

ANY THING BUT WHAT YOU EXPECT.

BY JANE HARVEY,

AUTHOR OF MONTEITH—ETHELIA—MEMOIRS OF AN  
AUTHOR—RECORDS OF A NOBLE FAMILY, ETC. ETC. ETC.

In Three Volumes.

VOLUME III.

“Alle day  
“It is both writ and sayde,  
“That woman’s faith is, as who sayth;  
“Alle utterly decayed.  
“But nevertheless right good witness  
“I’ this case might be layde,  
“That they love trewe, and contynewe.—”  
*Nut Browne Mayde.*

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BUT WHAT YOU EXPECT.

CHAPTER I.

IT was quite dark when the travellers reached Lyme, exhausted by fatigue and chilled with cold, for

“As yet the trembling year was unconfirm’d.  
“And winter oft at eve resum’d the breeze.”

It was the great misfortune of Cordelia’s journey that it was made amongst total strangers, and in a part of the country where neither herself nor Mrs. Brooks had ever been before. She had no male friend near to make those inquiries after Lord Lochcarron, which, so censorious is the world, and so apt to judge maliciously, a female could scarcely make without exciting evil suspicions; though wishing with an ardour which nothing can describe for news of Lord Lochcarron, she would not commission Mrs. Brooks to ask a single question about him until the morning; but ordering a slight supper, and a two-bedded room to be prepared, they partook of the former, and retired very early to the latter, where Cordelia obtained some hours of repose, and rose in the morning with a frame refreshed, and spirits renovated by hope, when the mistress of the house came in to pay her morning compliments.

Mrs. Brooks, in a way best calculated to avoid suspicion, inquired if a gentleman of the name of Campion was then, or had lately been there; she was told in answer that Mr. Campion slept there two nights, and left only that morning for Dorchester; whether himself returned to Lyme or not was uncertain; but at all events his servant would, as their baggage was still there.

Again disappointed, poor Cordelia could scarcely bear it, but fortunately her hostess was not a person of very distinguished penetration, and neither discovered the interest Cordelia took in Mr. Campion, by her emotions, nor by the efforts she made to conceal them, which, with a very acute observer, would have been the surer method of the two to betray her.

Left again by themselves they held a council of deliberation; it was Sunday, and to proceed to Dorchester on the vague uncertainty of Lord Lochcarron having gone thither, seemed a measure so replete with the risk of losing all clue by which to trace him, that it was not to be thought of; a much more prudent way was to wait at Lyme a day or two, as he must either return or send for the articles he had left there, which would, in either case, determine their future proceedings. Cordelia’s next task was to write to Lord Dunotter, to report progress, and to give a detail of all the negatives and disappointments she had encountered; but she did so with a gentleness, a sweetness, a playful patience, all

her own; yet far from being the present frame of her mind, but assumed for the purpose of inducing Lord Dunotter to think that her difficulties could not be very great since they sat so lightly on her; she had scarcely finished her letter, when Mrs. Brooks, who had visited the hostess to signify that they should remain at her house that day at least, perhaps longer, returned with the intelligence that a celebrated preacher from Weymouth was to preach at the parish church, adding a hint, that as the people of the house could accommodate them with seats, she should like, if agreeable to Lady Lochcarron, to go; Cordelia could not object; her dress, as a traveller, presented no obstacle; no one at Lyme, she thought, could possibly recognise her, and as she was never in the habit of marring her compliance with any request by a hesitating ungracious way, she signified her ready acquiescence, and, as the bells had long been ringing, they set out immediately, accompanied by a genteel well-bred young woman, a relation of the mistress of the house; they had taken their seats but a short time, the bells were ringing out, and Cordelia was endeavouring to abstract her mind from every earthly care, and to fix it on the solemn duties of the occasion, when a sort of bustle amongst the congregation, accompanied with a whispering, and the words "That is his lady," uttered by some person in the pew behind, recalled her to surrounding objects, and looking up, she beheld Sir Roger Cottingham, her Orton-Abbey acquaintance, his nephew Mr. Harrington, and the youngest daughter of Lady Hootside, now Lady Caroline Harrington, ushered up the aisle in great form to a magnificent pew, which seemed appropriated for strangers of rank; and Lady Lochcarron, in the consternation of the moment which the dread of discovery threw her into, had to felicitate herself that her rank was unknown at Lyme, and flattered herself that she might indulge the hope of escaping being seen in the obscure seat where she was placed; she knew Mr. Harrington to be in the church; she had heard him extolled as an excellent preacher; but beyond all these circumstances, she remembered him as nearly resembling Lord Lochcarron in person.

The service commenced, and Cordelia quickly found her mistake; her pew, though in rather a retired part of the church, was so situate that those in the pew where Lady Caroline sat had a full view of the persons in it; Lady Caroline had always entertained a more friendly regard for Cordelia, than any of the rest of the family; and though almost doubting the evidence of her senses, yet prepared by her brother's letters to see a striking alteration in her person, she felt convinced that she now beheld her; not contented with her own observations, she directed the eyes of both her husband and Sir Roger Cottingham to the same object, but they had neither of them ever seen Cordelia, excepting that day at Orton-Abbey, and could not determine whether this were the same lady, but Lady Caroline resolved to be satisfied before she quitted the church.

Mr. Harrington chose his text from the second Epistle to Timothy: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men." From which words he preached a very fine discourse; replete with sound reasoning, and enriched with all the graces of oratory. Cordelia and Mrs. Brooks listened with both pleasure and edification; but the latter had not the remotest idea that the preacher was known to the former.

When service was over, Lady Caroline fixed her eye upon Cordelia in a way which left her no longer in doubt that she was recognised; and though she felt extreme

repugnance to conversing, under her present circumstances, with any one who knew her, yet she resolved not to shrink from it, as if a sense of conscious guilt directed her movements; but taking care to leave her seat at the same time with the clerical party, they encountered each other at the door, while Lady Caroline and Sir Roger lingered a few moments, until they should be joined by Mr. Harrington before they got into the carriage.

Lady Lochcarron, determined to be at once herself, met the glance of Lady Caroline as that of an old acquaintance; and, resolved not to yield the point of rank, was the first to speak, which she did with mingled kindness and politeness. Lady Caroline, who was a gentle-tempered woman, and seemed to have greatly divested herself of her affected habits, since her union with Mr. Harrington, did not seem to contest the right of precedence; but carefully avoided (as her brother and sister, Lord and Lady Hootside had done on a former occasion) giving Cordelia any name or title; they asked after the health of mutual friends; Sir Roger spoke with great complaisance, as did Mr. Harrington, who now joined them. Lady Lochcarron complimented him on the discourse she had just heard, and introducing her friend Mrs. Brooks, that lady joined in the encomium; when they were about to separate, Lady Caroline taking Cordelia's hand, with great appearance of kindness, said, "We are at Weymouth at present, my dear; if you are going to make any stay in this part of the country I hope you will favour us with a visit; Lady Hootside and Lady Cottingham will rejoice to see you." Cordelia paid due acknowledgments for this civility, but said, "that her stay in Dorsetshire, would probably not be above a day or two longer, as she only came to Lyme to visit a friend," thus leaving them to conjecture, if they pleased, that Mrs. Brooks was that friend. "I shall have the honour to see you to your carriage, madam," said Sir Roger, when Cordelia had made her last courtesy, and was turning away; with a glowing cheek she was compelled to reply that she had walked to church; the countenances of Lady Caroline and Sir Roger expressed astonishment, that of Mr. Harrington something like concern; Cordelia staid to encounter none of them, but again dropping her parting courtesy, took Mrs. Brooks' arm, and walked away with graceful dignity.

As Lady Caroline journeyed homewards, great was the surprise her ladyship expressed to her companions at meeting Cordelia in Dorsetshire, at such a place as Lyme, where neither resort of company, public amusements, nor rural retirement could possibly be the motive which has attracted her thither; "Pho!" said Sir Roger, "she has merely come down for a little change of scene on a visit to that lady who is with her, Brooks—Brooke—what did she call her? what family can she be of? there is Sir Richard Brooke, and Sir Samuel Brooke, and my very good friend Colonel Brooke, and the Brookes of Northamptonshire, and—" "Dear uncle!" interrupted Lady Caroline, laughing, "you remind me of the lines of old Dryden:

"Ill habits gather by unseen degrees:  
"As *brooks* to rivers, rivers run to seas."

Mr. Harrington smiled, and the baronet, with whom Lady Caroline was a great favourite, said, "You are very satirical, Carry; perhaps my acquaintance with almost all the best English families sometimes leads me to digress too long, but when I am

introduced to any person I always wish to know their descent." Little more was said on the subject until they reached Weymouth; but when Lady Hootside and her elder daughter were told the miracle, that Cordelia was at Lyme, both joined in pronouncing that her residence there must be connected with "some dark deed she would not name."

"I ever thought her a strange girl," said the countess, "and the more I hear of her proceedings, the more deeply is my opinion confirmed; Lord Lochcarron must have had weighty reasons for leaving her in the way he did, immediately after the ceremony of their marriage;" "Eh?" questioned Sir Roger; Lady Cottingham, who best understood the avenue to the baronet's ear, took the office of interpreter, and said, "Lady Hootside thinks, Sir Roger, that Lord Lochcarron must have felt himself justified in deserting his bride, by the knowledge of some impropriety in her conduct." "Impropriety!" reiterated the baronet, "rely upon it the impropriety has been on the other side; the poor girl has had a strange set to deal with; Lady Walpole was never any great things, and Dunotter I never liked—I dare say his son is a chip of the old block." No one pushed the subject further, but each cherished what mental opinion they preferred.

Cordelia passed her hours at Lyme in a very cheerless way; after parting with Lady Caroline and her companions, seeing that Mrs. Brooks was inclined for a walk, though she did not exactly say so, she begged that she might not prevent her intention; but returning to the inn under the plea of fatigue, Mrs. Brooks and the young person walked out of town, to view the fine harbour, and whatever else it was surrounded by, worthy notice; this girl, impressed with a high idea of Cordelia's consequence, from her evident familiarity with Lady Caroline Harrington, and unable to gather from their conversation who she were, because they had never addressed her by any name, could not help taking the opportunity of being alone with Mrs. Brooks to endeavour to find it out, though she did so in a very distant and well-bred way; but Mrs. B. was never off her guard, and was deterred, by the visible curiosity of her companion, from using the occasion as she wished and intended to do in making inquiries concerning Mr. Campion, and the way in which he conducted himself while at Lyme.

During her absence, Cordelia, in the solitude of her own apartment, drew a comparison between her own situation and that of Lady Caroline Harrington; and found all the arguments drawn from hope, patience, resignation, and fortitude, inadequate to repress her tears; oh, how kindly, how gracefully attentive, how exactly the medium between neglect and uxoriousness was Mr. Harrington's behaviour to his wife! how greatly was her consequence raised in the scale of society, and how striking was the improvement effected on her manners by her union with a man of Mr. Harrington's dignified and excellent character; while she—but she could only weep over the sad and often-repeated catalogue of her own blighted prospects and drooping hopes; however as evil is seldom unaccompanied by some ray of good, or misfortune without some correspondent consolation, she had to felicitate herself on having escaped discovery, by the circumstance of her friends having studiously avoided addressing her by any appellation. Reflecting that it was of no avail to yield to despondence; that she must exert herself, and finish her singular and trying task; she compelled herself seriously to consider what was next to be done, and after due deliberation changed her late opinion,

and thought it best not to linger at Lyme, but to proceed the next day to Dorchester, where she was taught to believe her lord then was, and to trust to fortune, or a better guide, to find out his residence when there; at all events such a mode of proceeding seemed preferable to risking the constructions which might be put on her prolonged stay at an inn, and indeed had she known all that was going forward on her subject, she would have applauded the prudence which dictated the measure she was pursuing; for more than one of the gay young men of the town had already caught a glimpse of her lively face, and the spirit of curiosity was up in arms to discover all the items that belonged to her.

When Mrs. Brooks returned from her walk, Cordelia imparted the resolution she had taken, which that lady did not attempt to oppose; this seemed the longest and most comfortless Sunday Cordelia had ever known; the passing groups which she gazed at from the windows had no interest for her; every thing was insipid, books were dull and tiresome, and whatever allured for one moment ceased to please in the next; gladly did she hear the clock strike eleven, and Mrs. Brooks propose to retire; but her distance from home, anxiety of mind, and incertitude respecting the future, all conspired to banish repose; her slumbers were broken, and her wandering dreams, which had Lord Dunotter and his son for their objects, were all of a gloomy kind; glad was she when the morning-light, beaming through the shutters, called her to make preparations for quitting Lyme.

When breakfast was ended, and the bill discharged, Cordelia, in contemplating the diminished contents of her purse, felt how much she owed to the provident care of Lord Dunotter, who had enriched her with a well-stored pocket-book on the morning of her departure from Holleyfield; for so little was she aware of the heavy expenses incurred by travelling in the mode she did, or indeed in any mode, that but for so seasonable a source in reserve she must soon have been bankrupt.

People in a state of uncertainty respecting any event, are very prone to think the steps they have taken less eligible than those they have rejected; and thus it was with Lady Lochcarron; for by the time she had passed the first stage to Dorchester, she felt dissatisfied with herself for having quitted Lyme; true, she was taught to believe that her lord was at the former place, but to seek him there, was like the fable of seeking lost reputation in the wide world, for she had neither clue nor guide by which to discover him; by remaining at the last-named town, she must have seen either him or his servant, but it was uncertain when, and time she thought was too precious to be trifled with.

On arriving at Dorchester, her first care, while dinner was preparing, was to write to Lord Dunotter, to give her reasons for the new course she had taken, and to say that she should remain where she was until she heard from his lordship, unless some very pressing reason should induce her to change her resolution. Mrs. Brooks made cautious and guarded inquiries after Mr. Campion, but with less success than ever, for the people of the house where they were, had neither seen nor heard of any such person. Poor Cordelia, thus disappointed, felt herself compelled to believe what she had before feared, that Lord Lochcarron had never come to Dorchester, though, for some reason or other, he had been induced to make the people at the George suppose that such was his intention; she knew not how to proceed, and could only resolve that if in the course of a day or two

she heard no tidings of her recreant spouse, she would relinquish all pursuit, and with it all hopes of future happiness; sunk to deep dejection by these painful thoughts, she ate her meal in nearly silent sadness, yet in consideration of Mrs. Brooks she made an effort to appear composed, and even cheerful. Mrs. Brooks paid two or three visits to the mistress of the house on errands which had for their object Lady Lochcarron's accommodation and comfort; on one of them she learned that a concert was that evening to be performed in a room adjoining to the inn, by young persons belonging to the town, amateurs, the profits, after deducting the expenses, to be appropriated to the relief of a necessitous family who had suffered by a fire. Mrs. Brooks proposed to Cordelia that they should go, if agreeable to her; situated as she was at present, she had little inclination for such an amusement; but unwilling to appear morose, gloomy, or so selfish that she regarded only her own feelings and positions, she expressed her assent, submitting it however to her friend's better judgment, whether they could, with propriety, appear in their travelling dresses; Mrs. Brooks decided in the affirmative, and the little time which intervened between dinner and eight o'clock, the hour of commencing, was passed in rendering their costume as far as might be suitable to the occasion; Cordelia, secure that no one at Dorchester could know her, laid aside her hat, an incumbrance she was glad to part with; anxiety of mind had robbed her cheek of that transient bloom with which exercise and returning health were beginning to adorn it; and her constant, and now almost habitual, meditation on her misfortunes shed a soft and pensive languor over her beautiful features, softened the expression of her sweet blue eyes, and rendered her altogether so interestingly lovely, that when she entered the concert room, which was when the opening symphony was nearly concluded, the attention of the Dorsetian belles and beaux was fixed on her alone; while "It is Mrs. Beaumont," for with her travelling nominative they had already become acquainted, was whispered on all sides, and the epithets of "charming, fascinating," and every other superlative that could be made to signify admiration, were so liberally bestowed, that poor Cordelia soon wished herself anywhere but in the concert-room at Dorchester, and severely repented having entered it; however, as she could not with any propriety make an immediate retreat, she endeavoured to elude observation by not seeming to notice it, and by bending her whole attention on the performances of the evening; these were such as might be expected; no false cadence, no discordant note jarred on the ear of refinement; it was perfect science, but with all the wonted stiffness of science when native taste and genius are totally excluded from it; the first act was nearly concluded, and Cordelia was proposing in her own mind that if agreeable to Mrs. Brooks they would then retire; it was during the performance of one of Handel's beautiful overtures, her whole soul was entranced in the harmony of sweet sounds, and even the vulture Care, which so ceaselessly gnawed her bosom, was, for a while, diverted from his prey, when, by one of those impulses for which we are totally unable to account, she happened to raise her head, and beheld—oh! language can never be modelled to convey an idea of her feelings, when she beheld that form, never seen since the evening on which she received his vows at the altar—the form of Lord Lochcarron; he was leaning against one of the pillars which supported the orchestra, his arms folded on his bosom, and his eyes fixed on the floor.

Cordelia would now have given worlds for the large bonnet and veil to conceal her face; she believed the gaze of all present bent on her; trembling, agitated, and

subdued at once with surprise, joy, and a feeling nearly amounting to anguish, she was only alive to the wish of pointing him out to Mrs. Brooks, that they might not again lose sight of him; she stole another glance, and finding his attention absorbed, and his eyes fixed as before, ventured to contemplate him for some seconds; he was, at least she thought he was, greatly altered in person, and the bloom of his countenance gone; she gently touched Mrs. Brooks's arm, and making a violent effort to speak with composure and collection, softly whispered, "There he is, that is my lord in blue, leaning against the second pillar of the orchestra." Mrs. Brooks softly pressed her hand at once, in token that she understood her, and to recommend composure, and then bent her whole attention to watch Lord Lochcarron, and to obtain by some means or other information of where he resided in Dorchester.

The instruments ceased, and the company rose from their seats; one of the chief personages present, both in his own estimation, and on account of the office he held, was a Mr. Tadcroft, the president of the evening, a merchant in Dorchester; this gentleman had been some time on the watch for an opportunity to commence a conversation with Cordelia and her companion, and took advantage of the present interregnum to pay them some slight compliments, and inquire how they liked the performances; Lady Lochcarron, every faculty of her soul engrossed by the object which on earth was dearest to it, replied to his question in such a vague way, that he thought her worse than ill-bred, quite stupid, and turned the whole of his attention to Mrs. Brooks, in the hope that she might be composed of more conversable materials; Mrs. Brooks readily entered into discourse, for she doubted not that from Mr. Tadcroft she might glean the requisite information concerning Lord Lochcarron's present place of abode; when he asked what she thought of the concert, she gave it at least due praise; "Now I feel flattered, Madam," said Tadcroft with a grin, "for if you, who no doubt hear all the first performers of the metropolis, can think us tolerable, we shall do in time with a little practice." "I am not much in London, Sir," returned Mrs. Brooks, "my residence is chiefly in the country." "May I inquire, madam, what rural shade possesses attraction sufficient to induce a lady to seclude herself in it?" "A very warm and comfortable one," said Mrs. Brooks, with an affable smile, "I come from that district which manufactures the raw materials you furnish." "Devonshire then?" said Tadcroft, with eager curiosity. "Not so," said Mrs. Brooks, gaily, "I'ze be Yorkshire." "Here on business?" said her companion, pushing his inquisitiveness beyond the verge of good-breeding; deeply indignant at his impertinence, she yet kept her own purpose in view, and veiling her resentment beneath a smile, replied, "On business of the last consequence—we are travelling for my friend's health;" then to prevent any further effusion of prying curiosity, she looked round on the company, and after a general tribute of admiration to the smart appearance of the Dorchester ladies, she inquired particularly who several of them were; Tadcroft replied to each inquiry in such a spirit of keen satire, as gave her a much clearer insight into his mind, than into the history of those he described; for as the very essence of satire is an attempt to light the lamp of the satirist's perfections at the expiring embers of his victim, the malevolence of his purpose is sure to injure him with every mind possessing sense, delicacy, and moral rectitude.

From the ladies, Mrs. Brooks proceeded to the gentlemen, and asked the names of one or two, who fared no better with Mr. Tadcroft, than the lovelier part of the creation; "And pray who is that gentleman?" was Mrs. Brooks's next query, directing Tadcroft's attention towards Lord Lochcarron. "That is Mr. Campion, madam, a gentleman lately arrived from the continent; he has been at the White Hart two or three days, and has come here to-night to ascertain, I suppose, whether our music be as good a feast for the ears, as the mutton of our downs and the beer of our town are allowed throughout England to be for the palate." Mrs. Brooks had now all the information she either expected or desired to receive from Tadcroft, but she was both too well-bred and good-tempered to neglect gratifying his vanity by a smile of applause to his home-made wit.

She now joined Cordelia, who, during this whole time had been only attentive to her lord; at first she averted her face, and endeavoured to shun his recognition, dreading that it would be but the harbinger of his contempt; but when reason suggested that it was not for this she came into Dorsetshire, she tried to obey its dictates, and rather to court than avoid his observation; for some time after the music ceased he did not appear to see her, and though he moved his position, walked about the room, and once passed very near her, he neither noticed her by word nor look; at last their eyes met, and could the expression of the most melting tenderness be reduced to rule, it would be that which now animated the sweet face of Cordelia; the gaze of Lochcarron seemed to linger on it a moment, and was then averted with the cold disregard of a perfect stranger; she felt as if the warm current of life were ebbing away, when she was joined by Mrs. Brooks, who imparted the intelligence she had gained from Tadcroft; this, by giving Cordelia time, enabled her to recover composure; she was convinced, or rather she tried to convince herself, that her lord had not recognised her, and delighted that she had at length ascertained his place of residence she once more turned her beautiful eyes upon him, beaming fond affection, but

"As one who spies a serpent in his way,  
"Glistening and basking in the summer ray,"

they were quickly averted; for Lochcarron, his face arrayed in smiles, was bending gracefully to carry on a whispering conversation with a beautiful woman, who, as Cordelia and Mrs. Brooks had learned in the early part of the evening, from the conversation of some persons in their vicinity, was a widow of large fortune, generally resident at an elegant mansion near the post road between Poole and Dorchester, and very lately returned from France.

