

Confessio Regiae. 1827

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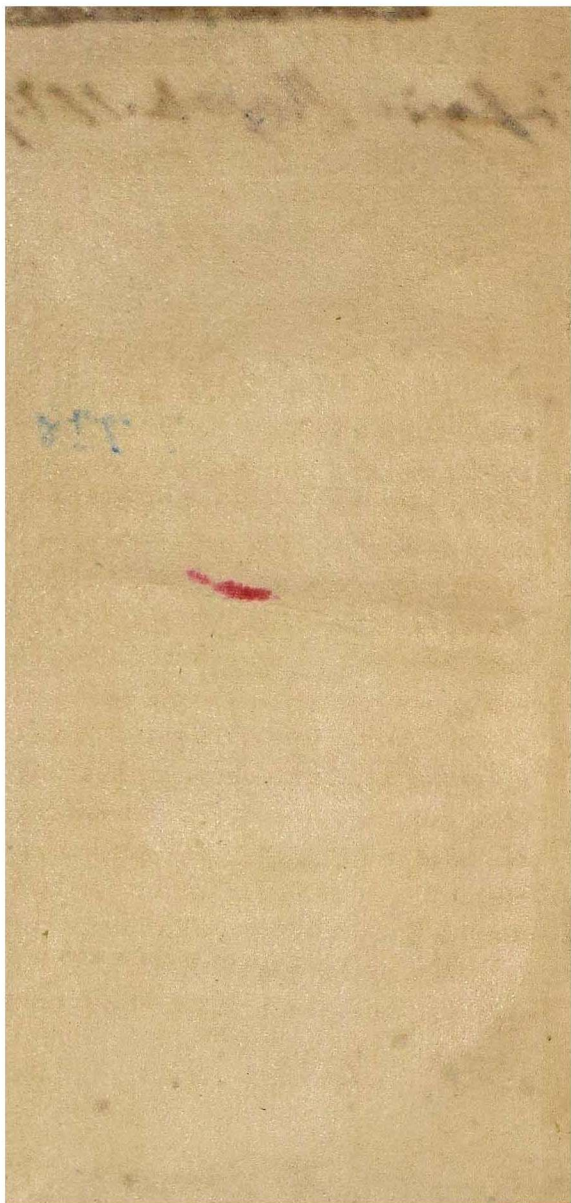
SECOND EDITION; CAREFULLY REVISED.

The ways of heaven are dark and intricate;
Puzzled in mazes, and perplex'd with errors.

ADDISON.

PRINTED FOR T. N. LONGMAN, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1798.



TO THE
REVEREND MR. POTTER,
PREBENDARY OF NORWICH.

NOTWITHSTANDING the *real* and acknowledged corruptions of the times, and the alarming spirit of depravity, which has, more or less, pervaded all orders of men; in despite also of the piteous whine in which hypocrisy affects to bewail, and the cant of those censors, who, with more suspicious vehemence, rave at the state of universal degeneracy;—a writer whose aim it is to illumine written language—which is but the dead letter—by models of existing rectitude, from the living volume, can be at no loss to find such models, even at this day, in every class of society. Indeed, any difficulty of this kind argues the declaimer to be himself destitute of respectable connexions, and to have kept very bad company.

In taking a survey of the sacred profession, to give the energy of an example to a rule which is intended, in the person of the reverend Baronet, to exhibit a man venerable by his years, of the holy order, and of exemplary conduct, save in the frailty that, confessedly, shades his character, a numerous and honourable train will offer itself to the mind of every virtuous reader; and the difficulty will consist only in the variety prescribed for selection. But it will unquestionably be admitted, by the lovers of private virtue, and the admirers of publick talents, and by the sacred body of which he has been, for near half a century, a respectable member, that, a MORE pious man, a MORE affectionate friend, a MORE tender parent, or a MORE zealous minister of the protestant faith, unblemished by the infirmities which attach to the character of Sir Armine Fitzorton, could not have been chosen than HE, whose name the author has placed at the head of this division of his work.

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FAMILY SECRETS.

CHAPTER I.

A HOUSE OF MOURNING.

ON the evening of the day preceding the intended nuptials, Sir Armine felt himself unexpectedly faint, accompanied by a slight return of his pains in different parts of the body, but particularly in that where he had received the ruffian's last dastardly blow. He withdrew to his chamber, before the usual hour, convinced himself, and convincing others, that a few hours rest, which he felt he should enjoy, would make him rise more alert in the morning than either the intended bride or bridegroom. Resisting all offers to have any body sit up with him, and it having been settled, before he was taken ill, that on this, the last night of Olivia's single state, Lady Fitzorton was to be the partner of her bed, he went up stairs, peremptorily refusing company or assist-

tance: and as Lady Fitzorton saw he was not in a temper of mind to be controlled, she vexed him not with importunity.

But growing worse in the night, he resorted to, as he thought, a bottle of laudanum, in whose powers he had always too much faith; and although in much agony, he was unwilling to disturb any of the family, thinking the disorder would pass away in the profoundness of that sleep which the supposed laudanum, his favourite panacea, would procure. He went so hastily to the closet, where, the day before, he had locked up all his medicines, that the lamp went out; and in this state of darkness and uncertainty, as he was in search of something to hold the laudanum, he unfortunately laid his hand on a cup, in which had been mixed up, and incautiously left by the house steward, a preparation of arsenic and other poisonous drugs, to destroy some rats which had infested several parts of the dilapidated mansion. Anxious to remove the malady which he felt every minute increasing, he resorted again to the medicine chest, and
poured

poured a double portion of his favourite anodyne upon the dregs, which having drunk, he returned to his bed.

The deadly quality of the poison was for some time overborne by the balmy power of the anodyne, and poor Sir Armine enjoyed a temporary repose; out of which, alas! he was roused at the dawn of the day by sensations of misery that raged through his whole frame. The family were alarmed: they found Sir Armine in speechless agony; at a transient interval of which, he with difficulty exclaimed,—“ The laudanum! the laudanum! some dire mistake!”—A shriek from the wife of the house steward, who had taken up the cup out of which Sir Armine had drank the fatal potion, now augmented the consternation by wildly crying out—“ O! why did not my husband remove this cruel, cruel cup? His Honour, ladies, has swallowed poison!—This cup, alas! this cup!”—Incapable of finishing the sentence, she fell on the floor.—“ Poisoned!” Sir Armine poisoned!” ejaculated

every one present ; “ the God of heaven and earth forbid ! ”

On the arrival of the very surgeon who attended Sir Armine at Adfell, and whom True George, almost with the rapidity of wings, had fetched from thence, medicines were administered, which, after a violent operation of some hours, gave gleams of hope that Sir Armine might be restored, so far as human means could recover him. On the fourth day, by judicious treatment, he could bear to sit up, and saw, by turns, every one of his family in his chamber : Henry was still his constant attendant, and rarely left the bed-side. His beloved hand—for in sickness as in health he was his darling—administered the cordials, and they seemed to acquire new energies from such ministration. The gentle Olivia too was often at the door, even when it was impossible to gain entrance. Every person about the house was solicitous for the recovery of Sir Armine, whose character was well known in those parts.

In the end, the poison seemed wholly expelled by the antidotes, but had left his general health so much invaded, his frame, even to its stamina, so shaken, his stomach was so torn by his old malignant enemy, and, perhaps even yet, some internal pains from those bruises which a more inveterate foe had inflicted, that the effects of all these evils brought on a complication of ills, for which perhaps, in the most vigorous bloom of man's life, there could have been no established cure, but which must inevitably, even in the firmest constitution, and such Sir Armine had been blest with, have terminated in a manner the most fatal.

The dreaded stroke which was to separate this venerable man therefore from his family came on "with solemn steps, and slow;" but, alas! they were not less certain than if the dire power of the poison had continued to rage: he was in a manner dying daily under their eyes, but happily his pangs were less and less acute. Thus he regained comparative ease of body and

tranquillity of mind; and though assured of death's approaches for some weeks before the "fatal arrow sped," he displayed to all around a rare example of paternal tenderness, patience, and every christian virtue.

When Sir Armine felt his hour at hand, which he expected more than a week before it arrived, he expressed wishes to her whose delight had ever been to obey them, that he might breathe his last at Fitzorton Castle. Thither, therefore, he was removed by slow degrees, and seemed much the better both for the air and exercise of the journey.

What a seducer is the heart! It again deceived all the Fitzortons and Clares with a false but soothing hope, that Sir Armine might yet be spared to them. And when these fond expectations were imparted to their object, he received them with a smile, which shewed his reluctance to damp an innocent delusion which he saw gave them pleasure.

The disorder, nevertheless, in silent depredation went on; and in the evening of
the

the fatal night in which its victim departed, he desired such of the family as were then in his room to leave him. "All of you," said Sir Armine, holding Henry by the hand, "but this young man, with whom I wish to confer; and when I ring the bell, let it, I pray, be considered as a summons for your return to me."—They obeyed.

"O! thou the nearest to my heart!" said he to Henry, "in this its last hour of motion—for the hand of death is outstretched; I see it hovering over my pillow—Thou! for whom it throbs with tenderness unutterable—I charge thee, with my expiring breath, and by my parting soul's eternal hope, as soon after my decease as the decent forms of the world will allow, not to delay fulfilling the purpose for which the journey that will produce my dissolution was undertaken; for were all other motives annihilated,—and I have pardoned all men—even as I hope to be pardoned—all motives I say, but those which are due to the best of the aged, and of the young—to

my earliest friend, and to his child, those are all sufficient. My own immediate death is not more inevitable, than would be theirs on your refusal. Perhaps, my dear Henry, this point of union has been pressed on my part with too fond a solicitude—beyond a parent's authority. It is my only pang in death. You must place it amongst the faults of my long life; but it is alas! now too late to avail yourself of this error. Guard then with the most religious care from the father, and the child, whose fate is in your hand, the remotest thought of it ever having been necessary for me to *urge* this subject, and conceal yet more religiously the secret attachment you have unadvisedly once entertained for any other woman, more particularly for the daughter of the man who—but I will not insult you by farther mention of that Implacable, whose conduct you must deprecate. Think that my latest blessing, even if not withheld, cannot be deserved—if—.”

“ O! I will be the victim of a thousand sacrifices,

sacrifices, die a thousand deaths," exclaimed Henry, in an agony, "to deserve and to receive that blessing."

"Receive it most certainly thou shalt," said Sir Armine, "even if it be not deserved: It will be my duty to give, but it rests with my son to bestow, or to refuse, what will impart to that duty all its sweetness. My son, decide; thy father's life hangs by a thread, which the next breath may sever."

Henry was so utterly absorbed as scarce to hear his father's thrice repeated command, to ring the bell; when, however, he obeyed, the family re-appeared.

Amongst these, we have to number John Fitzorton, who had been, at length, informed of Sir Armine's extremity, the cause of which however was to be imputed to the accident of the poison. Every one, but especially Sir Armine, trembled at the consequences, should the part that Sir Guise had taken be made known. From the vow of silence, therefore, which Sir Armine imposed, the family was only in part released. John had rode almost at full speed two days

and nights, to take his everlasting leave of a parent whom he loved with a strength and ardour not inferior to that which was borne him by Henry or James, and this inspired him with a speed that even outstripped the rapidities of the former.

But his farther's exhausted appearance, the depredation that had been made on his majestic form, the sinking voice, the faded eye, the trembling hand, and the various wrecks of a death-bed sickness, struck the heart of John with a dismay far beyond the powers of speech; but though silence enchained his tongue, the friend, the son, the man, spoke in every feature, flowed, when he *could* weep, in every tear, and agonised in every groan.

"Thou art in good time, my inestimable John," said his father, "to receive my warmest blessings! my warmest gratitude! Thou art in time, also, to witness the happiness with which a christian can leave this world! pleased, and proud, at the thought of bequeathing to it, in his own family, some of its noblest ornaments and examples."

John

John Fitzorton uttered not a sentence, yet seemed almost suffocated from the powers of speech refused—the relief, even of a single tear, was long denied him. After his first survey of his father's situation, he had hurried round to the left side of the bed, fell on his knees, put his father's hand into his bosom; there held it, and looked steadily at Sir Armine's countenance.

The object of his care here spread forth his arms, as if to illustrate his eulogy by encircling his family, Mr. Clare, and Olivia. In the intermediate space betwixt his life and death, as Henry was leaning over his pillow, a whispered question and reply passed between Sir Armine and his youngest son.

“Is my blessing to be deserved?”

“O! in all things now left within my power.”

“All I require is in your power,” said Sir Armine.

Henry seemed eager to say something in reply, but his father prevented, by invoking upon his *obedient* son the last benediction

of a dying parent. He then clasped Henry in his arms, beckoning to Olivia to receive him from an expiring father, as her future guardian and husband. Then taking up a Bible which he had been frequently reading, and which at all times, in sickness and in health, was laid behind his pillow, he pressed it with fervour to his lips, emphatically repeating—"The everlasting benediction of a father be upon ye both!"—He delivered the book to Henry, saying, after an earnest gaze, whose meaning could not be mistaken, "Do thou likewise."

Henry, the victim of a thousand emotions, kissed the sacred volume with an ardour, as if he hoped, from its holy power, the inspiration of fortitude greater than his own; and, in a voice suited to such expected succour, exclaimed, "On the holy bond of these awful leaves, do I swear to ratify the commands of a dying parent."

"Enough," said Sir Armine: "I die in peace."

Sir Armine survived this speech only a few hours; but the reader will permit us
to

to conduct him hastily from the sacred apartment, and quit for a while the melancholy castle of Fitzorton.

CHAPTER II.

GOSSIPING.

WE were constrained to leave the unhappy Caroline in various distress, occasioned by receipt of Olivia's letter, which, as the reader remembers, threw the whole party whom it concerned—and it involved the destiny of several persons—into perplexities, out of which there appeared no friendly clue.

To this, on the part of Caroline, succeeded the secret departure of her brother and father, with an air of mystery which foreboded fresh calamities. In this solitary state, while she was wandering in the thorny labyrinths of conjecture, one of her maids came into her chamber, and officiously related the news which had been brought by a tenant

tenant who had passed through Adsell, and was come to settle his yearly accounts at the abbey.

This man had told Dennison, in the heedless girl's hearing, the history of the affray as he had picked it up in the kitchen of the inn, where Truth was so far from being the historian, that every fact was distorted; and by the time the good farmer had travelled with it to the abbey, for he made a stop at every public house in his way, it had grown to such a frightful size, that even at Adsell, had it been carried back again in the state it was delivered to Caroline, or at least as related to her by the maid-servant, it would scarce have been known to be the story of Sir Guise's assassination, and of Sir Armine's consequent malady.

The farmer recorded, "That his worshipful reverend Honour of Fitzorton was, at the point of death; that all the company, men and women, even to the coachman on his box, were beaten almost to mummies; and that, instead of marriage, there was, God willing, in all likelihood, to be a burial ceremony.

ceremony of them all.—That his honorable's dishonest landlord Sir Guise, his unhonorable madam, who 'tis thought is lurking hard by, and his hanger-on Miles, as pure a limb of the devil as you should wish to see, and another ill-looking fellow, all jumped out of a wood at once, snapped their blunderbusses, drew their broadswords, and went desperately to work; and being taken by one 'Squire Bartington or Partington, were thrust into an old barn till Sir Armine was dead, then to go before justice, who, it was thought, would order them all for gaol, then to the gallows."

Had not Dennison been too much occupied by the circumstances, to attend whether there had been any auditors in the room but himself, he would, doubtless, have attempted to set the seal of secrecy on the lips of the loquacious maid; but she happened to have just returned from sweeping Dennison's little parlour, when the farmer came, and as the door was left on the jar, the girl stood with open eyes and ears, suspended on her brush, devouring
every

every syllable, and the moment the tale-bearer had ended, she ran, without waiting to hear Dennison's comments, to make a report of even more than the whole; first to her young lady, and then to every one of her fellow servants.

Notwithstanding the terror and astonishment which these tidings produced in the mind of Caroline, she saw that much was magnified by the fears of the maid, and allowed for the natural progress of a malicious tale; yet enough of the probable remained, after all reasonable deductions, to excite apprehensions that something dreadful had happened, and that almost every person most near and dear to her was concerned. She would have gone down to the farmer and questioned him herself, but that another of the maid-servants at that time came to the apartment with Dennison's dutiful desire, as he expressed himself, to hold some discourse with her. The object of this interview was to conceal with much care every thing that had been already divulged, and at the same time to frame some excuse for

for his (Dennison's) journey to Adsell, where the good steward said he had reason to suppose his presence might be serviceable on a little matter of business. "I—I—I think—it may be right for me to set off and see what can be done—and—"

"Dennison," said Caroline, "I see your distress; but I have heard as much of the sad story brought by Farmer Spedman as yourself, and am so far from disapproving your journey to Adsell—for there I understand the unfortunates are assembled—that I am determined to be your companion, and desire the chariot may be got ready directly; from the next town we can go post. Then turning to the maid-servant, and saying, "Betty, I shall want your assistance," was hastening out of the room. Dennison, who apprehended more than Caroline, or at least than she thought fit to express, tried many ways to gain permission for his undertaking the journey alone; observing, "that if any thing worse than he hoped had happened—"

"The more unfortunate my father's or
brother's

brother's situation, the more shall I be wanted," cried Caroline; "and at all events I am resolved to go—so without waste of time or words, I shall intreat," said she, with a more peremptory voice and manner than usual, "that the carriage may be at the door immediately." As she was departing a second time, her brother the Lieutenant made his appearance. The happiness of seeing one of the persons dearest to her soul return alive, gave cheerful presage of the rest, and she was opening her arms to receive him, when that afflicted youth, after violently stamping on the ground to express contrary emotions, too strong for utterance, staggered to a chair and burst into a flood of tears; presently, seeing only the confidential Dennison with his sister, the maid-servant being gone out of the room, "My dear Caroline," said Charles, "prepare to leave this pest-house immediately—It is the seat of contagion, disgrace, and shame. It has covered us with blushes—Fly with your unhappy brother this moment."

"I was

"I was going to quit it," replied the trembling Caroline; "but wherefore do I see you thus agitated? Where is my father? Alas! I have heard in part; and I see in your terror-striking looks, your trembling lips, and shaking frame, the dreadful news—Yes, let us fly this instant to his rescue."

"His rescue!" cried Charles, No; it is to escape his presence—to avoid him for ever. Ah! my unhappy, beloved sister, let us hide our disgraceful heads in some unthought-of corner; for that I am come; and but for the love of thee, no earthly power should have brought me to the accursed spot, which returns on my memory the author of our injuries."

Dennison saw this was no time to reason down the rage, and almost phrenzy of Charles, or to enter into a detail of question; falling, therefore, on his knees, while the big drops of sympathy flowed down his cheeks, he implored to be partner of his young master's and lady's fortunes whithersoever they led. While he was yet kneeling, the good father Arthur entered, like a patriarch

patriarch bearing a commission from the God of gods.

“Rather implore my brother, good old man,” cried Caroline, “in the supplicatory posture you are now in, not to desert *him*, to whom, whatever are his frailties, or even his vices, he owes his existence, and least of all to leave him in misery, and wretchedness, and shame, if such are to be his fate. No! my dearest, dearest brother; you will not forsake your father at such a desolate moment. If he is most guilty, he is most pitiable; if he is in a prison, his soul and body equally call upon us by the voice of Nature to minister calm to his despair. His conscience—nay, his very crimes invite us to him. O! holy monk! convince my brother of this. Sir Guise it seems, has, in the furious extreme of some unfortunate passion, to which his nature, alas! is subject, done a desperate deed, which threatens his life. Exert, I conjure you,” continued she, falling at Arthur’s feet, and catching one of his hands, as Dennison had done the other—“exert, I conjure you, your pious eloquence

eloquence to penetrate the filial heart of this good youth with a due sense of what he owes even to an erring parent—convince him that a father *cannot* be guilty beyond the reach of a child's commiseration."

"Rise, dearest Caroline; I *am* convinced that thou art as good and virtuous as he is vicious and unworthy. But collect yourself, my worthy friend," said Arthur, "and be not too rash in deciding any offence beyond the reach of God's pardon; and if not past the reach of God's, surely not beyond that of a son? What offence hath Sir Guise committed?"

Charles incoherently related all the facts as they had happened, asserting, they ought not to be concealed.

Her father's barbarity, and calm, determined rancour; Sir Armine's sufferings and ennobled humanity, her brother's wounded spirit, from the bleeding arrows of hopeless love, lacerated friendship, and a parent's vices, all shot into the bosom of Caroline at once; and, alas! not the least and hard to bear, the filial, ever-active vigilance of
Henry,

Henry, so like her own, the agonizing struggle betwixt unconquerable love, his consideration for Olivia, affection for disappointed friends, and duty to an injured father, who, by saving the almost-forfeited life of Sir Guise, had new claims on his son's obedience;—all these, and a thousand other piercing reflections bore down her spirits to the earth, on which she fell, with a wish, that it were indeed the measure of her grave. She recovered from these accumulated shocks, only to feel new pangs, for Charles read the letter sent him by Henry from Adsell Inn.

Here a violent noise, as of many voices shouting within and without the house, arrested every one's attention, but before any conjecture as to the cause could be assigned, the tumult increased to a degree that baffled all inquiry, and, indeed, rendered it unnecessary; for Dennison had scarce opened the door, when every servant in the abbey, with a number of those from the castle, filled the room with the contrary cries of—"Spare him! spare his life!—

Kill

Kill him! kill him! he has murdered my poor master.—Help! help! I shall be destroyed in my own house!”—The last exclamation was soon known to proceed from the miserable Sir Guise, at the sudden sight of whom Caroline and Charles stood like statues, motionless with surprise. The buffeting of the multitude, however, filling all the rooms and passages, made it necessary that an active part should be taken by somebody, unless a worse fate was suffered to overtake Sir Guise at the abbey, than that he had escaped at Adsell.

Accordingly the good father Arthur and Dennison—Charles having forced himself from the rising storm of passion at the sight of Sir Guise to leave the house—powerfully exerted themselves, and produced a calm, chiefly by an observation from father Arthur, on the impropriety, indecency, and impiety of such outrage before a fair and equitable trial had condemned a man, however deeply accused; exhorting them to remember they were Englishmen, and, of course,

course, the supports of that grand charter of their country—A BRITISH JURY.

National vanity, whether well or ill founded, is seldom flattered in vain. Arthur's popular bait was instantly swallowed, and anticipating the universal holiday when Sir Guise should be hanged, the mob dispersed in the same manner, and from the same motive, that influenced the insurgents at Adsell. He was rescued, however, barely on this side death, and Otley was left without any visible signs that there remained any life in his worthless body.

But a trial more awful was at hand—the Baronet had yet to pass the ordeal of an indignant son's resentment; indeed, had not the populace driven Sir Guise into this snare he would have avoided it, and had taken precaution once more to that effect, his intention being to pass the first night at Mrs. Tempest's lodge in the forest, where she herself had lain perdue, and to remain there till he should learn whether the coast was clear at the abbey. His hope was, that his
son

son would remain with the Fitzortons, and either not return home for some time, or, as he thought more likely, wholly give him up in silent contempt, which he could have far better supported, and with him the eternal absence of the only being he loved, than thus meet him in the height of his fury. Happy was it for Sir Guise—if disgraceful life can in any position be called happiness—that, as usual, the sweet and merciful Caroline, the humane Dennison, and that man of peace and of every virtue, father Arthur, were at hand to attemper the rage of the Lieutenant;—happy, in this crisis of his fate, was even the hypocrisy of this worthless fire.

To a painter, who has the human passions at the command of his pencil, the whole groupe might, perhaps, furnish materials for a picture of a singular effect *: The father of a family returning degraded from the discovery of an infamous action, amidst the

* And some sublime and affecting pencils meditate enriching several of the passions, persons, and scenery of this history.

groans and hisses of those very persons who would have respected his rank, and even looked up to his protection, had not his vices made even the poor and simple hold his wealth and grandeur in utter contempt : —a parent ashamed to meet the eye of his own children, or enter, except by felonious stealth, into his own house, once the mansion of honour and hospitality, now the residence of a man so deformed by vice, that the heir to all its ancient privileges would have fled from it as from the seat of pestilence ! Behold, too, an injured daughter, checked in her gentlest impulse of embracing a father by a high and holy sense of the dignity of insulted virtue ; yet still pushed forward by those impulses to plead a parent's cause and save a brother, from, perhaps, forgetting Nature herself ! Behold, too, the venerable and just steward joining in the appeal ; and the blameless priest restraining the impetuous arm of the youth from committing the crime of parricide, and pointing to heaven, while he exclaimed—“ THERE, young man ! THERE alone, in the majesty

of justice, resides the Great Avenger!" To finish the scene, behold the abject father, while his trembling minion, happily too contemptible for notice, is stealing out of the room;—behold, I say, this abject father, as dead to shame, as alive to fear, crawling on his knees, in the spirit of serpent and satanick hypocrisy, to beg the son, when he re-entered the apartment, would pardon offences, which he himself repented of, only in that they failed of success. The humiliated son covers his eyes with his trembling hand, that he should not look upon such meanness; while, raised from so grovelling a posture by the fair daughter burning with her blushes, he suffers himself to be led away by Dennison and Arthur, their wounded souls flashing through their eyes a silent but sublime indignation!

CHAPTER III.

A HOUSE OF FEASTING.

WE have now briefly to unravel the mazes by which Sir Guise Stuart and Mr. David Otley encountered the dangers exhibited in the last chapter.

No sooner, then, was the Baronet and his two associates released from the fury of the exasperated rabble, whom the reader will recollect were pursuing the culprits after they had received their freedom from Sir Armine's clemency, than the redoubted Valentine, having secured a horse, the other conveyances being still at the inn, set off as precursor for the residence of his dulcinea, Mrs. Tempest, and where the Knight of, by this time, the Woeful Countenance, with his trusty, but less sorrowful 'Squire David Otley, might have arrived without any fresh enterprise or disaster, had not Sir Guise's evil genius suggested the policy of getting into his possession certain dangerous written testimonies of his own and his mercenaries' combination

combination to do mischief. He therefore, in an unfortunate hour, advised Otley to go, now that the Fitzortons were absent, to take some moveables out of the castle; but particularly a small box, containing a secret correspondence on several subjects, which neither of the writers were desirous should fall into the hands of Sir Armine, or any of the Fitzortons.

As to what had passed at Adfell, he supposed the time was yet too recent for the particulars of their achievements to have reached the castle, as Sir Guise and his colleagues lost no time in returning from the scene of action, after Sir Armine had permitted them to be set free, and the hissing delays which saluted them on the road were past.

Now it fell out, to the confusion of Otley's calculations, that the identical farmer Spedman, who brought the news to the abbey—where the alarm he spread prevented the good cheer which better tidings or better opportunity would have produced from the hospitable steward—did not make all

the allowances that might have been expected for the distress he occasioned ; and seeing himself neglected, after discharging himself of so much good money, and so much important intelligence, he repented him that he had brought either news or money. Taking, therefore, his horse, no better treated than himself, out of the stable, he jogged on much out of humour, and finding himself, moreover, both hungry and thirsty, he stopped at the village of Fitzorton, at the sign of the Fitzorton Arms, resolving to console himself, where he was sure to meet a hearty welcome for some of the cash that still remained in the yellow canvas rent-bag.

Scarce had he seated himself by the kitchen fire, all the other rooms in the little inn being engaged, and lighted his pipe—than a general huzza, after three distinct cheers, to the health of the new married couple, assailed his ears. The landlord coming in at that instant from the company into the kitchen, was questioned by our husbandman, touching the jovial sounds he had just heard.

“ Sounds,

“ Sounds, farmer? why you must know that Sir Armine Fitzorton, our great gentleman of the castle, has a son, the Lord love him! who is this day, or to-morrow, or was yesterday, married to the *famust* heiress, Miss Clare, of these parts. So the young lady’s father (by Miss’s desire) ordered the servants and neighbours to make merry on the occasion—and merry we are, you hear, and you shall be so too! for all comers are welcome to-night at the Fitzorton Arms!—Huzza! huzza! Fitzorton for ever!”

Making up his mind, therefore, to the maxim, that bad luck never *can* come too late, honest Spedman set in for a full and complete atonement with his new friends at the castle, for the ill-usage he supposed himself to have met with at the abbey. With this idea, he joined in the general spirit of the occasion, shook hands with the landlord, and all the servants, as if they had been bred up together, in the same kitchen.

The bowl was brought, and soon emptied,

emptied, and so thoroughly had the whole company entered into the spirit of keeping it up, that there is no conjecturing with how many more good wishes the supposed nuptials would have been celebrated in flowing, indeed overflowing cups, had not the farmer, between the extremes of sleep, intoxication, forgetfulness, and memory, just found enough of the latter to tell the long-concealed intelligence, in nearly the substance he gave it to Dennison, attaching, however, many bitter epithets to the name of Sir Guise, and as many hyperbolical encomiums whenever that of Sir Armine was mentioned. It was not without many interruptions they heard him to the end of his tale, and, at last, they all fell upon him for keeping them so long ignorant of their honoured master's destiny: indeed had it not been for the protection of the women, the farmer, who made his escape under their auspices, would have paid dear for his good feasting and mental reservation of the ill tidings.

The detestation they bore to Sir Guise,
was

was now augmented tenfold; but the sentiment of rage they conceived for Miles, and more than all for David Otley, the betrayer of Family Secrets, surpassed all description. It could be equalled by nothing but their love, pity, and regret, for the fate of Sir Armine, on recollection of whose destiny, their late universal joy was changed into as universal sorrow, and they fought the now dismantled castle in the honest anguish of their souls. As the Fitzorton servants were entering the castle gates, they perceived the apostate Otley coming with his letter-box, out of the house, and suffering him to move a few paces, they beheld the ever-drooping Sir Guise, who was waiting near one of the out-houses to join him. The whole pack opened at once, calling out—"There they are!—there are the assassins of our dear, dear—perhaps dead master, escaped from prison! It is both law and justice to slay them—they ought to be torn piece-meal!" And piece-meal they would have been instantly torn, had the feet of rage been as

rapid as those of fear. The fugitives were however over-taken in the abbey-yard, and driven into the house bruised and beaten almost to death, as we have described.

The miserable and dastardly heart of Sir Guise, however, permitted him not to rest, even when he had withdrawn to his chamber, whither the filial Caroline conducted him, and administered with her own hand, every comfort that she was conscious he did not deserve, nor did she forget to dispatch a messenger for the family physician.

Sir Guise would have been best pleased, indeed, to have made his escape from the abbey, but as every body had now an eye upon him, and as the additional odium he incurred really rendered it unsafe for him to be seen abroad while his late unwarrantable assassination of a man universally beloved was recent in every memory, he foresaw that he would be better accommodated in his own house than even in that of Mrs. Tempest, as it was by no means certain what the popular madness might effect on the property of a woman or her
paramour,

paramour, or their agents, who were considered as instrumental in such villany. That the abbey, therefore, might be, while he was thus constrained to do penance in it, a place of tolerable captivity, he caused it to be given out that he felt himself so much indisposed, which was by accident the truth, that it would be necessary for him to keep his chamber, and even to avoid company, as he found it rather oppressive to speak.

His object herein was to escape his son Charles, the shot of whose angry eye he dared not encounter. But this did not avail him, for though it is true he was ill enough in body, and harassed enough in spirit, to keep his chamber, that very indisposition was a motive with the virtuous Caroline to attend him in his hour of languor; nay more, judging from the goodness of her own heart, that it would be a cordial to his—the most comfortable, indeed, he could receive—to see his darling son, this duteous daughter, by incessant intreaties, and filial arguments, contrived so far to pacify Charles, as to gain his assent to an interview

with his father; and that this supposed cordial might have the greater effect, she introduced Charles imperceptibly, dropping on her knee, at the instant of such introduction, asserting at the same time that the blessing of everlasting consciousness would attend him, if he offered the reconciling hand to his sick and unhappy father.

But though Caroline had done the very thing Sir Guise wished to have avoided, the latter dared not to shew any repugnance; he therefore attempted to make the best of a very bad matter. A tale was to be told, and a point gained thereby, which brooked not delay, and this appeared to him a favourable, at least, a possible, opportunity.

Thus, therefore, the Baronet began to manœuvre, "This is more than I expected—more, perhaps, than I deserve, my children; for you know not the extent of my offences. Great is your duty: I fear my imprudence, in one instance, goes beyond your power to forgive. Know that I have done a deed,—"—here a profound sigh,
most

most likely from his heart—"a deed!—how shall I speak of it?" Another pause and another sigh, heavy almost to groaning, and not less sincere. Caroline turned pale, and Arthur, who had followed Charles into the chamber, crossed himself. Charles trembled. "I say," resumed Sir Guise, "I have been for some time—*secretly*—because I knew it would displease my children—."

"In the name of God! what?" cried Charles.

"Married!" replied Sir Guise.

"Is that the offence?" quoth Arthur.

"To whom?" questioned Charles, in terror. "Since it must be known—nay, since this very house, which was in the hour of my weakness given to my widow for her life—and as being a woman of a high temper,—she may insist on residence—"

"This house!—a high temper!—insist on residence!—Do not distract me!" said Charles, "but speak."

"Whomsoever you have thought fit to make your wife, will of course deserve and receive

receive the respect of your children," said the trembling Caroline; "for Heaven's sake then, sir, make us acquainted with the name of the lady we are to consider as —as—as—"

The remembrance of her amiable mother impeded her utterance, and it was long before she could finish her question by repeating—"Whom, sir, are we to consider as Lady Stuart?"

"Mrs. TEMPEST," answered Sir Guise—He then took shelter from the rage that might be expected to follow such thunder-striking intelligence under the bed clothes, in which he so muffled himself, that had the astonishment and anger of Charles, and the consternation of Caroline and Arthur, been expressed with the voice of a lion, they could scarcely have been heard.

Caroline was stunned, and Arthur shocked, but both tried to pacify and reconcile Charles to this irremediable circumstance. "Accursed is he," observed the good monk, "who putteth asunder man and wife; and although it might be wished these persons

persons had never come together in holy matrimony, they were now bound by a divine obligation, and it behoved all persons—but a son and a daughter in particular—to——”

The good man was proceeding in his harangue, when a vehement clamour assailed the ears of the company, as of a person rushing up the stairs and exclaiming at every step—“ Where, where is he? I will be shut out of my own house no longer; tell not me of lieutenants or captains, or sons or daughters; are *their* claims superior to *mine*? Alas! too long have ye withheld him from me. I will see him though the congregated earth were to oppose me. Beat, bruised, and in bed! Good heaven!”

And now this vociferous personage, in despite of the remonstrances and almost the whole strength of Dennison, made a forcible entry into the chamber, flew to the bedside, caught hold of the sick man's hand, and in a violence which rather overacted the character, called out in all the rant of
dramatic

dramatic affectation, " My love! my life! my husband!"

The surprise of so sudden an appearance, attended by such concomitants, did not permit the company immediately to recognise the speaker; and the astonishment was as much increased as it could be, when at last they perceived the new Lady Stuart, who continued to perform her conjugal duties in the same magnanimous style, without seeming to know any third person was in the room. " How do you find yourself, my dear husband? Why did you suffer a false delicacy, perhaps, I may call it, an unkind fear of your children, so long to banish your wife? While you were well, I submitted to my hard destiny, and kept aloof, even immured; I bore the imputation of being a wicked woman, rather than subject you to censure from a son and daughter, who you taught me to believe would treat the woman to whom you gave your hand in holy wedlock, with undutiful severity; but now that I find that your
precious

precious health is in danger, I burst through all idle ceremonies, and setting the whole universe at nought, when in opposition to my love and duty, I am come to insist that you permit me to remain here, and to offer my share in your comforts. No; never, never will I quit this roof, this bed, this hand, till you promise to receive all the services I can give; no power on earth shall tear you from me! nor bolts, nor bars, nor chains of iron! I am your wife, Sir Guise, yes, Sir Guise, your wedded wife, your true and lawful lady, and who shall dare to bar her away? Destruction's in the thought!"

Next, with all possible condescension, she advanced towards Charles and Caroline, and made an offer to embrace them. Father Arthur, in the goodness of his heart, earnestly promoting it as a fit preliminary to that domestic harmony he so anxiously desired to see take place: "Embrace, my worthy friends, embrace one another."

Caroline was so tortured between one sensation and another, that half-willing and half-

half-reluctant, she was just stepping forward to own Mrs. Tempest as her father's second wife, when Charles forcibly pulled her back, grinding between his teeth something which, in the ears of the lady, sounded like the words—"Abandoned woman! touch her not."

"Abandoned!" repeated my Lady, in a thundering accent, which, did we not know the power of sudden rage, we should have thought rather too violent for a lady under her circumstances, "Abandoned!"

"Be not too severe upon the sinner," said Arthur: "I have not the least doubt but that now the lady is become the wife of a baronet, and is by this unexpected stroke of good fortune brought into a respectable family and innocent connections, which is more than she could reasonably have expected—she will not only quit for ever her former vile way of life, but be wrought to so thorough a sense of that decency and modesty which becomes her sex, the pure-minded Miss Stuart herself would

would not have any more reason to be ashamed of her."

A spectator, less interested in the scene than any of the parties then present, would have been variously amused at the winks and nods of Sir Guise, who now peeped from the bed-clothes, to keep down the strong spirit which he saw working in his Lady; and at his signs to Arthur, to hold his peace; but his bride disdained all considerations and consequences.

She raved, she stamped, and — SWORE! Yes, reader, she did actually swear, that Sir Guise was a poor cowardly fellow to take any pains to shew that he was master of his own house, hand, or fortune—that if he, however, was mean enough to be trampled upon by his own children, she, being now his wife, was determined, by the privileges and authority of the nuptial character, to assert herself, and that she was humiliated, disgraced, and ashamed to have given into her husband's miserable plots and creeping schemes to conceal his marriage, and bring his lawful wife into her own house—

house—"None of your winks to me, Guise—I say you were a poor mean-spirited man, and you ought to blush at all these pranks and fuffes, to do me justice;—get up, for shame get up—and don't play the fool any longer, prithee. And as for you, Mr. Impertinence,"—meaning Arthur,—“if Guise had the spirit of a butterfly, he would twist your old babbling tongue out of your mouth. Don't stand lifting up your eyes and hands at me, you superannuated, canting rascal; for if you do, woman as I am, you shall repent it, I promise you. In future, I desire your visits may cease at this house, sir. If my husband has not the soul to forbid you, *I do*; and unless I see better manners in that young gentleman, who is now swelling up in that manner, ready to burst with venom, the less he gives us of his company here, the better. As for the young Lady—don't cry, miss—you are the only decent young body in the house.”

Any attempt to describe the situation of the party, consequent on this harangue, would be presumptuous absurdity.

Arthur

Arthur, who first recovered speech, declared, after thrice crossing himself, that she was certainly the devil himself, sent into this world in female shape to punish Sir Guise, as a dreadful example to all wicked hypocrites, and that he did not doubt but her feet were cloven.

“ Would that my hands were so !” cried she, furiously aiming at him ; in a moment Lady Tempest, Arthur, Caroline, and Dennison, whom the clamour had brought into the room, were all employed. The first, without any respect of sex, acted the Amazon, and opposed force to force.

Caroline entreated, yet was so much struck, that her supplications were feeble, and she went weeping out of the room.

Dennison and Arthur drew off Charles by main force into another apartment ; and the whole business concluded by leaving Sir Guise and his Lady to a conjugal *tête-à-tête*, which was equally short and decisive. It was, however, a curiosity in its kind, and must therefore be recorded.

After

After a pause of some minutes, Sir Guise ventured to emerge.

“ Aye, you may creep out of your hole, poor trembling wretch—and a fine hand you have made of it. Did not I tell you so? You have nothing now but to die in good earnest.”

“ If you come to that, who was it that overset my plan? But for your damn’d unreasonable passion, and impetuous temper, I had brought you into the house, reconciled all parties to you, and we should have had the abbey to ourselves; for the old priest would have persuaded Charles and the girl to leave us—instead of which, I am now in a worse condition than ever.”

“ Whatever may be your condition, mine is that of a woman who has the misfortune to be married to a poltroon, who is afraid to defend himself, or avow his wife! However here I am, and here I will remain, let who will go or stay, live or die; d—n me if I don’t!”

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW LADY OF THE MANOR.

THE heroic lady having said this, she insisted upon Sir Guise's getting up and dressing himself, ill as he really was—"Yes, and give orders like *a man*," said his gentle lady, "to your servants for the proper reception of, and obedience to your wife." Her yet more gentle lord was too well experienced in his spouse's violences to dispute her commands, and his late miscarriages had so sunk his authority, even in his own eyes, that, instead of opposing to her the power of the supposed lord of the creation, he resigned himself, in the most slavish humility, to what censurers have called the weaker vessel—just adding, therefore, to his habiliments a pair of stockings and slippers, he rose out of his sick bed, and almost lamented, now, with his dear wife, that it had not proved his dying one. However, he shook himself, and his rumpled robes, two or three times on feeling himself once
more

more on *terra firma*, and actually reeled with weakness and affright. He had, moreover, suffered, from sheer dismay, his beard to grow to a great length: his hair had been long neglected, so that his face was pallid and cadaverous; and he exhibited, at the end of the scene, a haggard, rueful-looking wretch indeed.

Lady Stuart, for so, henceforth, though with the greatest reluctance, we are constrained by the rights of a *femme covert*, to call her, deemed this no fit moment of his bestirring himself to the ordering of her ladyship's arrangements, without any hope of obedience following command. She therefore rang the bell, and directed the servant who answered it, to send the valet with warm water, and the rest of the Adornishing paraphernalia, taking care to say it was for the immediate use of her *husband* Sir Guise, who, she said, was now well enough, thank God! to rise, and would soon be down stairs. Not any rumour of the baronet's marriage having reached the abbey kitchen, or indeed any part of the house,

house, the servant who received this message was scarce less the victim of astonishment than had been every body above stairs; for neither Charles, Arthur, or Denison had, as yet, revealed the fresh disgrace which the Baronet had brought into the family.

Yielding, therefore, to sudden surprise, the astonished domestick, who happened to be thus taken unawares, remained fixed at the wonderful word *husband*! Whereupon, the lady repeated the orders, with an emphasis so thoroughly convincing, that, if she was not the wife, she would henceforward let him know she was mistress of the house—the poor fellow took to his heels, scarce giving himself time, or finding breath to stammer out in his exit—“ye—ye—yes—yes—my—my—la—la—my mad—madam.”

