

THE  
CORINNA OF ENGLAND.  
VOL. II.

THE  
CORINNA OF ENGLAND,  
AND  
A HEROINE IN THE SHADE;  
A MODERN ROMANCE,  
BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WINTER IN BATH,"  
"THE BANKS OF THE WYE," "THE WOMAN OF  
COLOUR," "LIGHT AND SHADE," &c. &c.  
VOL. II

"What Caricatura is in painting," says Fielding, "Burlesque is in writing; and in the same manner the comic writer and painter correlate to each other. And here I shall observe, that as in the former the painter seems to have the advantage, so it is in the latter infinitely on the side of the writer: for the monstrous is much easier to paint than describe, and the ridiculous to describe than paint. And though, perhaps, this latter species doth not in either science so strongly affect and agitate the muscles as the other: yet it will be owned, I believe, that a more rational and useful pleasure arises to us from it."

LIFE OF HOGARTH.

"When I see such games  
"Play'd by the creatures of a pow'r, who swears  
"That he will judge the earth, and call the fool  
"To a sharp reck'ning that has liv'd in vain;  
"And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,  
"And prove it in th' infallible result  
"So hollow and so false; I feel my heart  
"Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,  
"If this be learning, most of all deceived.

"Great crimes alarm the conscience, but she sleeps  
"While thoughtful man is plausibly amus'd.  
"Defend me, therefore, Common Sense, say I,  
"From reveries so airy, from the toil  
"Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
"And growing old in drawing nothing up!" COWPER.

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THE  
CORINNA OF ENGLAND  
CHAPTER XIV.

"Happy, beyond the common condition of her  
sex, is she who has found a friend indeed; open  
hearted, yet discreet; generally fervent, yet steady;  
thoroughly virtuous, but not severe; wise and  
cheerful at the same time!" FORDYCE.

THE absence of Montgomery was deeply felt by Mary Cuthbert; but she received some consolation by a visit from Miss Davenport, who came, unannounced, into the little parlour where she was sitting at work; and taking out her netting, remained with her two hours. Mary was delighted with her new acquaintance. She found her a most sensible and well-informed young woman; her manners entirely divested of self-importance and conceit; her heart teeming with benevolence and charity towards the whole world. No romantic effusions; no bombastic exaggerations, fell from the lips of Miss Davenport; her words came from the heart; they did not evaporate in expressions; and her conversation was marked by sincerity, yet a sincerity chastened from offending by the obligingness of her manner.

Miss Moreton was studying with the Chevalier, and, as she was never interrupted from pursuing her interesting researches by morning visitors, Mary had the pleasure of an unrestrained conversation with Miss Davenport, who pressed her to spend the ensuing day in the same friendly manner, at Heathfield Cottage.

Mary said, "she would gladly avail herself of the invitation, if Miss Moreton would permit it."

"She will permit it, I am confident," said Miss Davenport; "you must not be too obedient

at first, my dear; but I am sure you will be allowed to visit me, for I have never been one of Miss Moreton's rivals in any shape. She has always been very civil to me; but we think so differently on most subjects, and our pursuits are so dissimilar, that you cannot wonder at our not being very intimate."

Heathfield Cottage was about two miles from the Attic Villa. Mr. Davenport, the father of the young lady, who inhabited it, had been a respectable manufacturer in the city of Coventry; and, having acquired a fortune to satisfy his moderate wishes, he purchased Heathfield Cottage, with twenty acres of land, and retired from business with his infant daughter.

Mr. Davenport was a man of strict principles, both of morality and religion. He had a taste for reading; which, though it had lain dormant for many years, whilst engaged in the active scenes of life, was now suffered to revive again. His choice of books was judicious. He carefully discarded all which were calculated to dazzle by their brilliancy, and to blind the judgment; and he selected those alone which referred every thing to the *laws of right* and the *precepts of morality*, which were deducible from the Christian religion.

Such being the bent of his mind, no wonder that his daughter's was formed in the same model; and that she caught those truths, which came mended from the tongue of her father.\*

Gentle and affectionate in her disposition, with an accomplished and a perspicuous mind, and a prepossessing person, Miss Davenport was left sole mistress of herself and a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds, at the early age of nineteen. Her conduct in this situation had been strictly prudent and highly meritorious. No ostentation, no show, was observable in her mansion; the chaste simplicity of her manners gave the tone to her whole household, and decorum and propriety reigned throughout.—Prudent and economical in her own expences, the charities of Miss Davenport were diffuse and extensive; and though, in accomplishing some of her plans of benevolence, she was obliged to appear to the world in her true character of benefactress to her fellow-creatures; yet where it lay in her power, she scrupulously adhered to the scripture injunction of not letting her right hand know what her left had done.

Conforming to the customs of the world as far as they were reconcileable with her duty, there was nothing precise or eccentric in her manners or conversation. There was not indeed as much gaiety, as in most young women; but this was caused by some foregoing circumstances; for, previous to these, Clara Davenport had been the gayest of the gay!

Mr. Davenport had been dead three years. When Miss Davenport's independence was first made public, many had been the pretenders to her hand; but a Captain Walsingham, then quartered in the city of Coventry with his regiment, was the only one who had any chance of success. To the rest Miss Davenport speedily gave a polite but gentle refusal; and her mildness and modesty secured her their friendship and esteem, even while she put an end to the hopes of the lover.

Lesly Walsingham was handsome in person; elegant and insinuating in his manners; he possessed a genteel fortune; his family was superior to Miss Davenport's; and his character was held in general estimation by the world: and that world universally applauded the choice of Clara, when they saw Captain Walsingham received at Heathfield Cottage as an accepted lover.

Miss Davenport was of a tender and affectionate disposition; and the preference which she felt for Walsingham was very great. In his turn he was deeply in love, and thought that in the whole created universe there was not such another amiable being as his Clara.

At the end of twelve months, after the death of her father, Miss Davenport had promised to become his wife. The marriage settlements were made; the day was fixed; and the lover was

all hilarity and transport. Thrown off his guard by the impetuous emotions of happiness which he felt, he gave the reins to his sportive imagination; and, conversing amongst a party assembled at the Cottage, let fall some expressions which Miss Davenport thought wholly irreconcilable with a belief in the Christian revelation.

She had too much prudent consideration to notice this at the moment; but Walsingham's words had impressed her mind, and stirred up an uneasy sensation there, which an explanation with her lover only could remove. That explanation came! Too sincere, and too candid to dissemble or conceal his sentiments; what was the horror of the amiable Clara, when she found that the object of her fondest affections was a professed disciple of the new school of philosophy, and a disbeliever of Christianity!

To cease to love Lesly Walsingham, was impossible. To make him her convert, was now the sanguine wish of her heart; but, obstinate in error, proud in fancied knowledge and sceptical opinions, he resisted all her fond, her pious arguments, and received her last farewell!

It was only the comforts of religion, and the sweet consciousness of having acted with propriety, which could have reconciled Miss Davenport to this great disappointment. She nobly took upon herself the stigma of the world, declaring that she had broken off the match; and not assigning the reason, that the character of Walsingham might receive no injury from the discovery of his sentiments, and hoping that the day would yet come, which would behold him abjure his dangerous errors. Walsingham was honest enough to give the real reason of their separation.

But few people credited his story, as the "*religious* creed of a *husband* was of so little consequence in the *matrimonial connection*, that all the ladies *were sure* this was only the *ostensible* cause of Miss Davenport, and supposed that she had seen somebody whom she liked better, which was a very fair reason for breaking off with the Captain."

But time rolling on, and no new lover being received at Heathfield Cottage, it was at length decreed, *nem. con.* that "Miss Davenport loved her liberty and independence, and meant to live and die in single blessedness!"

And this did appear very likely; for Miss Davenport would never suffer a declaration of love since she had discarded Captain Walsingham. Disappointed, so cruelly disappointed in the object of her youthful affections, her heart did not seem inclined to "own another lord." And, in the active duties of life, in extensive benevolence, in social and frequent intercourse with a few estimable friends, she evinced that disappointment had not soured her disposition, although it had obscured her prospects.

Mrs. Deborah Moreton had always been on intimate terms with the Davenport family; and whilst she loved her niece from a feeling of relative affinity, her affection for Miss Davenport flowed spontaneously from the heart. She would have given worlds (had those been in her power) to have seen Clarissa Moreton such as Clara Davenport; but, unfortunately, she mistook the way of bringing this about, for, by praising and applauding Miss Davenport to her niece, by repeating anecdotes of her charity and active usefulness, of her propriety of conduct, and economical arrangements, Miss Moreton took yet greater distaste to what she called, "the sober regulations of common, *every day* kinds;" and she always acted in direct opposition to Miss Davenport, merely because her conduct was praised by her aunt Deborah, and held up to her for a model.

When she occasionally met Miss Davenport, she was barely civil to her; never entered into any thing like conversation, from an idea that Miss Davenport could only have an inferior

understanding, and the most precise and confined notions; while, in her turn, Miss Davenport felt a timidity and reserve, foreign to her character, when in the presence of Miss Moreton.

Miss Moreton made no objection to Mary Cuthbert's spending the day at Heathfield Cottage; and she was received with the most unaffected hospitality and pleasure by Miss Davenport. Insensibly the hours stole away in the pleasant and ingenuous interchange of corresponding sentiments and remarks. With an improved and highly cultivated mind, Miss Davenport was yet fond of those works of ingenuity and industry, which peculiarly belong to females; and while Miss Moreton disdained to handle a needle, lest she should depart from the dignity of her character, and rank only with a *mechanical sempstress*, Miss Davenport was always engaged in some piece of useful or entertaining work of invention or fancy; and carefully concealed that she had pursuits of a higher nature from the eye of common inquiry, lest she should be thought to have strayed from the path prescribed to her sex.

It was impossible to find a pleasanter companion than Clara Davenport; yet it was not her wit, it was not her vivacity, it was not her language, which was her secret charm; but it was the indescribable sweetness of her manner, and the good humour and candour with which she conversed on every subject!

The new friends separated, with a promise of meeting frequently. "I do not ask you to neglect Miss Moreton on my account, my dear girl," said Miss Davenport; "but recollect that when she is pursuing those pleasures and pursuits which are independent of you, if you find your time go slowly by, or that your spirits droop, you will always find a welcome reception here; and that you will afford me great pleasure by your company."

"On Miss Moreton's account I am rejoiced at your residence with her; but, prone to be selfish, on my own I am still more so. I regret the peculiarities of Miss Moreton's character; but I should hope, that they will never lead her to do any thing flagrantly wrong; and, harsh and censorious as the world is in most cases inclined to be, it yet makes great allowances for a young woman placed in her independent situation. Wealth has a great influence on public opinion; and when youth and beauty are its concomitants, the judgment receives a stronger bias in its favour."

Mary Cuthbert returned to the Villa, her heart filled with sentiments of respect and affection towards Miss Davenport, and with gratitude towards Mrs. Deborah Moreton, for promoting their intimacy.

## CHAP. XV.

"A few only can be expected to act alone,

"But millions are formed to follow others."

## SAUNTERER.

NOTHING very material occurred at the Attic Villa for some weeks, except the secession of Walwyn, who, *maugre* his love-lorn Romeos, and his gay Lotharios, was obliged to leave the fair lady of his adoration, and to join his regiment, which was ordered to the barracks, at Horsham in Sussex; and the absence of his superior officer rendered his immediate return absolutely necessary.

With many a sigh, a vow, and pathetic adieu, he left the Villa, and the entire field open to the Chevalier; who luckily had, at this period, a most skilful auxiliary in the shape of a French novel of wonderful celebrity, which had recently issued from the press.

Germ intended to hunt butterflies at the Attic Villa, while there was one left on the wing; as he liked the dainties of Miss Moreton's table much better than the *dry collections* which he should most probably "pick clean teeth" over, when he returned to his lodgings in town.

Copy, too, had one particular month for going to the metropolis; for, while the town was empty, he should have no one to sit to him; and he wisely thought, that he might search very far before he could meet with such good and such cheap accommodations as the Attic Villa; so he kept his ground.

But the painter and the philosopher were too much engrossed by their separate pursuits to interrupt the Sentimentalists; and Mary Cuthbert was suffered to run about the house like a domestic animal, or to visit Heathfield Cottage as frequently as she pleased; for Miss Moreton and the Chevalier D'Aubert could not be interrupted, whilst they were studying *Corinna*! It was the very work to suit the taste of Miss Moreton; for though she had neither judgment or knowledge to appreciate the beauty or the truth of the historical remarks, in which Madam Stael has certainly displayed great genius and learning; yet her imagination was enamoured of the character of Corinna. The lengths which she ran in pursuit of Lord Nelville; the fervid passion which she felt for him; her rejection of all common forms; her enthusiastic disposition; and her extemporising faculty, were all beheld by Miss Moreton as the reflected image of her own character. And, when she had read one or two of the improvisatories of Corinna; when the Chevalier, observing her flushing cheek and flashing eye, had remarked the similarity of her genius to that of Madam Stael's heroine, and, turning to her, had called her "The Corinna of England," the sickly brain of Miss Moreton became inflamed, and she resolved to imitate the inimitable Corinna, whenever opportunities should offer of discovering her genius to the world, or her passion to Montgomery.

Yes, reader! *he* was still the Lord Nelville of her imagination. And whilst, from his sombre turn of mind, the pensive cast of his sallow countenance, and his gloomy and reserved turn, the Chevalier had guessed that in Lord Nelville's character Miss Moreton could have seen his image alone; *she* was busily personifying the handsome and interesting Montgomery, and fancying him as suffering from the pangs of absence, and the uncertainty of his passion, as the English nobleman had done.

Mean while, Mary Cuthbert was in utter ignorance of all that was passing in the mind of her protectress; but, from her heightened intimacy with the Chevalier, she feared that he was trying to secure her hand and fortune, and to procure a divorce from his wife.

As this was only conjecture, Mary did not mention her fears, even to Miss Davenport, with whom her intimacy increased, and in whose society she passed many happy hours. She sometimes thought of Montgomery as of a dear friend; whom it was not likely that she should soon meet again; and, whilst she heaved a sigh at the idea, a pleasurable sensation stole over her soul at the recollection of his amiable and endearing qualities.

Mrs. Deborah Moreton frequently spent a day at the Attic Villa, and loudly spoke her mind on the subject of the Chevalier. Seeing all the rest discarded, and that his intimacy continued, she naturally concluded that he was the gentleman most in favour with her niece; and she loudly inveighed against the criminality of continuing such a disgraceful intimacy with a *married man, and a Frenchman!*

The lectures of her aunt had no power over the inflexible Corinna (as she now called herself), except in making her more attentive; and, to all appearance, more fond of the Chevalier. *His* vanity was easily persuaded to believe what he hoped; and, if he could once bring Miss Moreton to consent to give him her hand, a sum of money would soon silence the clamour of his

*ci-devant* wife, and send her back to her own country again.

It has been said, that Miss Moreton's heart had never heaved a sigh but for Montgomery. But the Chevalier's society was pleasing and delightful to her; and, while he marked the course of sentimental reading, and, with melting pathos, turned each flowing period, he "*taught the young idea how to shoot*;" but its attacks were always levelled towards Montgomery!

Miss Moreton's model, the heroine on whose character her own was from henceforth to rest, in order to acquire that acmé of popularity and éclat, which it so eminently deserved, the Corinna of Italy, had encouraged the addresses of numerous admirers, and had apparently favoured the pretensions of a *train* of lovers. The Count, the Marquis, were only the prototypes of the Chevalier and of Walwyn. And how would the whole soul of Montgomery dissolve in the full tide of rapture, when he should discover that the soft throbs of affection had been reserved for him alone; when he should find that the *Corinna* of England—she, whose talents, and whose virtues had been borne on the *blast of Fame* through the extended dominions of Great Britain; that *she* had elected *him*, to be the partner of her fortune and of her glory!

In such wild and chimerical rhapsodies did the visionary enthusiast indulge herself, and pant for the opportunities of discovering her talent as an *Improvvisatore* (though the musical abilities of *Corinna*, not keeping pace with her oratorical powers, perhaps this title was somewhat improperly applied). She practised attitudes and extemporaneous declamation in her private theatre, with no spectator or hearer save the designing Chevalier, who was frequently melted into *tears* at her sublime effusions; and flattered her with such skill, that he led her to believe, that her talent for extemporary composition surpassed any thing which he had ever heard of!

Mary Cuthbert became every day more enamoured of Miss Davenport's character; and, if ever she suffered a wish for affluence to escape her contented bosom, it was when she beheld the noble use which her new friend made of riches. She was the patroness of a Sunday School, and likewise of a School of Industry; and, while she daily visited her little cheerful scholars in the week, to inspect their improvement, she never neglected on a Sunday to inquire into their still more momentous improvement in religious knowledge. And all this was done with so unconscious an air, with such benignity of manner, and with so little display, that she appeared as if she had been receiving obligations herself, instead of conferring them.

The poor carpenter's family had found a friend in this general benefactress. She had procured the best medical assistance for the invalid, who was daily mending, and was supplied with wholesome and nutritious diet from Heathfield Cottage. Two of the children had been taken into Miss Davenport's schools; and the poor woman received at proper periods those helps which her distress required.

Thus were a whole family lightened of its cares, and relieved from the extreme of penury, by the timely intervention of a person, with ability to relieve, and a heart ready to succour; and whilst Sally Jervis poured out blessings on the head of Miss Davenport, she forgot not the kind visit, and the heart-consoling sympathy of the amiable Miss Cuthbert, who had helped according to her ability, and whose pious wishes had been so amply fulfilled.

Pleased as was Mrs. Deborah Moreton at the intimacy which now subsisted between Miss Davenport and Mary Cuthbert, she yet had not the satisfaction of seeing, that it had any influence on the conduct of her niece; and though the frequent visits of Miss Davenport to the Attic Villa might deceive the world into a belief of her being on close terms of amity with Miss Moreton, and be advantageous to her in this respect, by giving her the credit of a respectable acquaintance; yet in no other shape did it appear likely to benefit.

