

LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-street London.

LOVERS AND FRIENDS;

OR,

MODERN ATTACHMENTS.

A NOVEL.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY
ANNE OF SWANSEA,

AUTHOR OF

CONVICTION, GONZALO DE BALDIVIA, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS
HOUSE, SECRET AVENGERS, SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION, CAMBRIAN
PICTURES, CESARIO ROSALBA,
&c.&c.

“I hold a mirror up for men to see
How bad they are, how good they ought to be.”

VOL. 1.

LONDON:

Printed at the Minerva Press for
A.K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL—STREET.

1821.

INSCRIPTION.

WITH

SINCERE ADMIRATION OF HIS MUSICAL
GENIUS,

AND

THE MOST PERFECT RESPECT FOR HIS
HONOURABLE CHARACTER,

THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED TO

JOHN EMDIN, ESQ.

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND

AND DEVOTED SERVANT,

ANN OF SWANSEA.

College-street, Swansea,
July 10, 1820.

PREFACE.

KING Solomon, the very wisest of all wise sages, past, present, and to come, declared, in his day, there was nothing new under the sun: how then can the weak brain of a modern author (ye sons and daughters of fire-eyed Genius, be not, I beseech you, offended; I only mean weak, when compared with the brain of king Solomon) pretend to lead the fastidious critic through paths untrodden before, or present to his lynx-like sight sentiments and incidents unheard of either in prose or verse? The difficulty of twisting, twining, and winding together, three or four volumes, of sufficient interest to attract public attention, is labour that requires an ingenuity few have genius enough to accomplish, and affords a weighty reason why prefaces are growing out of fashion; for an author finds his inventive faculties spun as thin as a cobweb in supplying the requisite number of pages for his story, without wasting his metaphors, sublimity, and brilliance, on a preface. Nor is it my intention to suffer my wit to evaporate in a preface, which is generally designed to trumpet the superior talents of the writer above his contemporaries, or to defy, or oftener deprecate, those terrific inquisitorial gentlemen, the Reviewers; I will only relate a short conversation that took place in my apartment the other day, and then dismiss my gentle or ungentle reader to the approval or condemnation of my story, as shall seem most just to his or her fancy.

“Lovers and Friends!” said Miss Sylphina Thistledown, with a most captivating lisp, glancing her soft, languishing blue eyes over the manuscript as it lay on my table—“it is really a dear enchanting title, and promises—”

“Pshaw!” interrupted her maiden aunt, Miss Mentoria Grizzle, “you are a simpleton, niece! the title promises a jumble of sickening nonsense, only fit to turn the heads of weak silly girls—Lovers and Friends! the title is really ridiculous.”

“Why, la! aunt,” lisped the fair Sylphina, “you no doubt have experienced the blessings of friendship, and have know the exquisite pleasure of listening to a lover.”

Miss Grizzle frowned, and craning her scraggy neck beyond its usual altitude, replied—“No, Miss Thistle-down; I thank my lucky stars I have always had discretion enough to prevent my being made the dupe of man’s artful views and flatteries; and as to friends, I never wanted any; because, niece, I always carried a sure and certain one in my pocket.”

“For all this,” resumed Sylphina, laying her white hand on my manuscript, the forefinger of which was circled with a garnet ring, a love-token given her by a smart ensign in a marching regiment, whose return, though absent far beyond his promised time, she still expected with all the credulity of inexperienced eighteen, to perform the vow he swore while placing it on her finger—a vow which he had since repeated to twenty romantic fair ones, with the same sincerity and the same convenient forgetfulness—“for all this, aunt,” said Miss Thistledown, “I shall be quite impatient for the publication of this work, because I have so much pleasure in reading a novel, and because I hope to find the hero a tall, handsome young man, and a faithful lover, and that the work will prove there may be friendship without the interference of money, and modern attachments as strong as any the days of my great-grandmother could boast.”

For the confirmation or disappointment of Miss Sylphina Thistledown’s hopes, I beg to refer the reader to the following chapters, by which, if he or she is not improved

and entertained, it is not my fault, as I solemnly declare it was my intention that they should have equally as much pleasure in reading as I had in writing, what I positively think a pathetic-comic-moral story.

LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

And, as he gaz'd,
There flash'd upon his brain the memory
Of a dark and fearful deed.

With how secure a brow and specious form
He gilds the secret villain! DRYDEN.

*An Orphan—The Apartment of a Miser—An
interested Marriage—A Woman of Fashion.*

“POOR child! poor child!” exclaimed Mrs. Milman, in a mournful tone, as she repeatedly kissed the blooming cheek of a beautiful girl, who was fondly twining its alabaster arms round her neck—“poor little innocent! thy prattle and thy playful ways have so won my heart, that I know not how to part with thee. But it must be so; for when the earl, and the countess, and their noble friends, arrive, this will be no place for thee, and no one can tell when I shall be at liberty to send for thee back to the castle.”

The warmth and earnestness of Mrs. Milman's caresses, together with the tone of unusual seriousness in which she spoke, communicated a degree of sorrow to the child's mind, who fixed her lovely eyes on her face, and as she repeated—“I must, however unwilling, send thee away,” she pressed her coral lips on Mrs. Milman's, and hastily replied—“No, no; pray do not send your own Cecilia away—I love you dearly, dearly—I will be a good child—I will never ride on Triton's back again—I will never slide down the banisters of the stairs: pray do not send me away—I will be very good—indeed, indeed I will.”

“I wish there was no necessity for sending thee away,” returned Mrs. Milman, affected even to tears by this innocent appeal to her feelings; “it almost breaks my heart to part with thee; but, alas! poor dear! it must be so.”

“And wherefore must it? who imposes the command?” asked a voice that made Mrs. Milman start, and utter a faint shriek.

Disengaging herself from the embrace of the child, she turned round in dismay—beheld the earl of Torrington, who had unexpectedly arrived two days sooner than he had appointed. Mrs. Milman curtsied and stammered, but without bestowing any sort of notice on the embarrassment that deprived her welcome to his castle of its appropriate respect.

Without appearing to regard her confusion, he passed by the worthy house-keeper, and strode towards the child, who was patting with its white dimpled hands the huge head of a rough Newfoundland dog, who, pleased with her caresses, folded her fairy form between his enormous paws, and licked her ivory neck with his immense tongue,

while, with tears rolling down her cheeks, she protested she would stay with her own dear Triton, and her pretty white pigeon.

The little Cecilia was a child whose beauty might well attract observation; yet it was not her transparent complexion, in which the rose and lily were delicately blended—her bright hazel eyes, nor the rich chesnut ringlets that shaded her neck and forehead, that arrested the attention of the earl, who, while his eyes were rivetted upon her, turned alternately red and pale. At length overcome, as it appeared, with some painful recollection, he reeled against the window-frame. Mrs. Milman, who observed the changes of his countenance, hastily drew an elbow-chair, into which he sunk, pale, trembling, and almost lifeless.

Mrs. Milman was flying to the bell to ring for assistance, when the earl struggling for composure, bade her fetch him a glass of water. In a voice faint and tremulous, he said—“I am only overcome with heat; the weather is oppressively sultry. I am not ill, Mrs. Milman; I am much fatigued, and too warm.”

Mrs. Milman hurried away for the water, while the earl, again gazing on the child, shuddered, and with clasped hands and elevated eyes murmured—“Mercy, Heaven! again the horrid scene renews upon my memory—and this child—what a wonderful resemblance!”

It was evident to the penetration of Mrs. Milman, as she presented the water, that something more than heat or fatigue occasioned the earl’s disorder, for he seemed well enough before he examined the features of the little Cecilia; but why the poor child’s innocent face should occasion such trembling and disorder, she could not conceive.

After sitting for some moments buried in thought, the earl approached the child, who, utterly unconscious of his presence, was sobbing on the neck of Triton. The earl parted, with a cold trembling hand, the rich curls that shaded her forehead, and exerted himself to sooth her; then turning to Mrs. Milman, who was actually amazed at this very extraordinary instance of condescension, he inquired—“To whom does this sweet girl belong?”

“I hope your lordship will pardon me,” returned Mrs. Milman; “I had no intention that she should intrude upon your lordship.—Come, Cecilia, my love, take your arms from about Triton’s neck, and come with me.”

“Remain,” said the earl, sternly—“remain and answer me, who are the parents of this child?”

“Alas, poor babe!” said Mrs. Milman, “she has no parents—at least, no mother; and as to her father, he——”

“Woman,” exclaimed the earl, with an impetuosity that made Mrs. Milman start, “answer me, who was her mother?”

“Her mother, my lord,” returned she, “was my sister, who unfortunately married a very worthless fellow, of the name of Delmore. Poor creature, she died in a month after this child was born; and her father having sent the motherless babe to me, went immediately, as far as I can learn, to the East Indies; and as I have not been able to gain any intelligence of him, I suppose he is dead also; and this poor child is now an orphan, with no friend in the world but me.”

As Mrs. Milman spoke, the child raised her eyes to the earl’s face, and placing her little hand on his, said—“Will you be Cecilia’s friend? Poor Cecilia has nobody to love her but mamma Milman, and Triton, and Whitewing.”

The earl was unusually affected—“I will love thee, and be thy friend, sweet cherub!” replied he, kissing her white forehead.

Cecilia smiled through her tears, and in an animated tone asked—“Shall I stay with mamma Milman, and Triton, and my pretty white pigeon?”

“You shall, you shall,” replied the earl, delighted with the smiles that dimpled her beautiful face—“you shall remain here; and I lament that the countess of Torrington having accepted an invitation to Ireland, will deprive lord Rushdale of so lovely a playfellow.”

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Milman, after having expressed her grateful sense of the earl’s permission to retain Cecilia—“dear me! I am quite disappointed, I had got every thing in such nice order against the arrival of the countess: the tenants too will be so vexed—they are quite impatient to see our young lord.”

“They must wait the pleasure of the countess,” replied the earl, coldly; “and when that may lead her into Cumberland, is more than I can even guess. Some business I have to transact with Wilson has brought me hither; that dispatched, I shall depart immediately. As to this little beauty, her countenance is a letter of recommendation to my favour.” Again he contemplated the features of the child with interest and emotion.—“It is my command she not only remains at the castle, but that she is considered in all things as my adopted daughter; and— but I shall leave orders respecting her with the steward.” He then pressed a kiss on the rosy cheek of Cecilia, who would hardly suffer him to leave her, so much had he won her heart, by promising she should remain at the castle with her mamma Milman, ride when she liked on the back of old Triton, and have pease whenever she asked for them, to feed her pretty white pigeon.

Mrs. Milman had never yet seen the countess of Torrington, whom report represented as very handsome, extremely haughty, and deplorably weak and vain. Her son Oscar lord Rushdale was about the age of Cecilia, and, as the countess had no other child, was likely, from her silly indulgence, to become the inheritor of all her follies and imperfections.

Torrington Castle was situated on a rocky eminence, beneath the sublime and romantic Skiddaw; it was a heavy Gothic building, and had belonged to the earls of Torrington since the chivalric reign of Richard the First, when that monarch bestowed it on its first possessor, as a reward for some particular act of valour. The architecture of the castle, though ancient, was extremely magnificent; the state apartments, lofty and extensive, boasted the richest adornments that the carving of the early age in which they were finished could bestow; the windows overlooked the beautiful lake of Derwentwater, and commanded, on all sides, as picturesque and sublime views as ever delighted the tasteful and enthusiastic eye of fancy and genius: yet, in preference to this lovely spot, attractive to every admirer of the magnificence of nature, the young and frivolous countess of Torrington had joined a party of her fashionable friends, who were going to spend the summer at Belfast; and at their instigation the visiting Torrington Castle, a plan which she had herself laid down, and talked of during the whole winter with rapture, was in an instant relinquished, and the excursion to Ireland acceded to, with very little opposition on the part of the earl, who though, in general, obstinately pertinacious in his arrangements and opinions, having a scheme of his own to pursue, suffered himself to be persuaded to give up his intention of passing the summer at his castle in Cumberland, and accompany his capricious lady to Belfast.