A second delay happened in the servant's hall, where the lady-struck domestick no sooner arrived, than he threw himself into the steward's great chair, by way of recovering; after which he summoned every

adherent of the family, from the under-butler (Dennison being otherwise employed) to the under-scullion girl, prefacing the news he had to communicate by a solemn assurance, "that it would make every one of them run mad." Then, seeing their mouths all opened wide to swallow the threatened insanity, "Sir Guise is mar—mar—mar—married to—to—to—to that rascal Valentine Miles's con—con—concu—concubine! think of that, fellow-servants!—and has, more—moreover, brought his harlot of a wife into the house!" "Who?" asked the corps culinary. "Is she to be our mistress, and take the place of the good, virtuous, dear, dead and buried lady whom we all followed to the grave, with our hearts ready to break, and willing to do so that we *might* follow her?"

The grievous reflections which followed these questionary exclamations, produced so universal a groan of the spirit, that it re-echoed through all the dreary and subterraneous abodes, and ascended even to the central cupola of the abbey.

Meantime,

Meantime, Lady Stuart, exasperated at the delay in the performance of her first conjugal commands, resorted to the bell again, with a vehemence that broke part of the wires, and left the tassel in her hand. The incessant vibrations which preceded this accident had *more* than the desired effect, for it brought up, not only Sir Guise's valet, but Dennison and Caroline, who, from habits rather of duty than reflection of sentiment, now followed the idea of his being really at his last gasp. They were soon undeceived, by seeing Sir Guise walking backwards and forwards about the chamber, and his lady insisting that every body should go about their business, except her husband's valet. Seeing him amongst the crowd that had mechanically obeyed, she drew him towards her by the profuse neck-cloth and chitterling, calling him at the same time, "a creeping, lazy rascal;" flapping the door in the faces of the rest, who were thus agreeably repulsed, and were again left to their reflections on the prospect of domestick happiness.

In a word, their sorrows at the entrance of their new mistress into the abbey almost equalled that which they felt at the untimely exit of the first lady out of it. Indeed, the marriage of the one could be exceeded in calamity only by the burial of the other; and looking, as very truly they might, upon Sir Guise Stuart as the wicked cause of both misfortunes, the servants came, after some farther consultation amongst one another, to an honest resolve to save their character—that common necessary of a servant—by giving warning, before they could be supposed to have received any taint of corruption that might disqualify them for more reputable places. This combination being entered into with spirit, *nem. con.* many of the domesticks sacrificed their month's wages and took themselves away on the instant, others dropt off occasionally, and at the end of the month the kitchen was emptied down even to a poor limping dwarf, who acted under the scullion as a sort of human turnspit; but who, being assured that his good name, and of course his

his good bread, was in imminent danger, hopped away with his brown paper bundle of property, to save his reputation.

The first mover of all this was Robert Irwin the cook, and his wife, the dairy-woman. The troubled valet having finished his part of the business of disembruting his master, and certain other ablutions being performed, Sir Guise, in the course of two hours, was humanized, and the suits and ceremonies of sickness, pain and death, being thrown aside, though he had really suffered severely in body and in mind, he was still much better in health than any other of his family.

The unhappy Caroline and her brother passed some hours in the company of the good Arthur and the consoling Dennison, but they were in a state of misery too severe to decide what course to take.

Charles thought, in the present posture of affairs, it would be a right measure to expel the base intruder who had trepanned their father into marriage—but this was over-ruled both by Caroline and Arthur,

who insisted, that no man living could, with a safe conscience, divide man and wife, while they consented to live together.

Caroline proposed that the abbey should be left to the unhappy couple, and some place of escape be sought. Dennison held down his dejected head, and kissed their hands, with misery inferior only to their own; and the pious, gentle-hearted Arthur called upon the protection of that Power he adored so truly, and wept aloud; after which, circling his arms around them, as if to afford a shelter, he cried out, "There is a good and just Providence, my children, who will take care of us **all**. Ye may sojourn at the chapel-house, my children, for a few days, till we see what is best to be done. There is room for four quiet people who love each other; I include friend Dennison in the number—yes, there is space enough to be happy, and though we fare not as the dwellers at the abbey, in what are called the good things of life, we shall there escape abundance of the worst, the strife and discontent, which will surely
be

be found amongst the inmates of those we leave behind us in this lordly mansion—and as to attendants, fear not our being tolerably served. I am myself not a bad cook, and my Indian boy is both diligent and knowing.”

“As to that matter,” quoth Dennison, seeming as if suddenly to have recovered his youth, “my young lady and master and your reverence can tell I can bestir myself upon occasion, and do not doubt but I shall have every thing prepared in the little chapel-house and in such good order, that the old furniture shall give a shining welcome, before we have been twenty-four hours its inhabitants.”

While they were discoursing thus, a servant brought down word from the new mistress of the house, that Sir Guise and her Ladyship desired to dine privately that day, and to pass the evening by themselves, previous to certain family arrangements which they intended in future to make, and which, when properly digested, should be presented to them, to the end, that, what-

ever rules the *principal* thought fit to lay down, might be adopted, and pass unquestioned into domestick laws. Charles and Caroline were therefore to give orders for themselves.

This imperious message, which every one of the family servants refused to carry, was brought by one of her Ladyship's own domesticks, who, within the last hour, had called with dispatches from Valentine Miles.

Father Arthur, imposing silence on Charles, returned for answer, that neither he, nor his children, for so he often called Charles and Caroline, were surprized at the desire expressed by Sir Guise to keep out of sight, and that it was probable certain arrangements below stairs—meaning those of his own party at the chapel-house—would take place before those in agitation above; he, for his part, would advise them to turn their studies from the laws of eating and drinking to those of fasting and prayer, and all the other laws instituted and appointed for the use and performance of wicked sinners who were desirous to be saved.

The servant was scarce departed, before the monk presented one hand to Caroline, the other to Charles, beckoning Dennison, with a smile, to bring up the rear.

“Come, my dear children, let us remove with all convenient dispatch out of the habitation of guilt, misery, and hardened insolence, and seek refuge in that decent, unobtrusive abode, where peace, honour, innocence, and the merits of a life pure and undefiled, await to receive us.”

This proposition was accepted by Charles, because he felt that his longer continuance at the abbey would probably be attended by events too dire to name; by Caroline, because her poor heart was bowed by sorrows too manifold and mighty to resist or to make any election for herself; and by Dennison, because the good old man, as he lived at the abbey only to be of service to his young lady and master, so wished to pass the residue of his blameless days wheresoever their fate or fortune, their happiness or misery, should carry them. Orders being, therefore, given to Charles’s

man and Caroline's woman to pack up, and bring their different trunks and other baggage after them—they set out in the manner above described, for their small but comfortable dwelling.

They had gone about half way, when Caroline stopped suddenly, and declared she had left something, which none of the keys given to her woman could disclose, and which as none but herself could find, she must beg the delay of a few minutes while she returned for it, observing that she should be wretched in the extreme to know it was in the abbey after her banishment! Without waiting any reply, she ran back as fast as her delicate limbs could carry her, and in about a quarter of an hour returned, breathless, and bathed in tears, yet with a smiling countenance, declaring, that she was much easier for what she had brought out of the house, though she had the misfortune to meet the strange lady in her way, and heard her ask somebody, just as she entered, whether Miss too was of the run-away party? “ Yet, do not think, my
6 dear

dear Charles, it was an improper or trifling errand that could make me detain you thus long on the road. No; it was for what my brother will esteem no less than myself—this precious—precious picture of her—who—O! my God! what a change! what an alteration has this second marriage made in that abbey, which could once boast of the angel whom this little miniature—in her mortality, scarcely mortal—resembled! and on whose honoured head these tresses once grew!”

Turning the picture——she exclaimed, “O! my ever beloved and ever lamented mother! how wilt thou forgive him this last, this greatest of his offences?”

As if jealous and fearful of again parting with it, even for a moment, and to a loving brother, who yet seemed wishing to pay it homage, she took it from her own lips warmed with the sensations of her filial heart, and pressed it upon his: while Arthur, who never suffered the mourner to sorrow alone when he was at hand, broke forth into those moving sentiments of Hamlet

so truly applying to the present picture ;

“ That it should come to this ! ”

These and other reflections, in the same train of solemn thought, were interrupted, just as the little chapel-house appeared in view. It was opened by Irwin the cook, the footmen, and all the maid and men servants of the family, who, understanding from the young lady's woman, left in care of the baggage, that Charles and his sister, with the old steward, were leaving the abbey, and as the woman told them, never to return, but to live at the chapel-house till they could suit themselves, had come, in a body, like volunteers, to offer their poor but honest services to their honoured young master and mistress. They protested their humble love and duty with a fervour that denoted their sincerity. “ For that matter, we had all of us,” exclaimed Irwin, “ resolved amongst ourselves, to leave our present place before we knew of your worthy honours quitting the abbey ; but now we have nothing left there to make

us amends for what we suffer—our poor, dear, true, and virtuous Lady Stuart is dead and gone, and another woman, not fit to be named with her, or with any Christian woman, is put into our poor Lady's place, the abbey is no abbey for us, and we will not stay to do another hand's turn! So pray, good, dear your honours, let us follow and abide with you, go where you may. Do, your Reverence, and Mr. Dennison," continued Irwin, "speak a word for us—pray, pray do, and bid young my Lady and the 'Squire consider, that we were all in the family when the true Lady Stuart was alive, and followed her to the grave when she was dead, and we are sure her soul would not rest in heaven, where for certain it is gone, if she knew the doings that were now at the abbey, and that her poor old servants staid in the house when her blessed son and daughter were in a manner turned out of it."

The voice of natural eloquence seldom pleads in vain, for it generally is exerted in the cause of genuine and unaffected goodness.

ness. This unexpected appeal, however, produced some generous embarrassment. The affections were strongly touched, but as the little chapel-house was literally to be the resting place, such a retinue would be inconsistent with their decent and unobtrusive plan of life; father Arthur, therefore, putting on the arch smile which reconciled every thing in a moment, observed, that the chapel itself would be barely sufficient to the purposes of the accommodation of his own little family, though he would readily give up his monk's bed to them, as a reward for the honourable feelings which must have dictated their offer of services. "And me would give mine, masser," cried Floresco, his Indian boy, who had joined the company as he saw them gathered together—"yes, masser, me would give my ickle bed, and make up anoder wis my warm blankey and shawl, I brought out of my country, if masser will let good hearts peoples come and live wis us, and we'll be so merry and so glad."

"Aye, my noble child of the sun, which,
I see,

I see, has taught your heart to glow like his own beams, but here is a whole congregation you see.”—

Charles was greatly moved, Caroline experienced emotions peculiar to her character—they were composed of the tenderness of her heart and the firmness of her soul—and she settled the business, by assuring the petitioners, that if they went back to the abbey, and gave proper notice of their intentions to quit their service, but without entering into any improper explanations, so that all might be done with decency and order, they would probably find her at the chapel-house; at least obtain her address there, should she have left it; and they might depend on her best services and those of her brother to settle them reputably and comfortably in new situations. Father Arthur, Charles, and Dennison, giving their fullest sanction to this measure, the groupe were persuaded to turn back, after receiving the honour to shake the hand of the gentleman, and to kiss that of the young lady.

CHAPTER V.

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

THE assiduous Floresco opened the chapel-house door; and Arthur, who to the gravity of a monk adjoined the courtesy of a man fashioned by courts, with a hospitable smile gave that smile in welcome, and by the endearing names of friends and children, had entreated his little train to enter in and be at peace.

But one of the domesticks returned in haste, and presented a little packet to Caroline: "I fancy, miss, this must have been dropt by your Ladyship, as this slip of a card was found with it, and William the footman, who is a scholar, says he knows it is a *peigram* or *cross stick*, which means rhyming verses made upon letters in ladies' names, or some such *gonundrum*; and see, miss, it begins with C, and ends, lookee, with E, which William says makes out Caroline, which to be sure is your Ladyship, God bless you, and please your honour;

honour; there it is, miss—and I will now go to fellow-servants, who are a waiting for me o' the wood-side."

Caroline had begun to outglow the ribband that bound the packet, as soon as she saw it, and the hue of confession increased and spread to such a degree before the servant had done speaking, that when she received it, her whole frame attested it was a matter of great importance, coming at such a moment: "'Tis nothing but a—nothing," said she, "but a—small—little bit—of—paper—and—and—a—kind of—and—a—which you,—brother,—you know—desired me—to—to—to take care of for you."

As Caroline's head, heart, and voice, confederated to betray, were all fluttering at once, the discovery of her situation was threefold; for while her delicate fingers were, as she thought, tightening the ribband round the paper, they, in reality, were loosening it at every turn, and being thus detached, a little engine of mighty power, in cases of affection, known by the name of a locket,

a locket, dropt from the paper, and was caught on its way to the ground by Charles, who instantly recognised what it was, to whom it belonged, and from whence it came.

That the reader may be in the secret also, he is to understand, that this locket, containing a braid of Henry's hair, was, in the happier days of Henry and Caroline's intercourse, and yet when there had happened one of those slight yet delicious differences which sweeten agreement, given to their mutual friend Charles; to the end that it should find its way, by that medium, into Caroline's bosom, where the kind Charles took care it should repose shortly after; and he watched his opportunity so well, that he procured for it that enviable resting-place in the course of the very day it was presented, and could it have known its happiness, "right proud would it have been of its lodging." It was a token of reconciliation; and as Caroline, then under the influence of those hopes, which an innocent passion, and the first of the heart, believed,

believed, as all lovers do, every thing possible, or more truly speaking to the sweet extravagance of the affections, impossibilities probable, she *looked a vow* as she tied that very riband round her neck, which had lately bound the paper, then fastened to the locket, that neither time, nor chance, nor aught but the dissolving power of death, should rob her of that talismanic offering.

A cruel combination of circumstances, inexorable as death itself, ever since that fatal hour, which extinguished every tender hope, had made her take it, with a trembling hand, from its lovely mansion: Yet tenderness like her's survives even the extinction of hope, and manifests itself, perhaps most firmly, in the moments of despair. Her ultimate design was to return it by the medium she received it; in the meantime she looked upon it as a sacred property in trust, and deemed it worthy a place in the little sanctuary where her mother's picture and other reliques of the heart were deposited. Nay, she had carefully put them not only into the same drawer,

drawer, but bound them together in the same paper, as fit companions for each other, separating them only since she brought them from the abbey, perhaps to avoid the discovery, which, putting them as she supposed in different pockets, produced.

As the locket remained in the hand of Charles, Caroline cast a look first upon it, and then upon her brother, which was clearly understood by both; and perhaps by the whole company, to imply, "Alas! It is ours no longer. It is the property of Olivia, and must be resigned to the donor, with a secret injunction, to remember the friendship of Charles, but to forget the love of Caroline!" Some such sympathy must have struck the brother and sister at this crisis, for, as if suffering on the same sentiment, they ran into each other's embraces, consoling and commiserating one another.

Arthur saw the dilemma was of a singular kind, but had yet no clear idea of its cause: Charles, unwilling to deprive his sister of
the

the locket, and Caroline reluctant to part with, yet resolved not to keep it longer in her possession, a train of objections having by this time mustered themselves; Arthur exclaimed, "My dear children, entrust this to my charge, till it suits with the time to reclaim or restore it. It shall be preserved as a relique of innocence, sensibility, and adversity; the severe, but salutary school in which those gifts of heaven are best taught."

Thus have we seen the gentle Caroline, earnest in the preservation of a small unornamented miniature of her mother, and of a simple braid of Henry's hair, and to rescue them from the sacrilege of that plunder which might be expected from the new Lady Stuart; and, in short, jealous of her care of her two precious trifles of nothing worth to the unfeeling heart, while she abandoned her pearls, jewels, and other attractive ornaments, which have charms for many of her sex, without bestowing a thought on what might become of them; and this would have been the case had every
drawer

drawer been filled with the gems of 'Golconda.

And now they all entered the chapel-house, where, by the soothing attentions of Dennison, father Arthur, and his good little "white-hearted blackamoor," as he used to call him, in the course of the evening they recovered a more considerable portion of their tranquillity, in the habitation of a poor monk, than could have been expected in the apartments of the lofty mansion, from whose vicious influence their virtue had escaped.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST HOUR.

THEY had remained at the chapel-house some days, and, by the mingled powers of sympathy, holy friendship, and unaffected communications with the Author of comfort, by the medium of his zealous and upright minister father Arthur, had found relief, when one evening, just

as they had finished a twilight conversation, the purport of which was their yet-undetermined scheme of life, the bell of death, from the church of Fitzorton, assailed their ears. They had rather looked than expressed apprehensions, when, alas! fresh trials of their fortitude arose.

True George, with a countenance like that which drew “old Priam’s curtain in the dead of night,” came charged with a letter to Charles, containing the following words—

“O Charles! my father is no more!—His soul has taken with him to heaven my oath—an oath ratified by my lips on the book of life, and given in the dying moment of the best of fathers—to become the husband of Olivia. Yes, dear, unhappy one! to marry her, so soon as the decent forms of sepulture will permit. My rebel heart delayed giving this fatal bond till he appeared to be in the last extremity. I could not endure to embitter a period so agonizing and awful. I gave up myself, you, and even Caroline, to the ease of an
expiring

expiring parent. Alas! my friend, the Author of my being spoke to me, methought, on the border of eternity: he appeared to me, then, scarcely an inhabitant of this earth, and the voice with which he implored a son to bless a dying father, sounded as if it came from heaven. Trembling, I gave the fatal affirmation;—I dared, in that deep moment of lacerated nature, in which my soul seemed, like Sir Armine's, prepared to leave this world, and all its hopes and fears—I dared to promise that I would give my prostitute hand to the beloved of my friend, and prove a traitor to my heart's former vows to ———. Oh! fill up the space with the name of one precious to thy friend as Olivia is to thee; and tell me how this double duty, or this double violation—this infidelity to one, and hypocrisy to another—an hypocrisy, too, which is to last for life,—ah! it may be a long, miserable, mournful life—are to be reconciled! To you only I can, I dare appeal. John is more awful than ———. Forget that thou art the son of Sir Guise Stuart,
and

and speak to me as the friend of my youth, the partner of my few joys, the deposit of my many sorrows. Dying, my father separated your name from the name of him that gave it you; and requested the good Charles might be told he knew how to love and pity him. Olivia too, dear, unsuspecting girl, then kneeling at the side of his bed, intreated he would extend his blessing, his pity, and his love, to one no less deserving of them.—‘O thou best of innocents,’ cried Sir Armine, pressing her soliciting hands to his quivering lip, and casting at me a look which my bleeding heart interpreted, ‘I do bequeath Caroline Stuart all thou requirest, and, next to thyself, the report of her virtues are nearest to me. Circumstances, my dear child, may so fall out—for the world I am leaving teems with hourly revolution—that one day thou mayest contrive to impart to her my benediction without pain to thyself or others.’ O thou recently departed spirit of my dear father! intercede with thy now associate angels; yea, with thy God, to infuse new

love into my heart; or, with that Fountain of Love, to release me from an oath which falsifies the passion that feeds upon my life! —O! my friend, the tyranny of Olivia's virtues oppresses me almost to madness. They touch me with enthusiasm—they animate my whole frame,—they throb at every pulse, and every nerve of my soul attests their power. But the heart, my friend, the heart, in the midst of all this, is cold, insensible, uninfluenced, uninspired. Alas! it is another's!—Behold me at once the victim of gratitude and love.

“To detail the scenes I have past since last I wrote would be impossible. How shall I commit my dear father's body to the grave? The bell at this moment tells the rich, the poor, and all who have heard his name, and felt the influence of his virtues, that their companion, benefactor, patron, and common parent, is this very night to be closed in the cold vault.

“A cruel accident was the immediate cause of his death! But Sir Guise—O that he were not the father of my friend! I will

add no more!—Olivia, my agonized brothers, my afflicted James, and the subdued John, death-like in looks, as in silence, yet soft as love when those looks are directed to us; and Partington, forgetful of all his singularities, and weeping like a stricken babe, are gathered together around the venerable corpse, surveying his lifeless face.

“Just as I was about to quit the room, I thought I beheld the smile which my, alas! extorted obedience impressed on every feature, and made him die happy. I write in this desolate hour to save myself from, perhaps, greater desolation. My brothers, preserve their senses. The sound of the hammer that closed the coffin almost unsettled my senses. Methinks I could at this moment lay myself at my dead father’s side, and clasping his clay-cold hand, be buried alive, as well from filial affection, as to end this anarchy of my brain.

“O God! I am summoned to attend the herse. — Olivia, with fainted voice and solemn steps, bids me remember my father

is in heaven—she bids me be resigned, with her eyes swimming in tears.—My father is in heaven! His sacred body carrying out of the house—never, never to return! I feel greatly disordered. Olivia wonders at my delay, and at my employment; she little suspects I had, perhaps, been dead ere this, had I not thus relieved my bursting heart!”

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

EVERY passion of his friend's soul was aroused by the perusal of this letter; which having read, he put into the trembling hand of his sister, exclaiming, “Our ordeal is not yet over—Sir Armine Fitzorton is passing from the castle to the tomb.”

He then conferred apart with the bearer of the letter, and informed Arthur and Dennison with the contents; while Caroline was left the victim of some indescribable emotions, excited by every sentence—for every

every sentence had its appropriate pang.—She often paused, and every pause was filled with the dismal bell that still rang out for the father of her soul-beloved Henry. The night was dark and the air was still, so that not a vibration of the lengthening toll was lost. There is in solemn and sudden sounds an awe-inspiring power, which suspends, for a time, the more clamorous fallies of grief.—Caroline having finished the letter, stood fixed as in profound thought. She then intreated to be left alone with her brother, while Dennison and Arthur disposed of True George. She walked with Charles by the light of the moon, and, insensibly taking the path which led from the chapel-house to the chapel, she stopped at the porch of the latter.

“Sole support of our fallen family!” said she, “and only hope of an unhappy sister! honour me in this heart-searching crisis of both our lives with your attention. We are called upon by every solemn appeal to shew ourselves not wholly degenerate. Deep are the atonements which we owe to

that ill-treated family, now mourning their irreparable loss; and deep are the sacrifices which we must make. Alas! that piercing note of death, which sends its sound from the church of Fitzorton to the chapel of Stuart, informs us that all we can offer up will fall short of the ruin which our unhappy father has contributed, I fear, to produce."

There was a pause of a minute, and Charles said, "Yes, there is much to be done. Ah, my sister! many are the victims now demanded.—You and I are of the number.—I know the nature of the duty, but fear"—"Fear nothing," interposed Caroline. "It is not heroism we must invoke, it is honour and justice, whose aid will do more for us than all that fabled deities have devised. My part is already decided, your's should be so too. We have long been, and are still, the grand impediments in the way of Henry Fitzorton's duty; yet hitherto we have been only unfortunate. All beyond the present hour would be guilt."

"Alas!"

“Alas!” answered Charles, “must we resign Henry to Olivia for ever?”—“We must,” rejoined Caroline, “do some act that may prove to Henry the utter impossibility of an union elsewhere. This part is mine, and can be done only in one way—and that I will pursue——A life devoted to the God that gave it, ought never, my dear Charles, to be thought a sacrifice, not even in the blossom of youth and happiness; but when there is not a single joy left in the bereaved heart—when every aching sense bears throbbing witness of hopeless destitution; a secluded state, employed in holy offices, is not only a refuge from present despair, but will gradually oblivate the past disappointment, and light up in the soul sublime hopes that shall irradiate the future. To-morrow, I will consult the good father Arthur, and *my* part of reply to that letter shall be the communication of a resolve, which Henry Fitzorton knows I will not enter upon lightly, nor violate, when adopted, for the wealth of all created worlds, though every star which

is now glowing above our heads were a globe of gems. With Caroline he would be wretched; with Olivia he cannot long be unhappy.

“We are within a few paces of our dear mother’s tomb, and by the sacred ashes it contains, and O! an oath more holy, by her sainted spirit, which is above, I have here unfolded my intents, and expect you will not obstruct me in their performance. Obstruct! no, my dearest Charles, you will confirm your sister in the performance of her duty—for whom of all her house has she now but thee, my brother?”

“Caroline!” replied Charles, “you *shall* be assisted, and though a monastick life is no fit refuge for a *soldier*, I will not be left behind you in becoming a self-devoted victim. As my tenderness for Olivia is not surpassed by that you have felt for Henry, neither shall my resignation be inferior.”

“*Have* felt!” exclaimed Caroline.—
“Ah, you are yet to know the extent of your poor sister’s affection and despair.—My youth has been a series of heart-breaking
ing

ing duties, and this last is—not the most easy to be borne, but borne it *shall* be! HAVE felt! O God, that seeest and searchest the heart—thou knowest, at this moment, the bleeding sensibility of mine! I blush not, O thou that hast adorned the being I love with every virtue of the human heart, and every grace of the human form! I blush not before thee to avow the affection which thou hast thyself inspired; and I withdraw myself, under thy assistance, only to promote his good, prevent the evil which my abiding longer in his sight would bring upon him, and, in the humble hope that my unceasing prayers for his temporal and eternal happiness will be heard.”

During this ejaculation, Charles paid the tribute of a tear to the virtuous distress of a sister, of whom his heart was proud, and of whom he determined to prove himself worthy. He interrupted not her pious rhapsody, but when she had ended it, gently pressed her hand, as they walked on, silently meditating the important task they had undertaken. The moon suddenly be-

came clouded, yet they continued to walk arm wreathed in arm, as if to bring their designs into arrangement.

They were in that profound occupation of the mind, whereof the body has no share, when their feet had wandered from the track, and followed a direct contray path; they found themselves, at length, in that which led to Fitzorton church. The moment that succeeded this discovery, presented to their view the solemn light of funeral torches, and ere they were aware of it, they perceived themselves at the gate of the church-yard, where the hearse had stopped, and its sacred deposit, Sir Armine's corpse, was just lifted on the shoulders of six of his servants, as he had ordered. "O gracious Heaven!" whispered Caroline; "whither, Charles, have our devious steps beguiled us? Alas! to the grave of Sir Armine."—"Even so," answered Charles, retreating some few paces. They hastily walked into a remote path of the church-yard, while the procession kept its way to the burial-place of the Fitzortons. "Ah
"God!"

"God!" exclaimed Caroline to Charles, "I discover Henry amongst the mourners." "And there, close at his side," replied Charles, "is Olivia, supporting her weeping father with one hand, and receiving the support of Henry with the other, leaning for his help."—In one moment they both forgot they had been making resolutions.

As the bearers gained the porch of the church, and the multitude followed in decent sorrow, Charles and Caroline passed in the train undistinguished, and were as sincere mourners as any of the assembly. They felt themselves involved in the public calamity, to which they had still their suspicions that their own father had been accessory. Holding down their humiliated heads from the opposite pressures of grief, shame, and fear of discovery, they went with the lamenting multitude into the church. Forgetting all modes of faith, they joined with the fervour of devotion in that sublime form of prayer appointed in the protestant service for the burial of the dead.

The widowed matron, the venerable

Clare, the sweet and mourning Olivia, and the three heart-united brothers, were arranged on one side of the body; Partington with the whole family of the poor Atwoods on the other. The household servants, the gentry of the neighbourhood, and all the tradesmen and tenants of the deceased, were gathered into distinct groupes within view of the coffin, and a mixed multitude filled not only every other part of the church, but the church-yard, so that every grave and tomb-stone was loaded with living spectators.

The vault of the Fitzortons lay in the eastern side of the church, bordering the steps of the altar. The coffin was slowly moving towards it, when Caroline, carried forcibly along by the press of the too eager multitude, lost the hitherto protecting arm of her brother, and was driven forward even within sight of the chief mourners. The solemn resignation of dust to dust was at this instant pronouncing by the priest; the sexton proceeded to close the vault, and the assembly dispersed—Henry remained—

“ Stop,

“ Stop, for pity’s sake, stop one moment,” exclaimed he ; “ disregard me not, good friends, but as you honoured the dead, and love the living, I conjure you to leave me to myself.”—Then finding himself obeyed, and the sexton suspending his office, he kneeled down, bowing his head to the vault, and clasping his hands forcibly together, remained mute. Olivia and Lady Fitzorton, overwhelmed by excess of grief, had been led away by Partington and Mr. Clare, from the scene they could no longer support.

An action so characteristick of the enthusiasm of Henry had a too powerful effect on Caroline, whose tenderness and terror of heart proved, in this one instance, too powerful for the firmness of her soul. She sprang forward, exclaiming, “ O God ! O God !” as she pronounced which words she perceived Henry Fitzorton. He started at the well-known sound of her voice, and caught her in his arms. Her face being concealed by her posture, and most of the congregation being by this time dispersed,
and

and in disorder, little notice was taken by the sexton of a circumstance which might naturally happen at a funeral in two of the supposed same family. After Henry and Caroline, both deprived of utterance, had been in this situation the space of a minute, Charles, who had followed Olivia unseen, only for the melancholy satisfaction of a last look, came up, and finding Caroline in the attitude above described, kneeled down by the side of his sister and friend, and, in a suppressed voice, exclaimed, "O heaven! Is it possible? whom do I see? Caroline and Henry!"

Charles took Caroline by the hand, and they walked out of the church by the chancel door, escaping thus the general observation. Henry followed, and did not speak till they had reached the grand avenue of afflicting memory, and which led equally to the abbey and castle. "I know not," said Caroline, "how to account for this, otherwise than an event brought about without the consent, or, I might almost say, the knowledge of either me or my brother.

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The wisdom of Providence worked by ways inscrutable. The story of our wanderings at this awful hour is unnecessary to mention, but deeming it of heavenly direction, I shall use it to acknowledge that your letter found its way into our souls, and that it is our joint desire and supplication that you observe your oath, and obey your father and your God."

Caroline trembled as she spoke; the effort to be firm, and to recover herself, did but the more plainly shew the excesses of her agitation.

Henry looked at Charles, who tenderly taking his hand, entered into a brief explanation of all that had passed in their discourse at the porch of the chapel, which preceded their meeting at the funeral. He ended with the determination of his sister, if the monk approved. "And for my part," added Charles, "I have come to resolves which will render it no less impossible for me to obstruct your union with Olivia, whom it is my solemn intreaty"—here Charles paused—"my solemn intreaty

treaty—alas! my earnest supplication—that you should—O! Henry, Henry—you know the rest.” Caroline, in a state of equal trouble, undertook to apologize for her brother’s want of words to express the act on which he was not the less resolved—and endeavouring to make up the deficiency, she fell into language so incoherent, obstructed, and inaudible, that relieving herself by a violent burst of tears, she declared it was a subject which defied the power of words, and depended on deeds only—what those deeds were to be, had been in part explained; and this, alas! was no time to enlarge.

“Brother,” said Caroline, “we must cross yonder part of the forest to the chapel.”

“And not one token of eternal remembrance, at an eternal parting!” cried Henry, whom extremity of sensation had hitherto kept silent. “Remembrance!” replied Caroline, “O! it shall, it must be indeed eternal. Dearest and best of men! farewell—farewell—for ever!” Caroline turned away her head.

Charles

Charles spoke not, but clung round Henry's neck. Nature could carry the sensation no farther. They separated in dreadful silence; Henry taking the road to the castle, and the brother and sister returned to the chapel-house.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSEQUENT REFLECTIONS.

THEY had scarce reached the forest path, when they saw a light advancing towards them, and heard the sound of voices which they knew to proceed from Dennison and father Arthur. "My dear children, exclaimed the latter, running towards them, "you have alarmed us by your untimely absence; whither have you been wandering?" "Explanations must be deferred," said Charles; "let us make the best of our way to the chapel-house, for our minds and bodies equally demand repose." — "Lend Charles your arm, my good Dennison,

Dennison, and mine shall be the support of this dear young lady," cried Arthur, "and I command you both not to add to your fatigues by another word till we regain our peace-restoring abode; and then you shall silently partake of the refreshment we have prepared for you, and the word *farewel* shall be all that passes between us till the morning."

This truly excellent monk was, on the next day, made acquainted with all that had happened—from the conversation at the chapel-house to the rencontre at the church.

"I see, I see the Almighty hand in it all," said Arthur. "By what unsearchable means is the will of heaven fulfilled! Your resolves are the result of virtue, strongly proved, and for every tear you shed in her cause, a smile from that heaven shall await you. Your temporal sufferings have been indeed extreme, but eternity is before you, and I foresee, with a prophet's eye, that even in this world you shall have an earnest of your reward in that which is to come. Nay, you have it at this hour, my children.

Look

Look into your own pure hearts, and tell me, if you would change the conscious reflections which are there lodged, for all that is heaping up in the breasts of those who now inhabit the abbey? Is your loss infinite? So shall be your gain. He who trieth the very heart and reins hath tried you; but O! my dear, dear children, he hath examined and proved you, and made your way acceptable to him. What a consolation! what a victory! to be acquitted with honour by—nay to claim the approbation of, your conscience and your God! Tell me, doth it not deprive adversity of her sting, enlarge every generous affection of the soul, and crush every selfish thought? It doth, it doth, my children, and it will give to returning prosperity, come when it may, more delightful charms! and besides extracting thorns from the present, shall confer more sweets than the perfume of the flowers of Paradise on the future. Yes, my children, when you rest this night on your pillow, if your eyes should overflow at the retrospect of your sufferings and disappointments,

ments, reflect but for one moment that you have gained the applause of him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and you will slumber in peace and wake in triumph."

There was no professional pedantry, no unmeaning priestcraft in the character of father Arthur. He seldom held down his friends to long dissertations; but when he did assert the dignity of his office, his eloquence touched at once the understanding, the fancy, and the heart: while he spoke, the tumultuous passions seemed to die away, and the hearer thought it folly and delusion to disquiet himself about any pursuits less exalted than those which fill up the highest capacities of our nature. From his venerable lips the auditor became intimate with the lofty character of his being, and the sublime ends of his mind; the passions were purified, the desires elevated, and every faculty of the soul assumed new energy and extent, as he painted the joys of conscience, and the bright recompence of the crown that "passeth not away."

Such reasonings are not lost on worthy minds;

minds; they had their effect on Charles and Caroline, who appeared on the following day endued with new vigour to conduct them with patience and honour through the strong duties they had to perform.

The admonition of father Arthur, respecting the affair of the convent, was consistent with the wisdom and goodness that pervaded his councils; and after a private conference with Caroline, whom he prevailed upon to put the entire management of the business, such as seeking out a fit place for her reception, and fit associations, where and with whom to begin her pious offices, he convened his little auditory, consisting of Caroline and Charles, Dennison and his Indian boy, and smiling upon them, begged their attention to a few observations which pressed on his mind, in a survey he had taken of the late occurrences.

“ My dear children and friends,” said he, “ it is worthy your notice, that in the petty space of a few weeks have fallen out a variety of events, which must sink deep into the reflecting mind. In the degradation

tion of Sir Guise Stuart, and in the circumstances that preceded and followed it, we have seen the pageantry of power, and the pride of fortune, unable to shield the hypocrite—pardon me for the use of strong words to paint strong truths—the hypocrite, I say, from detection, misery, and shame; we have seen him deserted by his own servants. They fled from the contagion of vice to the protection of virtue; they left with an honest disdain the lordly mansion, and sought the cottage of piety and resignation. My dear children, doth not this point out the sublime authority and protection of virtue, even when she is depressed by misfortunes, and bowed down with or rather elevated by sorrows? At the least fear of Sir Armine's danger, did not the attesting country manifest in its woe the inestimable value of a good man's life? Did not the heart-swoln grief of friends, neighbours, children, illustrate the importance and the majesty of virtue? And when it pleased him who liveth from eternity to eternity, to call the good man to
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the inheritance of the just, did it not seem, by the attendance, the tears, the groans, of the countless multitude, as if each spectator was following a father to the grave; did not you yourselves feel as if you were *his* children?"

"O that it had pleased Heaven to have made us such!" exclaimed Charles. The tears of Caroline began to flow; the hoary cheek of Dennison was not dry, and the Indian child of nature crowded close to Arthur, touched his robe with pious awe, and doubted whether man or angel had spoken.

"But," resumed Arthur, "when it was but rumoured that Sir Guise was on the bed of death, did it not rather seem to be the approach of some happy and unexpected revolution in favour of mankind, at but the distant prospect of being emancipated from some despotick tyrant, whose life was obnoxious, and whose dissolution was implored? And had *his* death followed, is there a sigh which would have been heaved, save those of mercy and terror for his departing soul, or a tear shed by one of all the congratulating

congratulating thousands on his herse?"

"O yes, a thousand sighs—a thousand tears," exclaimed Caroline, sighing and weeping in proof.—"My dearest child," rejoined Arthur, taking her hand, "pardon my having forcibly touched a wounding subject; the All-good is of long patience, and of eternal kindness! thy father may yet be preserved as an example of penitence, as constant as his crimes have hitherto been lasting."

Caroline dropt on her knee, elevating her hands, and seemed to offer up a prayer which these cheering words had excited in her soul. Dennison and Charles lifted their eyes to heaven, and the Indian boy raised up Caroline, saying, "Young lady was so pretty and so good, that God would make her father good yet for *her* sake."

"We have seen too in ourselves, my children," concluded Arthur, "the upright finding favour and honour, followed by the prayers of the living, nay the persecutors themselves, in despite of the inveteracy of habit, or natural hardness of heart, feel the
awful

awful powers of persisting innocence; and, perhaps, the deepest resentment of the bad against the good arises from a consciousness that even the happiest triumphs of vice are less to be envied than the miseries of suffering virtue, which we are told, and blessed be the great Rewarder, we *know*, “Is but more relished as the more distressed.”—Witness for me, O recompensing Power! how sincerely I weep at the griefs of this afflicted brother and sister! How my heart glows at the fidelity of this good old man, how it beats with a paternal kindness towards this poor artless youth, whose untutored mind is filled with natural goodness! Witness all this! and witness at the same time, that I experience more soul-felt satisfaction in suffering with them, in affording them my humble protection and encouragement, in shewing to this enlightened pair the benevolence of heaven *made manifest even in their adversity*, in pointing to the sure rewards that await this venerable man, and in opening upon the dawning reason of this boy those sublime truths which may

convince him not only that his God is ‘to be seen in clouds and heard in winds,’ but that his creative, protective, and sustaining power, embraces all climes and encircles all nature; and lastly, that whatever may be the distinctions of partial man, the Maker of us all acts under influence of no such prejudices—but attending only to the complexion of the heart, hath allotted a place of happiness and glory to all that wear the forms of men, whether born under the blaze of the sun or placed beyond the reach of his beams!”

While father Arthur made this apostrophe, his eyes sparkled, his cheeks glowed, and the sincerity of his heart was visible in his features.

“Masser,” said Floresco, “me could hear you talk all times, and me am better boy, and better good christian black every time, and me shall go to good place like white man, and live all times with good peoples and good masser, and be in God’s heaven, though negro boy!”

CHAPTER IX.

AN OLD MAN'S AMITY; A YOUNG ONE'S
LOVE.

THE parties then separated for the night, and the next morning shewed the *effects* of what had past in the subsequent letters, one of which was the spontaneous effusion of the writer's unassisted heart, and the other the result of an early conversation betwixt Charles and Caroline.

Without clogging either of them by any commentary, the reader shall be left at large to form his own reflections.

“ To Miss Caroline Stuart.

“ Honoured my Lady,

“ After begging a thousand pardons for this boldness, seeing I am but your humble servant, but, I trust in God, of good designs, I must let your ladyship know of my state, which is the windfall of my brother Ned's farm and the like, come to me by

death of Ned this past week, which I have to notice to your honour's valuation, for being on lease for twenty-one years, of which eleven are yet to come, of goods and chattels, as per advice, 1400l. and ready money upwards of 500l. besides the savings up of 1100l. in your honoured honour's family, by the mother's side, with whom I was bred and born, and with whom, God willing, I will die, and, if I may be so free, be buried. Now I can hardly go on with penning my letter for what I hear about your honour's going to shut yourself up for life, and young 'squire master's taking himself over sea. As to the first, consider, my dear good young lady—pardon my boldness—if any thing should happen you don't foresee—for, Lord save us! we are poor short-sighted creatures—and I have my thoughts about some matters that may not be spoken to; what a sad thing it would turn out, to be closed as it were between walls, and never to come out—and your dear honour should consider a day is to come, when the poor (and rich too) of this parish will call for you—and,

alas!

alas! you cannot hear them, nor do them good—the thought whereof, if it should come across in your lonesome cell, would be a heart-breaking to you—And what if other matters should come round—I must not speak of the castle; therefore, shall only say love is not to be fastened out by bolts nor bars, and I have my misgivings; I will say no more, miss, but I have my misgivings; and I told all this and more to his reverence. As to the other affair—the 'squire's going to transport himself, his honour should think he is heir, and God give him life to take possession of this estate, and Sir Guise cannot hope to live for ever—and, begging pardon for my boldness, it is not fit he should; I hope the good 'squire will think what will betide every thing at the old abbey, if the new-fangled strange woman—I can't for the heart of me call her my lady—is left to have every thing her own way; and if the lawful heir is away, and your honour shut up, who is to prevent these doings? If an humble servant, therefore, may be so bold to advise,

it is this, that your honour will be so kind as to make use of the above 1100l. seeing it belongs to the family, by your ladyship's side, and as the chapel-house is, as I may say, in a straight line between two, the abbey and the castle, both being too near neighbours, seeing they are not friends, and must be, as circumstances now are, eyesores to your honour and the 'squire, my brother Ned's farm has a topping good house upon it—and as I know something of the business, I could carry on the farming, and your honours might live upon the same, and with his reverence and his good little black, we might be happy, in an humble way, considering what your honours have been used to, till God sees good time to restore you to your own; and as his reverence says we carry our own heaven or hell about us; so our heaven upon earth may as well be at Ned's farm, as any where else, till we all get into your heavens above. Such is your humble servant's good counsel; but if it so be it be not taken, and your honours prefer a London town life,

or

or the like of this publick way, Ned's farm might be turned into hard money, for as to carrying it on against your honours' good will, or your honours to live in one place, and Dennison in another, it is not to be reckoned upon, seeing it cannot be; for as it is said in the Holy Bible, used in churches, "wheresoever you lodge will I lodge," and so on. The lease, and the stock, and the households, would make up a roundish-like sum, and your honour's stool might go thereto, and together we might live bobishly. Now do not, my good lady miss, think my humble designs, hereby, to hurt you, the 'squire, or his reverence, by making a mighty matter of the aforesaid, in the way of vain glory, which is a sin forbidden, and if it were not, I should be ashamed of, for if a man's heart goes to the thing that should not be, what are laws and gospels, in churches and chapels, your honour? Old Dennison is no boaster, an' please your ladyship; when your honours can render back unto Cæsar, that is Dennison, even to the uttermost farthing, that

which is Cæsar's, to wit Dennison's, so be it; I don't gainsay it, forasmuch as I know by myself, the joy of giving is greater than taking, and I would desire your honours to have joy both ways; I only mean, that if in my time the wherewithal should not come, it would not signify, as I have neither chick nor child, and my last testament would be as well put in force by your dear worthy honours when I am in my grave; but I pray it may be in the parish where your honours mean to lie, which I suppose will be here in Stuart chapel. But this matter will be found more fully in what I shall leave behind, I mean in the testament; therein too is, all and severally, specified my devisings, hoping your honours will be the sole executors of your poor humble servant, to command,

“ NESTOR DENNISON.”