Many a useless walk did Mrs. Deborah Moreton take to the Attic Villa, "to tell a piece of her mind;" but the Chevalier was still in high favour with the lady of the mansion; *Corinna* in her hand and in her head, and the unconscious Montgomery in her heart!

The absence of this favoured object of her affections; her entire ignorance concerning him, would have given *any other* heroine great anxiety; but Miss Moreton had not a doubt with regard to a reciprocity of sentiment existing between them; and her busy memory was constantly employed in retracing his behaviour at the Villa; and at every succeeding retrospection, she became more secure of the heart of her lover, while her vivid imagination as frequently pourtrayed his hours of solitary meditation; his empassioned addresses *to the Moon*; and the tumultuous emotions of his soul, at hearing the fame of her genius and her talent sounded in his ears; and the exstatic rapture which would be his, when, raised to the very acmé of popularity, at once admired and adored, she should resign the glorious independence of her situation to make his fortune, and to become his wife.

From these delightful ruminations, Miss Moreton often tore herself to take lessons from the Chevalier on Sentiment and Platonism, and to improvisatore before him. The Chevalier declared, that she every day exceeded herself, and that she wanted only a proper opportunity of displaying her wonderful talent to be followed as a prodigy!

Corinna (as she now always termed herself) was now become the complete victim of vanity; and, seeing every thing that she said or did through this medium, she believed all the D'Aubert told her, and much more which was whispered in her ear by this subtle deceiver. She was ever on the watch for an opportunity of displaying herself; her action daily became more strong and more animated on the most common subjects; her countenance daily acquired a more daring character (if such an expression be allowable in describing a female), and her manners became more decided and more energetic.

Such was the *Corinna of England*, when accident first gave her an opportunity of displaying her oratorical powers in public and to a very numerous audience.

#### CHAP. XVI.

"Bare was her throbbing bosom to the gale:

"Loose flow'd her tresses." THOMSON.

IT was a fine morning, when Miss Moreton mentioned her intention of taking a drive in the barouche; and, contrary to her general custom, she invited Mary Cuthbert and Mr. Germ to accompany her, as well as the Chevalier D'Aubert. Mary would not refuse; for so seldom had she been of their party, and so frequently had the Chevalier gone *tête-a-tête* with Miss Moreton, that she very prudently thought it would be serving the character of her protectress to be seen with her, as frequently as she had an invitation; and, ever happy to benefit another, though in the remotest way, she readily prepared for the airing. Mr. Germ did not think it politic to refuse the proffered civility; and the party soon ascended the open barouche, drawn by four horses, with the drivers in their gayest liveries, and two outriders following.

A large bonnet shaded the face of Mary Cuthbert, and a mantle was thrown round her shoulders. Loose and negligently attired, Miss Moreton's hair was loosely waving over her forehead, and decorated on the crown of the head by a bunch of bay leaves, which she had selected from a heap of flowers and evergreens that lay on the corridor table as she passed, (for flowers were sent there every morning by the gardener, according to his mistress's order, that she might chuse, as fancy or taste might lead;) the corner of a long veil was carelessly hung at the back of her head, and shaded her neck and shoulders, while her bosom was bared to the air and

sun, and shaded only by a large parasol of pink persian, which the Chevalier held mutually over them, and which, though it might give an interesting suffusion to the features of Miss Moreton, had no apparent effect on the sallow visage of her companion.

Mr. Germ wore a large straw hat, which flapped at the ears, and partially obscured the profile of his face, though his lanthorn jaws were still very apparent, and his large green spectacles, when illumed by the sun-beam, exhibited some of the prismatic hues of a rainbow.

Thus arrayed, the equipage of Miss Moreton was seen passing through the ancient city of Coventry. Always an object of attraction, she was not surprized at seeing many curious eyes from doors and windows as she passed; but she presently perceived that an unusual throng seemed to precede the vehicle, and that with every step the horses took the concourse increased, till a mob of people, assembled in a narrow street, prevented the drivers from proceeding.

Beckoning to one of her outriders, Miss Moreton ordered him to go on, and inquire the meaning of the tumult, and the confused noise.—The man obeyed, and was presently in the thickest of the ranks, whilst the horses in the barouche, eager to follow, pawed and snorted, and could scarcely be reined in by the postillions. Mary Cuthbert was frightened and intimidated, but she had presence of mind sufficient to conceal her feelings by silence, and, shading her features more closely by her bonnet, she sat with patient calmness. Miss Moreton seemed to enjoy the scene; she looked around her, from time to time, with an air of triumphant majesty, her mind seemed labouring with some hidden meaning, which it was on the point of giving utterance to, when her servant returned with difficulty through the mob, and said, "'Tis the first day of the fair, Ma'am, and so the Lady Godiva be a riding about, to make a little bit of diversion for the people here in Coventry."

Miss Moreton leant her cheek upon her hand for a minute, in an attitude of meditation; and, perceiving that her carriage was now effectually wedged in by the crowd, and that she had to the full as many followers as her *Ladyship*: seeing also that the windows of the narrow street were well lined on each side of her with attentive spectators, she began to think that it would be highly impolitic to let such an opportunity pass without displaying her rhetorical powers; and softly whispering to the Chevalier, "I must not let this glorious minute slip," she slowly arose from her seat in the barouche, and beckoning to her astonished servants, she ordered them to command silence from the multitude, and to give audience. The trembling and half-fainting Mary Cuthbert knew not the meaning of what she saw, and began to conceive that a sudden paroxysm of frenzy had visited the sickly brain of Miss Moreton—Germ stared through his spectacles; he lifted up his hat, and looked, then on the mob, and then on the lady, as if to ask for an explanation. Even the Chevalier was at a loss to know in what manner Miss Moreton meant to proceed; though, after a pause of a moment, and her motioning to him to stand at her side, and to guard her with the parasol, he guessed that a declamatory harangue was about to ensue, especially when he found her hand laid on his shoulder with impressive earnestness, as she first broke silence. Miss Moreton's address began—

"Citizens of Coventry! My Countrymen, attend!"—She spoke these words in a distinct and loud tone of utterance; her face was fully turned towards the mob, one arm was extended, and her veil was expanded with it, whilst the other leant on the Chevalier as a pillar of support. Acclamations, huzzas, peals of laughter, "Hear, hear her,—'tis a preachment—silence—attention!" sounded from all sides. Overcome by affright and emotion, Mary Cuthbert hid her face in her handkerchief on the shoulder of Germ, and thus, unconsciously, added to the ludicrous appearance of the scene.—It was impossible for her to have escaped from her situation; the torrent of people became more strong; the horses grew more restive, and every instant seemed to threaten mischief and destruction.—With much presence of mind the outriders had placed themselves on each side of the barouche; and thus, in some measure, the people were kept

from pressing near the sides of the carriage, though many jumped up behind it, in order to be nearer Miss Moreton, who, nothing daunted, made a graceful bend to the multitude, on hearing their tumultuous shouts, and then again began her address.

The first impulse of surprise having ceased, curiosity was the general feeling,

\* "And the quelled thunder died upon the ear" as *the Corinna of Coventry* again spoke—

"Citizens of Coventry! my countrymen, attend! Accident has led me hither to be a pleased witness of your spectacle of this day, and of the patriotic enthusiasm which is excited in your bosoms! Though centuries have rolled by, and have been lost in the lapse of time, since Leofric, Earl of Mercia, the first Lord of this city, loaded your sires with heavy burthens, and the fair and illustrious Godiva so nobly signalized herself to loosen the bonds of your ancestors; gratitude yet lives in your breasts, and you immortalize the memory of your heroine!—Ye Citizens of Coventry, free men of an ancient city, behold this day *another* woman speaks! *another* woman asserts the glorious prerogative of her sex, the bold freedom of thought and of action, hitherto so exclusively, so unjustly confined to men alone!—People of Coventry, and do I then behold you sunk to a state of effeminacy and servitude." The cry of "hear, hear, hear her," resounded from all quarters; a gentle hissing was faintly distinguished, but it was borne down by "hear, hear." "People of Coventry! *Men!* possessed of capacious minds, of soaring genius, of depth of intellect; how do I behold you engaged? In what manner do I see the energies of youth, the judgment of manhood, the experience of age, employed? Is it in any one thing noble or praise-worthy? You are silent, you dare not—cannot answer me!" A pause of the Corinna was here followed by, "In providing bread for ourselves and our children—in honest industry—in weaving for our employers—hear her, hear, hear, hear," was the prevailing cry, and Corinna was suffered to proceed. —"In providing bread for yourselves and your children! you say—How? By the labours of your hands; but what is your labour?—the weaving of a few gaudy ribbons, which ought to be prohibited in an enlightened country.—Is the manufacturing these tasteless, useless ornaments, a worthy object for men—men, who have arms to chissel out the hero's form, and eyes that with Promethean fire can animate their work? Vain, vain do you complain of hard labour and scanty pay—for what is the intrinsic use of your achievements?—The attenuated thread of blue! The soft and silky ribbon to catch the eyes of childhood and frivolity!—Shame, shame on these inglorious occupations! Was it for people such as these, that the fair, the chaste Godiva, adventured her beauteous form, unclothed, uncovered, through your narrow streets? Was it for ribbon-weavers alone? No! she fondly prophesied that a race of painters, poets, heroes, should spring up in after times, burning with her patriotism, fraught with her enthusiasm, and glowing as her own sanguine fancy!—Rally, rally yourselves, ye citizens of Coventry! Escape from the delusion by which you are enthralled—seek for more noble pursuits, more glorious occupations.—I ask no other boon than to be remembered as the *humble* being who pointed your talents to a higher aim than that to which you now direct your labours.—People of Coventry, farewell!—Adieu!" And, gracefully curtsying, and folding her arms emphatically on her breast, Miss Moreton meant to have sat down again, but this was not allowed; her carriage was encircled by the wild mob; they jumped on every part of it, with the cries of "Down, down with the Frenchman, democrat, jacobin—more wages, more wages—Moreton for ever, huzza, chair her, chair her, huzza."— "Hiss, hiss, tear down the carriage," was now continued with the most riotous excess, and intermingled with the most blasphemous and indecent expressions.

Poor Mary sunk into a swoon at the feet of Germ, who seemed insensible of *her* situation, but fully aware of the disagreeableness of his own, he looked on all sides, but there appeared no escape. His appearance being rather extraordinary, he was also taken for a Frenchman, and his spectacles were readily snatched off, and thrown amongst the rioters; this caused such good diversion, that his hat and wig succeeded, and how far the populace would have proceeded in

forcing all the party to adopt the costume of Lady Godiva is uncertain, for there was now a new tide in the affairs of things.

It was proposed by one of Miss Moreton's admirers, to take out the horses of the carriage, and to draw her to the Villa. This was eagerly seconded, as the minds of the mobility once inflamed, they were ready for any mad exploit, and were a great many of them anticipating a reward, from the known liberality of Miss Moreton.—Delighted, enchanted at this proof of public devotion, Miss Moreton curtesied from side to side, like a hero making his triumphal entry.

The horses were presently taken out; men usurped their places; and the gratified *Corinna of Coventry* was drawn along, the idol of the people, while poor Mary Cuthbert was luckily insensible to all that passed.

When arrived at the Attic Villa, Miss Moreton descended, amidst the acclamations and plaudits of a crowd, made up of all the dregs of population in Coventry.—They followed her into the elegant corridor of the Villa, and a hogshead of strong beer was soon emptied to her health in the park, whilst her money was as freely bestowed in return for their praises. The day was too short for their rejoicings; and night came on whilst the park still rang with their tumultuous mirth and wild revelling.

#### CHAP. XVII.

"E'en the lewd rabble, that were gather'd round

"To see the sight, stood mute when they beheld

her;

"Govern'd their roaring throats, and grumbled

pity;

"I could have hugg'd the greasy rogues: They

pleas'd me." OTWAY.

MARY Cuthbert had been conveyed to bed by some of the servants, and when she had recovered her senses, the horrid recollection of the scene which had deprived her of them, recurred with such force to her mind, that it required all her resolution to prevent herself from being again overcome; her whole frame was unhinged, and she was glad to be alone in her chamber, though it was in vain that she courted sleep, for the noise from without would have effectually precluded it, even had her reflections been of a tranquillizing nature.

The Chevalier D'Aubert was not a little rejoiced at being again returned to the Villa with a whole skin, as some epithets had reached his ears, which led him to believe that he had been in a dangerous situation. *Now* he appeared as the ready Mercury of Miss Moreton; and, in distributing her rewards to the almost "countless multitude," he came in for no small share of their favour.

Germ was very much hurt at the loss of his *summer* hat, and the demolition of his *green eyes*; he could get no glasses to suit him nearer than London, where his optician resided. "The Spectacle de la Nature" was no spectacle to him now he had lost those assistances of vision; and he determined to leave the Attic Villa as soon as possible; besides he had been taken for a Frenchman—a stigma which he felt very severely; though, knowing Miss Moreton's sentiments,

and how highly the Chevalier stood in her favour, he wisely kept his mortification on this account to himself.

Copy stared, and whistled at Miss Moreton's florid account of the public adulation which she had received.—He thought of a picture of Jack Cade preaching at Smithfield, which he had remarked in a collection of paintings that he had recently seen; whilst Miss Moreton finished her description with turning to the Chevalier, and saying, "My friend, nothing ever equalled it, except when Corinna was crowned at the Capitol in Rome—it reminded me of that; my mind, my heart was full; and I then attained a new era of my existence!"

Corinna then relapsed into a fit of melancholy, yet extatic musing.—She thought of Montgomery—of the *Lord Nelville*, who should have beheld her triumph, who should have witnessed the acclamations which had followed *her* steps, who should have participated in *her* glory and *her* fame!

Fatigued and tired after the exertions which she had undergone on the preceding day, Miss Moreton had not quitted her pillow, when her aunt Deborah arrived at the Villa. Mary Cuthbert had just taken her breakfast in the little parlour; she was ill both in mind and body, and felt a sensation of satisfaction when she saw Mrs. Moreton enter the room, though this was succeeded by apprehension, when she observed her ruffled countenance. Sitting down in a chair, and, as if panting for breath, the old lady began—"My patience, help me, child! is all true that I have heard? Did my niece raise the riots in Coventry yesterday? Tell me the truth—tell it me all—tell me every syllable you know of the matter, and that directly; I know not which way I got along; my blood curdles to think, that ever a niece of mine should so have misbehaved herself.—I see that you are frightened, child, and well enough you may; but speak out, and tell me all you know about the matter!" Mary obeyed, and gave a narration of what had passed the foregoing day, as far as she could remember it.—She extenuated Miss Moreton's conduct as much as she could; she said she did not hear what the nature of her address to the populace had been, for that, overcome by the noise, and singularity of the scene, she had lost the powers of perception at the moment when Miss Moreton began to speak.

"And I don't wonder at it—I don't wonder at it at all," said Mrs. Deborah; "but lucky was it for you, that you were in a fit, for you were saved from hearing your cousin, *my* niece, disgrace herself.—Oh! that I should ever have lived to see this day;—the respectable name and family of the Moretons to be so scandalized!—My niece is become the public cry, and the public odium;—she is called an incendiary—an enemy to her country, the friend of the French and a secret emissary of Buonaparte. The whole town of Coventry was a scene of riot and confusion last night; and the mob were only dispersed by the military this morning. The ringleaders of these disturbances were taken to prison, where, if the head had been carried along with them, it would have served her right."

"You affright and astonish me, Madam," said the trembling Mary; "surely Miss Moreton could not foresee such dreadful consequences; I do not think she can have been told of these alarming events." "She! no; she sleeps securely, like another Helen, or any other of the wretches that she imitates.

"After she had intoxicated all the wretched gang that followed and brought her here, it seems that they re-assembled at midnight, round the houses of the principal manufacturers in Coventry, and declared they would not work unless their wages were raised, and that Miss Moreton would uphold them in their resolution. It was in vain that the respectable manufacturers would have spoke peace; they would neither hear peace or reason; they assailed their houses with stones and brickbats; windows were demolished in a moment; and nothing seemed capable of opposing their licentious and mad-headed folly, till an armed force was called out; and, as I told

you before, the ring-leaders were put under confinement.

"And, now, behold the consequences of this wild girl's conduct; not a single loom is at work this blessed day, in the whole city of Coventry, and at night when the poor woman shall look round on her supperless babes, and think of her imprisoned husband, it will go hard, but she will *curse* the name of Moreton!"

"My dearest Madam," said Mary, "I can say nothing to comfort you, except that, seeing the sad consequences of giving way to such impetuous and romantic feelings, I trust Miss Moreton will, for the future, adopt a different and more retired mode of conduct."

"Of that I have no hopes," said Mrs. Deborah, an expression of bitter sorrow overspreading her marked features. "A young woman, any woman who could voluntarily set out to witness the procession of the naked Lady Godiva, must be lost to decency, as well as to the sense of public opinion!"

"*There you must* give me leave to acquit Miss Moreton, Madam," said Mary eagerly; "I am *sure* her being in Coventry at such an unfortunate time was purely accidental, as I heard her repeatedly inquire the meaning of the throng, and heard the servant inform her."

"If there is any circumstance, which can take off from the edge of my feelings upon the present occasion, it is," said Mrs. Deborah, "the general detestation in which that French Dobbert is held; I do not think he can shew his face again in this neighbourhood, without endangering his safety; and I trust that my niece must be quit of him soon, in order to secure herself. Think what have been my sufferings! but indeed, child, I ought not to say *think*, for I see by your *looks* that you have been a sufferer also; but alas! you cannot form an adequate estimate of my agonies; for I still love my niece, whilst I abhor and detest her faults. I still cling to her as the dear child of my only brother, the last branch of the Moreton family; while she repulses my advice—repulses and disdains me!"

Mrs. Deborah now leant back on her chair (the first time that Mary Cuthbert had ever seen her verge from the perpendicular position since she had known her), and sobbed aloud!

