he had been so pathetically taking an everlasting leave;—when happening—then for the first time since his soliloquy began—to recollect his friend, he turned round, and saw that no less distracted lover going, as fast as his legs could carry him, in the contrary direction, towards the castle, to bid as affectionate and as eternal an adieu to its appreciated objects.

Henry exalted his voice, and assured his friend “he was going the wrong way:”—
which

which Charles retorted upon Henry,—and thus they stood for a considerable time, holloing and beckoning to each other, each steady to follow that part of the compass to which his own affections pointed.

Alas! the abbey and castle were as the opposite poles,—Henry and his friend, the attracted needles.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FINE DISSEMBLING.

WHILE they were vibrating to their different points, Little Fitz, whom fate seems to have intended as the small but important instrument of many a great event in this history, was heard to give tongue, and chase a hare, which he had started, at full cry, till all the woods of Stuart were made vocal with his musick.—The animal took up the great avenue, and seeing the unequal enemy she had to contend with, rather played with her slender legs, than put them

them on the stretch, keeping only at a safe distance before the panting Little Fitz, as if she intended to afford him diversion.

Henry, taken by surprise, though not a great admirer of the chase, now followed the sport, and by turning towards the same side of the hedge with the hare, whenever she deviated from the track that led immediately to the abbey, seemed to wish she would keep the straight road; while Charles, who came slowly after, perhaps would have been better pleased had she taken her course towards the castle.

It was, however, decreed that the abbey should now be the asylum for the poor hare; and, having reached the gate of entrance, she sprung through a well-known meuse, formed among some bushes that clustered at the bottom of the avenue; and, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of Little Fitz, was soon lost in the windings of the forest.

The hue and cry of the spaniel, however, and of Henry, who, though on very different motives, was not less vociferous, had

not only brought forth into the front garden that faced the grand avenue, several other four-footed lovers of the sport, who swelled the thunder of the woods, at they knew not what, but alarmed Sir Guise, honest Dennison, and lastly Caroline herself, who all ran to the iron railing to see what was the matter.

Henry, who was, very conveniently for his embarrassment, out of breath from his pursuit, explained the circumstance, and was relating the heroick achievements of Little Fitz,—accounting, at the same time to Caroline for his delay, when the courageous animal came panting into the garden, where hardly finding breath to express his transports at being restored to his mistress, he threw himself on his side upon one of the grass plats, and, still the most happy of the groupe, recovered his strength and spirits at leisure.

Presently after, arrived the tardy Charles; and, when Dennison had consulted the countenances of the whole company, and seeing nothing there either particularly to
delight

delight or to distress him, he patted Little Fitz on the head, telling him, "Pufs had led him a fine dance, and, like many other fine folks, had made a fool of him at last:" and with this pithy remark the good old man withdrew.

There never perhaps was exhibited in any four faces more characteristick impatience, than in those of the party then present,—Henry and Charles, to disguise their secret emotions,—Sir Guise and Caroline to discover them.

This threw them all into very aukward situations.—Caroline, from certain clouds not unattended with showers, that gathered and fell involuntarily on the features of Henry, was afraid to ask any questions: and Charles, whispering her not to be inquisitive, observed that "Ill tidings always arrived too soon," augmented her distress.

At length Sir Guise, counterfeiting a generous anxiety to know the result of his advances to reconciliation, and expatiating on the ardent desire he felt to complete the good work he had begun, insisted upon his

son's telling him, "How his overtures had been received?"

Charles made shift to acquaint him with the truth, so far as his father was concerned;—he said that "Sir Armine received them with proper kindness, and would be as ready to conciliate as Sir Guise."

Henry, finding that his friend got through this garbled relation but very lamely, offered him a helping hand, by taking up the narrative, and carrying it on, so far as had any relation to Olivia's amicable message to Caroline.—But Henry was not more successful than his friend: for, though he likewise indulged pretty copiously in mental reservations, the difficulty which he found to separate what was unfit for communication, from what might safely be divulged, rendered the whole story so dismembered and incongruous, that a far less discerning spectator, than either the baronet or his daughter, might easily conceive there was a great deal more hid than there had been discovered.

Sir Guise, therefore, choosing to interpret their confusion to a dislike of relating all that had past, thought fit to act the part of the man of violated feelings and nice honour, and to exclaim, "Very well, I see how it is!—I have been insulted.—My foolish good-nature has been rejected.—I might have expected as much, indeed;—But you would over-rule me.—You know your influence, and see the consequence of it!—However, thank heaven, I have the consolation to suffer this fresh outrage for my children's sake; and so I submit.—But, methinks, when I condescended to make the first advances towards the Castle, your father, young gentleman, should not have driven me back to the Abbey with disgrace, or have himself retreated."

Henry was about to reply, and with some generous warmth, in defence of his father, —from a tender love of whom, no sufferings of his own, though proceeding from that father, could detach him;—when Charles, who was a young man of high honour and exalted principles, felt it an in-

cumbent duty to take the justification of Sir Armine upon himself. "Sir," said he, "the overtures you offered, were, as I before observed, received with suitable kindness: and I am convinced your visit will be returned with a confirmation of the most hospitable assurances—but—"

"But what?" questioned Sir Guise.

Henry, who presaged some possible good from concealing, and much positive mischief from divulging, all that might naturally be supposed to follow, observed, in an abrupt manner, that "nothing had passed between his father and friend any way inconsistent with—that is—as to that—he only meant—he could assure Sir Guise, as to what had past,—nothing material relative thereto, he could take on himself to say,—in regard to the circumstances which—"

"Mr. Fitzorton," interposed the baronet, "your attempts to explain away the repulse I have met with from your family, are as generous as they are unsatisfactory; there is at the bottom of all this a something—"

Caroline

Caroline interrupted the farther discussion of this matter, by declaring she was suddenly seized with so dreadful a giddiness, that if she did not hurry into the house she should certainly tumble. Indeed, her whole appearance but too clearly confirmed the description of her situation: she was with difficulty conducted to the abbey, under the supports of Henry and Charles, —the former pressing her to his heart and whispering a thousand tenderesses in her ear as they passed along, to the total oblivion of every thing on earth but Caroline's anxiety: and her brother scarce less affectionately tried to recover his sister's spirits; for he now plainly saw that her disorder originated in the apprehensions of her mind, as to what had past at the castle.

Sir Guise Stuart, not being quite so much interested in or affected by these kind of disasters, took a turn or two round the garden, where we shall leave him to the only person he did really interest himself for—to himself.

His afflicted daughter now, in a voice of woe and terror, called upon Henry and her brother to unfold the dreadful mystery which lay hid behind, or was partly seen struggling in, their expressions. "What new grief has befallen us?" said she: "it cannot surpass what my despair suggests; and I conjure you, both by friendship, love, duty, and all that is dear to us, reveal the whole! I know not wherefore I am thus affected; but I feel as if something more terrible than any thing I have yet endured was about to involve us all!"

"No!" said Henry, dropping suddenly on his knee, "No, Caroline! neither father, nor fate itself,—I here solemnly swear—"

"Whatever be the nature of your oath, it must not be made," replied Caroline: "nor could I hear it now;—for so great, alas! is my present weakness, that—O my father, why, when I had yielded myself up to the cold mandates of despair;—why did you revive my hopes?—or how, knowing,
as

as I did, the many insurmountable evils which environ all of us,—ah! how could I be so frantick—so—”

While she was proceeding in this apostrophe, the venerable Dennison made his appearance, bearing two letters, one of which he delivered to Caroline, the other he laid upon the table, saying, “it was for Sir Guise.”

The baronet himself came in immediately after; and Charles desiring Dennison to leave the room, the rest of the party, before assembled in the garden, were now grouped in the great hall, where Caroline, it being the first apartment, had rested.

Although her strength appeared, in the moment before, to have left her, she rallied sufficiently, to break the seal of the above-mentioned letter, and was just about to read the contents, when Sir Guise, having with no less curiosity opened that which had been directed to himself read aloud what follows,—premising, “that it came from the castle, and appeared to be written by Sir Armine Fitzorton.”

Human attention, or expectation, never perhaps having been more fixed, than during the perusal of this epistle, we will assign it a distinct place.

CHAPTER XXV.

SINCERITY.

“**S**IR Armine Fitzorton and family receive Sir Guise Stuart’s advances to reconciliation, with all the attention due to them : and although some domestick concerns prevented an immediate reply in writing, proper acknowledgments were dispatched by our friend Charles, whose many virtues we all hold in high regard : and Sir Armine, for himself and his family, in which he includes by authority that of the Clares, now assures Sir Guise, his welcome to the castle shall be no less cordial than they expect to find at the abbey ; and that the first visit shall be left to his own nomination, as soon as he pleases, after an event, arranging

ing between the families of Fitzorton and Clare, has taken place; which it is now expected to do in the course of a few days."

The consternation of Henry and Charles, while the baronet read this card, could be surpassed only by that which, like a hurricane, shook the frame of Caroline. On hearing the last passage, she dropt the paper, which had long trembled in her hand, upon the floor, and sinking herself after it, cried out in a feeble yet agonized and interrupted voice, "In — a—few —a—a—very—few days!"

Henry's eye caught the superscription of the card which was addressed to Caroline, and perceived the hand-writing of Olivia. He would, hereupon, have glided it into his pocket, to prevent at least farther mischief. But Sir Guise, with a solicitude truly characteristick of *his* paternal feelings —wounded, no doubt, at seeing his now beloved daughter in such profound affliction, observed, that, "as it was possible the contents of the second might serve as

an antidote to the poison of the first paper, he must gently insist on reading it."

Henry stood by Caroline's side, hovering between sense and insanity:—Charles was in a kind of stupor, perhaps, at that time, friendly to his reason; and Caroline seemed to shudder betwixt life and death.

“ TO MISS STUART.

“ THE customs of the world require that I should begin and end my introductory letter with certain prescriptive formalities; but, in the first place, can I consider Caroline Stuart as a stranger, when, even in our almost infant days, I bore to her a sister's love, and have since been intimately acquainted with her virtues, and as long have loved and honoured her for them? And indeed I am so little an observer of etiquette, where my affections are concerned, that I should put the greatest restraint imaginable on those affections, were I to clog them with common ceremonies, in this address which is simply to
describe

describe the happiness I feel in the long-wished and long-sought opportunity of making it consistently at once with my duty and love."

Sir Guise paused.

"I told you," said Sir Guise, "the young lady would atone amply for the old gentleman:—so let us go on."

"The prospect of our family re-union, in which Caroline and Olivia,—pardon my boast,—shall be as sisters, Henry and Charles as brothers, and our parents scarcely distinguishable from each other, is so delightful to me, and is, indeed, a transport which has been so long watched, wished, and prayed for, that you must pardon me if I forget, not only the modes of the world, but the world itself, in the sensibility with which I reflect upon the completion of those wishes and prayers. Almost in the instant of their being granted to me—"

"Dear Sir Guise," said Henry, "it is cruel to proceed, when you see how your daughter, and indeed all of us are afflicted."

"Afflicted!" reiterated the baronet:
"surely

“surely there has nothing of an afflictive kind yet occurred; and I therefore augur well of the rest.”

“I entreat,” said Caroline,—“that my father may be permitted to proceed.”

Charles was silent.

Sir Guise read on, “I catch up the pen to inform my long-loved Caroline of my happiness, not only because I could not ‘suffer the coldness of delay to hang on’ such heartfelt tidings, but because I cherish the hope that my felicity will be shared by Miss Stuart.”

“Felicity!” exclaimed Caroline.

Henry, who had taken advantage of this pause, having cast his eye over the residue of Olivia’s epistle, which the baronet held carelessly down that he might the better observe on the parties, took hold of the paper, and cried, “Excuse me, sir!—we have heard too much already:—what remains, I see, is of no consequence. So, if you please, we will—”

“If you please, Mr. Fitzorton,” answered Sir Guise, pretending offence, “we will.

will go through the rest, and form our own judgment of its consequence."

Charles and his sister seemed to anticipate the sentiments that were to follow, in Henry's countenance; which was at all times an expressive one, and might now be said in Shakspeare's language, "to be a book in which one might read strange matters." From their perusal of this, they prepared themselves for something miserable.

The baronet asserted that, hitherto, he saw nothing but what was in good train, and proceeded thus :

"I must inform my dear Caroline—that—that—I protest I hardly know how to write it—that—after a life of wooing—a certain event is likely to take place between one of *my* family—and—and one of—but, I understand, Henry accompanied his friend home; and as I suppose him to be still at the abbey, I refer you to *him* for the particulars;—or if *he* refuses, your brother may be applied to."

If the reader's own mind furnishes not a
sketch

sketch of the situation of the trio most concerned in this intelligence, and especially the reference to Henry and Charles, we must fairly confess the inability of our pen to describe it.

Sir Guise, having insidiously made unobserved observations, read on—

“ I only mention the circumstance, as a tender thought, at the moment of my writing, steals into my heart, purporting the honour and happiness I should derive, had I the privileges of a friend to invite the gentle Caroline’s service on an occasion which—in short, as I said before, not being able to consider her in any other light than an old—an intimate—a bosom friend—I—I——”

Sir Guise, masking a cruel purpose in kind expressions, declared that “ he feared, what followed was coming rather too closely to the point:—However,” added the baronet, “ it is but another sentence ; the sooner an unpleasant thing was over, the better.—Suspense was the forest of evils ; and he would therefore get rid of the remainder

mainder as fast as possible." He then appeared to hurry over what follows:

"I feel a degree of anxiety, for which I cannot account, that the, I hope and trust in heaven, most joyful day of my life, even though I thus tremble at its approach, should be distinguished by two of the greatest blessings—the acquisition of a—how shall I name it—of a tender husband!—I can scarcely write—and the recovery of my earliest friend:—and this double felicity I am ambitious to mark by the latter undertaking the gentlest, the most endearing office of friendship. Ah! cannot my Caroline conjecture what the tumult of my soul permits me not to—"

"She wishes you to be one of her bridesmaids, I suppose," said Sir Guise, affecting a bluntness, for which, almost in the commission of it, he pretended to reproach himself.

"Her bridemaïd!" ejaculated the trio at the same time:—"her bridemaïd!"

"That, indeed, is too much!" said Sir Guise, affecting to sympathise.

"Dam-

“Damnation!” exclaimed Charles, rising and stamping as he walked toward the door, —then turned, and taking Henry by the hand,—“yet, God bless you together! It must be so. It ought—and I submit—I—I—I—do.—My friend, farewell.”

Caroline attempted to follow her brother’s example; but, catching his arm as he was going, she could only say—“I—too—resign myself—and—and—from my soul—repeat the benediction!” She withdrew, supported by Charles.

“My dear Henry,” said Sir Guise, almost betraying his triumph in the attempt to refine upon it, “you perceive I have done my utmost—I have sought, petitioned, and almost prostrated, myself,—but all in vain: my children and myself remain unhappy, and yet, in this instance, none of us perhaps can blame any of your family.”

The baronet paused, seeing Henry start from his seat, seize his hair in desperation, and then striking his breast as he ejaculated, “No! my worthy friend, it is not
you

you nor any body else :—it is the work of my own cursed, cursed fortune !”

A servant entered, saying to Sir Guise, “the gentleman you expected, sir, is come.” —“I will attend him immediately,” observed the baronet: then adverting to Henry,—“I am really concerned to see you so much affected, Mr. Fitzorton. I have only to regret that my paternal efforts have not answered the end proposed: and as some very particular business claims me elsewhere, I must bid you farewell: but we shall meet: yes, we shall certainly meet.—The abbey is still open, you know; and though my good offices have failed, my best wishes are yours.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DARK SIDE OF HUMAN NATURE.

HENRY was now again left to his soliloquies in that house where it seemed fated for him to meet varieties of distress, disappointment, and despair.—He found himself
more

more forely beset than ever:—his grand discovery had been made to some of the parties who were principally concerned in it;—and he had the mortification to perceive, his secret might have been better still confined to his own bosom.—At the castle, his father, mother, and brother James, were made partakers of it: letters had been sent on the subject to John:—at the abbey it had been communicated to Sir Guise and Caroline, with equal ill fortune.—Olivia and her father only had escaped: and were the knowledge of his involvement even to extend to them, it was plain to be seen, that, although the secret would then have taken its full range, like the flight of an empoisoned arrow, it would have lost nothing by its passage through the air; but scatter desolation in its progress.

Under this conviction, Henry once again left the abbey, staring wildly at Dennison, who once more opened the door to him in an extreme of his misery,—and in a state betwixt sense and distraction.

As the reader has several times accom-
panied

panied the ill-starred Henry in his gloomy walks to and from these mansions, we will not now press his attendance: but while Henry is on his way, we shall enter that apartment in the abbey, where the person who, it has been noticed, came to wait upon Sir Guise Stuart, was conducted, and whither Sir Guise was now gone to give him audience.

This person was no other than the notorious Mr. Valentine Miles, the active agent of Sir Guise upon all occasions:—he collected his rents and improved his estates, he got in his monies, and laid them out to what he thought the best, that is to say, his own advantage.—He was no less the parasite than the tyrant of Sir Guise.—To him the baronet was first indebted for the honour of Mrs. Tempest's acquaintance; and like other providers of his cast of character, he was shrewdly suspected to have first tasted the dainty himself: yet at other times, jackall as he was, he knew the art to make the lion crouch at his feet, and tremble before him.—The above-mentioned lady

numbered this gentleman amongst her first impressions, although we hardly know how to call him or any other person her first love, because there were, about the same period, so many candidates for her favour, and from a peculiar philanthropy she was so little disposed to that species of cruelty whereby lovers are said so often to suffer wounds and death, that it would be narrowing her kind and relenting nature, to confine her loving kindness to any individual. —Mr. Miles was certainly *one* of her happy men:—and Mr. Tempest, whom she honoured with her hand, was another; but somehow, the latter soon died, and the former had at least one rival less. But then her Valentine recommended himself by more than one congenial passion,—that of gaming.—The love of dice was paramount over all. Indeed it nearly extinguished every other, or rather it was, in process of time, so much the master passion, that every other was in vassalage to it:—love itself, great, enlarged, and impartial as it was in the ample heart of this generous pair, became

came subservient to it:—for the lady imagined her mighty flame might be fed by once more lighting at it the torch of hymen. A dice-box; in such a hand, seemed to have all the magick power of that torch; and as Sir Guise Stuart raised his admiring eye to the enchantress, the dice themselves were as two balls of electric fire; and a thousand sparks and gentle shocks were drawn from his heart. In love affairs, Miles was nothing selfish.—He secretly saw this conquest, and interrupted it not:—on the contrary, he had long called the object of it his bosom friend; and Sir Guise became another happy man, and entered into the gaming association with a spirit like that of his friend and mistress. His temper was sufficiently niggard indeed: but he was coaxed or terrified out of enormous sums, because, in truth, except by the starts of a moment, which he always paid for, he dared not refuse;—his own miserable soul was a reservoir; but Miles and Mrs. Tempest were the impure streams that exhausted, and literally, *played* it off.

Yet

Yet so radical was this vice of gaming in the widow and Miles, that sometimes, after a run of good fortune had sent them home laden with spoils, they would pass an hour before they went to bed in playing against each other, and that with the same desire to cheat and win, as if they were at work upon some marked novice, upon whom they had a design.

A slight specimen of the abilities of Mr. Miles was exhibited to the reader in the cheat he attempted to pass upon the family of the Atwoods, after he had favoured the plan for Jenny's journey to London.—But since the discovery of his treachery, he had lived wholly with the baronet's mistress as an *ami de maison*, and had been the confidential medium betwixt that lady and Sir Guise, in certain important points that are now to be communicated.

The most material of these, on the part of the lady, was to make good her ground at the abbey, with a view, as has been intimated, to her becoming no less than lady of the manor.—And the death of Lady
Stuart

Stuart gave an unexpected opening to her bold aspiring.

To accomplish this, however, was an undertaking that called for very extraordinary powers: and although those of which Mrs. Tempest was in possession, were certainly of this extraordinary kind, they were yet insufficient to bring about so great an event, without some congenial assistance.

There was not any one amongst her acquaintance so able, or for the rewards so willing, as her Valentine, to advance a project which he had some time suspected was going on in the mind of his beloved.