Mrs. Milman consoled herself for the disappointment of not seeing the countess of Torrington, with the permission granted her of retaining her orphan niece, and in the extreme good fortune of the child having so much interested the earl, who, previous to his leaving the castle, gave orders to his steward, Mr. Wilson, to pay every attention to Miss Delmore, and to be careful to procure her every advantage of education that the neighbouring town of Keswick could afford.

The earl of Torrington had been introduced to the acquaintance of his lady, the daughter of an apothecary at Oxford, by a very particular friend, a young East Indian, who, with eccentric and romantic notions, had fallen in love with her beautiful face, fondly believing it animated by a mind replete with every virtue. Circumstances of a complex nature had called this young enthusiast abroad, and while unwillingly detained at Calcutta, he received the melancholy intelligence that his only sister had lost her life by a shocking accident, and that the man who had even from childhood professed himself his bosom friend, had married the woman who possessed his devoted affection. The loss of his tenderly-beloved sister, the infidelity of his mistress, and the treachery of his friend, gave so severe a shock to the constitution of Edmund Saville, that he remained many weeks in a state of suffering that baffled every aid of medicine; and at length he recovered, to become a wretched misanthrope, with such a hatred to England, that he resolved never to return to a country where all his happiness had been wrecked—which he believed nourished only the hideous vices of falsehood and ingratitude.

Wilfred Rushdale was the only son of an eminent banker, and intended by his speculating father to fill, at no very remote period, the high office of lord chancellor. Wilfred, with specious rather than solid talents, received an education to fit him for the dignities with which his sanguine and too-partial father hoped to see him invested. From Eton, where his intimacy had first commenced with Edmund Saville, Wilfred Rushdale was removed to Oriel College with his friend, in whose unsuspecting and romantic mind his elegant exterior and imposing manners had created an attachment sincere and ardent; in the bosom of Wilfred every secret was reposed, and among others of less importance, his love for Emily Herbert, with whom he had become acquainted soon after his arrival at Oxford.

The parents of Miss Herbert were far from rich; the only portion of Emily was her beauty. Mr. Saville, a reputed wealthy East Indian, was a lover whose addresses were of too much importance to be rejected; and Emily, whose vanity was not a little flattered by a conquest so infinitely above her expectations, was instructed by her prudent parents to give him all proper encouragement. Saville was really in love, and too honourable to take an unfair advantage of the partiality she evinced for him; he publicly avowed his intention of making her his by the sacred bond of marriage, as soon as he became of age, and master of his fortune.

The eye of Rushdale acknowledged the graceful symmetry of Miss Herbert's person, and the faultless beauty of her face; but his own mind, strongly tinctured with vanity and error, was doubtful of the sincerity of her professions, which, at the very moment they breathed pure and disinterested love for Saville, were contradicted by the restless glances of her eyes, which seemed eager to obtain other conquests, and to demand even from him, the friend of her accepted lover, a homage warmer and more devoted than esteem and admiration.

Edmund Saville had just entered his one-and-twentieth year, when the death of his father rendered his presence at Calcutta, where the chief of his possessions lay, necessary. The parting of lovers has often been described; suffice it to say, with many a tender charge Edmund Saville exchanged vows of eternal love and never-ending constancy with the woman he adored, and consigned her to the guardianship of Wilfred Rushdale, of whose fixed and honourable principles he would have thought it sinful to doubt; he pledged himself to the parents of Emily to return with all possible expedition to England to marry her; and with deep and heartfelt agony he tore himself from her embrace, while with tears and distraction she vowed to love but him, and him for ever.

Rushdale accompanied his friend to Gravesend, from whence, relying on the affection and fidelity of Emily, and the honour and friendship of Wilfred, the generous, noble-minded Saville sailed with a prosperous breeze for the East Indies, impatient to conclude the business which, by investing him with a handsome fortune, would enable him to render happy the lovely girl who possessed his undivided affection. Miss Herbert wept bitterly, for a day, the absence of Edmund Saville, and lamented very sincerely the necessity that took him from England—his attentions had been so very agreeable—his presents so acceptable; but, the second day, as she listened to her father's sage remark, that Calcutta was a long way off, and that many things might happen to prevent his ever returning to England, she began to think the time very dull and tedious, without any one to flatter and make love to her; and that there was much truth in her father's observation, and that many things might really occur to prevent Mr. Saville from coming back, such as the loss of his fortune, his death—or he might change his mind; and that it would only be prudent in her to secure herself another offer, in case the present hope should fail.

While these thoughts were fluctuating in the mind of Miss Herbert, a very material change had taken place in the firm of Rushdale and Co., which considerably lowered the aspiring projects of Wilfred. Through the villany of one of the partners, the bank had stopped payment, and, after an ineffectual struggle to recover its credit, totally failed. This misfortune was followed by the sudden death of Mr. Rushdale, who, in the agitation occasioned by the failure of his house, burst a blood-vessel, and almost instantly expired.

The funeral of his father, and the arrangement of the very little property that had been secured to his mother, for some days so fully occupied the time of young Rushdale, that he had scarcely bestowed a thought on Oxford, to which his now-reduced finances did not allow his return; and he was going to the house of a distant relation, a solicitor, under whose instruction he was trying to make up his mind to study the law, when, in crossing Oxford-street, he had the good fortune to preserve an aged man from being run over by a hackney-coach.

Though he had received no injury, the old man was so terrified and so amazed at his narrow escape, that he was near fainting, and unable to walk without assistance, there being no coach within call; nor did any persons offer their service on this occasion; Rushdale was therefore constrained by humanity to conduct him to his lodging, which, he said, was close by, in an adjoining court. The dress of the old man was an entire suit of snuff-coloured clothes, clean, though threadbare, and of an old-fashioned cut; and when they entered a decent-looking house, Rushdale was astonished to find that the person who leaned on his arm lodged up three pair of stairs. With the assistance of the woman of the

house he was conducted to his garret, which exhibited a scene of deplorable poverty, beyond any thing Wilfred had ever seen or imagined.

Having laid him on his miserable-looking bed, Rushdale considered that a little wine, or some other cordial, would be necessary to recruit the spirits of the poor trembling wretch; but doubting, from the appearance of every thing in the room, whether he had the means to procure himself this comfort, he slid a guinea into his hand, and wishing him better, was departing; but the old man grasped his hand, and with much earnestness entreated that he would call in upon him the next day; he then added, in a whisper—“Take back your guinea, young gentleman; I do not want pecuniary assistance; but, mum for that—not a word—mum!”

Rushdale surveyed the old man and the miserable garret with looks of wonder, but feeling his curiosity excited to learn why a man, whose circumstances were above want, lived in a garret, with all the appearance of the most abject poverty, together with a wish to hear what he had to communicate, induced him to promise that he would look in upon him the next day; and he left the old man to compose his spirits with what, he said, would do him most good—an hour’s sleep.

A variety of engagements entirely obliterated the remembrance of the old man, and his request to see him again, from the memory of Wilfred Rushdale during the day; but being under the necessity of spending the evening with a family party, the dull, uninteresting conversation that took place between his mother and her maiden sister constrained him to seek amusement in his own thoughts and reflections. Among the variety of remembrances that hurried through his brain, the old man and his garret were not forgotten; and while he recollected the rejection of his proffered guinea, it appeared very probable that the person whom he had assisted was some money-hoarding miser, who, preferring the accumulation of wealth to every comfort and indulgence, deprived himself of the decent necessaries of life, to scrape together, by privation and parsimony, a fortune, for some prodigal heir to dissipate in a third of the time that he, by savings and denials, and lucky speculations, had amassed it together. The next morning, however, he had entirely forgotten the old man, and would certainly have broken his engagement, had not a heavy shower of rain, in which he was caught in Oxford-street, reminded him of the necessity of shelter: he was just stepping into a fruit-shop, when he observed he was at the corner of the court where the old man lodged; the rain continued to pour, and he hastened down the court, at once to satisfy his curiosity and escape a wetting.

Having mounted the three flights of stairs, he tapped at the garret door, and was told to come in. On entering the room, he beheld the old man, his head cased with a striped worsted nightcap, and his skeleton limbs buttoned into what had once been a great-coat, but now resembled most a harlequin-jacket, from the variety of colours with which it was patched. He was sitting on a low stool, shivering before a grate, where, between two bricks, was burning a handful of fire, upon which was standing a saucepan of gruel, which he was cooking for his breakfast. To Mr. Rushdale’s inquiry after his health he said—“Bad enough, bad enough: have been unwell a long time—cramp, or something like it, in my stomach.”

“That is occasioned by cold,” replied Rushdale, surveying the cheerless, miserable apartment; “you should get a more comfortable lodging, and have medical advice.”

“I like my lodging very well—have lived here some years—shall not change it; and as to medical advice,” continued the old man, “that is all picking of one’s pocket; doctors are all thieves—mix up a little chalk, and soot, and crumbs of bread, into pills—shake together a little brick dust and water, call it a draught—all rogues, I tell you—do you no manner of good—know nothing in the world, with their dog Latin, but how to ease you of your money—set up their carriages at the expence of the fools they persuade to swallow their filthy potions.”

While the old man was thus vehemently exclaiming against the whole tribe of Galen, his gruel boiled into the fire; snatching it off, in his rage and hurry he scalded his fingers.—“Plague confound it!” resumed he, blowing his fingers, “this comes of prating about doctors: there is a full farthing’s worth of oatmeal quite lost—too much, too much, these dear times—besides almost putting out the fire; then there is the salt—nothing but loss after loss—enough to bring a man to absolute ruin and want!”

Mr. Rushdale stood amazed—his imagination had never pictured any thing so wretchedly penurious. Half-laughing at the ludicrous displeasure of the old man, he said—“You had better eat the remainder, before some other accident deprives you of it.”

“Shan’t, shan’t,” replied the old man, in a tone of peevishness—“can’t afford such extravagance; must go without breakfast—the fire has devoured that meal for me; what little is left must serve for dinner.”

“For dinner!” repeated Rushdale—“surely you jest—you cannot mean to take that slop for your dinner?”

“Yes, but I do though,” returned the old man, “and a good dinner too—wish I may never want such: better take this slop, as you call it, than enrich a parcel of insolent butchers, poulterers, and fishmongers—a parcel of cheating, imposing knaves! And, after all, what should a man pamper his carcass with dainties for—why should he fatten himself, truly, for no mortal purpose but to feed worms?—But this has nothing at all to do with what I wanted to say. Your kindness to me yesterday, when I had like to have been run over by the coach, has brought my mind to a decision. I have long been turning it about in my mind to whom—you must understand, young gentleman, that I—but open the door and look out, there may be somebody listening atop of the stairs, for folks are very curious to hear what does not concern them. Look out, look out.”

Determined to humour the old wretch, who looked the very image of famine, Rushdale opened the door, and having ascertained that no person was listening on the stairs, the old man resumed—“If I was to be overheard, I might be robbed and murdered.”

“Robbed!” repeated Rushdale, smiling—“that is surely a groundless fear.”

“Perhaps not so groundless,” returned the old man; “poor as you may fancy Jonathan Blackburne, he may be found worth—but no matter for that, *‘a still tongue makes a wise head,’* and there is no occasion for me to—plague take the fire! it is just out.” He then fanned the embers with a thin board, while Rushdale impatiently waited his communication.

The fire giving signs of reviving, he resumed—“I know young men, like you, think nothing of imposing upon old fellows, such as me. But will you answer a question or two with truth and sincerity? Are you married?”

“No, thank Heaven!” said Rushdale, smiling.

“What is your name?” asked Mr. Blackburne.

“Wilfred Rushdale,” was the reply.

“Are your parents living?” demanded the old man.

“Only my mother,” replied Rushdale.

“And what are your prospects in life?” inquired Blackburne, holding his shrivelled hands over the embers.

Rushdale explained, without reserve, his late disappointment, owing to the failure of the bank—confessed his patrimony was very small, and expressed his intention of studying the law.

“Confound the law, and all its advocates!” exclaimed Blackburne. “Study the law! study the devil!—study how to plague and cheat men out of their property—study how to thrive on the ruin of your neighbours! Lawyers are worse, ay, a hundred times worse, than the plague we read of in the Bible—the locusts, I mean, that devoured every green thing from the face of the earth; lawyers, I say, are worse than these, for they swallow up not only the land, but houses, goods, chattels, and cattle. Study the law!—curse the law!—it is the black art—it is legerdemain—it is the profession of Belzebug!”

