

THE  
CURATE  
AND HIS  
DAUGHTER;  
*A CORNISH TALE.*

BY  
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EXCURSION—THE NOBILITY OF THE HEART—  
THE WEDDING DAY, &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

..... No mother's care  
Shielded my infant innocence with prayer;  
No father's guardian hand my youth maintained,  
Called forth my virtues, and from vice restrained.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alone from strangers every comfort flowed.  
SAVAGE.

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CURATE  
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CHAP. I.

THE parsonage house was an old fashioned building, and much gone to decay, yet its aspect was by no means gloomy. The walls were almost entirely concealed by the luxuriance of the vine which half hid the lattice; and such an inviting air of serenity prevailed, as seemed to characterize the happiness which dwelt within. The door opened upon a wide lawn, bounded by the glebe and orchard. The windows presented a view of the sea, a small inlet of which almost washed the cottages of the little village; and the surrounding mountains gave the spot an air at once wild and romantic.

In the evening a walk was proposed; the path they took led to a rustic arbour, enclosed by bold rocky scenery, whose entrance was almost impeded by the profusion of woodbine which carelessly wantoned around it. There was a rude table placed before the bench. A guitar, a few drawings, some books and flowers, were scattered upon it.

The earl requested the young lady to touch the guitar.

“My daughter,” replied his host, “has a pleasing voice, but we have no leisure for superfluous accomplishments. I sometimes, however, indulge her, by allowing her to accompany herself on that simple instrument, as she is self-taught.”

Lord Seyntaubyne was so pressing, it was rude to refuse; and she sang a tender air in a plaintive and graceful manner. In speaking, her voice was soft and persuasive, but in singing, it was melodious and beautiful. His lordship was going to pay her many compliments, when the old man rebuked him. There was, however, an irresistible insinuation in his lordship’s address and conversation, which soon gained a complete ascendancy over the innocent and unsuspecting Anna.

The poor curate possessed too much native urbanity of character, when he observed the enjoyment his noble guest derived from his visit to wish him to depart, and he already had spent a week at the parsonage. From the castle his lordship furnished his host’s table with every delicacy which it afforded.

The secret attention Lord Seyntaubyne paid Anna, the ardency of his vows, the tenderness of his conduct, she was too simple to question the truth, for every word and action seemed to proclaim his sincerity.

Too soon did her father remark the influence he was daily acquiring, and how dangerous a visitor he had admitted. He grew uneasy and alarmed, and hinted his apprehensions to his daughter. It rendered her unhappy that he should suspect Lord

Seyntaubyne but of the purest affection. She separated from him in tears, and at that dangerous interval she met his lordship as she was retreating into the orchard. His insinuating address soon drew from her the cause of her weeping. He reiterated his vows of eternal fidelity and tenderness, and throwing himself on his knees, intreated her to elope with him from the parsonage. Anna shuddered at the proposal; she feebly objected, and in the deepest anguish tore herself from his presence.

In the cooler moments of dispassionate reflection she recollected with indignation and surprise, that notwithstanding the fervency of the earl's professions he had fixed no time nor place for their union, in naming an elopement.

Perfectly ignorant of the libertine characters of those denominated men of the world, a stranger to art, she attributed the neglect to agitation of mind, and determined, when next he renewed the subject, to entreat him to obtain her father's consent to their marriage. The wide distance of rank between them had never struck her. His lordship's protestations she believed too warm not to be sincere, and that without entertaining a passion for her, he never would have professed so much.

Anna had no knowledge of the world. She had been taught to consider a hypocrite so odious and diabolical a character, that to unite such an idea with Lord Seyntaubyne was utterly impossible.

Listless and unhappy, she strayed to her rustic arbour, and carelessly taking up a book, which was a volume of the *Mirror*, she accidentally opened it at the pathetic story of Venoni.

Her thoughts at first were too much bewildered to attend to what she read, but gradually she became deeply interested in the tale. She was struck with the apparent similarity of her own situation. Lord Seyntaubyne had all the persuasive insinuation of Sir Edward. She wept violently, at the relation of the grief of the old man, after Louisa's elopement with Sir Edward. She read no farther.

The earl, who had been sauntering over the lawn, entered the arbour when she departed. Curiosity to see what she had been reading, prompted him to take up the book. It lay open at the page which had so greatly affected Anna, and was wet with her tears.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed he, "what a villain!" He paused: something like remorse stung him to the soul. He changed colour, while he added, "Such is the villain I would have proved myself. I, like Sir Edward, would have stolen the old man's daughter, the prop, the comfort of his declining age, and have sacrificed her reputation to my selfish views. It shall not be!—Rather will I relinquish her altogether than prove so vile a wretch, for to marry the curate's daughter is impossible."

Such were Lord Seyntaubyne's wise resolutions; while remorse of conscience came home to him in the character of Sir Edward, who, like himself, had been received into the bosom of the old man's family—soothed under his calamity, and in like manner he was going to forfeit every law of hospitality. But when again he saw Anna his virtuous intentions were vanquished by the ardency of passion, as he had never practised *self-denial*.

The tale, however, had not merely put her on her guard, but completely opened her eyes: she was astonished at her folly and want of discernment, and she fain would have hated Lord Seyntaubyne; but that she found could not be.

Her happiness seemed to be so strangely interwoven with his, that to break the link of tenderness which enchained her, seemed to threaten her very existence.

In this state several days passed away in wretchedness, for she avoided all opportunities of being alone with his lordship. He saw her intentions, but wavering in his own plans, and led away by the violence of a passion he found it impossible to controul, with that art he knew too well how to practice, he determined at once to awaken and alarm her tenderness, by a proposed retreat.

At dinner Lord Seyntaubyne declared his intention of returning to Penrose Castle in the evening. As he suspected, at the information the heart-sick Anna turned pale and trembled, and the tears started in her eyes, when her father made no attempt to oppose his lordship's going; she took advantage of the first moment to withdraw, that she might weep uninterrupted.

In a short time afterwards the following billet was pushed under her chamber door.

“In a few hours hence I go to return no more. Inexorable as you have proved to the fervency and sincerity of my vows, refuse me not, too cruel Anna, the solitary consolation of bidding you farewell! Meet me in your woodbine arbour at seven o'clock, when I shall have taken leave of your father.

“SEYN TAUBYNE.”

To consent to an interview Anna felt conscious was wrong; yet to suffer this too fondly cherished idol of her soul to depart without breathing an eternal adieu, she wanted the courage to persevere in; and in a luckless moment, with an impropriety, which tintured with unavailing sorrow and remorse her after life, she determined to meet Lord Seyntaubyne.

How feeble is human nature.—How full of error and imperfection, where the conduct is opposed by duty, and where *self-restraint* is not practised. Then does cold philosophical reason shrink under the feelings, as if they had no connection with the understanding, and when too late to regain its ascendancy it is succeeded by remorse, repentance, and sorrow.

At seven o'clock the agitated and trembling Anna awaited in the woodbine arbour Lord Seyntaubyne's arrival. It was contiguous to the gate which divided her father's premises from the high road, and was overhung by wild rocky scenery. She was drawn unconsciously to listen to the vehemence of his lordship's protestations, which he reiterated with fervency, urging her to accompany him to Scotland, in the carriage she beheld waiting at a little distance, to carry him hence; and while in the act of chiding him for again making such a request, she was forcibly lifted into it, and driven with a velocity which took away her senses. In the struggle to be free, overcome with surprize, agitation, and alarm, she fell into successive faintings, while every mile removed her farther from her paternal dwelling.

“Oh forgive,” cried Lord Seyntaubyne, “the stratagem to call you mine. Life and all it has to offer is valueless without you.”

“Restore me, Sir,” exclaimed Anna, feebly, but with dignity, “Oh restore me to my father! It was ungenerous to take a mean advantage of my confidence in your lordship. I never more can respect a man who thus could violate the rights of hospitality. Whither is it you would carry me?”

“Inexorable,” replied he, “as you were to the ardency of my declaration, now, at least, lovely Anna, listen to the sincerity of my intentions, place some confidence in them, when I assure you, that if you will only suffer me to call you mine, we will afterwards return to your father.”

“Left without choice,” answered she, mournfully, “I yield my hand in opposition to my duty. I claim your proffered vows, my lord, as the only means to restore my apparent deviation from virtue. It is due to my fame.—It is due to my suffering parent, the conferring on me your paltry title, to prevent his sinking into an untimely grave. It is the justice I require and demand.”

Exhausted by the exertion of addressing Lord Seyntaubyne in so spirited a manner, she again sunk into insensibility, obliging the earl, instead of proceeding to Gretna, (which he now seriously intended, for the virtuous dignity of Anna had vanquished) to put up at the first stage they arrived at, and send for medical advice.

## CHAP. II.

IT was not originally Lord Seyntaubyne's intention to marry Anna; he meant artfully to draw her from her father's home, under the delusion of such an idea, but only if he could not subdue her will to his base intentions, to have recourse to marriage as a *dernier* recourse, rather than lose her altogether.

There is something in the form of dignified virtue and unprotected innocence which overcomes a mind not totally depraved by vice. The distressing appeal which Anna made to Lord Seyntaubyne, he found it impossible to withstand. He was subdued; and after a painful struggle with himself, his pride yielded to his tenderness for Anna, whom he resolved to make his wife. To avow his union, however, scarce three months after the death of his former lady, was not his intention. He proposed living with Anna in the remote spot where he now was in the character of a private gentleman, under his christian ones, of William Frederic, to be married. Such measures had been adopted by others, who wished for privacy; and it was only necessary to be asked in the parish church, three successive Sundays, under those names, to render the ceremony legal. Anna, still confined by a fever which threatened her life, could not know, and therefore could not be alarmed at the circumstance.

Lord Seyntaubyne desired the ceremony might be conducted as privately as possible. To that the sick and sorrowful Anna had no objection; and only the landlord and his wife, of whom his lordship rented part of a house, were the witnesses.

Urgently did she now petition to return immediately to her father; but every entreaty proved in vain, for Lord Seyntaubyne was inexorable. Unable to lull her anxiety, he consented that he would carry her home at the end of a few days; at the same time taking her promise that she would not write to her father, but wait till he presented her to him as his wife, as he had reasons for not choosing to disclose his marriage by letter. Such a request was unnecessary; Anna felt her heart sicken at the idea of addressing her father, until she could throw herself at his feet and demand his forgiveness, which she languished to obtain, and felt that no elevation of situation, nor even being united to the object she so fondly loved, could render her happy, until she was once more folded in his paternal arms.

About a week after their marriage, his lordship came into the breakfast room, booted, and said to Anna, "Soon now, my love, I hope to carry you to Penrose Castle, as becomes my wife. I am going thither to give the necessary orders for your proper reception. In the mean time you will remain quietly here; I shall be absent not more than two or three days."

Anna looked surprised and dismayed. She would have said, "Why may I not go also?" But she dared not. Lord Seyntaubyne would not submit to contradiction, and tenderly as Anna loved, she stood in awe of him.

Affectionately saluting her, he put a bank note into her hand, which she never looked at, and departed.

The earl, in returning to Penrose Castle, merely did so under the false pretence of preparing for a long tour, which he gave out to his domestics it was his intention to make, that his extraordinary absence might not create curiosity and idle surmise. For he meant to return to the remote town where he left Anna, and there reside for at least three months

with her in retirement. Allowing her, however, to write to her poor father, and inform him of the event which had taken place,—her union with his lordship.

During Lord Seyntaubyne's absence, it was rumoured in the neighbourhood where Anna was left—the extraordinary circumstance of his marriage—by some person who had chanced to see and know him.

The clergyman, to whom the report was circulated, alarmed to find that he had married a nobleman under a borrowed name as he supposed, and as a private individual, waited on Anna, to whom, in the most delicate and tender manner, he revealed the circumstance,—soliciting to know the real names of the persons he had united.

Horror-struck at the relation, she fell into faintings; and, unable to give any reply, was carried to her chamber. When she came to herself, indignant at being so deluded and betrayed, she was convinced, into a false marriage, frantic with grief, and shocked at the wickedness of such deception, where most she trusted, she formed the fatal and desperate resolution to see neither her father nor Lord Seyntaubyne any more. Often had she wondered at the mystery and reserve which he had practised, and the objections he always made to her writing to her poor father. Now, indeed, all were explained; the terrible conviction appeared with every horror before her. Sensible it was impossible ever to remove the fatal truth, or the impression to her father of her lost virtue, she formed the frantic resolution of setting off for the wild solitudes of Cumberland, and there immure herself alive for the remainder of her existence. She was persuaded she could not have survived a sight of Lord Seyntaubyne, after the cruelty and despection he had practised.

By the earliest dawn she softly stole down stairs, and escaping by a back door into the garden, she crossed some fields which led into the high road, when a passing coach took her up, and fortunately contained no other passenger. The bank-note she possessed was for five-hundred pounds: she had, besides, a few guineas in her pocket. Indignation seemed to give her strength and courage. She reached London in safety; and having, during her last day's journey, travelled with a very humane elderly woman, she with her obtained one day's asylum, and was by her attended to the stage for Penrith.

Anna fixed on Cumberland from no other reason than because it was the native country of her mother; and she had heard her describe it as a romantic part of the world. Far distant she knew it was, and therefore least likely to lead to a discovery of whither she was gone. The sum of money she had, would enable her to procure a humble dwelling, and hereafter, if she lived, she must find some mode for her future subsistence.

### CHAP. III.

LORD Seyntaubyne having arranged his plans at Penrose Castle, returned to \_\_\_\_\_, where it was his intention to devote his life, for some time, entirely to the society of his Anna. Instead of finding her with impatient wishes and tender anxiety, awaiting his coming back, great was his dismay, when a letter was put into his hands, and the landlady informed him the young lady had escaped three days since, she knew not whither, not having been missed for several hours after her departure.

The writing was Anna's; and the letter, to the following effect, was directed to Earl Seyntaubyne.

“Vain, my lord, will every attempt prove to discover the retreat I have chosen; as far removed from you as possible. I take of you an eternal farewell. Deluded, under the semblance of the most solemn of all ceremonies—taught to suppose myself the wife of a man whose name is now become abhorrent, the very freedom which proves my destruction releases me at once from an object who is entitled to no portion of my esteem, and whose idea excites nothing but disgrace and misery.

I leave you to the reflexion of your own conscience: I wish you not a greater evil. You never can restore comfort to the once happy family whose peace you have destroyed. But you must expect hereafter to meet with a just retribution for the determined cruelty of your conduct.

“ANNA.”

On the perusal of this letter, the unhappy Anna need not have wished Lord Seyntaubyne a greater evil than he experienced in the remorse and anguish which assailed him, notwithstanding the unjustness of her accusation with regard to the deception practised in their marriage. The loss of Anna excited such frantic despair the people of the house thought him a maniac. He flew to the clergyman, from whom he learned the source of all his misery. Unable, through any channel, to obtain the least tidings of the unhappy wanderer, he visited all the remote places in the neighbourhood, as the most likely to trace her; and after sometime, in hopeless despondency, gave up the pursuit. The violent agitation he experienced, with the irritability of his temper, brought on a brain fever, which for some weeks rendered him an object of the truest commiseration. The compassionate and sympathizing Lady Sophia, with her amiable husband, came to Penrose Castle, where they watched over him with the tenderest solicitude; for though her ladyship was rigidly severe in her condemnation of vicious conduct, and vicious habits, yet, when she could do good to an erring mortal, her benevolence was never withheld: if she could not amend the object, she considered it a duty to extend her christian charity, not only by wise council, but by deeds of kindness.

It is seldom that even persons, the most hardened in vice, do not view with reverential admiration the celestial form of virtuous piety; and if they are not edified by it, are, at least, prevented for a time from the commission of evil.

The little respect Lord Seyntaubyne had paid to the memory of Lady Sophia's sister, and the evanescence of his affection in so early and new an attachment, after the violence of his grief, had filled her with disgust and indignation. The disappearance of the

poor curate's daughter with his lordship, was soon spread over the country, and the known gallantry of his character left little room for her ladyship to believe that the lovers were united. But when she heard the unfortunate young woman had withdrawn herself from him, and that he was supposed to be dying of a frenzy fever, without one friend to sooth his pillow, or to represent the awful world, which was opening to his view, and whither he was hastening,

“With all his imperfections on his head.”

She prevailed on her husband to accompany her to Penrose Castle, there to remain till the scene was closed for ever.

By the unremitting attention of this excellent pair Lord Seyntaubyne was at length restored to reason, repentance, and deep remorse; becoming from that period a reformed and exemplary character.

No effort was left unessayed to discover the retreat of the hopeless Anna. Advertisements were sent to all the papers, intreating her return to the husband she had deserted, but no tidings could be obtained.

Many long years had now passed away, and Lord Seyntaubyne concluded she must have become an inhabitant of a better world. Time had softened his affliction, but it had left a shade of melancholy in his character which not all the gaiety of his darling Julia could dispel. It would have made his lordship happy to have been on terms of amity with his mother, but she had disapproved of his first marriage, and had declined the overtures he some years since had tendered, of a reconciliation.

The accidental and transient view Lord Seyntaubyne obtained of Matilda at Lady Maltrevers' ball, in a manner revived the impression of Anna. She seemed to live again before him in all her native loveliness. Vague and distracting ideas floated in his mind, yet he dared not trust himself with the delusive hope which in a moment crossed his imagination, and which, with a saddened joy, he was almost tempted to cherish.

After a sleepless and agitated night, his lordship rang at dawn of day for his carriage, and drove to Lady Sophia's at Richmond. The hour was so early she was not risen. He requested she might be called, and in a short time her ladyship joined him in the breakfast-room, not without alarm, afraid some accident had befallen Julia.

Lord Seyntaubyne was walking in hasty disorder up and down the room. In a tender yet firm voice, she enquired the cause of being favoured with so early a visit.

“Last night, my sister,” said he, “a fair vision presented itself at Lady Maltrevers' ball, so like in person and in loveliness my lost Anna, that she seemed again restored to this terrestrial sphere, and a period of eighteen years sunk into no space when this angelic being lighted upon me with heavenly smiles of love and tenderness. She spoke to Julia, whom, strange to say, she somewhat resembles. I should have asked my daughter the name of this fair creature, but agitated, overwhelmed by surprise and emotion, I had no power to utter the enquiry, and Julia had promised to go home with Lady Milner. I was half disposed to detain her, but ashamed of my weakness, reluctantly I suffered her to depart without satisfying my curiosity. Now, dear Sophia, as you most probably know all my daughter's associates, tell me who this interesting creature is likely to be.”