Poor Cordelia could not bear the train of ideas which rushed to her mind, and grasping Mrs. Brooks's arm, all she could whisper was, "Go, go, let us be gone;" even Mrs. Emerson's remembered counsel, "To demand a personal interview with Lord Lochcarron, to engage him to do her justice in point of character," vanished before the feelings of the moment; and only anxious to escape being made the object of sarcastic scorn or contemptuous pity, she hurried from the spot.

## CHAPTER II.

TO have met Lord Lochcarron—to have passed close to him in the concert room without receiving the slightest notice—to have seen his eyes averted from her face with the chilling indifference of a stranger, while in the very next moment he could bestow on another the most marked attention and kindness, were all circumstances so distressing to Cordelia's feelings, that by the time she reached her apartment in the inn, she was ready to sink beneath her weight of anguish. Mrs. Brooks gently compelled her to take some wine, and inquired with kind affection how she did; Cordelia sighed deeply; "I have no right to complain," said she, "I have merited my fate, and must submit to it." "In what way, my dear Lady Lochcarron?" questioned Mrs. Brooks, with tender solicitude. "Because," replied Cordelia, shaking her head in mournful sadness, "I now, when too late, perceive that I have departed from the delicacy of our sex; Lord Lochcarron deserted me, and, hard as my fate seemed, I ought to have submitted to it, but by coming into Dorsetshire to seek him I have forfeited my own dignity, and"—she proceeded, tears of tenderness glistening in her beautiful eyes—"the very circumstance which, had he judged me with candour, would have pleaded for me, has excited his contempt."

Mrs. Brooks, now that she had seen Lord Lochcarron, so graceful, so elegant, so exactly suited in person and in rank to be the husband of her beloved Cordelia, was more than ever desirous of seeing them re-united; and really believing that Lochcarron (who certainly could have no thought of meeting his deserted bride at a concert in Dorchester) had beheld Cordelia as a total stranger, she said "I dare say, my love, your lord did not know you—you see he was engaged with a party of friends—" "Yes," said Cordelia, indignantly, and Mrs. Brooks plainly saw that at least a part of this ebullition of grief had for its groundwork, a jealousy excusable in every point of view under her circumstances; "I shall leave Dorchester early in the morning," resumed Cordelia, deep resentment in this instance subduing the natural mildness of her temper.

"Your spirits have been too much harassed of late, my dear," returned Mrs. Brooks; "will you on this occasion sanction me to judge and to act for you?" "Oh yes, my dearest Mrs. Brooks, on this and on every occasion I can rely on your affectionate kindness," replied Cordelia, in that tone of grateful sweetness with which she always acknowledged the kind offices of friendship, and which constituted one of her peculiar charms; "then promise to compose yourself, and I will go back immediately to the concert room, and have a few moments conversation with your lord." "What! before so many witnesses?" gasped out Cordelia, "oh no, for Heaven's sake, no!" "And can you not rely on my management?" questioned Mrs. Brooks, in a tone which appealed at once to Cordelia's knowledge of her delicacy, good sense, and refinement; "O yes, in every thing I can; but the packet of letters—you cannot give it to him to-night?" "Nor do I intend it; I do not even know that I shall mention your being at Dorchester—that as I see occasion."

Cordelia, with all her fresh indignation against her unkind lord, could yet breathe a pious wish for the success of Mrs. Brooks's embassy, who after seeing her wear at least the appearance of composure, went back to the concert room; she paused at the door, for

the performers were then in the midst of one of Corelli's most esteemed compositions, and she felt that nothing but the most absolute necessity could authorise that destruction of harmony which her entrance, however light she might contrive to make it, would cause; yet while she lingered there her eyes were not unemployed; she sought Lord Lochcarron in every direction, but without success, and became seriously alarmed lest he should have quitted the room; the instruments ceased, she entered, and found her apprehensions but too just—Lord Lochcarron was nowhere to be seen;—yet scarcely willing to believe even the evidence of her senses, she looked again and again until convinced he was no longer in the room; the party she had seen him with were gone too, and Mrs. Brooks, with deep sympathy, anticipated poor Cordelia's feelings when she should return to her with this intelligence; but to return yet was impossible, for to leave the room a second time until the performances of the evening should be nearly concluded was not to be thought of; she was compelled therefore to sit it out, and to listen to all the humdrum remarks, far-fetched jokes, and sly round-about modes of sifting, which constituted the discourse of her friend Tadcroft, who again joined her; the cost of all this was not a little, for the first required her whole stock of patience, the second of comprehension, and the third of finesse to parry, and of good-breeding to endure.

He noticed Cordelia's having left the room, but expressed no wonder at it, for Mrs. Brooks having said before that she was travelling for her health had lulled suspicion on that point; and her retiring was only attributed to the annoyance she felt from the close atmosphere of a crowded room; at length the concluding piece began to sound, and Mrs. Brooks hastened to her anxious young friend, who, during her absence, had felt what she had done under similar circumstances at Pool, the extremes of hope and fear; but as to Lord Lochcarron's having retired from the concert nearly at the same time with herself, it had never once occurred to her; and she sat in trembling expectation awaiting the return of her friend, dreading, yet endeavouring to arm herself with fortitude, to hear the fatal sentence which she doubted not Lord Lochcarron would pronounce, "I can never see or acknowledge Miss Walpole as my wife."

She thought time stood still, and that Mrs. Brooks would never return; when she at length entered, Cordelia grasped her hand with wild energy; "Tell me at once, my best friend, do not keep me in suspense—what does my lord say?" "I have not seen him." "Not seen him!" and she dropped the hand which she held; "His lordship had quitted the room in the interval between our departure and my return." "With the party who occupied so much of his attention!" said Cordelia, in a tone between grief and resentment. "That I cannot determine," said Mrs. Brooks, "you know I could not risk any inquiry." "Certainly not, but it must be some powerful attraction which induces him to remain in Dorsetshire, and traverse the country in this zigzag way, when his dear father is so very ill."

Mrs. Brooks in reply begged her to compose herself, reminding her that morning would soon return, when she should make Lord Lochcarron a personal visit, and put Lord Dunotter's packet into his hands. It was now getting late, and Cordelia was easily prevailed on to seek repose, but her spirits were too greatly agitated to obtain much of it; every time she awoke from her transient slumbers the dear idea recurred that she had seen

Lord Lochcarron; but alas! in the next moment came the appalling drawback that she had seen him as a stranger.

The weary night wore over, and the welcome beam of that day, which Cordelia felt assured must decide her fate, appeared; they rose soon after eight, and had breakfast, but neither her own efforts nor the persuasions of her friend could make it much more than a nominal meal with Cordelia.

Mrs. Brooks soon finished her toilet, and once again resumed the charge of that packet of letters which, superscribed in the hand-writing of his parent, would, Cordelia fondly flattered herself, awaken some emotions of tenderness in the heart of Lochcarron; she set out soon after ten, apprehensive that any delay might be attended with some ill consequence not to be foreseen; her plan was to inquire for Mr. Campion's valet, and in a private conference with him to desire that he would tell *Lord Lochcarron* a lady requested the honour of a few minutes conversation to deliver a letter, which must be given into his own hands; for she thought it extremely probable that in his assumed character he would receive no one, as he might, very likely, suppose that all who pretended to have business with Mr. Campion must be either beggars or swindlers; but she flattered herself that the knowledge of his title would be a guarantee for her admission.

Such was the plan of operations with which Mrs. Brooks set out, leaving Cordelia in the utmost anxiety of suspense that human nature could support; "I will endeavour to arm myself with patience," she thought mentally, "and not expect the return of my friend for an hour at least;" she laid her watch on the table, and taking up a newspaper, alternately read and consulted time, which seemed to move so slowly, that she more than once held the little machine to her ear, to ascertain whether it were in motion; half an hour had elapsed when Cordelia heard some one slowly ascending the stairs; she listened, the step approached, and she became convinced it was that of Mrs. Brooks; her heart died away, for she was certain that so rapid a return could only augur the total failure of her mission; the door opened, and poor Cordelia read in the fallen countenance of her friend that her fears had been prophetic: "I see how it is," she said in a tone of deep despondence, "my lord will not see you." "No," said Mrs. Brooks, as she slowly seated herself, and gave a sigh to her disappointment, "no, that is not the case—Lord Lochcarron has quitted Dorchester." A dread expression of despair passed over Cordelia's features, and clasping her hands she exclaimed, "Then my worst fears are verified, and all is over; he knew me at the concert, and is flying from me." Mrs. Brooks could not take upon her to say positively that such was not the case, because she did not know it; but she endeavoured to persuade Cordelia that she was alarming herself with needless fears: "I am persuaded you distress yourself without any additional reason, my love," she said, "I dare say he did not know you; there was no change of countenance when his eye rested on you; and I think no man breathing could be so finished a dissembler as to meet you thus far from home under the peculiar circumstances in which you are both placed and betray no emotion." "When did Lord Lochcarron go?" questioned Cordelia; "At nine o'clock." "How unfortunate!—but an hour before you went out; I suppose it was vain to inquire what route he has taken." "I asked," said Mrs.

Brooks, "for Mr. Champion's servant, and was answered by a waiter in the broad western dialect, 'Mr. Champion's zarvant be gone to Lyme, Missus.' I was not surprised at this, because we had reason to think he would be sent back thither; but I regretted it, because it placed me under the necessity of asking at once if I could see Mr. Champion; to which the fellow replied with a stupid stare, as if wondering I had not understood him, 'Why, Missus, Mr. Champion be gone too.' "What, back to Lyme?" said Cordelia, in a tone of united surprise and disappointment. "So I supposed from his manner of expressing himself," returned Mrs. Brooks, "but not quite satisfied with such information, I asked to see the mistress of the house, and was introduced to a very respectable looking woman, who told me very civilly that Mr. Champion left Dorchester about an hour before for Blandford;" "For Blandford indeed!" reiterated Cordelia, while something like a faint ray of pleasure illumined her charming features. "Yes," rejoined her friend, "and if I might venture to hazard an opinion, it is that his lordship is journeying towards Ravenpark, or Holleyfield." Cordelia shook her head: "I am afraid he is only journeying to shun me," she replied; "but does he travel alone? is Harris really gone to Lyme?" Mrs. Brooks answered in the affirmative, but evaded saying much on that point; the fact was, that though she could not push her questions very close to the mistress of the inn, she had yet gone far enough to ascertain that Harris left Dorchester for Lyme the preceding day in the coach; and that it seemed to be Mr. Champion's intention to remain where he was until his return; but he had, it appeared, changed his mind, for when he rose that morning he ordered a postchaise, and left instructions for his servant to follow him to Blandford; this looked so like a wish to avoid his lady, that Mrs. Brooks, as much as possible, concealed the circumstance from her; she really hoped it was his intention to go to Buckinghamshire; at all events no choice was left for them but to pursue his route; but some delay took place in procuring a chaise, and before that was obtained, their baggage packed, the bill discharged, and every other arrangement made, they found themselves upwards of three hours after Lord Lochcarron. It seemed as if a malignant genius pursued poor Cordelia with evil in every shape; the morning had been fine, but the afternoon altered, a heavy mist hung in the atmosphere, accompanied with a drizzling rain, and every thing which can make travelling uncomfortable, such as bad weather, an uneasy vehicle, and indifferent horses, conspired to harass her: Mrs. Brooks greatly regretted that the fog precluded her from viewing the landscape, but Cordelia heeded it not; a gloomy day accords with gloomy spirits.

When they reached Blandford, Mrs. Brooks, without hesitation, described Lord Lochcarron, and inquired whether a gentleman answering that description had arrived there; disappointment again hovered over them with sable wings; he had been there, remained only half an hour, and then went on to Cranbourn.

Cordelia could not imitate her lord's rapid mode of travelling; and though ardently desirous to reach home if possible before him, whatever might happen, she could not, either in consideration of her own health, or that of Mrs. Brooks, pursue her journey that night; the last-named lady was indeed a sufferer by this day's exertion, for in consequence of the wind having blown on that side of the carriage where she sat, she had caught a severe cold, and rose the next morning with a violent head-ache and sore throat; but alike fearful of alarming Lady Lochcarron, and of causing any delay which might be

repented of, she did not complain, but as soon as they had breakfasted, set off for Cranbourn with every appearance of cheerfulness.

When they drew near the town, Cordelia, as if awaking from a deep reverie, said she thought it would be best to make no further inquiry concerning Lord Lochcarron; "I am determined to return immediately home," she proceeded, "and to leave the issue of my fate to Providence; I find by sad experience that no effort of my own can make it better." "It is however your duty not to relax those efforts, my dear," said Mrs. Brooks; "at all events inquiry is my part of the business, and you must allow my continuing to make it;" this she did on reaching the inn, which was about one o'clock, and heard in answer that the gentleman she inquired for had slept there the preceding night, and started for Andover at rather an early hour that morning. Cordelia heard this with something resembling a gleam of pleasure, for it strengthened her hope that he was going to his father; as it was their previously-settled plan to pursue the same route with all expedition, they ordered another chaise, and, while it was getting ready, took some slight refreshment. Cordelia now beginning to perceive the languid looks of her friend, her difficulty of swallowing, and other symptoms of feverish cold, her tenderness took the alarm, and she strenuously urged the propriety of resting at Cranbourn that night; but to this she would by no means consent, assuring her that a night's rest, and a little care when they should reach Andover, would entirely remove them; again Cordelia urged the length of the journey, and the propriety of deferring it until the next day, and used every argument that the most considerate kindness and friendship could suggest, putting herself, her wishes, and interest entirely out of the question; but Mrs. Brooks was not to be excelled in generosity and self-denial in this friendly contest; according to her present view of circumstances, it appeared to her to be a point of the first importance that they should have an interview with Lord Lochcarron before he saw either Lord or Lady Dunotter; but this it was doubtful whether they should now be able to obtain; the only possible chance for it seemed to be in the highest degree of promptness and expedition, and these considerations determined her not to yield to the tender fears of her affectionate young friend; but putting personal hazard and feelings out of the question, to press forwards for Andover that night; but her strength of frame did not correspond to her energy of mind; and for the last ten miles of the journey she was so ill that she could hardly bear the motion of the carriage; in this state they alighted at the Star and Garter at Andover; Mrs. Brooks, scarcely able to support herself, much less to make her wonted researches after Lord Lochcarron, and Cordelia in such deep distress on her friend's account, that she would willingly, if that had been possible, have had her illness transferred to herself.

Ill as Mrs. Brooks was, her finely constituted and regulated mind was alive to every consideration of propriety, take the term in its utmost latitude; she was sensible that she was going to have a very severe illness, which would preclude her, at least for some time, from appearing in her deputed character of the guide and guardian of Lady Lochcarron; true, her own maturity of judgment, and dignified excellence in every respect, qualified her to act on almost every occasion for herself; but the world, the rigid world, required that a young female should not be left without a directress, beyond all in a house of such general resort as that they were now in; if in the course of a day or two

her illness seemed likely to continue, every consideration would demand that Lady Lochcarron should return to Holleyfield; but both in the interim and in the event of her doing so, it would be highly desirable to have private lodgings; and without alarming Cordelia by letting her see her motives in their full extent, she urged her own indisposition as a plea for wishing to be quiet; and apprehensive that if she remained at the Star all night, she might not be able to remove the next day, she requested the people of the house to procure them lodgings, which they did in a very respectable house on the opposite side of the street, inhabited by a Mrs. Fleming, who bestowed every kind attention on the invalid.

Cordelia insisted on having medical advice summoned; Mrs. Brooks made an ineffectual opposition, saying, she was certain she should recover well enough without it—her young friend was inflexible, and all she would concede was to have one doctor instead of two, which was her own wish and intention; nor would she give up even that point except to the whispered remonstrance of Mrs. Brooks, “Recollect, my dear, that to avoid suspicions of all sorts, the proceedings of Mrs. Beaumont must be very different from those of Lady Lochcarron or Miss Walpole—we are here without attendants, and must keep up a uniform appearance of mediocrity and retired habits.” Cordelia felt the full force and wisdom of her reasoning: with regard to being without an attendant, she had from her earliest years been accustomed to self-exertion; and on the present journey herself and Mrs. Brooks had given each other such mutual aid, that they had never felt the want of one; but as a female servant was now absolutely necessary, she requested Mrs. Fleming to inquire the next day for a respectable young woman, to be with her while she remained in Hampshire, which she hinted would probably not be longer than until Mrs. Brooks’s recovery.

When Dr. S arrived, Cordelia was pleased with his address and manners, and, as far as she could trust her own judgment, satisfied with his skill; he did not, like their family doctor in Buckinghamshire, Mr. Herbert, magnify the danger of his patient to enhance his own merit; but treated her case like what it really was, a very bad cold attended with fever, which might be removed by due care in a very short time; his prescriptions were judicious, and most strictly enforced by Cordelia, who insisted on passing the night in the same chamber with her friend, and nursing her with the affectionate regard of a daughter, much against Mrs. Brooks’s earnest wish and request; for she felt it the highest possible augmentation of her own sufferings, that Lady Lochcarron should thus deprive herself of rest after so long and fatiguing a journey; she had indeed less sleep than the invalid, and neither of them were refreshed with the little they enjoyed.

The next morning Mrs. Brooks was in no respect better than the preceding day, and Cordelia was beginning to feel the effects of fatigue and want of repose.

Mrs. Fleming fulfilled her promise, and introduced to Cordelia, as an attendant, a young person of pleasing appearance and manners, and satisfactory character; the course of this day brought Lady Lochcarron a letter, which had been forwarded from Dorchester, according to the instructions she left on quitting that place; it was directed for Mrs.

Beaumont in the hand-writing of Lord Dunotter. The heart of Cordelia beat with joy; she opened it, and the delight she felt on seeing Lord Lochcarron in the concert room at Dorchester, was scarcely greater than that with which she recognised the writing of the earl. It contained every expression that affection could dictate, and respect inspire; his lordship replied at length to the two letters she had written from Lyme and Dorchester; every line breathed the most unequivocal, yet delicately turned, assurances how truly he sympathized with her sufferings, how highly estimated the rectitude of her judgment, and how perfectly acquiesced in the wisdom of its decisions: so far all was pleasing and satisfactory, but much remained on which the letter was far otherwise: on the subject of his own health, his lordship was very reserved, and Cordelia too well understood that he had nothing pleasing to impart on that point; he adverted to the party at Holleyfield the preceding Saturday, but it was in a way as if the evident want of feeling and decency in Lady Dunotter, in having company at such a time, had wrung from him this notice of a subject, which he almost scorned to mention: of his son he said very little, thus leaving Cordelia to the certain conclusion that he had not heard from him by either letter or message; he exhorted his daughter to be strictly careful of her health; said every thing, to be repeated to Mrs. Brooks, that politeness and friendship could dictate, and concluded with earnestly requesting her to write at every possible opportunity. To do this was a heavy task to poor Cordelia, but it was one which she now hastened to perform, that she might save the post; all she could do was to dwell on the bright side of the prospect, and to enliven as much as possible that which was dark; that she had seen Lord Lochcarron would, she doubted not, prove a consolation to his father; and that she had seen him in vain, she extenuated on the broad ground of truth, that her agitation would not permit her to point him out to Mrs. Brooks time enough to allow of her speaking to him; and that when she afterwards returned for that purpose he was gone.

On the subject of his having passed by her as a perfect stranger, her own private opinion inclined her but too much to believe that he did not do so as not in reality knowing her; but as she was not certain that such was the fact, neither her scrupulous regard for truth, nor for the peace of Lord Dunotter, would allow her to say more than that Mrs. Brooks supposed, as he could not have the remotest idea of meeting her in the west of England, he really did not know her; she thought it right in every point of view to mention the party he was with at the concert; to subjoin, through a softened medium, all that had since occurred; to own that she knew not whither he had gone; to say that Mrs. Brooks was confined by a cold; and to add in conclusion of the whole, that she waited at Andover for Lord Dunotter's sanction to her returning home.

Such were the chief contents of the letter which Cordelia, after having finished, perused and re-perused, and scarcely able to find in it one ray of consolation for her suffering father-in-law, she mollified and softened it until compelled to write it over again.

After having despatched it to the post-office, she seated herself at the window of her sitting-room, in the lingering hope that if Lord Lochcarron had not quitted Andover, he would be staying at the principal inn, which was immediately opposite; and that she might possibly see either him or his respectable servant Harris, who was known to her;

but minute succeeded to minute, and hour rolled on after hour without any person appearing who bore the slightest resemblance to either of them.

Thus lonely and desolate, away from home, surrounded by strangers, with only one friend near her, and that friend sick, all her meditations were of the gloomy kind; and if it be indeed any part of wisdom to prepare the mind for the worst by hoping nothing, Cordelia was acting wisely; the longer she reflected on every circumstance, the more deeply she felt persuaded that her Lord fled from Dorchester purposely to avoid her; and she firmly renewed the resolution she had made with herself neither to inquire nor suffer any further inquiry to be made about him, but to return to Holleyfield the very first day that Mrs. Brooks should be able to travel. When the next morning arrived she thought this as distant as ever; little change which could be termed amendment had taken place in the invalid, and another gloomy cheerless day wore over: towards evening, however, the prospect rather brightened; Mrs. Brooks thought her symptoms much relieved, and her own feelings were sanctioned by the fiat of her physician.

### CHAPTER III.

MRS. Brooks passed a tranquil night, and was much better in the morning; her physician would not, however, sanction her quitting her apartment that day, but said that if she caught no fresh cold, she might expect to find every vestige of her complaint removed by Monday.

The morning was rather gloomy, but about three o'clock the day cleared out, and the sun shone with a warmth and brilliancy beyond what might have been expected at the season of the year. Mrs. Brooks, seriously apprehensive that Lady Lochcarron's health would suffer by confinement and anxiety, earnestly requested her to take a walk until five o'clock, their hour of dining at Andover, saying she should employ herself in the meantime in writing to Mrs. Emerson: but for the last plea Cordelia would not, probably, have consented to leave her; but taking that for a hint that she wished to be alone, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and saying she should soon be back, set out on a ramble in the pleasant environs of Andover. From the garden of the house where she lodged, she passed out into the fields, and wandered a considerable way, delighted with the novel and beautiful views which the downs of Dorsetshire and the woods of Hampshire presented, now wearing their most attractive form, clothed in the green livery of spring; whatever misfortunes may assail, whatever disappointments depress a feeling and tender heart, still if that heart is not the abode of guilt, and its followers, remorse and despair, it will never be dead to the charms of nature, to

"Prospect, grove, or song,  
"Dim grottos, gleaming lakes, and fountains clear."