Blackburne having raved himself out of breath, was obliged to pause; but when Rushdale would have said something about the necessity that prompted his intention, the old man suddenly resumed—“You did me a service yesterday—you saved my life; and one good turn deserves another. Look’ee, young man, I have taken a sort of a kind of liking to you, and if you come into my plans, there will be no occasion for you to juggle, and cheat, and empty other people’s pockets to fill your own.”

“And pray, sir,” asked Rushdale, every instant more astonished at the conversation of Blackburne, “what is your plan?”

“Come a little nearer,” said Blackburne, beckoning with his long skeleton finger—“come a little more this way—no need of letting all the town into our affairs; there may be listeners—hark! did not you hear a creaking noise on the stairs?”

“I heard no sound whatever,” replied Rushdale.

Having listened a moment, Blackburne bade him open the door, for he was positive he heard somebody on the stairs. Rushdale obeyed; but no person appearing, the old man resumed—“It was the wind, I suppose; but it sounded very like the creaking of shoes, and people are so apt to be inquisitive;” then applying his mouth close to Rushdale’s ear, he whispered—“My plan is to make you heir to a pretty round sum of money, if you are not fool enough to stand in your own light.”

Not supposing that this round sum could possibly amount to more than a couple of hundred pounds at most, Rushdale asked—“Have you no relations of your own, who have juster claims on your property? Remember, sir, I am but newly introduced to your acquaintance—a stranger; surely your own family have higher claims—your relations—”

“Confound my relations!” interrupted Blackburne, with angry impatience; “yes, confound them all! though I have only one living, that I know of; and she, the hard-hearted jade! shall never be the better, if I can prevent it, for a shilling of mine—she has used me worse than a Turk. It is many years since she heard of me, and she shall never hear again, but to her mortification. Relations! confound them! they never were of the smallest service to me—they drove me on the world, and left me to struggle through it how I could. I was determined to make money, and I succeeded; but I worked hard for it in a hot climate, where I gained a few odd pounds by the sweat of my brow; then I

married an ugly yellow witch, who would give me her property whether I would or no. Well, after some years of toil and torment, thank Heaven! my wife died, and left me my own master again, and well enough off too; but no matter for that—what I have I came honestly by, and that is more than many can say in this great overgrown city; and I shall dispose of it according to my own fancy, but not to relations—no, no—I shall leave it as I please, and to whom I please; my money is my own. Young man, are you inclined to be Jonathan Blackburne's heir?"

"To that question I cannot reply," returned Rushdale, "till I am informed of the conditions."

"Conditions!" repeated the old man, drawing up his shrivelled face to an expression of scorn—"talk to me about conditions! I do not believe there is a man in the kingdom but would jump mast high to accept my conditions. Who would be blockhead enough, do you think, to demur and boggle about the conditions that were to give him—but no matter for that—" Here the old man was seized with a fit of coughing that nearly strangled him, and Rushdale was apprehensive that he would expire, and not only disappoint the curiosity he had so highly inflamed, but destroy the hopes he had raised by the sketch he had given of his life, which had led him to believe he was indeed possessed of considerable property.

At length the old man was sufficiently recovered to say—"I shall certainly go off in one of these fits shortly, so the sooner I get my worldly concerns settled the better. Give me that cup of water." Having swallowed a little, he continued—"You must know, young man, I have a sister at Oxford, married to a mixer of pills and spreader of plassters—an apothecary, of the name of Herbert; perhaps you may have heard of him—a mean, shabby rascal; but not half so bad as his wife, who, though she was born of the same mother as myself, shall never inherit one penny from me—no, no; the flinty-hearted jade suffered her mother to die in a workhouse, and turned me adrift upon the world, where, but for good luck, I might have ended my days on the gallows: but no matter for that—I have been prosperous, though she shall have nothing from me, to whom she gave nothing but ill usage and neglect."

"But consider, sir," said Rushdale, "we are enjoined to forgive injuries; and who can tell but Mrs. Herbert may be sorry—"

"Confound her sorrow!" interrupted Blackburne; "she will no doubt be sorry when she finds that I am worth—but no matter for that, what I am worth is nothing to her; I have made up my mind never to forgive, so never mention her name in my hearing again. You have been at Oxford, do you know the apothecary?"

Rushdale answered in the affirmative.

"They have a daughter," resumed Blackburne.

"They have," replied Rushdale; "and Miss Herbert is as beautiful as an angel."

"Confound her beauty!" replied old Blackburne; "what is a beauty good for? to sit three parts of the day before a looking-glass, and lisp, and loll, and study looks to deceive men with. Beauty! a fiddlestick's end! all the same thing if she was as ugly as sin; beauty! nonsense! flimflam! all vanity, conceit, and folly; beauty is but skin deep, and often covers a wicked heart; only boys and fools look after beauty—a wise man seeks for something more solid; but no matter for that—a good heart is better than beauty. When Emily Herbert was a mere infant, as one may say, she followed me into the street, where her unnatural vixen mother had thrust me, and with tears as big as pease rolling down her

cheeks, she gave me her bread-and-butter and a penny; that penny prospered with me, for she gave it with all her heart—that penny was a lucky one, it grew into—but no matter for that—Emily shall be pounds the richer for her charity. Young man, will you marry her?”

More and more astonished, Rushdale answered—“Your proposal, sir, is extremely tempting; no man who has had the happiness of Miss Herbert’s acquaintance would refuse her. But—”

“But what?” asked Blackburne, impatiently. “Confound all buts and ifs, say I! Am I to be disappointed, after having settled the whole affair in my own mind? I have set my heart upon the match; confound all buts and ifs, and such tormenting words! tell me at once, plainly and honestly, will you marry my niece, Emily Herbert?”

“My hesitation, sir,” replied Rushdale, “does not proceed from any wish of my own to disappoint your intention; but perhaps you may not have heard that Miss Herbert is already engaged to a gentleman now in the East Indies.”

“I am glad he is so far off,” said Blackburne; “he cannot push his nose in, to set aside my wishes. Emily engaged! nonsense! folly!—Confound her engagements! if she is not an idiot, a worse than driveller, she will break through fifty engagements to be mistress of the fortune I can give her; but no matter for that. But let me understand about this engagement, if you please.”

Rushdale complied with the old man’s request, and related the offer made by Saville, and Miss Herbert’s promise of remaining unmarried till the settlement of his affairs at Calcutta enabled him to return to England and claim her hand.

“She is an idiot if she waits his return,” said Blackburne—“Wait for what?—the chance of winds and waves, and, what is even more uncertain still, the constancy of man, who seldom knows his own mind for a week together—wait for a husband from the East Indies! nonsense! nonsense! I know nothing about this Mr. Saville—I have made up my mind to her marrying you. But then if she is such a fool as to prefer constancy to wealth, why she may wait for this Mr. What’s-his-name from Calcutta, and I can leave my money to build an hospital. But the girl will never be such an idiot—she will accept my offer, as she ought, with joy and thankfulness—Though, now I think of it, you have not given me your answer. Tell me at once, young man, will you marry my niece?”

There were other reasons that ought to have prompted Wilfred Rushdale’s rejection of this marriage, besides the friendship he had so warmly professed for the absent Saville; but the unfortunate failure of his father’s banking-house, and the consequent poverty to which he was so suddenly and unexpectedly reduced, silenced every scruple raised in his bosom by conscience; honour and generosity were stifled, and, overcoming every objection, he declared himself ready to accede to Mr. Blackburne’s wish, provided Miss Herbert could be persuaded to resign Saville, and honour him with her hand: “and if the more material point was satisfactorily—”

“Emily Herbert will know her own interest too well to disappoint my wish,” said Blackburne; “she must be sensible that *‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;’* and as to the other point, I understand you there too—you want to know what money I will come down with to defray the expences of matrimony; am I right? I was always a famous hand at guessing—a hint is as good to me as a thousand words. I don’t dislike you for being wary—just like myself in that particular, it was always my maxim to *‘look before I*

leaped'—saves a deal of trouble and vexation. Go down to Oxford directly, tell Emily to put the man at Calcutta out of her head, and prepare to marry you; and in order to turn the scale in your favour, say you will settle fifty thousand pounds upon her."

The eyes of Rushdale fixed on the starved, ragged object before him, the inhabitant of a wretched garret, who was sitting with his long skinny hands extended over a few dying embers; he could scarcely believe the old man was in his senses, when he talked of giving away so much money—a sum more than sufficient to procure him every indulgence and comfort his age and infirmities required.

"Ay," continued the old man, observing the perplexity of Rushdale's countenance, "I guess your thoughts—you think me mad; but no matter for that—I promise you, young man, I am as much in my senses as you are, though no doubt I shall increase your amazement, when I tell you I can double fifty thousand pounds if I choose, and not leave myself destitute after I have done. It is not all gold that glitters, neither are all poor that wear a ragged jacket."

"And is it possible, with the command of so much wealth," asked Rushdale, "that you can prefer to live in this wretched garret—to wear this scanty clothing—to feed on such insipid diet? what enjoyment can you have of wealth, while you deny yourself even necessary food and raiment?"

"That is no concern of yours," replied Blackburne, his eyes glaring angrily upon him; "what have you to do with my mode of living? trouble your head with your own business. Live according to my own fancy; I hate fine clothes, all foppery and frippery; I detest gluttony and drunkenness. If I kept house, I must be pestered with a parcel of lazy, idle, vagabond servants; and I should have a troop of pretended friends, who would eat and drink up my substance, borrow my money, and abuse me as soon as my back was turned: I hate such tricking, deceitful ways; choose to live by myself—trust no man—keep no servants, to listen, and peep, and spy into my concerns, and perhaps, as a reward for feeding and clothing them, rob and murder me at last. As it is, I eat what I like—gruel all the week, and three pen'orth of something hot from the cookshop on Sundays; drink nothing but water—the best as well as the cheapest beverage in the world—keeps the head cool and clear, and helps digestion. I go to bed as soon as it gets dark—that saves the expence of candles, and rise as soon as I can see; wash my own linen and patch my clothes myself: find the good of living in this way—save my money; invite no friends, to eat, and drink, and gormandize, and devour me; keep no servants to waste my substance, which, thanks be to Heaven and my own industry! amounts to—but no matter for that. I feel I am going—shan't live much longer to enjoy my honest gains, for, go when I will, nobody will say that I got a single penny by cheating and knavery—no, no—I shan't live long, and I wish to settle my affairs, to prevent my jade of a sister from claiming a farthing of my property. So away with you directly to Oxford. If Emily Herbert consents to take you for her husband, it will be the best day's work she ever did in her life; if she refuses, why I wish her joy of her East India lover; and I hope he will have a fortune to give her, for not a sixpence of mine shall fall to her share. But I know the girl will have more sense than to refuse a proper-looking fellow like you, and fifty thousand pounds at least; but if she should be such a fool, you shall not be a loser; I will give—that is—I mean, I will pay the expences of your journey to Oxford. But, I charge you, give no direction to the Herberts where to find me—I will neither hear from

nor see them; Emily is the only one of the family whom I can bear to think of, and her I will never behold till I know whether she is deserving of my favour. So now good-day to you," continued he, almost pushing Rushdale out at the door—"good-day to you; let me hear how you succeed as soon as possible."