Her ladyship, persuaded it was Matilda he had seen, did not choose, for reasons best known to herself, to divulge either her name, or that she resided with his mother. The

resemblance she had often been struck with, which she bore to her niece, and it is possible the same vague ideas floated in her mind, which had taken possession of his lordship's. Too prudent, however, to disclose them without certainty of their reality, she merely replied, "Julia knew so many people to whose very names she was a stranger; and she would not take upon her to assert who the young lady in question might be;" with much address directing the conversation into another channel, while she insisted on his lordship partaking of her breakfast.

Lady Sophia was too much interested, however, in the subject to let it rest, except for the present hour, and pleading an engagement, set out with only a servant, to Doctor Arundel's, determined if she gained any satisfactory intelligence, to immediately communicate it to her brother.

After some indifferent topics, she led to the subject by speaking of Matilda. "I have often remarked, doctor," said she, "Miss Trevanion bears so great a resemblance to the Seyntaubyne family, that I am almost inclined to think her a Penrose instead of a Trevanion. Tell me, my dear Sir, is not the latter her real name? For I suspect," looking archly, "that you are in the secret."

The reverend doctor hesitated, and appeared at a loss how to reply.

"I remember," continued her ladyship, "that more than once, my good Sir, you have evaded the question. Be assured, it is not prompted by idle curiosity. I might see half the world without wishing to hear their names, or to be personally acquainted with them."

"Then let Matilda, my dear lady, be added to that half world."

"How strangely mysterious," cried she, sighing, "is the situation of this interesting young creature. If she has parents living, why are they not made known to her? If she has not, the Dowager Lady Seyntaubyne ought at once to proclaim to the world, that she is a destitute orphan, born in wedlock, whom she has adopted, and not allow her to be subject to the erroneous and ill-natured surmises of the world. For, if Trevanion be not a name given her by chance, then is it fondly cherished by one, who, were the events of her life made known, would take her to his bosom, and spare Lady Seyntaubyne's adoption."

"You distress me, madam," replied Doctor Arundel; "I am in confidence bound not to disclose the little I know of Matilda's history. I should be happy, were it no breach of honour, to extend my confidence to you. Be assured, however, that Lady Seyntaubyne will give her a portion suited to the elevated sphere in which she is placed. Whatever may be her name—her connections—her claim on others, in the way of relationship, while the dowager lives, I am assured, she will never part with her; for to her charge she was individually consigned by a dying relation, with a sacred promise, *never*, by either persuasion, nor pretended right, to relinquish her to another. She accepted the solemn charge. She has nobly fulfilled it; and though I lament that in some points her ladyship has rather considered Matilda's worldly interest, than what might more permanently tend to her future happiness, much praise is due for the truly maternal part she has acted. To strangers, the noble qualities which adorn her character are unknown; she is generous without ostentation, warm and zealous in her friendships, and though she possesses some faults, she has eminent virtues. I regret her implacability towards her son. For several years he has merited her affection; but she could never tolerate his want of self-denial in his vicious propensities, and considered one unfortunate act of his life an enormous crime."

“I no longer urge you, Sir,” replied Lady Sophia, “to disclose more than you now have, in regard to Miss Trevanion’s history. You have elucidated some circumstances to my satisfaction, which strangely agree with a certain association of events long passed away, confirming, as strangely, ideas which, whenever I have seen Miss Trevanion, have idly floated in my mind. We will drop the subject, and if ever her real name transpires, she will have no cause to lament being known to the persons to whom she will find herself closely allied. It is best, till that happens, all relating to her should remain in oblivion.”

Her ladyship took leave. She thought it cruel to torture Lord Seyntaubyne with vague surmises, and therefore she determined to leave to future chance the renewal of Matilda’s case.

#### CHAP. IV.

IT was two days after the preceding conversation Julia was engaged with her aunt to dine at Sir Charles Dashwood's. On her return from her visit, her father was then informed of Matilda's name, and discovered her to be the person he had seen at Lady Matrevers'. The agitation he had formerly experienced was renewed with augmented poignancy. There seemed, it was true, no affinity between the person his mother had adopted, and the lost Anna; nor did it appear within the pale of probability that there was any; for never through any channel, direct or indirect, had he heard of her being a mother. That *his* mother should adopt the child of what she believed an illicit connection, so violent as she had been in her resentments, so unreasonable in her prejudices, seemed, of all things, the most improbable. Yet still the loved, the cherished name of Trevanion brought back a thousand tender images. The very sound was fraught with new life and new joy. It belonged to a being the very counterpart of his own Anna. Her celestial form was again embodied; and to behold this fair creature once more was the most ardent wish of his soul.

To Lady Sophia, the affectionate participator in his grief, he unfolded all his daughter had communicated. He requested she would devise some means of learning to whom Matilda was allied, and if it would be possible to see her.

Thus painfully urged, her ladyship again waited on Doctor Arundel, and related what had passed between the earl and herself.

The reverend doctor was absolutely averse from awakening in his lordship the slightest hope, without it was possible to prove the certainty of her tender relationship, in which case he then would have a right to bring forth his claims; but without being able to do so, by legal authority, it would be only occasioning himself fruitless anxiety.

This judicious council Lady Sophia related to the earl; who, though he perceived the fallacy of surmises, he could not dismiss them, and at length determined, without acquainting his sister, to take a bold measure, which was, at once to write to his mother, with whom he had not had any intercourse for a series of years. His lordship's letter was as follows:—

*To Countess Dowager Seyntaubyne.*

“MADAM,

“Nearly twenty years seem to have dissolved the tender interest and affection which usually subsist between a parent and child. When family dissensions unhappily occur, they generally arise from wilful error on both sides; and while each person remains averse from concession, the breach becomes so wide that time rather augments than diminishes it.

“Such, madam, has been our ill-judged case. You, from implacability, have been deprived the joy of beholding your lovely grand-daughter, Julia Penrose, who could not fail of exciting interest in your bosom. Do not allow the prejudice you imbibed against her mother to be longer extended towards your child. In forgiving my union with Lady Julia O'Brian, which so much offended you, forgive also a succeeding one with a lowly maiden, which proved less consonant to your wishes.

“The objects you disapproved have ceased to offend you; they are each gone to join their kindred angels; and in the kindred one left on earth, which is sheltered beneath your maternal wing, allow me also to be a partaker of your felicity.

“It is essential, mother, to my future peace, to know *who* the *Matilda Trevanion* is that you have adopted. I urge you to disclose it; for if she has any claim to my paternal affection, oh! hold not back from me this angelic creature.

“Surely, if she claims consanguinity to us, it is unjust your not bringing her forward as your grand-daughter. Such she is, if you know her to be the child of Anna Trevanion. If, on the contrary, this Matilda is of humble birth, and obscure parentage, you have placed her out of her sphere; and you are depriving Lady Julia Penrose of that portion of your affection and inheritance she has a title to expect. It will be a stigma to the memory of my mother she would be sorry to hear offered to it, her having *willed* away her estates to a lowly stranger, in preference to her grand-daughter. But if, on the contrary, this Matilda is a *Penrose*, instead of a *Trevanion*, how much do I then owe to my mother, and how largely am I become her debtor in gratitude and affection.

“SEYNTAUBYNE.”

“Grosvenor Place, June 1.”

The countess and Matilda were descending the stairs to pay some visits, when the preceding letter was given her. She looked at it earnestly, and said, “I should know the hand; I am sure I have seen it before.” Then turning to the seal she changed colour, became much agitated, and enquired who brought it?

“A footman, my lady, not a minute ago, from my Lord Seyntaubyne’s.”

Matilda observed her ladyship was violently affected, by the variation of her countenance, but she dared not notice it, as she proceeded to the drawing-room, and desired her to go into the library and wait till she came to her.

Matilda obeyed. More than an hour elapsed, and Lady Seyntaubyne neither came nor sent. Lost in a thousand conjectures of what might be the purport of a letter from her son, whom she was not ignorant she neither saw nor held any correspondence with. Though not naturally curious, yet on this occasion she could not help feeling anxiety and interest to know what were its contents, when even the outside had entirely overcome her ladyship’s usual self-command.

Every minute appeared an hour while kept in this painful suspense. Matilda was surrounded by books; she could not acquire composure to look into, and she could only sit opposite the door, watching and listening to every footstep.

At length the drawing-room bell rang, and the next minute the footman appeared, who told Matilda that his lady desired she would not wait dinner, for she was going out on business and might be absent some hours.

Matilda’s anxiety and apprehension that something was amiss, overcame all idea of the countess’s displeasure, and she determined to meet her in the hall.

“Permit me,” said Matilda, in a tender accent, “to wait your ladyship’s return to dinner;” for she observed, though her cheek was flushed with displeasure, a tear she could not restrain, had forced itself into her eyes.

“I desired you would not wait for me,” returned she, hastily, “it is uncertain when I shall be at home.”

“Then allow me, dearest madam, to go along with you in the carriage; I will wait in it for you. It is now past four o’clock, and if the distance be considerable, it will be night before you are at home.”

“Don’t tease me, child. You are likely to be my torment, instead of a comfort.”

With these bitter and mysterious words Lady Seyntaubyne departed, leaving Matilda to digest them as she could. Listless and unhappy she was unable to employ herself. “*You are likely to prove my torment instead of a comfort,*” resounded in her ears. She could not refrain from weeping, and felt most truly wretched.

“Ah!” exclaimed she, “how happy is the humble cottager, surrounded by her family, loving and beloved; whilst I, a child of bounty—a solitary being—ignorant to whom I belong, yet set up as an object of envy, seemingly caressed and admired, how little am I what I appear to be; and how much entitled to commiseration, if it was only known.”

Such were Matilda’s mournful reflexions, whilst the countess was driving with all speed to Richmond.

She was above an hour in confidential conversation with her reverend friend. On her ladyship’s return home, Matilda perceived, that whatever had proved the result of her business, though she now spoke with much tenderness, her mind was far from tranquillized.

“Never, child,” cried she, “attempt to interrupt me, by what I know you intend well meant attention, when my thoughts are occupied. I cannot bear to be put out of my way. In future, when you observe any thing has disconcerted me, take no notice of it, if you wish to escape a rebuke, for I despise all sort of sympathy.

“However,” continued she, “as a punishment for your intended kindness, I shall send you to-morrow out of my way. You are to spend it with Doctor and Mrs. Arundel. I have prepared them to expect you: good people, they long to see you.

“Now tell me, Matilda, shall you break your heart, if in two or three days hence we set out for Cornwall, and leave this smoaky town, in which, for your sake, I have borne the self-denial of spending almost five years.”

“No plan,” exclaimed she, delighted, “can prove so congenial to my wishes. What I have seen of London during the three months I have now dwelt in it, has been so adverse to my taste, so different from the pleasing tranquillity, and the rational delight which illumined the domestic circle at Doctor Arundel’s, that in your society, madam, I may anticipate a return of such days, and take leave of parties, in which my heart had no share, for they were divested of all enjoyment.”

It was evident to Matilda, notwithstanding the silence Lady Seyntaubyne maintained, in regard to the purport of the letter which she had received, that she had disclosed its contents to Doctor Arundel, and their sudden departure from town was the result. Had she been permitted a close intercourse with her friends at Richmond, her regret would have been infinite in the prospect of so distant a removal from them, but in her present situation she looked forward with pure satisfaction to the sequestered life she had the hope of spending. If little should offer to interest or delight, as little, it was probable, would interrupt the still monotony it would afford. She rejoiced in escaping from the treacherous civility of Mrs. Aldersey, the insipidity of the Butlers, the disgusting

compliments of the old Duke of Elmwood, and even to see Sir Charles Dashwood no more, for whom she entertained a sincere esteem, would prove a relief. From his society and conversation she had derived her only source of pleasure, amidst the numbers she had known. But of late it had become oppressive, from the unremitting attention he paid her, too marked not to be understood; and she felt it was not in her power to return it in a way which she considered his due.

## CHAP. V.

WITH eager alacrity Matilda in the morning prepared to go to Richmond, where she was to pass the whole day, and return to town on the following. She longed to receive the maternal embrace of Mrs. Arundel, and to behold once more the doctor's benevolent countenance.

When Matilda saluted Mrs. Arundel, who tenderly folded her in her arms, as she earnestly gazed on her wan and faded countenance, she exclaimed with emotion, "My dear child—our own Matilda—unaltered, I perceive, in affection, by the gleam of sunshine in that good-humoured countenance. But why, my love, have you been so great a stranger?"

"We would quarrel with you, Matilda," interrupted the reverend doctor, "if we thought it was your fault. Old people are very tenacious of attention from the young; and though it is the fashion, and apparently the maxim, of the present day, to slight and disrespect those who are no longer young, I hope, my dear, it is a maxim which you will have too much wisdom to follow. If young people only knew the amiable light they appear in when

'They rock the cradle of declining age,'

and what silly frivolous beings they are considered by persons of sense when they assume an opposite mode of conduct, they would learn to estimate themselves.

"But tell me ingenuously, my dear Matilda, whether you prefer the life of a town-bred lady to the simple habits and domestic sameness which you experienced beneath our roof? You do not look happier. Late hours and heated rooms have stolen the roses from your cheeks, and the remaining lily droops by their absence."

"I can never be happier," said she, with animation, "I fear never so happy, as in those former days, when you, Sir, and my maternal Mrs. Arundel prevented every reasonable wish by your kindness."

"I have heard," exclaimed the doctor, "of numberless suitors in your train. Take an old man's advice, my dear—be wary whom you select. Do not listen to the vain coxcombs who flutter about every young woman, that is considered the fashion. Believe me, it is not the sort of notoriety to give you consequence in life. It will make you, indeed, the theme of every busy tongue; but rather aim at attaining the respect which can alone be derived from being seldom seen, and little known. Be assured, that a woman's surest safeguard is retreat."

"It is reported," said Mrs. Arundel, "that you have given ear to Sir Charles Dashwood's addresses. He is well spoken of by Lady Sophia Clairville, and therefore, I am sure, deserving of being so. Yet I would prefer a younger lover for our Matilda."

"Talk not, madam," interrupted she, hastily, "I beseech you, of lovers: so many are given to me, I am weary and disgusted with hearing their names."

"I am sorry," cried the doctor, very seriously, "report has been so busy: nothing can be more detrimental to the respect and advantage of a young and interesting female than such a circumstance. Without perhaps deserving, she will have the reputation of a flirt and a coquet, an enslaver of hearts. Young men may like the society of such a

woman *pour passer le tems*, but no sober thinking one would wish to make her his wife; and those most likely to render her happy are the ones to keep aloof.

“Fortunately, my dear child,” added the reverend doctor, “you are going from this contagious city; I observe that hitherto you have retained all that native purity of character which I trust will never desert you, and is likely to prove one of your chief attractions to an amiable man.”

A summons to dinner put a period to the discourse; and once again Matilda sat down to their social and happy table.

After tea, the evening looked so lovely, and wore that serene aspect, which towards the close of a sultry summer evening it often assumes, when scarcely a breeze whispers through the trees, and the declining sun falls in long shadows on the landscape, Matilda wished to enjoy it, and wander in the pleasure-garden which margined the river. She excused herself to her friends: it was the beginning of June, and the first time since she had quitted Richmond that she had beheld the reposing beauty of such enchanting scenery. She paused to contemplate it. The verdant meadows, in which groups of cattle were feeding, were richly enamelled with golden king’s cups, and enclosed by thick hedges, where the wild rose and woodbine grew in such luxuriance, as to send forth the most delicious fragrance. The translucent Thames reflected the pensile branches of the trees, while on its clear bosom boats and pleasure-barges were gliding; and as the sun disappeared in the western sky, it was richly coloured with a crimson hue in a cloudless horizon.

The sounds which alone interrupted the stillness of the slumbering landscape were of the most inspiring nature. A pleasure-barge, decked with a white awning and streamers, glided down the river, with a party, the sound of whose horns and clarionets sounded on the breeze, while every grove was made vocal by the plaintive songs of innumerable nightingales.

Matilda stood gazing and listening till approaching twilight almost hid every object from her view. At length she mournfully exclaimed, “Sweet spot! I take of ye, perhaps, an eternal farewell. Scene of my departed joys, of my happiest years, pure and tranquil as the days which then were my portion. Fostered with maternal tenderness in this terrestrial paradise, fond remembrance shall often recal ye to my thoughts when far far distant.

“Venerable and respected friends,” continued she, “Matilda Trevanion will ever cherish you in her heart. No time shall banish ye; and when discontent or sorrow prevails, then will she think of the wisdom of your councils, and endeavour to make them the guide of her life.

“And you too, sweetest Lady Sophia, bright pattern of every excellence, whose friendship was too large a portion of happiness to be permitted the indulgence, of you also I take a sad farewell! Be ye blessed in the affection—in the society of your children—for Julia Penrose soon will be your daughter. Ah, too lovely and interesting Julia—innocent bane of my peace—make Clairville happy—Matilda wishes it—oh, how ardently! Slight not his tenderness—and think not your felicity alloyed, because she, alas! was too prone to estimate the virtues of your husband.”

Again the sound of music rose on the breeze. It was accompanied by voices. Matilda listened attentively, for the air was familiar to her: she had often sung it with Lady Julia. The words, from Metastasio, were tender and pathetic. She observed the party

were making towards the garden, and putting to shore. She would have retreated, but in the next moment she heard a voice, whose well known accent thrilled her to the soul, exclaim, "There is some female pacing the reverend doctor's garden, *in mournful meditation.*"

"Speak to her, Clairville," said Lady Julia (for it was Matilda's Richmond friends.)

Clairville, who by the indistinct light, yet thought he recognized the figure of Matilda, cried—

"Fair nymph,  
In thy orisons be all my sins remembered."

Matilda, who found it was in vain to escape, approached the boat, and with as firm a voice as she could command, exclaimed—

"That strain again,  
O it comes o'er my ear like the sweet south,  
That breathes upon a bed of violets."

In a moment Matilda was recognised by Julia, who replied, "Away with heroics, though this indeed is the scene for inspiration—push to shore, Clairville, and let us greet our charming friend. But whence come you, that at so late an hour, a benighted maiden, you are wandering in this spot in solitude?"

"My solitude is voluntary," she replied; "and the shades of night, I believed, would have concealed me even from my friends."