Even the balmy air of the spring has a softening influence on the bosom, and disposes the elastic spirits of youth to receive impressions of delight: it was market-day at Andover, and Cordelia encountered so many objects both animate and inanimate to amuse her mind, and withdraw it from the contemplation of its own inquietudes, that when she consulted her watch, she was surprised to find she had wandered nearly an hour; not that she had walked in a direct line all that time, that was a peril she would not venture upon in a strange place; she had retraced her steps twice, and now stood still a few seconds considering whether she should endeavour to find a nearer way home; but did not deem it quite safe to venture on unknown ground without a guide, for she would not bring her attendant out, lest Mrs. Brooks should want any thing in the interim; she therefore thought it most prudent to return by the road she came, and had scarcely passed ten yards of it, when a weasel, pursued by a terrier dog, darted through the hedge on the left, and flew across the road immediately before her; scarcely had time allowed her to form a distinct idea of the objects she beheld, when the owner of the dog sprung over a stile, which she had not before perceived; and where shall the language be found which shall declare her feelings—for that owner was—Lord Lochcarron. In the very same instant that his lordship appeared, the little animal, finding no egress on the other side, which was bounded by a wall, turned to seek its old quarters; the dog followed, and in the ardour of pursuit came so close to Cordelia as to brush her gown; had no other cause

existed, terriers and weasels would never have called forth a scream from the bosom of Cordelia; but that other cause, the unexpected appearance of him in whom her every hope of happiness on earth was centred, and who she loved with a tenderness which survived not only neglect, but seeming contempt, did call it forth; she screamed wildly, became pale as death, for her veil thrown back exhibited her lovely countenance, and was nearly sinking to the earth; Lord Lochcarron advanced, and with that elegance and grace which so peculiarly distinguished him, apologized for the alarm his dog had caused, to which he attributed, or seemed to attribute, her agitation; but neither by voice, look, nor gesture did he betray the slightest recognition, or appear to think it possible that he could be conversing with the woman he had made his wife; either the change in her person, which was indeed very great, and the improbability of her being at Andover, had effectually concealed her from his knowledge, or he was acting with a duplicity unparalleled; for when he saw the increasing perturbation of Cordelia, which this striking proof that what he had done at Dorchester he now persisted in, did not fail to augment, he with great politeness, but with the perfectly cool and unembarrassed air of a stranger, presented his arm, and begged her to accept it.

Had any other object been there to rest upon, it is probable that Cordelia would not, in the moment of anguish, have taken that arm which ought, while nerve or sinew remained to it, to be her prop and stay. Lochcarron felt her trembling frame as she leaned on him for that support she was unable to afford herself, and regarded her with a look of what appeared to be real surprise that so trifling a matter should have caused such emotion; more and more did the tide of grief swell at poor Cordelia's heart; was this the look she ought to receive from him who was the lord of her vows and the husband of her choice; to whom she was yet a bride, and whose duty it was to be the guide, the consoler, the protector of her youth? yet though suffering as acutely as human nature could do under such circumstances, the singularity of which rendered them doubly afflictive, every consideration of a wounded tenderness, feminine timidity, and virgin reserve, conspired to prevent her from saying what her indignant heart prompted: "Do we meet thus as strangers, my lord?" No; she felt that if Lord Lochcarron did not recognise, or would not acknowledge his wife, her own lips must not be those which forced the recognition, or the acknowledgment from him; but all these united could not restrain her from giving her ungenerous lord a glance, in which dignity, conscious innocence, meek resignation, and all of resentment that her gentle nature could feel, were so powerfully blended, and altogether produced such a strongly depicted expression of countenance, that if Lochcarron had not felt its influence, he must have been divested of all those attributes of soul and faculties of mind, which class their possessor as man.

Was it that he understood that speaking look, and determined to parry it? or that it found its way to his heart by a new and unexpected channel? or that it called up suppositions which he resolved to realise? at all events he chose to have some conversation, which he commenced in the mode prescribed in this country from time immemorial, by an observation concerning the weather.

Cordelia had now, by every aid that her pious, well-regulated, reasoning mind could suggest, argued herself into a much greater degree of composure than under such

circumstances she could have thought possible; but we are very rarely, perhaps never, acquainted with the extent of our own energies till called upon to exert them. She reflected that if Lochcarron was indeed acting with that dissimulation she too much feared, it was due to her own dignity to conceal the anguish she felt; and if he really did not know her, it must appear the very highest degree of either idiotism or affectation, to continue disturbed because a dog had chased a weasel: calmed by these considerations, she replied to what Lord Lochcarron said, with her wonted graceful sweetness; and when he subjoined some remarks on the scenery around them, accorded with his opinions, and joined in admiring it. Lochcarron next pointed out to Cordelia's notice a very handsome house on the right, observing that it was a delightful residence, and expressing some curiosity to know who it belonged to; Cordelia professed her ignorance, adding, though not without considerable emotion, "I am quite a stranger here, detained by the sudden illness of a friend who travels with me;" for she thought with herself that whether Lord Lochcarron did or did not know her, she had an unquestionable right to assume the same show of ignorance with regard to him.

There was, at least Cordelia thought there was, peculiar meaning in the glance of her lord as he replied, "Then we are here under somewhat similar circumstances, for I also am a stranger at Andover, waiting the return of my servant, who I have sent to town on particular business." "That business," said Cordelia, mentally, "is to ascertain either the state of his father's health, or, oh! dreadful thought! the progress of that suit which is to separate us for ever;" and as the idea crossed her mind, the tremor of her frame, which had nearly subsided, came on again; yet a quick instinctive feeling prompted her at the same moment to withdraw her arm from that which supported it; and, while it was only by the strongest effort that she repressed her tears, to say, with all her wonted grace, "I fear I am taking you out of your way, Sir;" but she pronounced the last word faintly, and could scarcely forbear using the title for which it was substituted.

Lord Lochcarron, who saw clearly that her composure was assumed, not genuine, said in a respectful way, that he was apprehensive she had not yet recovered from her fright, and begged permission to see her home: this was a permission which, had Cordelia been Miss Walpole, and the escort of a mere stranger been offered under such circumstances, she would not perhaps have granted; especially as she saw her attendant advancing at a distance, sent by the considerate kindness of Mrs. Brooks, who was uneasy at her staying so long; but she knew that when an explanation took place, which it must do sooner or later, no stigma could rest on any part of her conduct.

They had nearly reached the house when they met the servant; Lady Lochcarron not choosing to go in by the back way, turned the corner and came up the street to the front door. "We are quite near neighbours," observed Lord Lochcarron, as Cordelia withdrew her arm, "my lodgings are not more than three or four houses higher up;" he then respectfully asked Cordelia's permission to inquire after her health the next day; at the same time presenting a card, on which was written, "Mr. Champion." Cordelia took it with a hand which she vainly tried to render steady, and said "that she hoped her friend and mistress would then be well enough to leave her apartment, and would be happy to unite her acknowledgments to those she now begged leave to offer for Mr. Champion's

politeness." A bow and courtesy of good morning were then exchanged; Cordelia entered the door which Gardiner held open, and Lochcarron turned away; but in the same moment all her forced composure vanished. The termination of her last two meetings with her lord, the fatal evening of her marriage, and the concert at Dorchester, rushed to her mind; and, unable to repress a sad presentiment that this would be their third and last interview, her tears imperiously refused to be longer restrained. Now that Lochcarron was gone, all the arguments which had withheld her from making herself known to him appeared futile and trivial; she wished to recall time, she wished impossibilities, and when she reached the apartment where Mrs. Brooks was sitting, she had just self-command enough to say, "I have seen my lord," that she might not too much alarm her, and throwing herself upon a sofa, she drew out her handkerchief, and sobbed aloud.

Mrs. Brooks, in dreadful apprehension that all was over, and that Lord and Lady Lochcarron had parted to meet no more, hastened to sooth her, and to entreat that she would disclose what had passed; considering, perhaps justly, that to unbosom her grief was the most likely means of assuaging it; but when she heard the full particulars, she exclaimed, "Be assured, my dear, Lord Lochcarron does not know you! it is not in human nature, much less in one so young, to evince at once such deep duplicity and such entire mastery of feeling." "I cannot think as you do," said Cordelia, mournfully, "I fear he knows me but too well, and is artfully disguising his knowledge until he gets from Andover." "I shall be enabled to judge to-morrow," said Mrs. Brooks. "I doubt no to-morrow will arrive to bring him here," sighed Cordelia, in a tone of despondence; "too fatally do I know that he holds neither promise nor vow sacred;" the bitterness of her spirit breaking from all the restraints of patience, meekness, and even hope.

Dinner coming in, no more was said; but the two ladies had now theme enough for conversation during the evening.

Though Cordelia had declared her doubts, amounting to disbelief, whether Lord Lochcarron would make his morning call, yet Mrs. Brooks could not but observe, that her dress was arranged with a degree of attention much beyond what she had bestowed on it in any of the temporary residences they had occupied on their journey; that whenever the door opened, she started with emotion; that as time wore away, long fits of abstraction came over her; and that as the day advanced, a pensiveness, nearly approaching to melancholy, became the characteristic of her countenance; when the chime of the clock announced half after one, Mrs. Brooks, though her own hopes were nearly extinct, was unwilling to altogether crush those of Cordelia, but she could not prevent her looks from betraying her fears; "I told you so," said Lady Lochcarron, with that bitter smile which, igniting from despair, may be termed the lurid lightning of the soul, as gay and genuine smiles are frequently denominated its sunshine, "I told you he would not come." Mrs. Brooks, with little real expectation, now scarcely dared to maintain the appearance of it; two o'clock struck, and Cordelia, at once, as if the sound conveyed a certainty that all was over, and as resigning herself to that certainty, moved her seat nearer the window, and took up a book to lose her own reflections in those of the author; "Surely I shall hear from Holleyfield to-day," said Cordelia; at that moment a loud knocking was heard; Lady Lochcarron's heart beat with tumultuous emotion, and in the next minute her lord entered

the room; a beam of pleasure seemed to illumine his countenance when he approached Cordelia; his hopes that she had recovered the effects of her fright, were expressed with easy grace, but no word, no look betrayed the slightest reminiscence of an acquaintance bearing date prior to the preceding evening. Cordelia's every pulse beat with accelerated motion, her cheek was flushed, and her quivering lips could ill perform their office, yet she exerted herself to introduce Mrs. Brooks by name; but when she pronounced that of Campion, her faint articulation was scarcely audible; Lord Lochcarron neither seemed to notice her emotion, nor to have either flutterings or hesitation; he was respectful, polite, collected, attentive; he soon caught the name of Beaumont from Mrs. Brooks, and appropriated it to Cordelia, who could not avoid feeling a painful pang when addressed thus by him.

Mrs. Brooks was, what may with truth be termed, a highly-gifted woman: her's was the very perfection of the female character; uniting the utmost exactitude of decorum, with the playful, easy, chit-chat way which fascinates in the young, and charms in those of more advanced life; she saw that her present business was to draw the attention of Lochcarron as much as possible from Cordelia, to prevent his observing her confusion, and to crush, by the most apparent openness and frankness, those suspicions and surmises which he was very likely to form, concerning two females travelling thus unprotected and unattended; the first she effected, by leading him at once into an animated conversation on local topics; and the last, by digressing from those subjects to Yorkshire, her native county, speaking of it as her home, mentioning many of the first families there, and occasionally addressing herself to Cordelia, thus at once drawing her gradually into the conversation, and meeting with every show of candour, the well-masked, but to her obvious, endeavours of Lord Lochcarron to find out their station in life and connexions: or else, if he indeed knew who they were, to see what colour they would put upon these matters; for as yet Mrs. Brooks could not clearly ascertain whether he did or did not know Cordelia, though she was still inclined to think the latter; if such was the case, the present discourse was well calculated to remove him from all possibility of finding her out: he knew nothing of the Walpole family history, origin, and connexions but what he had heard from his father; and Lord Dunotter's former inquiries concerning the relatives of Cordelia, had stopped short, very well satisfied on ascertaining that she had a maternal great aunt immensely rich, very old, and highly capricious, to whose great property she was likely eventually to be heiress; as he knew this lady resided in Cumberland, he never doubted that Cordelia had been educated, and lived there during her early years; and though he afterwards became much better informed on all these points, it was at a period when all intercourse with his son had ceased; and, if Lochcarron did not already know it, it was not likely now to rush into his mind that Cordelia Walpole, brought up, as he supposed, in Cumberland, and Mrs. Beaumont, so well acquainted with many parts of Yorkshire and the principal families there, were one and the same person. But there remained a still more strong and powerful reason for doubting the fact of Cordelia's identity; that is, if ever such an idea occurred to Lord Lochcarron, which Mrs. Brooks could not admit it did: he had early taken up a notion that the woman he married was weak and imbecile in understanding, gifted with no great share of natural talents, and having those she possessed but imperfectly cultivated; whereas the lady he was now conversing with, not only possessed every faculty of mind in transcendent

vigour, order, and arrangement, but had so large a portion of general knowledge, and was distinguished by such brilliancy of genius, and refinement of taste, that the young nobleman readily admitted to himself the fact of his never hitherto having conversed with a female so highly gifted, and so accomplished: indeed since her constant intercourse with Lord Dunotter, the progress she had made in every solid and elegant acquirement was great almost beyond either description or belief; this (as one topic of discourse led to another, and Cordelia's agitation subsiding, left her spirits more free) Mrs. Brooks saw, and saw with delight, held Lord Lochcarron in a charm of surprise and pleasure.

They had chatted about three quarters of an hour, when an elegant equipage, drawn by six foaming horses, and preceded by two out-riders, drove up to the opposite inn.

Mrs. Brooks, who happened to be near a window, threw up the sash. Cordelia instinctively looked across the way, and almost in the same moment that she recognised on the servants, the livery of the Hootside family, beheld the young earl and his countess seated in the carriage: as it drew up, Lady Hootside looked towards the window where Cordelia sat; she knew her, and a stare of vacant wonder was succeeded by as strong a sneer of contempt as the place she was in, and Cordelia's situation in life, would allow her to express; and then slightly touching the elbow of her lord, she directed his eyes to the object of her sarcastic notice. Poor Cordelia felt the insult, and it sent the blood first to her cheek, and then back to her beating heart: in the moment when Lord Hootside, in obedience to his Lady's intimation, fixed his gaze on Cordelia, her look was turned to Lord Lochcarron, as if to supplicate that support which was her unalienable right.

Lochcarron, who had been examining a print which was hung on the other side of the room, was called to the window by the sound of the carriage; the moment his glance had informed him to whom it belonged, and that its owners were in it, he evidently shrunk back, and sought concealment; but he was seen by both Lord and Lady Hootside, of which Cordelia was well aware, and she felt her situation so singular, and the combination of feelings consequent on it so powerful, that she could scarcely preserve herself from falling from her seat: her first idea was that naturally suggested by the weakness and vanity of human nature—triumph over the Hootsides; they could not possibly know on what terms, and by what chance, Lord Lochcarron and herself were thus together in a lodging-house at Andover: their accidental meeting the preceding day was a secret to themselves, and even if it should transpire, who would believe that they were thus keeping up the formal intercourse of perfect strangers, when connected by the nearest, and what ought to be the dearest, of all ties?

The reflection of a moment, showed still more plainly the reverse of the picture; this very day she expected, and hoped, while she dreaded, would tear aside the veil, and tell Lochcarron, that her fair fame demanded a final adjustment of the affair between them.

Sad with these reflections, Cordelia, with instinctive consciousness, looked at her lord; it seemed as if a correspondent feeling directed his eyes to her; their glances met,

and were hastily averted, as if each ought to have said, and neither did say, How well the equipage over the way, and its noble owners, were known to them both.

When female dignity required exertion, Cordelia was not long wanting to herself; she rallied her drooping spirits, and said, addressing Mrs. Brooks, "That is Lord Hootside's carriage, and that is Lady Hootside in the purple pelisse; they are going down to Weymouth—you know Lady Caroline Harrington said they were expected." Mrs. Brooks said "Yes," adding with a smile, that she thought her ladyship a very ungraceful figure. "Pray who did Lord Hootside marry?" questioned Lochcarron, "I am scarcely acquainted with any change that has taken place in England, since I was on the continent." Cordelia explained: "Oh! true;" he rejoined, when she named Sir Roger Cottingham, "and his nephew, young Harrington, married Caroline Mannark." "He is an excellent preacher," said Mrs. Brooks, "we heard him last Sunday at Lyme," watching as she spoke, to see what effect the mention of that place would have on her auditor: his countenance betrayed emotion, but it was of a sort which all her penetration could not assist her to decipher, whether it were that he knew Cordelia, and thought that Mrs. Brooks was approaching a point, which would compel him to avow his intentions; or whether he was only apprehensive of his own secret being discovered, and that Mr. Campion should be known as Lord Lochcarron; but she was inclined to think the latter, and to believe that seated as he now was by the side of Cordelia, and listening to her with an interest which not even his highly polished manners could entirely prevent from assuming the tone sometimes of surprise, and sometimes of admiration, it had never once occurred to him that he was paying the homage of all these feelings to the woman he had married, contemned, and deserted.

Meanwhile he replied to what Mrs. Brooks had said, not by continuing the discourse about Harrington and his connexions, but, as perhaps was natural, by taking it up at the point which more immediately concerned his own pilgrimage in the west of England; "I only left Lyme that very day," he said; but there was a slowness, a hesitation in his manner, as if while saying he had been at Lyme, he was dubious whether he ought to make the avowal.

The famous and frequently used simile, of being placed between Scylla and Charybdis, will now do nothing at typifying the situation of poor Cordelia: if an illustration must be sought for in maritime affairs, she was literally transfixed on the trident of Neptune; she thought it the likeliest thing in the world that Lord Hootside, who always acted from the impulse of the moment, and who never stood upon points of ceremony, would take it into his head to cross the street and inquire for Lord and Lady Lochcarron, nothing doubting that they were there in *propria personæ*, confessed and avowed; and now as at every second minute she stole an anxious glance towards their windows, and saw Lord and Lady Hootside conversing, apart from the lady and gentleman who accompanied them (whom she did not know) apparently as sedulously watching her abode, as she was doing theirs, she wrought herself up to a belief that they were canvassing the propriety of making such a visit as she dreaded; and it seemed, in imagination, comparatively easier to die upon the spot, than to have her identity

explained to Lord Lochcarron in such a way, with the Hootsides for witnesses of the consequences which would ensue.

In the next place, the stay of Lord Lochcarron had now reached the utmost bounds, to which any prescribed forms of visiting could allow a stranger to extend a morning call; she might hope, though she scarcely dared to do it, that he had not found her society beyond endurance; he would now go, but when, or how should they meet again: would Mrs. Brooks, to whom, when at Dorchester, she had delegated the power of acting in the affair as she should judge best, permit him to depart once more, after all they had suffered by having missed an opportunity of speaking to him? surely not; every moment she changed her position, moved her head, or opened her lips, Cordelia expected that the awful truth was coming out, either in some form of words, or by the presentation of Lord Dunotter's packet; and every time the least noise was heard on the stairs, she believed that Lord Hootside was coming up; so that between these two sources of apprehension, her fears and trepidation became so great, that she was scarcely able to support herself by the aid of salts, held within her handkerchief, and applied by stealth when the attention of her companions happened to be directed another way; anticipations and events are, however, found to differ widely; matters take unlooked for courses, and ends are brought about by means neither foreseen nor expected. Cordelia was perfectly right in conjecturing what were the intentions of Lord Hootside; he did indeed express a wish to step over, and pay his respects to Lord and Lady Lochcarron; but it so happened that his lordship, though he had never in his life been amenable to the control of either his lady, mother, or any other authority, natural or delegated, was completely held in thralldom by the young countess his wife; the ways and means by which her ladyship had already obtained this ascendancy over her spouse were manifold, and some of them the certain consequences of causes which might be explained, were it at all relevant to this history; but it is sufficient to observe simply, that the mortification her eyes endured when she raised them a second time to Cordelia's window and beheld the handsome face of Lord Lochcarron peeping over his lady's shoulder, called up all the spleen of a disposition, from childhood rendered perverse and wilful, by injudicious parental indulgence; and when Lord Hootside, with frank good-nature, expressed the purpose which Cordelia dreaded (lest it should bring about discoveries of the first magnitude, and that in all the wrong points of time, place, and company) his lady decidedly negated his proceedings, by saying in her wonted tone of pettish command, "No, indeed, Hootside, you shall not go."

## CHAPTER IV.

MRS. Brooks was well aware that Cordelia expected her either to contrive some pretence of sending her out of the room, until she had placed in the hands of Lord Lochcarron the letters of his father, or else when she attended him to the door to appoint a future meeting for that purpose; but it was not her present intention to do either: she knew that delays of indolence always prove prejudicial, and frequently ruinous; but those that are dictated by prudence are usually the paths of safety and success; her penetration very readily enabled her to see, that if Lochcarron *did* know Cordelia, he was surprised and delighted; if he *did not*, he was astonished and charmed by her uncommon endowments of mind, and (Mrs. Brooks could not help thinking) by her graces of person also; to prematurely say, "Behold your wife!" to seem bent on insisting that he should acknowledge her by that title, would, she thought, be the certain means of ruining their cause. "The progress of pure settled affection in the heart of man," (so she argued with herself) "is slow, but sure; those intense passions which are the growth of a day—perhaps of a few hours—are consumed by their own fervency, and usually decay as fast as they sprung up; he cannot now leave Andover without first seeing us—politeness, and I think I may venture to add, inclination forbid that, so that it will always be in my power to make the discovery, without risking every thing by precipitate and indelicate haste;" thus she reasoned with herself, and, acting upon these principles, when Lochcarron rose to take leave, she said with a smile, "We are all solitary sojourners here, and bound in duty to assist in amusing each other; may we hope, Sir, to be favoured with your company to tea?—eight o'clock is our hour." Lord Lochcarron gracefully bowed his thanks for the invitation, while the bright sparkle of his eye, and its involuntary, yet scarcely perceptible, glance towards Cordelia, seemed to say that Mrs. Brooks's politeness really conferred on him the pleasure, which in signifying his acceptance, he said it did. "I have no hesitation, my dear," said Mrs. Brooks, so soon as Lochcarron had taken his departure, "I have no hesitation in saying that your lord is, in person and talents, one of the finest young men I have ever seen; and I sincerely hope his heart will hereafter justify all the eulogiums which his father, in his letter to Mrs. Emerson, bestowed on it."