This gentleman was of a good figure and genteel address, and had indeed, in his youth, been a distinguished favourite of the ladies.—He was now only in the maturity of life, somewhat inclined to a corpulence not strictly consistent with elegance, but in perfect unison with our ideas of confirmed manhood.—He was of an assured air, confident expression, ready utterance, versatile talents, and accommodating manners;—and from an uncommonly well-knit construc-

tion of limbs, and great natural strength of body, with a certain constitutional power of drinking others out of their wits while he retained his own, he had run his career in almost every species of debauchery, without being checked by one distemper, or punished by any pains of body; and as to those of mind, he set them gloriously at defiance.

This accomplished gentleman, therefore, and Mrs. Tempest, divided the baronet between them, and had been for some time contriving how to dispose in a more legal manner of his family and fortune to their wishes: for as the widow had, after founding him, avowed her design to Miles, of becoming Lady Stuart,—so had Miles, in return of confidence, then first mentioned a long-cherished intention of making proposals to the baronet, for getting rid of the incumbrance of his daughter Caroline.

As to the baronet's person, the discovery of his infidelity with Jane Atwood was the finishing stroke to the remains of what Mrs. Tempest was pleased to call love:—she held

it

it more cheap than that of Miles; but not being over nice in her sensations, she foresaw the possibility of still retaining both in the voluminous list of her happy men.

In regard to the nature of Valentine's attachment to Caroline, it as little partook of the troublesome and avaricious tenderness which confines the great passion of love to one person, as that which Mrs. Tempest bore either to her intended husband, or to her old protector.

Miles had often seen Miss Stuart both in her mother's life-time, and since her death, but had never intimated his passion, otherwise than by certain sighs and smiles, moral sentences, and well-turned compliments, from time to time, which, partly his subordinate situation in life as her father's agent, and partly her own pre-occupied sentiments, had prevented Caroline from seeing, in the least degree, the drift of. He intended, indeed, at first only to seduce her: but he now entertained honourable sentiments, as the most profitable. In regard to the former objection to him, Miles con-

sidered it, on reflection, now done away by his profession, as he always maintained, before those who were disposed to question his titles, that a gambler was *a gentleman*, seeing it mixed him constantly in the very best company : and if ever the baronet disputed the claim, Miles would rise up in great displeasure, use some terrifying menace, and insist either on receiving a suitable apology, or the satisfaction due to a *gentleman*.

Of late, indeed, some pretty smart contests, about division of spoil, had past between Miles and the widow : their affection for each other was almost worn out ; and yet their ties of interest were so strong, that fear operated now, as love had done before, to keep them together ; for each well knew, a very little treachery on either side—as is the case with most rogues who confederate,—would destroy both.

Believing that the reader is by this time as perfectly acquainted with these great personages, as it is necessary for him to be, to the right understanding the events which
chain

chain our history,—we shall proceed to unfold the business which brought Mr. Miles to the abbey. But as what past between the worthy agent and his illustrious employer, will be, in part, best given in dialogue, we shall, as being indeed fit company only for each other, give them a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DIALOGUE TO PROVE IT.

MILES.

WHAT am I to believe, my dear friend? Is it true that you have offered your daughter in marriage to the son of your direst foe? Is it fear, or is it madness that induced you to this step?

SIR GUISE, (*with conscious pride*).

Ha, ha, ha! and have I deceived the deceptive Valentine Miles? Then is my art triumphant indeed!

MILES.

Not so triumphant as you may suppose,

fir. You are the dupe of your own artifice.

SIR GUISE.

I understand you not.

MILES.

Our trusty emissary brings certain intelligence that your enemies at the castle, with the tremendous John at their head, design to take advantage of this your pacifick disposition,—and, breaking the truce when you least suspect it, cut you off at once.

SIR GUISE, (*in consternation*).

Cut me off! murderous villains!

MILES.

The practised and politick Sir Guise, ought to know that his proffered hand was received with precisely the same degree of sincerity with which it was tendered. To have rejected it would have been as unwise in old Fitzorton, as in Sir Guise not to have presented it.—Sir Guise, I need not, at this time of day, enter into professions of attachment to you. My friendship towards you is as unquestionable, as Mrs. Tempest's love. We would both live or die

die for you. You have had proof of it: and if you should (which heaven forbid!) fall a victim to the secret and deep-laid machinations of your enemies,—if you should be destined to breathe your last—

SIR GUISE (*inconceivably agitated*).

Talk not of breathing my last! but hasten to prevent it. Save my life, and gratify me with complete vengeance on the execrable villains who are now plotting my destruction; and there is nothing within the purchase of my fortune, that shall not be yours in reward of the deed.

MILES.

The intention at the castle, I understand to be this:—Jenny Atwood, who is there protected as an instrument against you, is to be an evidence of your disgrace, which is to be of the most publick kind. Your cowardice, your falsehood, (thus they vilify you) your receiving a blow, your abuse of your late lady, your avarice to your son, your cruelty to your daughter, your seduction of Jane, your criminal intercourse with Mrs. Tempest, (this is their *vile* language)

M 4

your

your oppression of your neighbours, and your assumed change of character and conduct, which they pretend to see through, —all these are forming into one mass, first to effect your disgrace—

SIR GUISE.

But my life!—my LIFE, Valentine!

MILES.

First, to effect your disgrace, I say, and then—but indeed their purpose is too horrible;—I know not how to divulge it.

Having wrought the baronet to this, the proper pitch of curiosity, expectation, and terror, Mr. Miles paused, — when, seeing Sir Guise in a disposition to believe every thing, and to dread what he believed, he exclaimed, “But there is some satisfaction in the thought, that unless we all become victims at the same time, you shall not, my dear friend,—no, you shall not die unrevenge.”

Sir Guise answered, “I tell you, I will not die!—I will sooner leave the abbey—I will sooner fly from the hated face of man—of you, and Tempest, and all the world!”

“Fly

“Fly from me and Tempest! you cannot! shall not!” cries Miles: “for *her* love, and *my* friendship, shall follow you to the uttermost ends of the earth.—Ah! my good friend, were we all united by ties as sacred as they are strong, were we all of one family, and our fates and fortunes run together, what could hurt us? I should defy the powers of hell confederated then to molest you; but while we are thus divided—”

“I see your wishes,” answered the baronet:—“your long-desired happiness shall be granted.—I here pledge myself that *my* hand shall be Tempest’s, and my *daughter’s* yours,—if you will, in this instance, rescue me from the designs of the accursed Fitzortons, and effect my revenge upon them without hazard to my person.

“It is enough,” said Miles. “I know you are a man of honour; and the instant I have informed Mrs. Tempest of her happiness,—you know how it will rejoice her tender soul, which doats on you,—those measures shall be taken,—indeed I had

concerted them previously, without other inducement than pure disinterested friendship,—which will complete your triumph, and the defeat of your enemies, at one and the same instant. Meantime, as our double marriage cannot, you know, take place immediately, it might be wrong to let the idea go abroad to any part of your own family, till the impending danger to your precious life is over; and then, my dear father,—for I may now call you by that tender name,—we may shape the intelligence according to events. Indeed, I am ambitious to deserve the honour of an alliance with Sir Guise Stuart, by saving his life *before* I receive the bright reward, the promise of which should I even die myself in preserving you, I shall think a full atonement; for, though I have not, like that puny lover, the sensitive Henry Fitzorton, been playing at the game of declaration, I have an affection which—an affection which—but your dear life, my future parent, is in danger,—and this is no time to talk sentimentally about my passion :

tion:—so, if you will consider of these little articles of family affection which I have drawn up, supposing the family convention between us to take place,—and just put your name thereto, I will clap the saddle on my horse to convey the glad tidings to Mrs. Tempest,—and return with such plans, and powers of putting them into execution, as shall rid you of all your fears. Meantime, you will intimate nothing of what has past, to your family, but wait my return, in assured expectation that my life shall be the guarantee of yours.—Alas! Sir Guise,” continued Miles, taking the baronet by the hand, “what would have been the event, had not my incessant vigilance and secret intelligence traced the hellish plot now forming against you at the castle! I am sorry to say, Henry is almost the ringleader; your own son is not without a hand in the conspiracy; and in less than eight-and-forty hours, your death,—your concerted murder—”

“Eight-and-forty hours! Mercy defend me!”—cries the baronet.

“Your death, I say, within that time, would have been as certain, as will now be your preservation.”

At the end of this sentence, Sir Guise leaped on the neck of Miles, with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy,—called him and Tempest his only friends, protectors, and preservers,—swore they only should be his future heirs, his present associates,—declared he longed for the hour which should give to one the claims of a wife, and to the other those of a son,—and protested he only waited till the forms of mourning for Lady Stuart were past, personally to make a graceful offer. He then opened the paper which Miles had given, glanced his eye hastily over the contents, which he approved,—caught up a pen and signed his name,—called in Dennison and another domestick as witnesses, telling them it was a mere deed of trust,—dismissed them the instant they had made their signatures, and thus bound himself to obligations, the nature of which he scarcely knew, being under terrors which would have induced

duced him to sign away the globe,—and again hugging Miles to his bosom, and calling him his best friend, urged him not to spare horse-flesh, to greet Tempest with the most lavish epithets of fondness, and to return with the utmost speed; adding, as Miles departed, that he should not dare to take food, or rest, till he again embraced his dear Valentine,—so the dastard now called a man whom he had long feared and despised, and such was the message he sent by that man to a woman who was both his aversion and his dread.

Miles had not left the room more than a minute, when he re-entered, saying, as upon recollection, that, in his zeal to accomplish the baronet's safety, he had forgot all other matters, especially to intimate that as the design of counter-plotting the Fitzortons would be attended with considerable expence—

“ I understand you,” said Sir Guise, taking out some banker's checks, and scribbling at random. “ You will pass the house: get these cashed: and should more
be

be wanted, I have always some running cash with my country banker."

"We are wasting time," said Miles, pocketing the drafts. "God bless you! Expect me soon. Be silent and be safe!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VIRTUE IN DANGER.

BUT, great as were the motives already assigned for this invention of plots and intended counterplots to work upon the fears of Sir Guise,—the inventor, and his fair associate, Mrs. Tempest, were influenced by other inducements, more potent than all the advantages they had hopes of deriving, in the issue, from the operation of those fears, and the well-connected fable on which they were founded.

The primary wheels in this grand machine were the lust of revenge, and a lust yet more sordid, more violent, which the widow

widow and her Valentine bore towards the Clares and Fitzortons.

Mr. Clare had been the first to intimate to his friend Fitzorton, that there was something more wicked, though better disguised, in the disposition of Miles than that of the baronet,—adding that he had heard a story of his being drummed out of a regiment somewhere in Ireland, for malpractices,—amongst which, “it hangs in my memory,” said Mr. Clare,—“that theft and perjury were not the most atrocious.”

This happening to be communicated to Sir Armine in the presence of one David Otley, a domestick of Mr. Clare's, and a shrewd fellow, but to whom Mr. Clare was somewhat attached, the caution reached, by this medium, the ear of Mr. Miles.—John Fitzorton had been at some pains to trace this rumour, not only in compliance with Mr. Clare's suspicions, but in confirmation of his own, which had secretly fastened upon this man, even when he had the privileges of a visitor at the castle, in
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common

common with Sir Guise, who introduced him.—John soon profited of those opportunities which his military connections gave him, and made a report at the castle, not covertly, but consistent with the intrepid decision of his character.

One day, when the same David Otley was waiting at the back of his master's chair, and when, indeed, Sir Guise himself,—it being prior to the publick breach,—was at Sir Armine's table,—“It is matter of astonishment to me,” said John, who happened to be the only person of his family then present, “that a fellow who has every vice in human nature, but cowardice,—and that single exception proceeding only from a fearless constitutional impudence,—should gain the protection of any person of credit.”

Then turning to Sir Guise, he added, “If, on your return to the abbey, you should meet with a friend of yours who answers to this character, do me the honour, sir, to tell him what I have said. And farther, should his being in possession of the
single

single quality I have alluded to, namely, his insolent courage, be thought a counter-balance for the stain of every baseness, by the use and exercise *you* may have for it, Sir Guise, I have only to desire, in the name of my family, that the gentleman who may be so gifted, from this moment for evermore, may forbear coming to the castle,—and I think I may venture to add, or the manor-house.”

It is unnecessary to observe, that this pointed message was carried, at the time, to the party concerned.—Indeed, lest any thing should be lost in its journey from the castle to the abbey, it was kindly taken to the latter mansion by two persons.—Sir Guise faithfully related it, the very same night, to Mr. Valentine Miles; and David Otley took it in his budget of castle and manor-house intelligence, the next morning.

A natural consequence, arising from this inhibition, was, of course, cutting the acquaintance of Mr. Miles: but he had been inwardly consuming with the most implacable

cable hatred to the whole family ever since.

He had, indeed, long watched his occasion,—had assiduously, though secretly, fomented every cause and effect of hatred in Sir Guise,—and was almost in despair of an opportunity falling out suitable to his design, when at length he came to the knowledge of circumstances which will presently be no secret to the reader, and which, if well managed, he did not doubt, would produce a rich harvest of events favourable to his love, his avarice, and his vengeance.—The fabrication of the well-timed story of the assassination of Sir Guise was simply a necessary prelude to the bringing this about; and, as to the degree of probability of the tale, he was the less careful to construct it, as he had often perceived that when the baronet's terrors were once excited by a sudden shock, none of his faculties were sufficiently at his command to reflect how the history hung together, or how the parts were in harmony with the whole.—On the contrary, every sense
seemed

seemed to take the alarm, at the moment he heard of a possible danger; and, like an affrighted family running from a house at the cry of fire, every passion of his soul, but that of fear, left his bosom.

Now, in accounting for the hatred which the widow Tempest bore to the house of Fitzorton, we fear we must be under the disagreeable necessity of telling yet another Family Secret, and one which a more prudent biographer would conceal. But the truth, that guides our pen, demands the discovery; and the human nature, to which our history is dedicated, must plead excuse for whatever offences the developement of mysteries behind her curtain may bring to light. Henry became acquainted with Mrs. Tempest, without knowing any thing of her attachment to Valentine Miles, or her connection with Sir Guise Stuart.—The time was critical.

It was during Henry's visit in London to a female relation: and his first interview happened at a very remarkable moment.—It was, in truth, in the evening of the
day

day on which, with his accustomed punctuality and ardour, he had dispatched a large packet of "everlasting love and constancy" to his dear Caroline, under cover to the trusty Dennison.

The soft duty of his heart discharged, he went to the theatre, full of the tenderest vows, the fondest ideas; but having made, in company with some young friends, larger libations to the purple god of the grape, or rather, to the health of his beloved, than his reason could bear, though his passion seemed to augment at every glass,—he happened to walk, we had almost written, *stagger*, into a box, where the widow was then smiling at Mr. Congreve's pleasant comedy of Love for Love. Seeing a place to the left vacant, and near a beautiful lady, the right side being occupied by another female, who appeared to be in the character of a foil, rather than of a rival brilliant,—he made one of those bows which were sure to procure him a gracious reception; and, perceiving his welcome insured, by the brilliant's sitting closer to the

the

the foil, in order to make more room for him,—he took possession of the seat.

Rather as an effect of high youth and high spirits animated by love and wine, than a spirit of gallantry, he entered at once into some glowing remarks on the scene which was then representing.—The lady being one of those females who follow first impressions, and have the talent of being desperately in love at a glance, contrived to forget, in the space of half an hour, that Sir Guise Stuart (for it was his widow Tempest) had any claims for money, or her Valentine Miles for love,—or, indeed, that Mr. Congreve had any wit, or that her mute companion required any more of her attention than if she had been part of the bench she sat on,—or, in short, that there was any body but the enchanting young stranger at her side, in the creation.—She presently gave the youth such manifest and manifold proofs of her so thinking, by certain little tendernesses, innuendoes, languishing looks, and gentle pressures, every one of which,—though they were perfectly

new to him,—being altogether in a different style from the attentions of the chaste and charming Caroline,—it was impossible for him not to comprehend their meaning: and before the couples in the *comedy* were brought together in the last act, an union of a different kind was settled in the lady's mind, and ratified in her eyes, which seemed to *insist* on the consent of the young gentleman.—In a word, the widow thought her new object—and, indeed, she decided rightly—one of the handsomest and most elegant young men she had ever seen,—and, agreeably to *her* first-sight system, was, by the time the first act of the farce was over, *in love with him to distraction!*

It is probable she heard not a sentence of act the second, though it was upon a subject congenial to her feelings: so entirely was she engrossed by her new conqueror. At the conclusion, common gallantry required he should see her safe out of the house, and put her and her still dumb companion into their carriage,—to
which

which as he was handing them, the widow said, even as she set her foot on the step, "I hope, sir, I shall have the honour to set you down, in return for your civility."

—Which offer being accompanied by certain invisible signs and tokens, as potent as the secrets of free masonry, or the ancient art of palmistry,—Henry got into the coach, and seated himself on the same side, without attending to the other lady quite so much as the forms of politeness might seem to prescribe.

Henry, new to the town, thought it right, in point of etiquette, to see the lady home, before he took the liberty of using her carriage, which was, therefore, driven to a very handsome house in Grosvenor Square; where, alighting to hand the ladies out, it is certainly *possible* that Henry might have taken leave of his ladies, had not the sprightly widow sportingly exclaimed, with certain accompaniments, having still hold of his arm, "We may as well make it the romance of a night, sir, if you are not better engaged:—for you must know, I dreamed

dreamed of an adventure of this sort, and am just in the humour to have my dream out.—What say you, Priscilla?”—turning to her companion.—“I should like it of all things :” replied the lady.—Henry was not in a disposition to be rude : so the widow informed the coachman she should have no farther occasion for the carriage ; and the *trio* of choice spirits tripped into the house.

Voluptuous elegance now began its fascination.—A collation was soon served up, after which the servants disappeared ; the most costly wines circulated ; for neither the widow nor her companion was unknown to the jolly god ; and either of them would have taken off her bottle, with more ease than Olivia Clare, or Caroline Stuart, or any such “puny whipster” of the sex, could have managed her first and half sipped her second glass.

Indeed, our fair seducers were frequent votaries at the court of Comus, insomuch that Mrs. Tempest might have represented, and, in truth, often *did* represent, upon the
stage

stage of life, the part of Euphrosyne; and her associate had as often done equal justice to the character of the principal bacchante.

It is with reluctance we tell the reader that Henry was not so much alarmed at finding himself in such company, as was Milton's lady when she discovered the danger of *her* situation;—yet the situation was but too similar with respect to the surrounding magick.

Mrs. Tempest was, in all senses of the character, a syren.—Her voice, though neither sweet nor tender, either like that of Olivia or Caroline, was yet seductively harmonious.—Her eyes, though possessing neither the modest lustre of Olivia's, nor the appealing softness of Caroline's, darted such intolerable fire through *her* long dark eye-lashes, that a less ardent gazer than Henry might have been scorched by their burning beams.—She was somewhat under the size of Olivia, and, by the same proportion, above that of Caroline:—she wanted the chaste dignity that gave com-

mand to the one, and was utterly destitute of the interesting graces, shifting with every attitude, that adorned the other.—But she had to boast a symmetry of shape, a certain voluptuous roundness of limbs, a *contour* of visage, and an alluring government of countenance, so entirely the reverse of both, that while *their* features were formed to *instruct* the beholder that real beauty, love, and virtue, were the same,—those of the widow were calculated to excite, suddenly, a train of impetuous emotions, formed to seduce from the youthful bosom all its heavenly guards, and lure the gazer to indulge in the fatal contrast.—All the lineaments of her face offered the most infallible marks of passion unrestrained, an inordinate love of pleasure, and a total disdain of the decent laws by which passion and pleasure, and more especially in women, ought to be regulated.—Her lips were in exact correspondence with her eyes, and as constantly employed in expressing the same emotions; and the regularity and colour of her teeth could only yield to the beauty

beauty of her arms and bosom, which were in the highest perfection of female loveliness, but were displayed or shaded with a studied attention, that denoted she was at once proud and conscious of their attraction.