"Dear Matilda," cried Lady Sophia, "I rejoice to see you. We will storm the doctor's castle; I presume there is no company, without," added she, archly, "there is some incognito in that arbour. Sir Charles Dashwood, for instance, '*in such a night as this.*'" She was going on, when Matilda, much hurt, said, "I did not expect this from your ladyship."

Lady Sophia, concerned that she had unwittingly given her young friend pain, was going to reply, when Doctor Arundel called from the walk, "My wife, Matilda, is anxious you should come out of the night air. But I was not aware you had such engaging company to detain you." He invited the party into his house, and the invitation was cheerfully accepted.

The air and manner of Julia was lively and unembarrassed. She expressed sincere pleasure in meeting Matilda thus unexpectedly. Not so Clairville; he became silent, cold, abstracted, and took no part in the conversation.

"What enjoyments," cried Lady Sophia, "are those people loosing who are immured in London, in such a season, when all nature courts us so powerfully in every varied form; it is wonderful there are any who can refuse its alluring voice, who have reason and free-will. How artificial are the modes of enjoyment custom lays down. To dine by borrowed light\* in the month of June, when the glorious sun bursts in all its

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\* Some fashionable persons of the present day breakfast at three o'clock in the afternoon, dine about ten at night, and cannot attend divine service on Sunday, even in the afternoon, at their parish church, *not being ready in time.*

radiance on every object. O it is a monstrous absurdity, to be shut up in heated rooms—oppressed with *ennuie*, for want of air, and all this because it is the fashion. It is a direktion of all rationality, perverting the system of things, by introducing false taste and false indulgence.

“I hope,” continued her ladyship, addressing Matilda, “that you, dear Miss Trevanion, will not undergo such durance vile; but that we shall often see you at Richmond in the course of the summer.”

“You see me here,” returned she, mournfully, “to say I come not again. In a few days we go to Pengwilly Hall.”

“To remain long?” asked Clairville, eagerly. Yet why he asked a question in which he felt he ought to take no interest, he scarcely knew when his future destiny was marked out for him, and soon to be decided by so important an event as his marriage with Julia.

“Young ladies’ movements,” interrupted Lady Sophia, hastily, “are among these events which it is not always politic to disclose; they are often influenced by such various causes.”

“Clairville is anxious,” said his cousin, sportively, “to bid you beware, Matilda, of a little lurking god, who generally lies in ambush amidst the deep shades of sequestered woods to entrap poor maidens—though, in truth, if I am to judge by your looks, he has already been somewhat busy.”

“O, no,” cried Lady Sophia, alarmed for her young friend, “Miss Trevanion rather looks the

‘Pensive nun, devout and pure,  
‘Sober, steadfast, and demure.’

“But a truce with all this nonsense. If Mrs. Arundel will give us some supper, for I know she has not banished the old fashioned sociable tablecloth, but still makes her guests sit round her hospitable board, we will partake of it, and then return home.”

Lively and general conversation succeeded the social meal, and it was midnight when they rose to depart.

“Matilda,” exclaimed the doctor, looking at his watch, “you have absolutely brought your dissipated hours into my sober house, so infectious is bad example.”

“Yes,” answered Lady Sophia,

‘Parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night, till it be morrow,’

“So, in one word, dear Matilda, positively I will have no taking leave—it is a mournful sort of business which I do not like. I desire, Clairville and Julia, you will depart without one word of regrets, adieus, and all those frightful appendages which accompany separation.”

Her ladyship saw her son’s agitation, who changed colour alternately, and therefore she wisely included her niece in the authority she assumed.

It was not even at Richmond Matilda tasted repose, so little influence has the most inviting spot over the mind when it is not at peace with itself. She arose in the morning with the same sleepless eyes and pallid countenance she of late had done in Soho Square.

Doctor Arundel's penetration read what was passing in her thoughts. In the morning when he shook hands with her, he said,—“This will never do my sweet young friend.”

Matilda, sensible he guessed the mournful ideas which occupied her, blushed deeply, while he continued—“It is not London or Richmond, my dear, which is longer a suitable residence for you. I rejoice you are going so far into the country. Employ your time in various and useful recreation which will divert your attention, and all will yet be well.”

Tears came into her eyes. The tender, the considerate tenderness of her reverend minister, was so much like what she formerly had experienced from him, she was deeply penetrated, and returned in a faltering accent—“I will endeavour, dear Sir, to profit by your advice.”

Matilda departed after breakfast with a very affectionate wish and warm benediction from her venerable friends.

She tried to rally her spirits, and not suffer her thoughts to revert to Albert Clairville; determined to view him with firmness already in the character he soon would appear in—the husband of Julia Penrose. However severe the pang would prove, she was resolved not to weakly sink under the trial, which, though a wise resolution, was more easy in the theory than in the practice.

## CHAP. VI.

ON her return to Soho Square, after the first salutations were over, Lady Seyntaubyne presented Matilda with a letter. It was already open, and she desired her to read it. A stranger to the hand, she enquired who it came from.

“Read, child, and you will see.”

It began, “Most lovely Miss Trevanion.”

Matilda, though little inclined to smile, could not avoid doing so, and said, “Either it is some quiz, or the person is mad.” She looked at the signature and saw Elmwood at the bottom of the page.

“O I’ve read enough,” exclaimed she, “this poor superannuated old duke is not satisfied with uttering a thousand absurd compliments, wherever he meets me, but must now expose himself on paper.”

“I desire, Matilda,” cried her ladyship, “you will go on.”

She read as follows:

*To Miss Trevanion.*

“Most lovely Miss Trevanion,

“Notwithstanding your persevering cruelty, I do not abandon the hope that at length you will condescend to listen to the vows of a man who adores you; and permit him the felicity of laying his person and fortune at your feet.

“The noble title of duchess few young ladies would have resolution to withstand. I not merely proffer my hand to you, madam, but a *carte blanche*, for Lady Seyntaubyne to fill up with a settlement to whatever extent she may think proper, with which I shall cheerfully comply. Be assured it shall be the study of my future life to estimate and render happy so angelic a creature.

“I remain,

“Madam,

“Your adoring and

“Obedient servant,

”ELMWOOD.”

St. James’s Square, June 3.

“Be not hasty, Matilda,” cried the countess, as she indifferently folded up the letter, “in your decision. Ponder on all the advantages of such an alliance until to-morrow. I rashly have given my promise never to controul your choice. At the same time you know how entirely I have set my heart upon seeing you splendidly settled, and this offer is far beyond my most sanguine ambition. You have formerly heard my sentiments in regard to the Duke of Elmwood. How little I considered his large family an objection. They will all probably soon marry, for they are handsome women, and with their rank and fortune, some man of fashion will be glad to catch at such a match to repair his broken-fortune.”

“Gracious,” cried Matilda, “your ladyship speaks of marriage as if it were a mere matter of traffic. Better at once advertize the ladies, and some sordid bidder will make his bargain, without considering either the intrinsic value or probable defects of the object till too late, when he may have cause to lament his unfortunate purchase.”

“You argue like an ignorant girl. But I have often observed, Matilda, you are fond of arguing without at all understanding your subject.”

“I argue, madam, not from any intention to contradict you, but when we differ, in the hope of being convinced.”

“Well, then,” interrupted her ladyship, “be now convinced that it is to your future advantage to accept the Duke of Elmwood.”

“Your ladyship has promised,” cried she, “never to controul my choice. Resting on your word, which I know to be your bond, so full of integrity and truth is your character, forgive me if I say, in point of conscience, were you to consult Doctor Arundel he would also disapprove of it; for when rank and fortune are the sole considerations, how inimical will they prove to happiness.”

“It is true,” replied Lady Seyntaubyne, “I would have given the preference to Sir Charles Dashwood, as he really seems to be fond of you, but he has not made an offer. I am almost inclined to tell him of the duke’s proposal, and then, perhaps, he may come forward. But if he were, I should not be surprised did you reject him likewise.”

“I esteem and value Sir Charles,” returned Matilda, “I delight in his conversation; but in any other character than that of a respected friend, I never for a moment have regarded him.”

“Would you refuse him,” said her ladyship, impatiently, “were he to propose to you?”

“He has not put me to the test,” she answered, half smiling. “I should regret he did, for I could not estimate him as he merits, and is entitled to be from the person he honours by selecting.”

“You have a strange way, Matilda, of parrying my questions, and never coming to a point. I greatly dislike indecision. Tell me, at once, whether you would or would not marry Sir Charles, for I perceive you intend to reject the Duke of Elmwood.”

“I certainly do intend to reject his grace, trusting, as I said, madam, on your former generous declaration of allowing me to follow my own inclination. To reply as you would wish me, in regard to Sir Charles Dashwood, is a difficult point. If my refusal of him were likely to incur your ladyship’s everlasting displeasure, and to disappoint the expectation he had formed of happiness, in being united to me, then would I practice the *self-denial*, in foregoing every consideration of myself, and think it incumbent on me to fulfil the duties of a wife to the best of my ability; and if I could not repay him with that tenderness of affection which his excellence entitled him to, I would by every attention to his comfort and happiness, endeavour to make up that void my heart will always sustain, even when the object I regard is alienated from it. I will never deceive so excellent a man by allowing him to suppose he was always its sole possessor. I will unfold the weakness I have been guilty of, and then if his generosity prompts him to marry me, he shall not find me ungrateful nor unworthy the confidence he has placed in me.”

“You are a singular girl,” observed Lady Seyntaubyne, kindly smiling upon her. “As I said, there is no contending, and you must have your own way.”

Matilda, grateful and delighted, quickly wrote a polite rejection to the Duke of Elmwood. She had scarcely finished her letter when Mrs. Aldersey was announced. Matilda, who was afraid of her raillery, if she saw the direction, in hasty confusion put it into her writing case, but not before her quick observation guessed that something particular was going forward; and she said, significantly,—“By that becoming confusion it requires, dear Miss Trevanion, no great penetration to believe those pretty fingers have been either signing some poor man’s death warrant, or else sending him into the third heaven in an extacy.—What may it be? Fatima was scarcely less anxious to peep into the blue chamber, than I am into that secret desk. Suffer me to be your ambassadress on this occasion.”

The entrance of Lady Seyntaubyne fortunately interrupted Mrs. Aldersey’s ill-timed raillery.

“The porter,” said she to Matilda, “will be here in an hour for your trunks; has Smithson got them ready?”

“True,” exclaimed Mrs. Aldersey. “I heard a flying report that your ladyship was going immediately out of town, and came purposely to know the truth of it.

“It is very true,” answered Matilda.

“Surely, madam, you will not have the cruelty to take Miss Trevanion into the country, when all the world are in town. No person of fashion now leaves London till August. Don’t you know that things are quite reversed. We spend all the winter in the country, and all the summer here. It is perfectly gothic to reside on your own domain; when, formerly, the nobility were so extravagant to keep open house. We are grown wiser in this age: we live only for ourselves; and turn every thing to the best advantage. Our houses, when we don’t inhabit them, are lett to the highest bidder; no matter whom, if it is but lett. Our very carriages we convert into stage-coaches. Nay, the master is so condescending as to drive his own men; and whilst they are idly rolling at their ease, he endures all the fatigue of coachmanship. I would advise your ladyship to have a dicky-box to your coach, to convey you even out of town.”

“Never,” cried Lady Seyntaubyne, with indignation.

“It is my pride to preserve our old-fashioned respectable customs. If every person had kept their proper place we should have had no revolutions in Europe. But equality is a fine thing; we feel the blessed effects of it. I drive my coach in six, and will drive it as long as I live. It becomes the wife of a British nobleman to do so. In my house, you should know the footman from his master, if it had one. None of your servants out of livery, aping gentlemen, nor ladies’-maids drest unbecoming their station. It is an excellent idea of some Scotch countess, I don’t know her name, who dresses all her female domestics in a uniform of tartan stuff. I think when I return into Cornwall all mine shall wear camlet.”

Sir Charles Dashwood’s entrance put a stop to the conversation. Matilda blushed from the remembrance of her discourse with the countess, as he approached her. Mrs. Aldersey, in a view for something, exclaimed,—“Sir Charles, I do think Miss Trevanion has been writing you, or some other happy man, a love letter, if I may judge by the becoming confusion I found her in.

“Whatever happy man,” cried he, gallantly, “is honoured by a letter from Miss Trevanion, if not inimical to his peace, must consider it, next to herself, an invaluable possession.”

Matilda coloured deeper than ever.

“You had better, Miss Trevanion,” interrupted Mrs. Aldersey, “go with me to Tunbridge Wells; I have just taken a house there, from September for the three succeeding months.—You will be quite *ennuie*, when you are buried alive amongst the savages of Cornwall.”

“You are not going out of town immediately?” asked Sir Charles, eagerly.

“Positively so,” returned Mrs. Aldersey.

“Could I,” replied he, with much emotion, “hope any thing, I might say, would have any influence, no intreaty would be unattempted on this occasion.”

“Matilda,” cried Lady Seyntaubyne, “has, apparently, no inducement for remaining; and without *some motive*,” (laying great stress on the words,) “there is no occasion to sacrifice, not only her health, but all my comfort, by spending a longer time in this disagreeable city.”

“Is not the pleasure resulting to your friends,” answered the baronet, “a motive?”

“Mere pleasure is a vague gratification,” said her ladyship, “when no good is to result from it. However, Sir Charles, if you like our society I shall be happy to see you at Pengwilly Hall, where you will find a cordial welcome.”

Mrs. Aldersey, offended at not being included in the invitation, rose to depart, and took leave. After she had done so, she said to Sir Charles—“I am going to take a second sitting at Laurence’s for my picture. You are a connoisseur, and I should like your opinion; if you have not any thing better to do with yourself,” (looking sarcastically at Matilda) give me your company.”

With a bad grace Sir Charles said he would have the honor of attending her. He offered his good wishes to the countess and Matilda, half promising to see them if he visited Devonshire in the course of the summer, and went with Mrs. Aldersey.

“The old dowager,” exclaimed she, “made rather a pointed attack, Sir Charles. It is plain she will leave no means untried to get Matilda married, even if she should be denominated like Belinda’s aunt Stanhope, the match-making countess. Depend upon it she has got some new plan in her head by going out of town so suddenly. I know Matilda is dying for Clairville, or I would recommend you, Sir Charles, to take her off the old lady’s hands. If this little upstart was not so pert and consequential, I should pity her being under the dominion of such an antiquated dowager.”

Sir Charles, who perceived nothing but malice in these observations, and had now forced himself to attend Mrs. Aldersey, merely to escape her future raillery, replied, that with Miss Trevanion’s attractions it was not probable the mode she pointed out would be necessary to be adopted by Lady Seyntaubyne; and then he changed the subject.

Had he been certain that Matilda would have returned his affection, he would not have allowed her to leave town without making her an offer of his hand; but Mrs. Aldersey’s hint in regard to Clairville had alarmed him; for, though he knew him to be on the point of marriage with his cousin, he yet was afraid there was some truth in Mrs. Aldersey’s remark, from his own observations on the day the party had met at his house. But he was determined to avail himself of Lady Seyntaubyne’s invitation in the course of the summer.

## CHAP. VII.

IT was with sensations of the most lively pleasure Matilda bade adieu to London; and every mile which carried her from the metropolis, she found her spirits exhilarated by the perpetually moving landscape.

When they reached the rural village of Hartford Bridge, consisting of a few scattered houses, at the foot of a gentle ascent, with its quiet and pastoral scenery, Matilda first became sensible of being in the country.—They merely changed horses, for Lady Seyntaubyne disliked travelling, and she was anxious to reach Salisbury that night, intending to proceed as rapidly as possible to the end of her journey.

Innumerable were the magnificent seats which they passed; but to Matilda every place wore the charm of novelty; and when they entered Salisbury, she was delighted with the air of uniformity and neatness which it possessed. She found the city seated in a cheerful valley, watered by the Avon, which flowed through the streets in clear streams, and surrounded by chalk hills. The tall and elegant spire of the cathedral, with the grandeur of its structure, made Matilda wish to view the interior, and she expressed a desire to do so before their departure in the morning.

Unfortunately for her the countess had no taste either for the beauties of nature, or for surveying noble edifices, and therefore said—“If we were to stop to look at every object your journey points out, we should not get to Pengwilly Hall for a twelvemonth. Travelling is so troublesome and disagreeable to me I shall rejoice to be at home again; for I have never been comfortable since I left Cornwall. If half the world disliked moving as much as I do, we should not have a set of idle people running from place to place, infected, one would suppose, with a universal mania, which could only be cured by either dipping into salt water, or sipping out of some fashionable font, enough to create, instead of allaying diseases.”

Matilda could not assent to her ladyship’s opinions, and therefore remained silent.

The country around Salisbury, of a chalky soil, and by no means rich in culture, Matilda thought cheerless and uninteresting; and although Dorsetshire presented an open prospect, it had not sufficient diversity to suit her taste. The unbounded downs covered with flocks of sheep, or whitened by long lines of chalk, had nothing inviting in their aspect, and the cottages were very thinly scattered on the road.

With the approach to Dorchester she was much pleased. The town lying on the green banks of the river Frome, and approached by an avenue of trees, had a picturesque air. The streets, without being regular, wore a cheerful aspect, though the town looked prettier at a distance than it proved on entering.

Passing through Bridport, the romantic village of Charmouth, lying on a steep ascent, on reaching the top, presented Matilda with a view of the sea, which blending its world of waters in the landscape, excited so much admiration, she exclaimed, with enthusiasm,—“There, madam, is the ocean. Only look what a sublime picture it makes in the scene—the bold cliffs projecting along its margin—the blue expanse of sea fading in the distant horizon—the softer scenery of the green hills which surrounds this lovely spot, with the beautiful tranquillity of the evening, are surely enough to make one in love with the country.”

“I suppose, Matilda,” cried her ladyship, “you have just been reading some of Mrs. Radcliff’s glowing descriptions, which put those romantic flights into your head.”

“I am persuaded,” replied Matilda, “with difference to your ladyship, you would not depreciate Mrs. Radcliff’s rich and beautiful style of delineating so true to nature, if you were acquainted with her works. For though I have no desire to lose my time in the perusal of romance, it is impossible not to read her descriptions with an interest she alone has the magical power to give. Even the author of *The Pursuits of Literature*, so severe on that species of writing, denominates her *The Mighty Magician* of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Doctor Arundel put the work into my hands, telling me, at the same time, in the domestic scenes I might profit by the character of Emily, in being properly taught to endure the pressure of misfortune, without yielding to the weakness of an over-refined and mistaken sensibility; while, in the descriptions, I should travel with them through the finest parts of France, Italy, and the Appenines, and see them such as they really were.”