“ P. S. Finding I did not well know how to speak the above to your honours, I have put it down on paper, though I'm in the same house.”

To

To write this epistle was Dennison's employment, after he had withdrawn for the night, and it took him up some hours; after which he laid himself on the bed, without undressing, and enjoyed the most sweet repose till the usual hour of rising, when going into the chamber of the little Indian—who he found had been at his pen and ink also, borrowing from sleep what he gave to his studies—Dennison put the letter into his hand, desiring it might be laid on the breakfast table, nearest the lady Caroline's seat, "and covered over with these sweet flowers, which I have fresh gathered," says Dennison. "But stay, my good boy, we must brush off this morning dew, or it will wet the paper, and I would not for all the flowers i' th' field, have that happen." Here he shook them gently, and dried them one by one, then gave them to Floresco, who artlessly said: "Me guess who that letter comes from—'tis from somebody that loves missey." "You are right, boy," replied Dennison, "it is from one that loves her dearly." "Aye, I tought so; but why do

you put pinks, roses, and such'um like over dat? Miffey will tink dere is no sweet but de sweet words of him him loves. Ah! me knows dat, though negro boy. Looke you, dis ickle letter come from mine own Zoraida in mine own country; it is dear as mien own heart, and it make me cry, and it make me laugh; but see 'tis almost gone into bits and scraps, with shutting and opening; for I have a peep at it every times I am by myself—but masser is almost makey me write de nice words, and I learn de faster that I may send to my own heart's dear Zoraida for another letter, as dis is almost wear out; see, I have been writin A, B, C, D, and E, and tink me shall pick my own Zoraida's name out by and bye; but I must make him hold together till dat you know. I wish him was as fresh as dis to missy."

Previous to this observation, the poor boy took out of his pocket-book a little leathern case, from which he produced a parcel wrapt in several papers, and lastly a piece of shawl made its appearance, in

I

which

which was guarded Zoraida's epistle, that was sent to him after he had been sold, but now terribly torn in the foldings, and, indeed, almost in tatters. After shewing it Dennison with a disconsolate look, he kissed it somewhat too devoutly ; for two of the pieces, incapable of bearing the ardour of the salutation, fell to the ground. His distress is not easily described, at the discovery of this disaster : it was expressed by a sort of shriek, at the end of which he exclaimed, stooping down, "Oh ! mine heart—my poor heart—is drop in bits, and I no write yet to get him fresh."

He then gathered up the piece, in which Dennison assisted, promising to write a letter to Zoraida for him, and in the mean time to contrive some means of patching up the old one.

This compromised the matter ; and the grateful boy, putting up the precious reliques, with the same care he had taken them out, went to dispose of the steward's packet, according to the orders he had received.

The company soon appeared at their morning repast; and the letter was discovered under the flowers, by the lovely eyes for whose perusal it was intended.— They dropt many a lucid testimony, to denote that the contents were interesting to the affections, while they paused on the sentiments; and “Good, dear, excellent old man!” exclaimed she, at the conclusion, “were our misfortunes to answer no greater end than calling forth such virtues as thine, we should not suffer in vain!” The letter was then given to Charles, who, with equal emotions, read it aloud. “Not that any part of the honest creature’s offer can possibly be accepted,” said Charles; “but it is honorary to the human soul to be in friendship with such a man!” “True,” said Arthur; “but to consider ourselves worthy to be followed by such a man, from the house of feasting into that of mourning, is a triumph which is reserved only for the good.”

Floresco, who had listened to every syllable with the utmost attention, struggled with

with his sensations some time, and at last burst into tears; amidst the flow of which he exclaimed, "O! make me, masser, like Mr. Dennison; but me am poor Negro boy, and no money; but me give ickle to poor beggarman, and would diggey and workey all day, all night, all life, for feel as him feels."

But Dennison himself witnessed not these tender effects of his letter. On the contrary, he purposely absented himself, and was missing the whole morning. When Dennison at last made his reluctant appearance, he could not have cast down his eyes, nor discovered a more glowing cheek, or tumultuous voice, had he been detected in robbing the parties of the sum he had offered to lend them. But his generous distress was soon lost in the embraces of his friends.

CHAPTER X.

AN EMBASSY.

THE second letter, of which we promised our readers a faithful copy, was as follows, from

Charles Stuart to Henry Fitzorton, Esq.

“ My still and for ever beloved Friend !

“ It is now that I am to confirm, in the name of myself and sister, her resolve, and my own, to put it out of the power of either of us to do you or your much-injured family any further wrong. Humiliated to the very dust, and overwhelmed with confusion, I turn back my view on the evils which have been brought upon your house by the animosity of mine : nor do I think I could bear the anguish of these reflections, were I not instantly, on my part, to make all the atonement in *my* power ; at the same time my almost angel sister equals the sacrifice on *hers*.

“ Know

“ Know then, my friend, that we, like you, have now our solemn vows registered in heaven. We concur in giving up our eternal hopes to the vows made to your dying father, and to the happiness of Olivia Clare. You will not even receive this letter, till no earthly power could change our resolves. My sister joins me in wishing you all the good that can be thought, and far more than can be expressed. She unites too in the firm persuasion and belief, that the graces and virtues of —— O stubborn heart! why dost thou throb with a violence that makes the unsteady hand almost unable to mark the name upon paper?—the virtues of *Olivia*—as much the object of your tenderness, as she has ever been of your admiration and esteem! How full of despair, alas! is our condition, when sacrificing ourselves, we implore of Heaven, that this may be the issue of your—your—your—by my soul, Fitzorton, it seems like the stroke of death, or of life prolonged by torture, to mention your—MARRIAGE with Olivia! and yet Heaven, that knows the
weakness,

weakness of my heart, knows also, that I would not have her become the wife of any man breathing, but of Henry Fitzorton. Notwithstanding which, I dare not confess, even to my gentle sister, these marks of distracting, hopeless, yet tyrannizing affection. The constancy of her own virtue might expect better things of mine; but her confidence is illimitable; and her trusting heart will believe, that I have performed my pangful task as I ought. Lest I disgrace it yet more, let me hasten to beg you will present the inclosure according to its address, and that you accept the prayers of

“CAROLINE and CHARLES STUART.

“*P. S.* We have left the abbey, and taken refuge in the chapel-house, but only till we could mature our several plans of life, which, now being arranged, we shall shortly quit this place: nor can we ascertain our next address; and if we could, it would be superfluous, for any reply to these final dispatches would be in the highest degree improper.

improper. In one instance, my Henry has deceived his Charles: the latter has discovered—by what means it matters not—that the former was the medium of his brother John's benevolence, in regard to the lieutenancy. In short, it turns out to be a fraternal confederacy, between the brothers, to serve an unhappy friend, the son of their bitterest enemy!"

The Inclosure.

"To Sir John Fitzorton.

"Sir,

"As I can offer no atonement for injuries, I can no longer bear the calamitous burthen of benefits from the man so injured. This will at once account to you for the resignation of my lieutenancy, of which, by accident, I have found you to have been the donor; and if you judge of the firmness of my mind by the vigour of your own, or will so far exert your candour as to admit any parallel in our principles, you will accept

cept of my heartfelt gratitude for the past, and not turn that generous emotion into its reverse, by any vain attempt to reconcile what is in its own nature irreconcilable. Since I received your honoured admonition, a train of tremendous incidents have, as you know, fallen out, to render unnecessary all farther warnings. You will hereafter find, that I shall even do more than you required, in regard to one distracting subject: but this, alas! is no time to burthen your full heart with either my past misfortunes or future resolves. My commission, sir, may much more honourably be bestowed. For myself, I am still attached to the military life, and shall remain a soldier; but must take the liberty to serve my king and country without violating my own feelings.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your most grateful

“ And obedient servant,

“ CHARLES STUART.”

The

The above packet was dispatched by the trusty Dennison, who was made acquainted with so much of its contents as to convince him of the necessity of its being delivered to Henry Fitzorton's own hand, and in private, without waiting any replies.

Olivia was walking with Henry in a back avenue of the castle as Dennison rode up to the house, and by a concealment of the trees, which were there thicker than ordinary, to serve as a screen from the north-east wind, he did not perceive either Henry or the young lady till they were too close for any retreat. And this would have been rendered yet more difficult, as little Fitz—who, as usual, was the attendant on Henry and Olivia—happening to wander, on the hunt, into the path that Dennison had taken—announced, by cries of gladness, that one of the abbey family was at hand. A universal tremor seized Henry. Dennison had always been the faithful medium of his affections, and silently shared in his regrets and disappointments. Dennison was him-
self

self greatly moved at this sudden encounter, and the mutual endeavour of both to conceal it from Olivia, more effectually betrayed them. Far, however, far as tender sympathy is from jealous suspicion, was that spirit of candour from conjecturing that the real cause was seated in the despairing Henry's heart, or that the good old man was in its fullest confidence. Attributing the whole to some untold calamity which had happened in a family, in whose misfortunes they were all, in a manner, involved, and the sufferings of her ever-remembered Caroline first exciting her sympathy, "Alas!" exclaimed she, "I fear some fresh calamity has fallen out at the abbey. Tell me, sir, is Miss Stuart, or the good Charles, in any new distress?—What less can be the cause of these emotions?"—Dennison answered only by a heavy sigh and shake of the head. On recovering himself, he said he was charged with a commission from his young master to 'squire Henry, which must be deferred till he regained

gained his strength and spirits. "I am a poor, infirm creature, miss, and a little matter oversets me."

Olivia, who was, in every sense of the word, one of the least suspecting of human beings, desired Henry to assist the old steward into the house, where they had no sooner arrived, than, receiving a summons from her father, she left Henry and Dennison together.

"Alas!" said Dennison, "I fear me much, the weakness I have been guilty of has well nigh discovered what my master and mistress enjoined me to conceal. But your honour and madam took me unware— I was not in the best spirits before.—I have lost my rest of some nights.—Sleep is an old man's friend.—I did not think to see your honour so much changed—and I forgot you were all in black; and poor little Fitz's love put me in mind of former times; and I had just left one set of sorrows to meet another—so that it was too much for an old creature, and I doubt the young lady's suspicion—"

"Ah!"

“ Ah! she hath not an atom in her disposition!” cried Henry; “ but for pity’s sake, thou to whom I owe eternal gratitude—gratitude which even despair cannot extinguish, tell me the message you have brought from the abbey?”

“ Not from the abbey, but the chapel-house,” sighed forth Dennison. He then took out Charles’s packet, which, having put into one of Henry’s hands, he pressed the other to his aged bosom, kissed it, then wished him all God’s choicest blessings, saying, “ If that lovely lady was to be his bride, she must be a happy one, even though he thereby lost Miss Caroline. I cannot, must not stay, my dear, honoured ’squire; but upon earth and in heaven I shall remember, love, and bless you!”

The tears of an old white-headed man, whose honesty we have long known, and whose affliction we have often proved, shed over us at probably an eternal parting, are, at *all* times affecting; but in Henry’s case—combined, as it was, with the most touching circumstances of gratitude, doubt, terror,

ror, and tenderness—it is no wonder that he suffered Dennison to leave the castle without the utterance of another word.

It was, indeed, a considerable time before he had sufficient strength to open the eventful packet, of which his inmost soul felt at once the virtue, the energy, and the irremediable necessity.—“Excellent Charles! divine Caroline!” said he. “Yes, your Henry shall be added to swell the sacrifice of self-devoted victims; and our oaths shall be respected!”

By degrees his mind softened to a sort of pious acquiescence, and seeing himself hemmed round by innumerable duties at the castle, and insurmountable difficulties at the abbey, a new oath ascended silently from his lips to that heaven which had received his former, and, kneeling down, he cried out in a loud voice, thrice repeating it, “Here then, again I swear to devote my hand to Olivia! Witness the oath, O God!”

Olivia, re-entering, distinctly overheard Henry pronounce this solemn asseveration.

He

He was yet on his knees. Olivia raised him into her innocent arms.—“Join, join my fervent and humble prayer,” said she, “to the attesting God, that I may deserve the blessing those vows impart!” Henry reiterated them in her embrace.

CHAPTER XI.

A HINT TAKEN.

WHILE they were thus situated, John Fitzorton came into the apartment. Olivia, to ease the overflowing of her heart, which had now felt the first returns of joy since the death of Sir Armine, could not forbear describing to John the circumstance which had given birth to her happiness.

Henry delivered to his brother the letter which had been addressed to his care; and John, after hastily reading of it, went out of the room.

Henry and Olivia, being again left together, fell into a train of reflections, which, insensibly,

insensibly, brought round the conversation to the present posture of affairs at the abbey.

“ Alas !” cried Olivia, “ I dread, yet wish to hear what are those sad events which have the power to affect not only the sympathising heart of my beloved Henry, but to move the firm temper of John. It was, I see, not without difficulty he restrained his tears. But did you notice the affecting turn of his powerful eyes as he directed them to us ? The more I see of him, the stronger is my veneration. How gratifying to the inmost soul to possess his approbation ; but, good Heaven, how insupportable would be his anger !”

Although this was an hour in which Olivia gained extremely on Henry, he had presence of mind enough to communicate only such parts of the chapel-house packet as might satisfy the solicitude which he saw it had raised : to have told her all he knew, would only have destroyed her happiness, and augmented his own infelicity ; and he had now firmly resolved to resign himself to the inevitable destiny of his life. He

informed her, therefore, of the Baronet's indiscreet marriage; of the open rupture which had happened in consequence of making such a wife the mistress of his family; of the impossibility there was, that Caroline, or her brother, should remain longer at the abbey; of their departure thence; of their present residence with the venerable father Arthur, and their domestick, the good Dennison; of their forlorn state of mind and fortunes; and of their future destination, bound by oaths, which, "from my acquaintance with both," said Henry, with a trembling voice, "I know to be irrevocable as fate itself."

Olivia not only gave him full credit for the tender feelings of friendship, but countenanced them by generous testimonies of her own, and asked, with the most fascinating simplicity and ardour, "whether it were not possible essentially to serve these excellent persons without wounding their delicacy? My beloved Henry will not suppose that I involve their virtues in the faults of their father; or that I do not

as fervently wish, and intend to sue for, the revived friendship and society of Caroline. And if I have been withheld from the like avowals, it has been in conformity to the melancholy, which must, alas! long hang over our house, and which suspends every promise of the heart. But, indeed, Henry, I have a faithful memory, and think it is a solemn duty, incumbent on us both, to consult each other, till we strike upon some expedient by which your friend Charles and my Caroline should be reconciled to the felicity we should feel in rendering them happy.

“Something might, surely, be contrived to effect it,” continued Olivia.

Henry begged the subject might drop for the present.

Olivia, however, took an early opportunity of renewing it, little imagining that she was labouring the very point which kept alive the only subject it was her interest to annihilate, instead of suffering it to die silently away. Henry, after strong repetitions of his assurances, that nothing

could be devised, again put an end to the subject.

It occurred to Olivia, that Henry might be deterred from serving his friend, on consideration, that, as the power of conferring pecuniary obligations to any very considerable amount, would originate from her, she thought that she could not possibly give him a more graceful instance of her affection, and at the same time effectually indulge her own bounteous disposition, than by entering privately, and without assistance, into such arrangements as might answer the ends proposed. She could not easily settle on a plan, but she felt in every fibre of her heart, that she would adopt any one that might be likely to promote an object, which, by tender prepossession for, and long meditation upon, was become, in addition to the assured affection of Henry, the one thing necessary to her happiness. Day and night did she revolve the point in her fancy; but apprehensive that either Charles or Caroline would put their scheme into execution before her own should be
matured,

matured, or even engendered, she formed the resolution of paying a visit to Caroline; convinced, that when they got once together, something might be done which should facilitate the happiness of all.

A pursuit of this kind, in which all the generous affections are convened to assist, is among the highest delights of a young and animated mind; the agitation which attends, and the secrecy with which it is conducted, are parts of its happiness.—Olivia—whose whole life was too innocent for the disguises or concealments of an action or a thought—intended, that Henry, her father, and every-body concerned, should be, at a fit season, in confidence of her designs, but she wished to give them something like “form and pressure,” before they were revealed; and this secret interview with Caroline was designed as the general outline. She knew, that two women, of warm imaginations, could do more towards the advancement of a favourite project, by one hour’s conversation, than by an age of solitary thinking; and

she was *pre-determined* to believe, that her mind was so exactly in sympathy with that of Charles's sister, that their wits would be in immediate unison, and that something would be struck out—from this collision of discourse—which would make her return to her soul-beloved Henry, doubly happy, from the discovered power of enlarging the sphere of his enjoyment; the grand point in which were concentrated all the hopes and endeavours of her life.

While she was yet in search of an ostensible motive for her visit—at least such a one as could be reasonably assigned—and while she began to feel somewhat embarrassed at the difficulty, Caroline's spaniel—which had been for some time asleep at her feet—started in slumber as if dreaming of the chase, then barked as if, after long puzzling at the scent, he had hit it off, and, after running it at full cry, awoke.—Courting his new mistress's caresses, he leaped into her lap; and at the self-same instant leaped into Olivia's mind, which had, also, been on the hunt, an idea that he
would

would be a fit instrument of her operations on the present occasion. "The most proper and natural apology in the world, dear, little creature," exclaimed she, smoothing his velvet ears, and patting his downy sides: "The keeping thee, agreeable as thou art, so long from thy poor mistress, has lain on my conscience, and now that she is under affliction, thy society, and various endearing ways, may, haply, beguile her of her grief, and steal her sometimes from herself. Thou wilt soon discover, dear, sensible, sagacious little being, that she wants every relief which an old friend can afford, and wilt, therefore, double thy fondness. Nor shall she have cause to think thou hast been unfaithful, by voluntary desertion. Albeit, thy first ramblings discovered the little truant of an hour, they were intended only that thy neighbouring friends should share thy company, and thou wouldest have returned to her who owned thee—I know thou wouldest—had not thy sympathy for our sorrows, and my seductions, kept thee from thine own

house. All this shall thy lovely owner be told, and if there be ought of blame, it shall light on Olivia; or, to clear thy fame from ingratitude, as rare in thy race as common in ours, even my Henry shall be made a partner in the trespass we have committed; and thy lady shall understand the arts *he*, too, used to make thee sensible his attentions were never paid in vain.— And yet, trust me, kind-hearted creature, nothing but a sense of thy duty and mine own honesty should induce me to part with thee—but it will not be for ever; since I tell my affections, thy best friends shall be mine, and thou, who art now to be an assistant in the plan, wilt be entitled to part of its felicity.”

What arguments the inventive heart can find when it wants their aid! All this was very true, and it would have been no less so had it been thought of many days before: but a feeble spaniel was now a tower of strength to a favourite plan of operations.

CHAPTER XII.

A DISQUISITION ON MAJESTY AND MEAN-
NESS OF CHARACTER.

NOTHING now remained to perfect Olivia's enterprize, but a fit opportunity of fallying forth, and this soon presented itself. John had desired of Henry a morning's private conference; Lady Fitzorton was employed in her own apartment; Mr. Clare was going his usual ride. Thus favoured by circumstances, she gave out, that as the day invited, she should live in the air, and wander about like one of its feathered inhabitants. "But," said she to her father as he was mounting his horse, "I shall only make a circular flight of it, and at the sound of the dressing-bell return to my nest." She soon summoned her four-footed associate, who seemed to take the hint, and, with a bounding step and beating heart, she set forward toward the chapel-house. It was an enterprize that more than emulated the spirit of older times; it put the flower

of knighthood to the blush. It had the purest motive, and proposed the noblest end. There were dangers to be past, and difficulties to be subdued; but these all yielded to youthful hope and imagination, those generous Quixotes in the chivalrick adventures of the human heart.

There is, assuredly, an exultation seldom felt, and never to be described, attendant upon the performance of every hard and difficult duty. Charles and Caroline Stuart were in the possession of this, after they had performed the sacrifices with an account of which Dennison had been charged. And while that honest creature was on his commission, the brother and sister wept and smiled in the fullness of their hearts, sensible of their forlorn condition, yet proud to suffer with the dignity of virtue, what virtue required. In this tearful triumph they related what they had done, to father Arthur, whose reflection on their conduct produced the subsequent remark.—“ My children,” said he, “ the majesty, or the meanness, yet more than the strength or weakness

weakness of the soul, is only to be ascertained by an occasion like this. The *mean* will temporize; the *majestick* will stoop to no accommodation short of the point which honour prescribes. The mean will shift about for an evasion; methinks I see him trembling at the approach of a duty which menaces the deprivation of what he has long cherished. His conscience and his passions are at war within him. The insurrection of the little invisible world is hot and obstinate, but his spirit is abject. Virtue, with a frown, demands her sacrifice. He arms against her all his forces. She is immortal, and he arms in vain. ‘Such a point must absolutely be yielded,’ saith she, somewhat austerely; he still resists, and calls in his auxiliaries—sophistry, prevarication, and delay. They prevail not, for his own conscience, another divinity, goes over to the side of virtue, even when every one of his passions keep the field. Behold, how he waits, to the last moment, in a miserable balance betwixt the disgrace of the most vile, and the glory of the most virtuous

action! Every hope and fear upon the scout, to hunt for possibilities of an escape, till pushed by circumstances, he at last gives way only to an arbitrary necessity; to that he yields without any impulse from the moral principle, and repines for the rest of his life. The majestick, on the other hand, not less sensible of what is dear to keep, and difficult to part from, obeys, for a while, the dictate of human nature. He sees the advancing power, that is to dis-mantle his breast of a cherished joy; he receives him with a sacred awe that wants a name, disdaining to hold in equipoise the choice of good and evil; or, when a great and positive duty, arrayed, it may be, in terrors, and pronouncing what is fitting to be done—in the still small voice of conscience, whose whispers are, to such minds, more loud and alarming than the thunder—the majestick, I say, my dear children, your recent experience tells you, takes the treasure which had been long enthroned on the heart of hearts, out of the bosom, where it was lodged and treated as a guest from heaven

heaven—innocent affection is such—and, like the patriarch offering up his only son at the command of God, prepares to sacrifice; the majestick weeps and trembles at the altar as he binds the beloved victim—the blood of the heart seems to blend with his tears, but they are the tears neither of weakness nor rebellion: They are not the bitter waters of repining on having made that sacrifice, but a sacred stream flowing from a tender heart, which mingles the feelings of a man with the duties of a christian. My children, he who made us ‘tremblingly alive,’ sanctions the feeling which the agonizing, yet blissful sensibility, he gave, creates. Even I, who had my heart educated in the pale cloister, there labouring early to govern the passions of nature, hesitate not to declare, such sorrow is, *indeed*, heavenly!’

The whole of the time that Arthur was uttering his speech, the brother and sister illustrated it by example; and, perhaps, without hearing one half of it, continued to smile and weep as if their sensations were beyond

beyond the reach of declamation or eloquence. The proudest forms of words are, indeed, wretched mediums to paint any of the grander movements of the soul, and particularly the struggles of honour and affection. These are unspeakable : and when Arthur had paused, it was, perhaps, some relief to the afflicted friends whom he addressed, that he was prevented from going on by the unexpected sight of the little animal lately mentioned. He had often roved away, and often returned for caresses, yet gained the chapel-house before Olivia ; nay he had made his best apologies there for absence, and by every testimony of tenderness, had conciliated the favour of Caroline ; while Olivia, though the generous purpose of her visit hastened her steps, was scarcely midway.

Excuse the human heart, good reader ; if thou hast knowledge of it, thou wilt : Excuse, too, the truly virtuous and resolved Charles and his sister, if the slight surprize of suddenly observing a poor truant dog return to his friends, renewed a train of
tender

tender sorrows which would have at the moment been too powerful for a folio of moralities, even from father Arthur,

“ Tho’ truths divine came mended from his tongue.”

But, what will to thee appear a yet greater weakness—if indeed thou art not a delineator—father Arthur, knowing and feeling as he did the history of this quadruped, dismounted in an instant from his vaulting steed of eloquence, and when Caroline exclaimed, “ Ah! my poor, poor Fitz! And art thou come to be of the chapel-house party—or did my—my—my—did—Mr.—Henry—Fitz—orton send thee to comfort us?”—Father Arthur forgot to reason, but remembered to feel. To him, to Dennison, and to themselves, yea and even to Floresco, it was in a moment discovered, that Olivia was as dear to Charles, and Henry to Caroline, as at any period of their lives; and had any corresponding testimony been wanting, the following miscellaneous converse would have arisen in proof. “ Happy little creature, how sleek
and

and smooth he looks!" said Caroline, continuing her caresses; "and have they been very tender to thee, poor fellow?"

"Sister," said Charles, as his hand followed Caroline's along the dog's glossy back, "Henry has told me such instances of my Olivia's—hem—hem—of Miss Clare's partial fondness for this little animal, that I am almost sorry he has quitted her, and yet is it not comfortable to look at any thing which has found favour in the eyes of those we love?"

Caroline blushed assent. "I am persuaded," cried the lieutenant, "the fair hand of that sweet girl has honoured him in this manner a thousand times!"

"He slept in Henry's bed-chamber," said Caroline.—

"The 'squire and young madam were fondling him by turns, even while I was at the castle," interposed Dennison, "and me-thought the dog, when he laid down and whined piteously at my feet—which he did—seemed aware that all was not as it should be." Caroline drew her cheek
3
across

across the dog's forehead, and Floresco went and brought him a sweet cake of his own preparing, then kneeling down to feed him, told him, whisperingly, "you no speak, ickle ting—you no speak—but young lady and masser 'squire love somebody's that you loves, and that loves you dearly.—I see dat as plainer than you ickle ting."

While the good Floresco was thus employed, Olivia made her appearance at the chapel-house. She stood on the threshold of the door, which was open, and supporting herself with one hand by the door handle, which trembled as she held it, she pointed with the other to the spaniel, as an apology for her intrusion. Then slightly curtsying, she ventured to step over the threshold, and with accents of hyblean sweetness, the bloom of a generous heart mounting into her cheek, she assured Caroline, "that the detention of her favourite lay upon her conscience, and she thought nothing could make her pardon possible, but coming herself to surrender him at its mistress's feet. It had the wicked feeling
of

of robbing you of his little faithful heart, and what is there amongst the wide circuit of crimes so bad as to steal away the objects of one's affections? But he is now restored, and you must try to forgive me."

CHAPTER XIII.

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

NEITHER Charles nor Caroline were able to mark their welcome by a single word. They bowed, trembled, blushed, turned pale; endeavoured to reach a chair, attempted utterance, and failed in all. Denison and father Arthur were scarcely more collected, and had it not been for the happy alertness and urbanity of Floresco, the hospitalities would have deserted the chapel-house on the first entrance of its lovely guest.

Olivia, by a very natural construction, attributed this general confusion, partly to the variety of embarrassing circumstances which now subsisted between the two families,

milies, and partly to the situation in which she found Charles and Caroline at the chapel-house, where she supposed they felt themselves as exiles almost within sight of the paternal home from whence they had been driven. In pursuance of which opinion, she begged to speak a few words to them apart. And being conducted into another room, by the trembling Charles, she gave the brother and sister each a hand, and with a frankness that spoke the soul, and in a voice whose sweetness was, in itself, an antidote to the poisons of life, she said, "We meet not as strangers: you and I, Caroline, have been friends from our infant days. Cruelly have our amiable designs been broken, but we have daily and hourly conversed with each other by secret and silent intelligence. I know we have, so it is in vain to deny it. This is no time for ceremony or for concealments. Let us be ingenuous then: I have been greatly alarmed at the discovery of a plot,"—here she assumed a graver air and accent—"a plot, which

which I am told, you have actually^e laid against the happiness of Henry and Olivia."

The scarlet of a fever, and the pale of death, tyrannized alternately in the cheeks of Charles and Caroline.

"You are, I find, about to rob," continued Olivia, addressing them both, "two of your most sincerely admiring friends of what their souls hold most dear—."

There is no adequate expression to the looks of Caroline and Charles.

"Rob us, I say, of our inalienable property in your *society*," resumed Olivia, to the infinite comfort of her hearers, who felt relieved past utterance; "I am come, therefore," she added, "not only to restore your favourite, but, as a friend, to claim the interest which you, Mr. Stuart, promised to create for me in Caroline's affections: nay, I come to assert myself those claims of sympathy—of childhood—of softest, tenderest hours—and if they meet any congenial advocate in your bosoms, will be instantly rewarded with an assurance, that
this

this cruel convent scheme—for there begins your confederacy against us—will be wholly laid aside—and a more social plan,—which has been some time forming in my mind—adopted ; a plan, my *dear* friends—you must allow me to call you so—which includes the felicity of all ; and, though it is not yet mature, I can make no farther progress in it, till you here promise me you will not throw an insurmountable bar in my way, by putting your plot upon our peace in execution, and so throw down my new-raised edifice, and bury the happiness of Henry and Olivia in its ruins.

“ In short,” continued Olivia, glowing as she proceeded, “ my heart, dear and suffering friends, is in the history of all your unmerited misfortunes and disappointments ; and I truly consider them as much my own, as if I even had created them, and am as sincerely interested in their removal.”

The surprise and puzzling kind of perplexed astonishment, which seized on Charles and his sister, became again inexpressible.

pressible. The words seemed to involve much more "than met the ear;" and although Olivia intended them to express, with the most liberal simplicity, her general knowledge of the abbey calamities, the auditors believed they included even a discovery of their unfortunate loves, to which they supposed—judging from themselves—that Olivia had determined to become a martyr.

"It is decreed, by all the powers of honour and tenderness," said she, "that the castle must make reparation to the abbey; and, by a union of fortunes, fates, and affections, be for ever of one family."

The equivoque increased. "And why this trembling reserve?" said Olivia. "I will prove to you, sweet Caroline," said she, carrying her hand to her heart, and gently holding that of Charles—"I will prove to you both, that this is to be done consistently with the nicest feelings and duties to suffering friends below, and pitying angels above."

The

The Gordian knot was now to the apprehension of Charles and Caroline less difficult to untie.

“After this confession,” continued Olivia, “it remains with you to send me back to the castle the most successful or the most disappointed of human beings. I ought to tell you, however, that your compliance will enable me to make our friend Henry of human beings the happiest, and it will be accompanied by the sweetest surprise in the world; for though I know, and you cannot be ignorant, that it is the nearest wish and design of his heart, that ample atonement should be made to you for all the pangs you must have undergone, before, alas! you were driven to this extremity, the distress into which the news of your intention to steal yourselves away from us, has so disordered him, as well it might, that he can think upon nothing decisive, and my proud heart, aspiring to gain the conquest of your promise not to leave us, and my earnest desire to carry the tidings of my victory to him myself, has

has made me dare to undertake the whole matter without his knowing or even suspecting it; so that I have my plot too, you see. Judge, therefore, what a generous occasion presents itself for your exalting me in his esteem. If you permit me in this great instance to assure him of your friendship, and it can be done in no other way, than by such a family compact as I have suggested, you will thereby raise the value of mine, and my obligations to you will be everlasting."

What was to be said? what done by Caroline or Charles? Even what was done and said;—Nothing. The mystery was inextricable, yet a strange opening of trembling light, of hope and of happiness, all which had been yielded to the influence of despair, seemed to break in upon them like a vision, or rather day-dream which they knew not how to encourage or dispel.

"All I at present solicit," rejoined Olivia, earnestly, "is your promise to adopt no fatal measure, that may put it even beyond your own power to make us and yourselves,

self's, I trust, happy. O! grant me this, and I will fly with the wing of affection to mature my project; but why do I talk of your granting what neither of you can in conscience refuse? You owe it to yourselves—you owe it to Henry Fitzorton—you owe it to me. Betwixt Henry and you, Charles, there subsists even a brotherly affection; and my beating heart tells me, it is not wholly without a kindred emotion in the bosom of Caroline. I anticipate then your full compliance, and will now therefore go on with my darling scheme, of which you shall have the particulars at my next visit. But remember, you have both looked a complete assurance, that we have no more to fear from your former insufferable scheme."

Though it might be sincerely said, that during the delivery of these sentiments,

Soft as the dew from heaven distills,
Her gentle accents fell;

the disorder, surprize, and a thousand sensations, known only to the minds which

feel them, wholly took from Charles and his sister the power of speech. Olivia saw a variety of symptoms, part of which she thought auspicious, and part she feared were unfavourable to her designs. Interpreting, however, their silence into a kind of modest assent, she would have now hurried out of the apartment, had not Charles, with a melancholy but determined air, assured her there were invincible reasons, which, he feared, must for ever interrupt her benevolent endeavours to unite the families of Fitzorton and Stuart.

“ I know every one of those reasons,” rejoined Olivia, maintaining her point; “ but they are all to be reconciled, my good sir; they are all to be reconciled.” The riddle appeared now resolved. The generous animation with which Olivia repeated this assurance, brought into the mind of Charles the most delicious of all human delusions. His fancy had been achieving wonders all the time; and now he even supposed (what cannot the tender heart?) that Henry had, like himself, forgot every thing

thing but love, and had told the story of all their hapless passion to Olivia, who had determined, at whatever risk, to save them all from the threatened despair. "O! thou unheard-of excellence! Is it possible," said he, throwing himself at her feet.— "Shall we then owe to thy unparalleled sweetness the mighty blessing?"

Olivia, believing his rapture proceeded from the prospect of being restored again to the arms of his friend, replied, with an ardour scarcely inferior to his own, "That she was satisfied there was not a wish, which he, or his enchanting sister, could form, but the proposal she should speedily make would gratify, to its utmost height.

The strength of this expression, seeming to dispel all that remained of the mystery, moved the firm spirit even of Caroline, who, in her turn, ceased for an instant to remember her scheme of sequestration, and all the resolves she had made to bid the world an eternal farewell.

But, alas! it was the rhapsody only of a few blissful moments; yet those, who have

hearts to feel, might weigh those moments against a thousand insipid years, and find, in all the dull and freezing truths of the latter, nothing to balance the short-lived, but heart-felt transports of delusive joy.

Enslaved by a delicious impossibility, which the heart, inly stirred, made practicable as the plainest point in nature, fancy and affection opened to them the gates of hope, and moved, with more than the lightning's celerity, those bars which their own reason—peradventure, with all its pliability, strong as thine—had so solemnly, and so recently, declared were more immoveable than the everlasting hills.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSEQUENCES.

“ALAS!” exclaimed Caroline, “whatever destiny intends for us, we must be lost to every thing that is good and lovely in human nature, before we are unmindful of
Olivia’s

Olivia's kindness; and her friendly wishes will be in the nature of blessings to us, go where we may."

They had by this time reached the other apartment; and Olivia, supposing she had gained ground, proceeded to pursue her advantages, then insensibly slid to the door of the chapel-house, and was stealing off without seeming to move away. Charles and Caroline as insensibly followed. "We were all formed to be of one family," said Olivia! "Surely your hearts must convince you of this! How happy shall we be, when our arrangements are made! Can any thing interrupt it? Methinks I see, as in a mirror, the times to come. We are all seated by our fire-side; the arts, the pleasures, and the affections smiling before us. We shall be all in alliance, in friendship, in love."

They were now in the path which led from the chapel-house to the castle. Charles, perhaps without knowing it, pressed one of Olivia's hands to his lips, and the other was thrown round the waist of Caroline. In

this manner they walked on, colouring the fairy paradise of their fancy more highly at every step. Ah ! that it should be necessary for Reason to advance with a frown, and dissolve the charm ! Yet, how quickly is it done ? Under influence of any vehement affection of the heart, the step is quick, and almost keeps pace with the emotion. It is incredible how soon our three friends were within the bounds of Fitzorton.—Olivia had now placed herself in the middle, wreathing her lovely arms within those of Charles and Caroline. Had a sentiment, soft as that which Charles might wish to inspire, animated her bosom, its effects would have been demonstrated nearly in the same way in which she now proved the loving-kindness, compassion, and sympathy of her gentle heart, which all the time felt only what such feelings allowed ; nor had it one throb of a tenderer passion for any mortal but her Henry.

The spaniel led the way.—“ See,” said Olivia, smiling, “ that dear thing certainly knows our convention ; I find our George calls

calls him Little Fitz. The time, I trust, is not far off when every one of us shall assert our share of property in that worthy little fellow. Nay, and I predict, that the prospect from the castle to the abbey, will, one day, be as clear and bright as it is now obscure and cloudy. Methinks half the grand avenue, even to the little side alcove, which is never to be forgotten, looks full of promise already."

Here was a stroke of recollection, which, though intended by Olivia as a memento of her affecting scene with Henry, brought back to Caroline's heart ten thousand feelings, of which Olivia had not the most distant idea.

Such converse brought them absolutely within a few paces of the castle gates; at which all three, who had seen and heard nothing but themselves, expressed equal surprise.—"O!" cried Olivia, "that the moment were now come in which we might all be presented to one another, hand and heart, in the way each best desires.—And

why not? It is but anticipating the event, and in such a cause——”

Olivia's hand was upon the gate bell, and a single sound was given, just as Caroline, from some secret impulse, trembled, and begged her to stop.

It was a tumultuous and indefinable, as well as indescribable moment. Charles and Caroline Stuart, conducted by Olivia Clare, were at the gate of that castle which they intended never more to approach.

A new and unexpected hope, naturally arising out of a chain of misconceptions, as naturally corresponding to their wishes, suddenly expelled despair. Every passion, which was before refused admittance, re-entered the bosom, an almost-invited guest, and even reason seemed, at length, to nod assent.

“ I have a thought,” said Olivia, “ how it may even now be contrived ;” and, without farther warning, she rung the bell with a force which that thought seemed to inspire.

“ Heavens !

“Heavens! what have you done?” exclaimed Caroline, attempting to stop the sound, the vibrations trembling from her disordered pressure.

“Away with reserves!” said Olivia.—“My long-promised, long-postponed hand will be given to my beloved Henry—O, my heart! there he is!—you may see him through the iron work of the gate—how rejoiced will he be to see you!—I will undertake to explain.—Stop—hide yourselves a moment;—stand behind me, that his surprise may be the greater.”

Charles and Caroline were shot through and through by the second sentence: that sentence, like despair and death dissolved their fairy dream in a moment; they had no ear for more. Their delusion, their weakness, their affection, their disappointment, their misery, were by those few words made palpable; and had the gate of the castle, and the castle itself fallen upon them, it would have been deemed a tender mercy. Luckily for them, Olivia was too much busied to notice their consternation,

in what she had now, at a moment's warning, to say and to do ; and too much taken up with the approach of Henry, who catching a glimpse of Olivia, ran to receive her, exclaiming—" My sweet Olivia, I have been watching here this hour ! We thought we had lost the treasure of the castle."

According to Olivia's arrangements, Charles and Caroline were so situated that Henry could not see them in his advance ; she heard, therefore, the tender greeting, which was in strict conformity to Henry's wish to love, and oath, to live for her alone.

Henry opened the gate—Olivia immediately presented her friends. They had retreated several paces. Henry saw, and became in an instant, a statue of astonishment ! Olivia ran, and, taking their hands, would have advanced. " His joy, you see, is too great," said she.—" I will for ever love and bless you, Olivia," replied Caroline—exerting herself—" if you will go with Henry to the castle, and suffer us to return to the chapel-house. It is for the ease and happiness of all that this be done !

done ! But it must be instantaneous ; for I see not only Sir John Fitzorton, but all the family and servants are pouring upon us, and we shall be disgraced and exposed beyond the pardon even of Olivia.”

This petition was made in a manner, and in a voice, that rendered compliance necessary. Olivia believing the disgrace and exposure alluded to, suggested by a too deep, though delicate sense of their situation as exiled children from the abbey, and the behaviour of their father at the castle, answered—“ You shall be obeyed—Heaven forbid I should violate your worthy feelings ! Go, then, but remember your promise ; and be prepared to expect the fulfilling of mine.—You must leave our beloved friends to their own plans at present, and hear mine,” said she to Henry, who was now close behind her, and whose eyes followed Charles and Caroline, now turning sadly into the path they had so chearily trod a few minutes before ;—“ you must not pursue them, for my word is

given. The series of mysteries shall, "in due time, be explained." There was not opportunity for saying more; as John, Lady Fitzorton, and Mr. Clare, with several of the servants summoned by the bell, were gathered about Olivia.

She had outstaid her time more than two hours, and was surprised to hear that dinner was over, or rather had been sent away untasted, each individual wondering what had become of the fair truant. She gratified their curiosity without betraying either her own designs or the emotions of her chapel-house friends, laying the whole blame on herself for having neglected to take her watch—"that is, to wind it up," added she, as she perceived her father putting it to his ear, declared it ticked.— "Really?" said she, "does it, indeed? None of my excuses then will do, it seems: well, then, I must own myself a truant, and beg pardon." She supplicated, and was forgiven. And cold must be the reader who is not convinced she would have had
neither

neither eye nor ear to time had a thousand clocks reminded her that dinners of ortolan and deserts of paradise waited her return.

Charles and Caroline, save by ejaculations, spake not till they regained the chapel-house ; and then, desiring to pass an uninterrupted hour in their separate apartments, they retired to compose their afflicted hearts, in the best manner they could.

CHAPTER XV.

CRUEL KINDNESS.

WHEN Henry had an opportunity to converse with Olivia alone—an opportunity which he sought with unusual diligence, for his thoughts fastened on the foregoing scene with an eagerness, that, had Olivia been endued with one particle of suspicion, or been furnished with any clue to it, would have discovered the cause to lie deeper in his bosom than the interests of friendship. —“ I see,” said Olivia, “ you are earnest to know the history of my rencontre with
your

your friend and mine, my Henry; and though a train of little untimely events have gone blundering on, to the disorder of the whole scheme, which I intended to have kept a profound secret, even from you, till all was ripe for discovery, I cannot now but let you into the whole matter; for indeed, Henry, I would not give you the pain of one moment's suspense for all the schemes upon earth, and even this was plotted for your felicity."

Hereupon she related all the circumstances, from each of which the goodness of her mind and the tenderness of her heart were displayed so clearly, and with such force, that penetrated as Henry was to the quick, with the unexpected sight and as sudden departure of Caroline, the very glimpse of whom conjured up myriads of ideas which arose like the spectres of departed joy, as from their tombs, in his bosom, he embraced her with the utmost tenderness, and swore she was too generous, too good, and that he was utterly unworthy of her. "But though the plan is impossible,"

possible," added he, "your kind wishes can, in this instance, be accomplished:—I shall for ever cherish a remembrance of them in my grateful heart."