Mary wept with the old lady; for she sincerely sympathised in her affliction. Miss Moreton refused to see her aunt, on a plea of indisposition; but, in reality, she wished not to have the pleasing visions of fancy broken in upon, by obsolete lectures on prudence and propriety; and she was busily engaged with the Chevalier in a re-perusal of the celebrated Corinna's public entry at the Capitol, and making a comparison between it, and her own triumph at Coventry.

The Chevalier determined for her, that she had arrived to the sublime height of her model; and that, in England, it was impossible to have gone further than she had done in the *enthusiasm of genius* and *sentimentality*!

Mrs. Deborah Moreton was much hurt at being refused admittance by her niece; but, telling Mary Cuthbert that she should repeat her visit the next morning, she walked off, alleging as an excuse for not staying the day at the Villa, that she wanted to make a few visits in her immediate vicinity, to try to hear what was said of her niece, and to endeavour to extenuate her conduct, if possible. "Keep up your spirits, my good girl," said she to Mary, on taking her cane, and going away; "I see that you are almost as much overcome as myself; but we must put the best face on the business." Mary Cuthbert felt that she was indeed overcome; she was weak both in frame and spirits; the remainder of the day was passed in solitary abstraction. For the first time in her life, she found it impossible to employ herself; her heart was sick, and her spirits were in too irritable a state for any sort of application.

Mr. Germ had taken his leave with the dawn of morning, and was gone to London to seek new spectacles, with which he might again astonish the eyes of the vulgar; in fact this great philosopher did not like to be stared at for a *reptile* Frenchman, in a neighbourhood that was so soon in commotion; and probably this was the latent reason of the Chevalier's detaining Miss Moreton in the Boudoir the whole of the morning.

The quiet and inoffensive Copy had taken advantage of Miss Moreton's engagement above stairs, to draw a group at a village ale-house a few miles on his road towards town; and hence the day was passed in uninterrupted solitude by Mary (our Heroine in the Shade!), who sought her pillow very early in the evening, her head throbbing from nervous agitation, and her mental retrospection being of a most unpleasant kind.

She had no friend, in whose breast she could repose her fears and her sorrows. Miss Davenport had left the Cottage for a few weeks; and, an isolated being in the vast world, our youthful and interesting orphan bathed her pillow with the tears which were wrung from her eyes by the bitterness of her feelings! She reverted to that recent period, when, embosomed in domestic privacy and in fond affection, she had never known a care. The sad reverse was too distressing to be contemplated with tranquillity; yet, aware of the weakness and folly of giving way to despondency and unavailing retrospections, Mary tried to tranquillize her spirits, and to put her trust in that Almighty Being who had hitherto preserved her.

For a few moments her fond, her female heart, turned towards Montgomery. What would have been the indignant emotions of his generous breast, had he witnessed the distressing scene of yesterday? Blushes dyed her cheeks at the idea—she hoped he would never hear of it; and yet he alone could enter into the real nature of her distressing feelings!

She longed for the period of Miss Davenport's return; that kind, that disinterested friend, would console her by her conversation; would embolden her by her example; and would yield her her advice with regard to her future conduct, with a final reference of every thing that regarded herself, to an all-wise, and an all-seeing Being.

Mary, at length, sunk into a quiet slumber, from whence she was awoke by loud and tumultuous shouts—shrieks of distress were mingled with peals of riotous mirth; the crashing of glass; the pelting of stones; repeated knockings from without, hurried steps from within—"Pull out the Frenchman,"—"throw out the spy,"—"the French spy,"—"the democrat,"—"we'll tear down the house," were sentences which Mary plainly distinguished. The assailants levelled their attacks at her windows; and, at the moment she was getting out of bed, a fragment of glass, impelled by a large stone, sprung to her face, and stuck into her temple. Terribly frightened, not daring to stay in the room, and afraid to leave it, the situation of Mary was truly pitiable.

In the hurry of the moment she hastily put on her clothes; and then, assuming desperate resolution, she ran wildly round the corridor gallery to the chamber of Miss Moreton. The door of it was open, but Miss Moreton was not there. The noise and tumult increased; and poor Mary, almost sinking with apprehension, and trembling all over, sat down on a chair.

She heard the hasty pacing of the domestics in the passages, who seemed to be in as great consternation as herself. At length the house-maid appeared, "Oh! law's mercy me! Miss Cuthbert, be you here? I've been in your room a calling, and a calling, and nobody spoke, and I thought as how you must be quite gone dead, with fright, and I was fear'd to carry a candle for fear the rioters should see me pass along." "Where is your mistress?" asked Mary, "where is Miss Moreton?" "Oh! she is got out on top of the balcony to preach to'em again, as she did t'other day in Coventry, and to try to send 'em off." "What is it all about?" "Oh! they wants the *Civilear*, Mr. Dobbert; they say as how he be a French spy, and a *send here he*. And I believe for the matter of

that, he's no better than he should be; but he's off far enough from 'em all by this time; he sat off last night by dusk of evening, and Miss Moreton put 'en upon the very best horse she had in the stable. But Miss Moreton can't make the people believe it for the life of her, though she preaches ever so; and I *do* think, if they still believe that he be really here, they will set fire to the house, and burn us all in it!"

Mary shuddered; at this moment the uproar increased with redoubled violence; the great doors of the corridor were undrawn by Miss Moreton's orders; she gave the rioters leave to search the house for the fugitive; this was their ostensible motive, but pillage, wild riot, and devastation ensued. Miss Moreton could not precede or follow twenty furious men eager for plunder, and already in a state of phrenzical intoxication. Her elegant apartments were rudely searched; her costly furniture torn and disfigured; an eager booty made of the most portable and valuable articles, and her ears assailed on all sides by wanton and indecent exclamations!

Poor Mary shrieked with affright, when she saw three of the licentious rioters enter the chamber where she had taken refuge. They held a candle to her face; the picture of affright which was there displayed to the view, seemed to have some effect, even on their brutish and besotted faculties; they presently quitted the apartment, and left the unhappy girl in a state of insensibility, extended on the floor!

It was not till day-break that the rioters were dispersed, and Miss Moreton's money had been plentifully distributed amongst them, ere she could succeed in dismissing her self-invited guests! The adventures of this night had not been quite in unison with the picturesque visions of her imagination.

In order to ensure the safety of her Platonic and sentimental friend, she had advanced him a large sum of money to provide for his flight, but she could have formed no idea of the succeeding events. She had read nothing *like* them in *Corinna*!—but the vanity of Miss Moreton's heart yet reigned triumphant, and could not easily be shaken from its throne. She was yet a greater heroine than Madam de Stael's. Her haranguing, and finally dispersing the assembled mob, without yielding up the object of their fury, was surely a matchless piece of heroism! Yes, Montgomery must hear it! Her magnanimous conduct would reach his ears, and how would his whole soul dissolve in rapturous admiration!

## CHAP. XVIII.

"E'en so we glad forsook these sinful bowers."

THOMSON.

THE sun shone in upon Miss Moreton's bed, whilst indulging in these delusive and visionary reflections; and it required that she should be fully persuaded of them, to make her amends for the devastating wreck which surrounded her. The mischief done to the Villa and to its internal decorations was very serious; but the *noble soul* of *Corinna* soared above common evils, and she gave orders for cleaning, mending, and *replacing*, with the greatest *apparent* unconcern. But she was sensible of a sad vacuum at her heart. She was now alone, deserted by all her flatterers, and obliged to relinquish that society, which, next to Montgomery's, was the most delightful to her. Miss Moreton was sensible that this relinquishment had been absolutely necessary to ensure her safety, as well as that of her friend; but she deeply lamented the dullness, and mistaken and low notions of the people of Coventry, whom she had vainly endeavoured to enlighten by a ray of her own Divine Genius! In the absence of all beside, Miss Moreton had recourse to her cousin and her ward! She found Mary with her forehead bound (for though the glass had made only a skin-

deep wound, yet it was necessary to exclude it from the air), and her cheeks despoiled of their roses. On Miss Moreton's addressing her with more tenderness than she usually evinced towards her, the full heart of the poor girl overflowed at her eyes, and she burst into tears! Miss Moreton appeared to be somewhat moved with her distress. "These people frightened and hurt you last night, I perceive," said she; "it requires a very strong mind, to meet the torrent of public applause with equanimity and composure."

"Surely you do not believe, that your visitors of the last night meant to compliment you, Madam?" asked Mary, putting her hand to her sore temple, yet smarting with pain. "Not exactly that, perhaps: poor creatures! they could not exactly define the nature of their own sentiments, I believe;" said Miss Moreton, "if we were to ask them for an explanation; but no matter."

"I came to propose a little plan to you, Mary, which I have been agitating this morning on my pillow. My Villa, as you will perceive, wants a little brushing up and gilding, after such a series of rejoicings and festivities; and as all my friends have left me for a time, I think I cannot do better than to change the scene for both of us by a little tour!—What say you?"

"Mary paused; she seldom had spoken her sentiments to Miss Moreton; but her mind yet harassed; her frame yet trembling from those occurrences, which had been derived solely from her imprudent eccentricity; and, fearing a repetition of them, from any new plans which she might have in agitation, she felt that she *could* not be silent; and, timidly interesting as she spoke, she said, "My dear Miss Moreton, knowing as I do, that I am placed entirely under your guidance, it is an awkward thing for me to give you my sentiments."

"Oh! not at all," said Miss Moreton, with something of a confused surprise in her manner; "pray go on—let me have them by all means." "I must go with you wherever you wish," said Mary; "and with the utmost pleasure should I accompany you, were I assured, were I certain, that your intended journey had no reference to the Chevalier D'Aubert. But the impropriety of following him; the disrepute attached to his character; and above all, the disrespect into which yours must fall——"

"You have *said* enough," said Miss Moreton, coolly, "I perfectly understand you, Miss Cuthbert. You have adopted those narrow notions, which Mrs. Deborah Moreton, and other strait-laced damsels would *impose* on hearts and dispositions like mine! I am not at all alarmed at your *lecture*, believe me, child. Alas! poor D'Aubert is far from my protecting care and sympathising voice. I may never see *him* again; but *mine* is a capacious mind, Miss Cuthbert, and I yesterday heard of a friend, who, ill and at a distance, pants for my society, and lingers for my presence. I feel for the illness of *all*, for whom I profess regard, and, with the balm of comfort I would now visit the poor invalid. *This*, I think, even my aunt Deborah would allow me,—not that I shall consult her. And now I consider that I have entered into a sufficient explanation with my *ward*."

"I grieve that I have offended you, dear Madam," said Mary; "but when you consider the very great difference of my present life to that to which I have been accustomed; when you consider, too, that my good name is almost all that I can call my own, you will perceive that my fears are natural ones. I am very young, Miss Moreton. You likewise are in the season of youth; the conduct of females is narrowly observed; and, if there is no real impropriety discoverable, still a thousand invidious and uncharitable remarks may be made, and innumerable incidents and circumstances may wear the hue of culpability."

"Conscious virtue has in it something too *profound*, to be swayed by public opinion," said Miss Moreton, "even if it was not confident of its general *suffrage*; but it has likewise an *imposing* air of superiority, which fixes universal applause! and admiration will always follow

the *destiny* of *her* who soars

"Above the fix'd and common rules

"Of vice and virtue in the schools!"

Since Miss Moreton's perusal of *Delphine* and *Corinna*, she had adopted those words which are so frequently met with in the works of *Madam De Stael*, and which seem to carry more meaning in them than "meets the ear," or even the understanding. These words, it scarcely need be mentioned, are "*impose*," "*profound*," "*suffrage*," and "*destiny*."

Mary Cuthbert perceived that it was a vain attempt to try to reason with her protectress; she had no right to oppose her wishes, and even, should she request to be left at the Attic Villa, whilst Miss Moreton took her excursion, its present disordered state, and the fermentation not yet subsided in Coventry, might subject her to frequent and serious alarms.

Mary wished to mention to Mrs. Deborah Moreton the intention of her niece; but Miss Moreton employed Mary (for the first time since she had been at the Villa) in arranging the books in the Lyceum, which had been sadly soiled and scattered about the preceding night; and, as if to prevent her from making her escape, she took a chair and a book, and remained in the room.

The journey was to take place on the following morning; Miss Moreton mentioned her intention of travelling in a post-chaise, with as little show as possible, and without an Abigail. "In a visit to the sick, dress is the last idea that could take possession of my mind," said she; "and how much more unrestrained and confidential will be my conversation with you, when unimpeded by the presence of a third person."

Mary ventured now to inquire if Miss Moreton intended taking a long journey? "To *you*," said she, "it may appear long—my friend is in Sussex; but I could say with Imogen,

"If one of mean affairs may plod it in a week,

"Why may not I glide thither in a day?"

"Is the illness of your friend dangerous?" asked Mary. "Dangerous, in as much as it is hopeless!" said Miss Moreton, with a deep-drawn sigh. Before Mary retired to rest, she snatched a minute to write a few lines to Mrs. Deborah Moreton, and, through the assistance of the housemaid, she sent it off unknown to her protectress. Her note ran as follows:—

"MY DEAR MADAM.

"Wednesday night.

"I think it my duty to inform you, that Miss Moreton and myself are to set out on a long journey to-morrow morning. I do not imagine that your niece wished you to be acquainted with her intention; and I can only pray Heaven, that it may turn out such an one as you may approve. Miss Moreton has merely told me that she is going on a visit to a sick friend; but of the sex of that friend I am left in doubt.

"I received her *word*, that the journey has not the *remotest reference* to the Chevalier D'Aubert, which has contributed to embolden me; and I have just learnt that Sussex is the county to which we are to bend our course.

"That I would much rather remain quietly at home, you will believe; but the choice is not

left me; I must obey my guardian, and I suspect, though *she* will not acknowledge it, that recent occurrences have had some influence on her present movements, and that Miss Moreton thinks it may be as well to leave the Villa for a short time.

"Wherever I go, I shall carry with me a grateful sense of the kindness which you, my dear Madam, have evinced towards your much obliged,

"And grateful,

"MARY CUTHBERT."

Just before Mary Cuthbert quitted her apartment the next morning, the house-maid put the following letter into her hands:—

"DEAR MISS CUTHBERT,

"I return you my cordial thanks for your favour, which has given me great satisfaction. The very best and most prudent thing which my niece, Miss Moreton, can do, is to leave this country for a short time. Mrs. Rebecca Nailsbury, cousin german to my late respected mother, resides in Sussex. She has long laboured under an incurable and hopeless disease; and, confined to her bed at upwards of ninety years of age, has long wished to behold her relative and my niece, Miss Clarissa Moreton.

I rejoice at Clarissa's having at length determined to introduce herself to Mrs. Nailsbury, as it is what I have long urged her to do; but she always expressed an utter repugnance to the visit when I suggested it, and, following her usual plan of opposition, will not inform me that she is now acting according to my advice. I sincerely wish you a pleasant and comfortable journey. You will find Mrs. Rebecca Nailsbury a very good and regular behaved woman, and will have nothing to fear, with regard to any improper acquaintances that may be met with at her house; as she is remarkably scrupulous, and choice in her friends. This is the first time in my life that I ever entered into a clandestine correspondence; but the occasion seems to justify me, and I avail myself of the opportunity to conclude myself,

Dear Miss Cuthbert,

Your sincere friend, and well-wisher,

DEBORAH MORETON."

#### CHAP. XIX.

"The timorous eye retiring from applause,

"And the mild air that fearfully withdraws."

LANGHORNE.

NOTHING but the most decided dread of remaining at the Villa, could, in Mary's opinion, have reconciled Miss Moreton to such a visit as Mrs. Deborah had described. And indeed she feared that the old lady was still in a secret, with regard to the intentions of her niece.

Mary could only hope that she was right; and she was presently called to Miss Moreton who was ready for the journey. After what had been said concerning dress, Mary had put on a close robe of black, and a large bonnet on her head. She found Miss Moreton arrayed for

travelling, in a blush-coloured sarsnet, made tight to her body, and very scantily over the lower part of her form; her hair hung in ringlets on her shoulders, and was slightly shaded by a white veil; her stockings and slippers were of the same colour with her dress; a gold chain, to which was suspended an Opera glass, was hung round her shoulders.

Mary was soon seated by her protectress, who *maugre* the *confidential conversation*, which she had spoken of, seemed to be fully employed by her own thoughts, except when she stopped for relays of horses, or to take refreshment; when her inquiries were so odd, and her manner and appearance so extraordinary, that her companion painfully perceived that Miss Moreton was a universal object of attention and curiosity, and that, delighted at perceiving this, she conversed in a louder key, and with still greater energy, in order to increase the number of her observers.

The second morning Miss Moreton said, "we shall stay this night in London, Mary; and I can amuse you in the early part of the morning, by taking you to see a few of the streets and squares. Perhaps we may return by the same way; but the course of human destiny is *so* uncertain, and so *profound* in mystery are the intricate recesses of the future, that I always like to seize the present moment, whilst it is in my power!"

Mary was not much exhilarated at the idea of being dragged through the streets of the metropolis by a person of Miss Moreton's peculiar air and manner; and she said, that she hoped Miss Moreton would not retard her journey or inconvenience herself on her account. "An invalid," said she, "must of course be regular, with regard to hours. You will be anxiously expected, and—."

"I am not expected," said Miss Moreton; "my friend does not know of my intention—No! I have imposed a painful silence on myself, in order to impart a more *profound* sentiment of pleasure when I shall unexpectedly appear. My friend is at that period of life, when hours make no difference with regard to the distribution of time!"

From this ambiguous speech Mary gathered, that Miss Moreton thought Mrs. Nailsbury's confinement to her bed made day and night the same to her; and, though she was still of opinion that propriety and regularity should be particularly observed in an approach to a house of sickness, yet she saw that it would be in vain to urge any thing more on the subject.

Our travellers reached London late at night, and much fatigued with the journey. On arriving at an Hotel in the Strand, Mary Cuthbert was glad to go to bed.