“I wish,” replied Lady Seyntaubyne, “the good doctor had given you a taste for theology; it would have been more to the purpose.”

Matilda was not ignorant of theological subjects, though not deeply read in them; for the reverend doctor considered a perfect knowledge of the Scriptures the most important ground work, and the only sure guide to heaven.

Shortly after losing sight of Charmouth, the travellers entered into Devonshire, and drew near the ancient town of Honiton. Matilda was enchanted with the beauty of its sylvan valley, its clear rivulets, verdant meads, and the shady luxuriance of the hedges and trees, were so pleasing a contrast from the awful magnificence of the recent sea view, so rich and soft, as if breathing peace on every object. The arcadian appearance of the cottages, covered with the blooming myrtle, whose tender green leaves expanded over the white walls of the rural little dwellings, had a most romantic appearance.

Advancing further into Devonshire, the country became extremely unequal, which considerably added to the beauty of the prospects. The hills being usually verdant to their summits, richly interspered with wood, the venerable city of Exeter, with the river Ex rolling its clear waters towards the distant sea, and the valleys sprinkled with the substantial houses of the gentry near Exeter, gave the cheerful appearance of culture and civilization.

It was a late hour when they arrived at Exeter, and they left it by dawn of day.

Approaching into Cornwall, the features of the country gradually changed by no means for the better. Dark and barren moors, for a considerable extent, rendered several of the stages very dreary. The insignificant coppice-woods which now and then partially clothed the hills, after the pleasant woodlands they had passed, bespoke the sterility of the country.

Pengwilly Hall was situated between Camelsford and Strattan, and being nearest the latter place had the advantage of a more cultivated appearance, from the neatness of its town, and the pretty orchards and gardens which surround all the dwellings.

For centuries the antique mansion, Pengwilly Hall, had belonged to Lady Seyntaubyne’s family, of which she was a younger branch. She had married her first cousin, the present earl’s father, besides being an heiress on the maternal side. After the death of her lord, on quitting Penrose Castle, she returned to the seat of her childhood, where (except the late period she spent in London) she had past the last twenty years of her life. The two noble estates of Penrose and Pengwilly were within six miles of each

other, but the present Lord Seyntaubyne had never resided at the castle since the death of Lady Julia's mother.

Pengwilly Park was situated at the foot of a steep range of barren hills, and was approached by an avenue of Spanish chesnuts, whose noble and lofty appearance excluded the naked moors from the view.

Pengwilly Hall had nothing of architectural beauty to recommend it, being a large heavy stone-building, with inconceivably small paned sash-windows, and stood on a plain with a broad terrace in front. Behind the mansion, at a short distance, was the pleasure-grounds, laid out in bad taste. The walks were confined by heavy box hedges, and at each angle the yew trees, not suffered to extend to their natural growth, were clipped into the hideous forms of various birds. A large pond stood in the centre of the garden, filled with gold fish, and an old-fashioned pavilion, heavy and gloomy, terminated the principal garden-walk.

To shelter the garden from the bleak easterly blasts, on the hill which over-hung it, was a plantation of melancholy firs. Some noble trees grouped the park, through which moved so grand a piece of water, as to resemble a lake, where wild-fowl and swans resorted.

The hall, as is the case in most old-fashioned mansions, occupied the chief part of the ground-floor. Horns of stags, with ancient armour, pikes, &c. were ranged against the wall. At one end of it, a broad heavy oak staircase led to the gallery and the various apartments. There were several on the ground-floor, but except the dining-room, were by no means spacious; and from being wainscoted with oak, had a gloomy aspect.

Lady Seyntaubyne was once more in high spirits. At Pengwilly Hall she felt her own importance, and that she was queen of the whole dominion: in London she was nobody; neither respected for her age, her birth, nor even her fortune, more than other people.

She kindly saluted Matilda, and bade her welcome, though at the same time she added, "I never expected to bring you back to this place Matilda Trevanion. It is your own fault; so if you find it dull you must reconcile your mind to the lot you have chosen for yourself."

She assured her ladyship it was perfectly congenial to her taste, and she entered into a very cheerful conversation while they took their coffee together.

The chamber destined for Matilda was more spacious and handsomely furnished than the one which she had formerly occupied; out of it was a dressing-room, with a large old-fashion-bookcase to contain her small library. The view from the windows presented the most cheerful one, for it looked on the park and the fine piece of water.

Never had Matilda felt so happy since she had left Richmond; and the countess was scarcely less delighted to get back to Pengwilly Hall than she was. With a light heart she retired to bed, and immediately sunk into repose.

## CHAP. VIII.

IT was Matilda's whole amusement the following day to examine the interior of the building. She was extremely pleased to find a valuable collection of books in the library, containing the works of the first authors, in various languages. She determined to obey Doctor Arundel, and fill up her time, which he had happily taught her never to squander.

Lady Seyntaubyne spent so many of her hours alone, Matilda was left at liberty to devote those of her absence to walking or riding; and she anticipated much pleasure in exploring the neighbouring country.

In going through the suite of apartments, the collection of paintings arrested her attention. The gallery was hung with a vast number of portraits: the costume discovered some of them to have been done more than a century ago. One of modern style interested her much, for she imagined she somewhere had seen the person it represented. It was a full length portrait of a very handsome man, in the prime of life. He was dressed as a sportsman, and stood leaning on his gun, with two dogs beside him. A perplexing and imperfect recollection of knowing the object it was painted for, possessed her so strongly for some time, she inquisitively examined the picture to endeavour to find out who it could be, and at length recognized the face of the stranger who was so much agitated when he accidentally saw her at Lady Matrevers' ball, only he appeared at least twenty years older. While lost in curiosity and wonder at the odd coincidence, the old housekeeper passed through the gallery; Matilda called to her, and enquired who the portrait was intended to represent?

"Our young lord, to be sure," replied Mrs. Grey, "and as like as a copy can be to the life. My lady has often talked of having it removed out of sight; but I know, though she was so angry at first at my lord's marriage, and then afterwards for his running away with the poor curate's daughter, she will, when she thinks no one sees her, come and look at the very picture for an hour together."

Matilda could scarcely restrain the eager curiosity she felt, and looked at Mrs. Grey in so earnest a manner, the woman suddenly exclaimed—"Gracious, Miss! if you have not my lord's very eyes; and for that matter too, a look of my lady; only, she being old, they are not so bright, but they are the same colour."

When the idea was suggested, Matilda looked again on the picture, and could not help fancying there was some resemblance; but the circumstance was so strange, that the longer she dwelt on it, the more she was bewildered. She resolved to take the earliest favourable opportunity of soliciting Lady Seyntaubyne would relate the history of her family; for there was something so mournful in the circumstance of having no cognisance of her parents, it affected her extremely, and often gave a pensive cast to her character.

In the mean time, Lord Seyntaubyne, who with some degree of patience had waited a whole week for a reply to his letter, at the end of it again dispatched a messenger to Soho Square. Great was his disappointment and mortification to hear the house was shut up, and a bill on the window for sale. It was evident then Lady Seyntaubyne had left London altogether. He found it in vain at present to pursue the subject; but it was by no means his intention to let it rest; for as soon as his daughter's nuptials were over, he determined to wait on his mother without announcing his visit.

Lady Seyntaubyne, foreseeing what was likely to happen, and having substantial reasons for not replying to her son's letter, though her resentment towards him was dying away, and something like tenderness returning to her bosom, saw no other alternative than immediately going into the country, which plan she at once put into execution.

Notwithstanding Matilda's extreme youth, when she was taken from the only person she had ever regarded in the light of a parent, the situation of the parsonage had been too deeply impressed on her infantile mind ever to be forgotten. She recollected the name of the village Mr. Trevanion resided in was called Boss Castle. Charmed to find on enquiry it was within the easy compass of a walk, being little more than a mile distant from Pengwilly, by going at the foot of the hills, she was certain of readily finding it from its vicinity to Tintagall Castle, of which many legends were told, from being the residence of the famous King Arthur.

Shortly after Matilda had formed her plan, a favourable opportunity offered of effecting it. The countess informed her she should be engaged the whole day with her steward in looking over his accounts, and desired her to spend it as she liked.

Thus left at liberty, Matilda strayed to that spot dearer to her than any other in the world; and which, from being the scene of her infancy, was replete with interest and many mournful recollections.

The road she took lay through a deep valley, inclosed by mountains, broken sometimes by craggy fissures, and interspersed with brushwood; a small inlet of the sea washed this romantically wild situation, where a few scattered cottages, together with the parsonage house, formed the whole of the village. Old and decayed as was now its desolate appearance, Matilda approached the gothic ivy-clad gateway, with an agitation which almost subdued her, and she was obliged to pause for some time before she had resolution to proceed.

The little venerable church was half concealed by the yew trees which shaded it. Matilda entered by a stile its sacred boundary. A few straggling tombs marked the spot where

“The rude forefathers of the hamlet slept”;

while, beneath the humbler sod, though unstrewn with primroses or violet, yet,

“Spring with dewy fingers cold,  
Return'd to deck their hallowed mould.”

Treading with solemn contemplation over the awful precincts of the dead, which ever inspires a good mind, not with glowing ideas, but a cheerful conviction of the shortness of our sojourn here, and the happy termination of all earthly suffering, Matilda came to the grave of the venerable pastor of his little flock, the cherished friend of her infancy. On a simple stone she read these words—

SACRED  
TO  
*THE MEMORY*  
OF  
THE REVEREND FRANCIS TREVANION.

“An Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.”

Volumes could not have better defined his true character. The words thrilled to Matilda's heart, and tears of tender recollection streamed from her eyes. She seated herself on the grave-stone, and put up an humble, but fervent prayer, that she might so live on earth as to be worthy hereafter to meet that pure spirit, she firmly believed, was returned to the bosom of his God.

Almost sinking with the emotion which overwhelmed her, she next proceeded to the parsonage house. With a sensation of pleasing sadness she contemplated the exterior, for she perceived it was inhabited. The impression of childhood might mislead her; yet she thought, that formerly the lattices were covered with vines; and, that what now appeared to be a sort of cabbage and potatoe garden, used to be a rude sort of lawn, bordered with a profusion of flowers. Matilda was correct in her remembrance; for such as she had pictured the parsonage, it had formerly been. The change which it had sustained, was a true emblem of the vicissitudes of life.

She retreated by a gate which, leading to the road, was overhung by some wild rocky scenery, in which appeared a sort of artificial aperture, but it was rendered almost inaccessible from the unrestrained woodbine which covered it, and appeared formerly to have been a sort of arbour. With some difficulty she entered it, and found scattered on the ground, the fragments of an instrument, which, by the shape, seemed to have been a guitar; —a book torn, and almost from the wet rendered illegible, she discovered was a volume of the Mirror.

Anxiously interested to know to whom it had belonged, she was quite unable to discover. On looking around, however, she saw cut in rude letters on the wooden table, the initials A.T. and beneath it *Seyntaubyne*. She thought, yet she had no cause to do so, that some way she must be connected with the person who owned the latter initial of the name she bore, and almost was inclined to attach to it the fond and tender title of mother. She was so bewildered with the ideas which possessed her mind, she was by no means rendered happy by the scene before her, nor aware how rapidly twilight was advancing before she reached the hall. Accustomed to spend several hours every day alone, she had not been missed; and, from the unusual depression of her spirits, was greatly relieved when Lady Seyntaubyne sent to request that she would sup alone, being too much fatigued with business to see her until the following morning.

## CHAP. IX.

MATILDA, during her walk the former evening, observed, the nearer she drew to Boss Castle, the scenery improved in romantic grandeur. Determined to explore the neighbourhood of Tintagall Castle, she expressed to Lady Seyntaubyne her desire to do so; and, on the next fine evening, she was permitted to go on horseback attended by the groom.

The scene was awfully sublime. Tremendous craggy precipices overhung the sea; and the frowning cliffs, impending above her head, gave a terrific magnificence to the bold desolate spot, which was wholly without vegetation. A brisk wind rendered the ocean more turbulent than Matilda had ever seen it. The roaring waves, rising mountains high, dashed in foaming violence on the opposite rocks; while the scream of the sea-fowl, hovering near land, seemed to be the forerunner of a storm.

The ruin of the castle spread wide its high and broken ramparts, on a bold promontory jutting into the sea; and, frowning in gloomy majesty, seemed to defy the approach of any bold invader. Indeed, to Matilda, it had the appearance of being quite inaccessible; and, to those who might prove bold enough to venture to climb to what remained of this huge and massy fortress, she saw nothing to repay the stranger for his perilous undertaking.

As Matilda stood gazing on this once pondrous edifice, her imagination carried her back to the remote age when the celebrated Arthur, renowned for deeds of prowess and chivalry, resided within its walls; when many a festal gaiety was held, and the harp and song of the minstrels had recorded the valorous achievements of the conqueror:— closing with tilts and tournaments the joyous scene. All now was silent, awful, and mournful desolation. The voice of mirth which echoed through the walls had been long mute. The arm, which in war had spread slaughter and dismay, was withered into dust; and shortly the very hero, who, in this her day, struck terror and destruction throughout the land, would, like the great Arthur, be seen no more.

Matilda, from a very early age, had been taught to reflect, and moralize on the passing occurrences in life. Doctor Arundel had strengthened the principle; and to each of the excellent men, under whose guidance she had been brought up, she was indebted for being void of the thoughtless levity, too many of the young woman of the present day are led into.

The countess, who saw Matilda at Pengwilly Hall shut out from all society, was surprised, at the end of a fortnight to observe, that, instead of expressing discontent, or appearing low-spirited, she every day became more cheerful; and the pale and languid look she wore in London, was exchanged for a lovely and blooming complexion. To bury her, however, in total seclusion, was by no means suitable to the plans her ladyship formed for her future establishment; and she intended, as the autumn advanced, to request that Doctor and Mrs. Arundel would accompany her to Bath, where she would take a house for them during the winter.

Matilda's maid, who began to feel, what she called, moped to death, in such a retired place, said, one day to her, "I hope, ma'am, we shall not be here much longer; for, to be sure, it is the most dismal place I ever saw. And then one hears so many frightful

stories of ghosts, I am afraid of my life to go to bed at night, as I pass through that melancholy old gallery.”

“If you are idle enough,” replied Matilda, “to credit the tales of all the old gossips, I do not wonder you are frightened. I have always observed, the most ignorant are the most superstitious.”

“Believe them or no, ma’am,” returned Watson, “as sure as you are alive, a figure dressed all in white, was seen last week in the church-yard at Boss Castle, sitting on the grave of the poor crazy clergyman, who, they say, lived some years ago at the parsonage. You don’t know, ma’am what odd stories they tell about his daughter, who ran away from him, poor old man, with my lady’s son.”

“What are the stories?” enquired Matilda, as eagerly as Watson had been to tell them.

“Nay, for that matter, ma’am, as you will not believe them, there is no use in repeating them.”

Matilda, again urging her to proceed, she went on.

“Well, ma’am, as I was a saying, the curate’s daughter eloped with the handsome young lord about eighteen years ago; and in all that time she has never been heard of or seen, till that very night eighteen years, when they say her vision was seen all the evening hovering about the church-yard, and at last stopped at the place where the old man was buried; after which, it disappeared somewhere amongst the neighbouring rocks. The old folks say, it must be her troubled spirit; for it was as like the curate’s daughter as two peas. They knowed her again as soon as ever she appeared; and they say, it is no wonder her spirit cannot rest, for her going off with the young lord broke her father’s heart.”

Watson was a London servant, or she would not have dared relate any thing concerning Lady Seyntaubyne’s family; for who ever ventured to even name the curate and his daughter, was instantly dismissed. Watson was a great gossip, and had picked up her intelligence from some of the villagers, with whom she had formed an acquaintance, for the purpose of hearing marvellous stories, which she was fond of.

At any other time Matilda would have smiled at being taken for any thing supernatural; but in the present instance there was such an extraordinary and mysterious analogy between her and the person described by Watson, she became confident she must have been related to the venerable pastor. The agony which he experienced in parting from her, could not have been so acute, without the ties of kindred had excited such excess of tenderness. The affectionate separation, deeply engraven on her young mind, had never been forgotten; and the scene was as strongly impressed in her imagination, as if it had happened yesterday.

The subsequent conversation with Watson determined Matilda, without further delay, to address Lady Seyntaubyne on the subject of her birth, with an earnest request to know who were her parents, and with whom she might claim connection; or whether she was a destitute being, supported by her bounty, cherished by her benevolence, and by her alone prevented from sinking into indigence and obscurity. These were interesting and affecting enquiries, which she found it essential to her future peace to make.

## CHAP. X.

IN the morning, Matilda rose with an intention, in the course of the day, to fulfil her plan; when a letter from Mrs. Arundel, for the present, put her intention to flight.

After treating on various subjects, she closed her epistle with a paragraph to the following purport:

“We have lost, for the present, our charming friend and neighbour, Lady Sophia Clairville. She is gone to town to prepare the nuptial wardrobe of her niece, Lady Julia Penrose; an event, so long to take place, and deferred from time to time by the idle scruples of Julia, cannot surprise my dear Matilda. I think it better the intelligence should come from me, than newspaper report.

“Be firm, my lovely young friend, in subduing the tenderness of your nature. Sink not under the influence of a misplaced attachment. The regulation of the mind is much in our own power. We often sicken at a distant view of evils we are afraid will take place, which, when they actually happen, we are armed with fortitude to endure. While suspense hovers over us, we are alternately agitated by hope and fear; but when there is no longer any thing to hope, we wonder at the dismay the anticipation of the evil excited, and calmly endure what is irresistible.”

A letter from the reverend doctor to Lady Seyntaubyne, communicating to her the same intelligence, explained to her in a moment, without making the enquiry, why Matilda turned pale, and with trembling steps hastened to the window to conceal her emotion, soon after quitting the room.

The purport of Doctor Arundel’s information was by no means agreeable to her ladyship. He told her, that her son, Lord Seyntaubyne, who had not resided at Penrose Castle for several years, intended celebrating his daughter’s nuptials there with splendid festivity. That Lady Sophia Clairville had been prevailed on to accompany them thither; and from the church they were to proceed to the castle, where they were to remain during the summer.