"Why do you talk of impossibilities!" resumed Olivia; "Charles held the same language; he, too, said it was impossible! Where, pray, is the difficulty of our making two of the best people in the world a part of us? I should blush with shame for us if I thought we could dispose of more than a third of our income on ourselves, and I know of but one difficulty in appropriating some of the surplus, and that is in reconciling the acceptance of it to minds as proud and noble as our own. But this we must meditate upon. I have gained, meanwhile, the one thing needful—Charles and Caroline's implied, though not expressed promise, not to leave the chapel-house till you or I visit them again."

Henry, the more he heard, the more he admired the generous speaker; but with an agitation that rather seemed to proceed from a tenacity of opinion, than any thing else

else in the judgment of Olivia, still insisted on the impracticability of the thing.

“ I protest,” exclaimed Olivia, warmly, “ you do not enter into my views with half the spirit, my dear Henry, I might have expected, from your friendship to the Stuarts, and your love to me. I could almost call you unkind—for is not Charles your friend, and is not Caroline his sister?—By-the-bye, Henry, I am astonished how you have guarded your heart against the—I should have thought—*unerring* darts of this all-conquering girl. Though the deep shades of melancholy are cast about her, one discovers such ineffable sweetness, grace, and beauty, through their veils, that I really could not help thinking, as I beheld her, nothing but the prepossession or prejudice of old habits—such as our being born, bred, reared, and educated together—could account for it;—and although I verily believe my heart would break, and my death ensue—Heaven knows, I hope it would—on the loss, or the slightest abatement of your tenderness
for

for me, I should have enough of candour in the midst of my despair almost to justify the infidelity that would, nay, that ought—for how is the loss of Henry Fitzorton to be repaired?—Yes that *ought* to shorten my days! Your affection has taught me to be ambitious, Henry. As you have no superior in your sex, methinks—vain and proud wish!—I would be the first of mine:—methinks, for your sake, I would be a Caroline. How infinite must be your attachment, to prefer an Olivia! Precious, precious preference! which at once makes me proud and humbles me!”

In this artless and animated address, as there were so many points to wound, and so many to heal, Henry struck a kind of balance between both; and in the compromise, his gratitude and admiration of Olivia seemed almost to outweigh his love of Caroline, and made it even more impossible than it had ever been before, to declare in whose favour the trepidations of the scale preponderated.

The conversation ended with Henry's desiring to know the particulars of Olivia's plan.

"The particulars," replied Olivia, "would run into too much length for the time allowed us to detail it; but the substance is—if it met your approbation—to make Charles and Caroline as independent as ourselves; but that only you and I should be concerned, or be in confidence of the means. Indeed it would be yet better if the parties themselves could imagine it came from some fund on which they had a claim. For this reason, I blame my hasty visit to the chapel-house, but you terrified me with the thoughts of their leaving us for ever. With your assistance, however, it may not yet be too late to redeem my rashness. At all events my heart is set upon their remaining amongst us."

But the generous romance of Olivia's adventure increased the griefs she intended to heal, or rather tore open again those deep-mouthed wounds which she little supposed

supposed had bled so long; much less did she imagine her virtuous self the innocent cause.

Henry, to do him justice, now concealed from her with the most generous and tender care, so soon as he found no discovery had taken place at the chapel-house, all that could lead to a fact, which he every hour received some fresh conviction, would, were it but surmised, plant an eternal thorn in the breast of the woman he had sworn to a dying father, who took his oath to the "registering angel," that he would make his wife, and whom even in the storm of passion which shook his heart, he felt had claims upon him independent of all bonds.

Yet, Olivia made this necessary concealment of Henry's emotions the more difficult; she imputed the occasional cloud that, in despite of his utmost caution, overshadowed his brow, and the involuntary sigh that stole from his bosom, solely to the loss of his father Sir Armine, and the absence of his beloved friend Charles; a
day

day seldom passed without her reminding him that the virtues of the former ensured him that heaven to which his soul had ascended, and from whence it looked benignly down, and blessed that forgiving spirit which led his beloved Henry to succour the children of his mortal foe, whose vices rendered those children the more perfect objects of pardon and of love.

“Certain I am,” would she say, lifting her beautiful eyes to heaven, “Sir Armine approves all we may or *can* do for those afflicted and deeply injured beings. His sacred form was before my mind’s eye, as I entered the chapel-house—he smiled, methought, as I rose above the shrinking diffidence of my own timid nature, and the fancy that he did so, gave me confidence in what I spoke. As I came back, such a glow spread over my heart, that I have since considered it as an emanation sent from the bright region in which he now resides, to signify that even God himself, in whose sacred presence he now moves, pronounced

pronounced what I had undertaken was good. Your image too, dearest Henry, came in with its encouragements. Henry will be so surprized—so pleased, thought I—O my little offering of good will is abundantly overpaid! Why, Henry, will not every body do kind things! since the smallest urbanity is sure to be returned in blifs a thousand fold! Virtue seems to me to be common interest, my friend, and all the powers of earth and heaven reward it with happy feelings even to usury. Sweet, dejected, drooping Caroline! noble-hearted, generous Charles! how infinitely am I already indebted to ye! How can I repay my obligations?”

Indeed, every object that presented itself was productive of something designed to create the felicity of that heart which it kept in continual agitation. As she ended the above effusions, which were poured forth on the very evening of the eventful day that she arrived from the chapel-house, she cast her eyes on that little adherent who has already been so fruitful

fruitful of adventure in the course of this history.—“As I live,” said she, “this dear little Fitz is with us again! He already anticipates the time when we shall all be of one house, and even now considers himself as one of the family. But, methinks, he ought to have gone back with his sweet mistress too, now she is unhappy.”

It was impossible for Henry not to be at once distressed and delighted by these kind revivals of what it was for the happiness of both Olivia and himself to forget.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSULTATIONS.

MEANTIME the amiable brother and sister, whom we so lately reconducted to the chapel-house, had a conference with father Arthur as soon as they were able to appear before him. The subject was their preparations to leave the neighbourhood. They ingenuously related to him the particulars

culars of their discourse with Olivia, nor did they conceal the strong emotions of their hearts.

“It is time to make an escape from ourselves,” said Charles. “Our hearts are not to be trusted. Every hour we continue here is replete with pain and peril; and the very air we breathe is full of temptations. I cannot answer for myself if I remain any longer in this strait betwixt Scylla and Carybdis—the abbey and the castle; and my sister concurs with me in thinking, that when she is properly and honourably placed, something may be determined as to myself. Let us then lose no time, for I will honestly confess, a second visit from Olivia, which she has given us reason to expect, would perhaps prove too strong for all that reason, piety, or prayer could urge.”

“A second rencontre of that kind would, at least, afflict us both, to no good end,” said Caroline; “and as my fixed and solemn purpose is to go, the sooner that purpose is fulfilled the better.”

Caroline

Caroline uttered these few words with much delay and difficulty. The sight of Henry Fitzorton, and the contest it produced in her gentle bosom, had thrown her into such a state of agony, that she remained several hours speechless in her chamber.

Late on the following day she arose and came into the hall of the chapel-house, pale almost as if she were indeed in her shroud, and feeble even to staggering. But her principles knew no weakness; and what was due to virtue she still resolved to pay, without one appeal from the rigours of justice to the softness of love.—“O father Arthur!” said she, “We have confided with you our hearts—dispose of us before any discovery takes place which may make the angel-hearted Olivia as wretched as ourselves. Perhaps, already something has transpired from the late fatal interview.—We rely on your instant services. To your moral guidance, O dear adopted parent, we commit ourselves.”

Dennison, who was within the hearing
of

of this, threw himself upon his aged knees, and embracing by turns those of Charles and father Arthur, and then taking the hand of Caroline, humbly entreated, that since his dear young mistress was resolved on retiring from the world, that it might be in some asylum where the attendance of an old and faithful servant would be admitted;—declaring, that if he were denied this, he would build himself a hut, at the gate of the convent that inclosed her, and live and die near the daughter of his dear lady, to whose family he had sworn the dedication of himself while life remained.

—“ So it will be in vain to shut me out,” cried the old man; “ remember, miss, remember, young squire, what I said in my letter,—‘ where she lives there will I live; where she lodges there will I lodge.’—I know what the true Lady Stuart, as she lay dying, said,—I shall never forget it—‘ Dennison,’ said she, ‘ poor Dennison, you are an old standard of my dear father’s family, and must needs love my children;’ and then she whispered something about

what might come to pass—what, alas ! has happened—sure she was a prophetess ! I am sure she is a saint, and a spirit in heaven, at the right hand of the Lord God, as sure as I am now speaking upon earth.—Reverend Sir, do not think of letting me leave my young lady. If you part me from her, my heart will break, and my death shall be upon your head—aye, I would say so, if you were my father by blood.”

“ We will all go, my honest fellow,” exclaimed Arthur, melted with his earnest and simple eloquence, and assisting Charles and Caroline to raise him up:—“ I have already been turning the matter in my mind, and think it behoves all of us to depart, for a time at least, from a place which is, as you say, my dear child, beset with danger. The day may arrive when some of us may return to it with joy. Be that as it may, I trust you will put yourselves wholly under my guidance ; and convincing yourselves that I have your best interest, temporal and eternal, in view, I must

must

must have your promise to submit unquestioned, however mysterious may be my seemings, to what I shall propose, and to follow wherever I shall lead."

Having vowed the most implicit and unlimited obedience, and Dennison's worthy mind being made easy, the rest remained with the good Arthur, who told them, that on the third day, counting from that in which he spoke, their route should be fixed, and their journey might begin on the morning of the fourth. In truth, the sagacious monastick had already made his arrangements; for he soon perceived the chapel-house would be no resting-place; and as well read in the weakness of the human heart, as in its strength, he thought it fool-hardiness to set virtue too severe a task, or impose on her approved votaries mere trials of strength. He had little to apprehend from the established rectitude of those whom he called and loved as his children; but now that he was more completely in the secret of their hearts, he said they were surrounded by snares which

virtue herself had set, and that their own sensibility was lying in ambush to entrap them; a speedy refuge was, therefore, expedient, and his honest heart had been and was still diligent to prepare it.

But, short as was the space betwixt the determination and the departure of this little party, it was filled with incidents of great account to each individual.

The point was scarce agreed on, as to the time of setting out, ere True George, in that sort of haste which made him blow as if he was labouring with an asthma, and in which indeed he performed all his commissions, delivered a packet to Charles—gave several reverential bows, with like rapidity in distinct respect, to every one present—apportioning his bend to the degree of claim which each had on his affections, and then set off with the same speed he entered.

The billet contained these few words:

“ Charles,

“ Charles,

“ That you may not suffer by surprise, expect, within an hour from your receipt of this, a friendly call from

JOHN FITZORTON.”

Though the surprise was broken by this note of annunciation, the curiosity which it excited, as to what might be the motive of the visit, was extreme.

Charles read the billet aloud to his friends, and the expectation of something extraordinary became general. They knew, indeed, that the writer of it would say nothing without a meaning, and that his meaning was always characteristick of himself, apposite to some point that he believed to be strong and momentous.— They laid no stress on the messenger's bustling address, for as it was a maxim of old Dennison's to do business a round trot, so was it young George's to fetch and carry messages at full gallop; but with this line of variation between the two, that Dennison generally, as has been noted, conversed with himself or others all the

way going and coming, and George seldom spoke any sentence but that which made up his message, which he would in repetition mutter to himself, lest he should drop a syllable on the road, for miles together; and if the errand had nothing verbal in it, he would conduct himself exactly as he did at the chapel-house, on the delivery of John's billet.

From the hurry-scurry of George, therefore, nothing could be gathered by those who were acquainted with his paces, although these alone, to any one who knew him not, would have been sufficiently alarming to denote an affair of life or death; whereas, in fact, he would bring you a toothpick or a challenge with equal dispatch.

Yet no one at the chapel-house, except Charles, had seen John Fitzorton since the death of Sir Armine, or the conspiracy of Sir Guise. Charles silently interpreted the interview, partly to his delay in returning to the regiment, and partly to disregard of the captain's admonitions. Caroline, know-
ing

ing John's high sense of honour and insult, had her silent fears also.

While they were involved in the labyrinth of conjecture, the object of them appeared, to the moment of his appointment; and after a more respectful bow than it was his practice to give, and which was a deference he paid sometimes to real misfortunes, but never to the affectation of them, nor indeed to false pretensions of any kind, he desired to exchange a few words with Mr. Stuart, and they went out together.

CHAPTER XVII.

ANOTHER VISIT.

“LIEUTENANT,” said John, “I hate letter-writing—not the trouble, but the vexatious inefficiency of it. It multiplies words, and embarrasses meaning; to explain which, we run into replies and rejoinders, till we imperceptibly involve ourselves in a correspondence. The chaos

of obscurity is then complete. I come, therefore, to answer your resignation personally: I accept that resignation: I think I should have acted as you have done, in your situation. You have done nothing to dishonour the commission you received; but I do not see how you could have publicly held it to the satisfaction of your private feelings, which are not only the best judges, but the surest rewards and punishments of a man's actions."

Charles's cheek began to glow.

John paused, and extended his hand, which Charles met half way.

"It would be tyranny," continued John, "to impose on the son of the wretched and pestilent man, who has contributed to murder my father, any thing that has the air or weight of an obligation."

"O, insupportable!" said Charles, stretching out both his arms to their utmost width, as if to figure the immeasurable burden removing from his bosom.

"Your lieutenancy is, therefore, elsewhere disposed," proceeded John; "and
of

of your father's attempt on the sacred life of mine—but let me hurry from the dreadful circumstances! Alas! not millions of such lives as——but I will not name him to you—could atone even for imagining the death of Sir Armine Fitzorton. Why is there not a law, my friend, that the parent should consign to immediate death a thankless child, and the dishonoured child be the sanctioned executioner of an unnatural father?"

"What less can expunge the spot which infamy entails on a family to all posterity!" ejaculated Charles.

"Posterity itself," replied John, "and the example of children like my friend Charles—but all that was in the power of Sir Guise has, reluctantly, been done.—This packet,"—here John took some papers from his pocket, and desired Charles would deposit them in his own,"—"This packet will explain every thing, I trust, to your satisfaction, because it is both to me and to you an act of justice, and not of obligation. I am, as haply you suspect,

put, by your own lips, and from my own observation, in the most secret sorrows of your heart. They are profound—they are pitiable—but—they are not without a parallel.”

“Alas! no!” said Charles; “they find one no less bitter in the bosom of ——” Charles was just about to pronounce the name of his sister, when, checking himself, he left the sentence unfinished. He thought it unnecessary to commit or involve Caroline, the knowledge of whose similar disappointments could lead to no good effect; since, like his own, her passion was hopeless. It was one of the maxims settled by John’s noble disposition, as a rule of conduct, never to make a good mind betray itself; nor, if possible, to suffer a bad one to escape its own snare. In the latter case, he would hurry on a rogue to confession of villany by every terrifying power. In the former, he would prevent confession by all the kind interventions that offered. He saw the worthy Charles embarrassed; and without pushing the generous

generous soul into painful declaration, or waiting to gratify curiosity, he relieved him, by saying, "Yes, dear Charles; they find another where possibly you little expected—in the bosom of a friend—even in him who now gives you the hand of sympathy," said John.

"In your's!" exclaimed Charles, with all the emphasis of amazement.

"Even so," responded John. "You are amongst the number of those who impute to the coldness of my nature what proceeds from the vigour of my discipline. Imitate that vigour—emulate that discipline. To such an end I disclose and confide it with you. I have been, for eleven years, perhaps I am still, as much devoted to Olivia as yourself, or as Henry, I now find, is to Caroline. Had I not discovered her affection for my brother Henry, I would have tried the fortune of my rougher heart, or at least ruder manners, and might possibly have been your rival. But her whole soul was anticipated; and had you, my friend, or had even an enemy of worth and honour,

pre-engaged it, I would have acted as I have done—*promoted her happiness with the object of her affection.* This, my friend, is not the folly of a hero, but the common duty of an honest man; for though it were to be wished she could have inspired the man of her choice with an equal passion, she had better wed a man of honour whom she tenderly loves, than one to whom she is wholly indifferent; which must have been the case, had she fallen to the lot of either you or me, my friend. To struggle honourably and silently; to convert unavailing hope, and unwarranted jealousy, into an honest endeavour to serve her with the man of her heart, was all that remained.”

Charles admitted the fact, but gave a heavy sigh at the words, “wholly indifferent;” for though he knew these words described the truth of his own case, and had resolved never to see Olivia again, he could not hear that truth without an uneasy sensation.

“Any other conduct, you are aware,” resumed John, “would have aggravated my
my

my disappointment, and driven Olivia to the necessity of refusing me ; the distress of which to her, and the disgrace to me, would have been equal."

Charles considered this inference as incontrovertible, yet could not help thinking the worthy speaker more a hero than a lover.

" I therefore prosecuted my plan," continued John—" a severe system of self-denial: but do not think I suffered less on that account. I have an aversion to confidences in sorrow, whether from pride, or a better motive, I know not; but miserable feelings are best kept to one's self, methinks, though I will communicate matter that is comfortable with any man. These remarks are superfluous, as it is impossible either you or I can indulge a farther hope of Olivia, who is now little less than my brother's wife."

Betwixt the utterance of the words " brother" and " wife," there was a long line of circumvallation drawn by John's heart, which

which now began visibly to sound the alarm.

“ Ah ! my friend,” ejaculated he, “ that Henry were as sensible to her merits as either you or I!—but she cannot make him miserable ! Alas ! if she should, in the end, be so herself, that would be a hard stroke on us both.” John took out his handkerchief, and applied it to that part of his face which demanded it not, violently protesting at the same time, that the cold in his head—then first discovered—almost distracted him.

“ As—I—say—as,” continued John ; “ excuse me, Charles—I am, as you must perceive, getting quite hoarse—I shall not be able to speak !—In short, let us remember—let us never forget—let us have it eternally in recollection—In short, you see clearly—”

“ I do, alas ! I do most clearly,” said Charles.

“ These keen easterly winds, my friend, force the water from one’s eyes,” exclaimed John.

Charles,

Charles, looking on the weather-cock of the chapel, which stood opposite to the spot where they discoursed, and seeing it point due west, whispered to his own heart, that John was no more of a philosopher than himself.

But John tried again—"Let us remember," taking Charles by the hand, "that we are brother sufferers—brother soldiers—and men of honour. You see how I bear it, my friend—bear it as—"

Three hems—ending in as many coughs—could not stifle John's sensations; for the tears, as if in perfect despite of his efforts to conceal them, streamed along his face; and it was in vain that he pretended, in this extremity, to substitute a weakness in the eyes as the cause of that effusion which flowed from the tenderness of his heart. Perceiving this—"Behold," said he, "one of the many curses of what is called social sorrow. I have had ten thousand of these momentary infirmities in my solitary walks—in my chamber—in my tent—and even in the field of battle, where publick duty prevented.

prevented private observation; yet still it was an affair of the *secret* heart that involved none but myself, and did not expose the mind that agonized. Not that I ought to be ashamed of it," continued John, resuming himself: "for with this hand will I give away, at the altar, that of Olivia, to him only whom she can love: and in order my friend, to prove, that you and I love her still, love her as we ought to do, let us take every opportunity to make her husband—"

John declared a fly had got into his throat.

"Her husband as proud of—of—of pos—pos—possessing her—"

The fly had somehow leapt from his throat again into his eyes.

"As—happy, I say, as—had it pleased heaven to have inclined her heart to either of us—we—should have been—"

The latter part of this sentence, in point of tone and emphasis, was many degrees lower than the former. One was in unison with the loftiest sentiment of the human
6 mind,

mind, the other attuned to the trembling vibrations of the human heart. But it was the same noble composition of nature in all her grand and tender movements.

John rallied, and was re-assuming the philosopher, when observing Charles shake his head, "I will yield the point," exclaimed John—answering to that significant shake. "We have talked each other into this condition. Another blessed effect of confidence! I told you what would come of it. I protest to you, Charles, more words have been wasted and more weakness displayed in this short interview, than in my eleven years of silent forbearance; and yet I confided only that you might not think your sufferings and situation unexampled. You are right, my friend, this is no moment to be magnanimous; yet our being men of sensibility, involved in similar disappointment, prevents not our being men of honour. We are in possession of each other's misfortune, and may secretly resort to one another for support and sympathy, should

should the approaching event require greater strength than our own."

John perceived that Charles's heart was full, but his arms open. He run into those with an ardency that was returned with an ingenuous zeal. The friends then bade each other farewell. John hastened back to the castle, first assuring Charles, "that he had but half performed his errand, and that he should see him and his party again, on some momentous business he could not then stay to impart."

"Noble, high-feeling, and high-thoughted man!" said Charles,—apostrophizing in soliloquy as he passed on: "What a moment has he chosen for the discovery! He knew my domestick sorrows to be deep and mighty, the ruins of my fortune to be complete, the disgrace of my family to be desolating—and the agonies of my heart to swell almost to bursting; then, then it was that he came to separate the sufferer from the offender, to embrace me as an unfortunate friend, shew me that we were
involved

involved in one common calamity, and taught me to bear it—not by the stubborn example of the Cynick's virtue, which is but another word for affectation or stupidity, but by convincing me he struggled with a disappointment mighty as my own !”

CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE DISCOVERIES.

FROM the time that John Fitzorton had received the resignation of the lieutenancy, he was truly anxious to atone for the loss which that unfortunate young soldier, whom he at once loved and pitied, sustained by an action which he felt to be the consequence of a brave, delicate, and independent spirit. And on conversing with Henry, he found his brother officer labouring under the various ills and injuries which Charles himself recapitulated in his soliloquy. John, therefore, without wasting time or words, in barren and ostentatious compassion,

compassion, or speaking to Henry a single word about tender disappointments, seriously, although silently meditated how he might essentially serve this young man, and his no less meritorious, no less suffering sister.

Indeed, his attachment to their virtues had all along been as sincere as the detestation he had borne to the vices of their father; nor had any insults which he had himself sustained from the one, the power to affect his unprejudiced and clear-judging mind from what was due to the others. Not even the outrage of Sir Guise at Ad-fell forest shook his impartiality, although the interdicted particulars of that outrage, all fatal as they were, had come to his knowledge. No immediate opportunity, however, presented itself: it was a point of delicacy and difficulty; and John not only rejected confidence in his sorrows, but his benevolence, whenever it could possibly be avoided; and till the hour of giving them effect, his most generous designs lay hid in his bosom. But the miscarriage of one,
two,

two, three, or three-and-twenty efforts, did not discourage him from going on till he succeeded; his maxim *then* was to impart the rise and progress of his lucky endeavours, considering the rest as irrelevant. He would however much oftener present the happy piece of fortune he had procured to the person deserving it, without annexing it to any history at all, which he usually considered as a bait for applause, on which he looked down with all the pride of a magnificent spirit.

Several days elapsed before John could satisfy himself as to the mode of redressing the grievances of his two friends at the chapel-house, although he was early determined that the chief author of the calamity should be instrumental in its relief.

At length, an accident brought about, without any difficulty, what had cost the persevering John so much labour in thought, and so much of that labour in vain.

The history must look back a little. Our companions in this work will not have forgotten that the person fixed on by
John

John to carry his billet to Charles was True George.

That faithful fellow who had, in his heart, the very simplicity and sincerity of goodness, was accessory to the prosperity which was now about to gild the chapel-house. He had, with unspeakable assiduity, sought to wean the affections of Jenny Atwood from the unworthy object who too long possessed them, and place them in his own honest bosom; and though he made slow progress, he had *begun an impression*; the first visible mark of which was her suffering him to mention the baronet's name with a part of the indignation it deserved.

Indeed, the vile and abject spirit of her quondam lover, manifested both before and after the assassination scheme, the base injustice practised against the respectable Fitzortons, and his own children, and more especially the marriage with Mrs. Tempest, and which was not like poor Jane's—a mock, but *bonâ fide* a real wedding, after a time worked together for George's good. She began to find a kind of *relief* in his company,

company, which had before been burdensome. She suffered his little attentions, which formerly she had deemed intolerable; and always in possession of her goodwill and esteem for his virtues, she by degrees, and insensibly, encouraged his flame, not that she could yet be said to return his love.

She had still a child which had been the fruit of her former ill-requitted and unfortunate passion, and by that tenure the faithless seducer had some hold on her maternal sensibility: yet, she was pleased to merit the daily increasing tenderness of a worthy man.

One evening as George returned from an errand his master Henry had sent him on, Jenny perceiving his eyes were filled with tears, which he in vain attempted to conceal, "What is the matter, George?" said she in a voice softer than she had ever before addressed him, putting her handkerchief at the same time up to his face. Unable to make any reply, he sat for some moments rocking himself in a chair, and then

then broke forth into the following exclamation, interrupted by a torrent of grief, which had its fountain in his generous heart:

“ I do not like, Mrs. Jenny, to bring up the name of that Sir—Somebody in your hearing, because I would not have you think I disparage *him* to make you have a better liking to *me*; but I would not have what he did no longer ago than yesterday to answer for, if I might have the whole world! no! not to have you.”

“ Yesterday!” repeated Jenny.

“ But I may as well speak of it as another,” said George. “ The unnatural—gentleman—no sooner brought home the madam, whom he had married, than he picked a quarrel with the poor Lieutenant and Miss Stuart, and *turned them out of doors!* and the worthy popish doctor you have heard so much of, took them into his little chapel-house, where they now are almost distracted; for thus runs the rumour in the parish.

“ The hard-hearted—person,” continued
George,

George, still sinking the name, “ even refused sending their wearing apparel ; this, also, was reported ; and if it had not been,” proceeded George, “ for my master, and good Mr. Dennison, they might have wanted a morsel of bread.”

“ Morsel of bread !” said Jenny. “ Gracious God !—Why, have they not five hundred pounds a-year each, left to them by Sir Marmaduke Stuart, their relation, in the West Indies ?”

“ Not they, poor souls ! not five hundred farthings ; and as for Sir Marmaduke, I never heard of him before, nor I don’t believe they either. I thought my master Henry would have gone raving distracted mad, while he was speaking of them, though I found, thank God, he did not know the worst, which you may be sure, Mrs. Jenny—I wish I might call you Jane, as I find, Sir—Somebody called you Mrs. Jenny—I did not, I say, tell my master the worst ; and so, poor gentleman, he got up into his own chamber, that none of the family might see the trouble he was in—Ah, Jenny !”—

“ I thought you were to call me Jane, Mr. George,” sighed she—“ Thank ye, Mrs. Jane,” answered George, bowing; “ Ah! dear Mrs. Jane, there is a great deal of trouble that nobody but God Almighty sees—and Mr. Henry is a great sufferer, for all he is so kind spoken. ‘ George,’ said his honour to me, ‘ is the door fast?’ I went and locked it, trembling all the way, but saying never a word—‘ George, if you would save me from dipping my hands in blood—in the blood of Sir Guise Stuart—take this purse, and give it to old Dennison, whom you will find at the chapel-house, and for your life speak not a word either to Charles or Caroline.’ As he pronounced these names, I thought his heart would have broke—‘ Speak not a syllable to any body, George.’ Well, I was at the chapel-house, and back almost directly, and by good luck only saw Mr. Dennison—though *he* looked almost as bad as my master. I did not open my lips, but Mr. Dennison whispered—he feared it was all over with his young master and mistress.”

“ You

“ You astonish me,” said Jane, “ more and more at every word ; certainly, unless Sir Marmaduke’s will is good for nothing, by there being one of a later date, the son and daughter of a—a—certain person are in possession of five hundred pounds a-year each—for I saw the will with my own eyes, but in the calamities that fell so thick on each other about that time, perhaps, Sir—Sir—Guise forgot the circumstance.”

“ What circumstance ? ” demanded George, eagerly.

“ Why the will I just now spoke of ; and if it be so, how fortunate shall I think myself in not having destroyed or lost it ; and you must know, my good George, that while I was living—alas ! I then thought as innocently as happily—in London, I had occasion to look into a kind of travelling chest which belonged to Sir Guise, and which Mr. Valentine Miles’s man brought, saying it was full of old papers, it must be put into a careful place, as some of the papers might be of consequence, and were to be sorted ; and I remember on the after-

noon Mr. Dabble, the attorney, had settled some law business, I observed Sir Guise throw several packets into that chest, telling me he would have a fire lighted the next time he came, and could spare an hour to overlook and burn most of that trumpery; but this was forgotten, and as the baronet was then in a great hurry to go out, the key was forgot also, which I myself put into my pocket, with an intention to give it Sir Guise the next time he came, but it went out of my head, and as the lodgings were scanty of drawers and such conveniencies, I put into it any thing that would otherwise have laid littering about; in tumbling over these, I misplaced some of the papers which Sir Guise had thrown in for burning, and was struck with these words on the back of one of them: ‘ Copy of Sir Marmaduke’s will.’ I don’t know what possessed me to look into it, and though I could not very well make it out, I read sufficient to see it was much in favour of the baronet’s children.”

“ But you have got the papers yet, you say,” cried George; “ with the blessing of
God

God we may still recover their property. I have a thought, Mrs. Jane; you must be ruled by me."

"If no harm is intended Sir Guise, who, I am sure, cannot be to blame in this, I consent George," exclaimed she.

"I dare not tell my master, Mr. Henry Fitzorton, of this, because I know the consequence; but you must let me mention it to his brother, Mr. Sir John"—so he usually called him since Sir Armine's death; "Mr. Sir John," said he, "is as firm as a rock, and as stout-hearted as a lion, yet goes quietly about a thing."

"Do any thing you like," said the agitated girl, "so as you rescue the poor injured creatures' rights, though I fear it is too late; only do not let any harm come to Sir Guise, who was made to do whatever those lawyers thought proper; if any body has been to blame in this affair, it rests with me in not speaking of it before, which was only from thinking it of no consequence; for I recollect once mentioning it to Sir Guise, who said the business was taken care

of, and I dare say he thought so; not that I pretend to understand these matters, nor I suppose he neither."

"May be so," cried George; "but I know who does as well as any lawyer in the land; so do you go and get the papers ready, dear Mrs. Jane, and leave the rest to me; but not a word to any living soul, and as to harm—God help us, we only want to do what is right, and would not wrong any body."

CHAPTER XIX.

MEDITATIONS.

THIS affectionate conduct on the part of George, during the disclosure of a history from which reproaches were expected, won extremely on the grateful heart of the timid Jane Atwood, who, on taking leave, recompensed him with a look that richly paid the cordial he had bestowed on her wounded spirit; and this was the first moment he
dared

dared to tell himself—I am not indifferent to her.

But the history, and the historian, as well as the new sensation which filled his heart, did not allow of his going to sleep, or even to bed. The morning beginning to dawn, he waited John's hour of rising with the utmost impatience; at length it came, and as John had past the night in fruitless meditations upon the mode of extorting some provision for poor Charles and his sister out of the father's daily dissipated finances, it was the crisis most favourable to the tidings that the worthy domestick had to communicate. John, weary with cogitations, adopting an idea this minute, and rejecting it the next, had left his chamber at sunrise, and took a meditative walk round a shrubbery that was fenced in by the park paling on one side, and by a quickset of hawthorns on the other, running about a mile circularly from each wing of the house. George triumphed in this opportunity, and desired permission to unfold to his honour a scene of villany as bad as that of Guy

Faukes—seeing it was against one of the best young gentlemen and gentlewomen in the country, aye in the world—Captain and Miss Stuart.

A man, already debating on a subject which interests his affections, eagerly catches at every thing that applies. John—we should ere this have marked his right of inheritance by calling him Sir John, but that, in his strong way, he forbade every one of the family to use any title that reminded them or him of so irreparable a loss as the death of Sir Armine Fitzorton; and whenever any one annexed to his name the title which that loss conferred on him, he would check the observance of that mark of respect with as stern a frown as new-made Honourables generally give to those who presume to neglect it: But the dignity of John Fitzorton depended on nothing external—He ordered George to follow him into a summer-house at the south corner of the shrubbery, where the subsequent discourse passed between them.

“Relate every circumstance, George.”

“Only

“ Only your honour will take it into consideration, that poor Mrs. Jane Atwood, who is the cause of the plot being discovered, comes to no harm ; but indeed your honour will see she deserves none : and I have passed my word, afore God and Mrs. Jane, that should Sir Guise Stuart be found to have any hand in the matter, not to ’peach so as to get him hanged, as to be sure he ought to have been long ago.”

John nodded assent. George related all that Jane had told him about the will, saying, at the close of his narrative, “ I am glad at heart to see your honour takes it so well. I knew you would not fly out into hurry scurry as—Lord love his honour—Mr. Henry would—but take your measures to get back what belongs to poor Captain and Miss Caroline more coolly and cunningly, an’t please your honour : and it was therefore, I thought to myself, says I, ‘ George, you had better tell ’Squire Sir John than ’Squire Henry, about this will.’ And as to my Jane—that is—our Jane Atwood—I’ve done Jennying her, by per-

mission—your honour sees she is as harmless in the affair as the new-born baby ; and perhaps so is Sir Guise : but if it had not been for Jane, the thing might have been *smushed* up for ever—at least in this world.”

John did not interrupt this story by a single question. What George called *taking it so well*, arose from the magnitude of the emotion. At some passages in the narrative, torrents of blood rushed into his cheeks, which the next moment were left of as death-like a pale as if there had not been one drop of that blood remaining in his body. At length, collecting all his powers of self-controlment, he conferred an unusual mark of distinction on George, whom he shook by the hand—an honour never before granted to any domestick ; for though he was kind, considerate, and even bountiful to servants, his favours were always bestowed as if they came from the hand of a master, of which character he never lost the distinction or the awe.

Henry, on the other hand, was apt to
condescend

condescend a little too much : it produced affection, but it sometimes engendered also undue familiarity, and relaxed the well-poised authority so necessary to be preserved inviolate. But George had a disposition not to be spoiled by *any* extremes of behaviour, and was a rare example—amongst tens of thousands which form the rule of subordinate pride, folly, and ingratitude—how far the enriching hand of simple Nature can store the heart with the principles of humility, honour, and goodness, not to be shaken by any interest, nor corrupted by any example.

“ I am going to my chamber, George,” said John ; “ follow me thither, when you have got the papers you speak of. Tell Jane Atwood, she ought to love and honour True George ; and do you and she guard every syllable that respects this will in your own bosoms ; for on that silence depend, not only my good opinion, but possibly the lives of many here—and elsewhere.”

“ Lives !” cried George : “ Lord help us !

—well, your honour, but don't forget I have passed my word for Sir Guise's."

There was in John's speech, or in the manner of uttering it, something so affecting to True George that he bowed and looked, looked and bowed himself out of the room. Silent obedience, however, in servants was ever a charm in the eyes of John.

But Jane Atwood's lover did not suffer even love itself to delay carrying the bundle of papers she gave him, but still with the injunctions as to Sir Guise.

John received them graciously, and, retiring to his chamber, dropt the bolt of his door, and sat down, with a palpitating heart, to examine these eventful materials. In the heat of the perusal, the breakfast summons was rather abruptly given by Olivia's footman. "Puppy!" exclaimed John, "get down stairs. Tell them I shall not leave this room till dinner."—Dinner-time came; and Henry himself ventured a tap at the door. "If you disturb me, Henry," quoth John, "I protest

test I will break in upon your muse, and frighten her away, when she is inspiring you with happy thoughts. I shall be busy all day, perhaps all night; and as to eating, I shall not starve, depend upon it. I have a room full of food, both for body and soul; so leave me to my repast, and go quietly to yours."

Henry withdrew; and, as he rejoined the family, he applied the well-known words of King Richard—

"He's not i'th' vein!"

and we must not disturb him till the fit is over.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CLOVEN-FOOT.

NOTHING, surely, but the designation of that Providence, which gives to its direction the form of casualty, could make the timid and apprehensive Sir Guise Stuart either so negligent or so forgetful, as to leave

leave the credentials of his intended fraud—for we will ease the reader so far as to tell him it had not been completely perpetrated—upon his children to the mercy of whomsoever might find them.

From the written testimonies it appeared, that Sir Marmaduke Stuart, a first cousin to Sir Guise, had made a will, though Sir Guise had given out he died intestate, in consequence of which, Sir Guise, being heir at law, took possession of his property, which though not very considerable, was sufficient to discharge the testator's debts, and answer the several bequests, amongst which were life-annuities to the children of Sir Guise of five hundred pounds each, to be paid into a certain specified government fund one twelvemonth and a day after his decease, and the interest to accumulate until the parties came of age, but both interest and principal to be delivered up on their arriving at that period. It was likewise manifest that this will had been duly executed, but the signatures were torn off; and Sir Guise made
up

up his conscience to the enjoying the fruit of his deceit. But unluckily for the Baronet, Sir Marmaduke's solicitor, who was obliged to go suddenly and take possession of some property in the West Indies, where he afterwards established, sent over to Sir Guise a second will, the date of which revoked all others, and in this decisive one Charles and Caroline were mentioned with no less marks of distinction. Before, however, the end of the same year an account arrived from Jamaica of the attorney's death, an event which still promised secrecy to the designs of Sir Guise, who, finding his own estates begin to ebb apace, felt a strong propensity to supply them from Sir Marmaduke's reservoir. To which end he still gave out to his son and daughter, that they had not been remembered—he supposed because Sir Marmaduke knew the property would devolve to them as effectually after their tender father's death as if it had been devised.—Charles and Caroline being then very young, and very generous, and, of course,

very

very unsuspecting, rested satisfied with this account, and taking its truth for granted, never renewed, or perhaps never thought on the subject. They had never seen Sir Marmaduke, who chiefly lived abroad, and left so large a portion of his fortune to his cousin's children, merely because he did not wish to give it out of the family; and yet did not choose to bequeath it to Sir Guise, whom he never esteemed, and to whom he left only fifty pounds, with these remarkable words:—
“ I give and bequeath the sum of fifty pounds to my kinsman Sir Guise Stuart in token of my contempt.” This mark of ignominy, however, Sir Guise pocketed, as he did every other affront, even when it was not gilded like the present. Matters remained in this undivulged way, to the infinite content of Sir Guise, till he discovered that at the time the attorney sent over to him a copy of the will, the original, sent by the same conveyance, had been deposited in Doctors' Commons, but which, Sir Guise was informed, had been destroyed.

This

This thundering intelligence arrived at the time of the Baronet's maturest aversion to the first Lady Stuart, and to Caroline, and when his affections to Charles were in the decline. All these were motives to run any hazards rather than make a confession of the fact to the parties concerned. But there was yet a more important inducement to hush up the business. We must make a short digression to state the nature of it.

The finances of Sir Guise had even then been for some time under the pupillage of Mrs. Tempest and her paramour Miles. The Baronet's unconquerable love of the dice, and his complete ignorance with their consummate skill, gave them both the best pretence of plundering him in an honourable way. One fatal evening, therefore, when he was literally stript even from his diamond shirt-buckle to his watch, and downward to his shoe-buckles, at a *friendly* party, composed of Mrs. Tempest, Valentine Miles, a common companion of theirs, and himself, he grew frantick with his ill
luck,

luck, and, execrating Fortune, resolved on complete redemption or utter ruin at a stroke. Mrs. Tempest had, in a few hours, won several thousand pounds; Valentine no less. The friend abovementioned, whom Mrs. Tempest called cousin, had singly netted a draft for 8000*l*. Claret, Burgundy, Champagne, and last of all "imperial Tokay," had been called in to support the drooping heart, aching head, and trembling hand. The disappointed rage of Sir Guise, till it was put to flight by fear, was always phrenzy without the inflammations of the bottle; but these being adjoined, raving madness is a phrase somewhat too temperate to express the non-descript distraction of this memorable hour. He overset the dice-table, threw one of the boxes in the fire, tore and stamped upon some of the cards, gnashed others between his teeth, piled one chair upon another, slapped his forehead, and at length, being worked up to the proper ferment, he leaped upon the table, and proposed "Double or quits. Damnation!

I insist

I insist on restitution or ruin!" The bet was taken, amounting to a sum of forty thousand pounds, which had been the aggregate winnings of the friendly trio during the night. The ignorance and insanity of Sir Guise had no chance with the dexterity and double dealings of three expert gamblers! He soon rose, therefore, the above sum worse for that single throw, and at one sitting became debtor to the three friends in the sum of eighty thousand pounds!

Sir Guise now declared himself a ruined man, and muttered something about packed cards and loaded dice; whereupon Valentine Miles strutted up to him, assuming the man of nice honour, and insisted on satisfaction. In a tone wholly altered, Sir Guise declared he had been strangely misconceived, but it was plaguy hard to have such a cursed run in one night. Mrs. Tempest said she was sure her dear Baronet meant nothing personal; the friend protested, for his part he thought people in
luck

luck ought to do an handsome thing to the losing party, swearing that he would accept only Sir Guise's note at his own time for ten thousand, and cry quits. The cue was no sooner given, than the other performers acted their parts to perfection. Miles asseverated that he had as great a regard for Sir Guise as for any man in the world, and would let him off easily, and "I will answer for the lady's liberality." "Aye, he knows my weak part too well," sighed Mrs. Tempest. "Do what you will with me, gentlemen," answered the Baronet: "If you think fit to save me from ruin, it is more than I deserve." Thus they parted and the next day Sir Guise being wholly out of cash, as the trio very well knew, a mortgage was given on the abbey estate for ten thousand pounds to the friend, and the foundation was laid for the approbation and sale of poor Charles and Caroline's annuities to satisfy the two other moderate claims of Mrs. Tempest and her Valentine.

Versatile to the numberless meanders of the town, Mr. Miles soon adjusted the sale of the property in Mr. Dabble, the man in the world to make or mar a thousand last wills and testaments. The subsequent curious epistle which fell into John's possession will give the reader a happy specimen of that gentleman's creative talents:

“ N. D. informs V. M. that case is nice, but has got a party to do it, who, for considerations, will run all risques, and secrecy depended on—Broker of character will speak to married party, his friend; but for valuable considerations, broker sides with us: and must be let into plan—also, have drawn up sketch of the writings.—N. D. fancies if parties to consent should be wanting, they may be had on equitable terms; better if V. M. can provide them. Two adults of some sort must be forthcoming to agree, assign, &c. &c. else purchase null; but V. M. and any other of same age—spinster in preference to feme covert—will do. A fair price offered on speculation,

speculation, allowing for hazards. V. M. may fix time to see the instruments at N. D.'s apartments.

“ P. S. Ring at office bell.

“ Minories, Sep. 11.

“ N. B. Purchaser, an old dealer, and looks close. Parties to represent annuitants should be healthy constitution, price according. Affidavits, certificates, &c. &c. ready at a moment's warning.”