The then extreme youth of Henry, the novelty of the situation, the combining enchantments, and the state of the poor lad's head, will, we hope, mitigate his offence, should we own, as own we must, that he was far from being a mere neutral listener or looker on during the hilarities of the evening.—He looked at the widow, indeed, with a timid admiration: and as she sung several couplets from the *l' Allegro*, Henry's manly and pathetick voice, which the reader has already heard celebrated, joined in the chorus, with a spirit that shewed he had been gradually enchanted *out of himself*.

“ Here's a health to those that we love !”
cries the widow, filling the glass while she sung.

“ Here's a health to those that love *us* !”

answered her companion, in the same style, putting the bottle, which contained some excellent champagne, to Henry, who then, for the first time, probably, since the intoxication began, blushed and sighed, as at the remembrance of Caroline.

This, however, though noticed by the piercing eyes of the widow, was construed rather into growing passion for herself, than tenderness for another.—With renewed fervency, therefore, she proceeded with the song, increasing in animation as she went on;—and when they came to the following line, which the widow trilled with uncommon melody,

“ O my love, lov’st thou me ? ”

she cast an enflaming and decided look at Henry; and her redundant hair dropt from its slight bondage, and covered her with its luxurious mantle.

The heart of Henry must have been made of “ impenetrable stuff,” indeed, had he, at such a time, in such a place, and at such

an opportunity, affected not to understand the drift of such a question, breathed in harmony, through the lips of beauty.

The companion, on some pretence or other, withdrew ; and the very few remains of modesty, which had been reluctantly confined in the room before, followed her, or rather flew blushing out of the apartment, the moment the door opened, and seemed to wish for an asylum in Caroline's or Olivia's bosom.

Mrs. Tempest and Henry were now together ; and very few moments more might have completed the triumph of youthful folly and infidelity, had not Henry's good angel, in the *imaged* form of Caroline herself, interposed :—and that pure image was brought forward even by Mrs. Tempest herself.

“ Come, one more brimmer to the woman of your heart !” said Mrs. Tempest, replenishing her own, and then Henry's glass. “ This one bumper more, thou enchanting stranger ! who—without my knowledge of, or desire to know, thy name, family, for-

tune, or aught but thy enchanting *self*,—
hast turned a moment of time into an age
of love !”

She quoted, theatrically, various rhapsodies from the old dramatick poets : and then seizing Henry's hand, every artery of which trembled, she pressed it to her lips, exclaiming, “ Ah ! dear unknown, tell me who she is ?—What is her name ?—Whose health am I to drink ?—Who is my too happy rival ?—For to suppose—to flatter myself, I have the blifs to find the heart of such a love-inspiring fellow unengaged—and still at liberty to devote itself to this throbbing breast——”

She thought proper to hesitate, and imitate bashful difficulty,—then went on—

“ To dare even hope that I meet such a treasure undisposed of, is a blifs too great ! too mighty !—No, 'twere too presumptuous ! and yet to think this hand, those lips, that form, this panting heart another's—O ! it would destroy me !—By my soul it would !”

After a trembling pause, she said, “ You
are

are silent—you blush—your lips turn pale—and, good heavens!—ah! what do I see? there are tears in your eyes!—Accursed fortune!—perhaps, perhaps you love!—confusion! perhaps—no, you are not—surely you are not *married*!—but if you are” —“Curse! as the sweet poet says,—curse on *all* laws but those which love has made!

“Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
“Spreads its light wing and in a moment flies!”

CHAPTER XXIX.

GUILTY PASSION.

HAVING finished her poetical justifications, which have been many a pretty libertine's, and tripping lady's apology, she observed Henry extremely troubled.

“What can be the matter with you?—Yes, I know my fate.—It is not the fetters of wedlock *only* I have to contend with:—these might be broken—these, I could snap

afunder;—but, you are bound in the chains of *love*—almighty love!—and I—wretched woman!—But I am resolved to know all.—Here, since you cannot speak the cruel word, write—write the dreaded name—write on the back of this letter, and with my pencil—there—who am I to hate—curse—exterminate?—mark the detested name.”

“*Detested name!*” reiterated Henry: “oh! she is an angel! and her precious name would be profaned, were I to breathe it now with these unfaithful lips, to those polluted ones which have tempted me to injure her.”

“*Polluted lips!*” in her turn re-echoed the widow, springing up, and disdainfully withdrawing her hand from Henry’s,—“*Polluted lips!*—have a care, sir!—you do not perhaps know, that, as I can doat to distraction, so can I abhor to madness!—yes, and both with equal speed!—*Polluted lips!*—they have seldom been rewarded for their partiality by such an epithet!”

She took the room three or four times,
back-

backwards and forwards, in a violent passion, sometimes throwing herself down into a chair, sometimes tossing by Henry, without deigning to mark her rage, except through the flashes of her indignant eyes, —from which shot now as intense flames of fury, as had, a few moments before, darted burning beams of desire.—Her whole person was rendered terrifying, and might perhaps have alarmed Henry, though by no means apt to be appalled, had not another object, more fraught with terrors than an hundred thousand angry men or even women, with an equal number of armed troops in their train, fastened upon his attention, namely, the sight of the *address* of that letter which the widow had produced for the purpose of his penciling her rival's name, and which the said widow had hurled in disdain upon the sofa, where Henry and she had before been seated.

This superscription opened on Henry's eyes the following discoveries—first, that he had entangled himself, almost past redemption, in an affair of gallantry with the

mistress of his beloved Caroline's father! and secondly, that it was directed to the said father's mistress, in the well-known hand-writing of Sir Guise Stuart!

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Henry,—"what do I see?—is it possible, madam, you should be Mrs. Tempest?"

"And what *then*, sir?" demanded the widow, snatching the letter from Henry, and throwing it into the fire with a dreadful execration.

"*That* Mrs. Tempest," continued Henry, "of whom I have heard so much?—whom Sir Guise Stu——"

"And who then are *you*?" questioned the widow, stopping him in the middle of the name.—"Are you that enemy of mine, his detested son, whose hate I have long felt, but whose person I have never yet——"

"No, madam!" replied Henry, interrupting in his turn,—"I am not so great, so just, so honourable a man, as that noble, that distinguished youth, whom I now blush to call my friend!—but, unworthy as I
am,

am, I bless heaven for this timely discovery,—this miraculous escape !”

Henry caught up his hat, and, without considering the lateness of the hour, or any thing else but what he had mentioned, hurried to the door.

“Escape !—escape !—insolent !—impudent !”—raved forth Mrs. Tempest, running after him, and pulling him back.—“Confusion to my soul !—if you provoke me,—whosoever you are, were you the father who gave me life—”

Henry struggled in her grasp :—and a violent rapping at the street door made him step a few paces back.

The lady exclaimed, still keeping her hold, and perfectly agonized with rage, shaking Henry while she spoke,—“God be thanked !—that is either Valentine or Sir Guise !—now, sir, will *my triumph* be complete !”

As she said this, a noise was heard upon the stairs ; and presently the former of the above-mentioned persons made his appearance.

He had come to town, as the reader may remember, post haste, on the business of Jane Atwood. Arriving with Sir Guise in the middle of the night, and having left the baronet in Jane's lodgings, which had been provided by Miles,—he, Miles, had made up his excuse for visiting the widow at so unseasonable an hour, as at that time he observed some etiquette with her.

At the sight of Henry, whom he had seen more than once at the abbey, and whose passion for Caroline he had heard from Sir Guise, he started, as at that of an apparition.

“Mr. Henry Fitzorton!” exclaimed he.

“Who?—Henry Fitzorton!” cried the widow.—“No wonder, then, these unheard-of outrages have been heaped on me!—and I have not the smallest doubt, but that one wickedness would have led to another, till it had ended in my death!—Oh, Valentine!—sure heaven sent you at this moment to my rescue!—could you conceive what I have endured from this,
till

till now, unknown wretch,—your heart would bleed for me!”

She then related the foregone scene, so as exactly to reverse the several actual circumstances; observing, with an admirable accuracy of transposition, that, “he had rudely seated himself in the same box at the play-house,—watched her out,—thrust himself into her coach,—ran up stairs as soon as they got home,—forced poor Priscilla, her companion, out of the room,—locked the door,—swore that he would destroy the first person who offered to approach,—and, on casting his eye upon a letter she had received from her dear, dear Sir Guise, whose hand-writing he knew, he slandered both him and Valentine, with a volley of execrations,—and was proceeding to every thing shocking, when her good stars brought her friend Valentine to her aid!—’Twas surely providence,” &c. &c. &c.

As soon as she had finished this speech, which the gentleman whom she addressed believed as much of as she did herself,—
yet

yet the former thought it might be most productive to give it credit,—Valentine went into another room, observing, “ he should return in a moment.”

The widow then sallied up to Henry, and, in a malicious whisper, accompanied by a sarcastick sneer, her arms akimbo, demanded, “ whether he thought another miracle would happen, to befriend his *escape* from the vengeance of her injured friend !”

Henry disdained to make her any reply ; and indeed, before he could have done so, Miles returned with his pistols, at the sight of which, Mrs. Tempest, affecting to be alarmed, flung herself on her knees, and interceded for the life of Henry ;—then, by a gentle whisper, suggested to Miles, “ that if the outrage were well managed, it would be worth more to them both, than a million of such lives.”—This intercession wrought so on the tender heart of Miles, that all would have gone off, for the moment, with a gentle reprimand or menace, had not Henry,—who felt the Fitz-
orton

orton blood rush in boiling torrents through his veins, walked towards Valentine, and snapping his fingers in his face, observed loftily, "that the trick was too stale, and that, as he was too infamous a wretch to be met on a level by a man of honour, whose family had justly banished him from their presence, he should be warranted to treat him in the only way such a scoundrel was entitled to, if he did not let him pass out of the *private brothel* which Sir Guise and himself kept between them. — I have concealed your vile secret, which has been long communicated to me by the injured Charles, only out of delicacy to my angel. — I will no more sully her pure name by breathing it in a pest-house. — But, if an accent, respecting the shameful company into which I have been trepanned by that vicious and artful woman, is mentioned either in my hearing, or in that of any person dear to me, and it should reach me, I will set fire to a train that shall destroy you both! — so be warned."

It was with great difficulty Miles now held

held the arms of Mrs. Tempest, who maddened with rage, shame, and disappointment.—Miles was himself scarce less inflamed: but certain ideas rose in his mind suddenly, that induced him to let Henry go unmolested out of the room, and also to hold the widow by main force till the street door was shut, even to the hazard of Valentine's own face, which received several lusty blows;—but, when Henry was fairly off, it did not take either much pains or time to convince the lady, that, “though her whole story was *well put together*, he knew it had not one syllable of truth in it, and that, even had it been as veritable as it was false, it would be better for all parties to hush up the affair at present.—Till we provoke the stripling farther, he will keep *our* secret for the sake of *his own*; and the bringing upon us the fury of Charles, and of the d***d Fitzortons,—and, in consequence of our ill-timed resentment, arousing that nest of hornets, the magistrates,—would ruin the fruit of those plans which a little discretion will mature.—And as to

Sir

Sir Guise himself," added Miles, archly,—
"it would be as impossible to persuade him as me, or indeed yourself, that a young fellow should come here, and drink champagne, or burgundy,—which, I perceive by these tell-tale bottles, has been the case,—without your consent, unless he committed a rape upon the key of your cellar also!—No!—no!—let us be merry and wise, my dear widow: leave the event of this business with me.—I have a memory and mind, very faithful to my resentments; and depend upon it, when opportunity favours, though it should be the length of the siege of Troy before it arrives, I shall cherish the freshest recollection of whatever has been done or said in this business, even down to the saucy snap of his fingers in my face, which *his heart's dearest blood* shall one day pay for!—no matter!—leave the *thoughts* of revenge to me.—When time is ripe, do you assist the deed; and depend on it, we shall both be satisfied."

This consideration pacified her; and as Miles knew Sir Guise was safely disposed of

in

in the apartments of the deluded Jane Atwood for the night, he entered into the explanations he thought fit to make the widow for his untimely visit; and the amiable pair retired, after the bustles of the night, to the consolation of each other's faithful arms.

But, though this happy couple, reconciled by mutual deception, were satisfied with each other, they were by no means so with Henry: — for, notwithstanding the happy turn which the widow gave to the affair at the time, and her incessant assurances since, so often as it was mentioned, it was beyond the reach of policy, casuistry, or the most solemn oaths, to make Valentine believe there had not been some previous intercourse between Henry and herself, and that he caught them only in some quarrel of love, which would have ended in the usual way, had not his coming at the moment made it expedient for her to *pretend* violence, outrage, and displeasure. — And the idea did not a little aggravate the hate he bore to the Fitzortons, who appeared,

appeared, at every turn, the bane of his purposes.—Indeed, John and Henry were now alike detestable to him, especially as at this time the person of Mrs. Tempest, —though, for reasons good, he consented to divide her with Sir Guise,—was not then indifferent to him: for he had only begun to plot alienating the affections of the recently seduced Jane from the baronet.

And as to Mrs. Tempest herself, the sudden gust of love—or by whatever other name the reader thinks it ought to be called, for Henry, was presently succeeded by as sudden an aversion, when she found that no less than three penitently-*tender* letters, and one madly *accusing* epistle, which she caused to be clandestinely delivered to him by the means of David Otley, produced *not one word of reply*.

The caution, and dread of consequences, however, suggested by Miles, restrained her from publick and avowed revenge; but the thirst of vengeance kept raging within, and threatened one day to burst upon his head. Meantime, she availed herself

herself of more than one occasion to do him secret mischief, by way of giving earnest of her future designs.—The anonymous letters to John and his father, respecting Caroline, were from this lady's pen:—and had she known, at the time, his situation with Olivia, that would probably have been the subject of a third epistle.—Why she did not, since that, do him this kindness also, is yet in our confidence, and also, the farther proof, in her instance, how great truth there is in that celebrated distich of the poet—

“Heav'n has no plague like love to hatred turn'd,
“Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorn'd.”

In regard to Henry, candid reader, his error, and his repentance, are both before you.—His trespass, and his temptations, have been delineated.

CHAPTER XXX.

INNOCENT AFFECTION.

ABOUT the time that the disastrous Henry left the abbey, the impatient Olivia bent her steps toward that venerable mansion;—and never, perhaps, was an evening walk undertaken by two persons in situations of mind, and with reflections, more opposite. Henry, impelled by despair, and driven by irremediable necessity from the presence of his dear but deeply distressed Caroline, literally felt that “he dragged at each remove, the lengthening chain:” every step hurried him farther from the object of his affections, while Olivia, animated by hope, was by every step brought nearer to him whom she loved with unspeakable tenderness, and whom she fondly believed she was about to make the happiest of mankind.

They met about the midway of the memorable grand avenue; and the sudden sight of each other inspired very distinct emotions.

emotions.—Henry wished for the velocity of thought to escape so unseasonable a rencontre, and Olivia sighed for the speed of light to reach his hand.—Yet both were alike embarrassed, the one by trembling joy, the other by variety of sorrow.—By an involuntary impulse, Henry receded a few paces with the degree of rapidity that Olivia advanced; the wings of fear are even more rapid than those of love.—But Henry soon recovered himself and his steps; and by one of those hazards, which have all the air of design, and yet are common enough in life, Olivia and Henry joined each other immediately parallel to the place where the first avowal of love had been made by Henry to Caroline;—a circumstance, we trust, in the full recollection of the reader.

Anxious to know Caroline's reply to the request stated in the letter which had already produced so much mischief in the abbey family, Olivia was covered with blushes, and, hesitating almost to a stammer, alluded to the subject most likely to increase Henry's confusion.—“What would I give,”
said

said she, "to have been a sylph, or some other spirit, to have been present, yet unseen, at the reading of my hurried but heart-felt letter to Caroline!"

"Present at it!—you present!—good heaven!" exclaimed Henry, throwing up his hands and eyes.

"I dare say," continued Olivia, "you all thought me—but yet—I hope—"

Her blushes deepened, and the faltering of her voice augmented.

"I hope Caroline did not shew it?—Gracious!—if she did, I should never forgive her! yet," recovering herself, "wherefore should I talk thus? wherefore attempt to conceal the pride and triumph of my life? O Henry, my dear—dear—Henry, grant me a portion of your eloquence, that I may express what I feel at the thought of calling Henry—I know not what I would say,—I only know that I am the most honoured and blessed of human beings,—and that it is his goodness, love, and constancy, have made me so."

Her eyes were directed to those of Henry,

as her artless heart thus poured itself forth to her now almost husband ; for, in his late absence, the two fathers had at last fixed the eventful day of those nuptials which had a thousand times come into the sport and seriousness of the family conversation ; but Lady Fitzorton had communicated it in form to Olivia a few minutes before she set out to meet Henry.

The eyes of Henry were now cast a different way,—and they were filled with tears.

“ Ah ! hope and glory of my life !” exclaimed Olivia,—“ wherefore do you weep ? If those tears, like mine, proceed not from excess of tenderness,—excess of felicity,—the earth bears not such a wretch as Olivia !”

“ They do—the almighty searcher of hearts knows—they do proceed,” said Henry, passionately, “ from tenderness !”

“ That omnipotent witness be praised !” ejaculated Olivia. “ And yet, methinks I would not have such drops as these flow from my Henry’s heart, even though they spring from joy !”

Archangels might have fancioned the movement with which Olivia now laid her cheek to that of Henry, and dried up his tears. Alas! the fountain was full, and streamed afresh.

“Yonder is an arbouring tree with a bench round it.—I see it through the under-wood,” said Olivia, gently drawing Henry towards the place.

“Let us rest awhile,” continued she: “for I have something—very—very dear to impart to my Henry.”

Henry suffered himself to be led passively on; when reaching the bench, he sat down, Olivia placing herself by his side.

“I protest,” said Olivia, resuming her cheerfulness, that Henry might catch the gaiety, “this spot seems formed for tender hearts;—doth it not, Henry?—One would imagine these bowring hawthorns and these o’er-arching shades, branching from this romantick oak, had been the scene of some gentle assignation in days of chivalry.”

Every word she spoke, though designed to convey more than the rose’s fragrance

to his sense, was sharper than a thorn pressing into his heart. His disappointments were all brought close under his very eye: and wherever he turned, memory presented some bleeding image of former felicity, untimely destroyed even in the spot which was at once the place of its birth and burial.

He turned his head, as to conceal his agitations, when those initials of Caroline's name which his own hand had carved in the rind of the oak, met his view, and the words, "O my only life and love!" burst spontaneously from his heart. The name of Caroline which was about to follow this passionate exclamation, quivered and died on his lips; yet wholly subdued by a situation so affecting, he sunk down on Olivia's shoulder; and he had only strength enough to sigh out, "This—this—is too much!"

Olivia naturally applied to herself the above-mentioned tender expression so characteristic of Henry's habits, and so congenial to the rhapsody of her own heart: and she supposed—as how, indeed, could she imagine otherwise?—he was melted by
that

that overwhelming sensibility which might well be excited in a disposition like his, by the avowal she had made of boundless returns of her affection. “And, ah! in what language but your own,” cried she, chastely but fondly caressing him, her own lovely eyes repaying him with largest interest every tear,—“Oh in what language but Henry’s can I answer such tenderness?—My only life! my only love! Yes,” added she, exalting her voice without diminishing its sweetness, “that divinity to whom my beloved has just appealed in testimony of his own faith, can tell how truly my love and life are devoted to him alone.”

Henry raised himself up, as if to rectify the misconstruction which had been put on an expression that Olivia had so naturally appropriated: but the sudden appearance of Little Fitz, and, in the ensuing moment, the sound of a voice, exclaiming, “There is the dog,—depend upon it his friends are not far off,”—pointed his attention to other objects.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TRANSPORT OF PARENTS.

HENRY and Olivia without expressing their surprize to each other, hasted through the opening in the bushes to explore the cause, when they observed Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton coming up the avenue, and within a few paces of them.

Olivia, who had caught up Little Fitz, in silent rapture ran down the avenue to meet them, and in a whisper assured Lady Fitzorton that Henry was the best creature in the world, and had made her the happiest. —“With all his ardours you know, my dear madam,” said she, “he is not a man of professions,—more delicately trusting to actions than words, in attestation of his feelings;—a conduct I have often vainly attempted to imitate, and which I have admired, even when I have quarrelled with him for it. But, had you heard the endearing expressions he just uttered, accompanied by his tears, and witnessed by his love-declaring

declaring eyes—O heaven!—indeed,—indeed,—I am the happiest—and he is the best of human beings!”