This intelligence threw the countess into the greatest consternation. To have her son within a few miles of her, and on so important an event as his daughter’s marriage, to remain at enmity with him was by no means agreeable to her inclination; but an insuperable barrier prevented her from at present acceding to any terms of cordiality. Neither could she, if at all she considered Matilda’s peace, from her latent attachment to Clairville, visit her grand-daughter’s husband. She saw the surest method to preserve happiness was to retreat to a distance. Yet so recently fixed at home, after so long an absence, at her advanced period of life, was a sacrifice she was averse from making. She had cultivated a smaller circle of acquaintance than her inclination had prompted for Matilda’s future interest and advantage. She had been so repugnant to form an intimacy with those persons who moved in the fashionable world, that Lady Seyntaubyne found it difficult to establish her as she wished amongst them. At Doctor Arundel’s Matilda’s taste for refined and enlightened society had been too firmly fixed to tolerate frivolous people; there she saw no one from whose company and conversation some advantage could not be derived; for though they resided in one of the most populous and elegant

neighbourhoods about London, on the plea of bad health they declined all indiscriminate acquaintance. Mrs. Arundel had always been averse to Matilda's having juvenile associates, (except Lady Sophia's niece) for she considered girlish attachments were usually so full of romantic folly, as only to engross time which might be better spent.

On Lady Seyntaubyne's return to Pengwilly Hall, an opportunity was afforded of inviting her neighbours; but she could not invite them without waiting upon them in return; and the distances were so wide, a native indolence of disposition prevented her from doing what was not absolutely necessary, if attended with any trouble. Yet she had been considering the propriety of forming some intercourse with the most respectable families for Matilda's sake, who, though she evidently preferred seclusion, the countess did not altogether approve of it. Doctor Arundel's letter now occupied her thoughts. It was requisite immediately to determine on some plan for the removal of Matilda; yet where to send her, except again to Richmond, she knew not. Mrs. Aldersey had proved convenient as a casual acquaintance in London, but her habits of life she did not consider sufficiently correct to consign Matilda to her protection, although she had invited her to Tunbridge Wells; but she was certain, that from Matilda's sober taste, she would not be happy with her.

Perplexed and uneasy, Lady Seyntaubyne wrote by return of post to her reverend friend what was best to be done, intreating he would suggest some eligible plan to be immediately adopted. She would have requested Mrs. Arundel to accompany Matilda to Clifton, but the Doctor was unfortunately confined by a severe fit of the gout, which she knew would prevent Mrs. Arundel's leaving Richmond.

In the mean time, while the countess was employed in writing, Matilda ashamed to betray, even to herself, the little fortitude she possessed, on the confirmation of an event which she so long had expected to take place, put on her hat, and escaped into the park, where uninterrupted she might endeavour to sooth her agitated spirits, giving way to the tears she could not restrain, and which seemed to relieve her oppressed bosom.

Secluded from every eye, she seated herself on a rustic bench, overshadowed by high trees, and gave way to the most mournful contemplations. Ah! thought she, even this union likely to tend to the happiness of Clairville, I am not so selfish but to have ardently desired its accomplishment. But Matilda viewed it rather as a family compact, from which there was no honourable escape than a union founded on mutual affection. In ties so little binding, she trembled for the happiness of Clairville. With a high sense of honour, she was sure whoever was the fortunate woman destined to be his wife, she would meet with nothing but tenderness. Yet, if she slighted that affection (which she was afraid Lady Julia would do) and consider it worthless, then did she dread the loss of their future peace; for she knew Clairville to be proudly jealous of the smallest unkindness, warm in his temper, but generous, noble, and humane.

Matilda had studied both their characters, and she found no similarity of disposition between them. Julia wanted neither softness nor tenderness, but they were apt to be veiled by a gaiety of manner and poignancy of wit, which she often had observed Clairville did not parry in the same lively manner. She was afraid, that instead of soothing him when he was pensive (which his mother said his misfortunes frequently rendered him) she would sport with his feelings in playful raillery, which might lead him to believe her indifferent to his interests.

In a conversation Matilda had with Mrs. Arundel, previous to her leaving Richmond, she told her, Lady Sophia had endured the greatest anxiety from Clairville's wild idea of surrendering himself a prisoner, and that unknown to him, she was endeavouring to get him exchanged in the first cartel; in the mean time was anxious the union between the cousins should take place, which she hoped would make him relinquish the project he had formed, excited by his aspiring and undaunted spirit.

Though Matilda felt assured, from a thousand occurrences which happened when she was under the same roof with Clairville, during his mother's illness, their tastes and dispositions were similar, and that she might have rendered him happy, "yet," exclaimed she, mournfully, "how do I know, with even all Lady Sophia's affection towards me, she would have consented to our union. Ignorant who were my parents, doubtful whether the alliance might not prove disgraceful to him—portionless, except for the bounty of my benefactress—unclaimed, unacknowledged by any one; how could I hope to be received into her family under these disadvantageous circumstances? Herself nobly born—elevated in rank, as she is in spirit—dignified, without pride—it could not be expected that Lady Sophia Clairville would suffer her son to marry, as Mrs. Aldersey once sarcastically said, '*nobody knows who,*' and degrade himself by an ignoble alliance. No! dearest Clairville," continued she, "under such adverse circumstances, even Matilda would not have given you her hand, till assured she was your equal."

Lost in these painful reveries, the certainty that in his marriage all future acquaintance with his beloved mother must cease, she exclaimed, "Thus ends, then, all intercourse between us! so finish our greatest felicities and warmest friendships!"

She was roused by the sound of the first dinner-bell, and hurried back to the hall, that she might prepare to appear below with some degree of composure. But her eyes were red and swelled with weeping, and her face so pale and languid, she dreaded Lady Seyntaubyne.

To her infinite surprize and relief, when she entered the dining-room, her ladyship, instead of chiding her for the extreme appearance of dejection she wore, took no notice, though it was evident she perceived it the instant they met. She addressed Matilda with unusual kindness, and with much solicitude endeavoured to divert her attention and thoughts from the subject she knew her to be engrossed in.

Matilda felt grateful for the delicate consideration; for she was not ignorant of her grand-daughter's intended marriage, having informed her that she had received a letter from Doctor Arundel.

## CHAP. XI.

In the course of a week from the period of the countess's addressing Doctor Arundel, she received the following reply:

*To Countess Dowager Seyntaubyne.*

“My dear Madam,

“I entirely agree with you, that Miss Trevanion will be far better for the present at any other place than Pengwilly Hall. Your reasons for wishing to remove her are too substantial for me to controvert.

“At Richmond Matilda will always find a permanent home, with tender friends, who love her like a daughter, and who are so warmly interested in all that concerns her, she has only to come to them to be received with open arms; but your ladyship expresses a desire she should spend the summer in some place preferable to Richmond, if I am acquainted with any genteel family, who will admit her as a boarder, or allow her to join them on a tour of pleasure.

“If, madam, you are not alarmed at the idea of so long a journey for Miss Trevanion, there is an amiable and respectable couple just setting out to visit a relation in the Hebrides; and I can venture to assure you, the pleasing addition of Matilda's company will be a desirable acquisition to them. She is slightly acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. M' Arthur. On their marriage, last winter, they settled in our neighbourhood. I have known Mr. M' Arthur from a boy, and his wife is so amiable and engaging a woman, as to do honour to his choice.

“If this plan is agreeable to your ladyship, it will, in my opinion, be a mutual advantage and gratification to all parties.

“Young persons, whether male or female, always derive improvement from visiting different countries. It renders them citizens of the world; neither partially confined nor wedded to one spot. It is by an intercourse with strangers, whose habits and modes of life differ from our own, that our petty prejudices, illiberal and false opinions, are removed. We view the different manners and characters of our sister kingdoms, whether Scotland, or Ireland, as they really are. We then become sensible from observation, and demonstration, that genius, science, refinement, and hospitality, are not confined to one little spot, but that they are equally to be found in the various parts of the habitable globe, whether in the Hebrides or in London.

“Even the great Doctor Johnson, with a mind clouded by prejudice, could not avoid admitting, that in the houses in which he was entertained, in the Western Isles, *‘he found nothing but civility, elegance, and plenty.’*

“It is not, madam, in the circle you were desirous Matilda should move in, when she left us, she was likely to find much to either improve the heart or the understanding. No: to obtain knowledge is by the experience of difficulties—to be reconciled to the deprivation of accustomed luxuries—to be content under adverse events, to practice self-denial, the heart and temper can alone be amended.

“Prone as we are to error, the constant indulgence of free-will would spoil the best of us. The different scenes in which Matilda will be not merely a spectator, but a

partaker, I recommend, as the most certain cure for the malady I know that she has at present to contend with. Tell her, the gentle and engaging manners of Mrs. M'Arthur will prove as soothing as salutary, and that I by all means wish her to accompany her to Scotland.

"I have the honour to remain, with regard,

"Your Ladyship's

Obedient servant,

MARTIN ARUNDEL."

Richmond, June 25.

After dinner, while Lady Seyntaubyne and Matilda were conversing, the latter more cheerfully than she had done for the last week, her ladyship gave her Doctor Arundel's letter to read, desiring her opinion of its contents.

Ignorant of the motive why she was to be removed, and much hurt, as well as surprized, to find so hasty a plan had been formed without her knowledge or desire, no sooner fixed in one place than she was to be removed to another, she replied, "Under your ladyship's and Doctor Arundel's guidance, who regulate those plans you judge it proper for me to pursue, I can have no voice either to oppose or assent; and were my inclination contrary to your wishes, it would ill become me to dispute with my benefactress. I go, madam, to the Hebrides, as it is your and Doctor Arundel's wish, without hesitation; nor ask, if the question is improper, the cause why I am not permitted to remain with you, since I am not sent away in displeasure. The doctor is too good and benevolent to have said any place was better for me at present than Pengwilly Hall, without some very urgent reasons; or to have, I should hope, so bad an opinion of the weakness of my understanding, as to think it necessary to send me from place to place to conquer a recent attachment."

"Be assured, Matilda," replied her ladyship, "my parting with you is founded on no diminution of affection. If I considered your happiness less, you might remain here. The gloomy seclusion of Pengwilly, with no other society than that of an old woman, I never thought permanently suitable to so young a woman; though the summer months I intended you should have spent here.

"Tell me," continued she, "would you wish to do so, when very soon Lady Sophia, Albert Clairville, and my grand-daughter, will be our close neighbours? They will come direct from church to Penrose Castle, not six miles distance. On no terms of cordiality with them, how painful would a meeting prove, which must inevitably happen at least every Sunday, and sometimes at the houses of the neighbouring gentry; for to bury you alive here several months was out of the question, and I have been daily anticipating (till this intelligence came) giving an entertainment, on purpose that you might have some associates."

At the mention of names so fondly loved, Matilda turned pale, and all her composure fled. She tried to reply, but the words died on her lips ere she gave them utterance.

"Ah, Matilda!" cried the countess, smiling significantly, "I perceive you are no philosopher. There is nothing for it but banishing you to the Hebrides."

"It is, indeed, true," she faintly replied. "How little can we judge what is best for us. Doctor Arundel was most considerate and kind, in pointing out a journey so eligible.

Mrs. M' Arthur is an engaging woman; gentle, amiable, and benevolent. I shall be happy in being with her,—as happy, at least, as I can feel, removed from those friends whom I value most. Her husband is a man of sense and knowledge. We had much pleasure in their society last winter.”

“Who are they?” said her ladyship. “It is not a mere nobody I should like you to go with.”

“Mr. M' Arthur was at the bar. By his eloquence and profound judicial knowledge he soon acquired a genteel fortune, on which he lately retired. His lady is many years younger than he; but I understood there was a very long attachment, although it is only a year or two since they were married. Mrs. M' Arthur has very delicate health, brought on from the fatigue and anxiety of waiting on an aged parent in a tedious illness; and not till after his death would she consent to give her hand to the object of her choice. I have heard Mr. M' Arthur talk of a brother, who is resident in one of the Western Isles, and I suppose it is he they are going to visit.”

Lady Seyntaubyne, perfectly satisfied with Matilda's account of Mr. and Mrs. M' Arthur, was eager to realize the plan formed for her as quickly as possible. She desired Matilda to write to the reverend doctor, and gave her own consent to accompany his friends to Scotland.

Matilda readily complied. The prospect of Clairville and Julia's being so near to her, materially altered the object of her journey: no longer considering herself either discarded or going into banishment. The serenity which she had hoped to pass at Pengwilly, removed from the fatigue of dissipation, vanished like a faded chimera. Distant from those cherished objects who had made up the full sum of all her earthly bliss, she could reconcile herself to lose, but to have seen them without the power to enjoy their society, was a trial she was unequal to withstand; and she was glad to fly from them, and from herself. Lady Seyntaubyne wrote by the same post to Doctor Arundel, to inform him that Matilda would set out for Richmond on the following day, in her post-chariot, attended by Mrs. Grey, the housekeeper, and a servant on horseback.

## CHAP. XII.

WHEN the time of separation approached, Matilda's spirits died away. She was going with almost strangers into a strange country, far distant from the spot she hoped to have considered her future home.

Though it was not unnatural that she should love Mrs. Arundel more tenderly than Lady Seyntaubyne, yet a sentiment, so full of gratitude and obligation, accompanied her affection for the latter, she felt unusually sad at the idea of separating from her. To Matilda, the countess had supplied the place of a mother; and, notwithstanding her ignorance, whether it was the claims of relationship or only compassion, which had afforded her that indulgence, she was sensible of oweing every thing. Lady Seyntaubyne had protected her infant years from adversity. She had educated, supported, and intended to portion her. Of what magnitude were her obligations to this admirable lady; who, with such judicious kindness, instead of educating her at a frivolous boarding-school, had placed her under the tuition and care of Doctor and Mrs. Arundel; and while they had formed her mind into what it was, they had taught her to be sensible of her own deficiencies, and also a proper emulation to excel.

Matilda observed some domestic uneasiness preyed on the spirits of Lady Seyntaubyne, though her almost unequalled strength of mind endeavoured to resist the pressure. She wished to have shared, and soothed her anxiety, from whatever source it sprung; but she had too much delicacy, from the check which she had formerly received, to venture her present sympathy.

Ever unhappy when she recurred to the cloud of obscurity which hung over her birth, and the extraordinary mystery which appeared to be attached to her parents, Matilda formed the resolution not to depart from Pengwilly without having the subject fully elucidated, whatever future misery the disclosure might produce. If her birth proved disgraceful, she determined never more to return to England, but, in the insular spot to which she was going, pass the remainder of her life;—when no eye, which formerly regarded her with either tenderness or envy, should see her more. Yet, notwithstanding ideas so mournful, she felt within her a certain dignity and nobility of soul, that almost persuaded her she was not ignobly born.

Agitated with the thoughts of so important a disclosure, which was for ever to stigmatize or exalt her, not only in her own estimation, but that of the world, she met Lady Seyntaubyne at tea, with a sort of breathless expectation for the discovery of an event so full of momentous interest. She was absorbed in the idea how, properly, to introduce the subject, when Lady Seyntaubyne rose, and going to an inlaid cabinet which stood in the room, took from it a large packet in the form of a letter. Approaching Matilda, with a solemn voice she said: “The hour is now arrived, my dear Matilda, when I may present you with these papers; but it is only on condition you do not break the seal until you arrive in the Hebrides, that you receive them. They will reveal to you the name and condition of your parents; and I if live not to welcome your return to your native country, you will find in this packet what claims you had on my bounty, and that I have provided for you as becomes your rank in life. Should you see me no more, (for who dare count, at my advanced age, of years, nay, even months, without presumption?) you will

always find a permanent home with Dr. and Mrs. Arundel. Though, with them, I do not think you will chuse to live, when a more suitable one will be afforded you.”

Matilda took the packet with emotion; and while, with tears, she pressed the extended hand of the countess to her lips, exclaimed, “This precious packet, as you desire, shall not be opened till the period you mention! Yet believe, madam, whatever may prove its important contents, whether I am allied to you or not, I shall ever consider myself in the light of your daughter, from your tender affection and unbounded liberality.”

Lady Seyntaubyne, not wishing Matilda to see how much she was affected by the events of the evening, desired her to go and carefully lock up the packet, which put an end to the subject.

In the morning her ladyship’s carriage, which was to carry Matilda to Richmond, was in waiting at an early hour, and every thing was soon ready for her departure. She swallowed, or rather attempted to swallow, a hasty breakfast alone, for the countess never rose till a late hour; but Matilda sent a message by her woman with a request to bid her adieu. Lady Seyntaubyne had a decided aversion to personal farewells; and was so much affected and overcome at the separation, she could not be prevailed on to see Matilda. Greatly as she was hurt and disappointed by so positive a refusal, yet she dared not enter the countess’s presence without permission, and was obliged to depart under so severe an affliction.

The shock and surprize which she experienced by so unexpected a denial, drove all remembrance of her important packet from her thoughts. She had carefully locked it up the evening before, with an intention to put it in her pocket at the moment of her departure, and actually set out without being conscious of having left it behind. It is probable she soon would have missed it, if the recent event of having quitted her benefactress without her benediction, had not affected the tender heart of Matilda with the deepest anguish; for it appeared to her so like a disgraceful and eternal dismissal from Pengwilly, she could not discard the mournful impression from her thoughts.

When Matilda arrived at the Hall from London, the evening was so entirely closed in, as to preclude her discerning, for some miles, the surrounding objects. Now, as she travelled along, the extreme grandeur and extent of a castle, towering above every other object, with its heavy walls, square towers, surmounted with golden balls, glittering in the sun-beams,—the high arched windows and wide extended woods, fixed her attention, and carried her back to feudal times. The immense pile of building, which stood on a rocky eminence, commanded, she observed, a view of the sea, and was surrounded by bold and majestic rocks of granite, in shapeless and grotesque forms, spreading to a great extent; but these wild features were happily contrasted by the rich luxuriance of the tall elm and lime trees, which, in some points, almost shrouded the castle from the view.

“To whom,” asked Matilda, “does that noble edifice belong?”

Mrs. Grey looked surprised at Matilda’s question, and stared oddly at her when she enquired.

“What is the name of this place?” continued she, not heeding the singular expressions of the old woman’s countenance.

“Penrose Castle, to be sure, ma’am,” replied she; “it belongs, you know, to my lady’s son.”