"I know not what to hope, or to conclude," said Cordelia, with mournful frankness; "surely never person was placed in so singular a situation as I am; I have been in agonies all this while, lest Lord Hootside should take it into his head to come over and inquire for Lord and Lady Lochcarron." "I was greatly apprehensive of it," returned Mrs. Brooks, "and had hastily settled in my mind how to act if it should happen so." "Oh! what would you have done?" questioned Cordelia, in much trepidation. "I should have left the room the moment I saw Lord Hootside making for the house, and, receiving his message myself, I should have returned, and, addressing you, have said: 'My dear, there is a young nobleman below inquiring for Lord and Lady Lochcarron;—as they are both here to return their own answer, I have not ventured to give orders, either for his admission or denial.' then taking your right hand in mine, I should have placed it in that of your lord, and giving him his father's letters, which I had ready in my pocket, I should have said, without allowing him time even to think of the surprise, 'My lord, I have the honour, as the delegate of your excellent father, to present to you your inestimable, and, I

must add, injured wife, together with these letters of explanation from my Lord Dunotter:—I will now go to Lord Hootside, and tell him that your lordship will wait upon him in two minutes;—I should then have quitted the room, and—” “Oh! my dear Mrs. Brooks!” interrupted Cordelia, “and would you really have done all this?” “Indeed I should!” she replied; “reflect a moment, and you will be convinced I could not have acted otherwise.” “And how will you act now?” questioned Cordelia, averting her face; “That is quite another matter,” answered Mrs. Brooks, smiling; “when we are threatened with sudden invasion, we hastily throw up such outworks as time will allow us to construct; but when we prepare for a distant attack we take more deliberate measures, and call in the skill and assistance of experienced engineers.” “But do you not think, my dear madam,” said Cordelia, diffidently, “do you not think it might have been better to have been more explicit before my lord left us?” Mrs. Brooks replied in the negative, adding, very affectionately, “seeing as I do, my dearest Cordelia, how certainly your merits are making their way to the heart of your lord, I think it best not to be too precipitate; his turn of mind, allow me to say, is singularly romantic, and must be managed with extreme caution.”

“But, my dear friend,” interposed Cordelia, “consider the situation of my father—of Lord Dunotter; think of the weak state he is in, and the anxiety he is enduring every day of my protracted absence, uncertain whether I have yet seen Lord Lochcarron; oh! if he knew that I have now seen him thrice, and yet—” she paused, and her cheek was tinged with a faint blush.

“These,” said Mrs. Brooks, “are amongst my chief reasons for delaying the explanation; should Lord Lochcarron be confirmed in his unreasonable prejudices, by any mismanagement on our part—” she hesitated, but Cordelia felt her argument in full, even greater force than it was intended. “Oh!” she exclaimed, “say no more; that brings back to me all that I felt and thought at Dorchester;—I must for ever remain degraded in my own eyes, for having been prevailed on to come in search of my lord.”

“No! no!” interposed her friend, “that is not my meaning; you must permit me to recur to what I said before: your lord has a peculiarly romantic way of thinking; and it requires the utmost caution and delicacy to deal with minds of that class; I dare say the singularity of your meeting yesterday would be quite an adventure suited to his taste.”

“I think,” said Cordelia, faintly smiling, while the sigh which she could not repress proclaimed that her smile was not genuine, “I think that if ever we should be established in life, my happiness would rest on a slender foundation if my husband’s feelings were thus powerfully excited by every trifling incident that came in his way.”

“My dear girl,” said Mrs. Brooks, very seriously, “allow me once for all to give you this solemn caution: should you, which I trust in Heaven you will, be soon indissolubly united to Lord Lochcarron, study his temper, accommodate yourself to his way of thinking, and become the sharer of his pursuits; whatever plans or alterations he proposes, be ever ready to promote, if any way within the pale of moderation, even though your taste or judgment may not entirely approve them; be the cheerful partner of

all his little excursions; see, or at least say you see, female beauty and merit with the same eyes that he does; and, beyond all, never seem to remember that his heart has rested any where but with you; and if ever circumstances should unavoidably call up the remembrance, let it only be with a sigh to the memory of her who will then repose in the grave. I have observed through life," she added, with peculiar emphasis, "that a considerable portion of domestic infelicity—I do not mean matrimonial infelicity alone, but that which we too frequently see in families, by whatever ties they are connected—arises from undue appreciation of, or indifference to, the characters of those we are thus united with; thousands of feeling hearts are chilled into apathy, numbers of ardent, generous minds raised into passion, highly brilliant talents sunk to despondence, and virtues of the first order of sublimity withered and blasted, and all because those with whom the ties of nature, or the bonds of society have linked their possessors, have neither discrimination enough to find out their excellencies, temper to sustain their defects, nor sense to impel or restrain them with gentleness, address, and delicacy, as reason or prudence may direct."

It is probable that Mrs. Brooks was induced to this long lecture by observing certain little ebullitions resembling jealousy, which, whenever any thing occurred to call up the idea of Miss Borham, seemed to overcome the native meekness of Cordelia's character; be that as it may, and however she might appropriate the friendly hints, her good sense and grateful sweetness received them as intended kindnesses.

"And are you still, my dear Madam," questioned Cordelia, "of opinion that my lord does not know me?" "Decidedly I am," was the reply; "I thought," she resumed with some hesitation, "that after he saw the Hootsides there was something in his look which I could not altogether translate, but which seemed to betray that he did know me."

"That," said Mrs. Brooks, "I am persuaded was only emotion originating in the fear that Lord Hootside would detect Lord Lochcarron beneath the assumed character of Mr. Campion; however," she pursued, first with a smile, and then rather seriously, "I shall be enabled to judge with greater certainty this evening, and to take my measures with more decision."

"I think he won't come this evening," responded Cordelia; "so you said this morning, my dear; but on that score I have no apprehension; I have seen the first dawnings of love before now, and I have no hesitation in saying that what Lord Lochcarron now feels for you, whether he does or does not know you, will, if nothing intervenes to crush it, expand to the truest and tenderest affection."

Great was the agitation of Cordelia's heart when Mrs. Brooks uttered these words; for one moment the dear idea of being the object of Lochcarron's love, seemed worth all that could be risked, hazarded, or sacrificed; but in the next her innate rectitude of judgment, and delicacy of principle, recoiled from the slightest shadow of deception in a matter so sacred; "No!" she exclaimed in a tone where the firmness of virtue struggled with female tenderness, "had I the wealth of the Indies, oh! how cheerfully would I give it all to be blest with the affection of my husband; but he must love me as myself, or—

oh! what must I think of Lord Lochcarron, were he capable of cherishing such a sentiment, while the holy tie which unites us remains uncanceled: my dearest Mrs. Brooks, in pity mention it no more, I cannot bear to think of it; I cannot do evil and expect good to result from it.”

Mrs. Brooks, with great strength of mind, and all that clearness of judgment which is the result of experience, had none of that exquisite refinement, that keen and quick perception of the gradations of right and wrong which distinguished Cordelia. “You are truly a fastidious simpleton,” she exclaimed, laughing, “you would barter your chance of happiness for a shadow.” “Oh! no! no!” was the reply; “the path of duty is that of true happiness, and may no temptation ever induce me to swerve from it; if Lord Lochcarron, as you would have me believe, knows me only by the name of Beaumont, he must suppose me the wife of another, and to think that he feels any thing like admiration for a woman so situated—oh! gracious heaven! I cannot support the idea!”

Cordelia, in saying this, spoke the genuine dictates of her mind; its gentleness and goodness, combined with her affection for the man she had married, and her sense of the solemn duties of veneration and obedience incumbent on a wife, were such, that she could readily have said with Eve,

“Witness, heav’n,  
“What love sincere, and reverence in my heart,  
“I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,  
—————Thy suppliant  
“I beg, and clasp thy knees: bereave me not  
“Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,  
“My only strength and stay: forlorn of thee,  
“Whither shall I betake me?  
“Between us two let there be peace.”

Yet her gentle nature recoiled from the slightest shadow of crime or profligacy, and her discriminating judgment required that he to whom she could thus bend, for whose sake she was willing to make such concessions, should at least be distinguished by

“Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure.”

Mrs. Brooks was beginning to rally her young friend on the singularity of her apprehending that her husband should fall in love with her, when their attention was called off by the departure of the Hootsides, who had only stopped at the Star and Garter to change horses, and take some refreshment; Cordelia, as may be supposed, took care to keep out of sight; but Mrs. Brooks watched their motions, every now and then reporting to Lady Lochcarron what they were doing; when they got into the carriage, she said that both the earl and countess looked up at the window where she sat, affirming that when the latter found Lady Lochcarron was not there to view her, she seemed mortified and disappointed; Cordelia did not feel disposed to doubt this fact, but with all due deference to Mrs. Brooks’s penetration, she could not help thinking that fancy had assisted her in

this instance, for she did not deem it exactly possible to trace the expression of any countenance across a street; however she rejoiced in their absence, as it released her from the painful apprehension of being intruded upon while this important crisis of her fate was pending.

An hour passed at the dinner table, and another devoted to such arrangements of the toilet as the state of their wardrobe at Andover would permit, helped to wear away the time; whatever might be Cordelia's other perfections, she certainly was not gifted with the spirit of prophecy; she had pronounced that Lord Lochcarron would not make his morning call, and the event proved that she was no seer; again, she had predicted that he would not keep his engagement in the evening; and though people are generally supposed to be a good deal chagrined when circumstances prove the futility of their pretences to divination, or at least to that penetrating faculty which serves its purposes, Cordelia did not look either displeased or disappointed, when a loud knocking at the door announced the arrival of Mrs. Brooks's expected guest, though it must not be dissembled that she hated to receive him by the name of Campion, in the same proportion that she did passing by that of Beaumont herself.

Lohcarron entered, wearing an aspect of smiles and gaiety; but as if his cheerfulness had the singular effect of depressing Cordelia's spirits, the more lively and animated he seemed, the more she felt disposed to be pensive and dejected; either in consequence of her recent discourse with Mrs. Brooks, which had opened her eyes to the situation in which she stood with her lord, the object of his present attention indeed, but under a borrowed appellation, as the wife of another; or else it was that feeling or presentiment which is supposed to haunt the mind upon the approach of grief or calamity.

Mrs. Brooks however was neither reserved nor out of spirits; she met Lord Lochcarron with the cordiality of an old acquaintance; and when the interchange of short sentences, consequent on the first entrance of any one, had given place to general conversation, she kindly endeavoured to draw Cordelia away from her sad meditations, and to give her in the eyes of her lord that exaltation and consequence to which she was, in every point of view, entitled, and which Mrs. Brooks deemed it highly essential to take every pains to impress on his mind.

Lord Lochcarron was most becomingly dressed, combining a very elegant taste, with just enough of fashion to mark the gentleman; his lady, in the simple costume which her travelling circumstances permitted, with no more of decoration than suited the domestic fireside, was,

“When unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.”

Mrs. Brooks, as her eye wandered from one to the other, thought she had never seen so lovely a couple; Cordelia, felt a sensation too like real happiness to be long either grave or silent; Lochcarron detailed the little of what was doing in the great world, which had transpired by that day's post; and those topics dismissed, the conversation reverted, as it ever does with a trio of persons possessing taste and refinement, to subjects of literature

and the fine arts: they talked of books (as Gibbon and Fox did, when the latter visited the retreat of the former in Switzerland) from Homer to the Arabian Nights; they talked of music from the sublime oratorios of Handel, to

“The strains whose wandering echoes thrill  
“The shepherd, lingering on the twilight hill.”

And they talked of paintings, from Raphael and Rubens, to West and Lawrence.

Cordelia had read and reflected much for her years, and since her intercourse with Lord Dunotter, she had heard a great deal also; hence she possessed a vast fund of knowledge; but her youth, the retirement in which she had been educated, and the subsequent circumstances which had confined her exclusively to the vicinity of Holleyfield, had prevented her from reaping much from actual observation; true, she was eminently gifted with that rare and happy faculty which is the result of united judgment and reflection, and which Richardson has happily ascribed to his *Clarissa*, when he says, she is “The most capable of any one I ever knew of judging what an *hundred* things are by seeing *one* of a like nature.” But though Cordelia possessed this capability in so high a degree, it had one consequence inseparable from it—that of producing a constant recurrence of the same ideas to her mind; thus when pictures were talked of, the visit to Orton-Abbey was always called up in her memory, because she could refer to it as a standard of her practical knowledge of the subject; and now as restraint wore off, and her spirits became more elevated by the dear society she was in, she could not resist the temptation of describing the whole scene at that place, all that had occurred about the paintings and the china, and all the whimsicalities and peculiarities of the Cottingham family; she took care, however, to conceal the names of those who were of her party; and when she had occasion to mention them, only said, “one of the ladies,” or “one of the gentlemen who accompanied me;” for though she might have enriched her story by saying that the acquaintance of Lord Hootside and his countess commenced that day, she would not venture to do so; she gave the narrative with such humour and vivacity, yet such gentleness and sweetness, that Lochcarron listened with a strong and powerful interest.

Had Mrs. Brooks and Cordelia not known that the young nobleman was acting with duplicity, concealing his real name and character, and assuming such as did not belong to him, the fact must have struck them that he was doing so; it is hardly possible for people to associate much with others without explaining to them, in some degree at least, their connexions and relationships, recurring to past times, and talking of their home, and the friends they have, or have had there; even English reserve, the greatest, perhaps, of any, usually wears off in a third interview, and the parties grow communicative, and begin to place confidence in each other; but Lord Lochcarron had done none of these things; he had studiously and cautiously confined his discourse to subjects unconnected with himself; or when compelled to approach his concealment, he had done it in such a way, that though any stranger of penetration might see there was a veil, they could not catch a glimpse beyond it. Cordelia trod the same path, and this Lochcarron, whether he did or did not know her, must have seen very plainly; but there

was this essential difference, Lochcarron seemed resolved to keep his secret at all events—Cordelia was only anxious to hide her's from a timid fear of being the first to disclose it; however as she talked a great deal less than her lord, she certainly had the better chance of escaping detection. Mrs. Brooks had nothing to conceal, and probably was not very anxious to prevent any thing she said from betraying all, and thus being released from restraint she was at liberty to attend to all that her companions said or did: it was scarcely possible to hear them talk without being convinced that they had drank at the same fountain; or to speak without metaphor, that they had imbibed their knowledge from the same source; for Lord Dunotter was so transcendently well-informed, particularly on topics which a comparatively small number have the advantage of hearing discussed, and the coincidence of knowledge in his son and Cordelia was so striking, that it seemed as if one or both must exclaim every moment, "You have had your information from Lord Dunotter."

When Cordelia paused after describing her visit to Orton-Abbey, Lord Lochcarron said, "Then you have been in Buckinghamshire, Mrs. Beaumont;" and his countenance betrayed such visible emotion, that Mrs. Brooks began to think she had either been deceived in supposing he did not know Cordelia, or else that the truth was flashing on his mind; the heart of Cordelia wildly throbbed, her nerves trembled, and the blood receded from her cheek, while in a voice which in gasping, as it were, for firmness, only made agitation the more evident, she replied, "Yes, I have resided a great deal in that county."

A pause of some moments now ensued; Lord Lochcarron seemed abstracted in thought, and Cordelia dared not trust her voice with any addition to the sentence she had uttered; Mrs. Brooks thought matters looked so like a crisis, that she would not say a single word for fear of doing harm in so delicate a juncture; it was past nine o'clock, when Gardiner, Cordelia's new servant, entered, and whispering something in her lady's ear, she instantly rose, and followed her out of the room. Lady Lochcarron, after she dined, had given orders that inquiries should be made at the post-office, whether any letters directed for either Mrs. Brooks or Mrs. Beaumont had been forwarded from Dorchester, as she had requested; this commission was given to the servant of the house, who chose to take her own time in executing it, and as it was Sunday evening, to remain out to the last possible minute: on her return, she put into Gardiner's hands three letters, all superscribed, "For Mrs. Beaumont;" and as Gardiner knew that her lady had been anxiously expecting letters, both that day and the preceding, she thought it would be in the line of her duty not to retard their delivery a moment longer, now that they were in the house, in consequence of which she summoned Cordelia from the room, as has been already related. When struck by the vivid and peculiar expression of Lord Lochcarron's countenance, as he noticed her having been in Buckinghamshire, trembling for what would follow next, and wishing for, yet dreading those explanations which must take place, she hailed this interruption as the most seasonable relief that could have occurred; beyond which she felt deeply anxious to see the contents of the three letters which she was told awaited her; for thinking only of Holleyfield and Lord Dunotter, she imagined him to be very ill, and that these were the messengers of fatal news despatched to her one after the other, and that by mistake or negligence they had been suffered to lie at

Dorchester until their number amounted to three: she took a light, and retiring with them to her own room, hastily glanced her eyes over the superscriptions; her worst fears seemed verified, for none of them were in the writing of Lord Dunotter; one was the hand of Lady Dunotter, another that of Philipson, and the third the well-known characters of Mrs. Emerson; the last she threw to a side for after-perusal, and having, to her great relief, ascertained that neither of the others were sealed with black, pondered a moment which she should read first; nothing surprised, and indeed alarmed her, more than that Lady Dunotter should have been enabled to trace her to Andover, should have written to her, and directed by the name of Beaumont; she was about to tear it open, and end astonishment in certainty, but anxious beyond every thing else to know how Lord Dunotter did, she hastily threw it down, and snatching up that from Philipson, broke the seal, and with mourning, pained, and agitated feelings, read the following lines:

“My honoured Lady,

“It is with the deepest concern I discharge the painful task of acquainting your ladyship, that my Lord Dunotter has made several unsuccessful efforts to reply to your ladyship’s last letter, and has now honoured me with his commands to do it; but I shall not send the letter which I show his lordship, finding it my incumbent yet sad duty to write more at large, and be more explicit than I should presume to be if I did not think my lord in a very weak and declining state; his lordship’s symptoms I think are becoming lethargic, and are I fear increasing; but the two physicians who were in attendance when your ladyship was at Holleyfield are both dismissed, and only Dr. Herbert and a friend of his, neither of whom are in my poor judgment very skilful, are suffered to see my lord; indeed I think since his lordship was in their hands he has altered daily for the worse. Mr. Swinburne, my lord’s worthy chaplain, has been here, but my lady would not permit him to see his lordship, alleging he was too ill; but I am sorry to say, that ill as he is, her ladyship intends he shall travel; for, though it is endeavoured to be kept a secret, I am well informed that preparations are making for a journey to Dunotter Castle, which I suppose is to take place as soon as your ladyship returns; the two doctors are to go with my lord—I cannot help thinking that their medicines are more calculated to increase than cure this lethargic complaint, which I am sure my lord never had any symptoms of before. My young lord has not written to his father: I humbly entreat your ladyship’s excuse for mentioning the subject, but Capt. Thornton has been here these two days, and here have been two proctors of the ecclesiastical court closeted with my lady, Capt. Thornton, and Mr. Crompton; again humbly begging your ladyship’s pardon for the freedom of this letter, I remain with the most profound respect,

Your ladyship’s dutiful servant,

Robert Philipson.”

The date was the only addition to this letter, which in every point of view, but chiefly as it concerned Lord Dunotter, was a source of the most heart-felt affliction to Cordelia: every motive conspired to render it not only proper but absolutely necessary that the contents should, without loss of time, be made known to Lord Lochcarron; the treatment the earl was receiving, and the evident intention of removing him to Scotland, were matters of the first moment for his son to be made acquainted with; and in the event

of his sudden demise, which was too much to be apprehended, every consideration of feeling and decency required that his heir should be upon the spot, not wandering about England, in a way which seemed to have no other end in view than to await the dissolution of his matrimonial tie: if such was indeed his aim, and poor Cordelia shuddered as the thought passed over her mind, one part of the letter now in her hand would give him pleasure; so far at least seemed certain, that whether he did or did not know the person now called Mrs. Beaumont, for the Cordelia Walpole he had married, he at least knew that Cordelia to be in existence, and that her sufferings, which it might naturally be supposed were very great in consequence of his desertion, made no part of his regret, or even, it should seem, of his thoughts; all this, however, did not prevent Cordelia from wishing to be back to the apartment where she had left him; but she thought she would first glance her eye over the countess's letter; she opened it, and found the following lines:

“With shame, with grief, with every thing which parental anxiety, wounded delicacy, feminine dignity, and all that is dear to woman can inspire me with, I take up my pen to address my wandering, degraded child, who is disgracing herself, her talents, her family, and her situation in life, by traversing the country under a feigned name, after a man who does not care a straw for her; who offered her the highest possible injury and insult by running away the very hour he married her; and whose behaviour has been the death of her poor father. Yes, Cordelia, I know from a friend who wishes you I am sorry to say better than you deserve, that he is skulking in the West of England, and that you are following him about in a way that outrages decorum, and scandalizes your rank in life: had you been situated like many unfortunate young people without friends to advise you, there might have been some excuse for your conduct, but now there is none; Capt. Thornton, your nearest relative, so well principled, so high in the world's estimation, so every way competent to compel justice to be done you; Mr. Crompton so admirably skilled in every point of law, your joint guardian, appointed by your excellent father; and myself, the widow of that father, his delegated representative, and constituted by that ought-to-be-respected tie, your fittest adviser, have been all scorned, contemned, set at nothing: you have chosen new directors, who are, I am afraid, of the first order of impropriety, as it respects your subject: your ever-to-be-lamented attachment to that bad young man—the son of my lord, which commenced, I suppose, in the chaise as you journeyed from St. Albans, and which I discovered the very second day of your residence under my roof, induced me to make a thousand sacrifices, to bring about your union with him—I have since had ample room for repentance; but I erred from tenderness of heart, from affection for you; and while reason censures, conscience acquits me. However, I must now, in the quality of your guardian, insist upon your returning immediately home, and ceasing to act *Patient Grizzle*, for which you can now have no excuse: your separation from Lochcarron is advanced in every preliminary step as far as it can be, and the hearing of the cause will come on at an early period of the sittings; Lochcarron has by this time had the proper notices, so that you no longer have even the pretence of any claim upon *him*, but you still have a too powerful one on the heart of her who, grieved as she is, must still subscribe herself your most affectionate mother,

Harriet Dunotter.

Holleyfield, March.”