At the finishing of this eloquent morsel, which was amongst the papers delivered by Jane Atwood, John worked the letter into a twist in his clenched hand, precisely as he would have twisted the neck of the writer had he been present; and, then, personifying the innocent paper, bestowed upon it all those opprobrious names which were due to Mr. Nicholas Dabble, but of which the said paper was to the full as sensible in point of conscience as the aforesaid Nicholas, who had lived in the city of London a practising doer of all dirty works eight and thirty-years, without once committing

mitting an action, even by mistake, which did not deserve the halter. He had been the bosom friend of Mr. Miles and Mrs. Tempest half their lives, during which time he had got both of them out of as many hang-worthy escapes as he had got every person they connected with into them.— And, indeed, few Judges had ordered more guilty persons from the prison to the gallows than Nicholas had prepared innocent ones for both. But, as Mr. Dabble will turn out by no means like one of those heroes who “strut their hour upon the stage, and then are heard no more,” we will reserve what may further be proper to say of him to his second appearance, convinced that his first has fixed an impression of his character in the mind of the reader not speedily to be effaced.

John soon recollecting himself, deemed the epistolary philippick of this prostitute of the law of too high value to destroy, and therefore rescued it, almost griped afunder, to as nearly its pristine state as he could, in the consolatory hope, that, like
the

the hand-writing on the wall, it might, one day, be given in evidence against the author.

Meanwhile, he carefully folded it up, and having sat a full hour in the profound thought that usually preceded his deeds of moment, he rose from his chair, indignant and determined. His plan was mature, and he lost not an instant in its execution.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONFESSIONS.

BY a perseverance which uneasiness of mind rather rendered more intense than obstructed, John had by this time secured his seat in parliament, where the independent display of his talents and principles had gained him the respect of all parties; as his attention to military duty, at home and abroad, had rendered him honourable in the opinion of friends and enemies: but, in the intervals of peace, it was always a lucky circumstance to favour any of John's

secret manœuvres, or in retreating from any chagrin or bosom service at the castle, to gain the regiment; and whenever the colonel, the colonel's horse, or groom were not to be found, which was often the case, it was concluded he was gone to quarters: And when his own servant was indisposed, he would, without ceremony, borrow True George from Henry, for an hour, a day, or a week. For instance, the colonel's servants being otherwise employed, or thought less proper for the business, George was now ordered to have horses saddled at five the next morning. The colonel only saying to him over-night, "You must leave your master, ay, and your mistress too, George, to accompany me at five to-morrow, on the matter we spoke about in the summer-house." George bounded, rather than ran, out of the room, and on that occasion would have left even the arms of his Jane, had they been enfolding him in the bridal hour,

"Punctual as lovers to the moment sworn;"

therefore John Fitzorton and True George kept their assignation in the stable. The morning was heavy with clouds, which, as the colonel mounted his steed, broke in deluges of rain: Neither of our heroes appeared at all disposed to advert to the circumstance, nor indeed to be sensible of it. The 'tempest in their minds,' as the great dramatick delineator says, 'took from them all feeling else.' They had cleared the park, and got about a mile on the road, when George recollected that the colonel's great coat was belted to his back; and the colonel, so far from feeling the want of it, was jogging on at a gentle trot, with his eyes fixed on the pommel of the saddle, as if he were counting the drops that fell from the spout of his hat, which, having the cock military, filled like a reservoir, and, from the downward bend of his head, flowed like a fountain.

George, however, having unbuckled the great coat, rode up to the side of John Fitzorton, but seeing his position, (for George critically understood all the family attitudes,)

attitudes,) he feared to interrupt his mind by an unseasonable care of his body, which, he knew, was always secondary in Colonel Sir John's consideration. After due deliberation, therefore, what, in so difficult a case, was proper to be done, he passed by John a few paces, holding the great coat at arm's length, so that it might strike in the most favourable point of view, and thereby recommend itself; but this not succeeding, and the shower not only increasing, but driving with the wind full in their faces, George drew in his own steed, and gently threw the coat on John's shoulders. This arousing the latter, who had been all that time making Sir Guise, his new married lady, her gallant Mr. Miles, their agent Mr. Nick Dabble, and even the purchaser of annuities, dance the tight rope from one scaffold, had the desired effect; the colonel, throwing the bridle on his horse's neck, took up the great coat, and put it on slightly, saying to George, who stood at the horse's head, "And I advise you to follow the example;" which the

obedient George would certainly have taken even had the dogstar raged—so implicit was he as to the word of command—but for a trifling impediment—that is to say, he had no great coat to put on; for when he unbuckled John's, he forgot to save his own, which, therefore, dropt for the use of the next traveller who might wish for such a convenience. Upon this discovery, however, George contented his honest heart with gently condemning and striking his own head, kept his station behind, and only said to himself, 'What a silly Simon! 'tis well it was not Mr. Sir John's, though.'

The colonel pushed on, much increasing his pace—not because the morning continued showery, but because he had, perhaps, satisfied his imagination with seeing the parties swing their hour in his fancy, and he seemed riding-post to take the news to his friends. The colonel and his attendant had travelled upwards of twenty-four miles ere George had hazarded a conjecture where they might be going, for

John

John had not said a syllable as to that particular, nor, indeed, would George have made an inquiry had he been journeying to the world's end; but that feeling a mis-giving they were wrong, he supposed matters had better be set right; he conceived John was at least two-and-twenty miles out of the road. He was therefore on the very rim of a question, the rarest of all things with George, when John, pulling in his steed, signified his intention to stop at the next market-town, and if the weather did not clear, go post the rest of the way; "for," added he, "I am, as I suppose you may guess, going to Mr. Partington's."—"Bless us! your honour," replied George, "I wish I had known that before, because I could have gone several miles nearer across the country. We should have left the London road, which your honour knows we are still upon, at the two mile-stone, and gone over the heaths."—"And pray how happens it thou art so well acquainted with this road?" interrogated John, "'tis quite out of Henry's beat,

prosaick or poetical, and Partington is but recently settled in these parts.”—“Your honour knows I have been backwards and forwards on one business or t’other ever since—”—“Ever since—Jenny Atwood’s father, I suppose, was put by Partington into a farm in his neighbourhood. Hey George? What, you went for his vote and interest I suppose?” George blushed, and took in a copious mouthful of rain; he then said, “We must now go right an end, please your honour, then take the road slip-side of the town, which will bring us to—to the farmer’s, your honour.”—While George was accurately describing the geography of the road to Partington’s, a man on horseback rode by at a full trot, when George immediately exclaimed—“Your honour, there’s my great coat! if your honour will give me leave, I’ll have it off that fellow’s back in *a jiffy*.”—John assenting to this, the dripping George galloped after the man, who, believing himself pursued, and whose horse having the speed of George’s, would, perhaps, have
escaped

escaped with the furtout after all, had not some little altercation at the turnpike taken place, and occasioned a delay which brought the pursuer near enough to catch the arm of the man pursued, and to say—
“ This is mine, sir; I’ll make affidavit of it before a justice of peace; and there’s one just behind, who is a squire, and a barrow-night, and a colonel, and a parliament-man, at the same time, and who knows the coat as well as I do.” The word justice, sounded more ominously in the ears of the party accused than all the other titles of his worship, had they outpedigreed Cadwallader; he therefore owned the fact, saying, “ Though I found it in the king’s highway, friend, and could, therefore, keep it by law, I will surrender it, if the pikeman will open the gate and let me through, as I am in a very great hurry.” This haste produced a suspicion in the mind of the toll-receiver, who swore he would detain him as a thief on his own confession, the goods being found upon him. “ And as to your finding a good

great coat on the road such a morning as this," said the man, sneeringly, "'tis a likely story, indeed! seeing that there is not such a ninny in the world to throw away the best friend to a man's back in such a ducibus of a day as here is!" For the proof of which assertion he appealed to George himself, putting it to *him*, whether such a nincompoop ignoramus was ever known in King George's dominions! He then added, "I suppose, young man, this fellow has robbed both you and your master."

"I believe," said George, "he *might* find it, for I was fool enough to let it drop; but still it is my coat, and I must have it." All this time the stranger resisted, for fear of some worse discovery; and while he was labouring to muffle up his face in the said coat, which had now become necessary as a disguise, George laboured to uncase him, assisted by the tollman, and indeed by his wife, who now came forth from the turnpike-house, half undressed, to see what was the matter. These contentions gave John
time

time to come up, and he gained the scene of action just as the victorious George had unhooded his antagonist—a victory, which unfolded to the view of the company the illustrious Mr. David Otley, late, as the reader remembers, a faithful domestick in the Clare, and now a no less worthy confidant in the Stuart family. At the sight of John Fitzorton his usual presence of mind, which in a case of stratagem was scarcely inferior to that of the Swedish monarch, wholly forsook him, and he fell upon his knees, assuring every one present, that—though he knew he was a very infamous rascal, greater rascals than he had made him so; and particularly the love of gold, the root of all evil, and which he verily thought the greatest rascal-maker in the world, and would, sooner or later, bring him and a number of his friends to the gallows. “But indeed, your honour, my conscience has at last done what I thought would never come to pass, worked a miracle upon me, for I am now running away from the abbey, and going to London to repent.”

John could scarcely help unbending his muscles, braced up as they had long been to thoughts of vengeance; and, indeed, he almost smiled at the place which Otley had chosen for the scene of his reformation. However, commanding George to take his property, the youth had no sooner obeyed, than feeling something hard and heavy in the pockets, he took out from thence a brace of pistols, which in an instant George discovered to be loaded.

“As *our* pistols, your honour, are in their cases on the saddles, these cannot be they,” said George, significantly.

“And are these the books, firrah, from which you study the art of penitence?” questioned the colonel, sternly. “Tie him on the horse, George, and bring him away.”—Jane’s lover performed this with surprising agility. He belted him with the strap which had before bound the very great coat that led to his discovery, then threw him on his back over the horse’s shoulders, and, getting up before him, trotted off with him calf-fashion, with as
much

much ease as if he had been carrying his master's portmanteau.

The turnpike-man, who was an arch fellow, and a great lover of seeing thieves taken, tried, and executed, begged a holiday of his wife.—“Now do oblige me, my dear love, by letting one of your pretty eyes look to the gate, and your two pretty hands take the toll, just while I see this gentleman limbo'd. 'Tis for the good of my country to lend a lift to hang off its rogues; and next to you I love my country, you know.”—The wife, pleased with the wording of her husband's petition, charitably and lovingly replied, “Well—but mind you bring me back news the fellow is to be hanged at our next sizes, because then I shall have a gossiping as well as you, and limping Beck will see to the gate; and I *know*, husband, that is a villain, because the young man says he went from 'squire Clare's family to that of Sir Guise. We know old devil-come Guise of old.”

Thus authorised, the turnpike-man, jumped up behind George, who reached

his colonel and the town, which was but a short mile from the turnpike, at the same time. They stopt at the sign which bore the name of George, with the addition of Saint, for the prowess of conquering the dragon; but perhaps the reader will presently be of opinion, as great honours ought to be adjudged to our modern George for his atchievements in bringing to condign punishment an animal more baneful to society than the dragon which fable asserts, or all the actual wild beasts of the earth; for what troop of them can cause half the mischief that has often been produced by one dishonest man?

The culprit being unbound, to observe which a greater concourse of spectators had gathered, than suited the colonel's purpose, he took in his hand Otley's pistols, and went with him into a room, and sat on him in his judicial capacity, as successor, by right of eldership, as well as nomination in the commission of the peace. Assuming, therefore, his terrible graces, he told David, in a very succinct manner, that he
was

was apprised of enough of *his* villany, as well as that of his employers, to hang the whole gang. "But as you know me, Otley," said John, "few words are necessary; answer, then, the questions I shall put to you;—first, whither are you going?"—"To London, sir, as I hope to be spared," answered the trembler.—"To London! for what?"—"To—to—to—"—"Have a care! if your affectation of penitence was not in itself an ample ground of my suspicion, the thorough knowledge of you and your associates warrants my insisting upon—." "Sir, your honour, I see, knows me as well as I know myself," interrupted the quivering wretch; "I am only going, sir—I am going, a going—I am going, an't please your honour—I am only going—" "Where, rascal?"—"To town, on a little business to Sir Guise and Mr. Miles's attorney, sir."—"His attorney!" exclaimed John, staring wildly. "What is that attorney's name, firrah?"—"His name, an't please your honour—his name is—that is to say the name he does business in, is—is—" "Is

“ Is what, abominable caitiff?” questioned the terrible John, losing all temper. “ The name he does *some* of his businessses in, please your hon—hon—hon—hon—our,” replied Otley, cutting the word exactly in twain between his chattering teeth, “ is N. D. which means Nick Dabble, please your honour; but his real name, I have heard say, is—” “ Perdition on his real name, that in which he cheats heirs at law out of their estates, is sufficient for me;—the alias’s under which he will be hanged are immaterial,” said John—“ Oh Lord! Lord! your honour! save me, I am but a servant; a second-handed little personage, as it were, and obliged to do as I am bid. But I see your honour knows all; yes, I see I shall suffer yet. I told myself so years ago! both at the manor-house and castle. David, (said I,) depend upon it, my friend, the abbey will, sooner or later, take you to Tyburn.”

“ The abbey, for once, told truth,” said John.

Here David dropped on his knees, imploring

ploring mercy, and protesting he would from that moment be an honest man, and give instant proof of it, by 'peaching his master, mistress, and Miles, and the lawyer, and his clerk; and, in short, bring all their necks into the noose, if his worship would promise to let his own slip out of it.

John, instead of making any promise, held one of the pistols to each ear of the miserable petitioner, till he confessed he was going to Mr. Dabble's chambers, to meet the family.

"What family?" interposed John.

"Sir Guise, and the new Lady Stuart, and Mr. Miles, your honour, will be there presently, having set off before day-light from the abbey; only they come into the open road by backways, and are going to settle some little affair with a gentleman who lives in this very place, and then for London, to Mr. Dabble's; and—and there has been a—a—a—a—"

"WHAT?" said John, in thundering accents. "A little bit of a *rbumbustion* at the abbey, and Mr. Dabble is to commodate.

—He's

—He's a vast commodater, your worship—and I am a party—something about a little bit o' an affair of honour between Mr. Miles and my lady.—And this—this—is the whole truth, as we are all wicked sinners, an please your worshipful, merciful honour."

What further questions John would have put to the captive is uncertain; for True George tapped at the door of the chamber of examination, and, speaking through the key-hole, said, "The mob was so great, they would not leave the inn-yard till they knew what was to be done with the rogue."

John, by the same mode of communication, desired them to be told, that the man had given satisfactory answers to all his questions: and that, as the great coat had been actually found, and restored, the prisoner must be acquitted, in case he cleared up some other points, for which he must proceed with him to London. The multitude, though they appeared much discontented with these tidings, dispersed, lest they themselves should become responsible

to

to justice. The turnpike-man, in particular, was mortified, and began to fear it was decreed for him to return home to his wife without his welcome, having pledged himself, at parting, to bring the good news she expected, as to the thief's being committed to prison, and in a fair way of the gallows. And indeed, several of the mob now shifted their censure from the thief to the justice, whom, in a general muttering, they accused of undue severity, in taking a poor honest man up, and packing him upon a horse, as if he was a beast. Nay, one of the bye-standers observed, "that justices of the peace ought to be *sure* what they are about, before they go such lengths; otherwise nobody is safe," said he, addressing those nearest to him; "and you or I may be clapt into prison when we are as innocent as the child unborn; and as to the coat's being dropt—I don't doubt but that was designed as a trick upon travellers, all done for the purpose. I have been in the law myself, and with every gentleman of the faculty"—"You mean, of the pro-
fession,

feſſion, perhaps," ſaid his next-hand neighbour. " Well," reſumed the other, " it is the ſame thing, faculty or profeſſion, in the Greek ; and I ſay again, what I meant to ſay before—I wiſh all gentlemen were of my opinion ; then ſomebody would be ducked or ſo, for trying to *make* rogues of honeſt men—juſtice or no juſtice." George, who, though in regard to his own intereſts, he was the moſt peaceable young fellow in the world, had a ſpirit of vindictive fire that mounted into a flame the moment any of his maſter's friends or favourites were accuſed. Having heard, therefore, theſe reflections on juſtice, he caught hold of the profeſſional gentleman of the faculty, ſwearing, that his maſter was the beſt juſtice in all the country, as well as one of the beſt men in all the world ; and if every man had his deſerts, he did not doubt but the rascal that dared to ſay any thing to the contrary ought to ſwing under the gallows. " My maſter's name, the juſtice of peace now in that room," cried George aloud, and with triumph, " is Colonel Mr. Sir John Fitz-
orton,

orton, who is the son of Sir Armine Fitz-orton ; and shall such a fellow as this here, that I am shaking by the collar, and who, I dare say, is no more a lawyer than I am—shall the son, I say, of Sir Armine”—several of the populace, to whom the name of Sir Armine was not only known, but held in reverence, would not permit George to finish what he intended to say ; but, levelling their resentment at its proper mark, they took the accuser of justice from the grasp of George into their own hands, and were proceeding with him to a copious pond at the bottom of the inn back-yard, when a female voice exclaimed, “ Stop, stop thief!—there’s my handkerchief stick-out of the corner of that man’s pocket—give it me, gentlemen—I’ll swear to my property !” This exclamation produced a search ; the consequence of which was, a redemption, not only of the handkerchief in question, but of several others, all of which were owned by different claimants ; amongst whom was George himself, who said he would swear to a silk India handkerchief

kerchief which the thief had thrust into his bosom. "'Tis marked in the corner," exclaimed George, vehemently, "with J. A. and I would not take all the handkerchiefs that ever was born for it." Indeed, it was that which Jane Atwood had, with her own fair hand, tied round his neck the very morning before he set out on the present expedition: in our haste to prepare for which, we forgot to tell the reader, this affectionate girl had risen, notwithstanding the unseasonableness of the hour, to make George, for whom her regard grew apace, a comforting dish of tea, before he went into the cold air.

The worthy gentleman, whose morality, touching the subject of justice, had been so violent, turned out a pickpocket; and, as the reader will perhaps, hereafter, be of opinion, something worse. It was therefore thought expedient to secure the arraigner of rash justices of the peace, with all his credentials of moral sentiment about him, save and except that precious mark of Jane's attachment, which George declared

clared he would shew to the justice *himself*; but that he would not let it be polluted by touching such a fellow's neck.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NICE POINT.

THE clamour in the yard had induced John to open the door, first commanding the still-trembling Otley, on pain of death, neither to speak nor stir. In less than two minutes the room of justice was filled with people of all descriptions.

The two prisoners, that is to say, Mr. David Otley and the pickpocket moralist, no sooner saw each other, than, in despite of the penitence of the one, and the morality of the other, an involuntary recognition took place, in a very curious way—to wit, in a determination not to own each other; but the struggle, on either side, to effect the concealment, produced the discovery:—a discovery, dear reader, of their

being not only brothers in iniquity, according to the vulgar, but expressive phrase, but brothers in blood. It is a nice point in feeling, and certainly a desperate case in politicks, when two such personages are, by a sudden and unthought-of rencontre, so thoroughly ashamed of their relationship, that each deeming the other the greater scoundrel, both resolve on disavowal. Nature, however, sometimes seizes upon men unawares, to the total overthrow of their best-concerted designs.

After John had heard the depositions of the several witnesses, with George's account of the theft of Jane Atwood's handkerchief, about which George still stormed like another Othello, the justice was struck with something very particular in the behaviour of his two criminals, who, happening to stand parallel to each other, were biting their lips, gnashing their teeth, and making many other grimaces, which they supposed were not noticed; for, hitherto, the noise and confusion of relating the thefts, and of asserting claim to the several properties,

perties, were favourable to such deportment. At length, being "perplexed in the extreme," by this demonstration of vengeance in dumb shew, the moralist, exasperated, probably by some gesture in the penitent too provoking to be borne, broke through the laws of pantomime, by exclaiming—"What, brother Davy! you scoundrel, are you unchanged yet?" "Yes, brother Gam," answered the penitent, with an overflow of malicious spleen, that forgot all consequences—"Yes, brother Gam, you villain, I know my duty, and staid on purpose to see my elder brother swing first."

"Scoundrels!" interposed John; "I make no doubt, however the precedency may be adjusted, but you will both die the same honourable death; my business at present is to direct you the nearest way to the accomplishment of your fraternal wishes—for which purpose—"

While John was speaking, a noise was heard at the door, of "Make way, make way for Justice Barhim," and in the next minute the said justice, and his attendant, having

having by dint of fist and elbows made an avenue through the spectators, his egregious worship appeared in view, discovering thus his great abilities and good manners: "Mr. Thingum—Thangum"—said he, addressing himself to John Fitzorton—"I understand you have taken upon you to examine, to harbour, and detain in durance, my thief, thieves, or what not—the which is neither law, nor gospel, nor like one gentleman to another; thief taken on my jurisdiction, is as much my thief, as game taken on my manor is my game. Perhaps, Mr. Thingum, you don't know any more who I am than I know or cares who be you; but I must tell you, if you be a justice, this here township has rights; and I thereby, take up, whip, stock, pound, pillar, cage, bind over, or bind down, or what not, in my own right, so that whoever takes up, whips, stocks, pounds, pillars, cages, &c. &c. in my bounds, commits a trespass on my rights, and is thereby guilty of a breach, and an action will stand, go, and lie, against him. You will do well, therefore,

therefore, to surrender my thief, thieves, or what not, and look after your own, for there's enow in reason in every man's parish, if a gentleman will look after 'um; therefore—which are the prisoners? what are their offences? and where be they going?"

He now vaulted into the seat of justice, squatting down on a chair by the side of justice John, when there past a scene of dumb eloquence betwixt John Fitzorton and his brother of the quorum, not inferior to that which had been acted by the moralist and penitent; for notwithstanding his pretended ignorance, as to personal identity, the obtruding magistrate as thoroughly knew John, as John knew him, and they bore to each other an aversion not less inveterate than that borne by the brother prisoners, though very different in kind; for John Fitzorton despised Mr. Barhim, because he considered him abundantly more mischievous than either of the scoundrels in custody; and Barhim hated John, because he was conscious the said contempt

was founded on such knowledge ; in short, the antipathy on either side was no more than that which an honest man feels towards a rogue, and a rogue towards an honest man.

The mob had now fresh objects of surprise and curiosity before them ; John Fitzorton declared he by no means wished to dispute with Barhim his natural or inherent right to any or to all the vagabonds and villains of the land, inasmuch as he believed no man had so just a claim on the villain who had a fellow feeling in the villany ; and that so far from disputing pretensions with Mr. Barhim to a property in the prisoners now before him, he thought it a pity two jails should part them : for which reason, unless a certain misdemeanor be atoned for, committed some years since by the said Barhim on the person of the late Sir Armine Fitzorton—
“ *my father, sir,*” said John, exalting his voice, “ I shall include three of the greatest scoundrels that ever came before a magistrate in the same commitment.”

Before

Before the great man accused had opportunity to make any reply to this insinuation, which, indeed, it is more than propable he would not have attempted, for it had a visible effect upon him, a chariot and four; followed by two servants, drove into the inn-yard, and the words—"This way, my lady, this way, an't please your Ladyship—the justices and a couple of thieves are in the Angel—hope your ladyship and his honour, therefore, will put up with the Devil for a moment till they are gone."—"Thieves!" exclaimed the lady, "I am glad they are taken; we might have been robbed, perhaps."—"I hate pettyfogging, way-laying thieves of all things; I have a great fancy to see the fellows," observed one of the two gentlemen who came out of the coach; "and so have I," said the other. "Let us go into the room then," said the lady: "but pray," added she, "has not some gentleman been here to ask for—though of course *he* is one of the justices, so lead on to the thieves."

The reader who has been, in some sort,

prepared for the company of Sir Guise, Lady Tempest Stuart, and Mr. Valentine, by their courier, Mr. David Otley the penitent, will not be surprised by any means in the degree that the said good company were, when, on entering the apartment of equity, they beheld their own confidential servant in one of the prisoners—his brother, who had been of no less use in their affairs, in the other, and the two magistrates—equally known to them—John Fitzorton, the avowed and indignant enemy of their vices, and Mr. Barhim, as their mercenary and time-serving friend.

Another arrival this instant demands our attention, even as it did, at the time it happened, that of the landlord and landlady of the inn. The rumble of a stage-coach was succeeded by the rattle of two post-chaises following it; and, by a miserable jealousy which the gentlemen of the whip almost universally feel to drive furiously through a market town; or, if their passengers stop at any inn in the said town, a no less absurd vanity of turning into the yard with
velocity

velocity and dispatch, animated both the postilions with two sublime determinations—the one to pass the stage coach, and then to contend between themselves which should take the lead into the George yard.

The stage coachman, however, happened to have as great a thirst for glory as the postilions, and giving his horses the encouraging word and the commanding whip, had almost gained the entrance, when the postilions taking each side, made a vigorous push, which carried them all three into the mouth of the gateway at the same moment, by which manœuvre all the wheels were locked together. The stage coachman and the two postilions, who with no less than four men, who were jerked from the top of the coach, and as many of the inside passengers as could recover their fall and consternation, were all in arms at one and the same moment. The justice room was emptied even faster than it had filled, and the inhabitants of the Angel would have run to the Devil, had not one of the

combatants, who appeared, by a handful of hair which he held in triumph, to have been the most active in the affray, cried out, in as loud a voice as a mouth filling with the blood of his own nose would permit—

“ Stop, stop thief!—stop the worthy gentleman to whom this head of hair belongs.”

Without uttering more, the exclainer darted amongst the croud in search of the fugitive.

Alarmed at this, John Fitzorton and True George, supposing the thief who had stolen away was one of their own prisoners, looked about and saw both of them secured, the one in the custody of a stout young man, which happened to be Jonathan Armstrong, Jane Atwood's cousin, the other in that of as sturdy a young and as hearty an old one, being no other than the two Atwoods, father and son. The colonel's aim, therefore, was to recover his brother justice, who, taking advantage of the new disturbances, had discreetly withdrawn himself, as did Mr. Miles, Sir Guise, and his amiable spouse, but, by the vigilance of George,

George, they were recovered, and will be forthcoming when their re-appearance may be necessary.

Meantime, the gentleman who had, in the first instance, given the alarm, as to the escape of a thief, returned, conducting that personage by the collar, declaring, as he held the honours of his head in his hand, “ that he was sure of his man, for what he had borrowed from the scalp would fit it to an *hair*. Come, gentlemen,” said the hero to his three attendants, who were at the heels of the prisoner, “ help to escort him into a place of safety.” They accordingly took him into the room, which the baronet and his lady and her friend had vacated; the attendants followed; and as the gentleman was himself about to enter, True George plucked him gently by the coat, saying, “ Bless me, ’Squire Partington! is it you!—as I live, Sir, here’s my master’s parliament brother, Mr. Sir John the colonel—and we have had such a to do—but Mr. Sir John will be so very glad to see

you, Sir, for he was going to your honour's house, only he was stopt on the way by a thief or two.

Partington immediately conferred on George, who was a singular favourite, the high and distinguished mark of his most coarse abuse, and exclaimed in great spirits, "Why then all the rascals are got together! for look you, there are the two Atwoods coming, as I suppose, *your* friends, for *mine* are gone into this room, with three as honest personages as himself."

At the name of the two Atwoods, George, seeing John coming up to Partington, left them together, to enter into further explanations, running to his Jane's father and brother, who had the Otleys still in their gripe; he gave them a hearty welcome, and had their hands been at liberty, would have demonstrated his sincerity by the usual token. But scarce a moment's opportunity was given for cares or conversation, as Partington beckoned the Atwoods to advance with their prisoners; and

and as they passed him, Partington bowed very respectfully, telling them, as he thrust them into the room, where his own party were inclosed, "that they would there probably meet with an old acquaintance."

He now locked the door, put the key into his pocket, and clapped his own cudgel into George's hand, saying, "You must stand sentinel here, you scoundrel, as you did at the inn at Adsell." He then gave his arm to John, and desiring the Atwoods to follow, they shut themselves into the room of justice. It may not, meantime, be improper to observe, that True George, previously to these arrangements, had dispatched the turnpike-man to the place where the angry justice and his friends had betaken themselves, with a strict charge to have an eye on all their motions, and that they might not steal out of town before they had Colonel Sir John's sanction so to do. George had, in the bustle of affairs, taken care to order the landlord of the inn, the only one where post-chaises were to be had, not to put

horses to the carriage of Sir Guise, or any other, without giving him the said George notice. The turnpike-man was too well pleased to find the mischiefs in which he so much delighted, multiply upon him—and to think that he should not go home with an empty budget—not to execute the commands of George on this occasion with as much vigilance as if his own property and life were at stake.—So indefatigable are some men in the business of others, and so officiously do they engage in punishing the follies and vices of their neighbours to the utter oblivion of their own!

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GREAT DEAL OF BUSINESS.

IT will scarce be necessary to refresh the memory in any thing that compounds the singular but veritable character of Partington,* who, under the most unornamented

* The author might have added the word *existing*; for the original of this copy still lives, to the delight of his friends.

leaf, concealed the fairest fruit, and within the roughest husk shut up the richest kernel. In short, he was, like John Fitz-orton, earnest and indefatigable in searching out misery and misfortune, of every size and of every sort, purely for the satisfaction of relieving it; and like John also, though utterly different in the means of effecting the same ends, he was no less persevering in his researches after fraud and villany, for the gratification of exposing it to scorn and infamy. His hale constitution, lofty courage, and ample fortune, were all knit together to produce these effects.—The means, indeed, were, as just observed, not only dissimilar to his friend, the colonel's, but such as scarcely any other man would think of using, but in the way of counteraction and contrariety; yet, never did a human being more infinitely love an honest, nor more abundantly hate a dishonest man—never would human being go farther, or try harder, to save the one, and hang the other.

The moment that he returned from tak-

ing an eternal leave of his inestimable friend Sir Armine, he hurried to his house in London, and after bringing the whole of Sir Guise Stuart's character into a point, he concluded it would be a meritorious thing, as well to the family in particular, as to human society in general, to bring the honourble baronet to the gallows!

“ The focus of that honest gentleman,” said he, “ presents to my view halters by the thousand; now, the summit of my ambition would be to twist them all together with my own hand, and tie them about his neck; for I can assert with the Moor—

‘ My great revenge has stomach for them all.’

But as this supreme happiness is denied me, he must, I fancy, be put out of the world the ordinary way, and with that, I must try to be content. I must learn some of my friend John's philosophy.”

While he was in the spirit of this soliloquy, which he pronounced on his arrival from London—even as he was just sitting down

down to a dish of tea after his journey—the two Atwoods, and their kinsman Jonathan Armstrong, whom he had situated in the comfortable and independent way the reader has been informed of, came running in to know whether their patron had returned, and, to their infinite satisfaction, hearing that he had just drawn off his boots, they followed the agitated feelings which impelled them, and rushed, without asking the usual questions, into his presence. “Tell me, you dear, good-for-nothing scoundrels; tell me,” said Partington, the instant they entered—pushing them down by their shoulders till they were seated in chairs—“which of you has gratitude and religion enough in your hearts to assist a scoundrel like yourselves, even my magnanimous self, in a plan that I am forming to hang an honest man? But, before you determine, remember that you owe something to Providence, and that one good turn deserves another.”

“As *your* honest man, please your honour, I have observed is always a rogue,”

replied

replied Atwood the father, trying to conceal his disturbance of mind, "I think I may safely promise you my poor efforts, and I fancy I can answer for those of my boy and his coz." Young Atwood fervently, but rather more tipsy, than affrighted, declared, he would knock all the honest men in the kingdom on the head, and no questions asked, which his honour should think ought to be put to death.—

"But as to that," added the high-mettled youth, with increased impetuosity, "father and I are come to wait on your honour about, as I take it, another hanging or knocking down matter: whether the party be over-honest your honour will be the best judge when you have heard the story."

"Tell it, you insufferable caitiff!" exclaimed Partington.

"Why, then, there is a good-for-nothing rogue of a lawyer, an't please your honour," said young Atwood.

"Out upon you!" vociferated Partington. "What's that you say, firrah?"

"I ask your honour's pardon," replied

the youth, very gravely correcting his mistake, "under favour, there is one of your honour's honestest men, by trade a lawyer, who has sent two ill-looking fellows into our farm, swearing we owe him above two hundred pounds, though we never clapped eyes on him before; and then they tossed about our things, and rummaged our boxes and drawers, and almost frightened poor mother out of her wits; whereupon I thought, your honour, it was time for me to begin—especially as they got father by the collar, and mother set up a roar, and there was no time to run for neighbours, and your honour's justiceship was, as I thought, from home; so with that, cousin Jonathan here and I, made bold to trip up one of the law-men's heels, and knock down t'other smack, your honour, with back-handed stroke, this fashion. So we down'd with 'em both; then, wi' a couple of halters cousin Jonathan, who was with us at farm, had bought at market i' th' morning"—"Yes, I had been to market, and got rather mellow, your honour," said Jonathan,

Jonathan, “and was in order, as I may say, for any thing; and cousin Jerom is in the same way; so I tied un till they squeak’d, and then roll’d un into backhouse, slip side kitchen, and icod, there they be now, your honour; and they took it as kindly, as thof they had been us’d to it, only one o’um gave a bit of a growl, and said sum-mut about *Sir Guise Stuart* should pay for his bloody nose yet!—sure enough his nose spouted finely—so thought I, as sure as a gun, that son of a—gentleman, *Sir Guise*, is at the bottom of all this:—but I did not stay to ax questions, thinking to get neighbours, and your honour’s servants—glad enough are we your honour’s come home yourself, just in the nick.”

“Fine fellows!” in a kind of gulp, and giving a sort of hysterical catch at the name of *Sir Guise Stuart*; “Fine fellows!” said Partington; then doubling his fist at young Atwood and Armstrong, swore the scoundrel, meaning Atwood, should die upon the spot, if he stopt to breathe till he had given his old rascal of a father a bumper of brandy,

brandy, and taken another himself; and made Jonathan then swallow a third.

This command the son obeyed with great dispatch and dexterity, declaring when he had swallowed one half of his allowance, he should now be a match for all the rogues. "I beg pardon, your honour, I mean, for all the honest gentlemen who take a fancy to come into other people's houses in Christendom. O! but I should have told your honour," said Jonathan, "one of these genusses, when he first came in, just as uncle, aunt, and cousin, were keeping out the cold of this biting night from our stomachs, and drinking to your honour's health, said, 'We had better let'um do things quietly, and let'um take account of goods and chattels, as we could not pay money; for that lawyer, himself would be down shortly, and then, said he, You'll all go to pot.'"

At the close of this narrative, Partington snapped his fingers, rubbed his hands, and danced about the room, as if he had been hearing the extrication, instead of the involvement

vovement of the family in question.—
“ Charming! noble! exhilarating! delightful! and triumphant!” exclaimed Partington, putting on his gloves and great coat, and taking his hat, and grasping the cudgel which we have celebrated in this history, and then leaping by bounds, rather than long steps, out of the house, the elder Atwood in one arm, and ordering Jonathan and Jerom to follow, but never slackening his pace till he gained Atwood’s farm, nor aught abating his demonstrations of joy in his way thither, exclaiming, however, almost at every stride, “ It shall be—it must be—it can be no other than Sir Guise, who set this amiable pair at work. I know him by his marks—I will swear to his noble deeds out of a thousand.”

After shaking Goody Atwood, as he usually called her, by the hand, and assuring her that she was a silly good-for-nothing old woman, to whimper at her present unexpected good fortune, he ordered the son to unlock the door of the prison-room, which being done, he ran to the prisoners, whom
he

he found bound hand and foot, by those halters which, had they been fastened by the hand of justice, would have been placed in a more elevated part of the human body.

“Gentlemen,” said Partington, bowing himself almost to the ground, “teach me how to thank you;” here he began to draw the ropes harder in their knots;—

“teach me, I pray, how to express my thanks—my—my—sincere—est—thanks”

—(here three pulls and three bows)—“for making me the happiest—of mankind.

But the load which you have taken from my mind is so heavy—so—heavy—I say”

—four pulls and as many bows—“so—very heavy—that I can never hope to make a

suitable return”—a grand jerk of the halters

—“suitable—return—unless it were within my power to save your necks”—here many

strong tugs, in succession, at the ropes, his foot on the body of one of the prisoners—

“to save—I say, your necks—for the opportunity you will give me of stretching

those of the worthy—very worthy—gentleman, who sent you hither. I suppose

you

you have the honour to know Sir GUISE—STUART”—at pronouncing the name, three enormous bends and pulls.—“Yes, we do,” said one of the men—“that is, we have heard of such a gentleman.”—“Ay—I thought so,” replied Partington—“which binds me to you”—here he pulled the halters with redoubled force—“binds me to you—for ever.”

“Take care, master, that your own neck is not stretched, for your outrage of his majesty’s officers, in the discharge of their bounden duty,” said the other captive, almost gagged, and struggling like a lion in the toils; then lifting up the only eye which some former contest had left in his head, young Atwood would certainly have deprived him of this, had not Partington interposed, by insisting on the honest gentleman’s being permitted to *see* his way to the gallows.

Further remarks were interrupted by the appearance of the great personage, who had set these subordinate instruments to work, namely, the lawyer himself. He had
come

come post haste from London, for many great and important purposes; amongst which, not the least in "his dear love," was the pure and laudable design of turning a whole innocent family into the streets, in the bitterest weather that a rigorous December ever inflicted—and that upon a mock execution instituted against them, and to be served, unless he could obtain a certain security, which was, indeed, the great object he came in search of, and of which the reader shall not die in ignorance, unless his death be very sudden indeed. This pest of the laws of England began to exhibit a specimen of the goodness of his heart the moment he entered, by demanding whether the distress had been made, and the goods inventoried? observing, that he had not a single moment to spare; and unless he had satisfaction, must take them all into custody that very night: then seeing the instruments of his office bound, he cast his eyes about in a wild sort of surprise, and, in so doing, threw them on Partington and his associates, whom till then

then he had not noticed, and at the sight of whom, though he did not personally know either, his honest conscience, the only thing which even rogues cannot always bring over as parties assenting—his honest conscience suspected, perhaps instinctively, were no friends to his cause. Partington, without speaking one syllable, and even without making his bow, a rare omission in his dealings with a knave of distinction, gave the cue to the Atwoods and Co. and zealously assisted, first in tripping up the heels, then in pinioning the arms, and, finally, in fettering the legs, of the principal, even as the legs and arms of the petty agents had been fettered and pinioned, with a slight difference only in the materials of bondage—substituting for ropes, the handkerchiefs tied together, and the garters—which were loosened in a moment—even of the aforesaid agents and principals. While this ceremony was performing, Partington suggested a trifling alteration, which he thought might be an improvement, in the article of fastening—
to

to wit, tying the prisoners neck and heels *together*, and then arranging them so close that they might enjoy the benefits of a conversation, "which, no doubt," said he, "must be interesting while you and I, ye scoundrels, and this old good-for-nothing whimpering woman," said Partington, pointing to Mrs. Atwood; "retire to the Bury, and consult about their future promotion. Meantime, worthy gentlemen," continued Partington, "I will, by virtue of mine office, perform the duty of searching your pockets, convinced, that I shall find nothing therein but the most unequivocal testimonies of your virtue and your humanity!"

Partington's hands were ransacking the pockets of the prisoner in chief, and the Atwoods and Jonathan those of the subalterns in captivity, all the time they were thus speaking: then possessing themselves of the spoil, the parties, thus *literally bound* over to their better behaviour, were packed in the way Partington proposed. The windows were made fast, neither fire nor candle
allowed,

allowed, every article of furniture moved out of the room, a comfortable cold brick floor was their bed; the key of the street door was then turned upon the vanquished, and the conquerors marched away, taking Goody Atwood in protection to head-quarters, at Partington Bury.

Here, over a bottle of the best wine which Partington's cellar afforded, the victorious party examined the plunder which they had taken from the enemy.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SECRET CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER I.

MR. VALENTINE MILES TO MR. DABBLE.

DEAR DABBLE,

THOSE damn'd papers are certainly in the Atwood's hands. David Otley remembers to have seen the very trunk Sir Guise describes in the baggage-cart, on the morning

morning the Atwood family were carried to that *fussakin* Partington's, before they had any house or home, save the run of his kitchen; of course no papers were thought of then. Partington, we hear, is now from the Bury, so this is your moment; should you not find them we are undone, and you are in the ruin. What a curse, Dabble, it is for men of spirit, like you and I, to have to deal with such a thing as Guise! The abbey grows insipid; I have not philosophy enough for this country. The cursed castle, you know, brow-beats us; and if I stay much longer I foresee I shall have some pretty accounts to settle sword in hand. However, there are prospects—Guise and Tempest fight and make peace fifty times an hour, and I fancy your next instructions will be to draw up articles of separation;—between ourselves, Tempest is grown cursed avaricious. We got rid of the son and daughter delightfully, and though they are at the old monkish priest's, within a mile of us, we have not heard any thing of them since; but if the annuity business

should get wind, young Captain Cut-throat would hang us all in a string. But then that Caroline—O, Dabble, what shall I do to succeed with that girl! I would even commit matrimony for her sake.

V. MILES.

P. S. My dear Dabble is perfectly aware that I would cut the throat of the dearest friend or relation in the world who should violate the slightest confidence, therefore I shall say nothing about his holding the contents of this letter just as precious as he holds his life.

LETTER II.

FROM SIR GUISE STUART TO MR. DABBLE.

THAT rascal Valentine, Sir, your nephew, has cheated me of my fortune, and takes liberties with my wife before my face; and they both laugh me to scorn, and I dare not complain. What a life have I led since that she-devil and her paramour set foot into the abbey! Pity me, Dabble; if you will think of some place of safety

safety for me, while your apparatus and instruments can be prepared to resume my estates out of the clutches of these sharps, I will engage to give you two guineas for Valentine's one.

GUISE STUART.

LETTER III.

LADY STUART TO MR. DABBLE.

I HAVE always made it worth your while to be faithful to my interests and caprices; so I scruple not to tell you I begin to dislike your nephew Valentine, and thoroughly detest Sir Guise, and wish, with all my soul, your fertile genius could hit on any expedient to take both off my hands; which, in point of profit, should be the best job you ever had in your life. But why should I conceal any thing from thee, Dabble? There exists one,—and how wonderful then must be my passion—whom I love, even more than I hate the above-mentioned persons—one, whom I have long adored—whom I have long tried to scorn—

scorn—to injure—to destroy ! and who is, at this moment, on the verge of being lost to me for ever—lost in marriage.—I never see him but by stealth, and then by the glimpse of a moment. Perhaps if I were my own mistress, if this abbey were mine beyond controul, or participation, or interruption, something might happen. Accept the enclosure for 500l. as earnest. But have a care ; if *my* hate and love are in your hands, *your* life and death are in mine ; and on your breach of trust to me, the latter, in its most tremendous forms, should ensue, though my own, with all my fortunes, were to be the purchase. We are all coming to town instantly. You will manage the Atwood business after these hints, discretionally. Be prepared, I charge you, with some cordial for my sick heart, against our arrival in town. Till then, farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO MR. DABBLE.