“Penrose Castle!” exclaimed Matilda, with equal surprize in her turn. With the name of Penrose Castle, there was connected a thousand interesting circumstances, which brought back the never-to-be forgotten name of Clairville to her mind. “Ah!” cried she, “when banished to the remotest part of Great Britain, it is here that Clairville and Julia reside. In this terrestrial paradise their nuptials will be celebrated; while I, no more remembered, shall be cast on the friendship of strangers,—without kindred, or one being whom I may regard to cheer my melancholy days.”

Her future prospects appeared so mournful, she threw herself back in the carriage, and gave way to the indulgence of tears, which she was unable to restrain.

Without accident, or any event to interest or amuse, Matilda reached Doctor Arundel’s house on the evening of the third day.

### CHAP. XIII.

SO much distress and anxiety of mind had Matilda suffered in leaving Pengwilly, that it was not until the end of the first evening of her journey she missed her important packet. The vexation such remissness occasioned, interrupted her sleep; yet she trusted there still might be time to forward it to Richmond, before she departed for the Hebrides.

The sight of her beloved and respected friends, who gave her the most tender reception, proved some relief to her oppressed heart. Doctor Arundel informed Matilda Mr. and Mrs. M'Arthur were so impatient to commence their journey, as the summer was now rapidly advancing, they hoped she would be ready to accompany them the day but one following.

Desirous as she felt, to wait the arrival of the papers, she could not properly detain them on that account, having already kept them a week beyond the period they had fixed, and there was no alternative but immediately departing.

Matilda found the reverend doctor and his lady shunned every topic that could possibly lead to the subject of Clairville's marriage, while she, on the contrary, thought, when the event had actually happened, she should be less uneasy than enduring the torture of suspense.

After Mrs. Arundel had embraced and wished her good night, Matilda took her hand, and exclaimed with much earnestness, "I perceive, madam, you consider me a weak girl, divested of fortitude, by withholding from me all intelligence of our Richmond friends. Is the event," continued she, anxiously regarding her, "actually over?—I am certain I shall be easier when it is."

"Great," cried she, clasping her hands together, "be their felicity! Oh! may it be perfect as their virtues—unclouded as their spotless minds—and may every future year be crowned with the choicest blessings! Tell them it was Matilda Trevanion's most fervent prayer."

Mrs. Arundel observing a pale cheek, trembling frame, and tearful eye, accompany this apparent composure, said, "the marriage has *not* yet taken place, but we have every reason to suppose that it soon will. Compose your spirits, dear Matilda," continued she, "for you look fatigued." She kindly saluted her, and retired.

Matilda's agitated spirits had another painful scene to contend with, in taking leave of these amiable friends. She found the doctor in a declining state of health, and his lady worn down by care and fatigue. Doctor Arundel's was no common life, for he existed but for the purpose of dispensing good. It was not alone in the circle of his friends he would be missed, but amongst the numbers whom he fed and maintained by his bounty; wherever distress was, he mitigated, if he could not relieve it. His example, his piety, his benevolence, rendered him universally beloved and revered. He was the friend of the poor, the oppressed, and the suffering.

The morning after Matilda's arrival, Mrs. Arundel accompanied her to wait on Mr. and Mrs. M'Arthur. They received her with much friendly politeness, while Mr. M'Arthur good-humouredly said, "we ought to feel proud, madam, that we are to have with us so fashionable and lovely a young lady, who abjures the gaiety of London, and actually consents to be buried amongst the most desolate of the Scottish Isles."

“It is even so,” replied Mrs. Arundel, “yet if you find Miss Trevanion’s vivacity clouded for a time, do not ascribe it to regret for the gaities of London, but to the true cause, regret in parting from her friends.”

Greatly did Matilda feel obliged to Mrs. Arundel for her kind consideration.

“We must endeavour,” answered Mrs. M’Arthur, with much sweetness, “ourselves, to win Miss Trevanion’s regard, and then I hope she will be somewhat reconciled to the change which she is going to experience, and not think she is sent into actual banishment. We will, dear madam,” added she, “make a mutual compact to be mutually pleased; and though we now meet as strangers, we will part, when we do so, as perpetual friends.”

“I have no apprehension, madam,” returned Matilda, “of the want of kindness with you and Mr. M’Arthur, I know I am going, though to a land of strangers, to a land of hospitality, whose inhabitants are as justly famed for their sense, as for their benevolence.”

“But,” cried Mr. M’Arthur, “what will your train of admirers, dear Miss Trevanion, say, to my carrying you off from them all in triumph. I am afraid, if I do not make good a retreat with my prize, I shall have a dozen duels to fight, and half a dozen lives to answer for. Without some idolatrous knight prefers making a pilgrimage to so fair a creature, instead of the shrine of St. Columba; in which event, I may perhaps be tempted to resign you to those you consider the most deserving.”

“Be assured, sir,” replied Matilda, smiling, “you will be suffered very quietly to carry off your prize, as you are pleased to call me. No, no, the days of chivalry, as Burke says, are passed away.”

“Well, we shall see; for on that score I am rather incredulous.”

It was agreed they were to set out at eight o’clock on the following morning. Matilda took leave; wishing to spend the few hours which remained with her friends.

When Doctor Arundel received Lady Seyntaubyne’s letter on the subject of Matilda, it immediately occurred to him, Mr. and Mrs. M’Arthur intended a visit to the Hebrides, and that they, in so long a journey, would probably be happy to have such a pleasing associate, and he lost no time in making the proposal. He informed them, the secluded manner in which Lady Seyntaubyne lived, in a remote part of Cornwall, had prompted the desire that Miss Trevanion, if it was possible, should join in some respectable party of pleasure, during the summer, to vary the scene. The doctor then added, “he knew none so entirely calculated to suit the countess’s plans; and believing it might prove a mutual pleasure, as they knew Miss Trevanion, he had been induced to offer it to their consideration.”

No sooner was it mentioned, than Mr. and Mrs. M’Arthur cheerfully acceded; for the little they had formerly known of Matilda, had left strong impressions in her favour.

Matilda, likewise charmed with what she had now seen of Mr. and Mrs. M’Arthur, as well as before, on her slight acquaintance, became persuaded the accompanying them to Scotland was the best plan for her future tranquillity, unpleasantly as she had viewed it on a first proposal.

Previous to leaving Richmond, she wrote a letter, full of gratitude and affection, to Lady Seyntaubyne. She assured her how intirely she was reconciled to the plan marked out, and that, with content, she should remain estranged from her, until it was judged proper to recal her; when, joyfully, she should return to her maternal protection. She

bitterly deplored forgetting the valuable packet, which she requested might be sent to Doctor Arundel's by the first opportunity; begging, likewise, that her harp might be forwarded to Inverness, where she heard they were to spend the winter. Matilda spoke in high terms of Mr. and Mrs. M'Arthur; closing her letter with fervent wishes that the happy period might arrive when she should return to Pengwilly.

Mrs. M'Arthur was so interesting, it was impossible to be long in her society without a wish to possess her regard. Very delicate health gave a languor and softness to her appearance, which was heightened by gentle and unassuming manners. Her father, in his second marriage, had given her so austere and unkind a mother-in-law, as to have subdued her temper, and left a pensiveness in her character, which was rather engaging than otherwise. She had no children; and the whole of her attention was directed towards a husband, who perfectly adored her. Indeed, so infinite was his solicitude, if she discovered more than ordinary indisposition, in the dread of losing her, she often concealed her sufferings; for a slow fever preyed on her delicate frame, which was gradually destroying her.

Although there was a long attachment, they had not been married two years; as it was not until the death of Mrs. M'Arthur's father, she would consent to their union. She entertained so high a sense of filial duty, that, after she lost her mother-in-law, she could not be prevailed on to desert her parent, whom she watched and attended during a tedious illness, patiently submitting to all his peevishness and ill-humour. When released from her arduous undertaking, she gave her hand to her faithful and persevering lover; with a constitution so much broken and impaired, as to leave little hope of a long existence.

Mrs. M'Arthur's brother, who was one of the lairds residing in the Isle of Mull, had for several summers been so earnest and pressing to see Mr. Collin and his amiable wife, that on the physician's assuring him the journey would rather improve than injure her health, if, in winter, she was removed to a more genial climate. No obstacle remained to their setting out, as they intended remaining till spring with a married sister of Mr. M'Arthur's whose husband had a beautiful villa called Craignegar, in the environs of Inverness. The addition of Miss Trevanion's company, both Mr. and Mrs. M'Arthur looked forward to with mutual pleasure. They were persuaded her loveliness was her least attraction; Mrs. M'Arthur would have an agreeable companion, who would prove a most valuable acquisition.

## CHAP. XIV.

IF Matilda could have indulged her inclination the evening previous to her leaving Richmond, she would have stolen out and taken a last look and last farewell of Lady Sophia's habitation, though she knew it to be shut up and deserted by its interesting inhabitants. But to have been seen wandering alone in the vicinity of Richmond, as she was known to several of its inhabitants, would bear such a strange appearance, she dared not realize a plan she thought would have rendered her happier if she had effected it. To Mrs. Arundel she could not express her wish, knowing, if she did not ridicule it as romantic and absurd, she would condemn it as a most improper weakness. She was therefore compelled to be contented with passing an hour in the doctor's beautiful garden which bordered the translucent Thames.

Again, in the pleasure barges which moved on the surface of the river, she heard the notes of music, and the voices of merriment. But the sounds, instead of soothing her, as on a former occasion, distressed and rendered her unhappy. She returned to the house, and endeavoured to compose her spirits; but the image of Clairville was ever before her, with the remembrance of the evening which she had spent in the very house with his mother and Julia.

Doctor and Mrs. Arundel, who saw the anguish of Matilda's mind portrayed in her expressive countenance, did all they could to divert her attention; and were too feeling and humane not to enter into the depression it was natural to feel, in the prospect of so long a journey, and the estrangement from all her early connections.

Matilda spent an hour in the morning in Doctor Arundel's closet, listening to his excellent admonitions.

"It is probable, my dear child," cried he, "we shall not meet again, for I find my health and strength daily declining. I am therefore anxious, while I admonish, to impress on your mind a proper fortitude, to endure the calamities incidental through life; for you will find, the longer you are in the world, they will rather augment than diminish. Remember, this is intended to be a probationary state of suffering, not a scene of unmixed felicity. Were it not so, how little should we be reconciled to quit the scene; and how wise is the Almighty Disposer of good, to call us to a recollection of our own weaknesses in the afflictions he tries us with, and which it is unbecoming a christian to sink beneath.

"I have," continued the reverend doctor, "remarked, during the few hours we have been together, the imbecility of your mind, and the tender hurry of your spirits. You are not, Matilda, the only young woman who has been disappointed where she placed her affections; and though I admit the object to be most deserving your regard, yet you never had encouragement, from the first hour of your meeting, to cherish the hope of being united. Nay, you are guilty of the greatest injury to Clairville and Lady Julia, in the weak indulgence of a hopeless passion. If he should discover it, you are undermining his happiness, and sapping it to the very foundation. You are creating endless misery, and destroying the best of your days in hopeless despondence.

"Rouse yourself," added he, "my dear young friend, from the torpor which is stealing upon you. Though there seems to be little in life to interest, for which you think existence desirable, remember it is always in our own power to become useful and

valuable members of society. We are not here intended to live for ourselves, nor our own gratifications; and there is no situation we can be placed, in which we must not be more or less subordinate to others.

“A female, destitute of near relations, particularly a young and lovely one, is a very desolate being, who has no tender friend, in the character of a husband, to guard her from infamy, oppression, and calumny. Without the ties of parental or maternal affection, were you to be deprived of Lady Seyntaubyne, you would find the world abounding in selfishness, envy and ill-nature. Even the fair semblance of kindness and attachment, is by no means an invulnerable shield from its attacks; for, frequently, those very persons, on whose friendship and confidence you placed the most reliance, will play you false, and prove deceitful.

“This, Matilda,” continued Doctor Arundel, “is a dark portrait of mankind, but it is a true one. At present your own native innocence paints every thing in the most pleasing colours; but as you advance in years, disgust, to find how much you have been mistaken, will weaken your enthusiasm, and the agreeable picture your imagination had created, will fade into disappointment.

“It is natural Lady Seyntaubyne should wish to see you respectably married, and somewhat to her own taste, from the former vexations and uneasiness which she has experienced. Do not disappoint her hopes, if you can avoid it. She has to you been unbounded in kindness and generosity. I need not point out how much you owe her.

“Consider, Matilda, what I wish to enforce. A tender interest in your concerns, and a fatherly affection for my amiable pupil, is my only motive. God direct and bless you, my dear child; pray to him to guide you, and then you cannot err.”

The venerable doctor was affected. He waved his hand for Matilda to leave him, as he said, “Go to Mrs. Arundel, and desire her to give you some breakfast.”

Matilda, bathed in tears, entered the room where Mrs. Arundel was anxiously waiting for her. She took a cup of tea, and after receiving her maternal embrace, stepped into Mr. M’Arthur’s carriage, which was waiting to carry her to his house, whence they immediately departed.

## CHAP. XV.

It has frequently happened through life, that many persons have formed, in imagination, the same flattering impressions the present party had done of each other; and from not being sufficiently acquainted to discern the dark blemishes which, on a more intimate association, appeared in their characters, destroyed at once the first partial impressions, when nothing but mortification, disgust, and disappointment afterwards ensued.

The present instance, however, proved a happy exception, for Mrs. M' Arthur and Matilda had journeyed almost a week together, daily improving in the estimation of one another.

The conversation of Mr. M' Arthur was lively, sensible, and full of information. His wife was interesting and amiable. Both were so flattering in their attentions to Matilda, she felt it would be extremely ungrateful not to endeavour to show that she was content in her new situation.

When she was alone she dwelt much on Doctor Arundel's admirable advice. In some instances she felt its truth, though the picture of mankind which he had drawn, she hoped was more darkly coloured than it merited. Except Mrs. Aldersey, she knew none who deserved the character he had described, though she acknowledged that hitherto her experience had not been extensive.

They travelled very deliberately, stopping at every place where there was any thing worth seeing. Mr. M' Arthur was a man of research and universal knowledge. He had a taste for antiquities and natural curiosities, therefore Matilda derived much pleasure as well as advantage from his society, accompanying him to visit every spot deserving of notice. As they approached the borders they left the great north road, for the gratification of viewing Melrose Abbey.

Matilda was glad to exchange the dark and naked mountains of Northumberland, for the soft and pastoral vallies of Tweed and Teviot Dale, skirted with woodlands, and watered by pure streams.

In passing near Kelso Mr. M' Arthur pointed out Flodden Field, at the same time reciting the following lines from Marmion:

“Still from the sire the son shall hear,  
Of the stern strife and carnage drear,  
Of Flodden's fatal field.  
When shivered was fair England's spear,  
And broken was her shield.”

The pretty town of Kelso, with the ruins of its ancient abbey, resting on the banks of the broad and rapid Tweed, they entered, by an elegant stone bridge. It was environed by gently swelling hills, and all the charms of sylvan scenery.

Proceeding along the borders, Matilda observed several small fortresses, in the shape of square towers, which Mr. M' Arthur told her was formerly designed as a protection against the banditti, which in ruder times infested the country. And as they travelled further into Teviot Dale, he pointed out Hermitage Castle, where the powerful

and wicked Soulis was said to exercise his infernal necromancy, and which is still shewn as the resort of demons.

The romantic town of Hawick, situated amidst rocks, rivers, and cataracts, with its old bridge, next engaged Matilda's attention. Thence to Selkirk the stage was greatly diversified, though now changing into a more mountainous and naked aspect; yet still embellished by partial woody banks, at whose base the river fancifully wended. As one scene succeeded another, they each recalled some song, some verse, some legend. The lyric poetry and music of the borders, abounding with romance, carried Matilda back to those remote ages; and she said to Mr. M'Arthur, "The words of the old song is justly verified—

"How sweet are the banks of the Tweed."

"You will scarcely travel," replied he, "a mile, as you advance into Scotland, but some river, some burn, some castle, some glen, will be pointed out to you, as the subject either of song, or of poetry. How inferior are all the ballads of the present day, compared with the original Scotch ones. Even the old songs, Ettric Banks, Tweedside, and the Braes of Yarrow (what can be prettier, for instance, than the following lines:

'Sweet smells the birk<sup>\*</sup>, green grows the grass,  
Yellow on Yarrow banks the gowan,<sup>†</sup>  
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,  
Sweet the wave of Yarrow flowing,")

are so full of poetic imagery, and their plaintive simple melody is so happily adapted to their tender and affecting words, that no person of taste or sentiment can listen to them without viewing the scenes and persons they are intended to characterize, with a beauty and truth almost unequalled. To Percy we are indebted for a valuable compilation which will render ancient ballad-poetry for ever interesting.

"Burn," continued he, "with all the fire and originality of native genius he possessed, owes much of his celebrity to his just and simple delineation of the primitive manners and customs of his country. Even the absurdities of some of its superstitions are described in the form of tales, with such genuine humour and accuracy, that you are actually at the celebration of Halloween, and partake of all the Shakesperian horrors of 'Tam o' Shanter.'"

The travellers spent a few days in the magnificent city of Edinburgh. Matilda had an opportunity of seeing all its romantic beauties, ancient structures, and numerous curiosities, to much advantage, from Mr. M'Arthur's acquaintance with several of the most eminent characters in that seat of learning.

From Edinburgh they proceeded to Glasgow, where they staid a sufficient time to view its noble and ancient cathedral, college, manufactories, and establishments, and to notice the extraordinary progress of a town, being a few years ago only the seventh in rank, now the second in the empire.

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\* Birch trees.

† Dandelion.

It proved no small comfort to Mrs. M'Arthur to find the roads excellent, and the inns commodious; for she had never before been fifty miles beyond London, and formed, like many other persons, who have moved little from home, no very favourable opinion of the accomodation she should find on the northern roads. Agreeably disappointed, she partook with her young friend in the pleasure derived from the journey. The novel scenes she witnessed appeared in some degree to amend her health, while the winning attractions of Matilda, gained her esteem.

## CHAP. XVI.

AS the travellers proceeded to Dumbarton, the magnificent waters of the Clyde, covered with vessels, the bold and two-pointed rock on which the castle stood, the sloping banks feathered with wood, from amidst, where partial openings, the villas of the gentry were just seen, was one of the grandest and most pleasing views they had hitherto looked on.