“My good mamma has been studying declamation from the Morning Post,” though Cordelia, as she finished reading this curious epistle; still she could not help feeling indignant at some parts of its contents, and uneasy at others. As to Lady Dunotter’s mean attempts to pique her pride, and wound her delicacy, she passed them by as unworthy notice; but she felt more than disgusted—horror-struck by the gross duplicity she displayed in ascribing the pains she had taken to bring about a marriage between Lochcarron and Cordelia, to the predilection she had discovered in the latter for the former, when the fact obviously was that her own union with the father, and nothing that concerned the son, constituted her chief motive of action in the affair.

As to the pretence that a friend, zealous for her honour and welfare, had traced her to Andover, she knew it was futile; the Harringtons, who had seen her at Lyme, had given Lady Dunotter the first intelligence; and Crompton, who, in the line of his profession, possessed the means of discovering almost any thing, had, by some of his agents, found out her present abode, and, she doubted not, that of Lord Lochcarron also.

The countess, she observed, entered into no particulars on the subject of Lord Dunotter's health, and never hinted at the projected journey to Scotland; but now that her mind was enlightened on those points by the communications of Philipson, she was at no loss to account for the eagerness Lady Dunotter displayed for her return to Holleyfield. That part of the letter which gave her the most pain, was what her ladyship said about the suit of separation from Lord Lochcarron; but it was a topic on which she could not at present bear to dwell—better, she thought, to lose the painful idea in the smile, the converse, of Lochcarron himself, from whom she had now been absent half an hour; "I will return to my lord," she said mentally, whilst putting up the letters; “for the next hour at least I may enjoy his dear society, if we are never to meet more.”

## CHAPTER V.

WHEN Cordelia quitted the room at the summons of Gardiner, in the way described in the last chapter, after having said in reply to her lord that she had lived much in Buckinghamshire, Lochcarron sat for some moments seemingly abstracted in thought; he then said rather abruptly, and with an emotion which spoke a strong interest in the question; "Pray, Mrs. Brooks, is the husband of your friend one of the Beaumonts of Yorkshire?" Mrs. Brooks saw that the die was cast, and that had concealment been desirable, it was no longer possible; to trifle in a matter of such deep consequence, was not to be thought of; and only studying to combine gentleness with dignity in her answer, and to blend the solemnity which the subject required, with the kindness which might be requisite to re-assure Lochcarron in a moment so trying to his feelings, she replied, "No, sir, his family is of Buckinghamshire." "Indeed!" said Lochcarron, "I do not recollect any family of the name in Bucks;" either forgetting in the impulse of the moment that he was betraying his own intimate acquaintance with the county, or else thinking reserve no longer necessary. "Oh, yes," responded Mrs. Brooks, with the most perfect calmness of manner, "you must know her husband's relations, and, I think, himself; reflect a little—do you know Holleyfield?" "Holleyfield!" he reiterated in wild perturbation, "you know me then!" "Delia does, my Lord!" she replied, with a composure which she strove and struggled as if life had depended upon it to render perfect. "Delia!" he repeated, "gracious heaven! do not torture me! if you have mercy in you do not! who is this lady? is her name really Beaumont?" still calm and unruffled, she firmly replied, "No, my lord! her name is not Beaumont; need I go farther, and say what it ought to be?" The agitation of her auditor told her she had gone far enough; his frame trembled, and his fine face became pale, as if life no longer gave it animation. Mrs. Brooks was now effectually roused from her assumed stoicism, and internally rejoicing that Cordelia was spared this scene, she compelled him to swallow some wine, and said in a tone of cheerfulness, "Come, my lord, exert yourself—you know the truth now!" Lochcarron recovered in a moment; but all the strong impetuosity of his character revived with the energies of his frame, and the powers of his mind: "Oh! merciful heaven!" he exclaimed, "and this is the angel who I have treated so infamously! the truth seemed to flash upon me the moment she mentioned Buckinghamshire: what an infatuated monster have I been! how she must despise me!—but she is changed in every feature—she is considerably taller—still how dull, how stupid have I been! Oh! Mrs. Brooks, how cruel you were not to tell me this morning; where did she discover me?—but she knew me at first."

Mrs. Brooks replied, by putting into his hands the packet of letters, directed in the writing of his father, and by saying, "That, my lord, will explain every thing."

As his eye glanced on the superscription, a sigh that seemed irrepressible burst from his bosom; he broke the seal with convulsive eagerness; at sight of Pringle's letter, and that which himself had written to his father on the night when he so inexcusably abandoned his family and his bride, he seemed to start; when he beheld that written by Miss Borham, a sudden flush came over his cheek; and Mrs. Brooks, who knew enough of these letters, from both Cordelia and Mrs. Emerson, to be enabled to follow the

changes of his countenance as he read, and to conjecture what parts affected him; as he went on with the perusal, which he did very rapidly, his agitation became more violent and visible; and the letter of his father, the contents of which neither Cordelia nor Mrs. Brooks were acquainted with, but which it may be conjectured was one of strong remonstrance and exhortation, seemed to work up his emotion to the very acme; “Oh, what a fate is mine!” he exclaimed, with a stifled groan, “but why do I blame fate for the act of my own folly—it would be well if all connected with me could forget that I was in existence.” Then hastily depositing the letters in his pocket, he snatched his hat from the sofa; his features wore an expression so like despair, that Mrs. Brooks became really alarmed: “You are not going, my lord?” she said, placing her hand on his arm; he released himself from her hold, but detained her hand for a moment, yet the pressure which he gave it was not like that of a friendly good night, it was rather the grasp of agony; and the tone in which he said, “Yes! I go, and no matter where,” corresponded with the action; he then rushed from the room, and flew down stairs, and out of the house at the very moment when Cordelia opened her chamber door to return to the apartment where she had left him, as detailed at the close of the last chapter; but in that moment her eye caught his retreating form, and her ear his flying steps; and in the next she heard the loud sound of the house door as it shut after him: petrified with astonishment, she stood rooted to the spot; but too soon she was recalled to the sad reality of her situation, which rose to her mind painted in its very worst colours; she believed that Mrs. Brooks had revealed the truth, she believed that Lochcarron had not, till that moment, known that in Mrs. Beaumont he beheld his despised, detested wife; and she believed that now when such knowledge was obtruded upon him he had fled from her as he did on the evening of their marriage; and influenced by all these torturing beliefs, she hurried to Mrs. Brooks, and met her at the door of the drawing-room coming in search of her: the countenance of her friend did not tend to dispel her fears; it was not melancholy indeed, but it wore none of that gaiety of expression which Cordelia was well aware would have characterized it had the issue of her embassy been a successful one; “Where is my lord?” she gasped out, in nearly breathless trepidation, “is he gone?” “For a little while he is, my dear,” said Mrs. Brooks; and alarmed by her paleness, and visible agitation, she earnestly entreated her to compose herself. “Oh! do not deceive me, let me know the worst at once!” she exclaimed in accents which bespoke the acutest misery, “am I indeed so hated that he flew out of the house in the way I heard him do the moment he knew it contained his unhappy wife!” “No, no, my dear,” returned her friend, “believe me, you do Lord Lochcarron the highest injustice; so far from hating, he spoke of you in terms of not only respect, but admiration; you must make some allowance for his surprise, and more for the circumstances he is placed in; his father’s letter, whatever might be the contents, seemed to agitate him very much; he merely glanced his eye over the others, but it is natural to suppose he could not bear a witness to his emotions while he read them.” “But he is callous to my sufferings!” said Cordelia, while gathering despondence checked the ray of hope which was beginning to dawn on her soul, when Mrs. Brooks said Lochcarron had mentioned her with tenderness, “if he had the slightest regard for my peace, he could not leave me in this dreadful suspense; oh! tell me every thing he said, how did he begin—or did you introduce the subject?”

Mrs. Brooks in reply, gave her a faithful transcript of all that had passed between herself and Lord Lochcarron, until the time of her putting his father's letters into his hand; and seeing Cordelia somewhat tranquillized, she added, "Indeed, my dear, I think you distress yourself without cause—your lord will return in the morning." "Oh! but he did not say he would return!" replied Cordelia, who clearly saw that Mrs. Brooks threw a veil over the latter part of her conversation with Lord Lochcarron, and that consideration for her peace induced her to conceal some circumstances, and to gloss over others: the conflict became too severe; hope, which had been raised to the highest pinnacle, drooped and fell; and as she contrasted the happiness of the last few hours with the dark despondence of the present moment, she melted to tears, and wept in the bitterness of anguish. "It was not like to last," sobbed out the poor sufferer, "I was too happy." Then again memory gave back the thrilling joy with which, when Lochcarron began to apologize the preceding evening for the alarm his dog had given her, she heard the first sound of his voice; the tender thrill of the heart with which but an hour before she had poured out his tea; and as sigh swelled upon sigh, and her tears chased each other, she felt more forlorn, dejected, and heart-sick, than even in the early period of Lochcarron's first desertion: her eye glanced on the seat where he sat; her bosom seemed to bleed in sorrow; and she felt as if, dearly as she valued those fleeting moments she passed in his society, she had not valued them enough.

Again she reverted to every look which she had flattered herself spoke approval, every word which hope had whispered betrayed dawning tenderness, "All has been fallacious," she sighed mentally; "why was I so infatuated as to follow him hither!" Alas! she might too truly have replied to herself, that

"Love, ev'ry hope can inspire,  
"It banishes wisdom the while,  
"And the lip we are wont to admire  
"Seems for ever adorn'd with a smile."

Mrs. Brooks hung over her, and soothed her with maternal affection; and Cordelia, never insensible to kindness, never deaf to reason, never wanting to herself where exertion or fortitude were requisite, strove, struggled, prayed for composure of spirit, though in her own mind too fatally convinced that she had seen Lochcarron for the last time. "Oh! my dear friend!" she sighed, at the same time producing the letters she had received, "how unfortunate it was that I staid to read these, or at least the one from Lady Dunotter; look at this, and you will see how important it is that Lord Lochcarron should know the contents;" and as she said *Lord Lochcarron* she wept afresh; since their ill-starred union, she had always hitherto said, "My lord," when speaking of him; but now it seemed as if she had no longer a right to call him so; as if, in the words of her mother-in-law's letter, she had indeed "No longer a pretence of any claim upon him."

Mrs. Brooks read both letters with great attention, and was of opinion that their contents ought, without loss of time, to be communicated to Lord Lochcarron; "That which concerns his father's health, and the treatment he is receiving, he certainly ought to know," said Cordelia, "but as to Lady Dunotter's letter, it could give him no new

information, for I think his conduct to-night proves plainly that he no longer considers himself as bound by any tie to me.” “You are the greatest self-tormentor I have ever known, my dear,” said Mrs. Brooks, compelling herself to smile; “you said all along that you were convinced your lord knew you; I asserted the contrary, and the event proved I was right; you believed he would neither keep his morning nor evening appointments to-day; he did both, and I am equally certain that we shall see him again to-morrow morning; but as I am decidedly of opinion that no time ought to be lost, as it respects these letters, I will, if you think it right, go immediately to his lodgings, and explain to him such parts of their contents as it is proper he should know.” “Not for worlds!” said Cordelia, with eager wildness; “no, not for any earthly consideration would I send after Lord Lochcarron to-night! no,” she added after a short pause, “I have made up my mind how to act; we will leave Andover early in the morning, and I shall seal up Philipson’s letter, and give it to Mrs. Fleming to send to his lodgings immediately on our departure; there is nothing in its contents which I can have any objection to his seeing:—but I believe I may spare myself such trouble, for he will have left Andover before me—perhaps he has done so already!”

It was now past ten o’clock, and Mrs. Brooks lost the hope, she had hitherto secretly cherished, that Lochcarron would return; she urged Cordelia to retire to rest, for her wild and anguished look proclaimed how much she required it: “Have you heard from Mrs. Emerson, my dear?” asked Mrs. Brooks, now first noticing the letter which had arrived with the others, and which lay unopened on the table, having been forgotten by Cordelia in the agitation of this dreadful evening; “I have not read it,” she replied; “pray open it, and tell me what she says.” “It is sealed with black,” observed Mrs. Brooks, “our friend was not in mourning when I left Leeds.”

Cordelia did not anticipate any very great addition to her heavy catalogue of sorrow from this circumstance, as it was evidently the writing of Mrs. Emerson, and knew of no other friend in Yorkshire for whom she would grieve much; but she was not quite prepared for the intelligence contained in it, which was as follows:

“I write you a few hasty lines, my dearest Cordelia, to announce to you the death of your aunt Holmes, which was sudden in every respect, excepting that her very advanced age made it an event to be looked for; her demise took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> inst. but I only learned it last night, by a letter from a friend in her neighbourhood, no notice having been sent either to me, or to any other relation; no will, I understand, has been found; and my friend writes me that there is the greatest reason to suspect a fraudulent collusion between her attorney and her favourite servant to embezzle and secrete, not only part of her household goods, but those documents and papers which are necessary to prove the full extent of her property, which is very considerable, in the funds and similar securities, in mortgages, and in cash, notes, and bills, which she was in the weak and censurable practice of keeping by her in the house, but of which, it is to be feared, little will be suffered to see the light; you, my dear, are her undoubted heir-at-law, the nearest of kin she had in the world, and I stand in the next degree of relationship; it is much to be lamented that her sordid, unsocial, jealous habits should have swayed her to keep estranged from all her connexions in the way she did through life, which must have sadly

diminished those comforts she might have enjoyed in the esteem and attentions of her friends: you know, my dear Cordelia, it is the duty of Lady Dunotter, as your guardian (if the task of asserting your rights be not now finally vested where we all wish to see it) to send a legal person immediately to take possession in your name; thirty thousand pounds, which by the lowest computation Mrs. Holmes has died possessed of, is too considerable a fortune to be thrown away for want of proper measures to counteract base and mercenary designs; write to Lord Dunotter, my love, on the subject; I hope and trust that his lordship still retains the power, as I am sure he has the will, to obtain for you such legal advice and ability as will see justice done you. Anxious to save the earliest post, and uncertain where this may reach you, I shall only add my sincerest regards to Mrs. Brooks, and the assurance that I am as ever, my dearest Cordelia, yours with the truest affection,

Matilda Emerson.”

This letter was dated nearly a week back, of course long before Mrs. Emerson could know any thing of Mrs. Brooks’s illness; Cordelia, in the present anguished state of her spirits, listened to the contents with very little emotion. What was accumulation of fortune to her whose brow, after a coronet had impended over it so long, was now doomed only to wear a wreath of care and despondence; whose heart, in the day-spring of existence, when other hearts expand to their kindred ones, was to be lonely and blighted in prospect and in hope; and who was to be held up to public scorn and contempt as a despised, abhorred, repudiated wife: “Oh!” she groaned in the bitterness of her soul, “oh! that I might with this thirty thousand pounds endow some solitary convent, where, without abjuring my faith, I might abjure a world I am weary of, and which when Lord Dunotter leaves it will not contain one being able or willing to protect me from the injustice and oppression of my mother-in-law, who has secured to herself the inheritance which ought to have been mine; and who will leave no means untried to either possess herself of this also, or to compel me to form ties which my heart loathes to think of.”

This was the first time that Mrs. Brooks had heard Cordelia express herself thus of Lady Dunotter, or notice the shameful way in which she had been deprived of her father’s property; and from the hint she now gave of the countess’s wish to unite her to Capt. Thornton, it was evident she considered Lord Lochcarron as lost to her for ever; and indeed from the time which he had now suffered to elapse—considerably above an hour—without either returning or sending any message, she began not only to incline to the same opinion, but, from the wild agitation in which he left her, and the dark expressions he suffered to escape him, to have much worse fears than she imparted to Cordelia; she tried however by every possible means to draw the poor sufferer from herself, and to fix her attention to the letters she had received, particularly that of Mrs. Emerson, and to the prospect of independence which it opened; for she doubted not in the range of her own acquaintance, and that of Mrs. Emerson, to find professional men whose ability and integrity would contend with Lady Dunotter’s wealth and power, and with Mr. Crompton’s arts and chicanery, and eventually compel them to do their ward justice; but the unhappy Cordelia, in her present frame of mind, would find no ray of consolation: it would be harsh to say that she saw every thing through a jaundiced medium; her trials were indeed great, and though there was no reason to suppose that the

heroic firmness and fortitude she had hitherto displayed, would now fail her, still she must have been insensible indeed not to have betrayed, in such a trying moment, how keenly she felt her miseries.

“We must be gone early in the morning,” she said, raising her pale countenance to the view of Mrs. Brooks, and speaking in a tone from which the last note of hope was exiled. “You know it will be a long journey to Holleyfield, my dearest Cordelia,” said her friend, seriously alarmed by the expression of despair which marked her sweet features; “let me implore you to defer talking about going till the morning, and retire to bed now, and endeavour to obtain some rest; I am sure you need it; I still hope and believe that all will yet be well.” “Oh, what can ever be well with me now!” said Cordelia, in accents which might have moved the hardest heart to pity; and sighing heavily, as the clock struck eleven, Mrs. Brooks rang for their attendant, not to assist them in undressing, for she knew that Cordelia would prefer having nobody but themselves, but to say that they should not want her any more that night.

“When I get to Holleyfield,” resumed Cordelia, “it will be only to see my best friend reduced to a state of torpor and inanimation, perhaps of total insensibility, and no longer able to recognise me; to see him, and myself with him, hurried down to Scotland against my will, in the power and at the mercy of Lady Dunotter and her creatures, close by the melancholy spot where Miss Borham is dying, if not already dead;—to——” Mrs. Brooks, fearful that she would quite exhaust herself by enumerating evils not less true than irremediable, earnestly wished for the entrance of Gardiner, who seemed very long in answering her summons; just as poor Cordelia was beginning to specify another of her numerous afflictions, the girl came in, and saying to Mrs. Brooks, “I was half way up stairs to answer the bell, ma’am, when I heard some one inquiring for Mrs. Brooks’s servant, so I went back, and a gentleman gave me this note for you, and said, I must be sure to deliver it immediately;” she put into her hands a sealed paper: Cordelia, between the fear that it contained Lochcarron’s eternal adieu, and the wish—for she durst not suffer it to amount to a hope—that it was the harbinger of his return to her and happiness, could scarcely prevent herself from sinking down from the sofa where she sat; what inclined her the more to apprehend the worst was, that Gardiner had said a gentleman brought the note; this she had no difficulty in supposing to have been Harris; and as Lord Lochcarron himself had said, that he only waited his return to leave Andover, she felt a dread, nearly amounting to a conviction, that he was now going; for there could not, she thought, be a doubt that Harris would bring his lord intelligence both of the state of his father’s health, and of the steps lady Dunotter had taken in the affair of their separation. Mrs. Brooks dismissed Gardiner, saying she would ring when she wanted her; and Cordelia, trembling, unnerved, and almost breathless, yet all eye and all ear, watched the opening of that paper on which hung the last decision of her fate; Mrs. Brooks read as follows:

“Madam,

Aware that your delicacy can appreciate, and your goodness sympathize in my sufferings, deserved as they are, I venture to implore your mediation with that angel so

greatly injured and insulted by my infatuated folly. So deeply conscious of my errors, that my unsteady hand betrays my remorse as I write, I should only trespass on your time to-night to beg that you will exert your merited influence in prevailing with Lady Lochcarron to read—not the extenuation of my fault, I have none to offer—but the record of my deep humiliation and penitence, which I shall devote the first dawn of the morning to write—believe me, madam, with the highest respect,

Your most obedient servant,  
Lohcarron.

Sunday evening, half past ten.”

The uneven characters of this note, did indeed betray the agitation of the hand which had traced them; perhaps that unequivocal proof of the sincerity of her lord's repentance endeared them to Cordelia, who gazed on them until tears springing from a joy, such as had never before swelled her heart, dimmed her beautiful eyes; she then pressed the note to her lips, and sinking on her knees, acknowledged with fervent gratitude the dawn of hope and of happiness which seemed now opening for her. Mrs. Brooks embraced and congratulated her lovely friend; nor did she find the task which Lord Lochcarron had imposed upon her—that of prevailing with Cordelia to receive his letter in the morning—a very arduous one: yet though she felt flattered by the deference Lord Lochcarron had paid to her, and by his having requested her mediation, she could not, in the deep recesses of her own mind, perceive the necessity for it; but thought it might have manifested full as much respect for his wife, and repentance for his errors, if instead of writing, he had thrown himself at once at her feet, acknowledged his faults, and implored her forgiveness.

Cordelia, though she could not be aware of Mrs. Brooks's thoughts, reflected on the same subject, but viewed it in a clearly different light; she drew a happy augury from that seeming delicacy of mind which had induced Lochcarron to seek pardon and reconciliation through the medium of her constituted directress; and neither to approach her without permission, nor by writing at once to herself, subject her to the humiliation of answering his letter, and thus as it were to *invite* a reconciliation between them.

All thoughts of immediately retiring to rest were now laid aside; for as it was undeterminate at what time they could quit Andover, it became requisite that Cordelia should write in reply to Philipson's letter, and despatch it by next morning's post; this task she set to without further delay: after expressing her regret at the unfavourable account he gave of Lord Dunotter's health, and her sense of Philipson's zeal and fidelity, she commissioned him to tell Lord Dunotter, with a gentleness and caution which she left to his own discretion, that she had that day seen Lord Lochcarron, and that they might both be expected at Holleyfield very soon after the receipt of the letter she was then writing; but she warned him to take especial care to guard this intelligence from the knowledge of Lady Dunotter.

Cordelia and Mrs. Brooks held a council of deliberation before this letter was despatched, and both were of opinion, that it said neither too much nor too little; they did

not allow themselves to doubt for a moment that it would be Lord Lochcarron's fixed determination, more especially when made acquainted with the present state of his father, to return immediately home; but at the same time they deemed it by no means prudent to write any particulars of the interviews they had held, and the explanations that had taken place, or to inclose the note which Mrs. Brooks had received from Lord Lochcarron, and trust matters of such momentous importance to a defence so weak and uncertain as the seal of a letter, even though Cordelia should write to Lord Dunotter himself, and inclose the letter in that for Philipson; for considering the present precarious state of the earl's health, no one could calculate upon his being able to read it when it reached Holleyfield, and it might eventually fall into the hands of the very last persons the writer would wish to be made acquainted with such communications: thus then they resolved; the letter to Philipson was finished, and committed to the care of Gardiner, to be put into the office in time to save the post, and between one and two in the morning, Lady Lochcarron and her friend betook themselves to repose.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE light slumbers of Cordelia fled before the elastic spirits of youth, and love, and joy; and when Mrs. Brooks rose about nine, she found her seated at a small casement, which commanded a view of the pleasant environs of Andover, inhaling every scent which breathes of the spring, and listening to every sound which speaks of renovated nature, and the joys which return in the train of summer; only yesterday, and none of these would have touched Cordelia's heart; the smiles of early day, and the promise of the rising year, would alike have passed over her senses without exciting the sensation of a moment: oh, with what knowledge of the human heart does Gray, when lamenting the death of his friend West, exclaim,

“In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,  
“And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire,  
“The birds in vain their amorous descant join,  
“Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.”