BROTHER Barhim writes word, to my astonishment, the affair of the annuity is a sham; that the man and woman you past on me, are people of straw, that the parties are alive, and in the way of knowing the whole business: there would have been a fine business if I had not discovered the will. No tricks on travellers, master Dabble: I must beg, as I have found you out in this, not to trust you in any other, and that you will come to a finish by paying the balance, which is, 1287l. 6s. 3d. My cash, or your neck in a halter, I'll have by God. So your's, as you shall behave,

SOLOMON BARHIM.

LETTER V. AND LAST.

TO THE SAME.

MR. DABBLE,

BILL I cashed for you is a forgery ; Otley suspected ; his going off same day suspicious, but that's nothing to us. Bill is a bad bill, Mr. Dabble, and being indorsed by you, must forthwith be paid to humble servant, for father,

PATRICK MEADOWS.

Here ended the letters, so far as they related to the several personages contained in, or connected with, this history ; and here ended too the bottle ; for Partington filled and emptied with incredible dispatch, either to the health of his worthy friend Sir Guise, and his lady, or to that of Mr. Justice Barhim, Messrs. Otleys, Valentine Miles, Esq. and Mr. Nicholas Dabble.— Bottle the second, from the same bin, was brought, and while young Atwood was uncorking it, Partington declared, that the ordinary

ordinary siz'd glass was an insult to such abilities, for the speedy recompense of which, he insisted on each man's drinking a half pint bumper, and even Goody Atwood was not excused, either on the consideration of sex or age; for Partington was a despotick sovereign not only in his own house, but in every other.

Had not the extreme coldness of the night, the succession of violent surprizes, diminished the effects of the wine, it would have most likely brought the victors at the Bury as near to the ground as the vanquished at the farm, especially young Atwood, and Jonathan, who, as we before noted, had been somewhat flushed at the market; but kept sober, or, at least kept on balance, by the above-named auxiliaries, they were now only in proper order for bidding defiance to wind, weather, and all that was rolling in the prolifick brain of their great leader, Mr. Partington.

The following arrangements took place on the spot. Three of Partington's domesticks were summoned, one to get ready

an old single horse chaise which had stood in the coach-house ever since Partington came to the Bury, and the two others to prepare Partington's own carriage, themselves attending on horse-back. Meanwhile, Partington delivered the following laconick, but arbitrary charge; to wit, that on pain of immediate death, neither the young nor the old scoundrels of his family should presume to say a word, either in question or answer, to the high, respected, and inestimable gentlemen whom he should now conduct from the farm to the county jail.

This being promised, and the carriages and horses brought to the door, Partington equipped himself with a brace of pocket pistols, and gave to Jerom and Jonathan a blunderbuss each, arming the two horsemen suitably; and in this manner, Goody Atwood remaining at the Bury till the morning, they proceeded towards the farm, a few paces from which, General Partington commanded his infantry and cavalry to halt, and without any noise made good his entry

entry into the said farm, that is, into the kitchen thereof, which adjoined the back house, wherein the prisoners of war were deposited, when applying his ear to the key-hole, Partington was witness to as curious a scene and dialogue as hath perhaps ever been represented on the theatre of human nature. But this being the epoch of another great Family Secret, we must allot to it the distinguishing mark of a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XXV.

SECRET CONVERSATION.

THE great rogue and the little ones had been not only in violent conflict with their situation, but with each other; indeed they were still in the heat of an action, wherein their passions got the better of their prudence; for either not hearing, or not regarding what they heard, they carried on the piece and its accompaniments, as if they were still by themselves.

“ I told you so, Mr. Dabble, I knew what would come of this scheme of picking up loose papers; the devil of a scrap of writing is here in the house, but two or three bits of letters and bills stuck between the leading of the windows,” said one of the men, rolling himself with vehemence towards Dabble, “ and so we are to be hanged, and let you die in our debt, are we? You never paid us for the last job; you owe for the two *corpseffes*, master Dabble—the two resurrections in Pancrafs—for your cutting-up couzin!”—“ Who the devil is to do your dirty work for nothing!” raved forth the second man, dashing his head, in despite of bondage, into the stomach of his principal. “ And he owes me for three evidences and five oaths, and be damn’d to him!” cried the first assailant. “ That is nothing to my pillory business, for which he was to make my fortune, instead of that, I have hardly seen enough of his money to buy rags to wipe the eggs off. Do you remember that fine job of work, master Dibble Dabble? And
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the bail business; do you remember that?" Here the speaker, by way of refreshing his employer's memory, threw the load of his whole body on his face: "And the exchequer matter, and the Marshalsea hobble, and the bankruptcy white-wash article; and the insolvency prank," exclaimed the other, following up the action of his comrade, who swore he could have maintained himself and family in a better manner by blacking shoes, or any other honest employment. "Granted, gentlemen, granted; but what are all *your* pains and penalties to *mine*? You do not consider my losses and dangers! I have actions out against me, at this blessed moment, in five names, whereby I do business: ay, and do it fairly too according to our way. Even in this business no harm can come to you; a little imprisonment, and whipping at most; but is there no escape, no quarter? Cannot our teeth untie our feet, and set our hands at liberty? Do let us try, my friends; if we could escape, we might get prettily over to the Continent, and be comfortable.

By my soul, I will make all your fortunes if the thing can be done."

As a profound silence followed this proposal, Partington took his ear from the post, at the key-hole, and placed his eye there, by the help of which optick he saw one of the men's faces at the feet of the other, and the mouth of the ingenious Mr. Dabble labouring to see whether it were possible to put his desire into execution. This, therefore, Partington conceived to be the fit moment for his appearance; so stepping back to the street door, he marshalled his troop, and putting himself at their head, stormed the back house, which having magnanimously entered, he cried out, "I am come, gentlemen, merely to save your teeth the trouble of untying those hard knots, which, with mine own hands, will I thus loosen; and give you, moreover, a ride this fine night through the fleet and snow, in a commodious, open chaise, in which, with three hours good driving, you will be carried to the place where I intend to set you down to breakfast."—

fast.—Come, my fellow-soldiers," continued Partington, " pack up these trusty and well-beloved friends of mine into that conveyance."

The prisoners were stowed in the open chaise ; two armed domesticks riding before, and two behind, and Partington's chariot, containing himself, while Armstrong and the Atwoods brought up the rear. In the middle of the first town, the crazy machine, over-loaded with too great a weight of roguery, even though in its way to justice, broke down ; but a post chaise was in a few minutes substituted, and the rest of the journey was performed without any further interruption, till that which the two ambitious postilions, running at the no less lofty-minded stage coachman, produced those consequences which the warlike muse of prose contentions hath right faithfully recorded.

By such means, were all the parties, John Fitzorton could possibly want, brought close under his eye, almost in the beginning of his journey.

We have now then, in one room, Mr. David Otley, and his ingenious brother, Mr. Gamaliel Otley, whom Mr. Dabble appointed to his chief clerkship, to the great jealousy of his brother, Mr. David, who was likewise a candidate for that valuable office ; and the disappointment which David felt on being thrown out of it, knowing, as he did, that his abilities for every villany, even Dabble could put him to, was the cause of that animosity which rankled in his breast, not only against his brother, but against Dabble himself. In short, both these brothers, as well as Mess. Solomon and Ephraim Barhim, had for some years cherished the tender hope, and were animated by the zealous endeavour of bringing each other to that place, where there is a reasonable prospect of their fraternal wishes being one day gratified.

In another apartment, the reader recollects we have secured Dabble and his two colleagues in office. We may now, likewise, bring forward into his view, Sir Guise Stuart, his chaste lady, and the friend of
their

their house, Valentine Miles, not forgetting the illustrious Justice Barhim, in whose house they had taken refuge, and from whence they were escorted back to the inn by the active man of the turnpike and True George, with some trusty followers, amongst which were two servants of Sir Guise.

The several parties, therefore, being met in the room yclept the Angel, the Devil being emptied of its lawyers, thou hast the satisfaction, gentle reader, of seeing all the good company together, and if thy curiosity gives thee a wish to see further, what the honest men did with the rogues, and how the affair ended, take thy seat quietly, and hear the trial.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WAR.

AND now, Sir John Fitzorton, and Edward Partington, Esq. two of his Majesty's justices, ordering two chairs to be placed
side

side by side, as chairs of judgment, sat themselves down; when lo! Mr. Justice Barhim, conceiving himself insulted in the omission of a third seat on the bench, did, with his own mighty hand, and with much more blood in his face than usually settled there, albeit he was of a sanguine complexion, violently, and literally, by force of *arms*, thrust a chair between and sat him down—swearing, that he had better right to try *thesum* fellows than any justice man else; and that as to Justice Fitzorton's threat he did not care either this or that for it; at which words he first snapt his fingers over his head, and then spreading them, gave three soft strokes on the opposite extremity.

What would have been the conduct of the other justices, on this deportment, is not easy to say; for, in the critical moment that Barhim was alluding to the extremity, to do which with the better grace of action, he had duly elevated one side, and rested his whole weight on the other; True George drew the chair from under the justice,

justice, who thereby losing his centre, came with a tremendous lump on the floor. Indeed the person of Barhim, in such a situation, might have disarmed resentment, had he in other respects been its fit object. We will introduce the reader to a more exact personal acquaintance with him:—His legs were so distended, and his thighs so filled, from the fork downwards to the foot, there seemed no more joint at the knees than in those of an elephant, but a continuity of flesh without bone. His feet were in proportion, and appeared to be the same long wad of dough turned up, as if to keep the contents of that bursting plenitude from running out at the ends. These were covered in shoes of black plush, in case of the gout, by which, though he had two fits in the last twelve months, he had lost nothing of his corpulency. His stockings were of course white flannel, and over the mountainous extremity to which he alluded, was drawn a proportionate quantity of dark blue serge, which would have made a furtout for True George, had his

own been irrecoverably lost. The body of this great man was an entire mass of what would have cut into half a dozen beaux of these degenerate days; and, indeed, the bunch which grew out of his left shoulder, would have been, of itself, sufficient for one of those delicate creatures to carry from one room into another; for, it was not so much an humped back, as an enormous elevation of the bones and muscles of the shoulder, starting out of their due places in the human economy; and, over-grown with flesh, had formed a huge knot, not so regular indeed as that of the camel, but looking to the eye far more misshapen. The length of his back, from the shoulder to the hip, measured to the breadth of his belly, which, as he stood up, concealed the lower members even to his feet, and appeared as a weight which those feet, and all that appertained to them, could not move under. This unwieldy rotundity was arrayed in an old figured velvet doublet, with an edging of dirty gold lace, and a dark brown coat, and a bob wig of the same colour, which covered a full fleshy head,

head, with large glaring eyes, grey as those of a cat, in the orbs, red as those of a ferret at the edges, which were wholly without lash, and seeming to burst from their sockets. In the middle of this head, an ill arranged straggling set of yellow and black teeth, large, gapt, pointed, and long, were discovered, not concealed, by a pair of lips of a stale liver colour, the upper one turning up to his nostrils in the proportion as the under one dropt down to his chin, so that the jaws of the cavern, that led to that unfathomable deep, where the internal secrets of this enormous mass were happily hid from human view. Of the neck had he nothing visible, the short thick pallets of flesh which should have separated that part of the body being sunk between the rise of his shoulders behind, and the fall of those collops which descended from his chin before. And to finish the whole, his nose was bottled at the end, and the space between the end of the forehead and the beginning of the nasal organ, was flaming with carbuncles: he breathed with the difficulty,

ficulty, yet with the violence of an asthma, on the least motion, and his breath was fraught with a blast exactly the reverse of the Arabian gale.

At this important crisis, entered the brother of the prostrate justice, Mr. Solomon Barhim, and no less than five thief takers in his train, each armed with a tremendous bludgeon, demanding their victim. After rolling their terrifick eyes about the room, Solomon seized upon Dabble, and swore he was one of the men—whereupon Dabble, fixing his talons upon his quondam clerk, cried out, “ And here is another, whom you are doubtless in search of;”—adding to Gamaliel, “ You dog, now I am satisfied, even though we should be hanged together.” But justice was not yet appeased, for the spirit of equity was so great in Mr. Dabble, that he charged the thief-takers, in the King’s name, to secure, since he must die, his accomplices, Mr. Valentine Miles, with Sir Guise, and Lady Stuart.

Solomon at length discovered his beloved

loved brother, who greeted him with a salutation on the left jaw from the sudden stretch of the left leg, whether owing to fraternal love, or the insensibility of his situation, cannot be known; but Solomon, with a token of affection no less zealous, made restitution by paying him in kind, right and left, the first acknowledgment beginning at the scalp, and the last finishing at the toe.

A truce seemed to be now necessary, not from any abatement in the spirit, or animosity in any of the parties, except Sir Guise Stuart, but from an absolute incapacity to continue the war, every individual being disabled; and this was, therefore, the moment for the voice of justice to be heard. John Fitzorton once more interposed his authority, tempered however, by his intreaties, that the multitude would depart in peace:—"Satisfied," said he to the mob, "as every one of you must be, that the parties can amuse you no longer; and that you may all take leave of them under the solacing assurance, of your next merry meeting

meeting

meeting being at their gallows. We have now the commitment of the worthy groupe to adjust among ourselves, and must desire to be left in quiet to the administration of justice."

With this reasoning, and these promises, the mob seemed tolerably well satisfied, and, bowing to justice, went their way: even the turnpikeman, who had been the most alert and vigorous assistant, and, under a mask of conciliating differences, had artfully fomented them, shook True George by the hand, returning him many thanks for the diversions of the night, and walked home to his wife, well pleased to communicate the joyful news of no less than a dozen persons being sent to prison to take their trials the next sessions, and, as he hoped and believed, to be hanged the bloody Monday after. Perhaps, nothing but his appointment to the delectable office of executioner on that day, could have made his felicity more perfect.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LAW.

THE apartment being now cleared of its intruders, and containing only parties really interested in the issue of the adventure, John reinstated himself in the judgment seat, and thus harangued :

“ As you are all convinced what you deserve, I shall not waste time on this point, satisfied in my own mind, as I doubt not you are in your’s, that every one of you will end a contemptible existence, on the very spot, where, for sake of example, the only good you have done or will ever do the publick, it ought to be terminated.”

“ A noble peroration !” said Partington.

“ Now, although I know it is for the good of the community that you should be hanged out of hand,” continued John,—a second bow from Partington to the company.—“ I will, on one condition, use my best endeavours to change your sentence to imprisonment or transportation, if you
think,”

think," added the ironical John, " your fine feelings can accept of life when tainted with dishonour."

This mark of charity, in John, was treated with a look of defiance from Dabble, Valentine, and Lady Stuart. " Now that look," exclaimed Partington, " being interpreted, means this—" as to hanging, though we have done every thing that deserves to have our necks broken, we have done nothing by which the laws can break them; and as to the dishonour, we consider that as rather a ludicrous circumstance; since use, you know, is second nature, and shame is nothing to those who have been all their lives in the practice of laughing it to scorn. Am I not right, my noble masters?"

A second look from the parties, acknowledged that Partington was a physiognomist. " Your most humble and obedient servant," said Partington, bowing in his best manner. " I thought so."

Several of these triumphs of incorrigible impudence, and strokes of unavailing irony, past and repast, rather to the hindrance

than advancement of John's grand business. Perceiving which, he found it necessary to re-assume his magistratical character, by virtue of which, he would have actually committed the whole group, Justice Barhim inclusive, had not Dabble, alarmed at his proceedings, and wisely foreseeing that the collusion and confederacy, in which he and his instruments had been taken, would warrant a commitment, which might lead to a publick trial, which trial might lead to other discoveries which might lead to Tyburn, and which alone could lead to the end of his career in roguery; having, we say, a politick fore-knowledge of these hazardous consequences, he huddled his compeers together, while the justices were instructing the Atwoods and George, to adopt coercive measures; and holding council with them in a corner of the apartment, like Lucifer and the fallen Angels, he soon convinced them all it would be the best and safest, as well as shortest way, to comply with the requisition of justice, because, added he, to Lady Stuart, who was

the most dissatisfied and indignant spirit, if we do not make this restitution by consent, we must by compulsion.

The leader of this faithful band, therefore, advancing to John and Partington, just as the ministers of justice were going to "let slip once more the dogs of war," assumed the softness of Belial, and observed, "that however appearances were against him, he was at the bottom an honest man; and though by his multifarious profession, and practice, very disagreeable jobs were, in a manner, thrust into his hands, and if *he* did not undertake them another would; he had his feelings and his conscience; ay, and his little niceties; and all manner of things of that sort and"—To every one of these assertions, Partington made a bow, John's features were at strife betwixt smile and frown, George lifted up his eyes and hands, young Armstrong shook his cudgel, Atwood doubled his fist, and his aged father sighed even to groaning; but Mr. Dabble had been bred in courts, and was neither to be bowed, laughed, frowned, ejaculated,

ejaculated, sighed, nor groaned out of countenance, so he went on with his defence. "Yes, gentlemen may smile, gentlemen may frown; but though to gentlemen it may seem a little extraordinary, I have no scruple—no scruple whatever, gentlemen, to say, that I have my sentiments here, and my sensations there," laying his hand first on his forehead and then on his breast; "ay, and my little delicacies, and moreover, my remorses as well as another; and, as abundance of clients can witness, have done their do, as well as any gentleman of the profession. And, though perhaps, gentlemen might not think it, I have got a poor man's right, orphan, widow, or what not, out of the fire, even not seldom to the burning of my own fingers. But here we are in a scuffling world, and gentlemen of the profession, you know, must live, and half of them must starve, if they wait for practice, or confine themselves to regular business. To be sure, some gentlemen refuse, what other gentlemen undertake. It is hard work; the

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thing is unpleasant; but it is with many of us, Hobson's choice, this or none; or rather this or worse; and a man had better earn a mouthful of bread, you know, gentlemen, as bread must be had, rather than steal it; and gentlemen must allow it, that starving oneself is the worst of murder, and immediately against the law of God; indeed, a crime the most unnatural."

John began to express some disdain at this curious pleading, when Dabble exclaimed, "But I beg gentlemen's pardon; I own this is irrelevant; a degree of conscientious innocence, in certain cases, for which, perhaps, you would not give me credit, and an earnest desire not to seem worse than I really am, has been the cause."

"Unblushing wretch!" cried John, "come to the point; or"—"Yes, honest, honest gentleman," said Partington, bowing twice, "come to the point."—"Why then thus it stands," continued Dabble, returning the two bows to Partington, and even giving John a third, notwithstanding his epithet:—"This affair of the annuity,
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it must be owned, is amongst the number of the disagreeables, which gentlemen of my practice are liable to. Put the case, A owes B and C a few thousands—debt of honour. B and C are out of cash; debt must be paid, or A can't shew his head. A will be posted. Every body, who has his little niceties, can tell, that to be posted for debt of honour, is worse than to be pilloried, or put into prison, or put to death. A is disagreeably situated; his own fortune locked up. A has children, however; A thinks it but natural that children should relieve their father in distress. So A, not willing to wound said children, by disclosure of affairs, thinks best to procure their services, as it were, by proxies, and children don't know father's distress, nor that they were able to relieve it.

“Case, I say, gentlemen, put thus, what is to be done? Unpleasant to be sure. But I see gentlemen are going to be out of temper, so shall only observe, that client Sir Guise has agreed to the needful, and

parties generally resign all claim, and so forth."

"Let it be done on the spot," cried John, "and in the manner I shall dictate."

Not to detain the reader, from following the history, we shall omit several other features in the portrait of Mr. Dabble, drawn by himself, and briefly observe, that an attorney of unimpeachable character and credit, whose name was Morgan, was immediately set to work, after James Fitzorton, then a barrister of very promising powers, had been consulted, and that the aforesaid annuities of Sir Marmaduke were reassigned to the injured parties by every guarantee, direct and collateral, which the law allowed, with a bond for the payment of the accumulated interest, on the only part of Sir Guise's estate whereon his friends had not yet dishonourable claim. It would be losing, however, a trait of the human heart, were we to omit, that at the sight of Mr. Morgan, Mr. Dabble, notwithstanding his conscience, his fine feelings, and his little niceties,

niceties, shrunk appalled: in fine, his little niceties suffered him to be led out of the room by the nose; George, on an hint from John, undertaking that office, Ajax Atwood, on a like hint, kicking him behind, while Partington, busied hand and foot, made his profoundest reverences, as the personage, so escorted, passed along. The two distress-men slunk after, thanking both the justices for their lenity, and returning Partington bows for the hearty kicks which he bestowed, with great courtesy, on them both. The rest of the company made, also, their exits very characteristically. "I believe, gentlemen," said Solomon Barhim, "we had better depart in a body than individually, for by the noise I hear without, I have my apprehensions the mob are not even yet quite at peace. Indeed, I fear Mr. Dabble is now the object of their fury. This would, in truth, be 'a consummation devoutly to be wished,' but that the multitude do not always distinguish betwixt guilt and innocence, so that, possibly, an honest man,

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like myself, who only came to look for my own, may be considered as bad as he, and be treated accordingly ; and though I love a joke, this would be carrying it a little too far."

"Possibly, we might be permitted to escape by this glass door, or the window," cried the already tattered and torn Sir Guise, who justly suspected a general massacre. "Perhaps, in consideration of my having done all in my power," added he, "the justices will allow—"

"By no means, thou most amiable of men," said Mr. Partington, putting the bars to the window, and double locking the glass door, "I would not suffer a man of your rank and prowess to march off, without the honours of war, for the world."

"Miserable coward ! vile abject slave !" cried Lady Stuart, her rags trembling to her indignant rage, for she was as nearly stript as her Lord, "What is it you are afraid off ? I hope the day is not far off when I shall have ample revenge for this treatment : and as for you, it would serve you
you

you right to leave you to the madness of the mob. But let me see who will dare to touch *me*; I scorn protection, but from my own hand. By my soul, I'll blow out the brains of the first man who opposes me." While she was in the heat of this discourse, she seized the two pistols which had been taken from David Otley, and, by inadvertence, left on the table behind the justices, and pointing them both towards the door, sallied forth, like another Boadicea, after she had been scourged by the conqueror.

Her beloved husband, and even her faithful, intrepid bosom friend, Valentine, deeming this an auspicious moment to call all the attention upon her, and escape themselves, ventured out under her auspices, as did, likewise in the train of these, Mr. Solomon, the money broker, making free with his brother's hat and wig, which had been trampled off, by way of disguise; and last of all, rather by instinct than consciousness, for he was still a bleeding victim, waddled away all that was left of the bare-head justice himself, to the unspeak-

able delight of Partington, who had kicked and cuffed, and bowed, till he was out of breath; and to the no small entertainment of John, who, finding he could not reward the almost equal merit of the culprits with the gallows, was endeavouring to make up his mind to the moderation of their being once more worried by the populace.

While he was practising at this philosophy, and had, on reflection, brought himself to think, this might, for the present, answer a better purpose than hanging itself, as it would be attended with less disgrace to Caroline and Charles, he heard the report of one of the pistols, upon which Partington hopped off with incredible velocity, attended by the attorney of honour, and John almost out-stepped his dignity to see what had happened, not doubting but the virago had, in the last paroxysm of her rage and vexation, shot at the multitude in general, or taken a more fatal and particular aim at True George or the Atwoods.

The affair, however, was no more than this—Lady Stuart was no sooner perceived,
than

than the agile George, and the lofty Ajax, and Hercules the second, who having delivered over Dabble and Co. to the mob, were returned, with at least two hundred strong, to receive her. In a moment she was disarmed, Ajax brandishing one pistol, and True George the other, the former going off as he wrenched it from the Amazon: And, though we are accustomed to call those things accidental, by good luck, or by supreme direction, the bullet grazed Lady Stuart's arm, then sunk below her husband's head, and by the sudden jump which that heroick gentleman gave, the tip of his left ear was shivered away, at the sense of which he howled amain, and nestled amongst the crowd, as if he dreaded his head would follow: the vigorous Jonathan diving after him, and at every stroke he gave with the butt end of the said pistol, crying out with a voice of vengeance—
“ This for myself—this for your son—this for your daughter—and this, and this, for my poor cousin Jenny; and this you know

is not the first drubbing for which you are my debtor."

Justice, which, considering that all these outrages had been committed in her very presence, had certainly aided and abetted rather in breaking than keeping the peace, thought it now time to interpose her authority, by virtue of which, John made another speech to the mob, who rather from a conviction that they could not push matters further on this side murder, and without bringing themselves into a hobble, than from the force of John's arguments, suffered the mangled parties to carry away their remnants as well as they could; the landlord and landlady exacting a good sum for disturbance, and for house room. Sir Guise, his Lady, and Mr. Valentine, notwithstanding their recent discovery of each other's perfidy, crept into their own coach, pulling up all the blinds, and their servants driving them by a back road, almost ashamed to drive them at all; Dabble and his party, including the Otleys, notwithstanding

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ing antipathies, for roguery detected often conciliates the rogues, disappeared they scarce knew how. Partington, with the Atwoods and Armstrong, went back to the Bury, and farm, while John, with the worthy lawyer, and the ever honest George, returned to Fitzorton castle.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RESTITUTIONS.

SUCH is the history of the annuity restored, the wicked punished, and the good redressed; including a faithful narrative of the social happiness and rural felicity of Sir Guise with the second Lady Stuart, in the married state at the Abbey. The only thing worthy of note in John's journey back, happened at the toll-house, where the vigilant turnpikeman had been on the watch to hail his return, and as soon as he saw him, he summoned his wife and family to make their best bows and curtsies for the great pleasure they had received at

the inn. But this zealous friend to justice was sensibly mortified on being told by True George—who staid to take a loving cup without dismounting—that the battle bled in every vein after he left the field.

“Odds fury!” said the tollman in despair!

“What have I lost?—My mind misgave me there would be more fun; and I said to my wife, says I, Grace, I am sure I am come home with half my errand, says I; and more than that, I dreamed of having my head broke, and I was over head and ears in mud, methought, all night—Now mud is always a battle, George—Well—’tis past now—No man can help his fate. Better luck next time, mayhap—but ’twas wrong, George, odds haltars, to let ’um all slip their necks out of the collar, surely.”—

“What, no hanging after all?” cried the turnpikeman’s wife.—“Not till next time,” quoth George, “but we shall have ’em again soon, Goody, I don’t doubt.” “Well—come, that’s some comfort yet,” said the turnpikeman; “so here’s to their speedy execution, and your family’s good health,
ay,

ay, and the pretty girl that owns the handkerchief, which one of the thieves stole, you rogue—here's all their healths!"

"With all my heart," cried George, drinking off his bumper; and then, shaking the turnpikeman and his wife by the hand, he galloped after John and the honest attorney, Mr. Morgan, whom he overtook just in time to open the outer gate that led to the castle.

As John was passing through the arch he stopt, and observed to the attorney, "although there has been unforeseen clamour about this business, I hope it may yet escape the persons it would most wound, and who are most interested.—George, you understand all this."

George, who was then holding back the gate, answered tacitly by an immediate personification of silence itself, representing the attitude and action of that great power, by putting his forefinger on his lip.

The morning succeeding John's return to the castle was variously employed.—The worthy lawyer was dispatched on a
secret

secret embassy to the chapel-house, where he found Charles and Caroline were still the guests of the good monastick. The attorney presented the packet to the lieutenant.

John's secret instructions to his legal friend, with whom he was closeted a few moments previous to his own departure, were these:—"As I do not judge it expedient to clog this piece of good news with the particulars of the knavery by which it has been so long withheld, I have sketched a summary account of the matter.—Read and copy it, my worthy friend, with your own hand, as mine has no sort of occasion to be seen; you have merely to satisfy the brother and sister, that they are receiving only that on which they have independent and equitable claims, and leave them to the enjoyment of their rights."

The explanation which John had drawn out, and which made the envelope of a copy of Sir Marmaduke's will, was comprized in these words:

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“The annuities in the accompanying assignments, are unequivocally the property of Charles and Caroline Stuart, reserved from persons who would have abused their trust.” But the eager curiosity of Caroline to know more, was, on this occasion, not to be restrained, nor indeed wholly repelled; and the attorney, from gratifying it in part, and from an over anxiety to reserve the rest, was imperceptibly betrayed. His heart over-leapt the bounds which John had prescribed, and thinking it rather a case of conscience than of law, he replied to all questions, till there was nothing to ask or to answer.

The brother and sister were perhaps equally afflicted with this fresh instance of their father's unnatural disposition, and called to memory various subterfuges and pretences to thicken the cloud which wrapt, in hitherto impenetrable darkness, the mystery of Sir Marmaduke's property. The indignation of Charles, often painted his cheek with that ingenuous shame, which an honest man feels at being allied
in

in blood to a knave; and the lovely countenance of Caroline, designed by nature to express even her strongest disapprobation of paternal turpitude, with some reserves of filial charity, often begged her brother, and the attorney, to consider the fatal and additional influence of a woman, like the present mistress of the abbey, acting upon their father's mind; and when filial charity could find no apology for actions dark as Erebus, and at which the half-smothered resentment of a son burst forth into angry exclamation, the soft drops of a daughter's mercy, surviving her affection, would descend like showers upon a burning sand, when the flaming sun is rendering it every moment more intense; and often, when the consuming fire of the brother's ungovernable wrath had threatened to extinguish his shame in his own blood, the tears of the sister would fall like balm upon his ire.

The attorney ended his visit with expressing a sincere regret, that he had found it impossible in this the first trespass of
his

his practice, to prevent sacrificing his instructions unconditionally to his feelings, and then took his leave with many kind wishes.

The good attorney had scarce shut the chapel door ere Charles broke the seal of the packet, the envelope of which, contained what follows: "The enclosed assignment proved the right of Charles and Caroline, to the sum of one thousand pounds per annum, by Sir Marmaduke's will, equally to be divided between them." The lieutenant now summoned the monk, his Indian, and Dennison, who had retired on the entrance of the attorney. He made them partakers of all that had past. The inhabitants of the chapel house were rapt in speechless wonder. The pious Arthur repeated some passages from his offices, suited to the occasion, and Charles and his sister involuntarily bent the knee at the same moment to that paternal director, who had administered to them in their extremity, and who had thus, out of evil, educes good. "Yes, it is another heaven
sent

sent to reward my children for suffering virtue," exclaimed Arthur, embracing them both! The unutterably joy of good old age, and of unspotted youth, were finely painted by the hand of nature, in the countenances of Dennison and the little Indian. The latter said, fervently, "he hoped he might call God him's father, though him was a ickle black."

The monk begged to read the deeds, which he did, and with an audible voice, not, however, without several pauses; some to ejaculate, some to smile, some to weep, and many to pray. "Behold," said Charles, while the generous rose superior to the indignant passions, "persevering virtue in the noble-minded John Fitzorton, and the abject meanness of Sir Guise Stuart."—"Behold," interposed Arthur, "the wonder-working hand of Providence!"—"Nor let the noble-minded Mr. Henry Fitzorton be slighted by your honours," cried Dennison! "I have in my possession what would convince your reverence, and their honours, that my Mr. Henry—pardon my
old

old proud heart, for calling him mine—*ought* to have a brother as good as Mr. John.” Dennison’s aged cheek seemed suffused with the bloom of youth as he spoke; he then drew out of his pocket, a letter, curiously wrapped in several papers, which Henry had dispatched by George. “This same letter, you must know,” continued Dennison addressing Arthur, “in these papers, is a letter his honour’s goodness sent to me, your reverence, though I never could read, passing a line or two here and there, for joy and weeping. I received it just at the time their honours had refused my poor, humble, but, God knows, free-will morsel, and I have been thinking and thinking how to bring the matter about, so that what the dear young ’squire sent out of his pure love, might carry a face, and comfort their honours’ poor hearts without their knowing it, and yet I yearned, as I may say, to have it known too, for, thought I, the labourer is worthy of his hire; and a friend in need is a friend indeed: but still I am the saddest old fool to
make

make up a story in the world, and after a thousand things came into my head, and methought I had, at last, hit upon a whitish kind of a fib, which I thought might do, till time should serve, comes good Sir John Fitzorton's news, just as if I was to be hindered from telling my fib, an't like your reverence."

Here Dennison, whose flame was by this time electrick, bowed to Arthur, as if for absolution. "And had the fib been told, honest Dennison," exclaimed Arthur, rubbing his eyes, "I think I can take upon me to say, though I reckon truth amongst things most divine, it never would have appeared against thee."

Charles and Caroline stood in agitated expectation, and seemed divided in opinion, whether the letter ought to be suppressed, or read. It was the debate of a moment only; for Arthur, whose mind was filled only with emotions proper to welcome the generosity, which the sight of a bill of five hundred pounds that now fell from the unfolded epistle, prepared him to expect,

pect, was wholly unconscious of the tender agony that wrung the heart of Caroline, and delivered what follows, in a voice as audible as if he wished every syllable to be heard by a large congregation. And had it been heard to the remotest corners of the earth, and animated nature, it would have done honour to the writer.

“ TO MR. DENNISON.

*On a second cover enclosed, was written,
(Private.)*

“ If the memory of the dead be revered, or the welfare of the living be dear to you—If the buried Lady Stuart, or her unhappy, virtuous injured children be of any account, I charge you, dear good old man, dispose of the enclosed, to the comfort and service of your young master, and precious, precious mistress; and devise some probable method to account for the receipt of it. My own disordered, and almost distracted mind, can suggest nothing which would make it acceptable. By the love
• you

you bear us all, then, exert yourself. I mean it but as a temporary relief, and when my agitated soul will allow the return of a moment's reason, I will devise some likely way to be of permanent service, without ever appearing to any human creature, as a medium, but yourself; you my dear valued, valuable friend, whose integrity and secrecy——”

“Begging your reverence's pardon, I fear we have gone aside ourselves in this business,” interrupted Dennison, with much emotion; “I only meant to shew his honour's goodness, upon my soul, your honours, and never saw what you have read, and here have I betrayed his honour. So stop your reverence,” added Dennison, laying hold of the paper. But Arthur was hurried away too, and insisting that goodness ought to be known, went on reading, elevating his voice, to the defiance of all obstructions. Charles and Caroline could not speak, scarce dared to listen, yet seemed fearful to interrupt.

“You, my dear valued friend,” continued

tinued Arthur, holding the letter above the reach of Dennison, "you, whose integrity and secrecy has so often been tried and found faithful"—

"There, your reverence!" cried Dennison, with a jump, and a catch at the letter, "don't make a word-breaker and a rogue of me, your reverence!"—"Been tried and found faithful, I say," repeated Arthur, holding the paper at the utmost extent of his arm, and standing on tiptoe to read; "be assured, what I send herewith, is of no sort of use to me; it is my own absolute property; not a single farthing appertaining to any one else; and I have not even the merit of putting myself to the slightest inconvenience, on an occasion for which, heaven knows, I would, were it possible, convert the hand with which I write, and even my panting heart, into the means of accommodation."

"I believe thou wouldest," sighed out the pale Caroline, "I believe, in my soul, that thou wouldest!"—"To make you quite easy on this head, Dennison, know,

that the bills I send, are my dear mother's superfluous present; I had more than sufficient before, to distinguish the day which is to make me the most splendidly miserable of all mankind. The wedding gift, my Dennison, which I before connected with all that is wretched, shall turn even into a consolation, if it can be made subservient to the dear object of my despair." — "Heavenly God!" exclaimed Charles and Caroline, as if smote by the same sentiment, seeking relief from the same ejaculation!

"But lodge this in thy bosom," continued Arthur, his tears dropping audibly on the paper, which for a moment, in mitigation of his distress, he held down. — "Lodge this, Dennison, in thy bosom." "Does he say that too? O what an old unlucky villain must I be then, thus to forget what was written down!" cried Dennison, seizing Arthur by the arm; "but I never could get through the letter, though I tried till my old eyes could not make out a word through my spectacles."

But

But Arthur, who conceived there was more the direction of Providence in the discovery, than any merely human means, struggled with his veteran antagonist, and getting beyond his reach, by clambering upon the window-seat, proceeded in the epistle.—“Let me see,” cried the monastick, “where was I? O, ay, here I have it;—Lodge this in thy bosom—Ah! Dennison, Dennison! I thought nothing could happen in the round of human events, to make my marriage with Olivia, good, kind, gracious, and all deserving as she is, more dreaded”——

“If thou hast pity, Arthur, stop here!” said Charles:——“More dreaded, or my loss of Caroline more replete with despair,” continued the uncontrollable Arthur.

“O mercy! mercy! have mercy!” cried the shuddering Caroline.—“But this is the cruel, cruel moment, Dennison, the moment of my friend and his adored sister’s worldly necessity, that proves to every fibre of my quivering heart I feel an avarice both of fortune and affection; and had I worlds,

my friend, accumulated on worlds—O let thy secret soul do me the justice to believe—I cannot write.”

Caroline thrice clasping, and thrice unfolding her hands, shrieked with unutterable sensations.

“ I’ll be damn’d, saving your reverential presence,” vociferated Dennison, and climbing upon the window-seat, and in turn, struggling with Arthur :—“ I’ll be damn’d—God forgive me—if your reverence, or the devil himself shall read another word, and your reverence is as wicked as I am, to have gone so far.”

“ God, I hope, will forgive thee,” replied Arthur, putting an end to the strife, by giving up the object of it, “ and I will forgive thee too ; for thy treasonable communication is at an end ; and though I am no friend to broken faith, nor to prophane swearing, I will in this instance take upon me to absolve the oath of a feeling heart.”

Dennison, however, was not easily to be made at peace with himself, but, as he was putting the letter into its folds, shook his head,

head, and dropt some tears of expiation on the outward cover.

We trust the reader will forgive this breach of trust, and that honest Dennison will not lose any thing of that interest he may have acquired by his best actions, since his worst trespasss proceeded from the overflowings of gratitude. But as we never mean to offer more in extenuation of the bad, or the aggrandisement of the good, that may be found in the lives or conversations of the persons recorded, than a concise apology, or brief hint; should there be any outrageously delicate readers, who, setting themselves up for weighing every action to a scruple, are predetermined to find our venerable offender guilty, we shall resign the culprit to justice, with a wish that the best actions of such cold-blooded moralists may, in the scale of real virtue, be found of half the intrinsic value, and spring from a source as pure as this, the least praise-worthy, in the conduct of Nestor Dennison.

CHAPTER XXIX.

RECAPITULATIONS.

WHILE these discoveries were unfolding themselves at the chapel-house, others of no less magnitude were developed at the castle: for a confused rumour of the disturbances at the inn, strangely jumbling fact and fallacy together, was carried into the servants' hall by the industrious turnpikeman, who, thinking something he had not heard would yet come out at the castle, not a little gratifying to his insatiable curiosity, borrowed a trusty mule of a farmer whom he now and then franked through his majesty's toll-gate, following George full speed, leave first being obtained from his wife, and had disburthened part of his heavy lading to some domesticks in the stable, from whence it flew like lightning to the kitchen, from whence it found its way to the very apartment where Henry and Olivia, and the rest
of

of the family, save John, were sitting. The farrago of robbery, thieves, perjuries, battles, blood, Sir Guise, my Lady, Valentine Miles, Dabble, the distress men, Partington, the Atwoods, John, Charles, Caroline, and Justice Barhim, were all thrown together in a narration that gave no one circumstance distinctly, but which, even by its perplexity, was well calculated to stir up curiosity. In this general confusion of mangled events, John Fitzorton came into the room, and after a volume of questions, which, by their rapidity and contrariety, involved the incidents they meant to investigate; John, perceiving the whole would soon be known, since the gossip Rumour had run into the house with a part of the tale, thought it best to rescue the facts from general distortion, by relating so many of them as were barely necessary, to shew, first, that the rights of Charles and his sister were properly acknowledged; secondly, that out of respect to the children, the father would probably not be hanged yet; thirdly, that Jane Atwood and True

George were the chief sources of the independent situation of Charles and Caroline ; fourthly, that the Atwoods had assisted ; and, lastly, that Partington was more abusive than he had ever known him to honesty, and polite almost to prostration to knavery ; consequently had gone home pre-eminently happy. In short, that the good characters in the dramattick piece had been soundly trounced through every scene, and had made their exeunt with the strictest regard even to poetical justice.

The emotions which the statement of these adventures exhibited to the inhabitants of the chapel-house, even without the affecting supplement of Henry's letter, could not exceed those which John's abridged and imperfect relation produced in his whole family. Olivia danced about the room in an ecstasy, whispering Henry, " that it was the only event in the world to make the dear suffering creatures comfortable ; but," added she, " it does not at all preclude their social domestication with us by-and-by, you know ; on the contrary,

contrary, it will now give us leisure to ripen our plan, and we shall have the happiness to know that our friends are at no difficulty in the mean time. Will not that be delightful, my Henry?"

Henry was certainly not less, and, perhaps, was much more moved: He was, indeed, so inly penetrated, that he sought at once relief and concealment in John's bosom. John, who understood all his motives, and allowed for all his feelings, and for which, alas! he found a trembling advocate in his own breast, threw his protecting arms round his neck, thereby hiding from the view of Olivia those struggles of passionate love, which Olivia set down in her unsuspecting heart as the energies of friendship towards the now independent Charles, and as the effusions of gratitude to John, who had been so active an instrument, in the hand of Providence, to educe so much good out of so much evil. Lady Fitzorton and Mr. Clare were not unconcerned hearers of this revolution in favour of Charles and his sister. But, perhaps, the gratification

gratification of Jane Atwood and of True George was more perfect, and more emphatically marked, than that of any other in the groupe. To the former it occasioned a fit of joyful tears in the first instance, and in the second a fit of sickness, which not only confined her to her chamber, but deprived her of her senses for several days : so great an exoneration from the load which had long lain on her conscience on her supposed guilt of her not having before thought of the will, and the terrors she had for the life of Sir Guise in consequence of the discovery, being, for the time, more hard to be borne than the burthen itself, particularly to a mind so well formed as her's. Thus dangerous are sometimes even the joys of human life.

This amiable girl, indeed, at length recovered her general health ; but, at intervals, a melancholy kind of sadness settled in her heart, that sunk her spirits to a state into which vindicated innocence is far more likely to fall than convicted guilt.