Every mile they now journeyed the solemn grandeur of the mountains shrouded in the mist, which rolling away, sometimes unveiled their stupendous summits, filled Mrs. M'Arthur and Matilda with astonishment and awe.

From these rocky heights rapid streams precipitated in foaming violence, and hurried into the lake beneath, which showed on its clear bosom little tufted islands, and the striking ruin of a castle. Sometimes the road wound so close on the verge of the water, they appeared, by one false step of the horses, to be in danger of being dashed into the undulating waves, while the melancholy green of the pine woods, that partially hung on the sides of the dark mountains, added to the gloomy aspect of the scene.

At Aroquhar they seemed to have taken leave of all the habitable world, and to be journeying into a new one, formed only of mountain above mountain; for no other region was to be seen, and scarce any trace of human habitation, except one gentleman's villa, lying in lonely solitude on the verge of Loch Long, with a few miserable herdsmen's huts, perched in rocky nooks, where they could barely find subsistence for themselves and family.

If Matilda had admired the clear and rapid waters of Loch Long, whose salt waves were scarcely rippled by the breeze, the day was so calm, when the magnificent scenery of Inverary magically burst on the view, she could not contain her rapture. The antique castle embosomed in wood, overshadowed by the towering mountain of Duniquaisch, whose craggy point rose in terrific majesty far above the clouds, and was skirted by lesser ones, some naked, others verdant to their summits, intersected by romantic woody glens, with the picturesque fishing-town of Inverary, spreading in a crescent along the bay of Loch Fine, and shaded by tall and stately beech trees, with the little fleet of vessels for the herring fishery, with the two fine bridges thrown over the Shyra and the Aray rivers, formed altogether so romantic, novel, and wild a scene, Matilda almost fancied herself transported into Switzerland, instead of Scotland; so entirely did the landscape partake of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque.

She admired not merely the gothic architecture of the castle, but the singular stone of which it was built. Mr. M'Arthur informed her that, according to Pennant, it was called the *lapis ollaris*, or pot stone, because used by the ancients for utensils, and was of the same kind as that with which the King of Denmark's palace was built, at Copenhagen. It was a variety of granite found at Inverary, and when polished resembled spotted marble. The next stage was to Dalmally, where they were to remain for the night. Mrs. M'Arthur complained of fatigue, and Matilda walked with her husband along the borders of Loch Awe, in which were scattered several pretty islands, distinguished by the naked points of rocks rising from their surface in such grotesque shapes as to have the appearance of elegant ruins. The projecting promontories, woody banks, with the stupendous summit of Cruichen-ben darkly frowning in the north, gave a solemn grandeur to the scene; while

the western kingdom was lighted up in all the glowing, but mellow tints of a summer evening, after the sun had set in cloudless majesty, spreading soft richness over the landscape, and reflecting the shadows of the mountains in the clear lake.

Matilda was arrested at every step by the curious specimens of minerals and pebbles which lay at her feet. She shewed Mr. M' Arthur those she picked up, and he informed her that they were chiefly jasper, dark crystal, agate, cornelian, serpentine, zeolite, hornblend, and mica; and that the hills were chiefly of red, grey, or blue granite.

Here also she observed a few huts scattered on the side of the lake; the habitation of fishermen. She was shocked at the wretched appearance of these dwellings, and the slender means they had for support, living entirely, Mr. M' Arthur informed her, on milk, potatoes, fish, and oatmeal. Yet she saw what a hardy race of people they seemed to be, and how athletic in their appearance. At Dalmally she first heard of the superstitions of the highlanders, and their belief in witches, fairies, and ghosts. On a little green hillock, called by the peasantry Shian, or *Fairy Haunt*, Mr. M' Arthur told her they still performed their nocturnal revels.

Travelling over the dreary Menalin, a long moor, and winding amidst steep and naked mountains, they reached the small town of Oban, resting on the edge of a fine bay, commanding a view of the Sound of Mull, the Ferry of Kerra, which they were to cross, and the blue and distant hill of Morven. At Oban they were presented with a view of the old castles of Dunstaffanage and Dunolly, seated on rocky promontories jutting into the sea. In sequestered nooks, clusters of cottages were half concealed by the broom, which glowed in rich yellow on the ridges of the brown hills, where innumerable goats and kids were frisking, and gave a pleasing wildness to the scene. But when the momentary novelty had subsided, Matilda, with a sigh, gazed at the spot of her distant destination, from all she loved. The enchanting scenery she had beheld, and which had filled her with a transitory forgetfulness, was now to be exchanged for a naked and dreary prospect. The lowering aspect of the morning, with the turbulence of the sea, did not tend to cheer her spirits; and as she stood at the inn window the tears came into her eyes. Mrs. M' Arthur approached and kindly taking her hand, said,—“There, my dear Miss Trevanion, are the friendly islands before us; let us hail them, not as if we were going into banishment, but as a welcome home after our long journey.”

Matilda, by a faint smile, gave her assent, and in the next minute Mr. M' Arthur came into the room—“The tide serves,” cried he, “and there is no time to be lost. Come Miss Trevanion and Amelia, we shall have a fine breeze, a fair wind, and the day is clearing up.” He drew Matilda's arm through his, adding—“Never fear, my sweet young friend, though we are rocked a little roughly by the rude billows, it is not all smooth sailing you know through life; and you shall be goddess supreme in this desert island, if we once fairly land you there.”

“Your kindness, Sir,” returned she, “makes me blush at the weakness I discover. Remember, before we set out, I told you, that instead of a prize, as you called me, I should prove a torment.”

They had scarcely set sail for the Isle of Mull, before the late impenetrable fog rolled away, and the sun breaking through the heavy vapour, shewed the tops of the distant hills. The beams played on the bosom of the ocean, which became so much calmer as to divest it of this terrific grandeur, which united with the rude and uncultivated country, was apt to inspire the mind of strangers with no very favourable impressions.

Yet as they sailed along, Matilda expressed some admiration at the wild view of the rugged mountains which were bounded by the mountains of Morven, wearing a grand and awful appearance.

Mr. M'Arthur's cheerful spirits supported his wife and Matilda during rather a formidable voyage. He was delighted with the sight of his native country, bleak and barren as was its aspect; and saw, or fancied he saw, many beauties in the bold and uncultivated objects which neither of his companions could join him in admiring. Mrs. M'Arthur was only restrained from expressing her horror, from the apprehensions of hurting her husband's feelings, whose enthusiasm was unbounded; she therefore remained wholly silent. But the ungenial climate and sharp sea-breeze already struck a chill through her whole frame, which even the cloak and plaid in which she was enveloped could not prevent her from feeling; and she began to fancy she was going to be banished to a ruder spot than even the deserts of Siberia. She found she had been preaching that philosophy to Miss Trevanion, so much required for herself.

The impression the aspect of the country made on Matilda was hardly more favourable; yet she envied the delight which shone in Mr. M'Arthur's countenance, and was determined to assume, at least, a gaiety she did not experience, for the sake of his amiable wife.

They were landed towards the afternoon at the beach, and in a few minutes found themselves within the hospitable walls of Kilnorney, the Lord of Mull's mansion. He came out to meet his guests; and though the ladies were strangers to him, according to the old fashioned custom of his country, he saluted each, as he bade them welcome. There was an honest courtesy and kindness in Mr. M'Arthur's manner which made Matilda in less than an hour feel herself at ease.

"If you do not make yourself happy, my bonny lassie," said he to Matilda, "it will no' be Donald M'Arthur's fault. You, my dear sister, cannot be otherwise, where your good man is."

"I told Miss Trevanion," replied Mr. Collin M'Arthur, "she was to reign supreme in this island. Even Saint Columba will not be half so much worshipped and adored as this fair lady."

"No man in his senses," observed his brother, "who would not prefer worshipping a living object, more particularly so engaging a one, for which there is some compensation to the other, which brings nothing but penances and fasting."

They were shewn into a comfortable dining room, where a sumptuous repast awaited them.

## CHAP. XVII.

THE secluded situation in which Matilda now found herself, was quite different from any she had ever experienced. The place was so great a contrast to the soft reposing landscapes of Richmond, or even the old-fashioned splendour of Pengwilly Hall, that when she looked around on the wild and sullen objects, she wondered whither fate next would lead her.

Every comfort that fortune could bestow in this insular spot was afforded; and while the tempestuous blasts which swept over the dark and scowling mountains almost rocked the dwelling she inhabited, the elegance and hospitality which reigned within, seemed to bid defiance to the contending elements, for all was hilarity, good humour, and kindness.

The establishment of the household and its arrangement was so unlike an English one, it surprized Mrs. M'Arthur and Matilda; more particularly on observing the cheerful contented countenances of the domestics, who were satisfied with only the necessaries of life, for the luxuries they have not. Instead of roast beef and plum-pudding, set down to their hirelings at home, they found the servant's table of a Scottish nobleman or laird spread only with barley broth, potatoes, oat-bread, and milk. There were no lazy insolent powdered footmen, lolling in half-dozens in the hall. Every moment of the day was here employed for the benefit and interest of their master; and though they spoke in an uncouth language, it was with civility, at a respectful distance.

The women servants were not fine ladies. Mrs. M'Arthur thought their dresses too homely, yet she preferred it to the flaunting finery of a London maid. The young girls of the household wore no cap, but their hair was bound up with a *snood*;\* and they were dressed in a short bed-gown and petticoat of the same colour. The want of shoes and stockings, together with their unbecoming attire, gave them a savage appearance, which not even the custom of the country could reconcile to Mrs. M'Arthur and Matilda.

The women employed themselves, when the occupation of the day was over, in spinning; and while they turned the wheel, it was usually accompanied to the tune of some Highland ballad, or parts of Ossian's poems, in the Gaelic language, which was familiar to all the inhabitants of the Western Isles.

There was a wild air of romance in the Celtic songs, relating to the deeds of Fingal, that harmonized with this rude spot, whence arose the enthusiasm of these simple and superstitious people.

Mr. M'Arthur, like most Scotchmen, gave implicit credit to the authenticity of Ossian, and found it abounding with beauties. But when Matilda wished to read the works, Doctor Arundel called it *prose run mad*; therefore when she heard Mr. M'Arthur reciting long passages as the hills of Morven rose to the view, she rather inclined to be of the reverend doctor's opinion, for they appeared to her mere hyperbole; yet when converted into a rude language, characteristic of the country, and sung with wild melody, she was pleased to listen to them.

The habit of the country, consisting of the tartan kilt, plaid, bonnet, and hose, she admired, for it gave a fierce grandeur to the appearance of the dignified highlander, that seemed to characterize him rather as a warrior than a vassal.

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\* A band of narrow ribbon, or worsted, tied plain round the head, and confining the hair.

Mr. M'Arthur's house was situated on a high promontory, which overhung the sea. It was built of granite, and though an irregular gloomy pile, was somewhat in the form of an antique castle. Within, it was comfortable, being well furnished. A sort of orchard and garden, with a few solitary fir and pine trees, environed the grounds. Matilda and her friends missed the trim neatness, and elegant decorations of their English gardens.

Beyond the stone inclosures, all was a dreary sameness. Mull was not diversified by bold headlands like some of its neighbouring islands, but a hilly desolate tract of a rude uncultivated country, covered with brown heath, except what was partially divided for the produce of scanty crops of oats and barley. The lower parts of this seemingly desert waste, of a marshy mossy consistence, were of too ungenial a soil to repay the husbandman for his industry. Agriculture was in some parts almost unknown. The cattle and sheep, having no tender and luxuriant herbage to feed on like the spontaneous flowery meads of England, were tended by shepherd boys, or *herds*, (so called in Scotland) to prevent their straying far amidst these wild regions.

Matilda always found these boys knitting, or reading their bible; as there, no child, even of the most uncultured peasant, but what was thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures.

When the weather admitted of Matilda's going abroad, she would escape from her friends; for she loved to wander alone in these desert regions, which wore so contrasted an aspect from

“The deepening woods, gay lawns, and airy summits,”

of Richmond. She wished to explore and become acquainted with the variety of natural curiosities which she discovered in her rambles. The innumerable streams, pouring in liquid crystal from the hills in sullen and mournful music, she delighted in listening to;—it was the only sound which interrupted the profound stillness of the scene, except when she approached the sea, and caught the murmuring of the undulating waves, which broke upon the shore.

In her wanderings, she was always finding specimens of jasper, lapis nephriticus, agate, violet-coloured quartz, porphyry, and often large masses of chalcedony.

These minerals and natural curiosities, which abound in various parts of Scotland, were so pleasing a study, that Matilda determined to give some portion of her time to the pursuit of mineralogy, which Mr. M'Arthur was so well acquainted with.

Sometimes a cairn, or large pile of stones, crowning the summit of a hill, pointed out the burial place of some hero, with whose history she amused herself by guessing. Often Matilda visited the wretched dwellings of the inhabitants of the island, to whom she would have given money to relieve their misery; but if they were poor, they were also proud:—they would receive no charity from her; and she was forcibly struck with the little selfishness, as well as independence, of their spirits.

The cottages in Mull, or rather huts, which formed an irregular hamlet, were built of stones, heaped one above another, without mortar to unite them. The floor of their dwellings, consisting of the bare earth, always damp and swampy, was often filled with puddles; while a hole in the roof, which was thatched with turf, supplied the place of a chimney, and a cavity in the wall the light of a window.—A peat fire, in the middle of

these miserable dwellings, dressed their provisions in a pot, suspended over it by a chain, hanging from the roof. A kind of wooden crib was the only sort of bed used by the poor in the island.

When Matilda beheld the miserable accommodation of these people, who could scarcely procure a bare subsistence for themselves and starving families, in a country so sterile, and under the rigour of a climate so ungenial, and compared their situation with the meanest and poorest of the English peasantry, even in so remote a part as Cornwall, she was astonished at the vigour and health of their appearance; and became persuaded, that the content and cheerfulness with which they maintained so hard a lot, sprung from the genuine piety, and primitive simplicity of their characters.

## CHAP. XVIII.

IN these sequestered isles Matilda was agreeably surprized to find large families possessing elegant manners, enlightened conversation, and high accomplishments. The young women were lively without frivolity, and the native gaiety of their amusements inspired a temporary cheerfulness when she joined in their dance and song, which there was no resisting. Good humour, benevolence, and kindness, were the prevailing manners of all the inhabitants of the different islands, who visited at Mr. M'Arthur's house. Every person felt happy and at ease; and his guests seemed rather one family of cordiality and love, than of different clanships.

The national music of the bagpipe played always during dinner. Its tones were harsh and dissonant to Matilda's ear, yet she listened to it, though without enjoyment, with something like pleasure, when she observed the universal hilarity which it inspired. In the evening the carpet was always rolled away, and highland reels and highland songs, concluded the amusement of the day.

Thus passed the first three weeks of Matilda's sojourn in these remote islands, caressed, admired, and esteemed by strangers. If anything could have soothed the sadness of her heart, it would have been the kindness which she experienced.

The young laird of Lismore, Mr. M'Laurel, one of the guests, who had never seen so fair a creature, soon became a captive to Matilda's charms. The gentleness of her manners, the pensive sadness of her looks, so unlike what he had pictured of a haughty English beauty, and a graceful and unreserved deportment, which rather deluded, than discouraged her admirers, tended so entirely to ensnare Mr. M'Laurel, that he could not live out of her presence.

It was almost the only weakness Matilda possessed, her irresolution to check by distance and restraint, those whom she found amiable and pleasant. Hence, on some occasions, she had acquired (particularly from Mrs. Aldersey) the reputation of a coquette. But so perfectly unconscious was Matilda of the magical gift she possessed, of being followed and admired, wherever she appeared, she often wondered how she had power to induce the flattering attentions which were paid her, and felt it would be rude to return them with incivility, enslaving thereby her willing captives.

Matilda danced with more grace and airiness than the generality of young women. The lightness of her figure made her scarcely touch the ground. Her movements were beautiful without study: she had no affected attitudes, but possessed a degree of ease, that gave a peculiar charm to the natural elegance of her deportment. She was fond of dancing. The young laird of Lismore excelled in that accomplishment; and she preferred tripping with him through the Highland-reel to any other person. When she spoke, there was something so tender and dulcet in the tones of her voice, M'Laurel could have listened to it for ever, if he had not heard her sing. He was fond of music, and her mode and taste was so perfectly different from any he had been accustomed to, in the simple Scotch airs, that when she warbled some of the beautiful Italian ones, he hung over her chair for hours together, as she accompanied herself on the piano-forte. Like another syren, she seemed to have enchanted him to this fatal island to charm and to destroy.

Mr. M'Laurel's sister, who had accompanied him to Kilnorney, was a good-humoured genuine character. Lively, unpolished, but warm-hearted and obliging. She

sung her native airs in a simple and pleasing manner, and was so much delighted with Matilda's taste and knowledge in music, she profited greatly by the instruction she readily gave her.

The brother and sister always accompanied Matilda in her walks; and as her solitary rambles for the present were interrupted, she amused herself with taking views of the wild scenery with which she was surrounded.

Sometimes before she retired for the night she went on the sea-beach, to look at the wonderful radiance of the aurora borealis (particularly luminous in the Hebrides), darting in such long rays of light, as to have the most sublime and awful appearance. She was filled with astonishment and admiration at the extraordinary grandeur it gave to the scene, when the wild and gloomy mountains would have been wholly veiled in night, but for the fiery glow which it emitted.

"I am happy, Miss Trevanion," said Mr. M'Laurel (who had stood sometime silently at her side) "you find any natural beauty in so remote a region can excite your admiration, and that you are apparently not dissatisfied, for a time, amongst its rude inhabitants. Oh that you could reconcile it to your taste to remain for ever in these islands. But the wish is vain as it is selfish, therefore I ought not to express it; for Miss Trevanion was formed to adorn the more polished circles of an English metropolis. Yet, in no place can your sweetness be more estimated, or your society more valued, than in this insular spot."

Matilda looked with a doubtful sort of surprize at Mr. M'Laurel, so little was she aware of the impression she had made on his heart. He was in general a plain spoken young man, and he had never before uttered any thing bordering on a compliment. The constant habit of overwhelming a pretty woman with them, in England, seemed in Scotland scarcely to be known. Here she had always found the men appeal to the understanding of the women to whom they directed their discourse; they did not consider them as weak fools, silly enough to smile assent to the multitude of idle words which they took the trouble of uttering, and turning the next minute on their heel, to laugh at their folly.