When Rushdale returned home he retired immediately to his own chamber, where he shut himself in, that he might, alone and undisturbed, meditate on the strange adventure he was engaged in. The miserable garret he had just visited, and its equally miserable inhabitant, were still present to his mind's eye; his memory, with undeviating exactness, repeated the conversation of old Blackburne, whom at some moments he was inclined to believe insane, so incredible did it appear to his judgment that a being, seemingly half-starved, and actually covered with rags, should possess a sum exceeding a hundred thousand pounds. Again he considered that he had frequently heard of men such wretched slaves to avarice, that, while they possessed wealth in abundance, lived in the extremest penury, denying themselves even the bare necessities of life, and committing every meanness to add to the riches they had not the soul to enjoy: it was possible that Jonathan Blackburne might be one of those miserly characters. The liking he had so suddenly taken to him was not more extraordinary than his inflexible dislike of his own nearest relations; at any rate, the proposal of marrying him to his niece carried with it too many real advantages to be rashly declined. The person of Emily Herbert was all that youthful fancy could imagine lovely; of the virtues of her mind, her amiable qualities, or the strength of her understanding, Rushdale did not trouble himself to think, neither did he suppose that her passion for Saville was so firmly rooted, but that already it had undergone some waverings; absence, he concluded, must have cooled its fervours, and that, like himself, she would, without scruple, sacrifice any former attachment to secure the immediate possession of wealth. If old Blackburne's fortune was the mere coinage of his distempered brain, Rushdale foresaw, by carrying his proposal to Miss Herbert, he should involve himself in an awkward predicament; Saville, too, his confiding friend—would it not be dishonourable to solicit affections, request the hand already vowed to him? But then, to lose the chance of gaining at least fifty thousand pounds, and that too at a period when his father's failure had reduced his affairs to so desperate a state—it was a lucky interference of fortune not to be rejected. Emily certainly was, like the rest of her sex, vain, weak, and mutable, and would no doubt accept his hand; but if she should refuse, he could easily justify himself to the unsuspecting Saville, by saying his proposal of marriage was merely designed to put her fidelity to him to the proof. Such were the thoughts that passed rapidly through the brain of Rushdale, and filled him with perplexity and uneasiness. At length, on the reflection that he had nothing to lose, but much to gain by the trial, he resolved to set off the following morning for Oxford; but as interest, not love, actuated his motives, he prudently resolved not to tie the knot till he had secured the promised fifty thousand pounds.

The estimate that Rushdale had made of the character of Miss Herbert was perfectly correct; she had often heard of her uncle Blackburne, from a person who had known him in the West Indies, where he was possessed of extensive plantations and numerous slaves; her mother, too, had been informed of his arrival in England, with money enough to pay off the national debt, but could never find out his habitation, nor obtain the least intelligence of him afterwards; yet though she said he was always a strange out-of-the-way kind of character, and confessed herself not a little offended at his

having concealed himself from her inquiries, she was by no means sparing of arguments to convince Emily of the great uncertainty of Saville's return, and the folly of disobliging her uncle, who no doubt had plenty of money, as well as plenty of whims, which might induce him to give the whole of his property to a stranger.

The vanity and inconstancy of Emily's nature required but little persuasion to make her break the promise solemnly pledged to Saville, who might by that time have forgot her, and made up his mind to remain at Calcutta; she longed to look down upon all her acquaintance—to keep a carriage—to glitter in diamonds—to be followed by a smart footman. The person of Wilfred Rushdale, if not strictly handsome, was extremely pleasing; he was tall and well proportioned, had expressive eyes and very fine teeth: he was not quite so handsome as Saville, for whose return, should she, influenced by her promise, wait, she would then be only mistress of a moderate fortune, which was all he had ever led her to expect; and, to be certain even of this, she must remain single no one could tell how many months. She therefore prudently resolved to follow the advice of her parents, and take the fifty thousand pounds and the husband provided by her uncle. But not deficient in art, however destitute of sensibility, she considered it necessary to affect reluctance, to talk pathetically of her vows plighted to poor Saville, and to consent to be Mrs. Rushdale, in obedience to the command of her parents.

Rushdale, who considered no evil so terrible as poverty—no happiness so great as the possession of wealth, was not over nice in scrutinizing the motives that influenced Emily's transfer of affection from Saville to himself; and perfectly satisfied with having made so successful an approach to fortune, he hurried his intended bride and her mother to London, fearful that old Blackburne would die, or, what was to him equally as bad, change his mind respecting the disposal of his wealth.

Having placed Mrs. and Miss Herbert in convenient lodgings, he hastened to communicate his success to old Blackburne, who expressed much satisfaction at his expedition, but peremptorily and absolutely refused to be reconciled to his sister, or to see her or his niece. After having raved himself out of breath in repetitions of his dislike to Herbert and his wife, he remained for some moments looking over a dirty sheet of paper, which contained a long and very ill-written column of figures, with which being at last satisfied, he deliberately folded it together, and turning to Rushdale, said—“All right, all right! Go directly to a lawyer—pity people's affairs cannot be properly settled without these robbers—But, do you hear, don't offer to bring him here—I detest the whole cheating, tricking tribe. Have a deed drawn up to secure to my niece fifty thousand pounds, for her own proper use and disposal, in case of your death—ay, very true, I see what you are going to say; but I shall answer no questions—I shall only tell you that I have lodged the sum of fifty thousand pounds in the bank of Drummond and Co. for this express purpose. Go, young man, get every thing ready for your marriage on next Tuesday, when I think I shall surprise you a little more.”

“But recollect, sir,” returned Rushdale, “matrimony is a very serious consideration—a very expensive state; and before I take so important a step, I ought to be satisfied that I shall not be plunging myself into difficulties and involvements. I should be certain—”

Old Blackburne laughed—“Glad to see you cautious and wary,” said he; “true, very true, you ought to be certain what you are about; marriage is, as you say, a troublesome, vexatious state, and a man ought to have weighty inducements to tie himself

for life to that most tormenting of all animals—a woman. Well then—but, now I think of it, how am I to be certified that I may trust you? To be sure you have not the look of a rogue; but there is no trusting to faces.”

Rushdale would have pledged what he did not possess—his honour; he would have sworn, for oaths were, in his opinion, of no consequence; but Blackburne interrupted his protestations by saying—“Keep your breath; what is honour? nonsense—a mere puff of wind! and as to oaths, place no sort of reliance on them, because I have often found that *‘he that will swear will lie.’* Shan’t trust you till the deed is ready for me to sign; and mind that it is drawn up in a way that will make Emily entirely independent of you, which is but right, as she has given up a good offer to oblige me, and as I know very little of your principles. There, I have said all I intend just now—only not a hint of the settlement to Emily. You need not trouble yourself to call again till it is ready for my inspection.”

Rushdale was not sorry to quit the miserable residence of Blackburne, though not exactly pleased with his abrupt dismissal, or satisfied to marry a woman he did not love, upon such an uncertainty respecting the property he was to gain by the match; but as he was anxious to bring the affair to a speedy conclusion, his first step was to ascertain whether Blackburne had really fifty thousand pounds in the bank of Messrs. Drummond and Co. Being entirely satisfied on this point, he had the settlement drawn up by his own relation, agreeable to the old man’s instructions; and having prepared Emily to accompany him to church the ensuing Tuesday, he repaired, full of joyful expectation, to the garret of Jonathan Blackburne, whom he found looking even worse than at his last visit.

“I must have this marriage concluded directly,” said the old man, after he had satisfied himself that the deed was proper in all its forms: “and now,” continued he, with a significant nod of his head, “now you shall see, after giving fifty thousand pounds to my niece, what I will do for you.”

The pulses of Rushdale beat violently—he was now to ascertain his fortune.

Blackburne slowly drew from the rags that composed his bed, an old black leather portfolio; it was crammed with papers, from the midst of which, with great deliberation, he counted bank-notes, to the amount of ten thousand pounds, into the hand of the delighted Rushdale.—“Ten thousand pounds,” said the old man, with a deep sigh—“ten thousand pounds is a prodigious sum to give away, especially upon an uncertainty; for how am I to be sure but you may abscond with the cash, leave Emily in the lurch, and laugh at me for a credulous old fool? But if you should be such a villain, such a robber, the money will never prosper with you; it will melt like butter in the sun; it will fly away like chaff before the wind; it will be a curse to you, and it will not be the ruin of me after all; I shall still have—but no matter for that. As soon as you are married, bring your wife here; but on no consideration let that viper her mother come into my presence, to disturb me with her canting and whining. I know her—she is a lump of deceit—her heart is harder than a flint-stone; she can never deceive me, and I am determined not to see or forgive her. There, there, now go and bespeak the parson, and prepare for your marriage; I do not expect to see you again till you bring your wife in your hand.”

Rushdale could scarcely believe his senses; he looked at the notes, and tightly grasped them, to convince himself that he was awake. Arrived at home, he began to consider that he was now possessed of ten thousand pounds to begin life with, and that no

earthly power could compel him to marry Emily Herbert, whose family connexions were all persons not only in trade, but vulgar, ignorant, and ill-bred, with whom it was quite impossible he could ever associate, or be on terms of friendship. While his mind fluctuated between the right and possibility of appropriating the money to himself, and the injustice of deceiving and defrauding Jonathan Blackburne, by breaking off the match, the preponderating consideration, that the old miser had still a larger sum to bestow upon him, determined him, to fulfil his engagement and marry Emily, whose person he admired, though her beauty had made no impression on his heart.

More eager to ascertain what addition Blackburne designed to make to his gift than to put on matrimonial fetters, Rushdale hastened the preparations of Emily, who, as well as her mother, was discontented at being denied admission to Mr. Blackburne, and at the idea of being married without any sort of pomp or parade. By her uncle's express desire, she was kept in ignorance of the munificent settlement made upon her, and she felt not a little anxious and uneasy respecting her promised fortune. If Rushdale, to make himself master of her person, was deluding her with false hopes, she was about to bring ruin on herself—she was sacrificing her prospect of future independence by giving up Saville; and for what? to marry a beggar! for she was informed of the failure of Rushdale's father. A thousand times Emily was on the point of retracting the promise she had given to Wilfred Rushdale, and insisting on her mother returning immediately with her to Oxford; but the dread of being turned into ridicule by her young acquaintance, joined with the entreaties of Mrs. Herbert, who was quite certain her beautiful Emily was born to be very rich, prevailed, and she became a wife, with a mind agitated by the most painful apprehension that, in deceiving Saville, if she had not devoted herself to absolute poverty, she had, in all probability, confined herself to what she abhorred even to think of—the middle rank of life.

The coach that conveyed her to church having set down her mother at their lodgings, was ordered to the habitation of old Blackburne; and on their way thither, Rushdale endeavoured to prepare his bride for the scene to which he was about to introduce her—an apartment next the sky, dirty and deplorable, furnished with a wormeaten mutilated table, two low three-legged stools, a wretched bed, without curtain, or other covering than a quilt, made of various-coloured cloths, most awkwardly patched together; and the master of this miserable garret a ragged, cadaverous, mean-looking old man. Several times, on mounting the flights of stairs, Emily asked how much higher they were going? But when she entered the dismal apartment, she was near shrieking, for Rushdale's description had fallen short of the real wretchedness that every where met her eye.

Old Blackburne gave her two or three hearty kisses, said she was a good-looking girl, and declared himself much pleased to see her—a compliment Emily returned him with her lips, but not with her heart; for never had she seen a more disgusting object; and before she had sat a moment on one of his stools, she wished herself a hundred miles off.

The certificate of their marriage being presented to him, he rubbed his hands, wished them joy, and said he should now die in peace, having accomplished the desire nearest his heart—"I determined to choose a husband for you myself; and now, my girl," continued he, pinching her cheek, "now you shall see what you have got by obeying your old uncle."

Emily's looks began to brighten, as, unfolding a skin of parchment, he said—"In the first place, take that," presenting her the settlement—"that, my girl, gives you two thousand five hundred pounds a year, independent of your husband; and secures fifty thousand pounds to your children, let him sink or swim."

Almost out of her wits to find herself mistress of so much wealth, Emily tried to express her gratitude.

"Wont hear a word," interrupted Blackburne, "wont hear a single word about thanks; when you gave me your only penny, you was not as high as this table, and the tears rolled down your little cheeks to see my ill-usage—good child! good child!—shewed a feeling heart, kind and charitable—followed me into the street, and gave me a penny, all the money you had in the world, and your breakfast into the bargain; and at that time, with a sore back and an empty stomach, I swore a solemn oath never to speak to your mother, or forgive her, to my dying day; but if I should ever have the luck to make a fortune, I would not forget you. I have made a fortune—I am worth—but no matter for that—all in good time; my hoardings and scrapings I shall give to this young man, for he saved my life; and I hope he will make you a kind and loving husband, and take care not to waste in riot and extravagance what I laboured hard for many a long year to gain."