The next morning she was taken by her protectress from street to street, and square to square, jostled by some people, spoken to by others, stared at by all; for the extraordinary figure of Miss Moreton, and the "*mauvaise honte*" and beauty of her companion formed a general subject of curiosity. Remarks were made, which frequently reached the ear of Miss Moreton and of Mary.—The latter "blushed carnation deep;" the former returned, what she would have termed, "a profound and silencing stare!"

Mary Cuthbert wondered that Miss Moreton should prefer walking the streets unprotected, to going in a carriage; but *she* had not read *Corinna*, else she would have known that, in strict obedience to her *model*, Miss Moreton took this pedestrian excursion.—*Corinna* had walked over *Rome* with Lord Nelville!

"Time will not allow of our *now* visiting that noble pile of building, the mausoleum of the mighty dead," cried Miss Moreton, pointing to Westminster Abbey: "Ah! it is amongst the tombs of heroes only, that the soul is imbued with that *profound* and peculiar sentiment which may be said to give it *double life*!"

It was in the afternoon, when our two ladies departed from London. Mary Cuthbert had so frequently heard of the highwaymen who infested the environs of the metropolis, that her young and timid heart began to sink.

"How far is it to the place of our destination, Madam?" asked she, (for the name of it had never yet been mentioned by Miss Moreton.) "Only six-and-thirty miles from town," said Miss Moreton; "we shall soon be there.—You see I have had four horses put to the chaise; and shall have them at the next stage likewise, in order to expedite our journey."

Mary kept her fears within her own breast;—Miss Moreton seemed lost in reflection; and they reached a down about ten o'clock, which Miss Moreton said was near the end of their journey; the postillions had previously received orders from her, and they drove through it with much velocity. It was a cold and chill night; the clouds looked murky, and seemed to portend rain;—an undefinable sensation of dread seized on the mind of Mary Cuthbert, as she felt herself bowled over a wide down, where no friendly star afforded glimmering light.

The silence of Miss Moreton—the mysterious manner in which she had spoken of her friend, and of her friend's residence, filled her with alarm; yet she knew not what to fear; for such was the strange inconsistency of Miss Moreton's character, that it was impossible to fathom any of her projects.

At length they entered a long and gloomy avenue.—Mary could perceive, by the lights which issued from it, that they were approaching a large and massive pile of building; it appeared to wear the air of grand and feudal gloom; and the partial illumination of the building, at the termination of the vista, added to the solemn and sombre look of the avenue.

With an instinctive emotion of apprehension, Mary seized the arm of Miss Moreton, and said, "Is this large place the house of your friend, Madam?"

"My friend resides here at *present*," said Miss Moreton; "his continuance here is amongst the profound mysteries of *human destiny*!"

Mary Cuthbert now saw several centinels, clad in military array, pacing before a structure, which she perceived was not a private habitation; the momentary idea which it gave birth to, was that of its being the county prison.

Miss Moreton then had come to visit a friend under confinement; and, whether for debt or for some unexpiated offence, was doubtful, in as much as in her selection of intimates she used no discrimination!

The step of the chaise was let down; a centinel advanced, and asked Miss Moreton her business, telling her, at the same time, it was past the hour of admittance. "I come to speak to Captain Walwyn, friend," said Miss Moreton.

Mary's heart sank within her; she flung herself back in the chaise with a despairing and impetuous emotion. Miss Moreton perceived her not; the soldier answered, "What, Captain Frederic Walwyn of the —— regiment? please to come in, Ma'am; he—is just—" "Is he dead?" said Miss Moreton. "Speak! I charge you speak; but say not he is dead!" "Dead—oh! no, no, Miss, he's all alive and kicking—he's the captain on guard in the mess room; and if you'll follow that man—here Walter, Walter, shew Miss to the mess room." "Where are we, then? For God's sake tell me, where are we?" cried Mary Cuthbert, retreating with an impulsive movement of horror. "Oh, you are in H—— barracks, young lady," said the soldier, tipping the wink to the man, and whistling as he walked off.

It may now be necessary to account (as *far as we are able*;) for Miss Moreton's having undertaken the journey to H——. Walwyn had been very loth to leave the Villa, and such a formidable enemy as the Chevalier D'Aubert. He saw that this gentleman seemed to get on better by sighs, and interjections, and languishments, than he had done by ranting and poetic fervor; but he determined that, to guard against the mischief which might be done in his absence, he would also change *his* mode of attack; and, therefore, he indited a letter to the full as tender, and as pathetic, and as thick of notes of admiration, as the Chevalier could have done.

He bewailed his hard fate in being torn from the society of *her*, who only could sooth his soul; and he talked of the *racking pangs of absence*, and of his *wasting form*, and *broken spirits*, in a strain which he thought *must reach the heart* of his fair Dulcinea. He wrote the letter on the *pillow of sickness*, and he besought his *idolized* Miss Moreton, the *phoenix of her sex*, the *embodied image of genius and perfection*, to raise him from the *grave*, by a few lines from her own *dear hand*!

In some parts of this epistle Captain Walwyn had certainly been too verbose and overstrained; but, with regard to the *pillow of sickness*, he had not been guilty of any exaggeration.—The last night's intemperance had been succeeded by the usual nausea of the stomach,—an aching head, a heavy eye lid; and, not wishing another post to escape him, he had raised himself on his bed, at noon-day, to dispel the misty vapours of his brain, by composing an epistle to his mistress.

Miss Moreton received it in an auspicious moment.—She had just separated, perhaps for ever, from her beloved friend, the Chevalier; and had accommodated him with a thousand pounds, to insure a flight from his unjust and savage enemies.—She saw the Attic Villa, that elegant mansion which had been ornamented and decorated by her orders, and according to her taste, "by the coarse hands of village ruffians," cruelly despoiled of half its beauty; all her friends had quitted her, and her sick and jaundiced mind, recurring on self, would probably have been visited by some compunctious emotions, if this letter had not given a new stimulus to her ideas.

"Walwyn was ill, and at a distance! She had never before received a letter from him, so tender, or so touching.—True, her heart was Montgomery's alone; yet *he* would rejoice to hear that she had visited *his* friend whilst he lay extended on the bed of sickness;—the *world* might blame—Montgomery *must* applaud! Had not Corinna gone immediately to Lord Nelville on hearing of his illness? And did she quit him while his recovery was doubtful? Besides, *should* the illness of Walwyn increase, (and that *of course* it would,) it surely was the most natural circumstance for him to send for his friend Montgomery, the beloved confidante of his soul! *Then!*—oh! what an extatic scene would ensue! Montgomery would behold the woman he *adored* make her appearance on such an amiable, such a benevolent errand! How would his noble heart dilate with rapture at beholding such a proof of generous, of exalted friendship in a female! For he then would learn,—yes, surely he *must* learn, that the most pure, the most disinterested emotions, had alone impelled her in this visit to his friend; and that Montgomery—Montgomery alone was the master of her *destiny*!"

Eager to execute this scheme of sentimentality, we have seen how adroitly Miss Moreton managed to make Mary Cuthbert a participator in it. The Corinna of Italy, indeed, had never chosen a female companion; but, had she been left the guardian of an orphan cousin, Miss Moreton was confident she would not have left her behind; and her own tall and majestic form looked so graceful, when gently bending on Mary; it formed, besides, another so pleasing a trait in her character, to have it said, "She was always accompanied by her ward;"—it looked so affectionate, so benevolent, that, on no account, could she let her remain at the Villa.

Besides, Mrs. Deborah Moreton would take advantage of her absence, to impress her

formal and ridiculous dogmas on the ductile mind of Mary; and Miss Davenport might make her as puritanical as herself; therefore, if only in *common justice* to the girl, she must take her with her.

But the retired and obsolete notions of Mary might render her averse to enter the habitation of soldiers, (even on an errand of mercy,) if she were to apprize her of her intention; and the surprize of Mary on her arrival at H——, would give additional interest to the whole scene.

Mrs. Deborah Moreton might interpose with starched advice and curious queries, as to where, and to what place, she was about to bend her course; it should, therefore, be her business to elude her aunt, and detain Mary at the Villa till the hour of their departure.

We have marked how Miss Moreton's plan succeeded, and if our readers have curiosity sufficient to take another peep at H—— barracks, they must follow us to the next chapter.

## CHAP. XX.

"Let us go, and let us fly!" GRAY.

UNDAUNTEDLY Miss Moreton followed the servant who was her conductor through a long passage, lighted occasionally by a lamp, and from opening doors as they passed, from whence soldiers were seen issuing, or were discovered cleaning their arms, and brushing their uniforms. The laugh, the song, the oath was heard; and while Mary, with hesitating step and down-cast eye, walked on in trembling agitation, *Corinna* seemed to have acquired a firm and martial tread, on breathing a military atmosphere; and as the folding doors of the guard room were thrown open, she expanded her arms, and hastily looking round the large apartment, and seeing numerous faces, she no sooner caught a glance of Walwyn's, then, rushing towards him, she cried out, "He lives, he lives!" and sunk at his feet.

Surprize and consternation for a moment intimidated the whole party; even Walwyn was struck dumb, and could hardly believe his eye-sight had not deceived him, and that he *really* beheld Miss Moreton at his feet in the guard room of H—— barracks; but he had taken his usual quantity of wine, and, soon recovering himself, was able to raise the prostrate fair, and to express his wonder, his surprize, and pleasure!

The terror-struck Mary, seeing the doors opened, and beholding the numerous lights, and the large party of red coats, who were promiscuously dispersed over the room, some engaged in drinking, play, negligently lounging, or parading to and fro in the apartment, made a sudden retreat; but, not knowing where to fly for protection or shelter, she ran into the corner of the room, turning her back to the whole of the company.

No sooner was her situation perceived, than it added to their entertainment, (which was become very general,) at witnessing the behaviour of Miss Moreton towards Walwyn, and the surprize attendant on his first reception of her.

"To what cause am I indebted for this unexpected honour from Miss Moreton?" asked Walwyn, reassuming his self-possession, and hoping to impress his brother officers with respect, from announcing the name of his visitor, of whose fortune and consequence they had been frequently apprized by his conversation.

"Your letter—your own letter, my dear friend," said Miss Moreton; "Alas! I scarcely thought to find you alive, so forcibly did it describe your illness."

Walwyn seemed a little confused;—two or three of his comrades broke out into a horse laugh.—"Fairly bit, by G-d, Walwyn," cried one;—"Well done, noble captain!" said another; "And which is YOUR *chere amie* of this good company, my pretty incognita?" asked a young man, very much intoxicated, reeling to the part of the room where Mary was yet hiding her face, and rudely putting his arm round her waist, he turned her towards the candle, saying, "Come, come, my little Q in a corner, you need not hide your blushes, they will bear the light of day; come, chuse a *chere amie*." "And pray let that happy lot be mine," said a mincing Jemmy Jessamy red coat, tripping up in a most effeminate manner, and leisurely biting his nails to shew his white hand, and cocking his opera-glass to his eye as he spoke.

Mary Cuthbert broke from the retaining grasp of the first gentleman, and springing towards Miss Moreton, she said, "Pray, Ma'am, leave this room—leave this house instantly! Miss Moreton, consider; I conjure you consider the imprudence of your conduct.—Captain Walwyn, I beseech you lead Miss Moreton to the carriage!"

"Do not alarm yourself, child!" said Miss Moreton, rising and leaning on the arm of Walwyn, and looking round with the utmost *non chalance* on the company as she spoke.—"So happy, so blest am I to find my beloved friend in a state of convalescence, that I have no room for the entrance of any other sentiment!"

"Do not alarm yourself, Miss Cuthbert," said Walwyn, offering Mary his disengaged hand, which she snatched instinctively, and, whispering in his ear, said, "Pray, Sir, let us go."

Her ingenuous manner redoubled the mirth of the spectators, and,—"Two at a time!—Two strings to your bow!—How happy could I be with either!" and various other witticisms were heard on all sides.

"I will call on you early in the morning at H——," said Walwyn, pressing the hand of Miss Moreton, "and would fain escort you there myself to-night, but that, being the commanding officer on duty, I must not desert my post." "Alas! how unfortunate!" said Miss Moreton.

"*She* sighed for love, and *he* for glory!" sung out an officer, with no bad voice or expression.

When they had reached the passage, Walwyn called his servant,—"Light us to the carriage." "Sir?" said the man, and he looked all consternation.—"Do you hear my orders?" "The chaise *as* brought the ladies, Sir, drove off again as soon as it had set *they* down!" "Good Heavens!" cried Mary Cuthbert, stamping her foot in agony. A horse-laugh saluted her from behind, and she perceived that all the officers were crowding after them.

"What is the reason of this, Ma'am?" asked Mary. "What shall we—what can we do?"—and the distressed tone in which she spoke might have moved a stoic.

"My anxious fears on *your* account, my friend," said Miss Moreton, turning to Walwyn, "were uncontrollable, and imagining you at the very point of death, I thought of nothing save the receiving your last sigh in my arms, and watching your livid corpse through the long and solitary night. I neglected to tell the postillions to await my further pleasure; and, having paid them at the foregoing stage, in order to save time, they doubtless thought I had no further business for them here."

"Good morning to my night-cap!" sang out a gentleman from behind. "What is now to be done, Madam?" asked Mary Cuthbert, in an impatient tone. "Cannot you accommodate us for the night?" asked Miss Moreton; "you know that I mind no hardships in the cause of friendship, and that with a kindred mind, all situations are alike to me!"

"My sitting-room is so very small," said Walwyn, "that I can scarcely ask you to go into that. It is very unfortunate—but these *cursed* barracks are so very inconvenient. Suppose you return again to the guard-room, we'll make it as comfortable as we can for you; and I am confident that my brother officers will pay you every attention."

"Any where," said Miss Moreton. "Oh! no, by no means, by no means," cried Mary Cuthbert. "Pray let us go into a private room, no matter where; and send instantly to H—— for a chaise. I beg of you, Captain Walwyn, do not delay another minute!"

"That will be the better way, I believe," said Walwyn; who, feeling assured that Miss Moreton meant to bestow her hand and fortune upon him (and that anxiety for his health had been the real, as it was the ostensible, cause of her taking this journey,) though very free in his notions with regard to the female character, was yet inclined to be careful of the reputation of her, whom he was hereafter to call his wife, and consequently he did not like the idea of her remaining all night in the H—— barracks.

A door in the passage at this moment opened; it was the entrance to a small and desolate apartment with a stone floor; and a broken drum, on which was rested a lighted candle, was all its furniture. The officers in the passage crowded on the ladies; and Mary could not retreat or advance; she felt as if she could not breathe.

The soldiers, as they passed, looked with unlicensed freedom at her; and, rushing into the narrow room, the door of which was left open by the soldier who had quitted it, she ran in there as to a place of refuge, crying "here, here, Miss Moreton, come here, till the chaise arrives!"

Miss Moreton, it was evident, would have preferred the guard-room; but Walwyn following Mary Cuthbert's motion, she suffered herself to be led in by him, and, while chairs were procuring for their accommodation, Mary shut the door, to prevent the intrusion of the gentlemen, who were still jostling, laughing, and quizzing, in the passage.

"This place feels like a grave!" said Miss Moreton. Mary Cuthbert felt an internal shiver, and her teeth chattered in her head; but she attributed this to the agitation of her mind, and waited in a state of most dreadful and perturbed anxiety, for the return of Captain Walwyn's servant, with the chaise, to convey them to the town.

This was no time to expostulate, or to reason with Miss Moreton, on the impropriety of her conduct, had she been at leisure to hear it; but she was listening to the flaming professions which Walwyn was pouring into her ear, when the door suddenly opened, and a gentleman of graceful mien, and elegant person, entered. Seizing Mary Cuthbert's hand, he cried out, "Good God! Walwyn, what are you doing? lead out these ladies instantly; do you not know that contagion is in this room; that they are even now breathing the pestilential air of fever?" And he forced Mary Cuthbert along the passage, and back again into the guard-room.

No fear of infection, no dread of fever, could have induced Mary Cuthbert to re-enter this room, had she not been forced into it; but Miss Moreton, who, spite of modern philosophy, had most *feminine* fears with regard to contagious disorders, absolutely screamed from affright, as she heard the gentleman speak; and, outstripping Walwyn in speed, she ran like a frantic woman into the guard-room; and when Captain Walwyn approached both the ladies with wine, Miss Moreton could scarcely be prevented from casting a reproachful look at him, for exposing her to such imminent danger; but she recollected herself in time, and was silent, for it was not certainly by *his invitation* that she had come to the H—— barracks.

Interested by the beautiful countenance of Mary, and seeing her agitation and distress, the gentleman who had snatched her from lurking and unsuspecting danger, did not quit her, on

having brought her to a place, which he readily perceived it was very repugnant to her wishes to be seen in.

In a manner, at once humane and respectful, a manner calculated to inspire confidence, and to conciliate esteem, he addressed her; he seemed to have placed a magic circle round him, to defend her from the rude attacks of all invaders.

The other officers remained at a decent distance; and, while they contemplated her beauty, and entertained themselves with the distress of Miss Moreton, they dared not advance within the distance prescribed them by *the looks* of Miss Cuthbert's protector.

At length Captain Walwyn's servant announced the chaise. Miss Moreton was now as eager as Mary Cuthbert to leave a place, in which she had learnt with feelings little short of horror, that a pestilential fever had appeared within the last week amongst the soldiers.

Walwyn attended the ladies to the chaise, apologising for not accompanying them himself to H——; but as his leaving the barracks that night was impossible, he accepted the offer of Captain Walsingham's escort, who, jumping after them into the chaise, promised to conduct them in safety to the town.

Miss Moreton squeezed the hand of her "beloved Walwyn," and besought him to come to her in the morning, as she should sadly want his enlivening converse to detach her mind from the gloomy pre-sentiments of death and fever, which had taken possession of it; and had filled it with such *profound* ideas, that it seemed as if her *destiny* was fixed.