The turnpike-man, while these developments

lopements were made by John, was dealing out the same dole of communication below stairs, by way of balance for the confusion his first alarm created in the family. Honest George, indeed, resisted, for some time, all the emotions of love itself, and felt too much to utter a syllable himself, or to allow a syllable to be uttered by the turnpikeman, in pure reverence of John's hint of secrecy, and of his promise to Jane; but the first alarm having been given, while George was otherwise employed, he found that a discovery had been already made; and Jenny herself, who had been at work in her Lady's chamber, where Olivia had gone to tell her the news, coming into the servants' hall at this moment, proved that even John himself had assisted in telling the story. Our worthy adherent's conscience, therefore, being thus free, the turnpikeman found his tongue at liberty also, and accordingly made up for lost time by a narrative so eager and so vehement, that it was impossible for his auditors to follow him, by which the expli-

cation of the alarm was more confused and involved than the alarm itself. Amongst the few parts, however, which were sufficiently disentangled, were the theft of that token of love, the handkerchief, and True George's valorous restoration thereof, the annuity rescued, the prowess of Jonathan and Jerom, and the stealing off of Sir Guise and Lady Stuart. All these tidings had their due portion of effect on the gentle bosom of Jane. She was alike sensible to the generosity and tenderness of her lover, who was overpaid for the decided, active, and affectionate part he had taken in these operations, by a reward which he swore he should feel to the moment of his death; for, on the evening of these events, when they had opportunity to dilate them over a dish of tea in Jane's sitting parlour, this amiable unfortunate ran into a comparison betwixt her present and her former lover, and found the contrast so striking, that George reading, perhaps, a permission in her eyes, ventured to profit of it by saluting her with more evident marks of softness

ness than he had dared to do before. "You must know, an't please your honour," said the enraptured youth, glowing with pleasure at this instance of recollected fondness long after it had happened, with as much ardour as if it had the freshness of the moment—"You must know, your honour," said he to Henry, "as I was sitting with Jane's poor baby on my lap, for I love the child, your honour, as much as I hate the father—and Jane being sweetening my tea as she sat in a chair by me, I thought I never saw her look so pretty, nor yet so kind, though she said never a syllable, and only sighed softly about twice, so I hitched my chair a bit closer, and leaning to her's, I said, Jane, you must not be angry, for I cannot help it; upon my soul Jane, I could not help it if you were to hate me for it. With that I gave her a kiss—such a kiss, an't like, your honour, as quite went through my blood like a high fever. 'Hate you, George!' said she, as my lips were close to her's, and with that she—no it could not be called quite a kiss to be sure—though it was

was

was e'en almost one too—then she put her dear cheek to mine, and I felt her breathe upon my heart as plain as I now feel my heart beat against my hand, your honour. 'O George, that I had been still a good virtuous girl for your sake. If I hate any body it is myself—yes, I hate only my detested self.' She shed tears as she turned her eyes on the child, whose little hand went all over her poor mother's wet face—I then saluted her afresh, the baby too, and I am sure it was then that Mrs. Jane gave me kifs for kifs."

"He best can paint them who can feel them most."

But satisfying as were the effects of this enterprise to every individual at the castle, soothing as they were even to the wounded spirit of Henry, and, agreeable as they were at the chapel-house, the sojourners of the last mentioned place found it still necessary to carry on, though perhaps with some variations, their design of quitting a country, where they had lost treasures which no acquisition of fortune could redeem.

deem. Circumstances were perpetually falling out to keep alive their regret for those departed joys which it was for the peace of Charles and Caroline, as well as for the preservation of their honour, to bury in oblivion, or at least to remove from the spot where those joys expired. Every hour brought with it some disturbance to their eyes or ears, either as to what they saw or heard, while they remained in the fatal neighbourhood of Fitzorton and Stuart; the abbey and castle were alike baneful to their repose; since the tender goodness and consideration of the one, assisted by the agonizing conflicts of their own hearts, were as hard to be endured as the pitiless cruelty and incorrigible baseness of the other. The sweet Olivia, the disinterested John, the secretly mourning, yet generous Henry, wounded as deeply with their kindness, as the abject Sir Guise, the minion Valentine, and fierce Virago, who had stormed the abbey, with all the empoisoned arrows of unnatural persecution and determined hate. In the full conviction
of

of this, a conversation took place betwixt Arthur, Charles, and Dennison, at the instance of Caroline, who proved the necessity of their bidding adieu to the chapel-house, without any more delay; and, to escape future agitations and retardings, to quit it with all possible caution. "We have now," said Caroline, "the means of doing it; there can be no good reason given why we should not this very night begin our journey towards the metropolis, where we may remain undisturbed by any of the nameless calamities that may surprise us here, and we shall gain time for further deliberation, how and where to dispose of ourselves."

This, after some miscellaneous discourse, was agreed upon; it was about twelve o'clock in the morning when the point was decided, and twelve at night was fixed on as the hour of their departure. The intermediate time was passed in vigorous preparations, for much was yet to be done; but Arthur, who was now in the full sobriety of his mind, after the start of enthusiasm

thufiasm from the perufal of Henry's letter, kept pace with the activity and zeal of Caroline and Charles. The young Indian, and old Dennifon too, were no lefs bufy; for both, without any direct invitation, had refolved not to be left behind.

CHAPTER XXX.

REGRETS.

THE feparating, however, from a fcene fo interefting, and with the gloomy ideas, perhaps, never to return, was no flight or eafy trial of fortitude, either to Caroline or to Charles. Many as were the memorials of grief and difappointment, which attached to the fpofts they were about to leave, the fond and honourable endearments which even confecrated it, were alfo not few. Every tree, plant, and blade of grafs, in fome parts; every turret, window, and pathway, in others, were ftill precious to fight and to remembrance; and if thefe objects were more than balanced by various others
of

of a contrary nature, the parting hour is not the period of resentment in minds like those of Charles and Caroline. The very thought that we are looking, for the last time, upon any prospects, to which, in the days of our youth, our eyes and our hearts have been long accustomed, throws the dark and uncheering objects into the back ground, and brings forward only those which have afforded us happiness. Over these, even though but the simplest flower, or the humblest shrub, we mingle our sighs with our adieus; and sincerely to be compassionated is that proud and stubborn being, who can coldly pronounce the affecting words, *eternally farewell*, to the house-leek that grows on his wall, or the ivy that clings to his cottage.

Charles and his sister left to Dennison, and Caroline's attendant, the care of packing, and in that sort of social and endearing sorrow which now, strengthening the bonds of nature, linked them still more affectionately together, they pass the little allotment of time which was yet allowed, in
cares

cares of a higher nature. They rambled, while it was yet day, through all the labyrinths of the forest, and paused in every shade which their too faithful memories had marked with friendship or with love. And when the evening threw over them her veil, they hazarded, but with a step as trembling as that of the hare, that often crossed their path, a peep at the castle.— Their eyes fastened on two windows which threw the light of the moon then shining into the chambers of Henry and Olivia— The extreme brightness of the night had tempted that lovely woman to gaze at her favourite orb from her own apartment, and she had thrown open the casement. “O heaven!” sighed Charles, “there is Olivia!” Caroline in great agitation hurried away—dragging her brother. “Farewel for ever!” whispered he, and directing his eye towards her, as he followed the guidance of his sister. “Hush! dearest brother, hush,” said Caroline, quickening her pace. But the stillness of the evening betrayed the sound even of their almost
fairy

fairly footsteps: the dog-house of the castle, who was on his evening watch, gave notice, that some one was at hand; to avoid discovery, Charles and Caroline ran down the grand avenue so often commemorated in this history. Thus, narrowly escaping, they were about to turn by a winding wood-walk towards the chapel-house, when the figure of a man made its appearance, within about a hundred paces, crossing hastily the path; and while they were yet fixed in observing it, another living thing presented itself, and ere any measure could be adopted, the latter object, who had begun with a growl of displeasure, ended with a cry of joy. It was Little Fitz. This discovery left as little doubt on the minds of Charles and Caroline, as it will on that of the reader, that the human figure was Henry Fitzorton. He too had been led by the beauty of the evening, and the unencouraged but commanding sensations of his own heart, to wander forth, attended by his constant companion, and had paid a lunar visit to the ever-remembered seat leading
out

out of the avenue: there, indeed, he had been sitting ever since the moon arose, in converse with himself. Charles and Caroline were struck by a voice, and insensibly stopt to listen. It was Henry pouring forth his soul in grateful acknowledgment to that being who, at least, had rescued them from poverty, and from that horror than poverty more dire, dependence.—He fervently prayed to the same power to superadd to this bounty, the peace of mind which he declared he would himself be content to be in the want of all his life long, provided Caroline might enjoy it. He often laid his lips on the dew-bath'd initials of Caroline's name, and his own, carved in the rind by her precious hand. "My oath to Olivia," said he, "is not broken by this virtuous tenderness for one who is, alas! as effectually severed from me as if she were in her grave. To Olivia will I devote my hand, my faith, my life. It ought to be, but oh, most precious! most remembered! my every sense, my heart, my soul is thine!" Henry, on hearing steps, started up.

Charles

Charles and Caroline, followed by Little Fitz, were rushing into the forest, not daring to hear more, or to look back. Henry pursued, but just as he had gained the place at which he thought he saw them turn into the wood, he beheld, at no great distance, somebody coming up the avenue from the castle. To this he directed his uncertain steps, and found it to be Olivia. "I protest," said she, "my dearest Henry, I shall be quite jealous of this madam Luna, if you so often prefer her company to mine, and especially if you have these private assignations with her. But did you ever hear the dogs make such a barking? I should think some strangers were about, and on no good errand. Nay, I thought I saw people and heard voices a little while ago, as I was looking at your beloved moon, from my window. Did you meet or hear any body?" "Yes," said Henry, "two persons, who at sight of me ran into the wood."—"Only poor faggot stealers, I suppose," answered Olivia; "but where is your friend? Where is Fitz?" "He—
he—

he—ran up to—to—and followed them—” replied the hesitating Henry, now first conjecturing who were the fugitives. He whistled, while Olivia several times called Little Fitz. “Two people you say—Charles and Caroline, my life on it! They love Cynthia too, perhaps. It must be so. The dog would not leave you for any body else. What a pity you did not meet! Perhaps it is not too late to overtake them. Let us try. ’Twould be the best opportunity in the world to wish them joy of their good fortune.” Though Henry’s heart yearn’d to pursue this plan, he resisted. “No, my sweet Olivia,” cried he, gently checking her as she was setting off, “you are come out into the dew undefended, and even if—it were—any—any—any people of the chapel-house, we may be sure, by their getting away in so much haste, they did not wish to be overtaken; as to their good fortune, you know,” added Henry, “alas! it is embittered by the thoughts of those cruel spoilers, out of whose hands it was ravished.”

Satisfied

Satisfied with this reasoning—for it was Henry's—Olivia suffered herself to be over-ruled, by which means Charles and his sister, who had been generally embarrassed in their nocturnal excursions, arrived unmolested at the chapel-house, with Little Fitz in their train; while Henry and Olivia returned to the castle.

This adventure had not a little disordered Caroline Stuart, but she permitted not her own sensations to deduct from the comfort of others; and her gentle heart, troubled as it was, had yet much to perform, and much that could be performed only by herself.

Prior, however, to the history of her parting sensations, it may be necessary to inform the reader, that she had made the faithful Dennison amongst the happiest of the human race, by condescending to borrow from his often-offered little treasury the sum of fifty guineas, which that good man, much to her satisfaction, because favourable to her purposes, had furnished in almost all the varieties of coin current in
this

this country. Guineas, half-guineas, quarter-guineas, crowns, half-crowns, shillings, and sixpences, all new or curiously clean; for Dennison had been anxious in hoarding up these, infomuch, that the box in which the store was deposited, might have given one no bad history of the succession to the throne of England, for the space of sixty years; Dennison being now touching his seventieth birth-day, and as he had been heard to declare, he began to lay by at the usually prodigal age of nine; we say he might have given one such an idea, but that the history was often broken by chasms made by his charitable hand; being a miser only that he might have the power to be a philanthropist; for at the very same age he began to feel for human misery, and to determine so far as in him lay to remove it. His assertion to his father, on the day on which he put by the first half-crown, a birth-day present, was this—"I will begin to save now I am little, that when I am a grown-up man, I may give away, father; and, mayhap, now and then a tiny trifle

when I see occasion meanwhile:" so that this half-crown might be considered as the corner stone of the benevolent edifice he afterwards erected, and this half-crown was amongst the store now delivered to Caroline, the highest possible idea of his affection: it was curiously wrapt in many papers, the interior labelled—"My *Breeder*."—Conjecturing by Caroline's anxious desire to have the loan divided into as many unequal parts as possible, he imagined, also, he could not do better than to trust this his breeder to the hand of his young mistress.

Now, if the reader wishes to understand the uses to which Caroline put the fifty guineas thus collected, and which she borrowed only when she was sure it could be soon returned with interest, he will gladly follow her wherever she may bend her steps.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SECRET PREPARATIONS.

IN the adjoining parishes of Fitzorton and Stuart, were many cottages filled with honest, humble beings, who were content with the daily profits of daily industry, but whose luxuries, purchased even at less expenditure than the lightest baubles of the rich, had been, since the death of Caroline's mother, supplied by Caroline herself: the superfluities, if, by that word, the opulent can comprehend an occasional warm dinner, an annual coat or gown—the superfluities of these poor people were bequeathed to Caroline, not by her mother's will, or injunction, but by her death, an event which would have deprived them of their wonted bounty had not the daughter considered the benevolence of the mother as a part of her own inheritance, and all the deserving objects as so many legatees. There were, also, some families of old and young amongst the peasantry, whom she called

her own; and who, even in her mother's life time, were peculiarly appropriate to the charity of her own little purse, which, while yet a child, she considered herself as holding in trust for the cold and palsied hand of age, or the glowing one of honest labour. Nay, in a case of severe sickness, she parted with one of her keep-sakes, but redeemed it with a present of double its worldly value, the next day. Never, however, in any exigence, did she pledge, even for a moment, the first love-token of Henry Fitzorton; and though this was nothing more than the silver penny, already celebrated, she held it sacred as the vow with which it was given; and though many a year had elapsed, it was even now amongst the possessions beyond purchase, which she carried in her pocket. If this little fact appears to thee, O reader, too trivial for the majesty of history, may heaven incline thine heart to remit of its dignity, and teach it to feel, that inconsequential trifles often make up the happiness or misery of the sternest mind, or the proudest temper.

All

All these lowly pensioners on her heart, Caroline now visited, and every latch she pulled, opened to her a thousand welcomes from men, women, and children. One run for a chair, another dusted it with her apron, a third demonstrated joy by saluting her with a cheerful blaze, throwing the enlivening faggot on the almost expiring embers: nor did she repass the homely thresholds, without innumerable blessings from all ranks, ages, and sexes, of these harmless people.

She did not think it prudent to mention her intending so soon, or for so long time, to quit the neighbourhood; but just hinting her being on the eve of a long journey, she said, she came to bid all her friends and neighbours farewell; and to assure them, that absent, or present, their claims upon her would be ever duly remembered. It was with great difficulty she prevented them from escorting her to the chapel-house, or from casting severe animadversions on the stories they had heard of her father's cruelty. This, however, she managed tolerably well;

but nothing could hinder them from the bitterest reflections on the new Lady Stuart, nor from taking a comparative view of that imperious woman, and the unassuming excellent creature, her predecessor.

These duties ended, she had yet another, and one of a more affecting kind to perform, and this was, to pay a parting visit to the tomb of her mother. Predetermined that this should close, and crown the whole, she had taken care to provide herself with the key, confiding to Dennison only the secret of her intentions, in case any unexpected delay beyond the purposed hour of her return to the chapel-house, should alarm her friends.

The clocks from the castle and abbey, which seemed sullenly to mock each other, struck eleven as Caroline entered the chapel. The moon darted a dim religious light through the many-coloured paintings of the antique windows. With soft, yet sounding step, Caroline advanced to the vault, opened the iron gate that guarded it from common intruders, and approaching

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ing the well-known tomb, knelt down with a reverence which she would have paid to her mother, had she been still alive. ‘ O happy only in thy death! thy daughter now comes, thrice gentle shade, to take, perhaps, a final leave of thy shrine; till, if ever that should be permitted, her ashes shall be brought to mix with thy parent dust! Ah! were it the will of heaven, how much more gladly would she now resign her life; and, clasping thy dear remains, enjoy the peace which they so long have tasted; and, oh! blessed thought, enjoy the higher privilege of hailing thy angel spirit, which is, which must be, because God is just, which must be in heaven! Instead of which, encumbered by youth, which menaces length of days, and who may shorten them?—thy daughter leaves thee for an unknown land, to which her fate, her fortune, and even her own heart impels her. The powers with which the inhabitants of heaven are invested cannot be known to mortals; and the love I bear to thee, blessed partaker of those powers,

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whatsoever

whatsoever they be, incline me even to hope they descend not from thee to the earth; for the felicity even of thy seraphick state, couldest thou stoop to sublunary transactions, would be clouded to see the wretchedness of thy disastrous family, since the tremendous night in which I felt thee in death's cold arms. Yes, my now corrected soul acknowledges the soft providence of that wound which took thee from scenes that called for my blessed mother, if she *must* be conscious of them, even in her immortal state to bear. Parent of all the little I have yet known of happiness, farewell! Farewel the marble under which thy precious reliques are enclosed, those reliques have a shrine in my heart of hearts, and even that cold tomb has a monument erected there! O farewell!"

Caroline remained with folded hands, still kneeling at the foot of the tomb, then rose and moved towards the head, and bending over, kissed that part of the marble under which the face might be supposed to be laid. From this posture she was aroused
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by a deep and heavy sigh of some one near her. On turning round, she heard the words of "Dear, dearest sister!" pronounced by Charles, who had come to conduct Caroline home: Charles had attested and shared tenderly in her filial effusions, but in silence, so awful, that it was broken only by the sighs which he could no longer suppress. He supported Caroline in his arms, and led her from the vault; and at the door of the chapel found the vigilant Dennison, who had stolen out, as he thought, unseen, but who had been observed, and followed, not only by Charles, but father Arthur and the Indian boy, who were, most of the time, within hearing, and, at length, within sight, each emulous to give their fair charge some testimony of guardian attention.

The destined hour of departure was now come. The worthy friar would, however, have postponed the journey, in consideration of Caroline. "You must be weary with variety of avocations, emotions, and events, my dear child," said the good man,

“ your harassed spirits require rest. Let us delay our social pilgrimage a little longer.” Caroline declaring she was fully equal to the undertaking, and that having now done all that she desired, she should not submit to be thrown on the accidents of the morrow.

The journey of Caroline, Charles, and Dennison, began therefore with all the secrecy that had been projected.

Arthur proposed to set off so as to join them on the third day, at a given place on the road, being left, in the meanwhile, with his little Asiatick, to execute some necessary commissions; but that time might be allowed for securing the travellers from pursuit, none of these were to be executed till twenty-four hours after the party had set out. Amongst these commissions was the delivery of a letter, and the bank-note, to Henry Fitzorton, from Charles; a billet, with a present of the little spaniel, to Olivia from Caroline, with an intimation that the key of the chapel, and chapel-house, would be sent speedily by Arthur,

Charles's

Charles's letter to Henry contained only these words :

“ The generosity of John renders unnecessary the bounty of Henry ; and therefore the enclosure waits upon the latter, with the united and heartfelt blessings of

CAROLINE and CHARLES.

Neither did Caroline's billet to Olivia consist of more than a few lines.

“ In presenting you with my little favourite, whom I had before considered as your property, for it is plain he so considered himself, I not only perform an act of honesty, but bribe Olivia to receive this her humble attached domestick, as a small token of the respect and gratitude which is sincerely felt by

“ CAROLINE STUART.”

To John was written a joint epistle, containing what follows :

“ SIR,

“ You cannot but know why we quit this neighbourhood; for the means of doing which, means which you would have concealed, we would attempt to thank you, but that our best words would insult the deed. There is but one way by which our sense of obligation could be increased, and that is by watching diligently over the motions of Henry, so that no unavailing search be made after,

“ Sir,

“ Your most grateful servants,

“ CHARLES

“ AND

“ CAROLINE STUART.”

“ P. S. Father Arthur received your billet of last night, and notes the contents.”

All these matters were accomplished by the medium of George, whom the parties, previous to setting out, had fixed on as the proper person to employ in case of dispatch, trust, and honour.

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The business of the abbey alone remained, and this was to be performed by Arthur himself. The worthy monk had not been idle while his pensive associates had gone their rounds. He, too, had his duties to perform; and, one above the rest, of a very solemn and soul-commanding kind. This was no other than fitting himself seriously down, warmed by the spirit of true devotion, to write a sort of farewell discourse to his late patron, Sir Guise Stuart: as he was now about to quit the chapel, he thought it an incumbent duty to address the baronet, for the last time, in an official character, not so much, perhaps, in any warm hope of softening the rock which Sir Guise carried in his bosom, as in the discharge of his own conscience.

One great motive for his remaining at the chapel-house, therefore, was to finish this undertaking; and, as he wished to do it privately, he resolved, after turning the matter long in his mind, to go himself to the abbey, be his reception what it might.

With

With this resolution he gave the last touches to his intended discourse, and throwing his cloak about him, sallied forth on an enterprize far more arduous than any that had been attempted by the knight of La Mancha. For what are giants, and windmills, to an attack on the heart of an abandoned profligate, familiarized to guilt, habituated to mock at divine, yet trembling at human punishments?

This unpromising adventure, however, our intrepid ecclesiastick entered upon undismayed. He reached the abbey-gate that separated the garden from the grand avenue about three o'clock in the afternoon of the day on which his friends had departed.

When the purity of this excellent man's heart, and the purport of his errand, are considered, his chapel-house might well vie with Eden in its unfallen state. His appearance at the entrance of the abbey-garden may also be said to present the reverse of our great poet's image of Satan, on his journey to hell gates; for he resembled

resembled the figure of some good angel entering to give the warning voice. The abbey was now, indeed, despoiled, like ancient Eden; its pure inhabitants were driven out, as were the angelick guards from Paradise.

Nevertheless, such as are not terrified at the idea of a monk's sermon, may see, in the next chapter, what befel our good man after he had gained admission into the mansion, where they have often been introduced to better company than the present evil spirits that were now in possession of it.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A MODERN CRUSADE.

NEVER was a visit of exhortation apparently, worse timed than this of our good catholick, who found the abbey-gates barred, like those of a seraglio. Accustomed to all inlets of the house, he tried them one by one; and although it was yet broad day he perceived the very window shutters
were

were closed, as if the family were defunct, and the mighty mansion left without a single inhabitant.

Presently one of the shutters of a lower apartment was thrown back, and the sash of the window so forcibly opened, that some of the glass was shaken from the frame; instantly succeeding this, was heard distinctly, by Arthur, the endearing epithets of "Rogue, Rascal, Hussy, Slut, Strumpet, Knave, Thief, Traitor!" accompanied by the pithy sentiments, "It was all through you, wicked woman!"—"Vile man 'tis false: say another such word you poor, paltry, pitiful scoundrel, and I'll throw you headlong out of the window!"—"I wish you would, you jade, you infamous jade, I wish you would! I had rather have my neck broken a thousand times than lead this life!"

This asseveration was followed by a dead calm, as to the fury of oratory, but was blended with that eloquence which does more execution than the lightning of a thousand angry eyes, and the thunder of as
many

many scolding tongues, even the eloquence of blows. These played off so dextrously that all the echoes of the abbey and the forest, those echoes which had so often returned melting responses to the softest whispers of love, now reverberated with the hateful rebounds of indecent animosity.

Arthur, had been thundering in vain at the abbey-door, when he heard three violent and piercing shrieks of "murder!" and in the next instant the door was violently opened, by a person, who, seeing Arthur, suddenly shrunk back again into the house. The intrepid Arthur, however, entered undismayed, and following the steps of the fugitive, discovered Sir Guise Stuart, his incomparable lady, and Mr. Valentine Miles. This amiable trio, worthy of each other, had, in their precipitate retreat from the inn, betaken themselves to the abbey, not knowing, for the moment, where else to shelter, amidst the press of sticks, stones, and other missive weapons. They luckily found the house evacuated by the few domesticks who had remained in their service;

vice ; and these, prior to the return of the parties, having received some unpromising flying reports, that the baronet's fortunes were hastening to that bourne, from which no travelling guinea returns, namely, into his lady's and his lawyer's clutches, deemed it might save time, and trouble also, to pay themselves their own wages ; accordingly, they took whatever plate and other moveables they could get at, by dint of pickers and picklocks, by way of discharge, in full of all demands ; and with which summary settlement they marched off, under covert of that very night, by whose aid their equally honest master and mistress returned from their expedition ; and, what is not unpleasant to relate, the two flying parties met each other on the road, and mutually filled with the terrors of consciousness, ran away at the first glimpse of each other : one of the fugitive domesticks happening to say to his comrade, not yet having seen any of the other party—" Sir Guise will find himself caught finely, at last : " It is hard to say which made the most haste ;
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the master to run away from his property, or the servants to carry off the spoil.

The abbey was, in fact, destitute of all living creatures, except its cats, and these were wailing piteously at being left alone, without a soul to speak or mew to, in the deserted mansion. My lady determined on prosecution, even to halters: "Yes, but not till we are in a place of safety ourselves," said the trembling baronet.— "There is no rest for us here, it is plain, nay, probably, my unnatural son—for I can see *his* hand in the plunder—may come with his myrmidons, with that old brutal Partington, or the monk at their head, and cut our throats, and then swear we had been our own executioners." "I wish him hang'd as much as you; but depend on it, the two parishes that have so often hunted us up and down this cursed neighbourhood, will be in arms shortly, and we had better, though God forbid we should commit such a crime, cut our own throats indeed."

“ I have a thought,” cried Valentine, “ that may turn that idea to glorious account : but let us try to get a little rest for the present : and as we have got thus far safe, and have the house to ourselves, surely we may lie concealed, or block out all intrusion, till we have devised what measure to adopt for future safety ; and as to former plots and plans against each other, why, damn it, we were *all* wrong ; but wrong or right, it is now our interest to stick by one another, at least till this cursed affair at the inn is a little blown over.”

Though it is scarcely possible to conceive an aversion more entire and radical, than that which rankled in the hearts of these three persons against each other, yet a common danger, for the moment, united them. This project, therefore, was agreed to, with an improvement on it, suggested by the fearful Sir Guise Stuart, that the doors and windows, and gates should be all bolted, barred and closed, save a partial light in the one apartment they should inhabit, “ by which means,” said the baronet,

“ it

“ it will be imagined that the house is shut up, the establishment broken, and that, in short, our retreat will be supposed any where but where it is.” The high-minded lady treated this as too cowardly an image ; but, on being reminded, that it was only for a very short time, and to mature a more ample and fearless vengeance on some future day, she suffered Valentine, for Sir Guise dared not himself to venture forth, to close the outer gates, and afterwards herself assisted the indefatigable husband in drawing the double fastenings across the inner apartments ; Valentine taking care to collect and bring into their living-room, all the pistols, swords, and sticks, he could gather ;—while the baronet bold, who heartily wished there might be no use for these defensive instruments, carried off a curious shield and buckler, which had been borne by one of his forefathers, and under which he intended to hide himself, or run away, in case of extremity.

Thus was the abbey converted into a fortified castle, and as there were plenty
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of good fitches of bacon, dried tongues, hung-beef, pickles, sweetmeats, &c. in the garrison, there was no danger of their being starved out. On the contrary, they thought they were in a situation to hold out a much severer siege than would probably be raised against them.

In this fortress,—after giving it every possible security,—they went, much harassed, to repose, and being, as yet, superior even to the starts of conscience, slept several hours after the sun, forcing his beams through the crevices of their window-shutters, announced that most of the honesty and roguery of the world was again in motion.

Their noon-tide breakfast began with harmony, but ended in discord. In short, they touched upon a jarring string: my lady, unluckily adverted to the only circumstance in the late transactions, which could not be patiently revived, videlicet, the discovered perfidiousness of her quondam lover, Valentine; this produced a retort from the said Valentine, who accused the

the lady; who in turn, accused her husband; who, accused his wife; each persisting in condemning the other as the most false, most treacherous, and most insidious of human beings; and each concluding, that it was very hard indeed, and the sign of a soul altogether incorrigible, when three persons, bound to each other by the most solemn league, to plunder and deceive all the *rest* of the world, could not be faithful to each other.

These politick remarks, which shewed, at least, some knowledge of the world, and exhibited the necessity of the social compact in a new point of view, were followed by other observations, which led to a pretty curious examination of each other, not founded on their virtues, but vices. All seemed very tenacious of holding the first place in roguery, agreeing only in one small particular, the calling that roguery by any name but its proper one, such as—bold stroke, lucky hit, happy thought, and chef d'œuvre. The contention for superiority soon grew warmer and warmer; at

last the spirits took fire, when every auxiliary of foot, fist, and tongue, all which had been found so argumentative at the inn, was once more called in to prove, which of the trio was the most desperate fury, and which deserved most the destiny which they had just escaped. But, indeed, they had got into a dispute which would have puzzled the devil himself to settle ; so we shall not presume to attempt the decision.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AN ATTEMPT.

IT was in the grand climax of this sublime union of oral and manual eloquence, that they were found by father Arthur, who, deemed them unworthy of his sacred counsels, seeing that they meditated rather a plan of vengeance than of reform, treating him as a scout from their enemy, sent to reconnoitre. In effect, they looked upon him as a tub to the whale, as a morsel sent in kind relief to be devoured, rather than

continue devouring one another. "Yes, yes, we have got the *old* lion in the toils, however," said my lady; "let us dispatch him first—Shoot him through the head," continued this fierce compound of all the vehement passions, seizing a blunderbuss with one hand, and holding his sacred robe in the other;—"shoot him, and then hang him out of the window, as an example of terror to the rest—no matter for consequences—Revenge is more glorious than life!"

The indignant Arthur, disengaged, sprung like the lion, to which he had been compared, at the aim of the lioness of the abbey, even as she was cocking the blunderbuss, and brought her struggling to the ground. The blunderbuss going off in the affray, lodged those two bullets, which her gentle passion wished in father Arthur's heart, all innocently in the tapestry, after going through the head of one of Sir Guise's ancestors, there interwoven.

The good man, seeing that his mission would be profaned, were he to perform it

at such a time, and to such associates, rushed out of the house with the disdain of dignified silence, leaving the den of thieves, to soothe his outraged mind in his own temple of piety.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FIDELITY AND ATTENTION.

SWEET, however, and consoling, are the rewards of virtue. The inmost recesses of his heart, possessed by these, he knew not the rancour of a violent spirit, for he knew not guilt. His resentment against the persons, therefore, diminished at every step, and retained its force only against their vices; and ere he reached the chapel-house, his heart softened into commiseration, nor had his bosom room for other feelings than those of regret and compassion. Then it was, that "with a prophet's eye," he anticipated, and with a Christian's pity, bewailed the hour, when death should enter the wretched mansion, out of which he had
just

just escaped. "Then," exclaimed Arthur, "will the King of Terrors, arrayed in all that is tremendous, approach the abbey; then will he extort from the miserable inhabitants that remorse, which my feeble admonitions have now failed to produce. Fountain of Mercy! O turn their hearts!"

At the end of these virtuous cogitations he found himself close on the chapel-house, and his hand was yet upon the wicket of the little rustick gate that led to it, when he perceived his faithful Indian and another person advancing towards him. This other person was True George, who, at the sight of the reverend pastor, in tatters, for his robe was almost rent in twain, made three of his most rapid bows; and then, without so much as enquiring into the cause of his dismantled state, ran away at full speed.— "Child," said Arthur to his Indian, "let us enter in, and tarry awhile, after which we will follow our family with willing steps and cheerful hearts."

But on the Indian asking for the key, and

Arthur feeling for it, the good man found he had either left it in the abbey, or dropt it by the way. Not deeming it, however, worth while to go in search thereof, and recollecting that he had often made the "rough couch," of a mendicant friar, "his thrice driven bed of down," he threw himself at length on a grass plat, shaded by two antique cypress trees, that had been planted in early times by the hand of superstition, or of piety; and declaring that he would only indulge his wearied limbs in a short repose, he desired Floresco, such was the name of his Indian, to do the same.—Scarcely had he wrapt himself up in his lacerated mantle ere he fell asleep. Floresco, meantime, was far otherwise employed—He stripped off his own coat and waistcoat, which he converted to a temporary covering, folding up at the same time a silk handkerchief, which he took from his neck, and one of linen from his pocket, to serve as a pillow for the old gentleman's cheek, under which, with all due caution, the Indian tucked it; he then

then stretched himself along at the back of Arthur, who, by this time, snored; and who, by these means, was kept almost as warm as if he had been in his chapel-house dormitory. Floresco, however, did not close his eyes; for, not content with converting one part of his little body into the uses of a screen, he found full employment for the rest of it. When the monk was locked by Somnus from all hazard of waking, Floresco gently drew off his master's sables, and taking from his pocket an huffy, which he always had about him, he began to sew the rent shreds together, as well as the case permitted him, working with hand elevated above Arthur's head, lest, by changing his position, he should disturb him. The seeds of every virtue that ennobles society, or endears solitude, were sown liberally by the hand of Nature in the bosom of this sable boy; and, we trust, have sufficiently recommended his humble self to make a more particular account of him acceptable. He was put up to sale soon after being landed at St. Domingo, in

his way from a remoter coast, his native soil. Arthur, who was there attending a friend in that island, bought the desolate boy from the pure impulse of a merciful heart. His parents were both dead, and all that our monk could learn farther of his story was, that he was purchased with his mother; who, from grief of slavery, and of her husband's death, which happened from severity, plunged into the waves, to escape a similar destiny. His heart became sensible to the charms of Zoraida, who first avowed an equal flame in the hour of his departure, and would have shared his captivity, but that she was already in the bonds of another master. His person was a purchase, and might be carried at the pleasure of the purchaser into other climes. But when he became the *property* of Arthur—since we must use that presumptuous word—he fell into the arms of a father; but neither other climes, nor other beauties of more boasted hue, had power over his heart, which emulated not only the warmth but the steadiness of the orb under whose
immediate

immediate inspiration he fixed both his fancy and his faith. So much only of his history was known when he came into the hands of father Arthur, and for him that was enough. Some trait of his attachment gave earnest of the other powers that enriched his nature, and to nourish and expand these, even till his Indian should become an imitable object of the fairest and purest European, was the delight of our Franciscan, whose instructions, whether concerning things divine or human, were eagerly imbibed. The good monk, though devoted himself to celibacy, would have crowned the virtues of his servant with domestick joy, had his researches after Zoraida been fortunate; but as these were made with all the diligence of a friend, though in silence, the endeavour was at length closed by news of her death; a circumstance, however, which the master kept from his servant, who still cherished the soft image of her existence and her graces in his mind; and made her, as has been seen, the constant object of his hopes,

his studies, and his prayers. The idea was too sweet to forego, and Arthur thought it would be cruel to rob him of an illusion that would die without untimely crushing. And now the still small actions which were within his power are before the reader, and we only glide in this slight sketch of his bosom's history while his pious master is asleep, and while the servant has been employing himself, to render the waking hour more comfortable.

The monk was yet in the profound of his nap, when True George returned with a speed fully proportioned to that with which he had departed, though he bore under his arms a load, with the apparent weight of which most other men would have laboured; but the spirit of good-will and urbanity in this honest fellow was superior to mere bodily strength, concerning whose burthens the heart seldom enters into calculations.

The former errand of this faithful domestick was to acknowledge, in the names of his masters, severally and separately, the
receipt

receipt of those letters, and not finding the good monk at home, and seeing Floresco sitting at the chapel-house door, he entered into discourse with that little counterpart of his own fidelity, and from him George understood that Caroline and Charles were by that time afar off; that all the baggage, except a small bundle containing a change of linen, which he had tied up in an handkerchief, but which, unluckily, were left in the barred and bolted chapel-house, was gone, and that it was intended he should himself follow on his master Arthur's coming back from the abbey, whither he was gone.

No sooner, therefore, did George perceive the good priest return in the situation wherein he had been exhibited to the reader, than he flew home to make report of what he had seen to his masters, Henry and John, who were walking together in the vestibule of the castle.

As if actuated by the same friendly, fraternal energy, the brothers went hand in hand into the house, ordering George to

wait their coming back. They returned in a few minutes, one bearing a bundle, the other a billet, saying to George as they put them into his hands, "Fly with these to the chapel-house!" In verity, wings could scarcely have executed the order with more haste.

The bundle contained a change of every kind of linen, a suit of canonicals, and a large roquelo. Arthur now awaking, True George presented his offerings on both knees, and with a bow that bent his head almost to the ground. "From the castle, your reverence," quoth George. Then leaping up, he opened the bundle, while Arthur read the following billet:

"John and Henry Fitzorton, hearing of the good and respectable father Arthur's situation, as they suppose from some robbery, earnestly beg he will use the necessaries which are sent herewith, and intreat he will have the goodness to consider, that the shortness of time allows not of accommodating him as they could wish: the professional part of the dress, indeed, which

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they

they have the honour to send, was the property of their deceased father, who, alas ! did not live to wear it. His sons cannot give the inestimable Arthur a stronger proof of their exalted esteem, than by presenting him with any the most trifling objects which had once been in the possession of Sir Armine. His sons present this testimony with a thousand prayers for the prosperity and happiness of father Arthur, and his friends, wheresoever they may bend their steps. John and Henry beg to know, whether they can be so happy as to supply father Arthur with horses, or carriage, or servants—or, in short, whatever Fitzorton castle affords?"

"I protest," exclaimed the pious man, when he had read this note, "one could never know half the virtues of the good, were they not called forth into action by the vices of the unworthy. Go, young man," continued he, addressing George, "present my humble services to your hospitable masters, and tell them, I should

felicitate myself on the injurious treatment I have received at the abbey, inasmuch as it has been productive of so much generosity from the castle—I say, youth, I should rejoice with exceeding gladness, were it not that the unhappy aggressors are heaping coals of fire, as it were, on their own heads. In respect of kind offers of conveyance, your honoured masters may remember, I prefer the ambulatory mode of travelling to all others, and should my little brother here find himself weary, we shall, doubtless, meet with relief on the road. Albeit the boon bestowed on me was not wanted, I will treasure it as a mark of love.”

George, whose lips followed those of Arthur, as he spoke, and who seemed in dreadful apprehension lest he should not do justice to his message, from the length thereof, dropped the roquelo, which he was then preparing to throw over the monk's shoulders, and beginning to repeat himself what had been said, took a second flight to the castle, working at the speech all the way,

way, sometimes, as it were, at fault, and sometimes in the direct trial of eloquence, running it off at full cry.

Meantime, the little Floresco, who, at the sight of True George, had suspended his vain endeavours to repair the lacerated garment, represented to his master the possibility there might be of either forcing the chapel-house door, or getting in at the window, and was preparing to make a bold push at the latter in consequence of this, but the Doctor declared it was wholly unnecessary, as he could easily penetrate into a more retired part of the wood, where he could attire himself at leisure; indeed," added he, "nothing farther than that roquelo, which, as it is here, I may as well use, is necessary till we get to a more convenient shelter, for which we may offer adequate compensation; so wrap it round me, and let us begin our route, my dear brother. As to the rest of the good things with which the worthy gentry of the castle have provided us, they may, peradventure, be of much avail should we tarry on the road,

road, since, to return them on the hands of the donors, might argue a proud instead of a grateful spirit."

No event of importance happened to them on the road, and at the appointed place in the great city they were received with open arms by the anxious Charles, his excellent sister, and the aged Dennison. — Thus, after such unexpected turns of fortune, having brought the chapel-house party once more together, and set them safe down at their temporary apartments in the metropolis, very much have we to lament the necessity of quitting them in the time of trouble; for, notwithstanding the strongest efforts of their virtue, notwithstanding their accessions of fortune, and the consolements of that potent friend which, as a dæmon or a god, has a throne in almost every human bosom—notwithstanding all these, and whatever else may be derived from associations of the wise and good, suffering for virtue's sake, we are aware that we part from this truly valuable groupe at a very afflictive period; but, alas! such

is the tenure on which we hold every earthly good; and, indeed, in the great volume of life, from whence, we trust, that we have faithfully copied some of its pages, we are sometimes obliged to part from persons just at the crisis that we feel most interested for them:—nay, not seldom, when their fate, fortunes, and lives, are bound up with our own; and when, from human uncertainty, a long absence seems to be only a softer lot than death, as not wholly excluding hope.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PEACE OF THE GOOD.

THE summary of events in the castle of Fitzorton, subsequent to the last related adventure of father Arthur at the abbey, and to the final departure of that venerable man, and his friends, from the chapel-house, was copious. Henry's nuptials with the lovely Olivia, as if fate itself retarded them, were again interrupted by the death of the
good

good Mr. Clare, and while they were yet in intermingled families, sorrowing for his loss, the decease of the excellent Lady Fitzorton filled up the measure of their domestick calamity. The grateful and tender conduct of Henry, towards the drooping and almost dying Olivia, on the first of those misfortunes, almost equalled that which Olivia herself manifested towards Henry to soften the severity of the last. And, possibly, these deep disasters under the parental roof, abated the sense of those which were more remote. The last words which trembled on the lips of the best of mothers, were to remind Henry of the yet unperformed oath he had made to Sir Armine. The latest office of Mr. Clare was to join the hands of his daughter and Henry: and, as if the good old man existed only to do this, the breath of life went from him in the moment he had thus united them.

The castle and the abbey, after these events, presenting only objects of regret, it was thought advisable for Henry and
Olivia

Olivia to change the scene, in pursuance of which design they past several months at the house of the hospitable Partington; that worthy man, as on a former occasion, resigning all the violent eccentricities of his character, united with the humble, but genuine Atwoods, to beguile them of their woe. Nor was True George, or his Jane, less assiduous, or less successful in their zealous endeavours to dispel the misery which they severely shared. The latter, indeed, had never thoroughly recovered the sudden shock which the fraudulent circumstances of the annuity had occasioned. Phantoms, and fearful shapes, obtruded on her waking hours, and broke in on her slumbers. She sighed heavily at she knew not what, and laboured with apprehensions she knew not why; nor could the incessant tendernefs of George wholly dissipate her gloom. The general establishments thus plucked up, as it were, by the roots, the branches felt themselves, for a tedious space, without vital energy; yet never, perhaps,

perhaps, had the sufferers been so near or dear, or necessary to each other. If adversity softened their hearts, it strengthened also their souls, or rather it kindled the emulative sparks of patience, fortitude, and every pious duty in each other. They one day assembled at the summons of John, to confer on an important subject. "My brothers," said he, "the time requires we should arouse from our lethargy of grief, into active employments of life. For my part the voice of glory shall again be obeyed. Retired from politicks which disgust, and from publick trust which I no longer hold with honour or satisfaction, I will once more push my fortune in the field. Your powers, my dear James, continue steadily in the even tenor of your way, and, almost without appearing to be in motion, you have already passed your senior brother on the road of life. I need not, surely, point out to you, my dear Henry, the two-fold duty which demands your attention, the church and the altar. It is
now

now too late to recede—advance, and you are yet in time to be the happiest of the three.”