As she sat in deep meditation, her memory wandered back to the same period of the preceding year, which was nearly that of her first arrival at Holleyfield; and though her sufferings and trials in that time had been very great, yet how many mercies had she to be thankful for! she now clearly saw the chain, the concatenation of circumstances which had preserved her from becoming—what but for those very sufferings she would inevitably have become—a mere votary of fashion, with all those feelings and principles which refine and dignify our nature; sunk and absorbed in selfishness and an apathetic disregard of every thing but what should conduce to her own pleasure.

Young, lively, and inexperienced, separated from the monotony of her youth, and without a parent to guide and direct her, she well remembered the time when, swayed by the example of the Hootsides, and the rest of Lady Walpole's associates, she had ardently desired to go to Brighton, and to plunge at once into all the gaieties of high life; from this, her attention was only turned by the prospect of a union with Lord Lochcarron; but conscience now reminded her, as it had often done before, that even then she had been too giddy, too thoughtless; more attached to the show, the glitter, the parade of the elevated station in which she seemed destined to move, than to the sacred and important duties which that station involved: by being separated from her new-made lord in the way she was, serious reflection was not only presented to her mind, but, as it were, “Brought home to her business and bosom.” Her recovery from the severe illness consequent on that separation, was another mercy for which she owed gratitude to heaven; and that of Lord Dunotter, by being the occasion of her passing so much of her time with him, had opened and expanded her mind, and given her such just notions of right and wrong, such clear conceptions of real greatness and true humility, and of the exact bounds which the one prescribes and the other requires, that while mentally petitioning for grace that she might through the whole of her future life be enabled to act up to the light which was in her mind, she could lay her hand on her heart and say, with a deep conviction, how truly she was applying the text, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”

In this contemplative mood she was found, as was before said, by Mrs. Brooks; after a little raillery on her early rising, they sat down to a cheerful breakfast, though Cordelia was not without some subjects that pressed heavily on her spirits: Lord Dunotter's evidently approaching dissolution, Lady Dunotter's tyranny, and even her own fate, which until she should again hear from her lord she could not consider as decided, alternately occupied her thoughts; and as the moments wore over, she could not divest herself of pangs of undefinable apprehension, for which her past and recent sufferings certainly presented an excuse; but soon after ten, suspense was once more relieved by the entrance of Gardiner with a letter for Mrs. Brooks; Cordelia started, but her friend, with more calmness, broke the seal, and found it only an envelope, containing a packet addressed to Lady Lochcarron, who read it with more emotion than language can express; it was in these words:

“If the deepest, most genuine, and most unequivocal expressions of penitence could be offered in atonement for voluntary error and intentional offence, oh, in what plenitude should this paper present them to the eyes of my Cordelia—my wife;—for not for the best hopes and the dearest prospects on this side eternity would I yield my right to call her by that endearing title; but no effusion of words, no auricular professions can or ought to extenuate the fault, or deprecate the punishment of the wilful offender; on Mercy alone, working of its own free grace, can he rely, and from you, my beloved, my own Cordelia, so pre-eminently gifted with that and every other angelic attribute, I will venture to implore it. It is my earnest, solemn wish, that for the future, every thought of my bosom should be open to its adored partner; and as it respects the past, I will neither attempt to veil nor gloss over the visionary fallacies, for they do not deserve the name of principles, on which I have acted. You probably know, my love, that the period of life which is of most importance in forming the future character; the years which intervene from thirteen to twenty, were chiefly passed in the society of my aunt Malcolm—the best of women, so far as good-temper, kindness, and purity of intention are implicated, and so indulgent to me, that since I lost my own beloved mother, I have regarded her as a second parent; but—for I have solemnly engaged to reveal truth, and it demands the confession—her modes of thinking are romantic, ideal, and calculated for some utopian region, which we may either suppose existed in the golden age, or does so still in some other planet, but are far unfitted for the constituted order of the globe we inhabit; yet though I am well aware that in suffering the mind to contract those fantastic habits, we enervate and weaken its noblest faculties; obscure the clear light of reason, and that in proportion as they raise and refine our joys, they deepen and depress our sorrows; though the latter, alas! are too frequently destined to preponderate in the scale of life; I must allow that I have ever been the disciple of my aunt, and that I have imbibed her maxims, if not always exactly in letter, at least in spirit; I began by *believing* that the real patriot had neither party-zeal nor animosity, but was solely actuated by the love of his country, and perhaps of the human race; that the true hero never steeped his laurels in blood; that the ardent adventurer who explored other regions, sought only fresh discoveries, and new accessions of knowledge, unswayed by either vanity or self-interest; and that the poet would only light his heavenly lamp to illumine the shrine of virtue; as time and acquaintance with life weakened *belief*, I sheltered myself in the *hope* that *many* such

might be found; and now, when at twenty-three, I am compelled to admit, that men seldom love and follow virtue and glory from abstract motives, I still *wish* that *some* exist who do so. Thus prepared by education and early habit to view matters through a *false*, yet in justice to myself I must add not a *base* medium, I became attached to Caroline Borham; spare me, my Cordelia, on that subject: it was my father's wish to ally me suitably to my rank in life; and here again my perverted judgment interfered to mar my happiness: with high-wrought chimerical notions of mental independence, and of what I conceived to be the unalienable right of every human being, to be left free and unbiassed in the circumstance which most materially concerns his future felicity, I felt indignant that my affections should be bartered with; and though I in part submitted to my father's commands, and in part was swayed by his reasons, I wilfully, pertinaciously, blinded myself to the perfections which, with deep humiliation, I confess myself unworthy to call mine; yet in the bitterness of self-accusation, let me not withhold from myself common justice; had time been allowed me to see you often, to converse with you, to become acquainted with your virtues and your talents, to contemplate you in the hours of domestic retirement, I could not have acted in the unworthy manner I did, because to know without loving you is impossible; but matters were hurried in a way which your better judgment even then condemned. Oh, well do I remember your emphatic words in the plantation at Holleyfield, "Precipitate measures are seldom justified by subsequent circumstances—both reason and propriety demand an acquaintance of much longer date." And now, my Cordelia, with a shame which, even as I write thus alone, dyes my cheek, and a horror which paralyzes my hand, as you will trace in the irregular characters which it forms, I must revert to that letter which I addressed to my father on the evening of our marriage; to affirm most sacredly, that not a line of it was premeditated, but the actual feeling of the moment;—to make my solemn recantation of all the rash and hasty vows and resolves of which it is the record;—and to implore heaven not to impute them to me as sin, but to accept my deep and profound repentance, as it shall be evinced by every action of my future life, so far as respects my Cordelia. In the first flush of my resentment against my father, I hurried over to France, and the more effectually to prevent my family from tracing me, went down to Marseilles; in the vicinity of that city, I lived retired nearly four months, striving to keep resentment alive—I blush to make the confession, but I will compel myself to be candid and sincere—and that I might not be induced to return to my father, who had, I conceived, so deeply injured me, I carefully and cautiously concealed my residence from every one whom I thought could communicate it to him, even at first from my aunt Malcolm; but when I received that letter which (as I learn by the one Mrs. Brooks gave me yesterday, from my father) you, my injured, forgiving angel, caused Mr. Brewster to write, acquainting me with the accident my dear parent had met with, I forgot every thing but his sufferings, and immediately joined a party of friends who were going to Paris, and from thence to England by the way of Dieppe; I landed at Southampton, and determined to remain there under the name of *Campion*, while Harris made inquiries into the actual circumstances of my friends; my aunt he found was in Scotland, otherwise I believe I should have gone to Shellmount-Lodge; but the intelligence he received concerning the state of affairs at Holleyfield was such, that I fear, my Cordelia, I must accuse Mr. Crompton at least, if not Lady Dunotter, of having caused the grossest misrepresentations to be imposed upon me, for what purpose I cannot guess, except to keep me away from Holleyfield; yet if so, I have only

to blame my own folly, which placed me so much in their power; nor let me be suspected of seeking to extenuate my faults by deepening those of others. Harris was told by one of my father's men of law, who affirmed that he had his information from Mr. Crompton, that Lord Dunotter, though he had suffered amputation, was not nearly so ill as was represented; and he added, that not only at the express wish, but by the absolute sanction of Miss Walpole—so he termed you, my Cordelia—the proctors of the ecclesiastical court were proceeding with all possible celerity in the steps prelusive to obtaining a sentence of separation between us; I now know from my father's letter that such was not the case; that unworthy as I was, as I am, or I shall ever be, your transcendant goodness, soaring above the jealous and indignant feelings of our nature, even then imitated celestial goodness, and rather wished the forgiveness than the punishment of an offender; but that I could not know, I dared not expect, and my haughty romantic nature strove to persuade itself it did not desire; yet I solemnly aver that there were hours when I bitterly repented my conduct, and when reason, and dare I say virtue? struggled with pride as it respected you, and with resentment towards my father.

“When Harris returned, and told me what I have said above, I yielded up all thoughts of going to Holleyfield, and debated with myself whether to return to the continent, or to visit my aunt in Scotland; unable to resolve immediately on either, and not choosing to remain long in one place, lest I should be discovered, I quitted Southampton, and went to Poole; where, as my father informs me, I was seen by an old friend of his, who was there on public business; I knew nothing of this, and supposing myself undiscovered, kept journeying about from place to place, until I was imprudent enough to go to a concert at Dorchester, where I met with a gentleman and his sister, whom I had known in France; I now saw that concealment was no longer possible, and decided on quitting Dorchester the next morning, going to Andover, and from thence despatching Harris once more to inquire the state of my father's health, and if I found him really as ill as my fears now began to suggest, I determined to go to Ravenpark, and from thence to write those submissions which, as a son, it was my duty to offer. On your subject, my Cordelia, I could make no decision; my wishes and my hopes were at variance, for I confess the former inclined me to seek reconciliation through the medium of my father; but when I reflected on my past conduct, the latter seemed completely chilled, and I believed I had no alternative but to submit to the fate I had courted, and to wait the promulgation of that sentence which should separate us for ever.

“And now, my Cordelia, I have brought down the manifesto of my errors to that period of Saturday evening, which shall hold the dearest place in my memory to the moment of closing life; that period, when Providence restored to me the inestimable treasure which, ever with deep humility I must acknowledge, I had so ill deserved to be blessed with; changed as you are in stature, voice, and expression of countenance, in every thing but beauty and goodness, how little did I imagine as your lovely hand held my arm, that it was resting in its sacred, devoted, unalienable home: oh! Cordelia, in what a light must I have appeared to you! I dare not—cannot dwell on the idea, for your sake, my adored wife, I cannot—if I were to indulge remorse and retrospection, you would see your Lochcarron the most miserable of men.

“When the Hootsides were at the Star yesterday, I was so solicitous to shun observation, that, knowing me as you did all the while, it must have required even your goodness not to have despised that fear of detection which was the consequence of my own folly: your mention of Lady Caroline Harrington in the course of conversation gave me surprise, and a sort of indefinite confused idea that you knew me; though why I should trace any connexion between your knowledge of the Hootsides and the Dunotter families, I could not explain; but the interesting fact never flashed on my mind, until Mrs. Brooks mentioned Holleyfield in the way which I doubt not she has described to you.

“When made acquainted with the truth, my agitation was so great that I could not bear to see you until I had reasoned myself into composure; on reaching my lodgings, I found Harris just arrived; he has been in the vicinity of Holleyfield, and had an interview with the brother of Philipson, my father’s confidential servant; from him he learns that his lordship is very ill;—oh! my Cordelia, I fear my haughty spirit has carried me too far in his instance also, and that I have been too unrelenting to my parent; you have been to him a consoling angel; with what rapture, in his letter to me, does he describe all the soothing affectionate attentions he has received from his best and dearest child, as he styles you; my soul feels the most ardent, eager desire for my father’s embrace and restored affection; and to hear him bless us together: we must return immediately to Holleyfield; perhaps the pleasure of that return may do more to improve his health than any thing else: within an hour from the date of this, my Cordelia will behold me at her feet, supplicating her forgiveness, and imploring her to believe that the whole of my future life shall be dedicated to prove myself her most tenderly affectionate husband,  
Lohcarron.

Monday, 10 o’clock.”

Though this letter was at best but a very weak, inadequate, and trivial apology for the worse than neglect and unkindness of Lord Lochcarron’s past behaviour, Cordelia read it with tears of joy, and gratitude to heaven, which had wrought so complete a change in the heart of her beloved lord; for sweetly harmonious to her ear as were the compliments of Lochcarron; dearly as sounded the note of praise from him, her keenly discerning mind easily saw that he had early received, and hitherto cherished, a very unfavourable impression of her understanding: one point however gratified her extremely, that was the scrupulous and cautious delicacy with which he avoided, as much as possible, mentioning of Miss Borham, but this she did not notice even to Mrs. Brooks; that lady gave the letter and the letter-writer all due praise, and gaily observed, “Now you see, my dear, I was right; your lord did not know you in the concert-room at Dorchester.” “So it appears,” said Cordelia; adding with a smile, “he certainly never saw me when we were married, for I think it is hardly possible I can be so totally changed;” her countenance then assuming an expression of the deepest pensiveness, she subjoined, “I see he has no idea how very ill his father is—he cherishes hopes of his speedy recovery.” “You must show him Philipson’s letter as soon as you find it convenient this morning, my love,” said Mrs. Brooks, “and that of Lady Dunotter also; it is highly requisite that Lord Lochcarron should immediately be made acquainted with every thing that is transacting at Holleyfield.” “But that strange epistle of Lady Dunotter is so gross,”

returned Cordelia, blushing deeply, "how can I, with any propriety, show it to my lord?" "You now know, my dear Lady Lochcarron," said Mrs. Brooks, "what cruel injustice Lady Dunotter and Mr. Crompton have done you, by proclaiming the falsehood that it was your wish and desire to be separated from Lord Lochcarron; and you would be equally unjust to yourself if you did not draw aside the veil, and show them to your husband in their true colours." "I cannot show him such a letter," said Cordelia, who had been hastily glancing her eye over it, while Mrs. Brooks was speaking; "Then I will," returned the latter, "for see it he must;" "you forget that Captain Thornton is mentioned in it as my chief adviser—gracious heaven! only consider, should my lord resent his interference!" "Your lord is too much of a self-accuser to resent any thing that has been done by him, my dearest Delia," Mrs. Brooks replied; "however," she added, "we can explain the contents of the letter without showing it; he must see both the other letters you received last night, and see them to-day; there is a propriety in it which will not admit of evasion; that of Philipson you can feel no repugnance to showing him yourself, except on the score of giving him pain; still less that from Mrs. Emerson, since it will only enhance your value thirty thousand pounds; and the contents of this," taking the countess's curious letter from the hand of Cordelia, "it shall be my part to communicate to your lord."

Time allowed of little more conversation, for Lord Lochcarron was punctual to the hour he had named in his letter; Mrs. Brooks met him on the staircase; and Gardiner, who was ushering him up, heard his anxious inquiry how Lady Lochcarron did; and Mrs. Brooks, in replying, styled him "My lord;" which furnished subject-matter for curiosity and conjecture below.

When he entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Brooks immediately retired, and closed the door; he threw a wild and anxious glance to the spot where Cordelia, though deeply and violently agitated, had advanced to meet him; and then kneeling before her, he said in a tone which blended the dignity of a man and a husband, with the sincere repentance of a conscious offender, "I have transgressed against you, my Cordelia, beyond all excuse or extenuation; I offer neither, but thus at your feet sue for that pardon which mercy may grant, and that oblivion which goodness like yours can alone extend, and which the truest and most sincere contrition now supplicates."

This was the moment of Cordelia's triumph, the victory of meek endurance, gentleness, and patience; had Lady Lochcarron, as perhaps many ladies in her situation would have done, yielded to the strong feelings of resentment, the first impulse of a wounded and indignant spirit, and sanctioned the measures which were taken to dissolve her marriage, her earthly happiness would have been irretrievably wrecked; she might, it is true, have formed a second union, as eligible and desirable in the points of rank and fortune as her first had seemed; but that fond and ardent glow of affection which had wedded her soul to its kindred one would have been chilled for ever; no future husband would have been Lochcarron; no other voice would have thrilled to the inmost recesses of her bosom, and called up associations of such dear and tender interest, and to no other form or features belonged those lineaments which were entwined with every fibre of her beating heart; she might have shone in the circles of splendour and fashion, blazing in

jewels and arrayed in smiles, but she would have been internally wretched, spiritless, and dejected; and Lochcarron, when he found himself thus thrown from her with contempt—(that such contempt was merited is not meant to be denied)—would have awakened from his fit of stubborn perversity, and, either to show his unconcern, would have plunged into all the evils of foreign dissipation, an alien to his family, and his country deprived of those promising talents with which nature had endowed him; or else he would have wandered about the world that romantic visionary which his education under Lady Charlotte Malcolm had fitted him for. Cordelia's mild and patient forbearance had reversed the picture, and she had now the indescribable joy to contemplate in Lochcarron's deep conviction of his fault, and determined purpose of atonement, the best guarantee of her married happiness, and of glory, dignity, and consequence reflected from the future fame and celebrity of the partner of her life.

Yet no pride, no female caprice, no self-gratulation appeared in either word or look, when she beheld her husband at her feet, and heard him beg for pardon, mercy, and oblivion; she did not mar the heavenly boons by a cold, ungracious, ill-accorded "Rise, my lord, I do forgive you," which many in her situation might, perhaps, have thought more than enough: but she asked her heart what duty required, and it replied, "You supplicate every day to have your offences forgiven as you forgive those of others, and you know the divine injunction to extend that forgiveness, 'Not until seven times, but until seventy times seven;'" and ever in the habit of promptly obeying what duty dictated, she kneeled beside her husband, and said with meek humility, "Mercy and pardon, my dearest Lochcarron, you must not stoop to solicit; in your letter of this morning you have so well accounted for every part of your conduct, and so fully explained every circumstance, that I can only add one observation, and that is but the echo of yours—those who ought to have been the guides of our youth, were too precipitate, and hurried us into a union without giving us time to become acquainted, which is the true source of all the mistakes we have made, and the uneasiness we have endured; then let OBLIVION be indeed the word, and the subject be buried in it for ever;" and with these words, she kindly pressed the hand of Lochcarron between her own.

Charmed, astonished, and delighted by a conduct so noble, so superior to what could have been expected in one so young, he ardently embraced her, and with a fervent assurance that it should be the study of his whole life to deserve her affection, he raised her from the floor, and seated himself by her on the sofa, where, as he held her to his heart, he yielded himself to all the liveliness of youthful spirits and a fine imagination, rising elastic from the pressure of recent affliction; formed innumerable schemes for their future comfort and happiness; planned various excursions, and proposed a thousand modes of employing and improving time.

Cordelia listened with deep and heartfelt delight, to accents and topics she had so long and ardently wished to hear; but she saw that her lord in all his plans pre-supposed the perfect recovery of his father, and themselves acting and journeying as Lord and Lady Lochcarron; she felt deeply for the pain she must inflict by showing him Philipson's letter; but she saw the propriety of not delaying to do so; and taking advantage of a pause in the conversation, she said in a tone of tender sympathy, "You do not know how very ill

your dear father is, my lord;” and taking out the letter, she presented it to him; he perused it with a countenance of deep interest: “Good heavens!” he exclaimed, “they are killing my father, purposely and designedly destroying him; Cordelia, my love, we must be off as soon as possible; Mr. Swinburne denied access to Lord Dunotter! his physicians dismissed! and Captain Thornton and two proctors of the ecclesiastical court closetted with Lady Dunotter and Crompton! it is high time I were at Holleyfield; oh! I could execrate my own infatuation!” Cordelia, not less impatient to return to Lord Dunotter, and anxious at all events that the projected journey to Scotland should be put a final stop to, was expressing her readiness to leave Andover immediately, when Mrs. Brooks came in; Lord Lochcarron presented his hand, and warmly thanked her, both for all the kind offices she had rendered himself, and for her maternal care of Lady Lochcarron through the whole of their excursion; he then reverted to the contents of Philipson’s letter, and indignantly blamed the conduct of Lady Dunotter to her lord; Mrs. Brooks joined in the censure, bluntly adding the information that Lady Lochcarron, together with that letter received one from the countess herself; “Her ladyship,” she added, “scarcely notices the state of your father’s health, my lord; nor does she make any mention of going to Scotland, so that one cannot ascertain whether or not Philipson be correct.” “I hope to ascertain it in person, before many hours have elapsed,” said Lord Lochcarron. “Harris is gone to order a chaise and four to be ready by two; will that be too early, my love?” he asked his lady; “Not at all,” she replied, “I will put on my habit,” and quitting the room, she left her lord and Mrs. Brooks together; it is needless to say that the praises of Cordelia, poured forth in terms of rapture, and re-echoed in expressions of the most affectionate attachment, was a theme not soon dismissed; Mrs. Brooks then reverted once more to Lady Dunotter’s letter, adding, “There is one point in it, my lord, which I think it is proper to mention; her ladyship affirms that a notice from Doctor’s Commons has been served on you—may I take the liberty of asking if such be the fact?” “Never!” he replied, with blended surprise and emotion; “I thought as much,” resumed Mrs. Brooks; “I believed it an unwarranted assertion, but I am convinced it has given Lady Lochcarron some uneasiness.” Then in compassion to the visible distress and self-accusation which his countenance displayed, she prevented his reply by inquiring if Lady Lochcarron had told him that she had lost a relation; he replied in the negative, his looks expressing the surprise he felt; she took Mrs. Emerson’s letter from a drawer in the table, where she had seen Cordelia deposit it, and put it into his hand; great was the variety of conflicting feelings with which he perused it; he could not but remember that Lord Dunotter, when enumerating the advantages which would attend a marriage with Miss Walpole, had mentioned her expectations from a rich aunt; these, it now appeared, were realized, this inheritance added to the ten thousand pounds unconditionally left her by her father, would have been an ample dower on which either to marry or live single, had she been inclined to separate herself from him, through the good offices so kindly and officiously obtruded upon her by Lady Dunotter and Mr. Crompton; and though the heart of Lochcarron bounded with ecstasy that such had not been her choice, he yet felt his own inferiority, or in other words the folly and criminality of his past conduct with tenfold keenness, when thus contrasted with the greatness of mind and exalted affection of Cordelia, who in the dawn of their reconciliation had not chosen to mention a circumstance which threw into the scale of her own consequence, that weight which will always be attendant on wealth; yet desirable as he knew wealth to be in the present state

of his father's affairs, he would, if the matter could have rested in his decision, have preferred taking Cordelia with only the portion he married her; however since fate had determined it otherwise, he rejoiced that she had received his letter of penitence before he could possibly have any knowledge of her accession of fortune; but beyond all, there was one point which gave him the highest pleasure—that passage of Mrs. Emerson's letter which implied, that to see him the undisputed assertor of Cordelia's rights, was the sincere wish of her real friends.