During the display of this delusion, which those who admire Olivia will wish might end with her life, Henry was advancing, but with steps that little justified Olivia’s description, on an occasion which would have carried him,—had he been indeed her lover,—with a speed and impatience like her own.

Indeed he seemed at first undetermined whether to make his escape by rushing into the woods, or to join the family party. Perceiving, however, the latter were moving towards him, he thought it would be impossible to recede; and after assuring his stars that he now defied their utmost malice, and should resign himself to their malignant power without any farther resistance, he somewhat quickened his pace, like a man giving himself up desparingly to the worst that could happen. Notwithstanding this, he saluted his parents with those graces of filial duty which the sight of

them always enkindled, and which even disappointed love, of whose pangs they were in great measure the cause, could not extinguish.

The sight, however, of Little Fitz, whom he had not before seemed to notice, had nearly overset his plan of non-resistance. "Would it not be best for me, dearest madam, to step home with that spaniel?" said he to his mother. "I dare say he watched the opening of the abbey gate to follow me."

Henry held out his arm to receive him from Olivia, who sportingly said, "she was sure he came again on a message to her from his fair mistress; for there was more than ordinary accident in the dog's returning so soon and at such a moment, they might depend on it; and she would therefore give him a fair chance either to go or stay."

She gently patted him, and set him down, observing that she would use no bribery to detain, nor any chiding to dismiss him. "Let him follow his own unbiassed inclinations,"

nations," said Olivia: "if he goes towards the abbey, I declare I will not say a word to call him back; but if he attends any of us uncalled, I shall think there is more in it than common chance,—and expect a welcome for him at the castle, till I can have an opportunity to return him to his lovely owner, in person.—There—now for it!—He is now to do as he likes. Say nothing; but let us walk on, and leave him to himself."

Little Fitz was no sooner set upon the ground, than he paid his compliments, first to Henry, then to the rest of the company, and bounding along the avenue in the direct line towards the castle, seemed to confirm the prepossession of Olivia, who now roundly reasserted, nothing should persuade her there was not more in it than even the philosophy of John, had he been present, could find out.

Sir Armine, who had attended rather to the history of his son's face than to what had been said about the dog, caught the eye of Henry, and over-ruled whatever farther

ther arguments or objections he might have been disposed to make: so the whole groupe went together to the castle. At first they walked arm in arm, in a row; but soon after they divided two and two,—Olivia and Lady Fitzorton, Sir Armine and Henry. This arrangement was again altered, by design or accident: for Sir Armine proposed that his wife and Olivia should make the best of their way home, and that he and Henry would take a poetical saunter, and follow at leisure, averring that he wished to discuss with him a *knotty* point.

The emphasis with which he pronounced these words, and the smile that accompanied them, was so well understood by her ladyship, that she pleasantly exclaimed, walking away with Olivia at the same time, “Pray, my dear daughter, let us leave these poetick philosophers to settle their *knotty* points by themselves, while you and I,” whispered she to Olivia, who crimsoned at the remark, “go and prepare some other knots that shall prove too hard for both their worships.” Olivia turned back thrice

on pretence of seeing whether Little Fitz preferred the male or the female division of the party, but, possibly, for a more affectionate reason. The sagacious and political little animal, however, seemed to keep, like James Fitzorton, the midway between them, and so continued to hold well with both parties:—a line of conduct which has been faithfully followed by much greater politicians.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY.

THE ladies were soon at a fit distance for Sir Armine's purpose. He loitered behind, complained that the relics of the gout still enfeebled him, "And, alas! my beloved, my favourite and favoured son," said he, "I literally stand in need of a support; a dear and tender child is the best crutch on which a parent can lean; it is one which Providence bestowed in the days of his youth,

youth, to sustain and to comfort his age."

Sir Armine took hold of Henry's arm.

They were both silent for some moments. "What a reliance is this!" resumed Sir Armine leaning on Henry; "it is a pillar that sustains the soul as well as the body! At this blest moment I feel myself as firmly *protected* as if the vigour of my own spring-time of life were returned. The plant I reared repays my care. It is become the goodly tree of my little garden."—He paused a moment to press on Henry's arm yet more forcibly. "And though," continued he, "I am now grown weaker than the shrub that the next rude blast may level with the dust, this filial support shall prove a better dependance than the branches of the proudest oak! yea, were they formed into crutches lined with the down of the cygnet's bosom! nay, in the conflict of my last hour, which, you know, my Henry, *cannot* be remote, this prop"—lifting up his son's wreathed arm to his lips—"shall attemper the storm of death."

Henry's

Henry's present emotions excited by this discourse annihilated the past; and in remembering he was a son, he even forgot for a moment he was a lover. Returning his father's embraces with tearful rapture, he conjured him, in a voice that the union of love and duty only can inspire—he conjured him to lean the whole weight of that body and of that soul Sir Armine had mentioned entirely upon him.—“The strength of my affection is equal to it all,” said he.

“I believe, hope, and feel it, Henry,” returned Sir Armine, “and the trial that is preparing will but confirm the assertion.”—He paused and wept.—“Henry, you must prepare early to-morrow to begin a journey, in company with Mr. Clare, his daughter, and myself: a journey, my son, at the end of which, if youth, beauty, and innocence; if fame, fortune, and love unbounded; if that religion, of which I hope soon to see you—with all humility be it spoken—a worthy minister; if all these, in blessed union, can render a human being happy, you will be among the happiest of mankind.”

Henry, upon whom was now forced a remembrance of himself, was about to reply, when Sir Armine, seeing something of resistance and agitation in his air, pressed more eagerly his hand, and said—"Name not to me your bosom prepossessions. Inasmuch as you conquer them for the sake of what you owe to duty and religion, to me and to God, you will be meritorious. The matter lies in a narrow compass," continued Sir Armine, raising his voice awfully, and dropping Henry's hand—"you selfishly unite yourself to the daughter of your father's enemy; ENEMY to his person, family, and faith, whatever gloss he may, I fear for no virtuous reason, now put upon it,—or to the daughter of your father's FRIEND, in all things that can give a title to that sacred character. It is superfluous for me to say more; I will expect your answer in your conduct not your words."

Without waiting for reply of any kind, Sir Armine hastened, unsupported, to the castle, dreading more the pain of a speech that might thwart his favourite purpose,
than

than the pangs of his gout; or, perhaps, he lost the sense of the latter in the greater apprehension of the former.

They were, indeed, within a few paces of the castle, as Henry was ascending, in disordered silence, the steps, at which Olivia and Lady Fitzorton presented themselves to view. The former had tript down the long flight of stairs to give her arm to Sir Armine; and as she was conducting the old gentleman in this manner, Henry took notice of a circumstance, which added, not a little, to his confusion. He perceived that Olivia had quitted her mourning, and was, for the first time since the death of a relation of the family, in colours. Lady Fitzorton seeing he observed this, whispered to him to follow the example, "since the white hours," said she, blessed be God! are at last returned.

The embarrassment, however, of any reply was taken off by the appearance of the good old Mr. Clare, who coming up to Henry, with an air and aspect of ineffable benignity, directly exclaimed, "At length,

length, Henry, I am about to entrust you with a treasure, which, were I not assured you know how to prize even according to its value, I would not, for all the wealth of all the worlds that pay homage to their god below or above, put you in possession of! But, at present, I must borrow her a few minutes even from you, having occasion for her services."

Olivia and her father left the room. Henry's heart seemed ready to burst with variety of agonies suppressed, and uttering a terrifying groan, he flung himself first into a chair, and then at Sir Armine's feet, passionately embracing his knees with one hand, and Lady Fitzorton's arm with the other.

His parents raised him from his prostrate posture, each taking hold of him—"Son," said Sir Armine, "nothing truly great or noble was ever done without exertion. The sublime duties demand, and deserve it. You are trusted with all my motives. You are in the confidence of my situation: a confidence denied to the rest of my

my

my children ; but I am this day permitted to inform *you* that Sir Rowland Fitzorton, allied equally to our family and to that of the Clares, has left the Adfell estate, which yields seven thousand pounds a-year, to Olivia, on condition *only* of her marrying one of our name and blood ; and the fortune goes out of both families to publick uses, specified in his singular will, in case she fulfils not the obligation. By way of generous surprize to your heart, which she has all along believed wanted no inducement in its love, it has been Olivia's prayer to her father, that this circumstance should be reserved to the hour at which the day of marriage might be fixed ; and though my friend and I have faithfully kept promise, it has been with much difficulty she has adhered to her own resolves, on the idea of its being cruel to withhold from you any good."—" Generous even to cruelty !" sighed Henry.

" Amongst other singularities of the testator, he has stipulated," resumed Sir Armine, " to have the marriage ceremony performed

performed at the altar of the chapel where he himself was united to his Lady, and that the wedding should be kept holy in the room which was his own bridal apartment.

“ Surely, my beloved child,” said Lady Fitzorton, gently pressing his hand to her bosom, “ these accumulated motives might reconcile a heart like yours to forego a partiality, which, whatever may be the merit of the object, neither duty to your parents, your friends, nor yourself, permit you to cherish ; I might have added, duty to your God ; for though you have of late neglected all offices, all studies, you cannot but feel that the sacred profession should again be cultivated.”

“ Henry,” said Sir Armine, “ no good man *can* be miserable with Olivia Clare ! and no good man, under like circumstances, could be happy with Caroline Stuart !”

• He then pointed to Lady Fitzorton, and said, “ Behold an illustrious example for you to follow. This beloved woman was the object of my affectionate esteem, not of my youthful enthusiasm. A great and commanding

commanding duty first united me; I did not romantically love, but I did more. I revered, I honoured; on that honour, that reverence, I made her my wife; since which, more than half a century has gone smiling by, and in all that time, she has been as my own soul. Henry, prove yourself worthy of us."

He led Lady Fitzorton out of the apartment, saying to her—"Madam, the honour and happiness of your family is safe. To-morrow will our filial preserver prepare his hand and his heart."

"To-morrow, Sir! Good Heaven!" questioned and ejaculated Henry, and once more he fell at his father's feet; but Sir Armine, disengaging from his embrace, hurried away, firmly saying to Lady Fitzorton—"There is but a moment on this side my destruction and your favourite son's disgrace, madam: if you would prevent both, assist me in making our escape."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONFLICTS OF LOVE AND DUTY.

HENRY sat for some time motionless; then attempted to examine his condition. There is scarce an emotion of which the human heart is capable, but took its turn to tyrannize. At one time, his distempered fancy painted the ruin, and even the poverty of his parents, brought about by the indulgence of his fatal passion. He thought he saw them stretched on their dying beds, with their last breath accusing him as the cause of their destruction. His filial heart shrunk as from the crime of parricide. He resolved, in that afflicting moment, to sacrifice his love to his duty; but in the next his imagination suggesting his vows to Caroline, and the miseries he should entail on himself, and perhaps on the innocent Olivia, made that offence more foul to his soul than the most determined

mined disobedience, "This," cried he, smiting his breast, "would be worse than self-murder — worse than that impiety, against which the 'Omnipotent has set his seal.' Alas, Caroline! though Fortune were to remain my cruel persecutor for years to come, should not this hand be reserved even to the end of life for thee? and were it never permitted to be united to thine, could my devoted heart, my violated conscience, offer it to another without treason to honour, to tenderness, and to truth! And, least of all, can I present it to thy brother's adored Olivia! Does filial duty require me to violate the sacred laws both of Love and Friendship? Shame on such virtue! It is unnatural. I renounce it!"

In the midst of these struggles he retired to his chamber, whither he was accompanied by True George, who, seeing his master agitated, and thinking rest would be the most likely means of restoring him, began, as usual to assist him.—"George," cried Henry, "thou art, thou hast been proved

proved faithful, and of that fidelity I must now make another trial." The countenance of the honest domestick brightened in an instant, and without losing any time in professions, or offers of service, except by giving assent at almost every word his master uttered, he stood eagerly waiting for the word of command.—“ My dear parents,” continued Henry, “ are going to make me the most infamous and miserable of human kind; my brothers, my whole family, and even the Clares, are in the plot against my peace. I have no dependance, no hope, but from thee!”—George’s whole frame quivered with impatience.—“ To-morrow I am by their joint contrivance, to be ruined; to-morrow they have determined I shall break my most sacred promises, my most solemn oaths; to-morrow, therefore, my heart also will be broken, if I am not preserved from the impending stroke to-night!”—George traversed the room at a stride, and ejaculated, “ To-morrow, to-night! to-night, to-morrow!”—A case of pistols hung over the chimney-piece

piece in Henry's chamber; and George, as if by an involuntary impulse, hastily took them down, and held one in each trembling hand, intimating, though he spoke not a word, that he was now doubly armed, and only wanted the orders of his superior to shoot any body and every body through the head, that should stand in the way of effecting his master's escape from this terrifying catalogue of ills.

“O Heavens!” cried Henry, at the unexpected sight of the pistols. An often suggested and desperate idea seemed to resume its dominion.—“Gracious Heaven! I thank thee, good fellow, for the hint.”—“The hint, Sir?” questioned the trembling George—“what hint?” “Alas!” exclaimed Henry; “how many easy ways are there of escaping the tyranny of friends or foes! By the help of one of these friendly instruments,” continued he, catching suddenly at one of the pistols, “I might, in one moment, avoid, perhaps, a long life of misery!”—“But what will become of you after?” cried George. “And can this be a crime?”

a crime?" resumed Henry. "A terrible one, your honour," interposed George; "the Lord gives, and the Lord only can take away."—"Or," continued Henry, not attending, "if a crime, can it be so atrocious, so immitigable, so beyond God's forgiveness or man's salvation, as that which prostitutes for gold the sanctity of the most solemn vows made in the presence of that God, and falsify the most awful engagements? If both are evils, both iniquities; is not that the least, which, to prevent the ruin of *many*, destroys but one?"

While Henry was entering into the latter part of this self-debate, too often discussed in the same way, George, who still trembled from head to foot, substituted action for words, by wrenching the pistol from his hand, and disappearing amidst a profusion of bows. Henry had scarce time to reflect on what had been done, before George came again bowing into the apartment, without any deadly weapon, and making a number of silent apologies for the liberty he had taken; at length, perceiving a frown gathering

gathering on his master's brow—"I hope your honour will not be offended at my obeying your honour's commands."—"Disobeying them, you mean," answered Henry.—"No," replied George, "you told me you should be ruined to-morrow, if not preserved to-night. Providence sent me to your honour's assistance; for I don't see how a man is to ruin himself, if another man takes out of his hand all *ruinating* weapons; at least he must thereby get time to think better of it; so you may now go into a comfortable bed, and to-morrow may come as soon as God pleases to give it us. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

The fervid devotion and humility with which George uttered this—bowing his head and folding his hands each time he uttered that name, which claims the reverence of all creation—disarmed the rising resentment of Henry, who extended his hand in testimony of forgiveness, and seeming to acquiesce in what had been said, went to his chamber, and desired to be left to his repose.

repose. George, who was now eased of his terrible apprehensions, departed; but the poor fellow returning on tiptoe, and gently opening the door, about an hour after, to see that all was well, having perhaps still some fears, found Henry had risen from his bed, and by the glimmering light of the lamp had been writing a letter. He was folding it up as George came in. "This is the trial I spoke of, George," said Henry, as he waded the letter. "It is to Lieutenant Stuart, and requires an immediate reply. He is at the abbey. Dennison will take it to his apartment; and as the old man, you know, sleeps apart from the family, it may be managed without alarm."

The latter part of these directions were lost in air; for George was at the bottom of the stairs, and making his rapid way, but with inaudible steps, to the street-door, before they were uttered, setting off at full speed with the words—*immediate reply*.

Henry now betook himself again to his bed; but it might be truly said, Caroline had

had

had "murdered sleep;" or rather, she, in combination with many more, conspired to banish that lenient power from shedding balms on his pillow. The morrow began to dawn, and he anticipated all the horrors of a marriage, into which even tender parents were about to plunge him; while they knew his heart to be utterly averse.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TRIUMPHS OF DUTY AND LOVE.

WHILE the intended victim of the Fitzortons was anticipating the sacrifice of all his happiness, how differently passed away the hours in the apartments of Olivia! —Virtuous love, in like circumstances, has ten thousand times been felt by virtuous women, but has never, perhaps, been described even by themselves without an injury to that feeling.

As the clock struck five, Olivia arose. It

was in verity an April morn, both of life and nature. Olivia smiled and wept; and the element showered and shone at the same moment. The summons of preparation was consigned to Jenny Atwood, whom gratitude and her own disappointed, but not hardened heart,—kept wakeful. On entering the apartment, she found Olivia almost dressed. They greeted each other kindly; but on Olivia's face had settled one of the tears, and another, in its "crystal source," stood ready; yet her cheeks glowed, and her eye looked the more bright from the lustre of that precious drop, but it trembled like early dew upon the rose-bud glistening in a sunbeam.

Meantime, the unfortunate Henry was sometimes tossing on the bed, sometimes traversing the room, and sometimes in a profound reverie, debating, but unable to determine, what course he should take. In the midst of these conflicts, he heard, with horror, the striking of that very clock whose sound vibrated the tenderest joys to the

the bosom of Olivia. It announced the sixth hour. Terrible was it to his ear, as if it had been the knell of a friend's death! To Olivia, it was the musick of the sphere. Resolving and re-resolving, but still unresolved, he arose abruptly, packed and unpacked, filled and emptied a trunk several times, and after having, at length, determined to hazard every thing rather than prostitute his heart by yielding a reluctant, alienated, betrothed hand, be the consequence what it might—here he pressed Caroline's miniature, with almost a convulsed emotion, to his bosom—he sat down with the composure which a man always feels, when, after deep agitation, his fluctuating opinions become fixed.

At this crisis the faithful George returned from the abbey, almost breathless with haste; and informed Henry, that the Lieutenant had left the abbey within an hour after his honour; that he set off without any servant, and left word for his sister, that he should not return till late in the next day.—“Left the abbey,” exclaimed Hen-

ry, "so sudden! Did you see Dennison?"
"O yes, your honour, and I know not what is the matter; but I—I fear from the young 'squire's going away in the night-time, all alone, some harsh words have passed between the old gentleman and his honour; for Sir Guise is gone too." Before Henry could reply to this extraordinary intelligence, a messenger, on horse-back, desired to speak to True George, who setting off at full speed, presently returned at full speed also, and delivered a packet to his master, saying—"I understand it is from the Lieutenant, sir: the horse that brought it is all in a foam."

"TO HENRY FITZORTON, ESQ.

"SEEING, O my beloved friend! we are both hovering on the extremest verge of destruction, I have been some hours on my horse, to prevent a marriage which, if *not* prevented, will be the precipice that must whelm us both into instant ruin. Henry, beware! Let nothing urge you to an action which will heap havock and horror on both, and on all that belong to us.

The

The secret of your love of my sister must one day or another reach the ear and pierce the heart of Olivia. You have no alternative but flight—instant flight! Something may happen in your absence favourable to all our loves. I have, by the assistance of a friend, devised a way to make your flight look like a matter of necessity. Proceed in your preparations—be ready at your father's call—seem to enter into the *spirit* of his views—begin the dreadful destined journey with alacrity, and at the edge of Adsell Forest, which you must necessarily pass in your way to the hall, expect to meet a DELIVERER!"

So great was Henry's perturbation on reading this, that though he ordered True George to prepare every thing, without knowing he spoke, and dressed with all possible dispatch; and though he determined to follow his friend's advice, he was by no means in a state of mind to conjecture, or indeed to connect thoughts on what could be intended by the promise of deliverance. The very idea, however, of

escaping a marriage with Olivia, and of the bare possibility of reserving his hand for Caroline, gave him such alacrity in preparation, that he was the first of the groupe to salute the intended bride, whom he met, arrayed in those bridal vestments which Lady Fitzorton's assiduity and taste had prepared. At the sight of her now almost husband, she was covered from her forehead to her bosom with the true "rosy red" of native modesty, and might literally be said to blush and breathe ten thousand graces. Lady Fitzorton, and both the fathers, had bestirred themselves, and were bustling to get the carriages to the door. Henry, animated by the hope which his friend Charles had inspired, had assumed, all at once, so vivid an appearance, not only from that hope, but from the flush of hurrying employments and emotions, that Sir Armine thought his parting words had taken effect. Lady Fitzorton wept, and Mr. Clare forgot his age, and danced for joy. For Olivia's felicity there are no words; and if it was still dressed "like

April's

April's suns in showers,' it was thence only the more bright and delicious. **A BE**

CHAPTER XXXV.