Walwyn assured her that he would not fail to attend her. He besought her to be composed and tranquil, as he was convinced no ill consequences could accrue to her from the transient visit that she had made him.

The chaise drove off; and, in silence, the travellers reached the place of their destination. Miss Moreton was really apprehensive of a dangerous illness, and imaging a final and untimely end of her bright career. Mary Cuthbert was retracing the scenes of the past evening with the most torturing feelings of wounded delicacy and mortification.

She was determined to enter into an explanation of her sentiments with Miss Moreton; and to inform her, that it was impossible she could continue with her, unless she adapted her conduct to the rules of propriety, and was more careful of the character and reputation of her ward. Mary even thought that she could obtain legal redress, were she to apply for it; and that in decent privacy, she might be placed where the interest of her little property would keep her from absolute want. But she would on no account have recourse to coercive measures, unless Miss Moreton refused to hear reason.

Yet, much as Mary Cuthbert respected the memory of her father, and unwilling as she must ever feel to depart from his last instructions; her fame and her peace of mind were at stake, in continuing with Miss Moreton, unless some very essential alteration took place.

Mary Cuthbert's disposition was generous and humane. She had not the slightest desire of trampling on the fallen; and, though some tempers, and those too in general reckoned amiable, might have enjoyed the sight of Miss Moreton's present distress, in which her own romantic and extraordinary conduct had alone involved her, yet Mary was full of pity, when she witnessed her fears and her evident distress, at the idea of having caught the fever; and determined, on no account, either by word or look, to give her a hint of what was passing in her mind that night.

Captain Walsingham saw the ladies to the inn; and Miss Moreton declaring her intention

of going immediately to bed, he left them, having politely desired permission to inquire after their healths in the morning; a permission which was readily granted him by Miss Moreton.

Really fatigued, and extremely frightened, Miss Moreton immediately went to bed. Mary Cuthbert attended her to her apartment; she tried to pacify her fears; and, by those gentle and spontaneous attentions, which spring from real humanity, to lull her to repose, and to divert her from dwelling on the cause of them.

Peevish and querulous, Miss Moreton was well inclined to be out of humour with every thing about her, and most of all with the undeviating sweetness of her companion, she at length hit on something to keep her ill humour alive; and blaming the weakness and the imbecility of Mary, who could not bear to meet the faces of two or three strange men, she said, "that if she died, her death must always lay at her door, for being so foolish as to run away where none pursued, and take possession of a pest-room! This comes of the overstrained affectation of you uninformed girls," said Miss Moreton, as Mary was quietly smoothing her pillow, and arranging the bed-clothes. "You read romances till your brains are turned, and then you fancy every man you meet with is to turn ravisher; and thus probably is my *destiny* completed, just as I was attaining the very climax of fame; and about to receive the *suffrage* of the whole world!"

Mary Cuthbert knew the cruelty and injustice of Miss Moreton's upbraidings; and, secure in conscious innocence, she disregarded them; though, when she had at length escaped to the apartment allotted for her, she gave way to those natural bursts of sorrow, into which her whole soul was swelling, and which were only quelled when raising her hands and her heart towards Heaven, she besought its protection and support.

#### CHAP. XXI.

"Come, gentle Venus, and assuage——"

THOMSON.

THE following morning, Miss Moreton, finding herself languid and enervated, as might naturally be expected after a long journey and the exertions of her *mental powers*, *determined* on having taken the infection the preceding evening, and was sickening of the fever. Medical assistance was immediately applied to, and Mary Cuthbert was stationary at the side of the bed. She was delighted to hear the physician give it as his decided opinion, that Miss Moreton had not the least symptom of approaching fever; that her pulse was regular; that her skin was moist; and that her whole frame wore the appearance of health.

Mary had no idea that the powers of imagination could be carried to so great an extent, and really supposed Miss Moreton to have been as ill as she had described. But when the physician, who was a sensible, rational man, assured her that her friend was the victim of fancy, and bade her keep up her spirits, for that there was nothing to be apprehended on her account, she felt reassured; and, though she continued her gentle attentions to Miss Moreton, yet they were unaccompanied by the anxiety which she had previously felt.

The two Captains, Walwyn and Walsingham, were soon announced. Mary was sitting at the bed-side of Miss Moreton. "Show Walwyn up, and do you go and entertain Captain Walsingham, for he seemed *exclusively* your beau last night," said Miss Moreton, in a tone of pique, and in a louder key than was quite consistent with the *sickening* stage of the fever.

"Surely not," said Mary Cuthbert. "Surely, Miss Moreton, you cannot mean to admit Captain Walwyn into your bed-room; and it would be almost as improper for me to entertain Captain Walsingham alone. Your illness, and consequent confinement to your bed, will be a

sufficient apology to the gentlemen; and I am confident, when they shall be thus informed, they will not expect admittance."

"You seem *confident*, indeed, Miss," said Miss Moreton, in a sarcastic tone; and, raising herself in the bed, "What! shall I be refused to see my dearest friends? When lying on the bed of sickness, I am isolated from all who love me, from all who care for me.

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,

"Some kindred drop the pious eye requires."

"And shall I not see Walwyn? Miss Cuthbert, what right have you to keep him from me?"

"I have no right, certainly, Madam," answered Mary; "but my sense of propriety, and the delicacy of the female character, both impel me on this occasion to desire you, my dear Miss Moreton, to reflect on the injury which such a visit will do your reputation. Of course it is known in this house, that you were last night at the barracks; this, of itself, is an unpleasant circumstance; and think how many disagreeable reports may be added to it, if you were known to receive Captain Walwyn in bed the next morning?"

"If I could have foreseen what Mr. Cuthbert had *imposed* upon me, *worlds* should not have tempted me to have undertaken the charge of a person, who, like a baneful planet, interposes to shroud my destiny with malign influence! Miss Cuthbert, I *will* see my friend. What! are all our hours of confidence as nothing? Are the sweet interchanges of sentiment to be forgotten? And shall I discard a rooted and cemented friendship, like ours, to please a prudish girl, who has taken her cue from Mrs. Deborah Moreton's code of formality, and sticks, chapter and verse, to her author. Miss Cuthbert, I *will* have Walwyn admitted; I have *much* to say to him; and while the pestilential disease is gradually stealing over my frame; while sense and reflection are yet mine, and ere my irrevocable destiny be fixed, I would unbosom my full soul to a friend, able to advise and to assist me!"

Mary Cuthbert saw that Miss Moreton was determined. The bell was rang, and Captain Walwyn was admitted. Mary remained in the room till Miss Moreton commanded her to leave it. She did so very reluctantly; but, instead of going to Captain Walsingham, as she had been ordered, she retired to her own room, sending a verbal apology to that gentleman on the score of Miss Moreton's illness.

Miss Moreton had really felt great part of the alarm which she had expressed, till the physician had visited her, when her symptoms gradually yielded to his cheerful countenance; but she had *assumed* an illness, and she could not acknowledge that her fears had led her so far, without discovering great weakness of character; she therefore resolved, that she would have the disorder slightly, and remain in bed for a *few days*, which would make her highly interesting in the eyes of Walwyn, and moreover have a wonderful effect on Montgomery when his friend should *describe* it to him.

Miss Moreton really panted to behold Montgomery once more. In her latent hope of meeting him at the—— barracks she had been foiled; his friend's convalescence precluding the necessity of his attendance. Neither did she understand that Walwyn had lately heard from him. But the passion of Miss Moreton was now grown to such a height, that it could not brook unnecessary delays, under the pretext of her illness she once thought of sending an express for the "dear possessor of her heart;" but her affection ought to appear disinterested in his eyes, and to expose him to the hazard of taking the infection would clash with this sentiment.

Assured of the affection of Miss Moreton, of which no greater proof could have been

given, than her having taken this long journey on his slight mention of indisposition, Walwyn felt grateful for it; and his affairs being just now in a deranged state, it behoved him to make the most of the present opportunity.

Marriage was a bitter pill; and Walwyn had frequently recoiled at the idea. He felt no regard for Miss Moreton; he had ridiculed her follies in all companies, before he had thought of making her his wife; and now he felt ashamed of them. But he was determined that, the connubial knot once tied, the conduct of Mrs. Walwyn should be under his sole direction; and as he had some regard for his own honourable name, he thought it would be better to conclude on the marriage, while the lady was still at H——, as this event would be some apology to the world, for her otherwise most extravagant behaviour.

In the most fervid, bombastic, and poetical strains, had Captain Walwyn often breathed his amorous tale into the ear of Miss Moreton. She had answered him with the melting pathos of a Monimia and Calista. But the question of marriage between Clarissa Moreton and Charles Walwyn had never been brought to an issue; nor was there one which was more remote from the idea of Miss Moreton.

Tender and assiduous as was Walwyn, he yet let the first and the second visit escape him, without having declared his wishes and his expectations to the fair invalid; but the third was to be the critical one, and, "nothing doubting," he entered the sick chamber of Miss Moreton, the attentive Mary Cuthbert was dismissed, and raising herself in the bed, in an interesting attitude, holding out her hand in answer to Walwyn's tender inquiries, the fair invalid pointed to the chair which Mary had vacated, saying, "sit here, for I have much to say to you."

Walwyn was pleased at this beginning; for there was a feminine consciousness in her manner, which assured him that his premeditated declaration would now be spared him, and that the lady (acting, as usual, in opposition to the strict observances prescribed to others) was about to make an avowal of her sentiments in his favour. The address of Miss Moreton corroborated this idea.

"My dearest Walwyn,—I am about to enter into an explanation of feelings, with which my heart is fraught—I know that, in discovering them to you, I am diverging from the general line of dissimulation practised by my sex; but you, who know my character, must know that *I pride* myself in opposing the foolish laws which enslave the female mind. Yet such is the contrariety of my feelings, and my sentiments, that while I am acting in concordance with the latter, I feel as if I was trampling on the former, and my blushes, and my palpitating heart betray my confusion."

"They give you the most interesting air imaginable; you are at once the most bewitching and the most exalted of women!" said Walwyn, who took advantage of this pause to say something expressive of his passionate adoration.

"This heart was formed for the indulgence of tender sentiment," said Miss Moreton, laying her hand on it. "I confess to you it was long ere I found an object on whom it could bestow itself; the foolish distinctions of the world were always trifles in my estimation. I looked for a kindred soul! my fortune is ample; of what consequence can it be to me, that he, whom I love, is without one, any more than that I shall have the *divine* pleasure of imparting to him, with no sparing hand, the benefits which I enjoy?"

"Charming, exalted creature!" said Walwyn, sinking on one knee, and rapturously kissing the white hand, which had been extended in order to give grace to utterance!

"I have an independent mind," continued Miss Moreton, "and, my notions were always at

variance with the marriage vow, and the *slavish obedience* which it *imposes* on women; I never thought that I could become its advocate. But now—*now*, when every aspiration of my heart is directed towards the object of my affections; when I would make him mine by the most endearing, and the closest ties—the sound of *husband* carries something sweet to my ears, which never reached them before; and, in bestowing myself and my fortune on the selected object of my affections, now in the bloom of my fame, when my name has attained so high and so just a celebrity; I am confident that I shall give him no mean proof of affection!"

"Mean," exclaimed Walwyn, passionately clasping his hands;—"No! it is the most glorious, the most exalted proof of love, which ever was bestowed on mortal—Oh Clarissa! Clarissa! my senses ache in contemplating such transcendent loveliness and virtue!"

"That the object on whom I have bestowed my heart feels a reciprocity of sentiment, I am well assured," said Miss Moreton. "His feelings have betrayed him to me; and the generous conflict, by which he essays to evade a declaration of passion, imagining that there exists some disparity in our situations!"

"Who that sees,—who that hears you,—but must feel their own inferiority," said Walwyn, affecting to be overwhelmed with confusion and gratitude.

"Having now explained my meaning," said Miss Moreton, "I hesitate not to say, that I have made up my mind to reward the affection of my lover, and to resign my happiness to his keeping."

"Charming!—incomparable Miss Moreton! How can he sufficiently evince his gratitude?" cried Walwyn. "It was not till the period of your last visit at the Attic Villa," said Miss Moreton, "that I yielded up my heart to the influence of the tender passion. My destiny seemed, then, to have taken a new turn; and my heart, hitherto actuated solely by the emotions of benevolence and universal philanthropy, involuntarily resigned itself to the imposing sentiment, which had taken possession of it. Walwyn, pity and respect my feelings; you must have guessed the object on whom my heart is bestowed; I need not name him to you; I shall write to him, in order to explain myself more particularly.!"

"Why write? lovely and beloved Clarissa!" asked Walwyn; "why not repeat to his entranced ear, in music all thine own, in all the polished harmony of numbers, those thrilling sounds which now have reached my heart!"

"The awkwardness of our respective situations, the distance—"

"But all futile distinctions you justly condemn," said Walwyn; "and I glory in the liberality which you have displayed; I justly count it as your *first* distinction. Then why, oh! lovely and beloved Clarissa! why have recourse to further explanations? Have courage to contemn all the forms and the foolish punctilios of the world. You have not hesitated to avow your preference; be generous, and reward your happy lover! Kill me not at the moment you have raised such delightful hopes; but say that you will be mine immediately, and our union shall be as private as your modesty can wish; only say that you consent, and my whole life shall be spent in showing my gratitude for your goodness!"

"Mr. Walwyn!" said Miss Moreton, "I scarcely understand the nature of your address! Is it possible that you can have made a *mistake*, as to the object on whom I have placed my affections? or is your friendship for *him* of so sanguine a nature, as to make you appear as if you were pleading your own passion rather than his?"

Walwyn hastily arose from his beseeching posture; his cheek was crimsoned, as he stood

rather awkwardly, awaiting the explanation of the fair recumbent. "Montgomery!" cried Miss Moreton. "Tell me, Sir, where is he? That I may on paper pour out my whole heart to the beloved of my soul!"

"Heaven sure sent letters for some wretch's aid,

"Some captive lover, or some banish'd maid!"

"Where is your friend, Mr. Walwyn? Where is my Montgomery? In what sad solitary spot does he wear away the tedious hours of absence?"

"Madam, I do not know;" said Walwyn; "but surely it is ungenerous thus to trifle with my feelings; it is inhuman, Miss Moreton, thus to sport with your victim. Oh! Clarissa, dearest, sweetest, Clarissa! be merciful as you are lovely!" and he snatched her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

"Mr. Walwyn! what part of my behaviour has led you to suppose I had the *smallest* partiality in *your* favour, except what friendship might lay claim to?" And the Corinna withdrew her hand, and fixed her eyes on his truly mortified countenance. "*What* part? *Every* part!" cried Walwyn, with indignant sullenness. "What brought you here, Madam, if you did not mean to make me believe that you loved me?"

"As a *friend*; as a lively companion, to amuse my comic hours; and as one who could cull the tragic page for more sublime relaxations, I countenanced and received you; but for my heart of heart's companion, Oh! Montgomery! Montgomery! I could never turn traitor to thee!"

"Good God!" said Walwyn, "you really amaze me, Miss Moreton; the lengths you have gone in pursuing me; your introducing yourself uncalled, unlooked for, at my barracks, was a step without precedent; and nothing but the excess of affection, and our speedy union can justify you to the world, or save your character from *public degradation*."

"Oh! Man! Man! this is thy gratitude!" apostrophized Miss Moreton. "Hear him, ye powers of benevolence, he *reproaches* me for my kindness to himself! Mr. Walwyn, I know not which to admire the most, your consummate vanity, or matchless ingratitude; but fare you well, Sir! from this moment I disdain to hold any further intercourse with you. To avoid your presence I would fly to the Antipodes! Go, Sir! leave the room, I charge you, and send Miss Cuthbert to me. This neighbourhood no longer retains us both. And as you, a *gallant warrior*, cannot absent yourself from the post of honour, which your country has (ignorant of your coward qualities) bestowed on you, I leave the place."

"And is it possible that you can be serious, Miss Moreton? Hear me, for your *own* sake, hear me!" but Miss Moreton, rang the bell violently, and then wrapped her face in the bed-clothes.

Walwyn found it useless to try to appease her wrath; and he left the room, muttering a string of curses, "not loud but deep," as he went down stairs.

## CHAP. XXII.

"Heard you that agonizing throe?

"Sure this is not romantic woe!"

## LANGHORNE.

MISS MORETON had sent for Mary Cuthbert, but no Mary Cuthbert appeared. Rather angry at this inattention, the impetuous heroine re-essayed her bell with additional violence. Alas! poor Mary heard it not; for, on leaving Miss Moreton's apartment, a faint sickness had overcome her, and she was found extended on the floor in her chamber, bereft of sense and motion.

Medical assistance was sent for; and the physician, who had attended Miss Moreton, was soon at the side of Mary. With looks of undissembled concern, he felt her pulse and observed her symptoms; and, asking to be shewn to Miss Moreton's room, he instantly gave it, as his unequivocal opinion, that Miss Cuthbert was really seized with an alarming and dangerous fever, and that in all probability she had taken it at the barracks.

On hearing this intelligence, unmindful of Doctor Saville's presence, Miss Moreton began to look about her for her cloths, in order to array herself. He respected the enthusiasm of her feelings, which made her forget appearances in the contemplation of her young friend's illness; but his own were speedily experiencing something not very remote from horror, when he heard Miss Moreton order a chaise, that she might immediately leave the house.—"I cannot answer for myself, if I witness the illness of my poor *Eleve*," said she to the Doctor; "on *your* care, Sir, I shall confidently rely; you have already rescued me from the jaws of the grave, to which the same cruel disorder had hurried me; my constitution could not brook a relapse, in the midst of the tumult which would oppress my anxious soul; and since tis "hard to combat," I must "learn to fly."

"Here, Sir, is a *small* return for your attention to me; and assure yourself that, if you save the life of my friend, you shall not go unrewarded!"