He was meditating on all this with the open letter in his hand, Mrs. Brooks offering no interruption to his thoughts, when Cordelia returned to the room; "You have got Mrs. Emerson's letter I see, my lord," she said in her sweet way; "it will convince you what trouble a wife brings with her; for all that is requisite to be done in that affair, it will now be yours to do."

Lochcarron was at no time a man of many professions; in making his peace with his lady, he had exerted himself to say and write much more than was natural to him, because he thought his past conduct required it; but now he only emphatically replied, with a glance of ardent tenderness, "All that can be done for your interest, my Cordelia, it shall indeed be ever mine to do." "Poor Mrs. Holmes!" resumed Lady Lochcarron, "she was the sister of my maternal grandmother; her peculiarities were very great—so great, indeed, that they nearly proved a bar to all intercourse between her and her relations, none of whom I am sure were ever wanting in intentional respect; I cannot pretend to deplore her death—it would be hypocrisy in me to say I do so; but oh! how painful must be accession of fortune, when it is purchased by the loss of a friend we love!" and as she spake, her eye turned in tender commiseration on her lord, as she reflected that he would soon be called to elevated rank, and to the possession of all that remained of the fortune attached to it, by the death of his sole surviving parent.

## CHAPTER VII.

HARRIS now arrived, to say that the chaise would be there in half an hour, and Mrs. Brooks went to settle matters with Mrs. Fleming; as she did not feel herself called upon to enter into any explanations in which her noble friends were concerned, she only said (in reply to the home-hints of Mrs. Fleming, who was bewildered in a maze of wonderment by the positive assertion of Gardiner, smilingly, though tacitly admitted for truth by Harris, that Mr. Campion and Mrs. Beaumont were Lord and Lady Lochcarron) that his lordship having now finished the business which had detained him first on the continent, and since in that part of England, was now ready to attend his lady home.

Mrs. F. did not appear over well satisfied with this demi-disclosure; but as Mrs. Brooks seemed pertinaciously bent on not being more explicit, she was obliged to take it as it was given; and at all events she had reason to be highly pleased with one circumstance—the generosity with which her bill was paid.

Lady Lochcarron, who greatly preferred both the disposition and qualifications of Gardiner to those of the personal attendant she had left at Holleyfield, offered to take her with her, which was accepted with gratitude and joy.

Harris, after completing some little arrangements for his lord at Andover, was to follow him post, and Gardiner was assigned him as a travelling companion; all these points adjusted, the travellers quitted Andover about two o'clock. In the midst of the delight which Lochcarron's speaking features evinced, in thus carrying home his Cordelia, there might still be traced a great degree of self-accusing humiliation, that she was thus in consequence of his romantic folly compelled to travel without that retinue which her rank demanded; and with an equipage so ill suited to the daughter of a baronet, and the wife of the heir-apparent to an earldom. Cordelia, who had already learned to translate the expression of his countenance, and as she used to do that of her mother-in-law, read his emotion and its cause, and took the most delicate and effectual means to evince her satisfaction by her sweet accommodating manners, and the interest she appeared to take in the different scenes and objects they passed on the road: as to Mrs. Brooks, now that she saw her beloved Cordelia restored to peace and happiness, she yielded herself to all the native cheerfulness of her disposition, and all the habitual activity and observation of her inquiring mind; during the whole of their excursion, subjects of historical and local interest had continually been recurring on which she wished for information, and she now found Lord Lochcarron highly qualified to give it, and truly desirous of obliging and giving her pleasure: they chatted on with little cessation; there was not a town in the counties of Dorset and Hants but they traced back its history and antiquities to the earliest known period; told which were Roman stations; when and how they were besieged in the civil wars; what battles were fought in their vicinities; what monarchs granted their charters and privileges; who were their benefactors; and what eminent characters were natives of them; Cordelia listened to all these details with not only pleasure, but with something approaching to delight; she might have remembered—for the reader will—how irksome and uninteresting she had thought

such conversation, when it passed between Mrs. Brooks and Mr. Jefferson at the inn at Poole, and how cordially she wished the latter any where but in the place where she was doomed to see and hear him; a proof, if proof could be needed in a case so common and obvious, that our opinions more frequently take their colour from our feelings than our reason.

They took a slight dinner at Henley, where their attendants came up with them, and then pursued their journey with fresh horses; but the evening had closed in by the time they entered Buckinghamshire; a sad variety of painful feelings pressed on Cordelia's heart; the season of the year was exactly that at which she first came to Holleyfield; it was too dark to distinguish objects; but the hour and the party she travelled with, Lord Lochcarron by her side, and Mrs. Brooks the substitute of Mrs. Emerson, made her almost fancy time restored again; the idea of the robber rose to her imagination with a force which made the whole scene seem present; the report of the pistol by which the ruffian fell, and the danger which threatened death to that bosom on which she now leaned, altogether rushed on her memory, and affected her so powerfully, that she could not suppress a deep and heavy sigh; Lochcarron tenderly apprehensive that the fatigue of the journey was too much for her frame, pressed her to his heart, and endeavoured to reanimate her with the certainty that it would soon be terminated; she strove to exert herself and be cheerful, but it was an effort beyond her, for when she tried to abstract her mind from the subject which occupied it, in the next moment it reverted to the melancholy situation of Lord Dunotter; the approaching interview between the Countess and Lord Lochcarron, which she had no reason to think would be a very cordial one on either side; and to the distressing probability that Capt. Thornton might be still at Holleyfield, and should Lord Lochcarron resent his interference in their affairs, who could calculate on the consequences?

When they had passed the last mile of the public road, and entered on the domain of Holleyfield, Lord Lochcarron submitted it to the judgment of his lady, whether it would be proper to send Harris on to announce their approach; Cordelia thought not, from apprehension that any one might, either through thoughtlessness or design, incautiously, and without due preparation, apprise Lord Dunotter of his son's arrival; Lochcarron acquiesced in the propriety of her decision: they passed the porter's lodge, drove up the avenue, round the sweep, and were at the door before time was allowed for Lady Dunotter to hear what, Cordelia was well aware, would give her no pleasure. The train of servants at Holleyfield was numerous, far beyond any necessity. Lady Walpole, in her widowed state, had a very large establishment; and Lord Dunotter, so long resident abroad, and so high in public estimation, had always, as may readily be supposed, a very splendid retinue; the chief part of these now thronged the entrance hall, gazing with delighted interest on Lord Lochcarron and his lovely wife, as he conducted her into the house; Mrs. Greville, the old housekeeper, one of Cordelia's most attached friends, who knew so well what had been her sufferings during the illness consequent on Lochcarron's desertion, soon appeared, and welcomed her return, and that of Lord Lochcarron, to Holleyfield, with feelings approaching to rapture; she led the way to an apartment on the left of the hall, to which a variety of refreshments were quickly brought; Lady Lochcarron as she approached it, observed that every place was thronged with boxes and

packages, from which she was at no loss to understand that all was prepared for the journey to Dunotter castle, and that the countess had only waited her return, which her ladyship no doubt supposed would be immediate in consequence of the command to that effect which her letter contained; and Cordelia, as she in silence viewed those preparations, mentally blessed that providence which had now given her a protector from her tyranny: her first anxious inquiry of Mrs. Greville was after the state of Lord Dunotter's health, and Lochcarron himself seemed to wait in breathless solicitude for her answer; the shake of the head, and the mournful countenance, too certainly proclaimed what her words confirmed, that the earl was very ill. Lord Lochcarron in extreme emotion went to his father's apartments to converse with Philipson, who, Mrs. Greville said, never quitted his lord, but evinced a fidelity and attachment nearly unparalleled. Cordelia, when her lord was gone, made it her first inquiry whether Capt. Thornton had left Holleyfield, and to her great relief found he had; she was then enabled to sit down with more composure, and had just taken off her hat when Lady Dunotter entered. As her letter had so severely censured Cordelia for seeking reconciliation with Lord Lochcarron, now when that reconciliation was effected, she certainly had every reason to expect chiding and displeasure, if not downright anger: but no such thing; the countess met her with the fervent embrace of maternal fondness, and the exclamation of "My Cordelia, my beloved child! to see you thus returned with your husband, confirmed in your rank, restored to peace, is a happiness, which in the midst of my deep overwhelming affliction consoles me, and gives me a degree of comfort which I cannot express;—where is your lord?" "Gone to inquire after his father, mamma." A well-measured sigh, or rather groan, of anguish, a shrug of the shoulder, and an eye thrown up to heaven, prefaced the exclamation of "Oh, Cordelia! how ill his dear father is! I am persuaded," and she spoke with strong emphasis, "that Lochcarron's eccentric conduct, and not the accident he met with, is the real cause of his—" here her ladyship either was, or seemed to be, interrupted by her tears; but soon recovering herself, she added, "that conviction and the deep, the keen, the acute anguish it gave me to behold his sufferings, prompted me to write to you in the terms I did the other day; I feared, as did all your friends, certainly with every show of reason, that Lochcarron had entirely deserted you; and I could not stand self-acquitted in the capacity of your delegated parent and guardian, if I permitted you to act in a way I conceived to be degrading—" Cordelia, totally unable in the present state of her spirits, to support this hypocritical harangue, which she perceived was only intended by Lady Dunotter to display excuses for her own behaviour, said, "I entreat your ladyship's pardon for the interruption, but my lord has accounted to me most satisfactorily for every part of his conduct; and I was honoured with so large a portion of my father's confidence previously to my going down to Dorsetshire, that I cannot be at any loss to know in what degree he approved or disapproved of the way in which my lord acted." She then introduced Mrs. Brooks as the friend of Mrs. Emerson, adding with conciliating sweetness, "and who as your representative, my dear mamma, has been my maternal monitress through the whole of our journey."

Lady Dunotter courtied low, and had recourse to all those powers of insinuation which length of time and frequent practice had reduced to a system; indeed it was one of her established maxims, to flatter and ingratiate herself with every stranger who came in her way, and in this she generally succeeded, though a more intimate acquaintance drew

aside the veil, and dissolved the charm; her address to Mrs. Brooks was a rare and happy combination of attractive grace, overawing dignity, and winning condescension; in short, it was exactly calculated for the meridian of Mrs. Brooks's character, as the countess pictured it to herself—a lady educated in the country, too much a novice to possess any great depth of penetration, and of course not qualified to see, or artful enough to parry, the masked battery she immediately opened, to discover how long Cordelia and her lord had been reconciled; but she erred in her estimate of Mrs. Brooks's understanding: she clearly developed her designs, and took care that she should be no wiser for any of her inquiries, whether made in the shape of direct questions or otherwise. The countess was beginning to find she could learn nothing, when Lord Lochcarron returned to the apartment; Lady Dunotter started from her seat, and presented her hand, exclaiming, "My dear Alexander! I cannot express the pleasure, the delight, the consolation, the happiness it is to me to see you thus together; oh! had your dear father but been able to participate in my joy!" then as if overcome with the subject, she faltered, paused, and sobbed; Lochcarron saluted her; he was grave, depressed, and seemed as if he had shed tears during his interview with Philipson, "My father is very ill, I understand," he said with a deep sigh; the countess waved her head; Lochcarron resumed with evident emotion, "Why, why were my father's medical advisers changed? why were Mr. C. who amputated his arm, and the other gentlemen from town superseded in their attendance?" "For reasons grounded in the highest wisdom, my dear Alexander," said Lady Dunotter, with prompt impressiveness; "their prescriptions were of no efficacy; your dear father's health continued to decline; doctor Herbert, so eminent in skill, so extensive in practice, a man of so enlarged a mind, so comprehensive a judgment—he saw their treatment of the case was wrong, and at once as a friend and a professional man, warned me of it; alarmed, distressed, worn down with anguish, no one to advise me, you absent, I knew not where, I deeply felt my obligation to Mr. Herbert; in short all—every thing has been done—" she paused a moment, and Lochcarron subjoined, "I conceive not; Mr. Swinburne, my father's old respected friend, why was he refused access to him? I was absent, it is true, but he was infinitely better qualified to advise;—however no further time shall be lost, I have sent express for the first advice in London, and also for Mr. Malcolm and Mr. Swinburne." The countess now felt herself compelled to say, that the physicians had strongly advised a journey to Dunotter castle, the earl's native air, and that she had only waited Cordelia's return to set off. "I cannot think it proper, or even practicable," said Lochcarron; "at all events we shall have able advice to-morrow; I have had a few minutes conversation just now with Mr. Herbert; I do not doubt his skill on many occasions, but he does not appear to me to have by any means a clear conception of what ought to be done in my father's case." Then wishing by all means to avoid the appearance of purposely seeking any disagreement with his father's wife, and too deeply conscious how faulty his own conduct had been, to notice the pains taken by both Lady Dunotter and Mr. Crompton (as he stated in his letter to his lady) to induce him to believe that Lord Dunotter was by no means so ill as he was in reality, and to bar all reconciliation between him and Cordelia, he turned the discourse to another subject; and as he would not risk disturbing the earl until Philipson should in the morning gradually prepare him for the interview, the party soon separated for the night.

## CHAPTER VIII.

LADY Dunotter, for reasons already detailed, had not only wished that her son and daughter might never be reconciled, but had done all in her power to prevent such reconciliation from taking place; but now that it *had* taken place, the position of affairs was totally altered, and it became her part to conciliate Lord Lochcarron by every possible means; she had reason to apprehend that Sir Charles Walpole's will would not stand the test of inquiry, at least an inquiry backed by the power and influence which a young earl of Dunotter would possess; while there existed a probability that Lochcarron intended to forswear his matrimonial vows, she deemed it her best interest, as the guardian of Cordelia, to promote the suit of Capt. Thornton, who thus bound by obligation, would never dispute with her the will of Sir Charles Walpole; but now that affairs had assumed so different a position, Thornton ceased to be any thing, and Lord and Lady Lochcarron became every thing to her; she chose to honour them with her presence at breakfast, and had recourse to all her modes of insinuation; to Cordelia, she appeared to all intents and purposes the kind affectionate mother, tender of her health, and solicitous for her happiness: to Lord Lochcarron she seemed to look up as the head of the family, to rely on him as her adviser and protector; well aware that woman, by this tacit homage, seldom fails to make her way to the heart of man: while towards Mrs. Brooks, there was at once that marked respect which is perhaps the most refined species of flattery that can be practised by a superior to an inferior, and a demeanor modelled to express the most cordial and friendly regard.

From the hour of the preceding day in which Lord Dunotter saw the note which Cordelia had written from Andover, in reply to Philipson's letter, he expressed so much impatience for the arrival of his children, that it visibly affected his weakened frame; when Lord Lochcarron visited his apartments, he had just lain down for the night, and though his attendants ascertained that he did not sleep, his son would on no account permit him to be disturbed; but at a proper time in the morning, Philipson, with all due preparatory caution, told him that Lord and Lady Lochcarron were come.

The way to their interview thus cleared, Lochcarron soon knelt by the couch of his father, acknowledged his errors, and implored forgiveness; the earl was deeply and severely agitated by many conflicting passions: joy was certainly the predominant one; for the first, it may be said the only, wish of his heart was fulfilled in the re-union of Lochcarron and Cordelia; but there was likewise so great a degree of shame, so much of a painful consciousness, that his own faults had laid the foundation for those of his son, and so deep a feeling of remorse for those faults, consequent on the near prospect of the grave, that his feeble strength and exhausted spirits sunk under the accumulation; that powerful, though misapplied, force and energy which would once have supported the haughty earl of Dunotter beneath the severest tortures of self-accusation were gone; weak in body and enervated in mind, he could no longer contend with his feelings; but while embracing his son, and listening to his rapturous praises of Cordelia, he fainted on his bosom; Lochcarron in wild alarm called assistance; the earl was soon restored, but continued so ill for some hours, that he could not receive his daughter: when he was

again able to sit up, his first inquiry was for her; their meeting was tender beyond all description; but Cordelia (as she contemplated his altered features and wasted frame, and yet more, his mighty mind, now, if the mode of expression may be allowed, evidently in ruins) experienced that acme, that quintessence of human misery—the certainty that the eternal fiat has gone forth against the being we affectionately love, that the day—the hour is numbered and fast approaching, when the tone of that voice we delighted to hear will cease for ever, and those eyes which were wont to be fixed on us in joy and kindness, shall sleep in the silent grave.

The earl fervently blessed his children, and offered up a pious prayer for their happiness; he could not support the exertion of conversing long together; but Lord Lochcarron scarcely ever quitted him, and Cordelia passed the chief part of her time in his apartment. Lady Dunotter also, though her attentions had not hitherto been very marked, was now his constant nurse; it was observed that her ladyship had displayed a much stronger attachment to Sir Charles Walpole during his illness, than to Lord Dunotter under the same circumstances; but they who knew her easily traced the cause: Sir Charles had it in his power to do—what he really did—bequeath her by will the chief part of his large fortune; but a very early period of her union with Lord Dunotter had given her to see that from him she needed not to expect any such concession; by far the greatest part of his landed property was entailed on his son, and what remained had been deeply mortgaged, until redeemed since his marriage, with part of Sir Charles Walpole's hoarded wealth; not an acre of this, she had every reason to believe, would he alienate from Cordelia and her descendants; yet to try if he could be so induced had been a chief motive for the projected journey to Scotland; and as to the personal property of value, such as plate and pictures, the whole of it, she was convinced, would go as heir-looms with the entail; of course she had nothing to look for beyond her jointure, and it would indeed be a departure from worldly wisdom, to waste time and assiduity where no recompence could be looked for: but now the case was altered; it became of the highest importance to cultivate the friendship of Lord Lochcarron; and to do this, no way seemed so effectual as to evince attachment to his parent.

One of the first points on which Lochcarron consulted his father, when alone with him, was the position in which his lady stood as heir-at-law to her deceased aunt; Lord Dunotter, as may readily be supposed, expressed himself highly pleased that his children would have this accession to their fortune at their outset in life; he counselled his son to write immediately to Mr. Brewster, his principal agent, who was then in Scotland, to send a person to Mrs. Holmes's late residence, with legal qualifications and proper instructions to take measures on the part of Lady Lochcarron.

The course of the day brought the medical gentlemen who had been sent for to Holleyfield; Lord Lochcarron himself then dismissed Mr. Herbert and his colleague from all personal attendance on his father; Dr. B. and Mr. C. only tacitly blamed the conduct of their predecessors by ordering a total change in the medicine, and of course in the regimen of their noble patient; Mr. Swinburne also complied with Lord Lochcarron's request to pay that visit to his patron which, but for Lady Dunotter's interference, he would have done sooner; and Mr. Malcolm arrived the following day; these were both

men of eminent piety; the former distinguished by vast acquirements, and the latter by peculiar tenderness of heart and delicacy of mind. From their conversation, the divine and exalted views they opened, Lord Dunotter derived inexpressible comfort; he had in his early youth been religiously educated by a truly excellent mother; but that school of the world in which all his later years were passed, had dimmed the fine glow of devotional feeling, and with decayed piety came its invariable concomitants—relaxed moral habits; the good seed which had been sown in his heart had long lain dormant; but now at this awful crisis, he felt awakened compunction, and an earnest desire to propitiate an offended Deity; he had much to repent of, but he had once been habituated to the exercises of religion, and his soul seemed to hail their revival from its inmost recesses; most true is the observation of Mr. Addison, that “It is of the last importance, to season the passions of a child with devotion, which seldom dies in a mind that has received an early tincture of it. Though it may seem extinguished for a while by the cares of the world, the heats of youth, or the allurements of vice, it generally breaks out, and discovers itself again, as soon as discretion, consideration, age, or misfortunes have brought the man to himself.”

Ill as Lord Dunotter was, he expressed a desire to see Mrs. Brooks, and to thank her for her maternal care of Lady Lochcarron; she cheerfully obeyed his request to pay him a visit, and on a personal acquaintance, he found the partial friendship with which his son and daughter regarded her amply justified.

The projected journey to Scotland was entirely a scheme of Lady Dunotter, Crompton, and Herbert, planned to answer purposes of the former; nor had its necessity ever been urged to the earl, except in distant and ambiguous hints, when it met his decided disapprobation; and it certainly had been intended to take advantage of that disposition to lethargy, to which the symptoms of his disorder seemed to point (to which his medical treatment had too probably contributed) and to have set off immediately on Cordelia’s return; for they made themselves certain that she would arrive unaccompanied by her lord; but, as it happens to many profound schemers, they were out of their policy for once.

Lord and Lady Lochcarron had been three or four days at Holleyfield, when one morning Philipson sent to request permission to speak a few words to the latter: Lord Lochcarron and Mr. Malcolm she knew were gone to Ravenpark; and her heart beat in wild alarm, lest the earl’s complaints had taken some sudden and fatal termination; she gave orders to admit Philipson immediately, and he soon relieved her fears on that score, by an assurance that Lord Dunotter was not worse than usual, yet he hesitated to explain his errand; Cordelia, translating his look that he wished to be alone with her, dismissed Gardiner; he then drew a letter from his pocket, sealed with black wax, and directed to the earl of Dunotter; the impression on the seal and the hand both told her it was from Lady Charlotte Malcolm: “I entreat your ladyship’s pardon for the liberty I am taking,” he said with great modesty of manner, “but this letter, sealed with black, is from Lady Charlotte Malcolm: I believe my lord daily expects to hear of Miss Borham’s death; and perhaps it may not be right to give his lordship this without some preparation; if I place it with the letters of compliments and business, my Lord Lochcarron will open it, for my

lord always requests my young lord to look into all such; so I thought it would be better to ask your ladyship.”—Cordelia, well aware that Philipson could be no stranger to the attachment which both father and son had felt for Miss Borham, was sensibly struck with the delicacy of mind which had dictated this mode of conduct; she took the letter, and assured him she would carry it herself to Lord Dunotter; at the same time giving him to understand, in terms of condescending kindness, how truly she appreciated his considerate attention to his lord.