PLOT AND UNDERPLOT.

AS the carriages were driving up, Mr. Partington, to the surprise of the whole party, rode up on the full gallop. "Why, heyday! you abominable good-for-nothing rascals!" said he, addressing them all; "and so you thought to have stolen not only a march but a match upon me, without knowing whether I forbid the banish, or give consent, did you? But I was not," added he, in the same pleasant vein, "to be out-generalled by a parcel of shallow vagabonds like you. My trusty scouts apprised me of your operations, and brought me a full account of the enemy's motions long before the official letters of Father Fitzorton arrived at head-quarters. But, to shew that I do not mean to punish you

for disobeying orders, I will be so far from intercepting you in your expedition, that I propose to be your leader, and now give you the word of command to proceed on your march like a pack of sad poltroons, as you are. To the right about! Make ready! March! Fire away!—at full trot—you sorry, fore-footed caitiffs!” rejoined he, turning round the horses’ heads with one hand, and performing part of the military exercise with the other, the huge crabstick with which he always rode or walked serving him for a musket.

The company, accustomed to his mode of address, took all in good part, and were made happy at the unexpected rencontre. Henry performed the honour of assisting the ladies to their carriages; and having made his bow to Lady Fitzorton and Olivia, he ordered the postilion to drive on, observing, that he and Mr. Partington would lead the way.

“Now, that is as it should be; so off we go, infantry and cavalry, to besiege your grandfather, old Sir Rowland’s castle
—hey,

—hey, my boy !” exclaimed the bustling Partington, who appeared to be as well instructed, and as much interested in the conduct, motives, and dispatch of the journey, as if he only had the ordering of the arrangements, had fixed the day, and was going himself to be married to Olivia.

The party in motion consisted of Sir Armine and his Lady, Olivia and Mr. Care in the family coach, followed by Jenny Atwood and True George, in the post chariot, at Olivia’s particular request ; Partington and Henry on horseback ; a suit of domesticks following. In this order they set forward, on one of the loveliest mornings of the loveliest part of the year, and all appeared in spirits suitable to the occasion.

They purposed dividing the journey into two equal parts ; stopping to rest, the first night, at Adfell, where they had previously bespoke accommodations at an excellent inn on the western road ; and to reach the priory early enough on the second day to finish the great object of their tour.

Nothing worthy to be recorded in this

history took place till, almost after the whole of the first day's travel, they arrived at the skirts of the forest bordering on the village of Adfell, when, just as they were descending a deep valley, enriched by a stream that took its way through the woods, Partington exclaimed, jocosely—"Now, if we have any of us our deserts, we shall be plundered by some of the robbers that infest this part of the forest! to prevent which," added he, "as the night draws on, and that pale-faced huffy, the moon, holds a dark lanthorn to the honest gentlemen of the bullet, aiding and abetting, rather than discovering them, let us push on till we get clear of this plaguy wilderness, which is absolutely an encouragement to the amiable associates of the halter." Rather in sport than in apprehension, Henry humoured his whimsical fellow-traveller; and they had not proceeded above a couple of hundred paces farther, ere Partington, checking his own horse, and pulling the rein of Henry's, cried out, "Wo-ho!—stop, you abominable good-for-nothing vagabond, we are just
at

at the spot where you are to be robbed, stripped, murdered, and ravished!—Let me see;—Ay! this is the very place. Prepare yourself; your time is come.”—He had scarce uttered this, when four stout men on foot, preceded by one on horseback, with vizors on their faces, rushed from behind a cluster of thick elms that, forming an angle, came jutting into the road. They surrounded Henry, crying out—“Yield, you are amongst *friends!*” —The horseman now came up to Henry, and taking off his vizor, cried out, “Behold one of your DELIVERERS!” —“Charles Stuart!” exclaimed Henry.—“Yes,” said Partington, “my plot is now mature; you are to be delivered, I find, from a forced marriage!—I will allow no scoundrel to force another. But we must wait the arrival of the coach, because it is necessary the old gentleman should see you carried off. You may as well seem to resist a little though, and I will appear to help you—but we must both cleverly suffer ourselves to be overcome—and while I am

making my escape, with proper difficulty, you shall be carried to a place of safety—namely, to my own house, where I desire you will remain a close prisoner.” Partington conducted the whole of this attack with too much rapidity to admit of more than silent surprise—but at this moment a violent shriek arrested the general attention.—“Heyday!” cried Partington, seeing the coach surrounded by armed men, and even some of the company dragged out, “here are more rogues than our own, Stuart.” Hereupon, setting spurs to his horse, and ordering the men to follow, bludgeons in hand, Henry, and the first body of assailants, with Charles at their head, were hastening to inquire into the designs of the second, which were soon discovered to be of a far more hostile nature. For, notwithstanding the dispatch of Partington, and his cohort, the villains had burst open the door of the carriage, and while the women were trembling and beseeching mercy, two of the banditti were belabouring Sir Armine and Mr. Clare with bludgeons, which would soon

soon have put an end to their existence, had not Partington, Henry, and the masked men, one with the fury of an old, and the rest of two young lions, assisted in their rescue. But this was not effected before Sir Armine, who received a blow in his temple after he was otherwise much hurt, had fallen on the ground. While Henry and Partington were endeavouring to raise him up, the rest were employed in pursuing and securing the ruffians. True George had fastened upon the collar of one, and the neck of another was nailed to the earth by his feet. The villain that was observed to strike Sir Armine after he was on the ground, was the prize of the victorious Charles, who, considering him as devoid even of the common compassion of an highwayman, in treating a venerable and helpless man with so much barbarity, returned every blow he had inflicted on Sir Armine with tenfold interest. Nor were Partington and True George's myrmidons less liberal in *their* rewards of the rest of the banditti,

ditti, which consisted of two persons besides those in George's custody.

By this time the tender and assiduous Henry, who totally forgot all idea of his own escape in the apprehension and terror he felt for others, had so far composed the ladies, that he was at liberty to assist in lifting Mr. Clare and Sir Armine, who were both wounded, into the carriage. Meantime, the victors pursued their triumphant blows over the vanquished: but villany, though done 'i'th' centre,' will speak, and great discoveries are brought about by slender means. Little Fitz, who, in the general ransack of the company, had left the coach, either from indignation or some other motive, leaped on the personage whom Armstrong was belabouring; and the moon coming from under her cloud, what could equal the surprize and consternation of the whole company, when, in prosecuting their chastisement, one of George's captives turned out to be the infamous David Otley, Sir Armine's favourite servant, who had been
trusted

trusted with ordering the accommodations at Adsell, and who was supposed to be still in waiting there to receive the family; the other, Mr. Valentine Miles! and, to complete the climax of astonishment, the personage under the severe discipline of Jonathan, proved to be Sir Guise Stuart!—while Valentine Miles had been the victim of Henry and Charles alternately! These extraordinary discoveries were made so near to the coach, that every body within, capable of sight or speech, exclaimed, “How! Sir Guise Stuart! David Otley! Valentine Miles!”—Sir Armine alone wanted power to know the prime offender, being utterly stunned by the back-handed stroke he had received.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONSEQUENCES.

THE rage, grief, and shame of the ingenuous Charles at this detection is not to be described: it was insupportable to him
—and,

—and, giving way to a resentment which shook his frame almost to dissolution, and annihilated all sense of affinity, he addressed the trembling Sir Guise with an oath, by which he swore, that he would see justice executed upon him, and be himself his principal evidence, even though the publick disgrace of an ignominious death should be the consequence.—“As for you, wretch!” said he, turning to Miles, “and thou, his meanest instrument, if my correction towards thee knows any bounds, it is only in the hope that the residue of your punishment will be more sure and exemplary in the hands of my country, than in those of an individual.” Partington, who deemed this no time for discourse, proceeded to immediate action: he therefore arranged his men, and placed his prisoners in the midst of them, in the manner of deserters, taken up and moving to a court-martial. He then took the lead, and desired Charles to guard and bring up the rear.

In this manner was the long-fostered revenge of Sir Guise and his mercenaries defeated

feated by the very persons whom his amiable but unhappy son had convened to rescue his friend from a forced marriage.

The escort of prisoners arrived at Adfell, which was about two miles from the place of attack, sooner than the coach; but the indefatigable George and his colleagues, which were no other than Jerom and his cousin Jonathan, for Henry had never left the side of the coach, had rode at full speed, and had brought a rural surgeon to the inn-gate, where he waited the coming of the carriage.

More than an hour elapsed in arranging the two different parties, in separate apartments, which were with difficulty procured; for David Otley had attended only to the accommodations at the forest, and neglected those he was to have prepared at the inn, which having much company, who purposed staying all night, the hostess was driven to her best management to provide beds, even for Mr. Clare, her landlord, and his friends. As to Sir Guise Stuart, and his fellow assassins, Mr. Partington and
Charles

Charles disposed of them with very little apparatus, in convenient out-houses adjoining, where they were put without ceremony, under lock and key, and the trusty George set over as guard, relieved occasionally by Jonathan or Jerom.

Sir Armine was accommodated with a comfortable suite of rooms, where he might be surrounded by Olivia, Lady Fitzorton, Henry, Jenny Atwood, and his attendants.

He was no sooner put into a warm bed, than the surgeon, who, contrary to what books usually represent gentlemen of the faculty resident in the country to be, was a skilful and sensible man, desired to be left alone with the patient, whom he immediately bled; and, finding the bruises less violent than he at first suspected, gently fomented the parts affected with a suitable embrocation; then, administering an anodyne, assured the company they would shew their affection in the most essential manner by leaving the patient to repose; “after which,” said the surgeon, “I do not doubt but we shall find him materially refreshed:”

freshed:”—And promising to call again before bedtime, and to attend early in the morning, he bowed and took his leave.

Somewhat comforted by this favourable report, the shattered party had leisure and spirits to inquire about each other. Mr. Clare felt himself much recovered, having escaped with only two or three blows, and those on no vital part. Olivia and Lady Fitzorton, who had suffered only in sympathy for the sufferings of others, and from the natural terrors of so sudden an attack, seemed to revive in proportion as Mr. Clare and Sir Armine were pronounced to be out of danger. Henry could not be prevailed on to quit Sir Armine's bedside, at which, begging his mother to sleep in another apartment with Olivia, he kept watch the whole night. On the return of the good surgeon, finding the favourable symptoms continue, the rest of the party felt themselves sufficiently at their ease to take some slight refreshment; and after each had paid a tiptoed visit to the chamber of Sir Armine, whom the vigilant

Henry

Henry signified, rather by gestures than by speech, to be in a dose, they withdrew to their apartments in order to follow so good an example.

It should not be omitted, to the honour of his race, that Little Fitz, whose various good actions entitle him to be now considered as a personage of some consequence in this history, kept watch over Sir Armine at the feet of Henry; and, except that on the entrance of Olivia, whose passing caresses he acknowledged, he remained there till the morning.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

RETROSPECTIONS.

HAVING thus disposed of the several characters at the inn in the best manner that the circumstances admitted, John Fitzorton, whom we left to the pleasing and painful task of finishing his drawing of Olivia Clare, had just taken his pencil from retouching the well-imitated features,

over which he heaved many a sigh, when Lieutenant Stuart was announced. John arose and ran to the door with expanded arms to receive him; but willing to pass over the subject of his promotion, which he knew might lead to what would disconcert the amicable convention settled betwixt him and Henry on that matter, he exclaimed, "I am apprised, my good Charles, of all that gives me the sincere satisfaction of seeing you, and having you amongst us; but I must cut short all unnecessary effusions. Are you come to remain with us now altogether?"—"No," replied Charles, "I have some affairs to adjust at home before I can have the honour of associating, but thought it a first duty to make my bow to my new Captain and Colonel, *en passant*."—"Then you are just in time to take letters for me to the castle; and may I trouble you to convey a small parcel to our Olivia."—"Our Olivia!" cried Charles, reddening; "Ah! Captain Fitzorton, you know not how far nor through what perils I would go, had I a thousand lives at stake,

to render the most trifling service to that dear angelick girl!" "Indeed!" said John, employing all the powers of his scrutinizing eyes upon Charles's face, as if at the first idea of a new discovery—"Indeed!"

There are moments, it is well known, which defeat the circumspection of years. The steady gaze with which John pursued his object, deepened the tacit declaration in the cheek of Charles, and either by reflection, or by some other course, John felt an uncommon glow in his own countenance. On the repetition of the ejaculatory word, *Indeed!* Charles, finding he had betrayed himself, became yet more embarrassed: John was discomposed, and each continued to confuse the other, till both sought relief by turning their eyes another way. John, who of all men was the most sensible of shame, and who the most laboured with self-reproach, soon left the room, and gave Charles opportunity for one of those painful soliloquies which usually burst from a man after he has discovered the secret he would conceal.

“ And

“And have I,” said he, “after cautiously guarding the cruel secret, divulged it to the man who, of all the Fitzorton family, would be the least likely to forgive my passion? even to John? who, noble-natured as he is, will consider my unfortunate attachment to Olivia—for, am I not a son of the offending Sir Guise?—as the height of madness and presumption—Doubtless, he is gone away displeased, or possibly my fears may interpret falsely—he may have been startled at the warmth of the expression—and yet perhaps—perhaps no precise discovery has been made.” In the midst of these ruminations John re-entered, and cordially taking Charles by the hand, inquired when he would wish to set out for the abbey. “As soon,” said Charles, “as I have paid my respects to my new Colonel, and obtained his permission of absence, which, I must confess, is a little unreasonable to begin with.” “By no means,” said John, generously, “I engage to procure you both immediately. Come, my friend, dispatch, you know, is the soul of business.”

John took hold of Charles's arm, and walked away with him so readily, that the latter really believed his last reflection went to the truth; namely, that his expression had not extended to the discovery of his affection for Olivia. The Colonel being found at head-quarters, John Fitzorton presented Charles Stuart in the following manner:—"This, sir, is the youth for whom Colonel Forbes has a friendship, of which the basis is not favour, but merit. I need not say more in his behalf to make Colonel Warren consider him as an acquisition to the regiment; but I must add, from my own knowledge of his virtues, and personal bravery, that if I should be found as worthy to occupy the post of the lamented Lascelles, as I will pledge myself this young man will approve himself of the station my promotion leaves open, and which one of my family has presented to him, under your auspices, sir, you will have reason to be doubly satisfied; and, what has rarely happened to me in any occurrence of life, I shall be satisfied with myself."

Colonel

Colonel Warren's reception of his new Lieutenant was such as this introduction gave claim to. "But," continued John, "the youth is desirous to owe to his new Colonel an indulgence on *advance*, even before he has done any duty. He has a lovely sister, whose situation requires a brother's immediate councils and consolation; other family affairs likewise summon his attention; and though the diffidence which connects with high and genuine pretensions induces him to shrink from the solicitation, I have taken upon me, on the surety of your character, sir, to come forward on the occasion."—

"Young gentleman," said the Colonel, turning to Charles, "the sooner necessary business is done the better; we expect stirring work in the military line in another month or two—this then is the time you can best be spared from the services my regiment may expect from a man who comes into it thus *doubly armed*, with the commendation of Captain Fitzorton and Colonel Forbes. Adieu! therefore—you

will return as speedily as circumstances admit."

Proper acknowledgments being given and received, John conducted the Lieutenant to the different officers of the regiment; and after dining at the mess, by way of giving to the initiatory visit all its advantages in favour of the Lieutenant, he left to the choice of that gentleman either to defer his intended journey to the morning, or to set out immediately. "I rather think, my dear sir," said Charles, "that—that it will be expected I am now on the road;—and as—as—as you know the Colonel intimated I might be wanted in my place in a short time, it will, perhaps, be better to—to—to—pray, what do you think yourself?" John, perceiving the Lieutenant was getting into a fresh dilemma, rang the bell before the hesitation in the Lieutenant's speech grew worse, and on the servant's appearing, said, "You will make ready, and bring round to the door, this gentleman's horse:" then, turning to Charles,

Charles, he added, smiling, "Let me be your commanding officer at present, in giving marching orders." Immediately after which he adverted to more general subjects, in order to take off the too keen sense of that particular one on which he saw Charles was irritable. A soldier of the regiment, who attended John, soon came to say, "The gentleman's horse was at the door." On which Charles, after more impediments than the simple question seemed to demand, had it not been preceded by a succession of little stumbling blocks, ventured to ask, "If the letters for Fitzorton Castle, and the parcel for—for—*for* Olivia Clare, were ready?"—"No," observed John, "I find, on reflection, I must have a little more time to make them up, and a few days more or less can make no material difference."—Charles rose to take his leave. John advanced towards him, and opened the door with one hand, while he cordially offered the other to Charles. "Lieutenant," said he, "you deserve honour for your own good qualities, and ge-

nerous compassion for the bad ones; but I will not wound you—you are, moreover, the chosen friend of our Henry Fitzorton:—for all these reasons, and for numberless others, I sincerely wish your happiness. I suspect, also, you are somewhat too sensible of the charming powers of our Olivia. Alas! do not shrink from the observation; if it is unfounded, happier is it for yourself; if it goes to the fact, ah! my friend, it is no way unnatural that you should love what is most lovely: I, you, or any other man might have been carried beyond our powers—but have a care—you have not a heart to endure the thought of breaking in upon the plan of two of the most venerable men that ever gave lustre to the character of parent; nor could you bear to enchain an alienated woman, even if she should be brought to sacrifice herself to your arms. My dear brother-officer, the strongest of the sons of men can often be saved only by determined retreat. Oh, beware! You had better be the most miserable of the wretched, *alone and unobserved*, than call in another

another

another who cannot love you, to *spare* your fate. Hasten then your journey; but should you, at the end of it, find your sorrow greater than your joy, return to your appointment here, and assuring yourself that the only remedy for the disappointments of life is *employment*, let even your calamity have the liberal effect of occupying you in some active virtue: so shall you, in a manner, remember others till you forget yourself."

John precluded reply by leading Charles to his horse, which, having mounted, he rode away, attempting many silent acknowledgments, and looking as many promises—all of which, he remembered, with a pre-determination to fulfil them till he saw Olivia Clare; or rather, till he saw her likeness in that very picture which John was finishing on his arrival, and of which it was first intended to make him the bearer; but, after the suspicious effusions which escaped the Lieutenant, John thought this would be making himself necessary in the temptation he would wish him to avoid; and

though John was too generous to throw any impediments, that might favour of the jealous lover, in this young man's way, he would not do any thing that might promote his unfortunate passion. When Charles had departed, John Fitzorton sat, as was usual with him in any new difficulty, in silent thought, his hands folded over his face.—“Ill-fated Charles!” said he, when he could articulate; “it is hard upon us both. We have been attracted by uncommon beauty and uncommon virtue; yet there is no quarrelling with the Creator for having made such a creature, nor with our beloved Henry for being possessed of happier powers to make her his own. I am very wretched, but methinks I love him the more, at least I think the more exaltedly of his virtues, for the very charm that has wrought my despair; for I am convinced that Olivia is not a woman to prefer one man to another on the heart's caprice, or the eye's absurd vanity. No, Charles, our Henry, depend on it, has endowments of *mind* as well as person, which we do not possess,

possess, that have given him this distinction over us both."

John turned the point many ways without coming to any thing satisfactory; and at the end of his soliloquies he took the miniature from his pocket, where he had placed it on the entrance of Charles, and after gazing on it with more true admiration than Pygmalion bestowed on the adored masterpiece of his art, he confessed he was yielding to great weakness, even though unseen of the world, and then, pressing the miniature to his lips, retired with it to his bed-chamber. His waking thoughts were pointed against human frailty, and a very energetick philippick followed on the weakness of man and the strength of woman; during which he found the resemblance of Olivia had, somehow, found its way to his pillow; but after he had risen he exclaimed, "I see plainly little of voluntary virtue is to be expected from incorrigible mortals; all is to be done by main force—the scourge, the wheel, the prison, and the gibbet, are all necessary instruments of terror! A Da-

moclesian sword must always hang over the human head! I have no superior merit to Charles, except that I am playing the fool by *myself*, and I fear he is gone to expose himself before company."—At the close of these reflections, John paid his parting adorations to the picture; for by an opportunity, which happened in the course of the following day, he sent it to the fair Olivia, to prevent farther mischief to himself, and in discharge of his promise. The use which that enchanting girl made of it was such as the reader has seen, and such as the truly generous John had foreseen also.