His cough now seized him with unusual violence, he became black in the face, and, struggling for articulation, uttered a few indistinct words, that to Rushdale and Emily sounded like—"Under the bed," to which, with much eagerness of gesture, he repeatedly pointed; and while in the utmost terror they gazed upon him, ignorant what to do for his relief, his head fell back against the wall, and, after a few convulsive gaspings, he expired.

The concern and terror of the new-married pair at this sudden and shocking termination of the old man's existence, did not operate to the prevention of their searching under the bed, where they found in the black leather portfolio, securities on the Bank of England for one hundred thousand pounds, East India bonds to the amount of sixty thousand more, and, stuffed into a canvas bag, twenty thousand pounds in bank-notes, and about three hundred guineas. In the portfolio they found a will, drawn up and signed by Jonathan Blackburne and three witnesses, in which he bequeathed the whole of his possessions to Wilfred Rushdale, provided he married his niece, Emily Herbert; but in case she refused to become his wife, he left to his niece, Emily Herbert, one shilling only; the sum of fifty thousand pounds to Wilfred Rushdale; and the residue of his fortunes to various public charities therein specified. The will concluded with a positive command that the testator should be buried as privately as possible, and that no memorial whatever should be placed over his grave.

Rushdale and Emily congratulated each other, though not with perfect sincerity, for they both regretted that they were shackled; Rushdale was almost frantic with joy at finding Jonathan Blackburne's fortune so far above his expectation, while his bride, though now certain of moving in the splendid style she had so much delighted to contemplate, was not pleased to think that the whole of her uncle's wealth had not devolved unconditionally on her, who, if she had not been married, might have aspired, with such an immense fortune, to the very highest rank of nobility: but the knot was tied, and her only consolation was to reflect that diamonds, carriages, and smart footmen, were

now attainable; and, though only plain Mrs. Rushdale, she should be able to vie in splendour with any countess.

Though sorry he was married, Rushdale thought Emily looked handsomer than ever; and he felt so grateful for the fortune he had obtained through her affinity to old Blackburne, that he resolved to make her, if not a fond, a very polite husband; and as they returned home to give orders for the funeral of the wretched miser, whose privations had so suddenly enriched them, he was so profuse of compliments to his wife's beauty, so attentively-tender in his behaviour, that she actually forgot to lament that he was not a duke.

Mrs. Herbert proved herself to be exactly the character old Blackburne had so frequently described—selfish and unfeeling; for when told of the death of her brother, and satisfied that she had not been mentioned in his will, she astonished Rushdale by the execrations she poured on his memory; and so offended him, by accusations of having worked on the miserly old fool, by false representations, to insist on Emily marrying him, that they parted in enmity, Mrs. Herbert declaring she would never again enter a house of which Mr. Rushdale was master.

Mrs. Rushdale's opinion respecting her uncle's disposal of his fortune did not differ very materially from her mother's, whose anger and departure she regretted for a few hours; but the certainty that, let Rushdale have used what arts he might to gain her uncle's fortune, he had made her a partaker of it, restored her to perfect complacency and good-humour. In the delightful hurry of giving orders to jewellers, dressmakers, and milliners—in receiving and paying her bridal visits—she forgot all suspicion and uneasiness: she heard her husband admired by all her female acquaintance, and she persuaded herself that he was quite as handsome as Saville, with whom, as she reflected on his serious, sentimental turn, she felt quite certain she should not have been happy; and that Wilfred Rushdale, being, like herself, gay, volatile, fond of splendour and amusement, was much more likely to contribute to her happiness as a partner through life.

The magnificent establishment, the shewy carriages, and the beauty of Mrs. Rushdale, soon introduced her to the highest circles of fashion, where she was followed, courted, and admired, even at the moment when scandal whispered that the failure of old Rushdale enabled his son to live in the first style of elegance and fashion. The vanity of Mrs. Rushdale received perpetual incense from daily papers, where the columns were filled with accounts of her splendid entertainments, the unrivalled elegance of her costume—even her horses and dogs were honoured with public notice and approbation; every where, and by every gentleman, except her husband, Mrs. Rushdale was admired. But a very few weeks served to convince Mr. Rushdale that mere beauty soon grows insipid, and that a wife, ever eager for adulation, is a wearying companion. But the inattention of her husband occasioned no sorrow to Mrs. Rushdale, whose morning levees were crowded with admirers, who never appeared in public but to receive homage from noblemen, who declared her a divinity; to a woman so followed and flattered the coldness of a husband could occasion no regret—Mrs. Rushdale was too much a woman of the *haut ton* to bestow a thought upon the man she had vowed to love, honour, and obey; her only regret was, that she had not married a nobleman—that she was plain Mrs. Rushdale. But, even in this circumstance, fortune aided her wishes; for in about eighteen months after her marriage, the failure of male heirs in a very distant branch of his family elevated

Wilfred Rushdale to a peerage, and gave to his vain, frivolous wife, the ardently-desired title of countess of Torrington.

CHAPTER II.

Far from the world, its pleasures, or its pains,
'Midst rocks and floods, I'll rear my hermit cell,
Enthron'd in solitude, where nature reigns,
And calm religion may delight to dwell.

In the deep glen I'll watch the rushing wind
Whirling in rage the autumn-tinted leaf,
On summer flown shall muse my pensive mind,
And sigh to think my faded joys as brief.

Though pleasure's roses strew my path no more,
Tranquillity may bless my solitude;
For here, upon this wild, this wave-beat shore,
The step of falsehood never will intrude.

In these lone groves my matin hymns may rise,
My vesper-pray'rs may breathe to be forgiven;
And I may hope, when death has seal'd mine eyes,
To wake, releas'd from ev'ry woe, in heaven.

*A Recluse—Scandal of a country Town—Traits
of a good Heart—St. Herbert's Island.*

THE beautiful little Cecilia, conformable with the strict orders given by the earl of Torrington to his worthy steward, Alexander Wilson, esquire, had been carefully educated, as far as the very limited erudition of a village schoolmaster was capable of affording her instruction; for so fondly was the lovely, interesting, giddy little romp beloved by every domestic retained in the castle, that they all resolutely opposed the dear child being sent to Keswick to a boarding-school, to fret, and pine, and be made unhappy among strangers. At eight years old, Cecilia could read in Mrs. Milman's folio Bible, she could spell tolerably, she could also scrawl her own name, and her aunt's, and Mr. Wilson's, in letters large, unequal-sized, and crooked; and these were the utmost extent of her literary attainments.

Mr. Wilson had, every year since their marriage, been taught to expect that the earl and countess of Torrington would visit their Cumberland estate, and he was very apprehensive that the earl, who had left such particular injunctions with regard to Miss Delmore, would not consider her beauty and her engaging manners an equivalent for her total want of education; he was aware that she had sense far above her years; he knew that her temper was sweetly affable, her spirit quick, and her disposition generous, compassionate, and forgiving. But though nature had been thus abundantly kind in bestowing on her a beautiful person, and a mind organized to receive the highest cultivation, he foresaw the excessive and imprudent indulgence she met from every

individual at the castle would actually ruin her, and that she would grow up a self-willed and ignorant young woman: this conviction gave the worthy Wilson great uneasiness, and he was determined to write to the earl of Torrington respecting her deficiencies in learning, and obtain his positive command for her being sent to a boarding-school.

But Mr. Wilson's attention to Cecilia's improvement was for that time suspended, by an application being made to him by a lady for a cottage ornée, built beside the ruins of St. Herbert's Hermitage, provided he would put it in habitable repair, and make such other additions as she would point out, if he would give her the meeting on the island on an appointed day. Cecilia was present when Mr. Wilson informed Mrs. Milman of this most singular desire of a lady to live in such a sequestered spot, where, in winter, she would be exposed to the melancholy devastations of the season, and be deafened with the hoarse sounds of roaring winds and rushing waters.

Mr. Wilson having named the day on which he was to meet the lady, Cecilia so earnestly entreated to go with him to the island, that he complied, on her promising to learn that evening the multiplication table—a task she had for near a month evaded, and thrown aside, on some frivolous pretence or other. When Mr. Wilson came in to supper, to his astonishment she repeated the table, without making a single mistake; and then more than ever convinced of her capacity for learning, he lamented the great injury their mistaken fondness was doing her.

When the day arrived, Cecilia did not fail to remind Mr. Wilson of the promise he had given to take her with him to St. Herbert's Island. Her favourite Triton, always her constant companion, was now grown very old, and Mr. Wilson objected to his going with them to the island; but, accustomed to attend Cecilia in all her rambles, Triton impatiently resisted the effort made to confine him to his kennel; but finding his strength fail him, and that he was likely to be made a prisoner, he set up a piteous howl, which so affected the kind heart of Cecilia, that she flew to liberate her favourite, whose rough neck she fondly clasped with one arm, while with the other hand she untied the strings of her bonnet, and threw it on the ground. Having soothed and repeatedly kissed old Triton, she turned to Mr. Wilson with tears in her eyes, and in a tone of displeasure said she would stay at home with Triton, as Mr. Wilson did not approve of his going with them—“For, poor dear fellow!” continued she, the tears rolling down her cheeks, “he would fret himself quite sick if I was to leave him; and I know he would not eat a morsel of dinner if I did not feed him.”

Mr. Wilson was not proof against Cecilia's tears, or accustomed to oppose her wishes; and, to the great joy of old Triton, he was permitted to make one of the party.

The day was bright and serene, the air, that gently curled the bosom of the water, wafted with every breath the perfume of the flowers that reared their glowing heads in luxuriant profusion on the romantic margin of the lake, where the sun, resting its golden beams on the rich and varied foliage of the woods, and gilding the many-tinted summits of the fantastic rocks, presented to the delighted eye an enchanting prospect, at once grandly majestic and sweetly pastoral.

Mrs. Doricourt, the lady who wished to engage the cottage, was already on the island, attended by two servants, when Mr. Wilson and Cecilia arrived; she was dressed in deep mourning. Her figure was tall and elegant; she appeared to be about the age of thirty; her features were fine; she had dark expressive eyes, and a mouth rendered particularly beautiful by a pensive smile, which sometimes hovered for an instant over

her serpentine lips. While engaged in pointing out to Mr. Wilson her wishes respecting the additions to the cottage, her eyes frequently wandered to Cecilia, who was seated on the root of an evergreen oak, with the head of old Triton on her lap, the thick curls of which she had stuck full of primroses and violets.

Her plans being arranged with Mr. Wilson, Mrs. Doricourt advanced towards Cecilia, and inquired if she was the daughter of the steward? Being informed of Cecilia's orphan state and dependent situation, Mrs. Doricourt said— "I cannot presume to interfere with, or alter the arrangements of the earl of Torrington; but, had this lovely child been less nobly or fortunately adopted, I should have been inclined to offer her my protection; as it is, I trust I shall very often be favoured with her company. Tell me," continued she, taking Cecilia's passive hand, "will you come to-morrow, and spend the day with me at Keswick?"

Cecilia turned her sunny eyes on Mrs. Doricourt, and, with a smile of pleasure dimpling her coral mouth, replied— "I think I should like to come to see you very much indeed; only—" She paused.

Mrs. Doricourt seated herself beside her on the root of the tree, and inquired what she meant to say by "only?"

Cecilia looked at Triton, and then asked Mrs. Doricourt if she loved dogs?

Mrs. Doricourt having answered in the affirmative, inquired what she meant by the question?

"I will tell you," said Cecilia, "Mamma Milman took me one day to Keswick to visit Mrs. M'Millan, and as soon as we entered her parlour, she ordered my poor Triton to be turned into the street; and it snowed very fast, and the wind blew so cold: now don't you think it was very cruel and hard hearted of her? I am sure I did; and I thought she looked so proud, I could not abide her; and I would not stay with her, though mamma Milman took me there to learn to dance, and speak French, and play upon the music."

Mrs. Doricourt kissed the rosy cheek of the interesting child, at the same time assuring her she was very partial to dogs, and that she hoped she would bring her favourite Triton with her whenever she paid her a visit, assuring her that she might depend on his being treated with all possible respect and attention.

This assurance effectually won the heart of Cecilia, and, all smiles and gaiety, she wandered over the island with her hand locked in that of Mrs. Doricourt, whose pensive countenance was often brightened with a smile, while listening to the remarks, or witnessing the sportive gambols of the innocent being, whose every look and bounding step evinced happiness.