Dr. Saville took five guineas of the twenty which Miss Moreton offered him.—"This, Madam, amply repays me for my attendance on you; and assure yourself, that every exertion shall be used on my part to save your interesting companion.—I know not that I have ever seen a young creature for whom I have taken such a sudden prepossession as I have towards her; there is such gentle modesty in her manner—such

—"

"Had you not better send off your prescription, Sir," coolly asked Miss Moreton, "than thus to indulge in the *sanguine* description of feelings, which do not well accord with your age or appearance?"

"I have done that already, Madam," said Dr. Saville, with great easiness of manner; "I have not lost my memory, or my reflection; and though I will do every thing for Miss Cuthbert which lies in my power, yet I must hint that, lying as she now does at an inn, she requires an experienced and an attentive nurse; a great deal—all, indeed, depends on attention, and the regularly administering of the medicines I shall prescribe."

"Leave that to me, Sir, leave that to me," said Miss Moreton, "I shall provide every thing necessary previous to my quitting H——."

Dr. Saville quitted the room not much better pleased than was Captain Walwyn, when he had received his dismissal; but the good Doctor whistled off his spleen, and told Mrs. Saville when he went home to dinner, on no account to teach his girls the words *sentiment* or *feeling*.

Miss Moreton, immediately on the departure of the sensible physician, wrote the following note, and dispatched a messenger with it to H—— barracks, and then discharging her

bill at the inn, she got into a post chaise, and set off no one knew whither, without once looking in on the still insensible Mary.—

*"To Lesley Walsingham, Esq.*

*H—— barracks.*

"DEAR SIR,

"The baseness and ingratitude of him, whom I once called friend, forces me to apply to you on the present imperious occasion.—My poor *protégée* and *élève*, Mary Cuthbert, has taken the virulent infection of your frightful barrack-fever, from nursing me in the disorder, and now is extended on a sick bed—a stranger in a strange place.—I call upon *you* to afford her every assistance which *her* situation demands from a man of honour and of sentiment! *mine* imposes on me far different claims; and it is required of me to lengthen the period of my destiny, by flying immediately from this pestilential atmosphere! On Dr. Saville as a medical attendant I confidently rely.—For a *nurse*, and a *compassionate companion*, I look to Captain Walsingham; and my skill in physiognomy tells me I shall not look in vain. I inclose a bill of fifty pounds to defray all incidental expences; and, as a proof of my confidence and of my friendship, I need say no more, than that I depute Captain Walsingham to the guardianship of Mary Cuthbert!

CORINNA MORETON."

"P.S. Expect to hear from me again when the tumultuous emotions of my soul are a little subsided, and I have acquired resolution to sit down and collect my thoughts!"

Words cannot express the surprize of Lesly Walsingham on receiving this note; but his surprize was not unmixed with concern. He had been much interested for the youthful and lovely Mary; it was he who had forced her from the infectious room, the moment he had found that she had sought shelter in it; but he had been too late, for she was visited by the disease. Unaccountable as was the general conduct and deportment of Miss Moreton, there was something so very inconsistent in her throwing the care of Miss Cuthbert on him, that he could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses, and in some trepidation he sought Walwyn, to see if *he* could give any probable reason for so extraordinary a proceeding.

Walwyn was too much disconcerted at the unexpected rebuff he had received, to have a good word to say of Miss Moreton; and yet he did not like to acquaint Captain Walsingham with all that had passed between them.

Affecting a laugh, he said, "My friend, I give you joy; *you* are enlisted in the service, but hang me if it be not worse than an Egyptian one. I have washed my hands of her, and will never pay her any attention again; for the slightest civility she construes into a mark of particular attachment, and absolutely *persecutes* every man with her addresses on whom she casts an eye.—You are now in for it," shaking Walsingham by the hand; "I wish you well out of it again. But the poor girl, who is lying ill, she *really* deserves your attention; and, as you are a man of known benevolence, I think seriously now, I think, Walsingham, Miss Moreton could not have deputed a more suitable man to perform the nurse's office!"

"Her application to me is most singular," said Walsingham; "and though it be in some measure accounted for by her having broken with *you*—" "By *my* having broken with *her*, if you please, good Sir," interrupted Walwyn. "Well, though it may be partly accounted for in this way, yet, surely, a female would have been far more proper to have selected for such a charge."

"You do not like to be considered as an old woman," said Walwyn, jestingly. "I feel myself awkwardly situated," said Walsingham, "and by no means in a humour for jesting. With regard to catching the disorder, I have not the smallest fear; but for me to enter the sick room of Miss Cuthbert, is wholly improper; and I have already seen enough of her to know, that I should offend her modesty by so doing.—And yet, how shall I execute the charge which is designated to me, if I stay away? How shall I be assured that she receives every attention and care which her situation demands?"

"On Dr. Saville you may confidently rely," said Walwyn; "he is a clever and an experienced man, and if the life of Miss Cuthbert can be saved, he will leave no means unessayed."

"If," repeated Walsingham, and he heaved a deep sigh as he turned away from Walwyn, and left the apartment to proceed to ——.

Our readers probably recollect Lesly Walsingham for the lover of Clara Davenport. He had not forgotten the amiable Clara; and though time had in some measure weakened the influence of her charms, it had not rendered Walsingham an happier man. He had plunged into dissipation to drive away the image of Miss Davenport; but it pursued him in his most retired moments, and painted the "compunctious visitings of conscience!" From the midnight revel and the unhallowed pursuit, he had frequently looked back on the peaceful cottage at Heathfield, and the pure spirit which presided there; and he had wished himself a convert to those precepts and that actuating principle which formed the rule of her conduct, and was the guiding star of her life.—But the *wish* only of being a convert to her opinions had yet been his; and this inefficient movement of the soul, though sincere at a moment when the disappointments of the world, the futility of his pursuits, or the emptiness of his enjoyments pressed on his imagination, was soon stilled in the intercourse of society; and, immersed in new pleasures, he forgot his former longings after immortality.

With regard to the general tenor of his actions, Lesly Walsingham was considered a man of strict honour and probity.—He was generally respected; his acquaintance was courted; and the charms of his conversation, and the graces of his manner, obtained him universal suffrage. He had never thought of marriage since he had been refused by Miss Davenport; and he had not again felt himself particularly interested, till his eyes had fallen on Mary Cuthbert—an orphan, dependent entirely on Miss Moreton, as he understood her to be, and now thrown in so unheard of a manner on his protection; an entire stranger.—His heart beat tumultuously.—It might now be in his power, by a series of the most delicate, the most undeviating attentions, to make an interest for himself in her gentle breast—to win the heart of this attractive and ingenuous maiden.

To win it,—and what then?—Could he marry a girl devoid of fortune, so closely allied to the strange Miss Moreton!—So—would not the whole world laugh at him? And was not the institution of marriage merely a piece of worldly policy, which would be "more honoured in the breach than the observance?" Could he then injure Mary Cuthbert, by inducing her to forego such illiberal and superstitious *observances*? Such was the sophistical reveries of this modern philosopher, while he bent his way to Dr. Saville's.

The good Doctor was just stepping out on his fourth visit to Miss Cuthbert.—In a few words Walsingham unfolded his business.

"Ah!" said the Doctor, shaking his head, "I fear this poor girl will soon be released from all human ties.—*Her* guardian is there," looking upwards, "to Him she will soon go, and dwell with Him for ever!"

He took Walsingham's arm, and they walked towards the inn together.—"I declare I can scarcely grieve as I should do for this young creature," said Dr. Saville; "for, seeing her extreme youth and ingenuous loveliness, and the caprice, folly—I may almost say *madness* of her protectress, it appears to me, that if she is taken, it will be from the evil to come; for, surely, *she* must require a more than common share of prudence and resolution, who can accompany this wild and fantastic Miss Moreton in all her extravagant flights, and escape uninjured!"

"But, *dear* Doctor, may it not be *yet* possible to recover her?" said Walsingham, grasping his arm.—"All that I can do I will," said Dr. Saville; "I am now going to have her removed to a neat and tranquil lodging in the environs of the town; and I have engaged a steady and humane nurse to attend her. The people at the inn were naturally enough alarmed at having her with them; and the noise of such a house is quite inimical to my hopes of a recovery.—Come with me, if you are not afraid of infection, and see her removed. I have had a sedan chair taken to the inn, and believe the poor girl will be wholly imperceptible of any thing that is going on."

"No, I am not at all afraid of infection," said Walsingham, "I received the last words of my poor corporal; he died in a few minutes after I quitted his room."

The nurse engaged by Dr. Saville had dressed Mary Cuthbert, and she lay extended on the bed, bereft of sense, and apparently motionless.—Her rayless eyes were fixed on vacancy; her cheeks were flushed by fever; her lips frequently severed; and she muttered from time to time short sentences, in a monotonous and almost death-like tone.

"No, no, Miss Moreton, do not take me there.—My papa sees you—he sees you from Heaven.—Look! he will not love you, if you carry his child to the soldiers. Poor Mary! nobody cares for her now; all the world will despise her; but she will go home soon; she will go home to her father's house—there are many mansions there—her Saviour has told her so!—Fie, fie, Miss Moreton, don't YOU believe in *Him*? What would poor Mary do, if she had not got this comfort?" Then she stopped;—heart-piercing sighs issued from her bosom. "No, no, no, I never *will* enter the hateful barracks again.—Pray, pray Miss Moreton return home; look, look, they are coming; they will fetch us back—the soldiers will keep us there!" and, with a strong convulsive motion, she turned and grasped her pillow with violence.

The marks of strong sympathy were visible on the countenance of Dr. Saville, while Walsingham turned to the window to conceal his emotion and his bitter feelings!

Yes! extended on the bed, the victim of fever, and in a state of mental delirium, yet Mary Cuthbert had spoken to the heart of Lesly Walsingham!—*She* had talked of that Heaven which he had abjured; she had talked of the comforts of a *Saviour*, whom he had never known.—But was there not something unintelligible, mysterious, in his feelings and his emotions? Did not his heart smite him for remaining deaf to the calls of conscience, to the voice of Heaven itself, speaking as it did now by one of its *own angels*!

With the utmost care, Mary Cuthbert was at length placed in the chair which had been provided for her; the nurse went before to the lodgings, and the two gentlemen walked at her side.

Although she continued in a state of insensibility, yet her weakened frame experienced the effects of this exertion; and when the nurse had got her into bed, she almost immediately fell into a sound sleep, which, when the attentive Saville was informed of, appeared to give him the greatest satisfaction; and, clapping the shoulder of Walsingham in an extacy, he declared that he augured every thing from this repose.

Several days passed, during which the disorder of the youthful invalid scarcely appeared

to abate; her two friends were unremitting in their attention; and the skill and exertion of Saville kept pace with the good wishes of Walsingham, who ransacked the neighbourhood for any thing and every thing, which had a shadow of benefiting Mary Cuthbert.

#### CHAP. XXIII.

"Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,

"Some banish'd lover, or some captive *maid*."

POPE.

MISS Moreton had retired only a few miles from ——, left entirely to her own profound reveries, without flatterers or admirers; when it occurred to her that it might look unfeeling to enter the world, whilst her charge remained at the point of death; and this period was not uninterestingly filled up, by writing to Montgomery, and in anxiously awaiting his answer.—*The Corinna's* letter ran thus:—

"In what words shall I address the worthiest of his sex, on a subject so near to both our hearts. I have seen, I have witnessed that fervent passion of your's, which breathed in every look and action, whilst in the presence of the object of it. I saw also the struggles of your noble mind, which refused to ratify the wishes of your heart, when deeming them inimical to the interests of the object of your love. Such love *must* be rewarded. I *have* the power, Montgomery; I have also the will. Fortune has not been unworthily placed in my hands; sufficient is it for me to say, that your passion is approved by me! nay more, that it is *returned*; and in cementing and ratifying the union of two affectionate hearts, I feel that I am rising to the very acmé of my existence! Write me by the return of the post. My heart aches to see you; and I shall remain at the place from whence I date this letter, till I hear when I may expect it.

"CORINNA MORETON."

Montgomery's sensations of regret on quitting the Attic Villa had accompanied him to Oxford; and the image of the beautiful Mary Cuthbert, exposed to all the follies and insults of Miss Moreton's companions, was ever rising to his imagination. His heart had taken a more than common interest in her fate; and he was unusually curious in making inquiries of those of his acquaintance, who lived in the neighbourhood of Coventry, for information and anecdotes of Miss Moreton. The knowledge, thus acquired, was not calculated to set his heart at ease with regard to the youthful orphan. All agreed in ridiculing Miss Moreton, and in contemning her manners and her conduct. It happened one morning that Montgomery carelessly took up a news paper, and read the following paragraph:—

#### "NOTORIETY.

"The celebrated Corinna, mistress of a certain Villa, not an hundred miles from C——y, has lately displayed great novelty of conduct. Attended by several of her train, and a nymph to whom she is guardian, she proceeded to that city on the first day of the fair, in a sort of triumphal car; and, crowned with bay, harangued the *mobility* in a manner which caused no little ferment in the public mind. Lady Godiva was deserted for this priestess of the new school; and the business ended with all that noise and tumult, which usually attends a popular commotion. The horses of the carriage were taken out, and the heroine was drawn home, by an infatuated mob, who returned at night to pillage the mansion of their new teacher. We have heard of several accidents which occurred in this temple of disorder and wild liberty. Most of the females, resident under the roof, experienced insults of the most degrading kind; and one or two *enlightened Parisians* were forced to save their *heads*, by an instantaneous use of their *heels*. The fair lady of the

mansion seems perfectly pleased at becoming the object of general animadversion, and, like another Helen, enjoys the confusion she has caused.

"*O Tempora! O Mores!*"

Such was the paragraph which Montgomery read with horror. "Good God! had Mary Cuthbert, the gentle Mary Cuthbert, been in a scene like this? Had the modest, the lovely Mary, been exposed to the rude insults of a brutish rabble?" He smote his forehead; he stamped his foot in agony on the floor; he wished—yes, he wished her in *Heaven*, rather than at the Attic Villa.

"The temple of disorder, say, rather the temple of immorality and licentiousness," cried he, "would that it were razed from the ground!"

Many hours elapsed ere Montgomery could recover, from the agitation which the perusal of this paragraph had caused in his bosom; but at length he resumed his studies, and tried to compose his mind; though this hardly acquired composure was completely overset, by a letter which he received from home, acquainting him with the dangerous illness of his beloved father. The filial heart of Montgomery bled at this intelligence; his father, his beloved, his honoured parent! could it be possible? and should he indeed lose him for ever? Must he be snatched from the fond arms of his faithful wife? Must he be taken from his helpless children? Helpless indeed! for on him had been the sole dependance of his family."

Montgomery lost not a moment in leaving Oxford. The letter of Miss Moreton followed him home, and his answer to it will best describe the hurried state of his mind at this period.

"DEAR MADAM.

"Elmsly—Tuesday.

"Your kind favour followed me to this place; and, grateful as I must ever be to you for its contents, and an explanation of your generous intentions in my favour, yet I must at this moment recoil even from a *perspective* of happiness! for, alas! I am surrounded by distress of the most afflicting nature! The grave receives my beloved father into its peaceful bosom. It has been my hard duty to see him close his eye, an eye which beamed with goodness and virtue on all around him. You, my dear Madam, will picture the distress of every individual under this roof. The gentle being who honours Montgomery by her good opinion, will afford him her sympathy on this most trying and conflicting period of his life. When my mind is a little more at ease, I will resume my pen to express all with which this heart is fraught, to the object of my fondest affection and respect; the gratitude which he must ever feel towards you, my dear Madam, who signs himself, Your obliged and devoted

FREDERIC MONTGOMERY."

CHAP. XXIV.

"Fallacious hope deludes her hapless train!"

LANGHORNE.

OVERWHELMED by distress, Montgomery had read the letter of Miss Moreton with trembling agitation. The sorrow of his mother, the affliction of his sisters, had almost bereft him of his self-possession, and he had been fearfully conjuring up the thousand evils which would await them.

His own prospects, if not blighted, were wholly obscured. Instead of pushing his way in the bustling and crowded walks of life, in order to further his advancement; his narrow path now lay before him. The small living which his father had held would remain in the family. He must

immediately take orders; and, residing with his mother and sisters, try to contract his wishes, and to repress his hopes; and be to them the husband, the father they had lost.

Montgomery had never been ambitious; but independent in principles, and liberal in his disposition, his warm heart panted to be the protector of all around; and his sanguine fancy had often portrayed, in the gayest tints, that picture of domestic felicity, which could not be completed, unless a gentle being, like Mary Cuthbert, had formed the prominent figure of the piece. Alas! this picture was now obscured for ever.

While such had been the gloomy images of Montgomery's mind, the letter of Miss Moreton had been put into his hand. He read it with the eagerness of a drowning wretch, who catches at a twig to preserve him from the overwhelming wave. He saw in it only a description of his affection for Mary Cuthbert, he saw (transporting sight!) that the dear maid returned his love! That Miss Moreton, her protectress, favoured it, and meant to reward it! Who can wonder at this misconstruction of the letter of Miss Moreton? Who can wonder that it was some days ere Montgomery became convinced of his mistake?

The interment of Mr. Montgomery had been succeeded by that calm which casts so chilling a feel on those who have recently witnessed the spectacle of human annihilation, and who mourn the loss of a beloved friend. Although autumn had scarcely began to tint the foliage with its varied hues of brown and orange; yet the forlorn group at Elmsly had drawn round a fire towards the evening; and whilst the tears were silently coursing down the cheeks of Mrs. Montgomery, her two elder girls were trying to repress their own feelings, and to engage their younger sister and brother, by artless prattle, to cheat their mother of her cares.