The next occurrence that happened to John was one of the most trying of his whole life, in the information which reached him by means of his father, who wrote to him in this manner:—

“MY EVER WORTHY JOHN,

“I HAVE no time now to comment on the affair of our dear Henry’s heart, whether it has had its wanderings or not: young men were always truants, you know,
from

from their boyish days; even John had his airy visions, and played with shadows. These all yield to substances in due time. Neither can I now stop to examine the precise fact alleged in the anonymous letter: whether a forgery or not, your conduct, my John, is alike liberal, and I thank you.—Our Henry is, at the present moment, all I wish him—he *cannot* himself be otherwise than happy with Olivia, and the strongest reasons that can urge to any union, combine to make it proper she should become his wife. The point, the place, the time, the circumstances, are all adjusted.—Your good little girl has more than once hinted at the sanction of her guardian giant, as she sometimes calls you. “My hand would tremble,” said she, “even as she gave it to Henry; but surely the union would have more strength were approving John to pronounce that it was good. Tell him so—and tell him, too, that the promises I shall make to his brother, at the sacred altar, cannot be more holy than those I long since made *him* to be, all my

life long, his *good* Olivia." I have repeated her own words, John, and leave you to act upon them. If you can quit quarters, you will not fail to give us the meeting. Now and ever, God bless you, my excellent son! is the wish of your

" True and tender father,

" ARMINE FITZORTON.

" P. S. Your beautiful drawing of our Olivia has been received with joy. It does honour to the artist—it does almost justice to Nature. Olivia declares it far surpasses the latter; but while she makes that declaration, Nature, as if piqued, asserts her superiority, and throws such fresh blooms into the countenance of this, surely the fairest of her works, that John would himself now she is the best painter."

The reader perceives this epistle arrived when Henry, wholly subdued by the paternal blessing on his head, had promised to become obedient to his father's wishes.

Having already said, it was the most trying

trying circumstance that his son John had yet encountered in life, a description of particulars is thereby precluded; we shall only observe, that after having again fixed himself in one of his ruminating postures, the profound reflections of an hour were concluded by the following reply to the invitation:

“ My father and my friends must not expect John at Adfell, or at the altar. But neither the parents, nor the children, nor even the lovers themselves, can more earnestly pray, now and ever, that peace, honour, and uninterrupted joy, may be the issue of their nuptials, than, Sir,

“ Your honoured and dutiful son,

“ JOHN FITZORTON.”

This answer was addressed to Sir Armine, at Adfell Hall, and there met him on his arrival, after the disastrous events at the forest: but it was earnestly requested by Sir Armine, nay, and even made a condition by the apothecary, that Mr. John Fitzorton should not be made acquainted

with those events, nor any thing that had allusion to them, till Sir Armine judged proper, even were death to be the issue; “for I foresee,” said the reverend sufferer, “that worse than death would be the consequence of John’s hearing of this fresh outrage of Sir Guise Stuart.” Sir Armine bound his whole family, by an oath of honour, to profound silence, and all readily joined in it. Well, perhaps, was it for the aggressor they did so, for dreadful must have been the result of the intelligence.

The afflicted John, indeed, wanted not any fresh cause of grief. He attempted to engage, with earnestness, in his official duties—he even sought its social reliefs—he mixed with his brother-officers—he employed himself in the ardours of a field day, and passed his evenings at the mess; but, when the day appointed for the nuptials of Henry and Olivia approached, his mighty heart and powerful nature were sorely shaken—he invoked blessings on them both—protested that nature’s most insupportable curse was upon him—received
and

and was denied the solace of tears alternately—kept the shutters of his chamber closed, that he might indulge in the sad luxury of his forlorn condition the whole day undisturbed—never quitted the bed on which he had thrown himself till towards midnight, and supposing by that time Olivia had become the bride of his tenderly beloved brother, he kneeled down by his bedside, and with a fervour arising from the sincerity of his agitated soul, applied once more the expressive words that had been so long in family recollection, on different occasions—“ Bless, O bless ye together !”

He then adverted to the Lieutenant, exclaiming, “ Ah ! dear partner in despair ! if thou hast been an eye-witness to the events of the past day, thou art even more to be commiserated than John Fitzorton, whose only comfort is derived from his determined absence.”

After two days silent suffering, in this manner, he nursed his mind into sufficient composure to attend to the common duties of his life and situation ; the heaviness of the

storm was past—a calm succeeded—and as he did not receive any accounts from Adfell, or the castle, for a considerable time, he attributed their silence to their festivity, and rather dreaded than hoped the arrivals of the post.

The intermediate history of our admirable John thus brought down to the events at Adfell, we go back to the family party assembled there with more ease and satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DISCOVERIES.

THE reader has been already apprised, that Sir Guise Stuart meditated an effectual revenge, and was prepared to expect some violent but cautious measures; and he now sees that this affray was intended to satiate his evil designs. In the pillage of the ingenious David Otley's pocket, we find the following letter from his prime seducer, Mr. Valentine Miles:

“To

“ TO DAVID OTLEY.

“ Friend David,

“ Your intelligence has been communicated to Sir Guise and Mrs. Tempest, and is most welcome to all of us. We are of opinion, the former plan which we had in preparation should be renounced as tedious in its process, and uncertain in its issue. The wedding journey promises a more immediate, as well as a more secure way of paying off old scores ; but, as there is not, I see, a moment to be lost, this is only to desire you will take the abbey in your way to Adsell, in order to receive our final instructions.

“ Your faithful

“ V. MILES.”

From this ingenious epistle the reader learns, that Otley was wholly in the interest of Miles, to whom he communicated the first news of the intended nuptials, time, place, &c. ; and being a confidential domestick, he was employed to make a very early report at the abbey of what was in

con-

contemplation at the castle. In the next place, we find hereby, that Mrs. Tempest entered into the mysteries of this confederacy; urged indeed simply by the spirit of a disappointed woman's vengeance; for, as to the insults which either Sir Guise or Miles had received, she would, probably, have sat with the most philosophical patience to have seen either or both of them mount the scaffold. But the affronts they had received, served very well to cover the revenge she resolved to take on her own account. In truth, her designs were more deeply vindictive than the Baronet's: they went to the blood not only of the offending Henry, but of his whole family; and her hate, like love, was a conflagration that consumed almost her own life, and made it extremely difficult for her to support the necessary ripening of her own purposes. Her joy, therefore, was excessive on the news of this promising journey, and her impetuous fancy outstripping that of her compeers, suggested the whole business of the assassination, and had furnished "all
appliances

appliances and means to boot" before either of her colleagues, fertile as each was in mischievous expedients, had seen any advantage to be derived from Otley's communication. By these means, the work of a few hours made so good, or rather so bad progress, that all things were arranged before sunrise; and never, perhaps, sallied forth a troop of murderers more determined than the heroine Mrs. Tempest, her generals Sir Guise Stuart and Miles, and her aide-camp the renegade David Otley, and three other chosen men who had been picked from the mass of their dependants, and brought up to the most hazardous enterprise. The chief delay arose on the part of the Baronet, who, though he heartily desired to promote the work of vengeance, apprehended it might prove a service of much danger, notwithstanding all the precautions he meant to take; and he would have been contented to stay at home, and hear from his agents a history of the attack and its success, without taking an active part in it. But Mrs. Tempest
so

so excited him by her daring arguments and biting reproofs, that he less dreaded to join in the attack of the common enemy, than encounter her virulent upbraidings singly. And though the superaddition of Miles's terrifying conversation was not wanting, it wound up his fears to a pitch that prepared him for the destruction of all the travellers. Thus, partly from shame, and partly from cowardice, but, more than all, the assurances he received of there being little or no hazard, he suffered himself to join the banditti, and assist in person.— His conduct and caution afterwards in the action are already unfolded.

The gang were ready to set out from Mrs. Tempest's lodge, where the plot was laid, as Mr. Otley arrived, saying he had been delayed by Sir Armine, but that there was not a single moment to lose, as the Fitzorton party would be in their carriages, and on their horses, at six. "It is now," he observed, "on the stroke of four, and if we make proper use of our time, shall have the advantage of two hours." After
a few

a few more arrangements, they began their march by the contrary road to that which the Fitzortons were to take; for Otley, having been consulted on this subject by his old master, with whom his advice in all such matters was looked on as oracular, told his own party how they might avoid a premature rencontre; "as," said he, "I found no difficulty in persuading Sir Armine, that the way I wished him to go was that he ought to take." In short, he settled geography of the route, and marked the spot at which the attack should be made.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ROGUERY.

WHILE these transactions were in preparation at the abbey, a conspiracy of a very different kind was laid by the ill-farr'd Charles Stuart, who immediately, on the receipt of the letters that intimated the wedding-day, and the intended particulars

culars of its celebration, fell into a state so near distraction, that a thousand plans to prevent the nuptials were formed, approved, and renounced almost in the same instant. Several of these, indeed, were scarcely possible to enter into the brain of any but a man agitated by the extremes of love and of despair. Rather, however, than suffer the hated ceremony betwixt Olivia and Henry to take place, he determined, thinking, perhaps, with Othello, such murders would be "heavenly," that the death of friend and mistress should be crowned by his own. But, to avoid this tragick catastrophe, he resolved on a project, which, to him, appeared capable of producing the end desired. The idea of Partington's resolute spirit; his love of doing what men, not daring to act for themselves, would be afraid to think on; his indefatigable perseverance in whatever he engaged; and, amidst all his singularities, his uncorrupted integrity;—all these, forming one grand idea, rushed upon the Lieutenant's fancy so strongly, that without precisely

cifully knowing what good might result from it, and feeling that the bad was nearly at the worst, he assumed a composure which lulled even the penetrating Caroline, who now but ill-disguised her own sorrows. He gave out that he would make a visit to a friend at some miles' distance, and try if change of scene, and of company, could not restore him to that tranquillity which he had lost. The house at which Mr. Partington was then resident stood at the distance of a very long day's journey from the abbey, yet, literally travelling on the spur of the occasion, Charles reached it just as Partington was sitting down to dinner. The company at table consisted of the whole family of the Atwoods, at least all that part of it which had been taken under Partington's protection.

At the sight of a stranger they all rose; upon which Partington, calling them a set of vile scoundrelly good-for-nothing vagabonds, insisted upon each resitting in the seat, and pulled the Lieutenant down into a chair, at the same time ordering him to
partake

partake of the family fare, and feel himself as much at home as if he were the son of a friend. "But," said Partington, "I know how to make distinction between an infamous rascal like Charles Stuart, and his all-glorious father, Sir Guise!" While Partington made this observation, in his own extraordinary manner, he was heaping Charles's plate with what he conceived to be the rarity of the table.

At the name of Stuart, the blood in a tide of the most violent crimson covered the countenance of young Atwood; and at the name of Sir Guise, the youth could hardly conceal or contain an indignation which rose from his full heart.

"You must be friends," cried Partington, noticing the young man's emotion. "The Lieutenant here is as great a vagabond as yourself: he has, like me, the highest respect for his exalted fire; but I shall think you youngsters less good for nothing than I could wish, if you do not, like me, know how to make distinctions." So saying, he put the hand of Charles into that
of

of young Atwood, who would have shrunk back from the slightest contact with the son of the man who had dishonoured his family—but Partington exclaimed, “I tell you, stripling, this is as good-for-nothing a scoundrel as any I know, and therefore you must be friends.”

Charles, however, made a shew of eating, without relishing a morsel; and immediately on the cloth being removed, Partington, perceiving his distress, forcibly led, or rather carried him into another apartment, where Charles, eagerly catching Partington by the hand, exclaimed, “The nuptials of Olivia Clare and Henry Fitzorton are to take place within twenty-four hours. *He loves her not.* It will be a sacrifice. *I adore her.* Our destiny will be determined. The effect will be dreadful. Sir Armine is not to be persuaded. O! Mr. Partington, is there no stratagem—no miracle to save us all? Accumulated will be the horrors that must ensue, if this forced alliance takes place. O! pardon the folly, the madness of this incoherence
—this

—this journey—but Olivia Clare shall not give her hand to Henry Fitzorton.”

“And when is this forced alliance, as you call it, threatened?” questioned Partington. “To-morrow begins the accursed journey, and on the following day my doom is to be sealed. Farewel!”—“Hold! you headstrong vagabond!” said Partington, detaining him; “let us return to the company—not another word.”—He then hurried back the passive Charles into the dining-room, and with yet greater vehemence than he had precipitated him out of it. And ere he had well opened the door he ejaculated, “Avaunt, ye lazy, good-for-nothing devils; here is a world of work to be performed.—Young man,” said he, addressing himself to Atwood, junior, “your benefactor’s favourite child, young Fitzorton, and your sister’s patroness, demand your assistance. Yet more, you vagabond, *your enemy’s son*, but *my friend*, is to be rescued from despair—even the son of Sir Guise Stuart.”—Atwood gave his hand to Charles. “Ay!” said Partington, “you are
are

are the caitiff I thought ye, so take home these old vagabonds, your father and mother, who would be usefess lumber in this expedition, to their farm: and if none of us return alive, for dire are our designs, take care of yourselves as well as you can. For you, Charles, mount your horse:—no—first write a few lines to Henry, ordering him to be of good cheer—to smile—to—in short, I will give you final instructions what is to be said to the vagabond as soon as I have adjusted a little preliminary with that old scoundrel my steward.”

The business with Le Maitre, the steward, was to furnish a stout staff and suitable disguise for each person intended to act a part in Partington's drama.

“Disguises, weapons offensive and defensive, you old vagabond!” were all the orders Le Maitre received: obedient to which, in something less than half an hour, Le Maitre had got together such habiliments and accoutrements as would have equipped a pillaging party in the days of Robin Hood. Young Atwood soon re-

turned from the farm attended by two husbandmen, who, he said, were to be trusted. The means of conveyance were ready, a servant was dispatched with the letter to Henry, and on the road were unfolded the particulars of the enterprize. The whole groupe, more especially young Atwood, who was of an affectionate disposition, entered into it with ardour and alacrity. “Olivia,” said Partington, “is an abominable scoundrel, and must be saved even from the man she loves, because he does not love her, it seems—but the rascal cannot help that. Yet, take notice, Charles, I will prevent forced matches, but I will not be a match-maker: so you and the wench must settle it as well as you can afterwards—though I will own to you I should engage with some good will in any project that might favour the escape of a vile ugly young scoundrel like your sister, from such a noble-minded, brave, generous gentleman as your father! So that when we have, by the plot now rolling in my head, prevented Olivia from running into the

arms

arms of Henry, I shall be ready, provided the girl be willing, to aid and abet Henry to run into the arms of Caroline; and as for Olivia, get you but the consent of that little villain, and you shall have mine; and after that, a fig for the opposition of fathers and mothers!—the handsome rascal will be the dearer after she has put you to a good deal of trouble. For my part, I know of but one natural or reasonable impediment to a man's marrying the lass he fancies, and that is, her fancying another; or her not fancying him. So now for our expedition—to release a love-sick knight from a damsel who is falling forth to have him whether he will or not!”

In this sort of discourse did Partington and his companions shorten their way to Adfell forest: what followed their arrival at the appointed place has been circumstantially related from the first and second attack, even to the catastrophe.

Now, should the reader, in a retrospect of his own life, be unable to trace any wild

project of love or revenge; if, in a survey of his antipathies, and of his affections, he should discover no ideas conceived, nor schemes executed, as little rational as those which instigated Sir Guise to vengeance, Mrs. Tempest to jealousy, Miles to study at once his interest and revenge, and the traitor David Otley to prefer a golden bribe to the duty he owed his trusting master, we *congratulate* him on his exemption from the darker shades in the human character. On the other hand, should he, in the aforesaid examination of himself, happen upon none of those generous excesses in his own feelings which correspond to those of Partington, nor any which urge him to love Olivia, and to bestow his pity on Henry and Charles; if, moreover, he finds no congenial touch that sends the sorrows of Caroline Stuart thrilling through his blood, nor any glow of approbation at the defeat of villany, as it was discovered and punished at the edge of Adsell Forest, we *commiserate* him for that he is incapable

pable of passing any true judgment on the fair, the beautiful, and the good of human nature.

CHAPTER XL.

STRATAGEMS OF HONOUR.

THE night was passed at the inn with more composure than the fatigues of the day, and disasters of the evening, gave reason to expect. Even the slumbers of Sir Armine were unbroken till towards the break of day when, seeing the still wakeful Henry at his bed-side, he affectionately said to him, "I feel in less particular pain, and am so generally refreshed, that, I trust, I shall be able, about mid-day, to proceed on our journey. Meantime, my beloved child, you require rest yourself, which I entreat you to take while I make trial to sleep again. Bless you for ever!"

At this moment Little Fitz suddenly started from his light slumbers, leaped upon

the bed in dumb but expressive eloquence of fond careffes—made with those timid advances and modest tremblings, creeping betwixt hope and fear—which seemed to purport—“I am the dog of an enemy, and my humble gratulations may not only be unwelcome, but suspected.” This was, assuredly, Sir Armine’s idea, if not the dog’s, for no sooner did that venerable man perceive the poor little fellow, than, with an encouraging benignity, he cried, while he patted the smooth head, and stroked the silken ears—“I have no quarrel with thee, simpleton; and I thank thine honest love for these testimonies of thy good wishes.” Little Fitz listened to the kind voice, and fondled, in turn, the careffing hand, then gently retired to Henry’s lap, where he had past the night. Yet such was the entire love that Henry bore his father, and so wholly was he engrossed by the injuries that good man had received, that he never adverted once to the dog’s belonging to his beloved Caroline, till his father’s notice of the animal, and the visible

ble progress he made towards recovery, had eased his heart of terrors for a life dearer than his own. He now received the dog with a tenderness which indicated feelings that attached themselves to the minutest thing living or dead, with which the object of the master passion has, or can, by the magick power of fancy and the heart, be made to connect.

Sir Armine dropt again to sleep, and continued to doze till the surgeon came to examine the wounds. Lady Fitzorton, Olivia, Mr. Clare, Jenny Atwood, her brother, and True George—the latter had, unbidden, kept watch on the outside his old master's chamber door—were all ready to overwhelm the surgeon with questions on Sir Armine's recovery. How great then was their wonder! their ecstasy! to hear this intelligent disciple of Æsculapius exclaim to the whole assembled party,—
“The patient, methinks, cannot do better than get his breakfast in bed, about an hour after which, if the sun continues his fair promises, it will be his own fault, or

yours, ladies and gentlemen, not Nature's, if he is not again in his carriage, so as to eat his dinner at the place of your destination."

The general rapture into which the whole family were thrown by these tidings, produced the very delays that each individual desired to avoid. Lady Fitzorton and Olivia, neither of whom had closed their eyes through the night, could have embraced the surgeon; the venerable Clare shook his hand heartily; and Henry, emptying his purse into the surgeon's not-refusing palm, leaped about with all the demonstrations of an extravagant transport, which wholly obliterated the idea, that, with the recovery he so hailed, would end his every hope, and revive his absolute despair. Jenny's tender heart dropt tears on her brother's bosom, and she hastened to prepare breakfast. But honest George had always, like Dennison, the art of being extremely happy, and useful at the same time; and, with the lightning's speed, he had flown into the kitchen immediately on the
utterance

utterance of the surgeon's hint, that his old master would be in a situation to travel, if not the fault of himself or some one of the family. He resolved, at any rate, the fault, if any, should not lie with him : though he would have been extremely ready to take the blame of it from any other.

While these matters were transacting above in the house, Partington and *his* corps were not idle below in the stable, where the degraded Sir Guise and his associates were still under the guard of young Atwood. About midnight, Partington betook himself to a truss of clean straw, as nothing could prevail on him to repair to any other bed : he had sworn not to quit sight of so honourable a personage as Sir Guise Stuart till he had the supreme felicity of seeing him fully committed. He made this observation with a profound bow ; and, indeed, through the whole night treated the Baronet with an external respect, which he would have refused to any but one for whom he felt the most sovereign indignation.