John pronounced these last words firmly, but with a sigh: and that was answered by another from Henry. John, however, had, as usual, determined on his own plan, and, making instant preparations, took his leave the succeeding day. He foresaw it would be a long, perhaps an everlasting adieu; and, magnanimous as he was to endure, dexterous as he was to conceal distress, the hardest trial of his firm soul approached. He alternately drew Henry and James to his manly bosom, and then going into Olivia's apartment, “Fair maid,” said he, “adieu! When next we meet, you will, probably, present me with new claims.” She held his hand, as if anxious to proceed. The idea he had excited tinted her cheek with that sort of bloom which mocks the pencil: but it dispersed, as she tenderly said, raising his hand to her warm lip, “Ah, how cold you are—and you tremble—you are not well—you grieve

to

to leave us. Do not, do not, dearest friend; consider your Henry—your James—your Olivia. Have we no interest with your heart? Shall we not be all more blessed together? At least you will stay till—till—”

He waited not to hear more, but seeing Henry enter the room, he told him—
“ Olivia had been holding him a prisoner, but you, brother, are her proper captive, and thus I deliver you over to her custody. I am, you know, destined to be a—a—conqueror. Here, sister, use your willing slave as he deserves.” John forbade either to follow him. He gained the great hall, and paced to and fro in disorder. “ Ah, envied James!” said he, on seeing his second brother, “ you have none of these tumults of the soul.” “ What tumults?” demanded James, over-hearing, and pressing the question affectionately; “ Why these, answered John surprised, “ which when we part with relations and friends, rend the frame of—” “ Our Henry,” interposed James—“ alas! I can easily conceive

ceive the depth of his regrets at this moment, which I perceive prove almost too much for our self-conquering, intrepid John.”—“ I self-conquering, intrepid !” reiterated the latter—“ high sounding epithets for feeble mortals !” “ Truly, my dear brother,” observed James, with eyes furcharged, “ we are few of us entitled to them ; but John resists the tear which Henry invites : to one it is a solace ; the other shuns its aid : and when, alas ! agony wrings it from him, he is even angry at its obtrusion. If then I have a wish that either of my brothers had a greater portion of my less adorned and humble nature, it is not because I have ever desired to rob them of far more rich and sublime endowments ; but because I imagine it might have made them both more regularly happy : and I have sometimes almost grudged myself what brotherly love—for I love you both most truly—represented to me as an unfair division. It is true, I am denied, perhaps, by Nature herself, to rise to the rhapsody, or sink to the desperation of my Henry ;

nor

nor does it belong to the frame of my soul to aspire at the heights, or ascend the difficult steep of glory or science, like John : but I have never seen or imagined a grief happening to either, that to the utmost of my capacity of sensation, and of my sympathy, I have not felt in my heart : to that extent I feel it now ; and should not, with all that moderation of character you have sometimes ridiculed, and sometimes envied, be able to reconcile myself to another separation from my brother and friend, at a time when death itself has rendered our lives and our society more necessary to each other, but that I think the bustling scene may be favourable to your health and comfort."

John affectionately embraced James ; struggling powerfully, and moved his lips as if anxious to confide something important ; then recovering himself, again pressed his brother to his bosom, and hearing Olivia's voice on the stairs, pronouncing his name, he hurried into the carriage that had been sometime waiting at the door.

As

As he passed through London, he settled some arrangements, very near to his heart, and shortly after renewed his career of military glory; for which, indeed, the dissonant times afforded him another ample opportunity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE FIRST BORN.

AND now thus pressed on all hands by gratitude, esteem, admiration, by resistless claims of the living, by pledged honour to the dead, however unduly obtained, Henry Fitzorton found it impossible to protract farther the awful day of his captivity: and to all these motives were added a due consideration for her who, by night and by day, month after month, year after year, had devoted herself to him, and was now an orphan, bequeathed by earth and heaven, alas! by every thing but love, to his protecting arms. At length, after one more night of combat, he threw himself at
Olivia's

Olivia's feet, and intreated that his oath might be fulfilled.

It is not necessary to enter into the minutiae of nuptial preparations ; be it sufficient to say, that at the end of these, James, Mr. Partington, the Atwoods, and True George, set off with the intended bride and bridegroom for Adfell Hall ; in the allotted apartment of which, agreeable to the clause in the will before specified, Olivia Clare, one of the most lovely of womankind, became the wife of Henry Fitzorton, not less entitled to pre-eminent distinction among his sex.

From the moment Henry united his fate to that of Olivia, he assiduously employed himself to contemplate her goodness, to imitate it, and to fill his mind with all those graces and virtues in her character, most likely to engage his heart. Her entire confidence in his faith, and perfect assurance of his affection, for not an idea to the contrary had yet crossed her imagination, such had been the management of John, were fresh motives to realise, if possible,

possible, all she thought or felt. When the image of Caroline obtruded, *unbidden*, he did his utmost to chace it away by flying from himself to Olivia: he resorted to her as to a protector from the involuntary seduction and treachery of his own heart. He even took Caroline's miniature, which, by some oversight, had never been reclaimed, from his bosom, and wrapping it in several papers, put it into a box, where he determined it should remain unlooked at; and, if possible, unthought of. With a tender sollicitude, that pierced Olivia to the soul, he frequently accused himself of wanting attention. Her satisfaction was testified in tears of joy.

In this manner he passed the first year, at the end of which Olivia presented him with a daughter. "What shall be her name, dearest life?" said the beauteous mother, holding the infant in her arms; "Your's, sweet Olivia," replied Henry, without any hesitation. "No," answered Olivia, after a pause, "I am certain had Caroline been within our reach, she would

have had the goodness to become sponsor for this little creature, and I am resolved to adopt the idea, even as if she had been consulted, and were present. Jane Atwood shall be her proxy; and I hope the day will yet arrive when I shall get her to confirm the deed by owning her little god-daughter. CAROLINE then shall be her leading name, nor must my Henry deny me this boon."

The circumstance was slight in itself, but brought in its train a thousand images uncalled. It summoned the blood from the heart into the face of Henry; and had he not, at the instant, been relieved by Olivia's reposing on her pillow, and desiring the curtain might be drawn at a part where the light was too strong, by which means he was commodiously shaded from observation, his embarrassment must inevitably have been discovered. Thus, however, gaining time to compose himself, and being again soon after urged on the subject, he answered, with a tolerable good grace, "Then let us come to a compromise,

compromise, and honour the little Christian by the names both of its mother, and her friend." Olivia's silence was interpreted into assent, and each tenderly caressing the object of their conversation, the point was settled. Earnest and reiterated were Henry's efforts to give and to receive happiness. In the first point he succeeded to a supreme degree; for the felicity of Olivia was as perfect, as innocent, and as ardent as love, crowned with its object, could make it: and she sincerely felt that she was the happiest woman in the only state where the highest earthly joy is to be found; nor did she less sincerely believe her Henry was the happiest of men. This very consideration was in itself a powerful motive with Henry to keep her in that persuasion, and sometimes to enter so far into the sweet spirit of it in his own case, that dividing himself between his lovely wife and beautiful child, and appropriating the intervals of leisure to such readings or compositions as gave exercise to the mind, and energy to the understanding, carefully

avoiding all that aroused the passions or deluded the heart; he left himself no time to be employed on the only theme which could annihilate his fortitude. He resumed the lyre, which had been too long hung on the willows; and sought new sources in his natural benevolence, by exploring the haunts of the surrounding poor and unfortunate, and dedicating part of his now immense revenue to the comfort and service of all around him.

Little Caroline prospered, and Olivia having, in a great measure, surmounted the sorrows which had so long pressed on her heart, appeared, if it were possible for her to gain addition, more beautiful than ever; the returning bloom of health added lustre to her complexion, and the happiness of her mind completed the charms of her person.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A SACRIFICE ON THE FIRE OF LOVE.

IT was during this paradise of her heart, that she thus addressed her husband, as they were returning one evening from having literally gone about the neighbourhood to do good. “ I have always heard, my dearest Henry, that anticipation is destructive of happiness ; that what we have often fondly told our hearts would one day, though perhaps far distant, fill up the measure of our bliss, would by the very frequency of the idea, indurate or blunt the fine edge of human felicity, till, when the promised good did actually happen, our relish for it was gone ; making, by this reasoning, imagination the murderer of our best and dearest possessions. Is there any truth in this, dearest Henry ? For my part, I gratefully declare to you and to heaven, that all I fancied of varied happiness—of the sweets of charity and human pity—of

rewarded genius and industry—and of domestick joy—the beauty and warmth of the sun—the imagery of nature, her artless musick and her proudest blooms, even to the sight, and perfume of the simplest flower, derive new force, energy, and lustre, from possessing them with my life's beloved associate. All this I anticipated, and you have often told me I wanted not fancy to create or to colour; but my creations and my colourings were comparatively faint, and inefficient; so that your society, my Henry, has not only been productive of the highest felicity, but assists me in aspiring to higher virtue; since the kindest actions towards my fellow-creatures, more perfect admiration of the works of nature, and sublimer gratitude to nature's God, under your direction and auspices, animate my heart infinitely more than if I had continued to pass my whole life in the exercise of solitary virtue, if indeed virtue can, beyond a certain point, be consistent with solitude. Have not my sentiments on this subject, the honour to receive the sanction of yours?

O thou

O thou dear second author of this supreme felicity, tell, ah tell me this !”

Sighs and tears of pleasure crowned her artless questions, to which Henry replied with a fervour worthy of the occasion.— Indeed, whatever were his particular disappointments, his inmost soul laboured to preserve, unbroken, the happiness of his wife. To this great end, he removed whatever might be likely to interrupt the full current of her felicity; and, as the last effort of his conjugal duty, he seized one evening on the box which contained that part of the correspondence between himself and Caroline, which the latter had supported, written in days of promise and of hope: these also, in the general confusion of the family, had never been reclaimed. They, with the miniature of their fair author, were the sole support of Henry’s sinking heart, which they at once agonized and composed for many months; but since he returned from the altar at which he had plighted his faith to Olivia, he had not once dared to trust himself with the sad

luxury of perusing a single billet ; but he still considered them as so many memorials of his utter despair, and yet as the dearest of his worldly possessions ; for, suited to the season of life, and the smiling aspect of affairs under which they were written, more genuine effusions of a truly delicate and tender heart have never been addressed to the distinguished object of its first election.

To meditate the destruction of such treasures, therefore, was unquestionably the exertion of duty and of virtue. His first intention was to consign them to the flames with his own hand, when Olivia should be withdrawn to her chamber, and when a fair opportunity of sitting an hour or two by himself should offer. Such opportunity he soon found ; and, alas ! without asking himself whether a miser could be cured of his avarice by throwing his treasures into the fire, or the lover of the passion which had taken root in his heart, by a similar act, he stole to his secret hoard, which no eye but his own had ever gazed on, since it came into his possession, and preparing a
kind

kind of circular furnace in the grate to receive them, his heart misgave him, even as he held the first bundle over the fire. Being slightly tied together by narrow riband, two or three dropt in the grate, and were the succeeding moment in a blaze. He tried in vain to recover them, and his tears fell on the consuming flame; his fortitude, however, returned; but he thought it would be unnecessary cruelty on himself to burn them without a last reading. Then, again considering this as dangerous, even after he had lifted one of them unfolded to his eyes, he gave it to the dying embers of the former victims. The flame was soon relumined, and while it was devouring the sentiments now blazing on his view, he saw the words—"Thy chance and change-defying Caroline!" The eager flame caught and consumed them in the next instant. Henry fell on his knees, and bending his head over the dear remains now mouldering into ashes, the last faint sparks of which seemed to ascend to heaven, in witness to the truth of the expression, he

resolved to peruse and then destroy them. The first part of this design he fulfilled with increased agitation. He then wished to preserve a few, and destroy the remainder; but those selected for preservation increased so fast, that none seemed devoted to destruction. He continued, however, to read and to reserve, till meeting with some sentiments which coloured highly the happiness he had for ever lost, the long-managed impetuosity of his disposition broke out fiercer than the flames; and placing the letters again in their cabinet, then locking them into the outward box, where they had so long been concealed, he put the key into his pocket, swearing, he had committed the worst of sacrilege; and, stamping with a violence that denoted the gathering disorders of his soul, he thrust his clenched hand into the fire, declaring that nothing could atone for the villany of the outrage, but consuming the base and barbarous instrument.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WANDERINGS.

SUCH of our readers as have entered into the true disposition and character of Henry Fitzorton, or, to speak more closely, such as have thoroughly acquainted themselves with those dreadful and contradictory revolutions of the heart of man, under like impulses and affections, will not hesitate to believe that this unhappy youth would, like the celebrated martyr to religion, have held the offending hand till it had dropt from his shoulder, had not his good genius, in the form of True George, rushed in, and, almost by force of arms, prevented farther mischief.

From his master's unusual restlessness, George suspected all was not as it should be. His ordering a fire to be made in the library, when the family were gone to bed; then dismissing even George himself at the midnight hour, saying he should have no

farther occasion for his attendance, and had private business; the anxiety he expressed to have every body withdraw sooner than the accustomed hour; and the variations of changes in his countenance; were symptoms which the deliberating George did not pass by without making his silent reflections. He, therefore, went up into his chamber, where he remained till all was quiet, and then stepping down stairs without his shoes, he descended into a room which was in common use immediately over the library, the least disturbance in which would be heard, especially as George laid himself at length on the floor, and turning up a part of the carpet, planted his ear to a crevice in the boards. Had it been necessary to stretch himself along the shaggy rock, instead of these boards, he would have done so with equal cheerfulness; for, besides that his attachment to his master rather increased than abated, he still held fast to the idea that Henry had gone mad for love; and that though he certainly had his intervals of better and worse, he
would

would never be thoroughly cured. An opinion, however, which, through all the tumults of the family, he had concealed in his own breast, where indeed every thing, which he supposed ought to be secret, was generally more safe than in the bosom of the person to whom the secret belonged. "My dear young master is as mad as ever," said he, "but I'll die before I'll tell it. Ay, we never get rightly over the first cross. Heigho! I hope Jenny will not slight me after all, though she keeps me off so long! If she did but know what an example we have in the family! but that she never shall from me: I'd lose her first. Poor gentleman! I begin to think my Jenny has caught the same disorder. I fear he will have his old fits come on again to-night; if he should not I'll steal up to bed and nobody the wiser." He did not wait very long for an alarm, and that being repeated even as he leaped up, he ran into the library, which luckily Henry had forgot to lock, and exclaimed on entering, "For the love of your lady and child, and
brothers,

brothers, and poor me, your worthy honour recollect yourself!" said the worthy fellow, dragging Henry from the fire and placing him in a chair. Scarcely had he uttered this, when Olivia herself, who had been alarmed by the noise below, came down in her night-dress, and seeing her husband in visible disorder, threw herself at his feet, soothing him with every name, epithet, and act of endearment, that the purest and fondest love could suggest. He was sufficiently restored to express his acknowledgments of her affectionate care; and to attribute his malady to a certain dizziness which had all at once deprived him of his powers—"during which, it was impossible for me, my best Olivia," cried he, "to know what I either said or did." He then retired with her to rest, and nothing of a similar excess happened for some time. But from this period certain fearful starts and sudden gusts, indicated a mind diseased in despite of his most powerful efforts to be happy. Hitherto, True George was the only witness: John and

James were still absent, and George alone was in the fatal secret of his master's heart; a secret, which we have already said, he refused to share even with Jenny Atwood, the mistress of his own. He watched and attended Henry, therefore, with the utmost circumspection; seldom or ever, indeed, losing sight of him; opposed his violences with the gentlest controulment without the least appearance of controul; apologized to Olivia for his unexpected absences or delays; and, without ever uttering the name of Caroline, often composed his unhappy master's tortured heart, by pointing to those days, when old friends, long parted, meet at last. These, and similar manœuvres of this honest creature, assisted by the powerful attractions of Olivia, who, in her conjugal and maternal character, surpassed the lustre even of her maiden graces, had a visible effect on the tender and tractable disposition of Henry. The birth of a second child, and that a son, greatly contributed to the re-establishment of his mind; and matters passed on to the
infinite

infinite joy of Olivia, who soon performed her promise to John, by giving his baptismal name to her second born.

Soon after this event, Henry and his wife agreed to spend the two following years in different parts of Europe, and particularly in France. The idea was suggested by Henry, on the score of his health, which began to decline; and Olivia made immediate preparations. At the end of this time, they returned to Adsell-Hall, where they had not remained more than a quarter of a year ere they changed the scene again, by devoting an autumn to their old friend Partington. This was a treat to the feelings of Jane Atwood, who, still subject to deep dejection and sudden wanderings of the mind, had attached herself to Olivia, in the degree that True George had to Henry; and she had the satisfaction to find her brother, and aged parents in good health. Olivia's first-born also, of which the old people had become extremely fond, and which had been left to their protection, was blooming in youth, and not a little in features

features resembling Caroline Stuart; a circumstance first discovered by Olivia, who pointed it out to Henry. Indeed, by the most natural and innocent means, she kept alive the subject which it had been the honest labour of her husband's life, since his marriage, to bury in oblivion: and although it cannot be doubted, that an anxious thought would often rise from his heart in sighs, and drop in tears, at the uncertain fate of her he had so long and so tenderly loved, it is highly probable, had he discovered her abode, and even seen the lovely fugitive herself, he would have made his escape without daring to speak to, or approach her.

Olivia had visited every monastery, convent or abbey which were accessible, by interest, by money, or by courtesy; she discoursed with the monks and friars of various orders, as she had not a doubt on her mind, that father Arthur would dispose of her within the walls of some religious sanctuary. Nothing, however, could tempt
Henry,

Henry, whatever might be his secret wishes, or secret regrets, to lead to, nor without visible marks of reluctance, follow the subject, during the whole time of his being abroad ; a circumstance which, whenever silently noticed by Olivia, was attributed to the uncertain state of Henry's spirits, little able to explore the retreats of the unfortunate ; and it was her chief point to draw him to pleasant from gloomy ideas, which she feared had, by indulgence rather than infelicity, grown upon him ; she had hopes beside, that Jenny Atwood's health would be restored by the tour. Be that as it may, Henry and Olivia returned first to Adfell, and then to Partington Bury, without either seeing or hearing any tidings of Caroline or of her companions.

On a sudden, Olivia expressed a wish, once more to change the scene, by passing a few months of the then approaching spring partly at Fitzorton castle, and partly at the manor-house. To these scenes she had ever been partial ; and although Henry felt

felt an involuntary trembling at the proposal, he thought it might be proper, gradually to enure his heart to all trials, and the scheme was carried into effect.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

RETURNS.

FIVE years and a half had now elapsed since Henry and Olivia had quitted this, the favourite spot of both. They returned to it, therefore, not only with all the interest which attaches itself to this circumstance, but with many other predilections, growing out of the numberless events which had happened to them, in and about the neighbourhood. It happened that on the day after their arrival at the castle, a billet came from James and John, both proposing to make a fraternal visit to the castle in a few days.

The secret history of which design, was

as follows : From certain observations Mrs. Fitzorton had made on Henry, she thought it necessary to write to John, then recently returned from a severe campaign. She made confidential report of her husband's illness and wanderings. The account extremely alarmed him, not only for his brother's sake, but for Olivia's. Though all his hopes were destroyed, the best part of his affection, like the soul which cherished it, was immortal. Unlike a rival brother, he trembled, lest the unconquerable passion of Henry for Caroline Stuart should at length betray itself.

James entered the apartment as Olivia's letter arrived. "James," said he, "you must, if possible, spare a few days, and help me to save our ill-starred Henry, and his more pitiable wife, otherwise something horrible may ensue. I could indeed, for very powerful reasons, have wished a journey of this kind had not been necessary. It is not simply inconvenient—it is painful. But we must not neglect an indispensable duty because it is difficult. Let us write a
joint

joint billet, and follow it. Your prosperity in life may spare you to me. It is one of your seasons of recess. We may discuss the subject more at large on the road. Henry has conducted himself irreproachably—but he is unhappy; and, strange as it may seem, Olivia is too often renewing the impressions that make him so, but ever from the motive of giving him felicity. Read these letters, and you will be of the same opinion; but first we must announce our design at the castle.”

While James wrote the note, and dispatched it by a special messenger, John made arrangements for the journey. James said, he was at his devotion a few days, and the brothers set out on their journey.

No sooner were they fixed in their seats than John exclaimed, “I am now in despair about this fatal bias of our Henry.” —“His case is, indeed, hopeless,” said James.—“I should have thought so lovely a creature as Olivia—” observed John—“It is very long since you and I saw her—I hear she enjoys perfect health.”—

John

John abruptly let down the side window of the chaise, held his face to the air for the space of a minute, and drew up the glass again.

James took this opportunity to lament that Henry had returned to the castle, whose scenery, and indeed whose every object, would rather keep alive than extinguish the ill-fated sentiments he still entertained for Caroline. "Is it not strange, my brother," added James, "that in all disorders of the imagination, we rather fly from than to our remedies? I feel few of these things, enjoying the blessing of an equal mind, but I make my observations."

"Not always," replied John, pausing—"not always fly to them; I have known, I think, one—or two—fly *from* them—nor has it been Henry's case—though certainly—certainly the rule is general. For my part," added he sighingly, "were I unhappy enough to feel an ill-directed passion, I think I should have firmness enough to—at any rate nothing but the most indispensable necessity should make me rush into

into the sight of the object; and I think that even such necessity would not make me betray my feelings, nor disgrace myself—but, indeed, our feelings, when strongly incited, are great traitors. We hardly know what they are able to do with us.”

“In the course of my practice,” observed James, “strange causes as to this sort of treachery of the passions have come under my eyes: To say truth, cases of absolute phrensy.” — “Very likely,” answered John, “but don’t you think it very unwholesome to ride with all these glasses up this fine morning?—And how confoundedly slow this fellow drives, else it must be shocking road—we shall not reach the castle till midnight.”

John had remarked, about five minutes before, that he thought the carriage extremely easy; certain it is, that the road was, according to the common simile, like a bowling-green.

The rest of the journey was passed in communicating some of the mutual adventures to each other since they parted. We
say

say some of their mutual adventures, for John had still his secrets; it being amongst his inflexible maxims, never to tell a falsity, nor yet to impart more of the truth of one friend to another than was necessary to the well being of both; asserting, that universal confidence was universal nonsense and folly; that secrets of all kinds were in themselves grievances, but that if it be honourable to receive, and a person submits to accept them, to divulge them to the dearest friend is a breach of trust that must be wrong, and may be fatal; the dearest friend may become a foe, and every secret is then a poisoned arrow in his hand.

Well then, John had fought his battles with distinguished success. He had, by the fate of the field and personal merit, been promoted to the rank of Colonel, and now he retired with half his pay, a third of his left arm, and covered alike with wounds and laurels.

The history of James was yet more concise. He had become an eminent instance of the power of common talents to effect

the greatest things by the aid of uncommon perseverance. Without one adventure, one brilliant fall, one variation in his plans and pursuits, his judgment was thought to be one of the most secure, and his practice equal to that of any man at the bar.

The beams of the setting sun darted on the patrimonial turrets, and, as they shine on the just and the unjust, our travellers observed them gild also the opposite windows of the abbey as their converse ended. The vigilant ear of True George first caught the sound of the wheels as they rolled in the winds, which seemed to join all the echoes to welcome the return of old friends. George was posted at the outward gate, which, with a ready hand, he threw wide open to receive his masters. He bowed, leaped, and huzzaed, all together. John beckoned the postilion to stop, George opened the chaise door, and the brothers, as Shakspeare finely expresses himself, "gave him their hands with their hearts in them." The poor fellow then

running to Henry, whom he perceived approaching, bounded backwards and forwards, and, like his favourite master, committed all the insanities of enthusiasm, but which, on such occasions, bless us more than all the powers of reason. Henry, who had expected his brothers with all the ardours and solicitude of his tender heart, and had even written some stanzas on Hope, indulged himself in that phrenzied excess of joy which kept his friends so constantly trembling between hope and fear. The incomparable Olivia saluted her guests and brothers with a softness no less attractive; she opened her lovely arms, and embraced them both. "You tremble," said she to John, "with cold; let us hasten into the house: how differently people feel! travelling always heats me," added she, giving to each a hand, and ascending the well-known steps. Perhaps John's tremor proceeded from a sensation somewhat opposite to that of cold, but he continued to tremble, and said nothing. Since the reader is in confidence of his secret, we will venture

venture to confess that his unexpected return to the castle, after so long an absence, and the sudden sight of Olivia, and, perhaps, the thought that her happiness was in danger, disarmed him of his usual fortitude; though he speedily resumed that characteristick of his virtue, after he had surmounted the operations of his first surprise; but even the tenderest and strongest of those operations, though attended with pain to himself, were not inconsistent with that virtue.

CHAPTER XL.

A FRATERNAL COMPACT.

WHEN the family party were placed comfortably in their appropriate apartment, Olivia desired George to pile the faggot on the soon blazing hearth, to warm poor John. The domesticks, with Jane Atwood at their head, came to pay their humble duty with smiles and tears of congratulation,

gratulation, and these were followed by almost all the inhabitants of the parish, to whom George had given notice. Nor must the recognition of Little Fitz, now growing grey in the service of the family, be forgotten. He leaped from lap to lap with an agility that seemed to proceed from fond remembrance. John and James received innumerable tokens of his goodwill. Led by the excessive gladness of Little Fitz, Olivia asked the travellers whether they had yet met with, or heard of, the poor fellow's mistress? John thought it politick to turn the discourse, which he did, by declaring he was heartily weary, and moved for the chamber candles being brought in. This being done, the party withdrew.

John and James held a conference the next morning, in which John had nearly betrayed his own passion, and which terminated by his observing, "You are no doubt aware, my dear James, of the necessity there is for placing over Henry, unknown to himself or his wife, a strict senti-
nel;

nel; and as this post cannot be always filled by the same person, you, James, must share it with me, whenever business will permit you."

Such then was the fraternal compact. But had John continued the discourse, which he cautiously broke short, he would doubtless have told James, what must already have suggested itself to the generous minded reader, that he was himself still the victim of disappointed love in a yet more hopeless degree even than Henry.

John knew, for he felt, that the human heart would often ake over the reflection of so irreparable a loss; but when he sighed, he looked upon it as if he were mourning the dead; and he thought that if his own virtue had shielded him from outrage, the same principle ought still more securely to guard Henry, who possessed such a treasure as Olivia, from ever hazarding her repose. Never, therefore, did any man act a more disinterested, or enter on a more difficult part. Happy would it be for society, if every disappointed lover, converting pas-

sion into principle, and, as it were, engrafting honour on sensibility, could, like John, employ himself in efforts to strengthen the bonds of sacred union between the mistress he has lost for ever and the rival who annihilates his hopes. But to this extraordinary task John Fitzorton brought powers which were competent to accomplish his resolutions.

“When opportunity shall serve,” said John, “we will make a first visit to our dear unhappy patient’s sick mind and imagination; believe me, James, a hecatomb of victims heap the bloody altar of premature and unlicensed death; yea, tens of thousands of our own countrymen and countrywomen have clogged, with their own gore, the shrine of self-murder, in this island of suicide, from like maladies.”

In truth, every part of the castle and its environs served to encrease the enemy in Henry’s heart and fancy, which the brothers had to combat. And after the first effusions of joy at their arrival were subsided, he often left them to themselves, or
with

with Olivia, on pretence of making astronomick observations, for which he had purchased all the necessary apparatus, and affected to become passionately devoted to a science which offered him not only a good general excuse for absence, but promised to indulge "the gloomy habits of his soul." And thus sedulous to nurse and provide the means of cultivating, as well as concealing his own misery, he felicitated himself on having securely fitted those means to the end. He could now go forth and return unquestioned ; yet it is but mere justice to the warped, but still amiable mind of this ill-fated youth, to acknowledge, that sometimes, after having passed half the night in silent and solitary anguish, he would return to the bosom of his fond and faithful wife, and constrain himself to pass several days in the arms of his family, delighting in the little sports of his children, and earnestly hoping his heart would soon be all their own. His midnight contemplations, however, were far below the stars : he took a mournful pleasure in tra-

versing the steps he had taken with Caroline Stuart, of whom some memorial seemed vegetating on every bough, and blooming in every flower; in a word, the united parishes, not less than the abbey and castle, appeared full of Caroline. Yet his attentions to Olivia were still more generally affectionate than they ever had been, and she luckily still imputed all his flights, and even his phrenzies, to his enthusiasm for the fascinations of this new science; and flattered herself that the ardour of his excesses would meet a sufficient check in the company of his brothers.

CHAPTER XLI.

AN ALARM.

HENRY had been missing almost the whole of the fourth evening after the arrival of John and James; a heavy shower of rain falling, accompanied by dark and turbulent clouds, out of which the moon did not emerge for some hours, Olivia expressed

expressed unusual apprehension. About ten o'clock James and John attended her to those haunts where his star-gazing eye and muse-struck mind might have led Henry. Wearing with the fruitless search, she returned with John to the castle, where she had hopes he would have been found. But Cynthia having gained the victory over her opponents, the tender wife had less solicitude. James pursued his walk, and from an arbour in the forest, within a few paces of the abbey, broke short his step on hearing the following soliloquy:

“O dark and awful foliage! how many years have gone by, and how many tumultuous scenes have hurried my heart and its affections, since thy sacred shade first received me! Awful and affecting cypress! partaker of my earliest confidence! receiver of my youthful sighs, and refuge of my cherished despair! thy truant votary, with more than pilgrim devotion, returns;—returns, like some way-worn wanderer, who, after having traversed immeasurable deserts in search of those sweet flowers

which bloomed, alas! only in the fairy land of his own imagination, comes to thee as to a sanctuary, to assuage the bleeding wounds that assailed him on his way; an holy penitence impresses my heart as I approach thee; every leaf of thy arbouring branches, yea, and the ground thou overshadowest, is consecrated: behold me bending at thy shrine!"

A voice, which James immediately knew to be that of Henry's, uttering these expressions in all the pathos of the heart, issued from the deep shade which some cypress trees afforded, and at the moment of closing his rhapsody the bird of woe poured her most plaintive note from an opposite copse, and added to the interest of the apostrophe.

"Dear associating sorrow!" continued the secluded Henry—"Sympathising Philomel!—O poet of the heart! accept my gratitude, accept my tears! Thou, perhaps, art a tuneful descendant of her who once soothed my sadness with her song when Henry first became acquainted—Ah memory!"

mory ! thou blisful agonizing gift ! how with precious and with torturing recollections dost thou swell this breast !”

At this, moment the death-bell from the neighbouring village tolled ; the nightingale ceased—her song was broken ; the last tinges of light departed ; the owl took her flight over the cypress trees, screeching as she past ; the fullen bat circled the air, in search of prey.

“ Thrice welcome, thou involving nightshade ! and welcome every being that loves thy gloom ! O wrap me in the thickest folds of thy mantle, dark as is my destiny !”
—resumed the mourner.

Unwilling to break on the sacred privacy the pensive recluse had chosen, and knowing that while his mind was yielding to this part of its propensity, James could not render even the tender solicitude of affection welcome, he drew back with the least noise possible, and took his way to the abbey. The bell continued to toll at solemn pauses, in one of which was to be heard distinctly, in a more affecting note,

the nightingale resume her plaint, and ere the next, the report of a pistol. The more than lightning speed with which ideas associate, and the incredible degree of celerity which is given to their wings by surprize, carried the thoughts of James, in a moment, to Henry : the former was about to invade his sanctuary, when he heard, rather than saw, the latter rushing from his recess. " My dearest Henry," said James, catching him, " you are in a brother's arms, and he hopes in safety there !" " Safety !" answered he, " for pity's sake let me go ! if any one has had the barbarity, the baseness to shoot that nightingale, his life shall answer it !" On this he ran to the copse, where the bird had been chaunting her vespers. James followed, and assisted him in the search ; but neither gunner nor nightingale, though the moon now became a kind auxiliary, was to be seen, and Henry agreed to suspend further efforts till the next morning. The brothers had but just extricated themselves from the tangling underwood of the forest, when
they

they heard a rustling of the bushes hard by, accompanied by the sound of human footsteps, stealing along the withered leaves which had fallen from the trees to the ground. Turning round, they perceived a man, who, as if he had undesignedly come near, was endeavouring to secure a retreat: Henry observing this, and not doubting but he was the murderer of the nightingale, rushed, with determined fury, again into the wood, and darting at hazard through its mazy paths, was lucky enough, after the pursuit of a few minutes, to seize on his prey, whom he called, "Villain, Caitiff, Barbarian, and Assassin!" while he dragged him from his covert. The victim, meantime, offered neither complaint nor explanation; but at length being brought into the full moonlight, this supposed barbarian was discovered to be the humane and tender-hearted True George. He had a lynx's eye on his master's motions ever since he returned to the castle, which he feared would be productive of the usual nocturnal excursions, and conceived more-
over

over, that his attendance would be more necessary on this night's fall than any other; for on Henry's going out, he said to George, "If I return not to supper they are not to wait. The moon will to-night be favourable to observations, but there are clouds about her at present which indicate she will not be in the state I wish her till towards morning." Now George had likewise made *his* observations, and was thereby become an adept in his master's astronomy, the secrets of which he still concealed amongst the other arcana of his honest bosom; but, like some faithful and attendant satellite, always revolved round Henry's orb. Numberless times had he shot athwart the gloom unseen, and was so thoroughly shocked at being discovered, that he justified the sanguine idea which Henry had conceived of him by his chattering teeth and tottering limbs. "And is it possible you, George, should be guilty of this wicked murder?" exclaimed Henry. Nothing short of this charge could have made him speak. "Murder, Sir!" replied George,

George, "God save your honour's life, and all your family's, I would not murder a worm, unless your honour commanded me, which I am sure you have not the heart to do; but knowing your honour was star-gazing here i' th' forest, I thought it my duty to come out when it fell to raining, with your honour's warm cloak, which I have got under my arm, only when the moon got up again I did not like to disturb your honour, because I knew what your honour was about; so I placed myself up in the old cypress-tree, over your honour's head, where, for your honour knows 't has been growing these hundred years, I sat me down as snug as if I had been in an arbour, and where I should have kept till your honour went home, if the going off of the pistol had not fetched me down to see what was the matter, just as if I had been a bird shot in a tree. I soon found, God bless us, no harm had come to your honour, and that's the whole story."

This account discovered so much of his heart, that the poor fellow was suffered to

go without any cautionary hint of secrecy which his master well knew required no *memento*.

James and Henry now hastened towards the castle ; the latter several times repeating, as he strode forward, his menaces to punish the wretch who could be capable of an action so infamous ; asserting, that he was thoroughly convinced, in his own mind, that the ancestors of that bird had sung on the premises, in different branches, these five hundred years ; and that he solemnly considered her as a part of the estate, “ ay, and with the best titles that could possibly be made out,” cried he, “ gratitude for pleasure received, natural inheritance, and long undisputed possession.”

We hope the reader has not perverted any thing we may have said of the unornamented part of James’s temper and character, that should induce him to suppose he had not a nature to be pleased with these little fallies of a tender heart, under the influence of an imagination more vivid than his own. The friend of animal, is not often

often the enemy of man: the interesting Henry was a friend to both; and a foe, alas, only to himself.

CHAPTER XLII.

TENDER RECOLLECTIONS.

ON Henry's return, Olivia ran into the embraces of her husband, only observing, with an ineffable smile, veiling the tremors of her heart, that she should wish she had him safe at Adsell Hall again, inauspicious as it was to his poetick flights, if the shades of Fitzorton made already such a solitary truant of him, particularly when such a variety of planets of the first magnitude, and the dear little stars his children, put in their claims to his society, and shone upon him at the castle.

John had been reading:—"What have been your studies?" said Henry. "Beautiful extravagance—eloquent absurdity," answered John, his strong features aiding the

the impression of his tones, "Sighs, tears, cypress boughs, and moonshine in every page of it. I caught you, the other morning, reading the original, in one of your chapel-house walks, and forgot at the time to tell how little value you must set upon our company, or your own understanding, or even life itself, which, well employed, is an inestimable gift, to waste it upon such nonsense!"—"Nonsense! Do you call it nonsense?" exclaimed Henry, looking at the title, and pressing it eagerly to his bosom—"Divine Werter! dear, unhappy, ill-fated youth, is it the . . ." Then putting it into his pocket, in his own animated manner, he related the adventure of the pistol and Philomela, which the report of little Caroline's illness had for a-while scared from its nest in his memory. John bade him be of good cheer, for that whatever value the children of fancy might set on Philomela, as he called her, the children of the world did not deem them worth powder and shot: adding, "that the aim was more probably taken at the rabbits

bits

bits in the adjacent thicket, by some village sportsman, who delighted in moonlight as well as himself, but for a very different purpose! not to soothe himself with the shadows, but to make them useful towards the substance." Henry replied, that he "had rather the whole race of rabbits should be extinct, than that nightingale should be destroyed." He now declared the night was uncommonly warm; and, on that pretence, threw open one of the sashes, and, fixing his eyes on the now perfectly clear sky, he remained for some time silent.

"I should envy," said James, "the votaries of imagination the delight they seem to take in this magick art of converting little into great, had I not such constant proof of their being sources of pain also; and that the former bear no proportion to the latter. I am still for the balance of things."

"Beautiful regent of the night! exclaimed Henry, keeping his situation at the window, and rapt beyond hearing James's remark;

remark ; “ how long is it since, from this spot, I have seen thee in thy unclouded majesty ? scarcely dost thou appear to be the bright orb whose obstructed light labours through the mist of the metropolis ; or are our affections set so entirely there on things below, that heavenly ones delight not ? ”

Here, turning round with much earnestness, he demanded, “ if the lustre of the moon in London bore any resemblance to that which now hung her resplendent lamp over yon desolated abbey ! Poor Philomel ! and didst thou fall on such a night as this ! ”

“ There, now ! ” said James, “ I would give up all the obstinate powers of my reason, which insist on common sense, to feel the, no doubt, blessed trance into which the queen of shadows has folded up my brother’s senses, were not his very dreams troubled by more than counterbalancing cares : the ghost of that miserable nightingale, I see, haunts him ; her apparition is gliding before him ; and, in all probability,

probability, will be in at the window, to the annoyance of us all, if we do not shut the casement."

"As to the dusky moon in London, brother," interposed John, "I should not at all wonder, if the same visionary goddess who has you in obedience—I will not say in chains—induced you to believe there were moons for town and moons for the country, and indeed as many moons as planets, made for all manner of places and circumstances, as you poets may have occasion for them; but for my part, I am acquainted with only one moon: and tho' I know her to be the friend of lovers and of bards, I know her also to be the abettor of seducers and villains; not that I am destitute of admiration for her use and beauty; and, perhaps, am now pouring forth the effusions of regret, that I cannot, for the life of me, be as moon-struck as yourself."

"The regret is superfluous, my dear John," returned Henry; "ridicule is as fertile a source of happiness to you, as the objects

objects which excite it in you are to me; and you are therefore more indebted to my shadows than you suppose. Perhaps, in turn, I have felt as much pity for the force of your understanding, as you do for the feebleness of mine;—perhaps, too, brother James, I as thoroughly commiserate that reason, which cannot unbend, even to the beauties of nature, nor relax its stubborn dignity to be pleased with little things, as you may despise the allurements of fancy and the heart, which swell those little things into feelings of great felicity.”

“ But the pain, my dear brother, of this attention to subordinate things,” resumed James.—“ I will not,” answered Henry, “ deal in paradoxes so far as to say, that the pain is part of the pleasure; but in every delight arising from the things you disregard; the effusions of a warm imagination and pensive temper, something of the charm by which they are endeared, attaches to the anxiousness and solicitude they produce. That solicitude and anxiousness is natural to the emotion—I look

on the beams of the moon, gilding the hills, reposing on the banks, or playing on the water; and, in the first instance, am pleased with them perhaps for their own sakes, in the next as the view of them is combined with circumstances brought more vividly into my own mind and memory, by their appearance, and this augments their power over both; in the end I may be led into a train of reflections, illumined by joy, or shaded by grief, but they are so blended in the sensations which they create, and so weave themselves into my affections, that I am convinced, to separate, would be to destroy; or, what is worse, the pain would be entire, and the pleasure diminished. The sighs that I heave over those objects which are gone from me never to return, or those which bring back on my fancy what were once realized; the song of that bird whom an innocent delusion perhaps leads me to suppose part of that progeny which was wont to increase the harmony of my spirits when I was happy, or to soothe me when I was wretched; the toll

toll of that bell which recalled to my memory, the soul-piercing sound which I once heard; the view of that church which now covers the sacred ashes of our venerable parents—authors, my brother, of our lives”—

John rose hastily, went to a corner of the room, and sat down.—

“ The affecting assemblage of images,” continued Henry, “ which congregate and croud upon the brain, as I traverse these seats of our nativity, childhood, youth, and all its cherished enthusiasm; the flowers that then sprung up in our path; the inexhaustible joys which we found in our own bosoms, and in that of others; the precepts of wisdom and virtue, illustrated by example, which, in this very room, we heard, and saw, and felt, and understood; the promises of our early hopes; the simplicity of our early happiness; the bliss that waited upon our ignorance of that, whose knowledge we have since, alas! tried and found wanting; the interesting years in which our minds, persons, and understandings grew together

together and prospered; the ease with which our little difficulties were adjusted; our disputes arranged; the festal days on which we all met in smiles; the awful period when all these were exchanged for tears of bitterness, when our dear parents, who followed each other rapidly to the tomb, that moment in which we were summoned to their bed of death, in that chamber which you, my dear John, now occupy."

"And can I not feel, without displaying all these flowers of speech?" said John, colouring highly. "Are the regrets or transports of the soul always best painted by the pomp of words?—Is there not a silence, as well as a simplicity, in grief?—and are you quite sure that the sorrow which uttereth not a word, is less potent or less honest, than that which hath a sound?—What hath affliction to do with the muses?—Is poetry a test of truth?"—

"Truth!" reiterated Henry, reddening from the like motive; "I did not mention your sincerity, nor ought you to have disputed mine."

"It was questioned by neither of you,"

interrupted James, taking a hand of each, and joining them together, "when will either of you draw the line? Was it not our father's last command, we should be thus united?—Did not his eyes last behold us in this attitude?—Did not our mother's death happen ere six moons had gone over the grave?—And was it not at the foot of their then mutual tomb, on the very night we placed their coffins side by side, that we made one fraternal oath, breathed into the hollow vault which received our tears, to preserve our amity unbroken?—Was it not at that moment, my dear Henry, that you turned to John for that support which, opening his arms, he so readily afforded you, and equally impressed with the solemn ceremony, did we not all."—"Embrace, as we do at this moment!" exclaimed Henry, first catching John, and then James, to his bosom, with a fervour that affected them both.

The evening was now far spent; and, after a few more conciliatory expressions, the brothers separated for the night.