Mrs. Doricourt, as well as Mr. Wilson, had come prepared to spend the day on the island, and during the repast of which they partook in the ruinous Hermitage, he deplored the very backward state of Cecilia's education, and his own wish to place her at a boarding-school, where the indulgence of all her little whims would not be allowed to impede or retard the more important cultivation of her mind.

Cecilia having given Triton his dinner, and made him a bed to sleep upon, had leisure to attend to Mrs. Doricourt, whose voice and manner fascinated and compelled her silent attention. Mrs. Doricourt had discovered in the countenance of Cecilia a strong resemblance to a dear and lamented friend, and she grew every instant more interested by her playful smiles and ingenuous replies; for on being asked if she loved reading, she said she loved to listen to Abraham the butler, when he sung the "*Yarmouth Tragedy*," or the

“*Wealthy young Squire of Tamworth,*” much more than she did to read in the big Bible to her mamma Milman; and to play with Triton, and feed her pigeons, better than to mark or darn muslin.

The soft voice, and gentle, though dignified, manners of Mrs. Doricourt, entirely won the heart of Cecilia, and she joyfully accepted her invitation of spending the next day with her at Keswick.

Mr. Wilson had seen a good deal of the world, he had spent the best part of his life with persons of high rank, and he was satisfied that Mrs. Doricourt was, in every acceptation of the word, a perfect gentle-woman; her conversation was polished, her language correct, and the various observations she made on the surrounding objects convinced him that she possessed strong sense, and a mind very highly cultivated by education. The references she had given him, placed it beyond doubt that she was a woman of character and large fortune, and he gave immediate orders for the cottage, and the whole of the island, to be modelled according to the plan she had herself laid down.

The cloud of melancholy that hung on the fine countenance of Mrs. Doricourt had not escaped the observation of Mr. Wilson, and he wondered what unfortunate event could have driven a handsome woman, in the very prime of life, to the strange resolve of retiring from society, and selecting a residence on an island so many miles remote from other habitation. But, while lost in conjecture as to her motives for preferring such absolute solitude, he sincerely rejoiced in the chance that had introduced Cecilia to her notice, and whom he resolved should go to Keswick the next day; for he encouraged a hope that, through Mrs. Doricourt’s influence, this darling child would be induced to seek the means of improving the graces and talents so liberally bestowed on her by the partial bounty of nature.

When Cecilia returned to the castle, she could talk of nothing but Mrs. Doricourt—her voice, her eyes, her beautiful smile, and the pleasure she expected in her visit to Keswick; and the last request she uttered when retiring to rest was, that she might be called very early in the morning, that she might get ready for her visit to Mrs. Doricourt.

Cecilia rose with the sun, and having got Triton’s paws washed, and his rough coat brushed, she counted the hours with no little impatience till Mr. Wilson’s gig drove to the door; she then entreated that he would allow Triton to ride between them, because he was grown old, and would be fatigued with running after them.

“Pshaw!” replied Mr. Wilson; “what is the use of taking Triton?”

“Why you know, sir,” returned Cecilia, “Mrs. Doricourt was so good as to invite him; and why should not the poor fellow partake the pleasure of the visit? Besides, as he is got old, I should not like to neglect or treat him with disrespect, particularly as he was your gift to me.”

Mr. Wilson was affected; he kissed Cecilia, and assisted himself to place Triton in the gig, observing that her attention to Triton was a lesson of humanity and gratitude, that, while it did honour to her own heart, would never be forgotten by his.

Mrs. Doricourt was in elegant lodgings, in a retired part of Keswick, attended by her own servants, who had lived with her many years—all middle-aged persons. In one of her apartments was a fine-toned pianoforte, which she touched with exquisite skill, and accompanied with a voice of such melting harmony, that

“One might listen and believe
A warbling seraph sung.”

She was also a proficient in painting, and was finishing a drawing she had made of the ruins of St. Herbert’s Island, when Miss Delmore and Mr. Wilson were announced.

Mrs. Doricourt received them with graceful elegance, and a pleasure that dispelled for a moment the pensiveness that overcast her fine features, and gave a transient gleam of the radiant light that had once illumined her dark eyes, and of those fascinating smiles that now but rarely hovered over her lips.

Cecilia sprang to her arms with artless demonstrations of joy, and seeing Mrs. Doricourt pat the head of Triton, she said to Mr. Wilson— “There, sir, you see Triton was expected as well as me; and I am sure the ride will do him good, and that he is quite glad I brought him.”

Mr. Wilson having business of his own to transact, took his leave, with a promise of calling for Miss Delmore in the evening, and left Mrs. Doricourt delighted with her animation as much as with the sweet and tender disposition she evinced.

Mrs. Doricourt took pains to divert her, and to win her regard; in which intention she so well succeeded, that in the short space of one hour Cecilia forgot how recently she had been introduced to Mrs. Doricourt, and was as much at home as at Torrington Castle. The sound of the pianoforte, and the singing of Mrs. Doricourt, rivetted the attention of the volatile child; her eyes sparkled—her cheek glowed with a brighter tint of carnation—she appeared enchanted; and when Mrs. Doricourt closed the instrument, she said she should never ask Abraham to sing her “*Nancy of Yarmouth*,” or the “*Tamworth Squire*,” again.

Perpetually on the move at Torrington Castle, and with difficulty persuaded to give half an hour to her book or her needle, Cecilia now sat silently and attentively watching the strokes of Mrs. Doricourt’s pencil; and when she placed the finished drawing before her, she exclaimed— “Oh, how beautiful! This is St. Herbert’s Island. What a delightful thing to be able to draw trees, houses, and water!”

“Should you like to learn?” asked Mrs. Doricourt.

“Oh yes,” replied Cecilia, eagerly; “but,” shaking her lovely little head, “I fear I should never succeed, for mamma Milman says I am so wild and so giddy.”

“When we particularly wish to attain an accomplishment,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “our application keeps pace with our inclination. Will you be my pupil?”

Cecilia blushed, and kissing Mrs. Doricourt’s hand, replied— “And would you indeed take the trouble to instruct an ignorant child? I am sure I could learn any thing from you much sooner than from Mrs. M’Millan, who behaved so barbarous to my poor Triton, or than I did from Mr. Angus, who first taught me to read, and when I came to a hard word, used to cough, and blow his nose, and tell me to go on. But I fear I shall be very stupid.”

“Fear nothing, my sweet girl,” said Mrs. Doricourt, placing a pencil in her fingers; “but let us, without loss of time, commence your first lesson.”

Contrary to her expectation, Mrs. Doricourt found Cecilia patient and docile, never expressing a word that indicated weariness, and evincing a taste and capability that promised the attainment of perfection.

Having employed a full hour at the pencil, Mrs. Doricourt again placed herself at the pianoforte; and as she played and sang, she observed the eyes of Cecilia filled with tears. Mrs. Doricourt caressed her tenderly, and inquired the cause of her emotion. Cecilia threw her arms round Mrs. Doricourt's neck, and sobbed on her bosom. Mrs. Doricourt waited the subsiding of this agitation, and then drew from Cecilia a confession that music filled her with joy, though, at the very moment she was most pleased, it brought tears into her eyes.—“But I will tell you,” said she, smiling through her tears, “why I feel so much affected. Mr. Wilson wants to put me to school to Mrs. M'Millan; and indeed I should like to learn music, and dancing, and French, and all the rest that they say young ladies ought to learn, but that Mrs. M'Millan is so cross; and I can never forget how cruel she was in ordering my poor Triton to be turned into the street, in the bitter snow and wind.”

Mrs. Doricourt folded Cecilia to her bosom—“We must contrive,” said she, “to have you instructed, without sending you to this Mrs. M'Millan, who has so unfortunately prejudiced you against her. But come, I have not yet introduced you to my dogs; and I have my favourites as well as you.” She then took Cecilia by the hand, and led her to a small room, where before the fire lay a Russian stag-hound, of a size exceeding that of Triton; and on a cushion near him, two little Spanish dogs, with long silky hair, as white as milk.

Mrs. Doricourt informed Cecilia that Ulric, the stag-hound, had saved her life, and though a ferocious-looking creature, was particularly gentle and good tempered. With this assurance Cecilia ventured to approach and stroke his black shining head, and suffered him to lick her hand, while she protested she should always love him for having saved the life of her dear Mrs. Doricourt. Cecilia had never seen such dogs before, and she was in raptures with the little Spanish animals; but when, at the command of Mrs. Doricourt, they picked up her handkerchief, and fetched various articles from the adjoining apartments, her surprise and exclamations of delight were unbounded; she kissed Medor and Fidelle a thousand times, declaring they were the most clever and beautiful little darlings in the world.—“But, though I admire you above all the dogs I ever saw,” said she, “I do not love you as well as my own dear Triton. Poor fellow, he is grown old now, and nearly helpless; but he is so sensible, he understands every word we say; and he used to carry me about on his back. No, no—though Medor and Fidelle are handsomer than my Triton, I do not love them half so well.”

“You are a darling child,” said Mrs. Doricourt, fondly kissing her; “and your attachment to Triton, grown old and helpless, proves to me that your heart is formed of the tenderest and noblest materials.” She then led her to the dinner-table, where every thing had been provided to gratify a youthful appetite.

When evening and Mr. Wilson came to take her back to Torrington Castle, Cecilia kissed Mrs. Doricourt many times, and said—“How very short this day has been! I never was half so happy at Keswick before, I am very, very sorry to leave you.”

“Then stay with me, sweet Cecilia,” replied Mrs. Doricourt, returning her caresses.

“But my mamma Milman, and my poor Triton, and my pretty white pigeons, what will become of them?” said Cecilia, hesitating between her wish to remain at Keswick and apprehension for her favourites.

Mrs. Doricourt assured Mr. Wilson, with so much earnestness, that she should feel particularly gratified by Cecilia being permitted to remain with her, that he gladly consented to her staying, being convinced that Mrs. Doricourt's accomplishments would stimulate Cecilia to improvement; though he was not a little surprised that Cecilia, who never before could be prevailed upon to sleep from Mrs. Milman, now appeared happy to remain, and was satisfied with Mrs. Doricourt saying that Triton should stay with her, and with Mr. Wilson's promise that Mrs. Milman should call upon her in the morning, and that her pigeons should be taken care of.

Weeks and months passed away, and Cecilia, contented and happy, remained the cherished and fondly-beloved guest of Mrs. Doricourt, making only short visits to Torrington Castle. Mrs. Milman and the kind-hearted Wilson beheld her rapidly improving in every elegant accomplishment, yet still the same affectionate, artless, animated creature, bestowing on every object of her infant love the same fond regard as when she saw them every hour; but at the very moment Mrs. Milman joined her friend Wilson in grateful praise of Mrs. Doricourt, who had effected such a wonderful change in her darling child, she could not forbear feeling a sort of resentment against her, because she behaved to her with a distance that forbade familiarity; and though she always received her, when she called to see Cecilia, with politeness, it was evidently with the cold reserve of a superior.

Alexander Wilson, esquire, the land-steward of the earl of Torrington, was a man of good fortune; he was a widower, without children; Cecilia possessed his warmest affections; even from babyhood she had been his plaything, his darling pet, and he had formed secret projects, that led him to hope the earl of Torrington's intentions in favour of Miss Delmore might not mar a design he had formed of marrying her to a nephew of his own, three years older than herself, the expences of whose education he had taken upon himself, intending him for the church, several good livings being in the gift of the earl of Torrington, with whom, he flattered himself, he had sufficient interest to get his nephew preferred to any other applicant. For the attention Mrs. Doricourt bestowed on Cecilia he was sincerely grateful, and was at much pains to contradict an idle report prevailing at Keswick, that she was deranged in her intellects.

"For what but an unhappy insanity," said Mrs. M'Millan, severely piqued at hearing that Mrs. Doricourt, for her own amusement, was educating Miss Delmore, and by this officious display of her abilities and accomplishments, depriving her of a pupil—"what but insanity can persuade the unfortunate woman to prefer a residence on that lonely spot, St. Herbert's Island, to living at Keswick, where she can visit and be visited? what, I say, but insanity, can make her decline society? for I understand she keeps her carriage, and Mr. Dougle the banker informed me that she was very rich: it is evident to me that she must be absolutely mad."