Matilda began to be alarmed, fearing there was something more meant in Mr. M'Laurel's compliments than met the ear, and she determined the following day to assume a more distant and reserved manner towards him. It would cost her some effort to do so, he was so sincere, good-humoured, conversable, and obliging. She felt grieved at the idea of giving him pain; yet to encourage and mislead him would be ungenerous and dishonourable in the extreme.

Dwelling on the unremitting attention which he had shewn her, not without pain she recollected that both the Mr. M'Arthurs had sanctioned and encouraged every opportunity to place them together. Mr. M'Laurel had considerable property in the small island of Lismore. He belonged to one of the most ancient clans, and was much beloved and respected. Matilda understood it was his intention to marry, for before Mr. Donald M'Arthur introduced him to her, he said, "Here, my dear lassie, is a sure match for you, if you have not already bestowed your heart on some of your English chaps. If you will but look with that bonnie smile on the handsome chiel, who is to be here the day, you will do his business. He has a pocket-fu' of siller, and a warm housie over his head to keep out the cold of a winter's day. Think o' it, my sweet heart. There is na in all the Hebrides a braver better lad than Collin M'Laurel, ye may take my word for it."

“My brother,” interrupted the younger Mr. M’Arthur, “is anxious, I perceive, to keep you, Miss Trevanion, amongst them, and to make you, after all, goddess of one of these isles.”

The evident attachment Mr. M’Laurel had discovered, of which Matilda could have no doubt, when she recurred to a variety of trifling circumstances, which before had passed over unheeded, gave her extreme pain. She in vain had attempted to drive Clairville and Julia from her remembrance, and had with careful anxiety examined the English newspapers which always came with their letters. Nothing like their marriage had appeared, nor was any intimation given of such an event being to take place. Mrs. Arundel had never written, though she had faithfully promised, and her silence gave Matilda the most serious uneasiness, persuaded it must be occasioned by some extraordinary cause. From Lady Seyntaubyne she had heard more than once, but she of all persons was the least likely to mention her grand-daughter’s marriage. She felt severely the long long distance she was placed from all her friends. In Mrs. Arundel she had lost her guide, her consolation, her able adviser in every doubt and difficulty. Matilda esteemed Mrs. M’Arthur, but she was a stranger to her connexions and her affairs. They were involved in so much mystery that to speak of them was but to expose the singularity of her situation. Thus reflecting, Matilda felt she was wretched, without a friend to whom she could unfold her wretchedness, or who could soothe the anguish of her mind.

## CHAP. XIX.

THE weather becoming very favourable, Mr. M'Arthur informed his guests if they entertained a desire to visit the singular natural curiosity of Staffa, which of late years many English travellers had beheld with astonishment, since it had been first seen by Sir Joseph Banks and Mr. Pennant. There was no time to be lost, the sky and sea being unusually serene.

Matilda eagerly caught at the proposal, to which Mrs. M'Arthur, though still a great invalid, gave a cheerful assent, and it was fixed on the following morning; at a very early hour the ladies were to put themselves under the care of the two Mr. M'Arthurs and Mr. M'Laurel.

As the distance to Fingal's cave was by no means considerable from Kilnorney, they hoped, with ease, to accomplish the voyage before the close of day.

The mists rolled from the hills soon after day-break; and the sun bursting in full splendour above their bare summits, discovered a morning highly favourable to their aquatic excursion. The laird's boat was putting to shore. The white sails flitted in the sunbeams. The Highlanders who guided it, as they advanced on the undulating waves, reminded Matilda of Walter Scott's line—

“See the bonnet sink and rise.”

A basket of provisions, with wines, whisky, &c. was placed in the boat. The party, delighted with the cheerful aspect of the morning, put to sea for Staffa.

In vain Matilda endeavoured to shun Mr. M'Laurel's attentions. As they got into the boat Mr. Donald M'Arthur said to him, “Take ye care, Collin, of the young lady, and I shall look to my sister; they are both of them poor tender things, and need warm hearts to comfort them.”

“Presuming,” replied Mr. M'Laurel, as he seated himself by Matilda, and colouring highly, “on Mr. M'Arthur's charge to me, will you allow, madam, a *warm heart*, full of sincerity in its admiration of you, to tender it to your devotion.”

“When,” replied she, smiling, and affecting not literally to understand him, “a Highland Chief gives the command, all his vassals must be under subordination;—we are so at present; and to mutiny might be dangerous.”

“Miss Trevanion,” cried the younger Mr. M'Arthur, “has ever, I perceive, been taught subjection. Our good friend Doctor Arundel's modes of discipline were so excellent, I should have been surprised to have found her any other than she is.”

“Come,” interrupted Mr. Donald M'Arthur, addressing one of the boatmen, “give us my laddie one of your Highland lilt, or some of the valourous deeds of Ossian, we cannot have them at a better time, when we are going to visit the cave of his fathers.”

“With what a variety of romantic history does Scotland abound,” said Mrs. M'Arthur. “Even in this remote and circumscribed island, you have the tales of Ossian, which form a perfect romance. Much ancient history is connected with the antique abbey of Icolmkill. I hope it will be the next place which we shall visit. My husband was speaking of another singular cave, in the Isle of Skie, which I should like also to see.”

“The cave,” replied Mr. Collin, “somewhat resembles those in Derbyshire; but this one, of Fingal’s, is singularly curious from a distinct cause: that the basaltic column, of which it is entirely composed, have all the uniform correctness of the finest architectural pillars; besides that, they are all magnetic.

“But we are losing,” continued he, “in conversation, the first view of these extraordinary rocks. Observe, Miss Trevanion and Amelia, that rude and stupendous one, which, even at this distance, resembles an immense pile of building. The traditions of the island concerning this cave are, that it was built by a race of giants for Fingal, the father of Ossian. By others it is said, that it was built for St. Columbia. All these idle fables are very well to amuse the credulous and superstitious; but all the naturalists agree in considering this extraordinary specimen of Nature’s work, to be occasioned by some volcanic explosion, which formed these basaltic columns with so singularly regular an appearance.”

A short sail now brought the party to the mouth of Staffa. The extreme turbulence of the overwhelming waves, excited much terror in Mrs. M’Arthur; nor was Matilda divested of fear, though it was somewhat checked by the awful sublimity of the scene.

The basaltic rock, towering in stupendous pillars, had a grander appearance than any thing the most creative fancy could have imagined. Though these pillars were somewhat broken by the brown moss and lichens which sprung from stones, yet the whole had the aspect of a vast building, which, on a near approach, wore the magnificent form of a cathedral. The lower part was broken by the fury of the waves, foaming and dashing with such violence, the ladies expressed the impossibility of entering, except at the risk of their lives.

Mr. M’Arthur, who was not to be disappointed by fears, which he however thought were not altogether groundless, instead of showing his displeasure, by soothing and gentle persuasion, at length obtained their consent to enter; and the men, who were careful and skilful, often having been in the place before, launched them safe into the entrance of this gigantic and terrific cave.

“Is it not,” exclaimed Mr. Collin M’Arthur, in rapture, “worth encountering some difficulty to behold this wonderful place?”

Mrs. M’Arthur and Matilda could only gaze in awful silence; for the terrific majesty it wore, seemed to deprive them of their utterance.

“You cannot,” said Mr. Donald M’Arthur, with a look of triumph, “shew me in all your England, with your boasting, any such curiosity as this place. You may tell me of your cathedrals, but where will you find one so magnificent as what you now see? There is regularity and beauty! Pillar above pillar, cut as curiously as if the nicest chisel had formed it.”

“It is, indeed, most extraordinary!” exclaimed Mrs. M’Arthur.

They found the cave formed of perfect and regular ranges of basaltic pillars, as if shaped by the most ingenious sculptor, and which appeared to bid defiance to the rude hand of nature; while the roof, wonderfully wrought in a sort of Mosaic work, presented specimens of white zeolite, with a variety of other minerals. The vast dimensions of the cave, and its elevation from the base to the summit, astonished them.

Mr. M’Arthur wished to have examined further into it than the ladies would venture. The awful solitude of its situation, and the terrific gloom of its appearance, with the turbulence of the ocean, the dismal scream of the sea-fowl, and the roaring of the

wind and waves, altogether were so terrific, that, astonished and gratified as Mrs. M'Arthur and Matilda had been, they so earnestly petitioned to depart, the gentlemen desired the men to land them at the small island of Booshala. They found there a few miserable huts, built of the fragments of some of the pillars, which constitute the whole of the island. Taking their provisions along with them, they entered one of these miserable dwellings, and found the interior equally wretched.

Mrs. M'Arthur, who was extremely indisposed, was afraid the damp floor, composed of mud, would give her an additional chill, dared not venture to sit down; and the little light, with the suffocating smoke, made her prefer returning into the open air.

Mr. Donald M'Arthur in vain pressed them to swallow a glass of whiskey, but they took a draught of the *gude wife's* new milk; and being refreshed with some part of their provisions, they set sail for Kilnorney, which they reached soon after the close of the evening.

## CHAP. XX.

Mr. Collin M'Arthur and Matilda, excited by their visit to Staffa to view the ancient remains of Icolmkill, proposed going thither in a day or two, as Mr. M'Laurel and his sister were soon to depart.

Mrs. M'Arthur, whose tender frame could ill contend with the uncertainty and moisture of the climate, had been seized, the day after going to Staffa, with so violent a cold, accompanied by fever, that the intended sail to Icolmkill was obliged to be deferred. Several days passed away, and Mrs. M'Arthur daily getting worse, she would not admit of the party waiting any longer for her, as Matilda had a female companion in Flora M'Laurel, for the season was advanced as far as September.

The day at length fixed on, proved equally favourable as the one on which they sailed to Staffa; and the party were put on shore at a spot some distance from the abbey, in order to search for pebbles and curious plants, with which that part abounded: Mr. M'Arthur having promised to shew various specimens of each to Matilda. As they proceeded, he pointed out a quarry of white marble, of which there were large masses distributed near the abbey, with specimen of jasper, porphyry, and granite. The rare plants, the *eryngium maritimum*, or sea-holly, covered the shore, which Mr. M'Arthur told her he had seldom seen except on the shores of Swansea, in South Wales. She gathered, near the marble quarry, quantities of the *salix lapponum*, or Lapland willow. But the scene was desolate in the extreme, from the ruinous appearance of the abbey, half diminished by the hand of time. Even of the large court, only part of the wall remained; and the roof of what was formerly the chapel, was in a state of decay. That chapel, once a religious sanctuary, when the choral hymn ascended in solemn chaunt to the pealing strains of the organ, with fervent devotion, was now degraded into a place of shelter for cows. A few mutilated grave-stones, much defaced, and nearly illegible, marked the spot where slept kings, chieftains, and abbots.

Near what was once the garden and fishponds, Matilda gathered the pink blossoms of the *pulmonna*, or sea burgloss. The ruin of the cathedral was covered with the *cotyledon umbilicus*, or navel wort; and the beautiful wild *menyanthes trifoliatum*, or trefoil, grew in abundance near the same place. All these plants, Mr. M'Arthur informed her, were peculiar to this wild and uncultured spot.

The beautiful workmanship, which formerly adorned the cathedral, retained scarcely any visible remains of its former elegance. The gothic window was the only specimen of the fineness of its architecture.

Several crosses marked the superstition of those days; and a large room joining the chapel seemed to have been the refectory.

"How mournful is it," cried Matilda, "to tread over this place of desolation. To observe the changes a few centuries produce. That this former grandeur, like its inhabitants, are gone to decay; and this ruinous pile remains only as a striking monument of the mutability of every earthly thing. That, however vast, however grand, it, like ourselves, must yield to the devastation of time, and in the words of Shakespear,

'Leave not a wreck behind.'"

“You must not,” interrupted Mr. M’Laurel, “speak in such sober sadness, or you will infect the whole party.”

“I wish not to do so; yet the very echo of our footsteps seem to whisper the solemn stillness of the place, where it would be sacrilege to be gay. Hark!” added she, “did I not hear voices?”

They listened a moment. “There certainly,” replied Mr. M’Laurel, “is the distant sound of footsteps and of voices. Strangers like ourselves, probably, come to look at the abbey.”

In the next minute, two persons crossed the large court. Matilda only caught a glimpse of one of the figures, but she turned pale, and uttering a faint exclamation, stood still.

Her emotion did not escape Mr. M’Laurel, who, with an agitation which he could not conceal, asked Matilda, “Whether the strangers were known to her?”

“I thought so,” she replied, in confusion; “yet it cannot be. I should like, however, to discover who they are.”

“Shall we go towards the spot where we saw them?”

“Yes, if you please,” returned she, with hesitation; “yet it does not signify.”

Mr. M’Laurel, irresolute what to do, was standing in silent anxiety beside Matilda, when the strangers again appeared.

When she saw them once more she changed colour and exclaimed, “Is it possible?” while the tallest of them advanced with hasty steps; and as a deep blush suffused Matilda’s cheek, he said, “Who expected to have seen the fair Miss Trevanion doing penance at the shrine of St. Columbia, when a thousand knees ought to be bent to her devotion? Yet some penance is necessary, I admit, for the sin of leaving so many friends to mourn your absence.”

“And who,” returned she, somewhat regaining her composure, “expected to see Sir Charles Dashwood also a pilgrim at this shrine, who has so many attractions in London? But,” added she, with a pleasure which she could not disguise, as she shook hands with him, “I am truly glad to meet an old acquaintance in a far and strange country.”

The sight of Sir Charles Dashwood brought so many interesting circumstances to her mind, and recalled so forcibly the friends she cherished with unabated tenderness. Her varying countenance and embarrassment, which she could not altogether shake off, at the singularity of the meeting, did not escape Mr. M’Laurel, who the moment he saw the pleasure that beamed in Matilda’s fine eyes, when she spoke to this elegant stranger, was convinced he saw a favoured and formidable rival.

Matilda was at a loss how to act in regard to Sir Charles. She was certain an introduction to her friends would immediately lead to an invitation to Kilnorney. No stranger came to the Hebrides unwelcomed and not hospitably entertained. She was lost in conjecture what could have brought him, and thought it was perhaps some stratagem of Mrs. Aldersey’s, and therefore wished to avoid introducing him; aware, if she guessed right, of the raillery it would lead to, if he was admitted on the familiar terms of a friend. She ardently longed to ask whether Albert Clairville was married. Sir Charles must know, but to make the enquiry was impossible; and she hoped, yet dreaded, that he would lead to the subject.

“I do not enquire,” cried the baronet, “who you are with; I have a letter of introduction to your friends, and I have one for yourself.”

“A letter for me,” exclaimed Matilda, in amazement. “May I ask from whom?”

“All in good time you shall know.—Now for my credentials, that I may not be taken for some idle adventurer, but present them to Mr. M’Arthur, the laird of Kilnorney. I have been a day or two,” continued he, “in the Isle of Mull. I knew too well the power of female charms not to be sure that I should be spell-bound, if I made my appearance before I had seen the extraordinary curiosities with which this insular spot abounds, and been taken for a very stupid fellow. I have been at Staffa, and to day I have taken up my quarters in the most wretched of all hovels, though it goes by the name of an inn. Piteously both man and beast have been accommodated. And now, sweetest Miss Trevanion, I come to kiss your fair hand, and to be welcomed by your smiles.”

This speech of Sir Charles much perplexed and distressed Matilda, while Mr. M’Laurel listened to it with an impatient jealousy which stung him to the soul. She was distressed in being alone with the two gentlemen; and expressed her anxiety for the Mr. M’Arthurs’ return, who had walked on to some distance, accompanied by Miss M’Laurel to look at some agricultural improvement; and she was not mistaken in guessing Flora had intentionally left her alone with her brother.

Sir Charles, elated by his reception, was in high spirits, and talked without ceasing. “It is unnecessary,” said he, to “enquire after your health, for the roses have usurped the lily, and I never saw you, though ever lovely, half so charming. Lady Seyntaubyne was afraid the rude breezes would spoil your complexion. If the Hebrides were to agree with every London lady half as well, I would recommend them to take a trip every summer.”

“I intreat, you Sir Charles,” replied Matilda, half angry (as she observed M’Laurel gravely regarding them), “do not talk such nonsense to me. Tell me when or where you saw Lady Seyntaubyne, And,” added she, stammering violently, “how were my other friends, all of whom I suppose you have seen?”

“Mrs. Aldersey,” cried he, smiling, “do you enquire after?”

“How malicious. She, I dare say, would not bestow a thought upon me; and is too much a woman of ton to think of any of her dear friends when she sees them no longer.”

“You say true,” said Sir Charles, more seriously. “Mrs. Aldersey, like half the world, lives but for her own amusement. She only *chaperons* and introduces a beautiful young woman, to give herself importance; and I am afraid, would rather *mar*, than, according to the acceptation of the word, *make their fortune*.”

“No, lovely Miss Trevanion,” continued the baronet, with vehemence, “it is not on her judgment I form my opinion; I build it on my own discrimination. I build my hopes on your smiles, on the letter which I bring from Lady Seyntaubyne. I have been to Pengwilly Hall, and have travelled thence to the Hebrides on the wings which Cupid has lent me. I boldly bid him defiance, but he has taken ample revenge of my bravery.”

Every word Sir Charles uttered increased Matilda’s distress and confusion. M’Laurel, deeply hurt, although sensible he had no right to be offended, walked to a little distance, finding it impossible to take any part in the conversation. Soon after Matilda saw the Mr. M’Arthurs and Miss M’Laurel approaching, and she immediately joined them.

Sir Charles Dashwood introduced himself by presenting Lady Seyntaubyne's letter to Mr. Collin M'Arthur, and to the laird of Kilnorney he gave one from a gentleman in Edinburgh, his particular friend, which immediately led to an invitation to his house in the most pressing and friendly manner. It was settled that the baronet should go back with them in the boat, which there was no refusing; and what Matilda dreaded actually happened, Sir Charles becoming a member of the family.

On their landing at home, Matilda went to Mrs. M'Arthur's chamber. She found her gone to bed, with considerable increase of illness. Full of anxiety and distress of mind she pleaded fatigue, and retired also for the night, that alone she might ponder on Sir Charles's unlooked-for visit. She was all impatience for Lady Seyntaubyne's letter, which she could not have till the morning, when his baggage was brought. Yet she was afraid, from the hints he threw out, her ladyship had induced, and sanctioned his journey.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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