Frederic had strolled out; and the tempestuous appearance of the evening, as viewed from the high and tremendous cliffs which overlooked the sea; the rolling of the mountainous surge, and the roaring of the winds, had been more congenial to the present tenor of his mind, than that stagnant calm which reigned throughout his late happy home. A post-chaise drove up to parsonage gate; the bell rang violently; a servant entered the parlour; "A lady, Ma'am, wishes to see you," said the maid. "I can see no visitors," said Mrs. Montgomery, in a desponding tone—"But she is here, Madam," replied the maid. "I am not a common visitor, the usual forms of the world and the ceremonials observed in what is called society, are wholly disregarded by me," said the lady, advancing towards Mrs. Montgomery, seizing her hand, and pressing it energetically to her lips, to her heart, and to her forehead.

"I come to visit the afflicted!" said she, in a tone monotonous and sepulchral enough to give just expression to the words which she uttered—"I come to mourn with the fatherless and the widow!"

The little children crept nearer to the door, as the lady raised her voice, and extended her arms; and Arabella and Lucy instinctively advanced towards their mother, as if to guard her from her strange guest. But, composed under every thing which could now assail her, Mrs. Montgomery merely said, "May I ask the name of the lady who favours me with this visit?"

"And has not my Frederic talked of his Corinna?" said Miss Moreton, (for so will our readers have discovered the visitor to have been). Ah! tell me, tell me, where he is? Where is the dear, the pious youth? Oh! let me strain him to my breast, and receive the fond sigh of affection; let me speak comfort, happiness, and love to his sad soul!" Lucy Montgomery now led the children out of the room, while Arabella, believing that the stranger was out of her senses, looked out of the window, vainly trying to discover Frederic.

"Say, Madam," asked Miss Moreton, taking the hand of Mrs. Montgomery, "has not my

Frederic revealed to you our mutual love? our fond regard?" "Never, Ma'am," said the surprised Mrs. Montgomery—"Alas! my son has had duties to perform, which have exclusively and painfully engrossed his whole thoughts, and his whole time, since his return to us!"—"I know, I know it all; my Frederic wrote me the sad tale, and, eager to participate in his sufferings, and to comfort every individual of his family, I flew to this place, immediately as I received the heart-afflicting recital.

"But where is my Frederic? where is the partner of my heart, the beloved of my soul!" Arabella's face was suffused by the deepest crimson, at hearing these warm expressions issue from the mouth of a female; even, though the object of them was a much beloved brother!

She had heard of the unblushing profligacy of women who made a barter of their persons, and she should have suspected Miss Moreton to have been one of these, could she for a moment have imagined, that her brother had been the associate of such a character. But the strict morality of his conduct, and the rectitude of his principles, forbade her entertaining a shadow of suspicion against him.

"My son has strolled out, Madam," said Mrs. Montgomery, with some formality of manner; "he did not expect a visitor, I believe; and, though his meditations are much of a piece with ours, yet he would rather indulge them alone; for it is not in his power to comfort and relieve, and my Frederic cannot bear to augment our distress."

"Oh! he is all that is good and tender; my heart has found him so; and I glory in my choice," cried Miss Moreton. Then, hastily falling on one knee before Mrs. Montgomery, she said, "Oh! crown our union with your blessing; what have we more to ask of Heaven?" Mrs. Montgomery looked with fearful apprehension in the countenance of Miss Moreton, and said, "Are you, then, the wife of my son, Madam?" "Not absolutely his wife," said Miss Moreton; "but the monotonous repetition of the dull and lifeless words of that ceremonious observance, cannot more closely cement a union like ours.—Ours, Madam, is the sweet reciprocity of kindred souls!"

"I doubt I do not perfectly understand you, Madam," said Mrs. Montgomery; now looking at Miss Moreton with an expression of painful curiosity and embarrassment depicted on her countenance.

"Perhaps not," said the lady, "it has frequently been my destiny to be misunderstood; the lofty feelings of my soul impose themselves on my expressions; and I cannot easily reduce them to an ordinary level!"

Montgomery had, during his lonely walk, been taking a retrospect of his situation; and, though it was highly pleasing to the young lover, to dwell on the letter of Miss Moreton, and on the image of the charming Mary Cuthbert, (an image rendered still more dear to his heart and his imagination, by that attractive softness which her protectress had described), yet he tore himself from the contemplation; how could he avail himself of the generosity of Miss Moreton? how could he bear to receive obligations at her hands? and could it be any thing but the most selfish passion, which should urge him to take advantage of the prepossession which Mary Cuthbert had acknowledged for him. Alas! he could not be so ungenerous as to wish it; he could not be base enough to desire it.

A large, a distressed family, looking towards himself alone for comfort and support! He must *live* for them alone; he must *think* only of *them*; he must drive the image of Mary Cuthbert from his heart. He wished Miss Moreton had not betrayed the secret of her charge; a secret which had, perhaps, originated in her fertile and chimerical brain, and that had no other foundation than

that universal benevolence and sweetness, which the interesting Mary evinced towards all the world.

In the midst of his most tender soliloquies, Montgomery had perceived the impropriety of Miss Moreton's revealing her secret. He was sure the delicacy of Mary could never have authorised it; and he felt jealous of that purity, which had been invaded by the disclosure.

"But," sighed Montgomery, "Miss Moreton has no judgment, no discretion, no feeling. Oh! Mary, Mary! what a fate is thine, to live with such a woman! Oh! that I could but rescue thee! insure thy safety, and my own honour!"

After such a soliloquy, what were the feelings of Montgomery, when he opened the parlour door, and beheld the figure of Miss Moreton! He retreated a few paces, at the first moment of astonishment; but Miss Moreton hastily advanced, and, stretching out her arms, in an attitude of recitation, she said, "Oh! Montgomery, thinkest thou that in the hour of thy distress, thou couldest be forsaken by thy friend? When the tomb has closed over the parent of thine infancy, it is the part of true regard to meliorate thy sufferings, to soothe thy griefs! Thy voice called me from afar, and I hesitated not to obey the summons. It is in scenes like this, that a mind like mine is wont to unfold its inmost recesses, and to show the strong workings of celestial sympathy!"

A deep vermillion covered the face of Montgomery, as he stood, in awkward confusion, to hear this rhapsodic address. He had always felt an unconquerable aversion towards Miss Moreton; he disliked her opinions and her sentiments; but her manners were disgusting in the extreme, and, at this moment, he saw them through a most distorted vision. She had, in reality, never before been so strangely eccentric in his presence; and his breast, aching with the contrariety of feelings, which had followed his recent ruminations—Seeing in her the guardian of his Mary, the *would-be* benefactress of himself; burning to gain some tidings of the gentle girl; and fearing the construction which his mother (regular in her behaviour, and reserved in her expressions) would put on the strange visit, and yet stranger address of Miss Moreton; reading in the modest confusion of his sisters, that her manners were at once incomprehensible and distressing to them, he stood, statue-like; words were for some minutes denied him, though the pause of Miss Moreton, her extended arm, and her attentive countenance, plainly evinced that she awaited his reply. He at length said, "To what lucky chance am I indebted for the honour of Miss Moreton's visit?"

"Chance!" repeated she, "You *do* not, *cannot* misunderstand me, Montgomery! know you not that I came purposely to see you?"

"I—I am very much obliged to you, Madam!" said Montgomery, twirling a chair, and forcibly evincing to all but the lady in question, that it was the most painful obligation he had ever received.

"Talk not of obligation," said Miss Moreton; "an intimacy like our's, Montgomery, expunges that word from the vocabulary of friendship!"

A great deal more, in the same strain, was expressed by Miss Moreton before her wondering hearers, and her *astonished friend*.

Hurt and disgusted at her behaviour, Montgomery knew not what to do. He felt the impropriety of her visit; he saw, by the countenance of his mother, that her heart ached in the presence of her guest; that she wished to withdraw from the scene of mock sentiment, and mock affection, to pour out her sorrows in private; and that she put a restraint on her inclinations, in continuing one moment longer in the room; but that she thought her stay was a necessary

compliment to her son's visitor; and, in fact, the only sanction which that visit could receive. His sisters, too, ingenuous, open-hearted girls! plainly expressed by their countenances, both astonishment and disgust.

Vexatious impatience filled his heart. He longed to undeceive his mistaken mother and sisters—He longed to tell them, that Miss Moreton was more the object of his aversion than of their's.—He longed to tell them, that a sense of obligation could alone keep him within the bounds of common civility—He longed to draw the contrast in the picture of her whose image was impressed on his faithful memory—He longed to inquire after that gentle maid; but timidity, an unaccountable repugnance, prevented him.

In vain did Montgomery try to rally his feelings; his presence of mind had forsaken him; and he knew not how to start a subject, and scarcely to give an answer to a question.

Mrs. Montgomery had heard of her son's accompanying Captain Walwyn on a visit to the Attic Villa; the succeeding melancholy event in her family had prevented her hearing any particulars concerning it; and, finding the conversation flag, notwithstanding the florid display of Miss Moreton, she, turning towards her, said, "If I am not mistaken, Madam, it was Captain Walwyn who introduced my son to your acquaintance?"

Miss Moreton started. "That name is *hateful* to my ears!" cried she, shivering with affected emotion. "How is this?" said Montgomery. "What can my friend Walwyn have done to lose the favour of Miss Moreton?"

"He is, at once, the most *treacherous*, and the most *presumptuous* of mortals! Montgomery, he would have supplanted thee in the object of thy love!"

Montgomery was all attention; his agitation was apparent. "Ah!" thought he, "who would not wish to gain an interest in that gentle breast? Presumptuous! No! the fortune, the connexions of Walwyn are far, far superior to my own. No! I cannot call him so!" and he looked at Miss Moreton with an expression of interest and curiosity, which was highly gratifying to her, and which his countenance had never before displayed. It confirmed the painful suspicions of his mother and sisters; and the interchange of their looks seemed to express their mutual opinion on a lost case.

"I see thy doubts—I mark thy trembling fears," said the undaunted heroine. "Be calm, be composed, Montgomery; his unheard of temerity was punished by the loss of my friendship!"

A doubt of he knew not what, now pervaded the breast of Montgomery. He had seen enough of Miss Moreton, to know that she eagerly prosecuted any eccentricity which occurred to her imagination; but he had also seen during his stay at the Villa, that there existed nothing more in her intercourse with Mary Cuthbert than a general politeness. Was it, then, likely that she should thus warmly espouse her cause? that she should go such lengths to facilitate the wishes of a girl, for whom she had neither professed or displayed regard? and would not the delicate soul of Mary Cuthbert have revolted from her cousin's strange visit, and yet stranger avowal?

"Did you take this journey alone, Madam," asked Mrs. Montgomery, willing once more to try to relieve her son.

"I wanted not a companion," replied Miss Moreton; "my own thoughts supplied me with subjects of meditation, at once profound and sublime!"

For such sublime flights, neither the taste or the experience of Mrs. Montgomery had prepared her; but she found that her guest could not descend to the common and ordinary topics

of conversation.

Montgomery could bear the warring feelings of his bosom no longer; and, in a sort of wild eagerness, and averting his eye from Miss Moreton, as if to know his doom at once, he said, "Is Miss Cuthbert at the Villa?"

"No," said Miss Moreton, advancing towards him, and, as if to give greater force to her words, altering her voice, "I left poor Mary at H——; she is stretched on the bed of sickness."

"Sickness!" said Montgomery, now seizing, grasping the hand of Miss Moreton. "Sickness! Good God, Miss Moreton! Sickness! say you? and did you, could you leave her?"

"I did, I could, Montgomery, for I came to *you*!"

The expression of Miss Moreton's look; the emphasis on her words, could no longer be misconstrued.

Montgomery experienced a total revulsion of his frame; the blood seemed to chill at his heart; too late he discovered his error; an error into which his passion for Mary Cuthbert, and a fatal infatuation, had precipitated him.

But Mary was ill, was stretched on the bed of sickness! and while, at one moment, he released Miss Moreton's passive hand, and started back as from a venomous reptile, he, the next, more precipitately approached towards her, as he said, "Is her disorder considered dangerous?"

"I fear it is," replied Miss Moreton, "and if she dies, Walwyn, that treacherous ingrate, will have much to answer for. In accompanying me to visit him at H—— barracks, I took the fever which is now so prevalent there. I recovered, and was anxious to follow the leading star of my destiny, which pointed my steps hither. My ward's fate was doubtful when I quitted her, but—" "Madam," interrupted Montgomery, "there exists not a word which language can utter, to convey a palliation for such unheard of barbarity. What! leave her to the mercy of strangers! leave her when visited by a pestilential disease, to breathe her last sigh unseen, unheard, unpitied! Miss Moreton, your romantic eccentricities have borne away the common feelings of humanity, and of your sex!" "Montgomery, Montgomery! surely I do not understand you." said Miss Moreton, while Mrs. Montgomery looked at her son with surprize, though it was unmixed by displeasure; and the two girls held back still further from the *strange lady*.

"I believe, Madam, that you do *not*," said Montgomery; "seldom does plain truth reach the ear of *her*, who, inflated by vanity and conceit, is wholly swallowed up in self!—Miss Moreton, ere it be too late, take the advice of a friend: Return to your own residence—desist from those capricious and culpable vagaries which you have indulged at the expence of your character and your fame—return to the paths prescribed to your sex; and shew, ere you are lost for ever, that you have some feeling of shame in your nature!"

"And this from *you*;—*this* from Montgomery, the *obliged, the devoted Montgomery*?" asked Miss Moreton, stamping her foot furiously on the floor. "To what cause may I impute this alteration, Sir?—Where is the perspective of happiness which you talked of in your letter to me?" "Where, indeed!" said Montgomery, hiding his face with both his hands, and retiring in confusion to another part of the room.

"Look, Madam," said Miss Moreton, hastily searching her bosom, and producing the letter she had received from Montgomery, "Read here, and account to me, if you can, for his frantic conduct of this moment!"

"Oh! rather say my frantic conduct at *that* moment!" said Montgomery, snatching the

letter from his mother.—"This letter, this hateful letter was written when my senses were infatuated, entranced! It owed its origin to an error as gross, as it was unpardonable, and I am now justly suffering for my almost unparalleled stupidity! Suffice it to say, Miss Moreton, that I am extremely sorry for the mistake into which it has led you; and I hope that you will forget that you ever received it!" and he hastily threw it into the fire.

"Forget it? oh! never, never, never!" cried Miss Moreton; "Cruel, barbarous Montgomery! Have I not learnt every word of it?—Have I not lived on every syllable?—Did you not write this never-to-be-forgotten sentence—"When my mind is a little more at ease, I will resume my pen to express all with which this heart is fraught, to the object of my fondest affection and gratitude—"

"Oh! no more, no more! it is insupportable, it is *madness!*" said Montgomery.

"My dear Frederic, what is, what can be the meaning of all this?" asked his mother. "If you have deceived this lady by false professions; if—"

"I never *did*, Ma'am," answered Montgomery; "A most unhappy, a most unfortunate mistake involved my mind at the moment when I wrote to Miss Moreton; but I call Heaven to witness (except what originated from this error, and which was wholly a misapprehension) that I never professed by look, word, or action, an atom, a shadow of regard for this lady; nay more, that while her guest at the Attic Villa, I might frequently have been accused of failing in common politeness towards her."

"Oh! hear, earth and heaven," cried Miss Moreton; "*thus, thus* it is—even the tenderness, the softness of my nature betrays me; and I, like my *prototype*, Corinna, am doomed to bear distress in every shape, ere I reach the climax of my *destiny!* but this from thee! from thee, much-favoured youth!—Oh! 'tis hard, *too* hard to bear!"—and, sinking on the ground, Miss Moreton fell into strong hysterics.—Mrs. Montgomery and her daughters essayed their skill to restore her to composure, while Montgomery quitted the room.

## CHAP. XXV.

"Ah! still propitious may'st thou deign

"To soothe an anxious lover's pain.

## LANGHORNE.

MONTGOMERY rushed out of doors to give way to all the tumultuous agony of his mind, unheard, unseen!—The mad folly of Miss Moreton had disordered his temper; but the intelligence of Mary Cuthbert's illness had sunk deep into his heart.—From reveries of the most flattering kind, he had been awakened to hear that this tenderly beloved girl was, in all probability, breathing her last, the victim of a contagious disorder; that she was unattended, unknown, placed amongst strangers.

And what had preceded the direful malady?—A visit to H—— barracks. Heaven and earth! the lovely, the modest Mary taken to be gazed at by soldiers—to be exposed to their unlicensed stare, their rude and brutal insults; perhaps her fame, her reputation gone!

"Oh! can I ever forget the day, when, beaming with modesty and native loveliness, she entered the Attic Villa!" cried he, clasping his hands together;—"Can I ever forget the thousand nameless fears which glowed on her cheek when she found that the remarks of Walwyn applied

to her cousin! Oh! Mary, Mary, and art thou gone for ever!"

This last exclamation seemed to bring reason to the aid of Montgomery.—He returned to the house with more haste than he had quitted it; and, without inquiring about the *heroine* in *hysterics*, he took a candle into the little study, which had lately been his father's, and there he immediately addressed a few lines to Mrs. Deborah Moreton.

Apologizing in as methodical a way as his agitation would permit, he informed her of the sudden arrival of her niece at Elmsly, and the intelligence which she had communicated concerning Miss Cuthbert, and, with no common energy, he besought Mrs. Moreton to take some immediate steps for her comfort and safety.

Having finished the letter, he instantly dispatched a servant with it to the next town, in order to save the mail of that night; and, feeling his mind a little relieved from a knowledge of its being on the way, and having offered up earnest prayers for the recovery of Mary Cuthbert, he sat down to a calmer retrospect of recent occurrences, than he had hitherto been able to give them.

Through the misunderstanding of himself and Miss Moreton, it plainly appeared that Mary Cuthbert remained wholly in ignorance of his regard for her; and it was probable that she entertained no warmer wishes towards him than a common acquaintance would receive. *If* he felt some mortification at the last supposition, it yet brought with it a proportionable share of consolation. There had been something repugnant to his feelings, and derogatory to the opinion he had previously formed of Miss Cuthbert's character, in the idea of her having confided her attachment to Miss Moreton, and in her having been privy to the letter she had written him; but this was entirely an error—an error, into which he had most strangely involved himself, by the effervescent emotions of his heart, and his credulous vanity.