"Very true, madam," replied Mrs. Murray—"your observations are perfectly just, and agree exactly with my own; for said I to my cousin Montrose—'This Mrs. Doricourt, James, is certainly mad; for no woman in possession of her senses would have refused to receive sir Archibald and lady Macintosh, and lady Jane and lady Margaret Douglas, when they called upon her.' Could she be in her senses, when she sent her old butler to inform them that it was not her intention to see company; that she came into Cumberland with the intention of living in the utmost privacy?"

“And then, I am told,” said Miss Gilchrist, “that she looks quite wild, and is as pale as a ghost: there is not the smallest doubt but she is mad, and I much wonder that her relation, Mrs. Milman, and her guardian, Mr. Wilson, suffer Miss Delmore to be with her.”

“They ought to be ashamed of themselves,” resumed Mrs. M’Millan, “to suffer the poor dear little innocent to remain with a mad woman, who, in some of her terrible frantic fits, may do the child an injury. I wonder, when the affair comes to be properly represented to the earl of Torrington, what he will say; I suspect he will not altogether approve Wilson’s saving scheme of getting the child educated gratis; for what can an insane person teach her?”

“As to the earl not approving,” rejoined Mrs. Murray, “I suppose he will not interfere: no doubt he leaves the child to the disposal of her mother.”

“You are mistaken in this business, madam,” returned Mrs. M’Millan: “the housekeeper at Torrington Castle is not the child’s mother; she is her aunt, her mother’s sister.”

“See how the artful impose upon the innocent,” replied Mrs. Murray. “My dear madam, your own virtue and goodness render you unsuspecting of the vices of others. Mrs. Milman is tolerably good-looking, and, I dare say, is not above five-and-thirty.”

“But what has Mrs. Milman’s age or good looks to do with Miss Delmore?” asked Mrs. M’Millan.

“Every thing,” returned the loquacious Mrs. Murray. “Bless my soul, you are not used to be so dull of apprehension, Mrs. M’Millan! Have you never heard it whispered among your Keswick friends, that the earl of Torrington, just by way of killing time, had a little love affair with his rosy-cheeked housekeeper, and that this little girl was their child?”

“Why no—I really do not recollect ever hearing this report before,” said Mrs. M’Millan; “but, now you mention it, I see nothing improbable in the story; and though Mrs. Milman has always affected great fondness for the little girl, she may not in reality be sorry to get rid of her.”

“Certainly, certainly,” rejoined Miss Gilchrist; “and as Mrs. Milman affects propriety and reputation, she may be glad to have the living memento of her frailty removed out of her sight; though how she can reconcile it to her conscience, to trust the poor unfortunate child to the care of a mad woman, I cannot imagine.”

“Unfortunate!” echoed Mrs. M’Millan, with a significant toss of her head—“your inexperience in life leads you into a mistake, Miss Gilchrist: these love-children, as they are called, have always the best luck; most people consider this child as particularly fortunate. When the earl was at the castle four or five years ago, he gave Mr. Wilson strict orders to procure Miss Delmore every possible advantage of education, and Mr. Wilson spoke to me about admitting her into my select establishment, which, though her birth is suspicious, and my pupils are, one and all, the daughters of persons of the very first consequence, I should not have objected, because it might have been injurious to my interest to offend the earl of Torrington; but the little vulgar thing insisted on a great ugly Newfoundland dog remaining with her, and cried and raved because I ordered the ugly beast to be turned into the street; nor could all my persuasions prevent her returning home with her mamma Milman, as she calls her, who most shamefully indulged her whims and ill-temper.”

“And now this mad Mrs. Doricourt has completely deprived you of a pupil,” said Mrs. Murray: “well, never mind—all’s well that ends well; we shall see.”

“That matters may turn out well,” rejoined Miss Gilchrist, “is, I suppose, the reason why Mrs. Milman has consented to the little girl residing with Mrs. Doricourt; for, should the countess of Torrington visit the castle, which is every summer expected, she perhaps might not be exactly satisfied to find the earl’s adopted daughter under the same roof with her.”

“The countess of Torrington,” said Mrs. M’Millan, “is, if report may be relied upon, a very vain, thoughtless, fashionable wife.”

“Yet, fashionable as she is,” replied Mrs. Murray, “and whatever latitude she may allow her own inclinations and caprices, she might perhaps object to the earl’s indulging his, and make uneasy comments, and be suspicious of the motive that instigates the generosity of her lord to this orphan, as she is called.”

“At any rate,” said Mrs. M’Millan, “when the countess comes into Cumberland, it shall not be my fault if she does not inquire into his motives; not that the earl’s intrigues are any thing to me, only I should like to be satisfied who the child really belongs to; and besides, I think it would be an act of humanity to remove her from this mad woman.”

Mrs. Doricourt was not ignorant that her very retired habits had created much surprise, and that she was considered by the curious gossiping ladies of Keswick as a person of “*bewildered brain*,” but this knowledge had not the effect of altering either her plans or her conduct, having made up her mind to form no acquaintance, and to live in absolute retirement. Every day her fondness for Cecilia increased, and in forming her mind she found all the amusement she either wished for, or was capable of tasting; reading, music, drawing, and short rides at the base of the towering Skiddaw, or on the margin of Derwentwater, fully occupied her hours; and she had the pleasure to behold Cecilia, under her tuition, making rapid improvement, and repaying her attention with gratitude and the truest affection.

The cottage was now finished according to Mrs. Doricourt’s plan, and the day appointed for her removal from Keswick, previous to which Miss Delmore was to return to the castle, and remain with her aunt till her own birthday, the tenth of May. Mrs. Doricourt, at an early hour of the morning, quitted Keswick, and took possession of her new habitation on St. Herbert’s Island. It was the month of May, when the trees were putting forth their leaves of tender green, when the romantic banks of the silver-bosomed lake were covered with bright verdure, and the whole island, laid out in groves, lawns, gardens, and shrubberies, wore the enchanting livery of spring, and was perfumed with her fairest flowers.

The cottage, finished in the Italian style, had tasteful verandas all round it, profusely entwined with passion-flowers, jessamine, clematis, and honeysuckles, designed at once to ornament and keep off the winter storms. A breakfast-parlour, a handsome well-stocked library, and a boudoir furnished with fanciful elegance, comprised one wing of the cottage; a conservatory, filled with rare and beautiful exotics, a dining-parlour, and an apartment appropriated solely to the private studies of Mrs. Doricourt, made up the other wing: the rest of the cottage was formed into chambers for repose and servants’ offices. A garden, elegantly and usefully laid out, extended to the edge of the lake, where Chinese bridges, painted boats, and a gilded yacht, added to the beauty of the scene. An extensive hothouse and greenhouse were constructed at the back

of St. Herbert's Hermitage, and temples, groves, and clumps of ornamental trees and flowering shrubs, had now transformed the island into another Eden—so charming, so picturesque, that while Mr. Wilson admired the accuracy with which Mrs. Doricourt laid down her plans, he was ready to worship the taste that inspired, and the liberality that promoted the cultivating and beautifying a spot which had for many years been considered only as waste ground.

It was the anniversary of Cecilia's ninth year when she paid her first visit to Mrs. Doricourt at the Hermitage; already she could converse in French, Italian, and German, with grace, correctness, and fluency; she could draw tastefully, and her proficiency on the pianoforte astonished Mrs. Doricourt, who was herself a scientific performer. Her genius, her beauty, but, above all, her sensibility, her sweetness of temper, and her affectionate heart, had so endeared her to Mrs. Doricourt, that she impatiently counted the hours of her absence. Early on the tenth of May, the yacht, decorated with silken streamers and garlands of flowers, was dispatched to the opposite side of the lake to wait the arrival of Cecilia, while, on the steps of a Chinese bridge, Mrs. Doricourt watched the light vessel, as it returned with a freight precious to her eyes and her heart.

Having welcomed Cecilia with joy and tenderness, Mrs. Doricourt had leisure to notice Mr. Wilson, who received her thanks for the minute attention he had paid to her wishes, in finishing the cottage and laying out the grounds.

"Why, this is an enchanted island!" exclaimed Cecilia, as her delighted eyes wandered over groves, cascades, bridges, and temples; "certainly I am in fairy land."

"No, my love," replied Mrs. Doricourt; "the change which so short a time has effected on this island has been performed by natural means, and will prove to you what human industry can perform, when directed by a little judgment."

Mr. Wilson would have expatiated on her uncommon taste, but, for the ear of Mrs. Doricourt, compliments and flattery had no longer charms; and immediately changing the subject, she led the way to the house, where she again congratulated Cecilia on having entered her ninth year.

After breakfast, she invited Mr. Wilson and Cecilia to the library, where the globes, telescopes, and a solar microscope, were objects of admiration; and the shelves of books, well selected and judiciously arranged, promised an inexhaustible fund of entertainment. But among all the handsome decorations of the library, none more attracted Cecilia's notice than marble busts of the poets, finely executed, and placed over their works.

When Mrs. Doricourt believed Cecilia had sufficiently examined the library, she presented her with a superb box of ivory inlaid with gold, containing every material for drawing. Cecilia was all smiles and acknowledgements; but, fondly kissing her, Mrs. Doricourt said she expected her thanks in a set of views from the surrounding country, to fill up the vacant pannels in the breakfast-parlour.

"Never," replied Cecilia, "never can I be sufficiently grateful for your goodness."

"I will not hear a word on this subject," said Mrs. Doricourt, "for, believe me, I consider myself the person obliged; your society, my beloved child, has, I really believe, preserved me from becoming in reality what the liberal-minded gentlefolks of Keswick represent me—a mad woman; and can I ever repay my sweet Cecilia for the preference she has given me to younger and gayer companions?"

“I never had, never can have companions,” returned the grateful Cecilia, “whose society can be so dear, so valuable to me as yours; for have you not condescended not only to instruct me, but to join even in my pastimes? I have given up nothing, while you have generously laboured to inform my mind, and gratify every wish of my heart.”

Mrs. Doricourt affectionately pressed her hand; and to silence Mr. Wilson’s grateful effusions, she invited them to see the house built for Triton and Ulric, who, now firm friends, had taken possession of their new habitation, where the ease and comfort of these faithful animals had been in every point considered. Triton, from age and infirmity, could scarcely crawl, or in any way provide for his own wants; but, still sensible to the kindness of Cecilia, he would listen to her voice, and lick her hand with unabated affection: the worn-out Triton, her playfellow, her constant companion, was an affecting object to Cecilia, who, while she caressed, shed tears over her favourite.

“Come,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “Triton’s comfort shall be attended to, and I will have no tears to-day.”

When Cecilia entered the boudoir, she was struck with the singular beauty of the apartment. The windows, opening to the floor, had elegant draperies of rose-coloured taffeta, and gave to the enchanted eye the white foam of a distant cascade, bounding from the craggy ledges of an immense high rock, and dividing into little pellucid rivulets, that were seen sparkling beneath the dark foliage of a thick grove; the majestic Skiddaw was seen towering to the right above the turrets of Torrington Castle; while the beautiful Derwentwater, bearing on its glittering bosom green islands and the gay pageantry of yachts and boats, presented a prospect of unrivalled beauty.

From the windows Cecilia turned to admire the interior. She was particularly struck with a marble bust, exquisitely sculptured, that stood in a niche, surmounting a trophy formed of various musical instruments. Beyond this was an arched recess, containing a magnificent Egyptian couch, embroidered with the flower of the lotus in gold, and supported by the fabulous sphinx. The niche on the other side the recess had a gauze curtain drawn before it: Cecilia paused for an instant before the curtain, but with a delicacy and self-command above her years, she repressed the curiosity she felt to see what it concealed. Mrs. Doricourt read in her countenance what was passing in her mind, but she suffered her to admire the paintings of several Italian masters that formed the pannels of the room. Her examination of these being finished, she turned again to the marble bust, the face of which was equally remarkable for beauty and pensiveness; the long neck was particularly graceful and elegant. On this model of female loveliness Cecilia gazed with an undefinable emotion, that filled her bright eyes with tears.