She then went to the earl’s apartment, and after she had, with her wonted soothing gentleness, charmed away, as far as was possible, the lassitude of illness, she said, “This letter from Scotland is for your lordship: an event which we have long looked for, has, I imagine, taken place:” then without any of those trite additions applicable to the subject which might have too forcibly reminded the suffering invalid of his own approaching fate, she put the letter into his hand, saying, she had promised to walk in the plantation with Lady Dunotter and Mrs. Brooks, but would come back to him when their stroll was over; she did not stay long; it was highly proper that she should again see the earl before the return of Lord Lochcarron, for every consideration demanded that no conversation on the subject of Miss Borham should pass between the father and son; and she wished to repossess herself of Lady Charlotte’s letter before she again saw her lord, aware that another task remained for her to perform; Lord Dunotter seemed perfectly composed, but his countenance was even paler than usual, and Cordelia thought she could read the traces of a recent tear; “Poor Caroline is gone at last, my Cordelia!” he said, as he placed the open letter in her hand; “she is gone to that blessed state, where ‘sorrow and sighing shall flee away;’ and I trust I shall soon follow her,” he added in a low subdued voice. Cordelia, as she heard this sad sentence, and read the letter, tried in vain to stay her tears; yet all the particulars it gave of Miss Borham were comprised in a few words; Lady Charlotte said: “Poor Caroline Borham was released from her earthly sufferings at nine on Sunday evening; her frame was so entirely exhausted, that her departure was easy; but her mind retained its powers to the last; sweet saint! the remembrance of her piety, and of her sincere contrition for her errors, if such they could be called, will remain with me always.” The remainder of the letter related to other matters; Lady Charlotte, like the rest of Lord Dunotter’s friends, had been imposed upon with a belief that he was not nearly so ill as he was in reality; her ladyship added in the conclusion, “I shall leave Scotland in about a fortnight, and will then visit you, my dear brother, at Holleyfield and hope to find my wayward nephew returned to his home and to his duty.” Some expressions were added, highly flattering to Cordelia, inasmuch as they evinced the tender partiality with which Lord Dunotter had mentioned her in his letters to his sister: she strove to be composed: “This letter,” she said, “have I your lordship’s permission to retain it, and to —” she paused; but the earl comprehended the refined principle on which she acted, “Do as your exalted mind shall dictate, my inestimable Cordelia,” he said; “you are Alexander’s guardian angel; leave me now, my love, for the present.”

Mr. Swinburne entered just then, and Lady Lochcarron retired to her own apartment, where she was visited by her lord, at his return from his ride; Cordelia felt most reluctant to damp the vivacity with which he read and commented on a new publication he found on the table; but it must be—laying the letter on the book he held in

his hand, and gently kissing his cheek, as if to assure him of her sympathy, she quitted the room, and retired to an inner one; in little more than a quarter of an hour he came to her, and embracing her tenderly, said, "Oh! my Cordelia, how shall I ever deserve thus to possess an excellence, in which I did not believe existed in human nature:—my poor father—have you seen him, my love?" "I have been with him a long time," she replied; "he is composed, and not worse than usual, but does not wish to see us just now;" then putting her hand in his, and affectionately pressing it, she added, "now, let us go to dinner."

When that was finished, Lord Lochcarron visited his father; but the name of Miss Borham was never mentioned between them; there was, however, a singular coincidence, which, though merely accidental, made some impression on Cordelia—the day and even hour of Miss Borham's death, were exactly those in which Lochcarron was discovering his wife in a supposed Mrs. Beaumont; and avowing to Mrs. Brooks his sincere remorse for the injustice he had hitherto done her.

For about a fortnight after the change had been made in Lord Dunotter's medical advisers, his lordship's complaints exhibited symptoms of amendment, and his children, who were most really and deeply interested about him, flattered themselves that his recovery was possible; but at the period just named, he became suddenly and alarmingly worse; the physicians held consultations, and most probably tried other medicines without success, for it soon became evident that they had no hopes.

The spring now bloomed in all its wonted beauty; but everything at Holleyfield was despondency and gloom; yet the earl had intervals of ease, when his faculties were clear and unclouded, and then he would converse with his son, in somewhat of his former energetic way; he gave him many precepts for the conduct of his future life, adapted, it may well be presumed, to a character which he had studied with the anxiety of a parent, and the acuteness of a man of the world; "I earnestly exhort you, my dear Alexander," he said, "now at your outset in life to establish yourself in the public estimation as a consistent nobleman; do not adopt the chimerical notion that you can either be a useful servant of your sovereign, or an efficient friend to your country, without professing yourself of some political party; trust my experience, that in such a case neutrality is impracticable; your own single unassisted efforts cannot new model the settled axioms and opinions of mankind; you must bend to them, if you would be good either to yourself or others: I never knew one of those theory-mongers who pretended to be too wise, too conscientious, or too independent to think and act like other people, who was of any use either to himself or his fellow-creatures; depend upon it, if you are once known to profess visionary abstracted principles, you will find few to coalesce with you whose friendship and co-operation are worth having; who would not shun a man who evidently thinks his head more enlightened, and his heart more pure, than those of any one else? no, Lochcarron, choose your own party, make your own election, and once made, adhere to it firmly; a wavering unsettled politician cannot be said to fulfil the divine precept, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works;' for he tacitly tells the world that his light has never been able to show him the difference between truth and falsehood. I confess I wish you to walk in the same path your father has trod before you,

because it is that in which, for a long series of years at least, our family has distinguished itself; but I only say I wish it—if you prefer the opposite side, declare for it in the first flush of your political career; and do not think, my dear Alexander, that when you have espoused your party all is done: when I now look back on my public life, and take a retrospective view of my own course of action, and that of my contemporaries, I see the causes of our success, or our failure, so plainly, that I can only wonder the consequences could then be hid from our eyes; a moment given to reflection will convince you that the glory of a nobleman may be drawn from three different sources, and that he only can be called truly glorious who unites them all: I have known celebrated characters—and so I dare say, in your short experience, have you also, whose note of praise is sounded to the skies, but who yet owe it all to some brilliant action, the result of great talents; or perhaps, to use a homely phrase, of great good luck, while yet they possess not one amiable quality to conciliate affection, or one solid virtue to claim reverence. Again, Alexander, I have seen others, who to the most splendid qualifications of mind, added great integrity of character; but were yet cold, stern, severe, and forbidding in their manners; these men might be applauded, feared, and even respected, but were never loved.

“There still remains another description of persons who are candidates for public favour, men on whom nature has bestowed great abilities, and who have acquired a polished insinuating gentleness of behaviour, which delights and captivates those they converse with, but are totally destitute of moral worth; profligate in their lives, and dangerous by the example they set; these are often the idols of the multitude, basking in the full blaze of popularity, but never acquiring the esteem, or possessing the confidence, of those whose confidence and esteem are of any value. In short, Alexander, I now receive it as a sacred solemn truth, that fame, unaccompanied by respect and esteem, is evanescent and unsubstantial; and as what we cannot esteem we soon cease to respect, the inference I would draw, is, that to secure popular celebrity, esteem, and respect, is the ultimatum of human policy, and the certain path to worldly wealth and earthly honours; born to fill an exalted station in life, your talents and education will, if it is not entirely your own fault, most certainly secure the first; and united as you are to one of the finest women in England—I might add in Europe—you have the best possible guarantee for that parity of conduct, and that internal happiness, that sunshine of the soul, which diffuses itself to all within the sphere of its influence.

“How often, during the early part of my illness, when your angelic wife was exerting her gentle efforts to sooth my sufferings, have I earnestly prayed to be permitted to witness your re-union, and my prayers have been heard: oh! Alexander, she was surely never equalled! her’s is exactly that soft and attractive description of female beauty which is calculated to charm in a partner for life; yet is it the least of her perfections; she possesses a delicacy of mind and a purity of heart, which I have never found to exist in any other human being—I am far from supposing that they never *did* exist—I only say *I* never witnessed them to such an extent; her understanding and talents are very great—I should have no hesitation in saying too great for her sex, were they not shaded by a gentleness and modesty so charming, that no one would wish them less to lose so fine a

contrast; and beyond all, she is gifted with two qualities which, in my opinion, constitute the very perfection of female character—she is superior to art, and above trifles.

“There are yet a few more points on which I wish to address you, my dear Alexander: in your intercourse with your friends—I include both personal and political ones—avoid as much as possible all those narrow and petty jealousies which are the result of suspicion, misconstruction, actions viewed in an erroneous light, or words taken in a wrong sense; never complain of one friend to another, unless clearly satisfied his conduct is such that you can no longer keep terms with him; carefully guard all your friendship from wearing out, for friendship may be compared to those master-pieces of art which increase in value, in proportion to their antiquity.

“Yet in giving you this advice, suffer me to caution you never to be governed or influenced by the opinions of others, when they oppose the dictates of your own judgment; hear the counsel of your friends, but decide for yourself; and having formed your decision, make a rule to give the friends whose esteem you value ostensible motives for your actions; for if left to conjecture as to the principles on which you act, they may, when they hear you attacked, defend you on wrong grounds, and thus, with the best intentions in the world, do you infinitely more harm than good.

“There is one point of caution which I will add concerning those persons you may have intercourse with; all men have their weak sides, and however self-love may assist to veil them, no man can be wholly unacquainted with the vulnerable parts of his own character; but settle it as a maxim never to trust him who trumpets forth his own imperfections; such a mode of conduct always gives room to question either his principles or his understanding; if he unblushingly accuses himself of vices, recoil from his profligacy, or suspect his hypocrisy, which is most probably wearing the appearance of one fault, to mask the reality of another; and if he lays to his own charge light foibles, and what are absurdly termed *amiable weaknesses*, set him down for a vain coxcomb, who is making an ostentatious display of seeming candour, and setting traps for compliments.”

Such was the substance of many conversations which Lord Dunotter held with his son; whether the principles contained in them were those which himself had always acted upon in public life, he best knew; those were only concerns of temporal interest; on others, of infinitely more importance, he often conversed with Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Malcolm, and feelingly regretted that he had through life been in many respects too nominally a Christian: but wide is the difference of mental vision in high health, and on the verge of the grave; the cares, the pleasures, and the honours of life then pass away like dreams and shadows, and nothing of retrospect remains, on which hope or comfort may rest, unless conformity to the precepts of the gospel can be traced there.

The marriage of Lord and Lady Dunotter had been one of convenience on the part of the earl, and of ambition on that of the countess; love was entirely out of the question, and esteem nearly so; her ladyship was too selfish to regard any human being but herself; and though Lord Dunotter's feelings were not quite so concentrated, his lady was not an

object who it could possibly be supposed might attract them; hence through their short union they had been a civil but not a cordial couple; and though Lady Dunotter had certainly been less attentive to her lord during his illness, than both duty and humanity demanded, he was now so sincerely in earnest to forgive every one, that he set aside all remembrance of such neglect; and more than once hinted to his son his wish that when he should be no more, he should continue in perfect friendship with Lady Dunotter, both as the widow of his own and his wife's father; and not by any quarrel or litigation expose family affairs to public discussion; to which Lord Lochcarron solemnly and readily engaged himself.

Pringle, the uncle of Miss Borham, still remained in Buckingham gaol; for Lord Dunotter had been so much exasperated by the thought that his crafty letter was the efficient cause of Lord Lochcarron's withdrawing himself from his bride and his family, that he would listen to no terms of arrangement for the release of the wretched culprit; but he now sanctioned his lawyer to set him at liberty, upon condition that he should immediately quit the kingdom; kindly solicitous to spare his beloved son the pain of taking any harsh measures with so near a relative of the woman he had so fondly loved.

## CHAPTER IX.

LORD Dunotter lived about six weeks after the return of Lord and Lady Lochcarron; for the last few days he was in a state of lethargic torpor, and in that state he expired: when the arrow of death takes a lingering aim, it blunts the acuteness of the survivor's anguish. Lady Dunotter, as she had done on the demise of her first husband, indulged her sorrow apart and alone; but the young earl and countess wept together; Lord Dunotter's grief for the loss of his parent was deep and sincere; and Cordelia mourned for him with filial tenderness.

Time, the best and surest physician for the ills of the heart, soothed their sorrows, and left only a painful yet pleasing remembrance, mingled with pious resignation.

The whole unentailed property belonging to the earl, he bequeathed unconditionally to his daughter-in-law, certainly as a mark of respect, though at the same time it was only an act of strict justice, for it had been mortgaged as deeply as it could be, and redeemed after he married Lady Walpole, with part of the money he then came into possession of; there was no bequest to his lady excepting a highly valuable and curious ring, and some other articles, which though they could not add much to her already immense fortune, evinced a degree of respect which might lead the world to suppose they had been a much more happy and attached couple than they were in reality.

Legacies to Mr. Malcolm, Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Brewster, and some other friends, and one thousand pounds to Philipson, were the only additional contents of the will worth noticing.

In the affair of Mrs. Holmes's property, the prompt and decisive measures taken by the gentleman employed, were attended with every desirable effect; her delinquent servants were compelled to yield up their embezzlements; and when the whole was secured to Lady Dunotter, it amounted to even more than Mrs. Emerson had stated in her letter, after every deduction made for actual loss or expense.

In the course of the summer, the fine old mansion of Ravenpark underwent every repair and decoration that fashion, elegance, and convenience could dictate; in the disposition of the grounds, Lord Dunotter combined the fine taste of his charming countess, and his own excellent judgment, with such rare and happy effect, that Ravenpark is never mentioned otherwise than in the class of the first situations in Great-Britain; but when they visited Cottingham park, and saw the fountain playing with such force and effect from the mouth of the great marble dragon, Sir Roger's delectable purchase at Orton-Abbey, Cordelia laughingly told her lord, that unless they could procure the original Sphynx of Egypt, their seat must yield the palm of attractive wonder to that of the worthy baronet.

The countess dowager set up her head-quarters in the splendid mansion of Holleyfield, where she maintains a retinue evidently intended to answer the purposes of

parade, since it cannot be utility in her unconnected state; with the first change of her sables, she emerged from all the gloom of widowhood, and entered into fresh schemes of aggrandizement with all the original spirit of her character; her breach with her old associate Lady Hootside is healed, and they are now, to all appearance at least, better friends than ever; innumerable are the plans they have formed to gain the ascendancy over the young representatives of their respective families; but in this laudable struggle for sway, neither of them, it is whispered, makes the smallest progress; Lady Dunotter has the worst of the contest, for her ladyship finds the firm, collected, repelling, yet conciliating dignity of her son-in-law, and the mild uniform elegance of Cordelia so difficult to make war upon, that she can neither gain the conquest, nor with any grace complain of her failure; while on the part of Lady Hootside, the facetious yet systematic mischief of the young earl, and the vindictive perversity of his lady, look so like aggression on their side, that her acts of hostility seem justifiable reprisals.

Poor Lady Dunotter has another cause for disquiet, to remedy which, her fertile brain is ever at work; the unfortunate accident which ultimately caused her lord's death happened before her presentation at court had taken place, and the consequence was, it never took place at all; now it is not to be thought of, for whoever heard of the presentation of a countess dowager? the Marquis of Belford had lately lost his wife, and her ladyship thinks it very likely that she may, in due time, be constituted successor to the deceased marchioness, only it happens very unfortunately that no one else, not even the noble marquis himself, can see the smallest probability of any such event taking place.

Just as little likelihood does the countess herself see of Mr. Crompton's hopes on her subject being realized; she well knew that the lawyer had, on the death of Sir Charles Walpole, flattered himself with a notion that she would marry him; and though he had seen his expectations defeated by her union with Lord Dunotter, they revived again when the accident the earl met with threatened his life; but though it had suited her ladyship's plans, when those plans sought the separation of Lochcarron and Cordelia, to lull Crompton into a belief that he would succeed in his wishes, she was in reality as far from an intention of uniting herself to a commoner, with a fortune greatly inferior to her own, as of bestowing herself and her possessions on the Dey of Algiers; still it suits both their interest to remain on the same terms of apparent cordiality, which they have done for such a length of time, and Mr. Crompton continues at the head of her ladyship's legal department, as Mr. Herbert does at that of her medical one: they have left no methods unattempted to secure to themselves the same places of trust under the young earl; but they are not exactly the persons to whose uncontrolled management his lordship would choose to confide either his property or his health.

Lady Charlotte Malcolm was detained in Scotland longer than she expected, and had not the melancholy consolation of a last interview with her beloved brother; but time has ameliorated her sorrow, and she now, with a feeling of laudable pride, sees her accomplished nephew at the head of their ancient and noble house, while (if the old English mode of expression may sanction the use of the word in such a sense) she may be said to worship Cordelia.

Capt. Thornton paid an early visit of condolence at Holleyfield, where the graceful and handsome manner in which he indirectly apologized for his past interference in the concerns of his fair cousin, and the blended dignity and the humility with which Lord Dunotter tacitly acknowledged the justness of such interference, laid the foundation of a sincere and lasting friendship between them: he is recently married to a very amiable lady of a noble Scotch family, and they are amongst the most respected guests which the hospitable portals of Ravenpark receive.

Mr. and Lady Caroline Harrington are also of the number of Lord and Lady Dunotter's select friends; aided by the judicious advice of her excellent husband, Lady Caroline has quite new-modelled her character; divested of that affectation which in early life obscured its gentleness and goodness; she is now a very amiable woman, and more generally esteemed and respected than any other member of her family; her sister, Lady Melissa Mannark, is Lady Melissa Mannark still, both in name and attributes; her memory is more defective than ever, deplorably so indeed, as she has forgot that she is the eldest of her mother's children, and always speaks of herself as the junior of both Lord Hootside and Lady Caroline.

Lady Dunotter, ever gratefully remnescent that to the invaluable moral precepts impressed on her ductile mind by Mrs. Emerson, she owes that rectitude of principle which has led to such happy results, is earnestly desirous that in the elevated station of life she is called to fill, she may yet have the benefit of her excellent judgment and experience; and Mrs. Emerson, most tenderly attached to the pupil of her care and affections, has made arrangements for passing at least one half of the year beneath the roof of Lord Dunotter. As to Mrs. Brooks, she has set up her rest there; Cordelia cannot be without her society and counsel; and it so happens that there is such a fellow-feeling between the earl and herself, the dawn of which first became visible on the journey up from Andover, when they were occupied with such a learned antiquarian dissertation, that they never seem happier than when poring together over Grose or Camden.

Philipson attended the remains of his respected and lamented lord to Dunotter castle; and after the interment had taken place, passed some time with his friends in the vicinity of Aberdeen, of which place his mother was a native; here he became acquainted with a very respectable woman, a widow of some fortune, and after a short courtship they were married.

Lord and Lady Dunotter, feeling that they owed him gratitude for his faithful services to their late parent, doubled the legacy which the earl bequeathed to him, and continue from time to time to add testimonies of their regard, so that he is now in easy circumstances, and enjoys the esteem of all who know him.

It may fairly be questioned whether any nobleman of the present day is a more highly respected candidate for both popular favour and private estimation than the earl of Dunotter; after the death of his father, he conversed a great deal with men of piety, learning, and moral worth; and read, reflected, and studied much more deeply than he had ever done before; too well aware that a stigma attaches to his conduct in the early part of

his marriage, he is most anxiously solicitous to wash it away, by not resting short of excellence in every point of his character; habituated as an only child, and heir to the family honours, to act as he pleased, without being amenable to control, he was, it must be conceded, very headstrong and impetuous; conscious that this disposition of mind led to the abandonment of his bride, and that such an act could only be construed into deep contempt of the most solemn laws, divine and human, he has so sedulously watched for, and curbed every little ebullition of haughtiness and self-will in his temper, that he has brought it to be perfectly under the dominion of reason in every instance, and on every occasion.

In the senate he is distinguished for depth of reasoning, and brilliancy of eloquence; in the intercourses of public and social life, by plain, dignified, elegant manners; easiness of access, and inflexible integrity and justice; and in the habits of private life by undeviating prudence and temperance.

In portraying the character of his lovely countess, what higher note of praise can be sounded than to say that she is still HERSELF? that no example drawn from elevated rank, no temptation incident to fashionable life, no human weakness on her own part, no artful sophistry on that of others, has ever been able to draw her aside from that sacred maxim in which she intrenched herself, "Never to do evil that good may come;" that as it is the constant aim of Lord Dunotter to attain excellence, so it is that of his lady to fulfil her duty, that the same meek submissive sweetness which was her distinguishing characteristic before she married, still accompanies her every action; and that one of the most striking features of her disposition is that lofty superiority to all that is puerile, trifling, and worthless, for which she was so highly extolled by the discriminating judgment of the late Lord Dunotter.

The elevated sphere of society in which she now moves, has of course brought with it associated duties and incumbent modes of conduct in which, as in every thing else, she shines resplendent; when presented at court, and blazing the meteor of the circle, her dignity, modesty, affability and discretion, delighted the wise, charmed the good, and repelled the presumptuous; when admired as the model of elegance, and looked up to as the standard of fashion, she is most solicitously scrupulous not to set any example in dress or manners which may possibly injure public morals, or militate against true taste; her three several establishments at Dunotter castle, Ravenpark, and Portman-square, are under such a system of graceful economy, that while plenty and hospitality are the order of every day, and magnificence of all proper occasions, waste and prodigality are never permitted beneath those roofs.

Fully aware of the divine and important truth, that "Where much is given, much will be required," and impressed with a deep conviction of the powerful efficacy which her influence may have on her neighbours, tenants, and dependents, she neither squanders her time and wealth in wandering needlessly from home to see sights, nor in a protracted residence amid the dissipations of London, Bath, or Brighton; when Lord Dunotter's political avocations might admit of their retiring to one of their seats, it is there, in the sacred circles of home, that the earl and countess of Dunotter are seen in their purest

lustre and highest glory; the munificent patrons and encouragers of all that can promote piety, virtue, and industry; and the bright examples of connubial harmony, faith, and affection.

FINIS.

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