“Be sure, you young, good-for-nothing scoundrel,” said he to the worthy Atwood, “that you do not suffer *your* eyes to close, should mine be caught napping; for I have not the smallest doubt but that noble, generous, magnanimous gentleman in the straw”—three respectful bows—“would try to escape, by which I should lose the heartfelt satisfaction I promise myself, in seeing him dungeoned, if not hanged”—two more bows.

At the end of this sarcastick speech Partington crossed his arms, and nestling in the straw, soon enjoyed the repose he courted, and which did not refuse to visit him in his lowly bed. Atwood grasped his crabstick, and in manly silence waved it over the heads of the prisoners, not condescending to speak during the whole night.

CHAPTER XLI.

TRANSACTIONS ABOVE STAIRS AND
BELOW.

BY this time it had gone forth, that the said prisoners were not actually highwaymen, but wanton assassins, who had maliciously plotted against the lives of Mr. Clare, Sir Armine Fitzorton, and their families, to gratify their private revenge.

This hint was no sooner spread abroad, than the inhabitants of Adfell were up in arms; for the whole of that parish was in the manorship of Olivia, and almost every house in the village, and most of the land that smiled around it, was, by virtue of her grand-father's will, the property of that young lady. An estate of Sir Guise, or rather of Mrs. Tempest, lay within the distance of a few miles in the same county, so that both parties were well known at Ad-

fell. In consequence of which, the yard

R 6

adjoining

adjoining to the barn wherein Sir Guise and Co. were deposited, was crowded by people of both sexes, who would have made it unnecessary for young Atwood to stand sentinel any longer, as they would certainly have knocked the Baronet and his illustrious companions on the head, had not Partington dispersed the populace before he betook himself to rest, and pacified them by an assurance, that they should have timely notice of the execution of the honourable gentleman, who, he made no doubt, would suffer to their hearts' content, in a very little time.

In this hope they departed to their several houses; and it was about the third hour in the morning, when all was quiet in the inn and its environs. But just as young Atwood had traversed the outside of the barn, the court adjoining, and returned to his station within,—it was at this tempting moment, that a whispering, succeeded by a soft, fearful tread was heard moving towards the barn. A small lantern, which
one

one of them held, discovered a man and a woman, the latter led by the former, and each, by turns, in earnest conversation.

Young Atwood did not doubt but some kind of treachery was on foot, as the first words that reached his ear were touching the liberation of Sir Guise; he retired, therefore, a few paces, that he might gain more information. The persons advanced, and observing the barn door half open, they entered cautiously; and, after walking on tiptoe a few steps, one of them said, "All is still; the guard and the guarded are equally overcome by sleep—I have thus far performed my promise—you desired only to see the vile author of your ruin, and to warn him, that he may leave off his wicked courses before it be too late. I have consented to this, because it is what a christian should do; but as for this Sir Guise, he ought to wish, for the sake of his own soul, that he should have time to repent, and then be hanged out of the way, for the good of other gentlemen. So, as this is the last time, I hope, the wicked
man

man can be seen on this side the gallows; take fast hold of my hand and follow me, for by the rustling of the straw we must be near the prisoners." Saying this, the person who spoke stepped forward, holding up the lantern, by whose light the object he and his companion were in search of presented itself to view, lying in an abject posture, his hands and legs bound, and his associates in the same situation.

Young Atwood receded as the night-walkers advanced, desirous to see the real motive and end of their enterprise. One of the adventurers now held the lantern to the face of Sir Guise, the miserable paleness of which, and every other sign of guilt and fear, caused the person who had not yet spoken to exclaim, in a piteous tone—
"Alas! unhappy man! did I ever think your conduct would bring you to this? and that the woman you have most injured should live to see it?"—Then, turning to her companion, she exclaimed, "Wicked as he is, I cannot bear to see him in this sad posture, tied like a criminal, and
thrown,

thrown, as it were, into a dungeon! If," added the speaker, falling on her knees to her companion—"Oh! if there is any compassion in your heart; if it has a spark of the love you profess to feel for me, suffer me, and assist me, to loose these cruel cords. I ask no more."—"Loose the cords!" returned the other—"No! were I never to see you more, although you are dear to my soul, and I now tell you so all at once, as my heart to my body, I would neither assist, nor suffer you to give that monster liberty of hand or foot. Had I thought Mrs. Jenny could have desired such a thing, not all the world—no, not my love for you, which I feel will be all the world to George, should have made me shew you the place! What would your good brother say to this? If poor dear Jerom had his eye on us now, only think how angry he would be!"

At the names Jenny and George, young Atwood rushed forward, and cried out in a terrible voice, even before he was seen, "O wicked! wicked girl! would you set at liberty the wretch who has undone you; who

who had well nigh brought your poor father and mother with sorrow to the grave ; and who has almost murdered your best friend and benefactor—for whose sake, and for his other numberless sins, he is destined to meet his deserts at last ?—Yes, vile sinner,” added he, turning to Sir Guise, “ you will be hanged, you and all your accomplices : but alas ! what are your lives, or the lives of ten thousand thousand such villains, to the finger-ache of such a noble gentleman as Sir Armine Fitzorton ; or the innocence of this poor, wicked, unhappy girl, whom you have ruined, and who is still sinful enough to wish you were free ? As for you, George,” continued he, “ I am not angry with you ; I know your love for my sister, and am sorry for you. I know you would have died sooner than consent to let him escape ; and you only came here with the girl, out of pure good will, because she pretended she wanted to rebuke her seducer.”

The poor Jane, overwhelmed with her agitations, at being thus in the presence of her brother, lover, and betrayer, could scarcely

scarcely stand under the support of the two former—"Would to God I were dead!" said she: "but you wrong me, brother; I did not mean to make Mr. George guilty of ingratitude to his master by releasing Sir Guise, I—I—I—only wished him not to be—be bound in that manner."—Here her tears choaked her utterance, and she wept aloud.

Her sorrows awakened Partington, who no sooner heard the story from the honest lips of George, than he called Jenny a good-for-nothing little vagabond, shaking her most kindly by the hand all the time, and desired George and Jerom to lead her back to the house, commanding them to say nothing of her adventure to any of the Fitzortons, and insisting the pretty young scoundrel should no more be scolded.—"Scolded, your honour!" replied George: "I would not let her own brother, nor even your honour scold her, if I could help it, without knocking out both your brains; only I thought"—"The thought of knocking out our brains is good, and might
in

in that case be justifiable, perhaps," cries Partington; "but thinking is loss of time, you rascal.—Here, both of you give her a kiss, and do as I ordered, while I relieve guard over this all-worthy gentleman"—a profound bow to Sir Guise—"and his two veteran associates,"—a bow to each, till his head almost touched the straw.

Jenny went away somewhat pacified, but could not help casting more than one look behind. For though, perhaps, even Partington did not more thoroughly despise the actions of the baronet, nor more execrate his principles, than did this virtuously-disposed young woman—she felt for him involuntary emotions of pity and tenderness.

The good Partington saw this midnight enterprise, as, in truth, he did most other things, in the proper light; and his knowledge of the human heart joined the compassion he felt in his own, to determine it was a matter to be hushed up. On the return, therefore, of the young men, he took each of them by the hand and desired them
to

to be of good cheer, since they had every reason to believe that “when that amiable gentleman”—a profound reverence to Sir Guise—“had hung his hour, the grand enemy to the girl’s peace of mind would be removed; and he did not doubt but he should see Jenny as good-for-nothing a sister to Jerom, and as infamous a wife to George, as any happy little varlet could desire to be.”

This inverted mode of compliment being well understood, the youths were made again comfortable, and the whole affair ended by Jerom’s taking George by the hand, saying, “If so be things went that way, there was not a man in the world he would so soon wish to call his brother, provided the affair with that vile monster could be put up with.” “True love forgives every thing that happens before wedlock,” said George, “and most things that happen after. And as to Jenny, I think her the modestest girl in the whole world, and I love her the best, though I never told her so till to-day; and when Sir Guise is dead,
I think

I think all will be well between Jenny and me; though I had rather he should live fifty years, and keep me out of Jenny's heart for ever, than that any harm should betide my dear good old master, or any of my honoured young ones, or any of the family, not forgetting Mr. and Miss Clare."

"George," said Partington, affecting to cough, "you are one of the most insupportable young rascals I ever knew—give me your hand. But take this for your comfort; whether Sir Armine lives or dies, Atwood's sister shall be your wife, and this right worthy old youth"—another bow—"shall swing with both his excellent friends, because it would be a sin to part them."—Here he rolled the baronet and his associates about, and heaped the straw over them as if they were so many pigs.

CHAPTER XLII.

EFFUSIONS OF LOVE AND PITY.

THE provisions which the youth ordered to be brought into the barn were now resorted to, and the exulting trio sat down to the repast, spread upon a winnowing machine, turned the wrong side, with as high spirits, and as hearty an appetite, as they ever enjoyed; particularly as one of the waiters entered with a billet to Partington, containing the following words:

TO BASIL PARTINGTON, Esq.

“MY poor father is in a sound repose.—Request my unhappy friend Charles to come to the bed which is prepared for him; and do you, dear sir, take quiet possession of yours. I cannot quit my post, but hope to relate good tidings in the morning.

“Yours affectionately,

“HENRY FITZORTON.”

Partington having read this note, and folding

folding it up, he handed it about, first penciling on the back of it these words—“Read, but let not the worthy Sir Guise suspect it brings any good news.”—He gave it to George, who opened it, and scarcely able to conceal his joy, put it in the hands of Jerom.

“Miserable intelligence!” said Partington, with great gravity:—“No hopes you see;—the surgeon, no doubt, gives it up as a lost case.—Heigho!—let us raise our spirits with a glass of that wine. Fill, George. Come, here’s to Sir Guise’s speedy mounting, and to the sudden execution of Valentine Miles, Esq. the chaste Mrs. Tempest—for we shall noose her too—and that most true and trusty of all valets”—an inclination of the whole body as he mentioned each—“David Otley, gentleman!”

“It would be a compliment, gentlemen, to offer you any refreshment; indeed, seeing you have so short time to live, it would be throwing good things away upon almost dead carcases; and I hate to be extravagant:

gant :—so, wishing, with all our souls, that the hangman may do justice to all three of you, we have the honour to drink your good health in all christian charity !”

The bitter sarcasm of tone, gesture, and action, which characterised the scorn of Partington, cannot be conveyed in language.

The bottle was emptied, and the repast finished, in the like spirit of biting ridicule, which often extorted an oath from the daring Valentine, and drove the abashed Sir Guise, looking more swinish than before, under covert of his straw.

One of the waiters now brought a letter into the barn, saying, it came by a special messenger, who was then waiting a reply in the kitchen. It contained what follows :

“ TO BASIL PARTINGTON, Esq.

“ FORGIVE my having deceived you. Instead of retiring to my bed, the pretence with which I left you, I fled from the most horrid of all human sights—the presence of a father who hath made his son curse the hour of his own birth, and wish for death

to

to cover his shame. But how shall I escape myself? And, alas! my poor sister! how shall I shelter thee from the disgrace which is thus brought upon thee? If Henry can endure my hated name, tell him I shall feel horrors not to be borne till I know the state of his injured parent. I have other griefs settling in my soul, but may not give them vent. As for him—the atrocious! the unnatural!—and yet, alas! he is my father!—Might he not escape?—Forgive and pity

“The distracted

“CHARLES STUART.”

“N. B. I will remain here till I have your answer, then fly to quarters.”

In the progress of perusing this letter, the colours of compassion and indignation alternately mounted, and sometimes mixed in Partington's cheek. These were succeeded by tears that gushed from his eyes, and that almost to the drowning of his voice. “Insufferable young villain!” said he, “this is not to be endured!”—Then darting a look of rage and contempt—which no features

features could more forcibly express than Partington's, sharpened by that ironical asperity which was edged at every word and intonation with the most cutting energies—"Here," cried Partington, "listen to the sentiments of that scoundrel of a son who has run away from his amiable sire in his last distress, and left him in confinement in his way to an ignominious death."—He then read the letter aloud, sinking only the last sentence, mentioning Sir Guise's being suffered to escape; thundering in the ear of Sir Guise every expression that manifested the deep sense which Charles had of his father's villany. And at the end, seeing him unmoved, only from the impulses of fear, "Behold," said Partington, "how the good baronet's tender heart bleeds at the wounds which his ungracious boy has inflicted! What sensibility! What affliction! What exquisite feeling! Honest, conscientious gentleman! He will hardly survive so unfilial an attack. It will go with him to the gallows!"

The reverences which Partington made,
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during this address, were repeated at every sentence, till, at last, they arrived at almost Persian prostration. Then desiring the baronet and his two friends would be kind enough to rise from the straw, and hold themselves in readiness to be tried, condemned, and executed, he left them in the charge of young Atwood, ordering True George to follow him into the house.

CHAPTER XLIII.

LETTERS AND THEIR EFFECTS.

THE good Partington, to the infinite joy of his honest heart, found the Fitzorton family still rejoicing at the unexpectedly rapid recovery of Sir Armine. Olivia had just prepared for him the third cup of tea, and was going to place it on a waiter to be conveyed by a servant, when this singular man snatched it from her hand, declaring, "she was an infamous little villain to suppose any other person should carry it the
old

old rascal but himself, when he was within reach of him."

"That trouble is unnecessary," said Lady Fitzorton; "Sir Armine feels himself quite stout enough to finish his breakfast below; and that you, Olivia, may be out of pain as completely as ourselves, your good father gently turned me out of his apartment just now, saying, he would be my substitute. Hark! I hear them coming." The door was opened, and discovered the truly reverend and honourable Sir Armine walking into the room with a not infirm step, and rather affectionately embracing, than leaning upon his friendly supporters, Henry and Mr. Clare. "There," said the old gentleman, dismissing his attendants by spreading his arms to their extent, "Armine's himself again!" Then taking every one by the hand, he acknowledged their tender care, assuring them of his freedom from pain, except a kind of confusion in his head from the severe blow he had there been saluted with, probably by the hand of Sir Guise Stuart.

“No doubt!” exclaimed Partington, “your obligations to that very worthy gentleman are so great, that I hope you will have no objection to attend him and his brace of myrmidons to the justice, who, I find, resides three miles on our road to Adfell Hall, scarcely a furlong out of your way,—though, I trust, you have enough of christian spirit in that old abominable body to travel to a court of justice as far as the Alps, in order to do your country the service of committing so very deserving and amiable a personage to the halter. Indeed, as you are also in the commission, I do not see why you should not pass sentence on the gentleman yourself:—but, perhaps, you may think it right to pay your brother justice the compliment of hanging an honest man found in his district. I expect, at any rate, that you will be well enough to see him swing; for, although you have given the death designed for you the slip, there is, I think, malice prepense enough in the attack to hang the assassin; and, to tell you the truth, if I did not think so, I should scarcely

scarcely forgive you for recovering.—I suppose,” added he, “you know that the worthy trio are under my custody, and refreshing themselves at this moment in an unroofed barn, with some unpeppered, unsalted, and unbuttered water-gruel, ready to march at the word of command.”

All the time Partington was speaking, poor Jane Atwood then happening to be in the room and behind Olivia's chair, was obliged to hold it fast to support herself from falling. Henry, from contrary causes, but productive of the same effects, was in a scarce better condition. They were all, however, soon relieved by Sir Armine, who, taking a paper from his pocket, at the sight of which Olivia's cheeks took the hue of the deepest crimson, thus addressed his friends:—“I will read a paper of proposals to you, my friends, and must own it has wholly decided me as to what should be done with the prisoners. I need not inform you that it was drawn up by that blushing little girl of ours, and, as I believe, placed by Lady Fitzorton upon my pillow.”

“Why, what wickedness has the little rascal been at now?” quoth Partington.

“You shall hear,” replied Sir Armine; and then putting the paper into Lady Fitzorton’s hand, desired her to read it for the good of the company, which, while Olivia sat between the palpitating Henry and Mr. Clare, she did as follows:—

“TO SIR ARMINE FITZORTON, BART.

“My dearly valued friend, and almost father,

“But that the news, the heartfelt news, of your being recovered;—but that the assurances of my soul-elected Henry, promise us the sight of you in a few hours; I should neither have the will nor the power to write to you on the proposed subject of this paper, which is in behalf of your bitterest enemy! not for his own sake, you will readily believe, but as his publick disgrace must, inevitably, be connected with the publick character and private feelings of far more worthy persons.”

“There’s a little villain for you,” said Partington, drawing the back of his hand across

across his eyes.—Lady Fitzorton went on:—

“Had any thing fatal happened from the merciless being for whom I now plead, Heaven only knows how any of those persons would have borne the blow! Surely, it would have broken all our hearts.”

“Dear angelick girl!” cried old Clare, pressing her to his bosom—“were any thing to break thine, the strings of mine would crack, I’m sure!”—Lady Fitzorton proceeded:—

“But, as it has pleased the great Restorer, in pity and in love, to give you to us, certain I am, that the only resentment your all-noble nature is capable of feeling against the cruel author of your sufferings, will be confined to himself alone, and no way extend to the innocent, because they happen to be his offspring.”

“Sweet Olivia!” said Lady Fitzorton, taking one of her hands.

“She is *my* child! my own dear daughter!” cried Mr. Clare proudly. “Think of that!” eagerly snatching the other hand

—“ Thanks be to God that gave her to me :—she is *my* daughter !”

“ Go on with the letter,” said Sir Armine, coughing to conceal his emotions.

“ On this principle I dare to sue even for Sir Guise Stuart ;—since the shame and sorrow of his children,—the excellent Caroline, and her amiable brother—would be doubly heaped upon them. Were you to carry even your just vengeance against this misguided man, I tremble for the effect of a publick prosecution on *their* minds.”

“ Good and gracious Heaven !” ejaculated Henry ; “ is it possible !”

“ Ah ! permit me, dearest Sir Armine, to place myself in their situation while I plead their cause. I feel, that the reflected infamy of Him who gave *me* being would kill me !”

“ My child ! thy father shall never dishonour thee,” said Mr. Clare, the proudest chords of his heart finely touched,—“ never ! never !”

“ The gentle Henry too, dearest and best of men ! would lament the fate of his
drooping

drooping friend! He would join my sympathizing woes for the blushes and tears of the sweet Caroline!—I cannot support it.”

“He must be more than human that can!” cried Henry.

“As I am neither more nor less than human, I’ll hear no more of the vile huffey’s nonsense, unless the letter is read on without stoppings,” said Partington, blowing his nose violently.

“Even our poor Jane would be afflicted, and Sir Armine himself, whose heart is the throne of all that is humane and honourable, would endure a pang it never ought to feel, were even this hardened creature to pass his days in a prison after the ignominy of a publick trial.”

Jane Atwood’s whole frame quivered at the idea; and had not her hand still clung to Olivia’s chair, she must have fallen.

“Zounds and the devil! you determined murderers! have you almost done?” cried Partington,

“Hem! hem!—Read the last passage,”

cried Sir Armine.—“ Thank Heaven we are coming to the last passage.”

“ In the names therefore of his unhappy son, the denizen of your Henry’s bosom, of his duteous daughter, in whose honour and felicity I feel a sister’s interest; in that of beloved Lady Fitzorton, and of my own adored father, whose compassionate heart, I am sure, goes with my petition, I implore that Sir Guise, with all his crimes on his head, may be suffered to depart, if it be possible, without his foul deeds, or at least his foul disgrace, reaching the ears of his innocent and outraged daughter. Let Henry and his friend owe this—through your abundant clemency—O! my second father! to the intercession of

“ Your duteous and ever grateful

“ OLIVIA CLARE.”

When Lady Fitzorton was preparing to read, Olivia would have quitted the room, and starting up, had got to the door; but Partington caught hold of her and exclaimed,

claimed, " Stop ! you insufferable scoundrel ! stop !—I knew you had done something to be ashamed of, but there's no escaping. I am an excellent hand to catch a thief, and to keep him too:—witness Sir Guise and Co. !"