The character, the delicacy of Mary was still unimpeached;—She was still—alas! she was dying! Perhaps even now she had breathed her last!

Miss Moreton, on recovering from her fit, and finding that the cold, the insensate Montgomery had left her, could scarcely be persuaded to stay under his mother's roof for the remaining part of the night; but this Mrs. Montgomery insisted on, and, having laid her troublesome guest on her pillow, she besought her son to give her an explanation of the extraordinary scene which she had witnessed.

To his mother and his sisters, Montgomery would no longer have any reserve. He gave a short history of his first introduction to Mary Cuthbert, and of his succeeding visit to the Attic Villa. He painted Miss Moreton's character in the colours which he had viewed it in; and he took shame to himself, in the mixture of blindness and vanity which had bewildered him, so as to make him misconstrue her letter.

"Thus far, my dear Madam," said Montgomery, "I have explained myself, as it is necessary to your Frederic's peace of mind, that his mother should have no doubts of his conduct, but no farther shall I go.—*Never* shall Miss Moreton hear me confess the origin of my mistake—never shall the name of Mary Cuthbert be breathed by me in her hearing.—I cannot so profane my passion—a passion, of which the object of it must ever remain in ignorance. I took no steps to gain her affections; for, knowing my situation, it would have been base and cruel to have done so. The lovely girl is unacquainted with my partiality; but I know the selfish, the ungenerous disposition of Miss Moreton; and, if she beheld a rival in her ward, the situation of poor Mary would be worse than it is at present—the present, did I say? Alas! the *present* may be her's no longer!"

Montgomery paused to stifle his emotions. His mother and his sisters cast on him a fond, a commiserating glance.

"I have already written to the aunt of Miss Moreton, acquainting her of Miss Cuthbert's danger," said Montgomery; "and, if it please Heaven to let me hear of her safety, I shall exert all my fortitude to struggle against an hopeless passion, and will sedulously endeavour to lose every other feeling in that of son and brother!" and he respectfully kissed the hand of his mother, whose tears flowed silently down her cheeks, as her grateful heart was lifted up to Heaven, in the conscious exultation of having such a blessing still left to her in her son!

Montgomery purposely quitted the house at day-break, in order to elude another interview with Miss Moreton; and finding, by this behaviour, that he was resolved to continue inexorable, the disappointed heroine departed, sighing as she got into the chaise, and muttering to the civil good wishes of Arabella Montgomery, who attended her to the door—"False, perjur'd Frederic!"

Miss Moreton had now determined on going to London. There she might, in congenial society, try to forget Montgomery's perfidy. She took H—— in her way, in order to make inquiries concerning her ward; but she had previously determined on not being troubled with her company, even were she fit to travel.

Spite of the taciturnity of Montgomery, her suspicions had been turned towards Mary; and she saw in her the insipid *Lucilia Edgermond* of Lord *Nelville's* present attachment.

To be rivalled by such a mawkish, ignorant girl, in the affections of the only man for whom she had felt a passion, was torture; and had she had an interview with her unconscious ward, in the present state of her feelings, she would doubtless have exhibited pretty strong symptoms of anger.

Hearing that Mary was alive, and slowly mending, she contented herself with sending a laconic message to Captain Walsingham; informing him that he should hear from her again, and that she would then give orders for Miss Cuthbert's removal, when sufficiently recovered.

Miss Moreton proceeded to town. She took lodgings in —— street, Covent-Garden. The Signora, the Monsieur, Germ, and Copy were in London; and she soon convened them round her, and they enjoyed with the Corinna, the pleasures of the metropolis, to which they were franked by her purse; and they had no sort of objection to partake of the *petit soupers* to which she afterwards invited them.

In the adulation of these sycophantic flatterers, *Corinna* derived some consolation for her rupture with Walwyn, and the pride-wounding behaviour of Montgomery. The theatre was her favourite amusement. There, with her paper and her pencil, she criticised on actors and actresses; and there she attracted general notice by her extraordinary deportment, and the studious display of her manner.

The Signora introduced her to many persons of *genius*, in singing, dancing, and acting; and a *ci-devant chere amie* of that lady's, of good person and assured address, who had been hair-dresser, valet-de-chambre, strolling player, and stage-harlequin in rotation, now bid fair to wrest the palm of Miss Moreton's favour from all beside. His person was not so attractive, as was Montgomery's; but then Miss Moreton discovered that he was an enthusiastic disciple of *Sentiment*. He reminded her of the dear Chevalier, in his manners, in the softness of his accents, in the tender melancholy of his looks.

Matters were perfectly understood between the Signora and Lauzune (for so had she

y'clept this Proteus); and a liberal sum was to be paid into her hands on his succeeding with the heiress. The Monsieur played on his dear Cremona, and smiled at these arrangements; Copy was too absent to suspect them; and Germ was just now too deep in the mystery of *gas*, to *see* any farther than the parties would have him.

#### CHAP. XXVI.

"Where'er I turn, how new proofs pour upon  
me!

"How happily this wond'rous view supports

"My former argument! How strongly strikes

"Immortal life's full demonstration here!"

#### YOUNG'S Night Thoughts.

REDUCED to a state of infantine weakness, the return of Mary Cuthbert's mental faculties was very sparingly followed by an accession of bodily strength; and, when she was perfectly sensible of her situation, and of the unkindness of Miss Moreton, in leaving her to the mercy of strangers, she seemed incapable of the least exertion for herself.

Her nurse, who had been won upon by the gentle patience of the invalid, with all the loquacity usually attendant on those of her occupation, and rejoiced at finding that she had once more an opportunity of making herself heard and understood, was loud in her praises of Dr. Saville's skill, and also of the kind and incessant attention of *the handsome officer* from the barracks.

Mary, to whom all that had passed was a mystery, expressed her gratitude to Dr. Saville, at their next interview. "I am grateful to you, my good Sir," said she, "for the preservation of my life; grateful, as it is the will of the Almighty, that it should be prolonged; which is apparent by his having blessed the means which you have used for my recovery. Yet, in a prolongation of life, I see nothing to hope."

"Oh! fie, fie, say not so, young lady," said the Doctor; "I must not hear that language. At your age, a very unnatural one, let me tell you—Come, come, I know more than you think for; you shall not always live with this confounded *quiz*, *odd-body* cousin of yours! and you have time before you, to make friends, who are more congenial to your turn of mind. To be sure, this Miss Moreton is the most uncommon heroine I ever met with in history or fable; and, I believe, nobody besides herself would have thought of putting you under the management of a gay red coat, and absolutely leaving him your whole and soul guardian. Ah! now you stare, and look prettily fearful; but the young fellow has conducted himself very well, and made over his right and title to you, with great heroism and wonderful self-denial, to an *old doctor* and an *older nurse*—and even now, he waits my permission, ere he pays you a congratulatory visit, though he comes here about twenty times in a day, and knows to half a second, how long you sit up."

"I shall be glad to see Captain Walwyn, if you think it right, Sir, when you are here."

"Walwyn, no, no; he is not the man; I have not such an opinion of his forbearance, believe me; Lesly Walsingham is the gentleman I am speaking of; and I am confident, that if good wishes could have helped you out of the disorder, he would have forestalled me."

A faint suffusion crossed the pale cheek of Mary; the Doctor watched the minutest

symptom; and, thinking the change indicated fatigue, he took his leave.

Lesly Walsingham was the next day introduced by Dr. Saville; and thinking that two visitors at once might be too much for the invalid, he took his leave, promising to call for his companion, when he thought it right for him to depart.

The air of tranquil serenity which was diffused over the delicate countenance of Mary, impressed Walsingham with respect and tenderness. During her illness he had had many opportunities of privately conversing with Dr. Saville; and if the good Doctor had been the restorer of Miss Cuthbert, he had performed a far greater cure on Walsingham, for he had dispelled the cloud of infidelity from his mind!

Dr. Saville's arguments carried great weight with them; for they came from man of science, and of great philosophical knowledge. He had attained the summit of human learning; yet he was candid and humble; for he was a Christian! "I know," said he, "that my profession labours, (unjustly I trust,) under the stigma of infidelity; but, tell me, Walsingham, has any order of men a greater call for the comforts of the Gospel? When we witness the most heart-rending and distressful scenes;—when we, in vain, exert out utmost skill to preserve the wife to her afflicted husband; to save the blooming boy for his distracted mother; to detain the orphan's friend on earth; *what* can console us under the failure of our endeavours, but the certainty of an hereafter; the glorious consolations of a Saviour's mercy, and a Saviour's love. We know in whom we have believed, and we trust all to him."

Lesly Walsingham had thought more within the last three weeks, than he had during his preceding life. The transitory enjoyments of this world appeared as nothing, when the glories of another were unfolded to his vision; and he entered the sick room of Mary Cuthbert a new man. All his outrageous passions were chastened, tempered by the convictions of his heart; and he looked at her with the hallowed softness with which he would have approached an ethereal being! Mary said but little, but that little was impressive. She spoke of her restoration to life as the mercy of Heaven; and piously clasped her hands as she said, "I trust I shall not be unworthy of it!"

As she said these words; as her dove-like eyes were turned towards Heaven, and Walsingham was surveying her countenance, with an admiration as unbounded as it was free from every worldly idea, a light step was heard on the stair-case; the door opened, and Mary Cuthbert was strained to the bosom of Miss Davenport! while the surprised, the entranced Walsingham, knelt at her side, and clasping her hand in his, almost devoured it with kisses! "Oh! Clara! Clara! Angel of Mercy!" cried he, "Beatified messenger of heavenly love! Oh! Clara, hear your Lesly's recantation! behold him not almost, but the altogether Christian."

Miss Davenport was busily engaged in encouraging and soothing the trembling and half-fainting Mary; but she remembered the beloved voice of Walsingham; the joyful sounds thrilled at her heart, and though she withdrew her hand, yet she did it not in anger.

Dr. Saville soon made the quartetto of this party. Explanations succeeded congratulations; and general satisfaction ensued.

Miss Davenport accounted for her unlooked-for appearance, by informing Mary Cuthbert, that she came deputed by Mrs. Deborah Moreton, to bring her back to Marlow.

"And is Miss Moreton returned to the Villa?" asked Mary.

"No, my love, she is not. It seems Mr. Montgomery became acquainted with your illness; and wrote an account of it to Mrs. Deborah Moreton."

Mary felt a secret pleasure at hearing that she owed any thing to the kind interference of Montgomery.

Eager to accept the proffered invitation of Mrs. Moreton, the recovery of our invalid seemed to keep pace with her wishes. An explanation of the most happy kind ensued between Clara Davenport and Walsingham; and the judgment of Miss Davenport now gave a free sanction to the choice of her heart.

In less than a week, Mary Cuthbert was able to travel; and the two ladies left H——, attended by Lesly Walsingham, and followed by the hearty prayers of Dr. Saville.

Mary Cuthbert was much hurt at perceiving the alteration in the countenance and whole appearance of Mrs. Deborah Moreton. "Ah! child," said she, shaking her head, "if the unheard of behaviour of my wild niece has almost precipitated you to the grave, it has likewise undermined my health; a gnawing canker has preyed at my heart for many months; and now, while I am in uncertainty about her, and do not know what wild freaks she may be about, and into what frightful schemes she may be plunging, I can never enjoy a moment's peace of mind.

"Ah! my poor brother little knew what would become of his *free* education, as he called it, and his *unfettered notions*."

Mary Cuthbert tried, by every means in her power, to divert the mind of the old lady. She palliated the behaviour of Miss Moreton, though conscious that when represented in the mildest point of view, it must appear wholly unjustifiable.

"I had hoped," would Mrs. Moreton say, "that she would have tried to attract Mr. Montgomery. He is a sensible, steady young man, and I should like to have seen him her husband; but he saw what a strange fantastic creature she was, and would have nothing to say to her. I am sure you ought to be grateful to him to the end of your life, my dear; for, had it not been for his kind and considerate letter, you might have lain for ever at H——. *I* should never have heard of it."

Mary *was* grateful to Montgomery; and she began to think that her gratitude was of a kind, which was calculated to give pain to her bosom. Insensibly she took the walks round the Villa, in which she had been accompanied by him; and she retraced every word which had there fallen from his lips.

The Attic Villa was undergoing repairs and alterations; but the servants were in ignorance of Miss Moreton's return, as well as of the place of her present abode.

Captain Walsingham had always been a favourite of Mrs. Moreton's. She had never known the cause which had produced a rupture between him and her favourite, Miss Davenport; but she was heartily glad, that any circumstance had produced their reconciliation; and when she looked at the bright prospect which was before them, she only wished that her niece had such an one.

But the prospects of the unfortunate Miss Moreton were closed for ever! Her untimely fate first reached her aunt, through the medium of the following letter from the Monsieur.

#### CHAP. XXVII.

"Great heights are hazardous to the weak head."

BLAIR'S GRAVE.

LETTER.

"MADAME MORE-TON.

"London, Wednesday, Twentieth

September, 1808.

I HAVE de tres honneur to *inform* you, Madame, a *cat-as-tro-pee* has happen dat will aston-ish you ver, ver much *in-deed*. You, Madame, have, no doubt, heard of de ver dread-ful *con-fla-gra-ti-on* dat happen t'oder night at Covent-Garden-*Te-a-tre*. Ve vas all just come from de seeing of de play. Madame More-ton, she look ver vell, ver vell, indeed, in de green and de silver; de long vaists vas ver *be-coming* to pauvre Ma'amselle More-ton. Vell, ve return to de petit souper, at her apartment, La Belle Signora, Monsieur Lauzune, Monsieur *Jerme*, Monsieur *Coupee*, and votre tres humble servant. Vell, ve ver merry, ver merry, indeed, ven we heard great noise, great bus-*teel*, great ringing of de bells; and den dey said de grand *magnifique* building, de Co-vent-Gar-den *Te-a tre* was all on fire. Madame Moreton, she vent ver fast wid Monsieur *Coupee*, Monsieur *Jerme*, and Lauzune, to see de fire, grand *spec-ta-cle*, on de top of de house; but, *helas!* dey should not go, for dey did not know dat de house vas caught, till too late. Monsieur Lauzune he jump from *pa-ra-pet* walls, ver high, ver high, indeed; but he vas used to *de jumping*. Madame More-ton she follow him, but she no thought it so ver high leap; she vas killed, ver *instantaneously*, on de ver spot she fell down on. Oh! Mon Dieu! how dreadful acci-dent! Monsieur *Jerme*, Monsieur *Coupee*, dey both escape, by assistance of fire-men! but, *helas!* Madame More-ton could not vait. The Signora be ver much sorry, quite *au de despoir*; she not sing one note of de musique since. Charmante Madame Moreton met wid so ver *tre-men-dous* *mis-for-tune* tragique,

"Madame De-bor-ah More-ton,

"J'avois de honneur

"to be, Madame,

"tres humble,

"tres Devoted Serviteur,

"JEAN JACQUES, LOUIS MYRTILLA."

N.B. It may be observed, that Monsieur *accented* in writing, just as he pronounced in speaking.

This accident, as related by the Monsieur, was too true, and was of too dreadful a kind to require any comment. Mary Cuthbert tried to console Mrs. Deborah Moreton; but she felt too much herself from the shock of this awful event, to be able to tranquillize her own emotions, or to compose her mind. After an affliction of such a nature, time must be required ere the mind can recover its tone; but Mrs. Deborah Moreton was able to exert herself before her young companion, and seemed to derive a new interest in life, whilst securing to Mary Cuthbert the fortune which had devolved to her by the death of her niece.

"I have enough for myself," said she; "every farthing of the poor lost one's must go to you. Dear child, you will be regular, and steady; may it prove a greater blessing to you than it was to her!"

The sudden acquisition of fortune by such an appalling calamity, gave a superstitious impression to the mind of Mary Cuthbert. "You give me these riches for a trial, Madam," said

she; "as such they are sent me by Providence. Oh! may I, by a humble, by a right use of them, prove myself worthy of the distinguished favour!"

"That you *ever* will, I am sure," said Mrs. Deborah Moreton; "Oh! an hundred and a thousand times have I wished, that the poor lost one had been like *you*! but my dear child the assistance of a *clergyman* may be of some use to *keep* even *you* in the right way.—Don't blush now, Miss Cuthbert—Mr. Montgomery loves you; he is worthy of you; and—*but all in good time*, child, I hope to see you united."

And in *good* time Mrs. Deborah Moreton is likely to see her wishes completed. Montgomery will become the happy pastor of his father's flock; and Miss Cuthbert's fortune will enable them to gratify the benevolent feelings of their hearts.—The emoluments of the Elmsly living will, with the full consent of Mrs. Deborah Moreton and her favourite, be secured to Mrs. Montgomery and her daughters, who are to reside in a cottage near the parsonage.

Mary Cuthbert does not wish to inherit the Attic Villa. "No, dearest Madam," said she, while conversing with Mrs. Deborah Moreton on the subject, "the Villa would bring us a thousand unpleasant recollections.—Comparisons would be made; we could not bear them; it would grieve us to hear them.—Peace to the ashes of the dead!"—"Amen!" said Mrs. Deborah, lifting up her hands and eyes; "the estate has not been many years in our family; I wish my poor brother had never bought it, from the very bottom of my heart; but no matter, I will sell it, Miss Cuthbert, and the money shall accumulate for your children!"

Thus we must draw our curtain, telling our readers that, in all human probability, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery, and Mr. and Mrs. Walsingham will maintain an uninterrupted and friendly intercourse, and that Mrs. Deborah Moreton will be a witness of their happiness.

We fear that we shall be *accused* of the *murder* of Miss Moreton, our redoubtable heroine; but, reader! in the intricacies of her *destiny*, we had *imposed* on ourselves no easy task. It was impossible to let a lady on stilts slide down *gently*—and, (be merciful, O reader!) it was not *murder*, believe us, but accidental death.

THE END.

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