For some time Henry had manifested emotions almost beyond his nature to endure. Generosity, goodness, compassion, and every other quality that exalts Humanity, in those happy moments, when every principle is alive, and every passion moving to virtuous impulse, reflected from the conduct of Olivia, struck on his heart, well fitted to receive such distinguished guests ; at length, dropping on his knees, " O teach me !" he exclaimed, " teach me how I can deserve such excellence ?"

Olivia, who had not till that moment raised her head, which alternately reposed on her father's and Henry's arm, as the proper supports of her blooming merit, now ventured to look up, summoned by a voice to her *indeed* " sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains," and ten-

derly returning the embrace of her Enthusiast, she declared, "that although the whole company had, out of all bounds, over-rated common sentiments of Christian charity, she felt herself rejoiced not to have offended; and if there was any merit, it was all borrowed from constant association with those whose conduct was at once her emulation and her example."

"Then, I suppose, the worthy Baronet is not to be hanged this time?" said Partington.

"No," said Sir Armine; "I think I see myself so well, and so satisfied, that I shall take Olivia's advice."

"Why, for that matter," rejoined Partington, "I must own, I too have a letter to be read which seems to strengthen an idea of that sort; and as I plainly perceive my vote to break the honest man's neck will pass for nothing, where a pack of abominable good-for-nothing scoundrels are resolved to save him,—here, Henry, do you give us the contents of this:—"

presenting him with that letter from

Charles

Charles which was before offered to the reader.

It was with great labour that Henry, after many stops, lets, and hindrances, from the overflowings of his own heart and that of the company, finished this epistle. All the passions of his nature had been up in arms for a considerable time. In this last letter, there were some hard lines which pierced him, and him only of the party, to the quick.—The forlorn situation of Caroline, wondering, perhaps, at the absence of her father; the tender goodness of Olivia, the benevolent disposition of Sir Armine, and the dire heart-rending condition of his friend Charles, formed, in his bosom, such a mass of contrary and conflicting passions and principles, desires and duties, hopes and fears, that Henry Fitzorton's situation at this crisis was, perhaps, as truly to be commiserated as at any period, not of his individual, but of the human history.

“Do you, Henry,” said Sir Armine, “for I know you will do it in the best manner, answer your friend's letter—Partington

ington will only interlard it with vagabonds and scoundrels.—No—it will be better, dear boy, in your hands;—You will assure your friend of my continued esteem for *him*; and that while you are telling him so, his father will be set at liberty.”

Jane Atwood here quitted the room very hastily.

“And add, my Henry,” cried Sir Armine, “that it shall be by no fault of mine, or my family, or my friends, if the cruel and unprovoked assault is ever divulged to—to—to—his—to Miss—”

Sir Armine hesitated, seeing some paper which had laid on the table tremble in Henry’s hand, to pronounce the name of Caroline or Stuart. He therefore only added, in an under tone, heard only by Henry—“you know who I mean, Henry.”

“And while Harry is thus employed, you, my dear Sir Armine,” observed Lady Fitzorton, “you may go with me, if you please.”

They did so, and while they were absent,

sent, Partington, being now left alone with Henry, exclaimed, "What, you vagabond! is to be done now? Our plan, you see, has been overturned, and there is no time for another. You cannot be carried off again. This forced match, I fear, after all, must take place: yet who, but such a fellow as you, would require *force* to possess such a darling little villain as Olivia? What do you intend?"

"Would I were dead, and buried!" ejaculated Henry, "or would I had never seen—Indulge me, dear Mr. Partington, by leaving me alone a little. I will endeavour to do what I ought—what is right. Order the carriages as desired.—Some delay will, of course, happen after this accident—at least, one day! and if I gain another day, I shall have time to think and to decide."

Partington, who, amidst all his singularities, was never troublesome, and who, indeed, knew not how to advise Henry, whom he sincerely loved, left the room, saying only, with visible signs of anxiety—

"All

“ All I know of a certainty is, that you are one of the most atrocious young scoundrels I ever saw ; and, therefore, I wish with all my soul I could see you happy, without seeing others, who are as great vagabonds as yourself, miserable.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

RESENTMENT AND COMPASSION.

THE letter which Henry, after he had recovered himself, wrote to Charles, contained all the generous sentiments his father dictated, with every grace they could receive from eloquent expression ; but they were mingled with others that betrayed a disordered and almost distracted mind, but which would become intelligible to Charles, in addition to his father's kind commands.

“ Ah ! my dear ! dear friend ! and partner in grief !” observed the unhappy Henry, “ the firebrands of hate and animosity, which

which our affectionate care, joined to the goodness of Sir Armine's heart, had almost extinguished, are by this baneful rencontre and its effects, kindled afresh, and must consume you and your beloved Olivia, Henry and his adored Caroline in ashes."

He then implored the advice and assistance of Charles, without the slightest expectation that either could be availing! He ran on to some length in a state of incoherence that entangled the design, and obscured the sense with which he began; and, in fine, discovered that his enthusiasm threatened to hurl Reason from her throne! He then recurred to that last dire refuge of the desperate, and argued the point of life and death by his own hand, with a casuistry so subtle that he had almost persuaded himself suicide was the only virtue left him to perform.—“This way only,” said he, “can Olivia escape a man, whose heart is for ever alienated—for ever possessed by another! This way alone can my friend avoid the misery of seeing the woman he adores in the arms of another.—This way, too,

too, shall he be dissolved from his everlasting oath, and die faithful to the vows of his heart."

After a long indulgence of this phrenzy, he took the path which led to the contrary extreme, where duty to his father, and admiration of the tender virtues, as well as tender pity for the affection of Olivia, convinced him, though his days were to exceed those of the longest liver upon earth, he ought still to wish their prolongation, that he might reward so much benevolence, beauty, and goodness. He concluded the epistle by confessing, his whole soul was in the state of this globe of earth, when all its materials were discordant atoms, and not having suffered his passions or his imagination, intemperate as they were, to extinguish, for more than a moment, those heavenly sparks which his principles had lighted up, and which his education had fostered in his soul, he ended with a prayer, that the Power who called into order a world, and perhaps myriads of worlds, from anarchy, would deign to bring his
deeply-

deeply-distracted mind from its present chaos!

The unfortunate writer of this farrago having addressed, sealed, and dispatched it, felt an impulse, he could not but indulge, to join the party now assembled in the barn. He there found Sir Armine and Lady Fitz-orton, Olivia and Mr. Clare, who had been interrupted in their way thereto by a little adventure of Jane Atwood's

The reader may recollect the latter of these persons left the room suddenly, the occasion of which was this:—Finding, through the benevolence of Olivia and Sir Armine, that her still too kindly-remembered Sir Guise would receive no farther hardships, and conjecturing she should incur no censure by a little anticipation of the intended clemency, the poor girl, obeying the softness of her heart, which told her, that Nature insisted on her dues of daily bread, as well in her guilty as innocent subjects, had ventured to gain one of the waiters over to her wishes of administering something to eat and drink more nutritious than

than the bread and water which that vigilant disciplinarian, Mr. Partington, had permitted to be set before them since their captivity. Having seen her brother, therefore, safe at his own breakfast, and True George, whose heart, on this side a breach of duty, could deny her nothing, fixed as his substitute, she had passed the first sentinel, namely the aforesaid George, and had got with her basket of provisions to the barn door, and was just giving orders to the waiter to take it to the prisoners, when Sir Armine and the rest caught her in the fact.

It is not easy to conjecture the ingenuous distress and embarrassment of Jane Atwood. She entered upon her defence in so very lame a manner, that her offence would have been extremely aggravated had she not found a better advocate in Olivia, who, with honest energy, declared, she should have done the same, or worse, had she reflected on the circumstances of the poor wretches; "for I do not think," said she, "I could know the wickedest creature upon

upon the earth; no, not my father's murderer—though the very thought of him would nearly murder me too—no, I am positive I could not let even him die of famine while I had charge of his life, and power to administer to those bitter wants which would make him incapable even of repentance in his last moments.”

“Take that basket, George,” said Sir Armine, “and carry it to the party who are in need of its contents—or no—stop,” continued he, “I have a thought may answer the purpose better.—Here, Jane, do you carry this into the house, and in a room apart from that which we occupy, order a proper repast to be prepared for the persons you intended to relieve; and see, good girl, that it be done immediately.”

Jane, bursting into tears, could answer to this kindness only by them, and several bows which George made for her, saying, “Their honours saw the young woman was not well.” George then took hold of her arm, and conducted her into the house.

It was at this moment that Henry arrived. Sir Armine undertook the explanation so much to Olivia's honour, that Henry, incessantly warmed by instances of her excellent disposition, felt it was, if not the conquering, the resistless moment, and with violence protested he was sure she must be an angel. "No," replied Olivia, putting her face close to that of Henry; "alas! no angel, but a mere mortal, who considers that the poor wretch, bad as he is, gave birth to Charles and Caroline, of whose inestimable value we are both conscious."

Thus perpetually did Olivia promote the cause of others, and counteract her dearest interests! At the displays of her character and conduct, Henry often glowed with such admiration and gratitude, that he could have been proud to have flown with her to the altar; but then her conversation so frequently brought back the image and virtues of Caroline to his mind, that she was, in a manner, necessary to his looking on
that

that altar as the place where, should he yield his hand to Olivia, he must at the same time sacrifice his love, his fame, his friend, his honour, and his virtue!

CHAPTER XLV.

A VERY TENDER HEART.

SIR ARMINE, with his family, now entered the place where the proud, crest-fallen Sir Guise, and his infamous accomplices, were degraded; and, advancing within a few paces, stopped short.

The contrast exhibited in the two Barons at this instant was such, as a delineator of the human character has seldom an opportunity to observe. The awful and superior majesty of an insulted and innocent man giving liberty to a base clandestine enemy, who, though nearly dead to the excesses of conscious infamy, seemed almost to wish that the cords thus loosened were drawn

drawn tight, even to strangulation, round his neck.

Sir Armine pointed to the door, and signified, by sufficient tokens, that the path to the Abbey, or wherever else he might desire to take his way, would not be obstructed: but Sir Armine uttered not a word till he gained the court-yard, that led from the barn to the house, and then, in a voice that penetrated the heart of every hearer, he said—"Attribute, thou Implacable! thy undeserved enlargement to thy children and mine, whose virtues are a balance—and surely higher praise cannot be given them—for vices such as thine!"

Disdaining to cast a look on the subordinate engines of baseness, Sir Armine, with his associates, went into the house, but he had scarcely passed his foot over the threshold before Jane Atwood and True George came running into the passage, by another door, to say, that "an armed multitude were marching on from the neighbouring villages to revenge the injuries committed against

against their respected patron, Sir Armine, by their detested tyrant Sir Guise."

"He must be protected," said Sir Armine. George flew to his protection swift as the word. Young Atwood, who was at hand, did the same. His sister repeated Sir Armine's orders till Adfell woods re-echoed—"Sir Guise must be protected." Henry Fitzorton forsook, for a moment, the side of Olivia to attempt the rescue of the father of Caroline. But the mob, who now poured into the inn-yard, covering the fields adjacent, were at first too clamorous to be opposed—they had heard the story of the assassination with all the extravagant additions of a travelling tale; and here, as at the abbey and castle, Sir Guise being an object of general hatred, and Sir Armine of as general love, even the entreaties, explanations, promises, and threats of the latter, could not prevent the enraged multitude from hooting, pelting, hissing, hustling, buffeting, and beating the former out of the inn-yard; and in despite of Henry, Partington, young Atwood,

George and Jane, who followed the rabble from one end of the parish to the other, their unmitigated fury was pursued by the assailants even to that part of Adfell forest where the postillion told them the attack was made. At that memorable place, had not the shrieks and at length the swoons of Jane Atwood, like a guardian genius, broke the raging passions, by exciting the general pity and humanity of the mob to restore a beautiful young woman whom some of them supposed was the Baronet's daughter, Sir Guise, Otley, and Miles, would have breathed their last on the identical spot where they had begun the assassination.

Thus implored, they suffered at length the miscreant and his minions to escape, and the mob turned all their attention to the young woman, who,—after recovering, and being assured, by the generous George, in a tender whisper, that Sir Guise had got off alive,—was carried by the people safe back to the inn. Here they met Sir Armine, Mr. Clare, and the ladies, coming in consternation to know what had been the result

result of the affray. Olivia seeing Henry, for whom she had felt terrors not to be described, fell into a state scarce less pitiable than that of Jane. But at length the adventure of the running fight was explained, the company took some more refreshment, and the good surgeon telling Sir Armine, the sooner he left the scene of agitation, and got to his own quiet home, the better, Partington ordered the horses and carriages to be brought out, and Sir Armine, his friends and family left the eventful inn.

But they had not yet arrived at the land of peace; for the same multitude which had dismissed Sir Guise with so many marks of disapprobation, would not part with Sir Armine without greetings of as violent applause; they hung on the wheels of his coach, took off the horses, and drew him along in triumph; they ran after him for some miles, crying out "God bless Sir Armine!" and at last stopped the carriages and horses, insisting that Partington, Henry, and all the retinue, should join them in three cheers, to the honour of Sir Armine.

After which they gave a universal huzza, and suffered the vehicles and horsemen to proceed.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CONTRASTS.

THE rest of the journey was performed without any farther interruptions, except that towards the end of it Sir Armine complained of uneasy sensations in his stomach, which, he said, he was apprehensive were the forebodings of his old constitutional enemy, the gout.

At length, however, the antique towers, and gothick avenues of Adfell Hall appeared in view, and the evening sun was playing its beams on the romantick scenery around, at the prospects of which different sentiments were produced in the minds of some of the company.

In the fine eyes and complexion of Olivia, were written all those tender perturbations, hopes, and fears, which till now
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the late occurrences had banished from her gentle bosom, but she said nothing. "It was at the altar of that old chapel, my child," observed Mr. Clare, "that your grandfather was made the happiest of mankind.—O may the heirs to his fortune, the fair domain that is now opening upon us, succeed to that richer possession, his unspeakable felicity! for I know by my own heart—widower as it is, and *wholly* bereaved as it would be but for thee, Olivia," the old gentleman tenderly drew his daughter towards him, "I know there is no earthly treasure so invaluable as a chaste and virtuous companion—such as, alas, I have lost!" Mr. Clare brought his daughter's hand from his bosom to his lips, and impressed it with a kiss that was moistened with a tear, while Olivia gently lifted her other hand to the old man's cheek, and wreathing her arm by degrees round his neck, repaid the precious drops which he had shed with tenfold interest.

Meantime, Sir Armine forgot every former pain in the supremely happy reflection

of still possessing the excellent Lady Fitz-orton, whom having viewed for some moments with conscious pride, he exclaimed, with an energy that spoke the soul—"The years of that lovely girl almost thrice numbered," pointing to Olivia, "haft thou been the blessing of my life!"

The coachman was ordered to stop at the top of the hill, from whence Adsell Hall park and chapel were discovered, and where these little pictures of family happiness were drawn. Henry and Partington had rode on one side of the road, keeping even with the coach; and the post-chariot, in which were George and Jane, to whom her brother was now added, drew up on the other, more in apprehension of Sir Armine's returning sickness, than in expectance of those sweetly tearful sensations which welcome the pains, if pains they may be called, of a tender heart. The whole group, therefore, characteristically felt the scene. Henry, who had witnessed it from the time of Mr. Clare's paternal prayer to Sir Armine's last reflection, and to whom the sight of the

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the chapel brought back every agonising anticipation, counterfeited but ill the smile he gave to Mr. Clare when that good man wished him all the bliss that both their houses had experienced in marriage. Henry bowed acknowledgment. True George wept and laughed by turns; young Atwood bore him company; but Jane was so overwhelmed with the conflicts which preceded, that, when the carriages were again in motion, she felt relieved. Some minutes before, Partington, whose sensibility had been variously excited, turned his horse from the coach again into the road, swearing, “that Sir Guise and his worthy pair of friends were archangels to Sir Armine and his family, who, he plainly saw”—here he rubbed his eyes, which were not dry—“had a desire to blind him first, and then to break his heart; for which, amongst a multitude of other obliging favours, he considered the whole body, men and women, as a set of ——— good-for-nothing assassinating caitiffs and scoundrels.”

At length they arrived at the place of
destina-

destination. The sun had just made "a golden set;" the villagers were assembled on the green which neighboured the hall, to pay their first salutations; and the rural bells joined merrily in chorus to the notes of universal welcome. It was, indeed, considered by the inhabitants of the surrounding parishes as a jubilee, which had been expected by the peasantry and husbandmen for many years: Their lovely patroness was now come amongst them, not only to take possession of her ample inheritance, but to share it, as they had often heard, with a youth generous as herself, and from whose liberal regulations they expected to derive all the benefits of honest industry, and of easy servitude; for it had been given out that if the young 'squire and his lady liked Adfell Hall, they were to fit it up for their general residence; a point of the utmost importance to the sons and daughters of poverty. That nothing on their parts, therefore, might be wanting, whatever could demonstrate respect, gratitude, and zeal, were now to be seen and heard.

A village

A village poet, whose metre was looked upon, by the rusticks, as the sublimest effort of human genius, presented a gratulatory ode, in the last stanza of which he promised an epithalamium when the young couple should attend the altar of hymen. A rural musician, whose untutored melody was at least a match for the uncouth rhyme of the aforesaid bard, composed a cantata, which was to be rehearsed the evening of the arrival, but to be played to a full band, immediately after the ceremony—the barber having promised his flute, the huntsman of a neighbouring 'squire, his horn, and the clerk of an attorney from the next market-town, his fiddle, the composer himself literally *executing* harmony on the bassoon. Six of the village maids were selected, by sage matrons, to twine chaplets of jessamine and roses; cudgel-playing, single-stick, and cricket were also in preparation, and a variety of other honorary tokens of duty, good-will, and homage, were designed to celebrate the nuptials of Henry Fitzorton and the blooming lady of the manor.

These innocent testimonies of rustick satisfaction

tisfaction were highly acceptable to all but Henry, who, having now had leisure for retrospect, looked upon every preparation as a garland to decorate a grand sacrifice, of which *he* was to be the principal victim. And yet matters had now gone to such length, he saw no way to escape. His obligations to Olivia, whose virtues were ever under his eyes, multiplied every hour. His obstacles to the hand of Caroline were increased tenfold within the last two days; even though, before, they did not seem to admit of augmentation. All that could be expected was a little delay, that his father might recover his late fatigue before he entered on a fresh course of tumultuary happiness; and even this Sir Armine determined, should postpone the festivity only four and twenty hours.

There was a rough honesty in the good Partington, who, albeit, unused to the soft parts of speech, had as much nicety in feeling, as bluntness in expression. He was often on the point of at once extricating Henry by unfolding his situation to Mr. Clare, or even to Olivia herself; for he

he entered into the spirit of Henry's objections; and though he did not see the least possibility of his friend being united to the woman he loved—the daughter of the villain, or, as Partington himself called him, the worthy gentleman who would have murdered Sir Armine—he could look for nothing but grief and disappointment in marrying one whom he did *not* love, even though it was the charming Olivia. But the business of interference was difficult and delicate; and after long deliberation, he once more took Henry aside to say, “ My dear scoundrel, I can do you no good, and I do not choose to run the hazard of doing you any harm; so to-morrow morning I shall take myself back into my own country, attended by young Atwood, whose family are now in suspense about him. All I have to observe is that if you have no better means than a second elopement, and wish for an asylum, I can lock you up in my cellar; in descending to which there is a well-stored pantry, and there you may remain, you unhappy villain, till you have drunk and eat me out: for I must confess,

as love is not on *your* side of the question, you would do better to live with 'toads in the vapour of a dungeon,' as that incomparable old scoundrel Will Shakspeare expresses it, than with the fairest and finest girl in the world in a palace; for in that case, to my firmest thoughts, Olivia is no better than an oyster-wench."

With this sentiment he left Henry, forlorn and undecided, and would have made ready for his journey, but for one of those unforeseen interventions which, in this world of changes, baffles the limited foresight of man, and sometimes, at a moment's warning, sometimes without it, levels emperors and empires, and every laboured edifice of their power, fancy, and ambition, in that common dust of nature, out of which they, and all that they create or inherit, were formed; proving at once the strength and weakness of mortality.