Mr. Wilson remarked, that it resembled Cecilia in all but the pensiveness that characterized the countenance.

“Your observation is just, Mr. Wilson,” replied Mrs. Doricourt; “the features and the form of the neck are indeed strikingly alike. The pensive cast of the countenance was not the natural character—no,” continued she, sighing heavily—“I remember the original, lovely and animated as Cecilia. That bust is the perfect resemblance of a dear friend now no more.”

A tear stole down the cheek of Mrs. Doricourt, but she instantly wiped it off; and perceiving that Cecilia was weeping, she drew her towards the veiled niche.—“Are you not anxious to see what that curtain conceals, my Cecilia?” asked Mrs. Doricourt.

“No, madam,” replied Cecilia, “for I am certain you do not wish me to peep behind the curtain; and you are so good, so very indulgent to me, that I should be the most ungrateful creature in existence if I encouraged curiosity in opposition to your will, which I am certain is always guided by reason.”

Mr. Wilson declared Cecilia was a little angel, and that his and Mrs. Milman’s obligations to Mrs. Doricourt could never be expressed or repaid.

“I am infinitely more than repaid,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “for all I have done for this sweet child, in beholding her uncommon self-command.—But come, my love, your forbearance deserves reward. Take hold of that tassel.”

Cecilia obeyed; the gauze curtain drew back, and discovered an inimitable bust of herself, and beneath it a superb harp, decorated with wreaths of beautiful flowers. An exclamation of joy and surprise burst from the lips of the delighted Cecilia.

Mr. Wilson was loud in admiration of the excellent likeness preserved in the bust, which he at once declared was his little favourite.

“This harp, my Cecilia, is yours,” said Mrs. Doricourt; “I have often heard you express a wish to play on that instrument, and your uncommon proficiency on the pianoforte assures me you will be no mean performer.”

Cecilia, speechless with gratitude and pleasure, could only press Mrs. Doricourt’s hand to her lips, while Mr. Wilson, more delighted with the bust, wondered who in that part of the world could have chiseled such a beautiful and correct resemblance of Cecilia; “the statues and vases at the castle,” continued he, “were all brought from Italy, in the late earl of Torrington’s time, who was a great admirer of the fine arts, and I never heard of any person at Keswick, or in any part of Cumberland, that worked in marble.”

“Most likely not, my good friend,” replied Mrs. Doricourt; “for as I never boasted my abilities in sculpture, there was no possibility of it being known that I am a chippier of marble.”

“You, madam!” exclaimed Cecilia, with a look and tone indicative of amazement, “and were these beautiful busts chiseled by you?”

“They were,” replied Mrs. Doricourt; “and I trust, at no very distant period, to see you, my Cecilia, capable of chipping a block of marble into the resemblance of some dear friend.”

“That dear friend will be yourself then,” said Cecilia, again and again kissing the hand of Mrs. Doricourt. “I am the most fortunate child in the world,” continued she, smiling through her tears, “to be loved and instructed by you, who are mistress of so many accomplishments. But indeed, indeed I will be observant of all your commands—I will obey all your wishes.”

Mrs. Doricourt drew forth the harp, and, with a gracefulness all her own, played several of Cecilia’s most favourite airs, which had, as she intended, the effect of composing the strong emotion that agitated her unsophisticated bosom; and while she admired the superb instrument, again repeated that she had sent for it from London, to present to her on her birthday.

Cecilia was now able to express her thanks with a firm voice and in animated terms; and while her dimpled fingers flew over the strings, her eyes sparkled, and her cheek glowed, not because she could call so rich a gift her own, but from anticipating the pleasure she should feel when able to play on an instrument she had many times heard Mrs. Doricourt say she preferred to any other.

Mr. Wilson, with a feeling very like awe, surveyed the apartment, and its interesting and still-beautiful mistress; and while he remembered all her wonderful attainments, he more than ever felt his curiosity excited to learn what extraordinary circumstances, what misfortunes, had occurred to drive a woman so eminently gifted from that world she was formed to adorn.

Cecilia's birthday passed, to her and Mr. Wilson, on the rapid wings of delight; for Mrs. Doricourt exerted herself to entertain them; and never did a creature of mortality possess in a higher degree the power of fascinating the senses, or of commanding respect.

When Mr. Wilson returned to Torrington Castle, he bore to Mrs. Milman an account of Mrs. Doricourt, her cottage, and the Eden she had created on St. Herbert's Island, so surprising and enchanting, that she more than ever felt mortified at her distant politeness to herself, while she loudly condemned her strange, unsocial determination to receive no visitors.—"You, Mr. Wilson," said she, with an air of pique, "you are a very fortunate man, to gain admittance to this wonderful woman."

"Truly I think so," replied he; "but it is a favour I should never have obtained, had not a man of business in this part of the world been absolutely necessary to the management of her affairs; and but for her extreme fondness of Cecilia I should certainly never be admitted to her presence, but when it was for the direct purpose of settling accounts."

"Her partiality for Cecilia," resumed Mrs. Milman, "might have extended to some little notice of me; but it is no matter—I suppose I am not good enough—the housekeeper of the earl of Torrington is too humble a person to be admitted to her presence."

"You know," replied Mr. Wilson, "she has declined the visits of the first families in Keswick; and do not let pique, my worthy woman, deprive you of gratitude; remember what she has done for your niece, and be satisfied with the knowledge that she enjoys Mrs. Doricourt's love and favour, and that you do not want it."

Mrs. Milman blushed—she felt the justice of Mr. Wilson's reproof, and confessed her great obligations to Mrs. Doricourt on Cecilia's account; adding—"How greatly the earl will be surprised when he finds her so clever! I declare I hope the family may come down to the castle next summer; and who knows, as the countess has no daughter, but she may take as great a fancy to Cecilia as Mrs. Doricourt has done?"

Mr. Wilson joined in Mrs. Milman's wish to see the earl and countess of Torrington at the castle, but from a very different motive. He knew that the countess was a vain, frivolous woman, on whom genius and talent would be lost, and whom beauty was very likely to displease; but from the earl he expected a compliance with his wishes—an approval of the plan on which he had dwelt for some years, with anticipations bordering on anxiety.

"I have no doubt," said Mrs. Milman, "when the countess comes down, she will be curious to see Mrs. Doricourt."

"Nothing more likely," replied Mr. Wilson; "but I am certain her curiosity will not be gratified; Mrs. Doricourt is very rich, and in her notions very independent. It is a pity, nay, it is a great loss to society, that this charming woman resolves to seclude herself, her conversation is so improving, her manners so graceful, and her accomplishments so wonderful."

"Bless my soul!" interrupted Mrs. Milman, laughing; "I really fear, Mr. Wilson, you are in love with this wonderful Mrs. Doricourt."

“Never fear,” replied Mr. Wilson; “I am heart-whole, I promise you; I am not so silly as to fall in love where I can never hope to meet a return; but still I say she is a charming woman, and it was a blessed day for Cecilia, Mrs. Milman, when I took her to St. Herbert’s Island to meet Mrs. Doricourt.”

“Indeed, my good friend, it was,” returned Mrs. Milman; “and a blessed thing it will be for your nephew too, if he has the good luck to get Cecilia for his wife.”

“True, true, my dear woman,” replied Wilson, rubbing his hands, an action indicative of his pleasurable feelings; “and I am doing every thing that money can accomplish to make him worthy of her; he shall have an education, Mrs. Milman, fit for an archbishop; and who knows,” added he, proudly, “but I may live to see him one?”

“No one can tell, to be sure,” said Mrs. Milman, “to what they may rise in life; nor can any one tell who Cecilia may marry, for they say there is a fate in these things; but if she has your nephew for a husband, to be sure her lot in life will be a lucky one.”

“Yes, yes—pretty well,” returned Mr. Wilson; “his father has made a tolerable handsome fortune, and has only three children; Solomon, the eldest, is my godson, and I have taken care about his education, being determined he shall be a great scholar; and if the earl does not oppose my wishes, why Solomon Scroggins and Cecilia Delmore will be a pair unequalled in England.”

Several days had passed with Cecilia in uninterrupted happiness at the Hermitage; for Mrs. Doricourt, judicious in the arrangement of all her plans, took care that her studies should be so varied, that her lessons always came in the shape of amusement. But this felicity, so pure, so perfect, met a check in the death of poor old Triton, and introduced into the bosom of Cecilia its first sorrow; worn out with age, the faithful animal expired with his head on her lap, as she sat, at the close of day, with Mrs. Doricourt, beneath a group of trees, watching the last rays of the setting sun, as they glittered on the loftiest peak of the Skiddaw mountain. The tears of Cecilia fell in torrents on the inanimate form of her favourite, for whom she grieved most sincerely, though convinced he had lived to an unusual age, and had suffered much, from being nearly blind and destitute of teeth; but she felt consoled, on the assurance Mrs. Doricourt gave her that he should be buried on the spot where he had died, and that a marble urn should be placed near his grave, to honour his memory, and commemorate his faithful qualities.

Cecilia saw the bones of poor old Triton laid beneath the pensile branches of a drooping willow; his grave was raised into a bank, a cypress was placed at each end, and the turf was thickly planted with violets. From the window of her bed-chamber Cecilia could see this spot, particularly endeared to her from containing the remains of her early, faithful friend, and thither her eyes were directed every morning when she first rose from her bed; for poor old Triton, though dead above a month, had not yet failed from her memory. She recollected Mrs. Doricourt’s promise of raising an urn to his memory, but as this tribute of regard had never been mentioned since he had been laid in the earth, Cecilia began to fear it had escaped her recollection. But in this instance Cecilia’s impatience to see her favourite’s memory honoured made her unjust to Mrs. Doricourt, with whom a promise was always held sacred. One morning, as usual, she had opened her window, and as her eyes were directed towards Triton’s grave, she was agreeably surprised to see something white gleam through the dark foliage of the surrounding trees. Having hastily dressed herself, she flew to the spot, and with tearful gratitude beheld a beautiful but simple urn, bearing a tablet, on which was inscribed—

"Beneath this violet-sprinkled turf reposes
TRITON,
A native of Newfoundland,
Remarkable for strength, fidelity, and gratitude."

Cecilia's tears flowed copiously as she read this just tribute to departed worth; she kissed the tablet, and repaired to the breakfast parlour, to thank Mrs. Doricourt for this new proof she had given of her attentive kindness—"The estimable qualities of my poor Triton," said Cecilia, "are now honoured indeed—they will not sink unremembered to oblivion; and while I sit beneath the shade of his urn, I shall reflect with gratitude to Heaven, that I have still a friend unequalled in goodness as in accomplishments."

The evening of this day turned out dark and rainy, and as they could not take their accustomed walks about the grounds, Mrs. Doricourt introduced Cecilia to the apartment where none but those conducted by herself were permitted to enter. But if the taste with which every other apartment of the cottage was fitted up had delighted Cecilia, this astonished her: it was a room of octangular form; the richly-stuccoed compartments were curved into ornamental arches, each containing a beautiful statue; several elegant busts were placed on brackets, blocks of marble lay on the floor, with various mallets and chisels, and among these an unfinished bust of the Lesbian poetess.

"The statues to your right hand, my Cecilia," said Mrs. Doricourt, "are all the works of eminent Italian artists, and are considered inimitable specimens; that Ganymede feeding the Eagle, the Apollo, and Ceres, and that unfinished figure, are my labours."

"Oh how beautiful!" said Cecilia, in a tone of mingled admiration and astonishment; "surely you are yourself a goddess, for what mortal skill could produce such inimitable figures?"

"Alas, my love!" replied Mrs. Doricourt, "you greatly overrate my little abilities; with the assistance of similar implements," pointing to the mallet and chisel, "many ladies now living have greatly exceeded me as a sculptor. You, my Cecilia, from never having seen any thing of the kind before, conceive these specimens more excellent than they really are; at present you are charmed and astonished—you look up to me as a being of superior talents and attainments; but the charm will cease, and you may hereafter learn to behold with cold indifference, perhaps to despise, the genius you at the present moment so warmly admire."

While Mrs. Doricourt spoke, her countenance expressed the mingled feelings of sorrow and disdain. Cecilia's sensibility was wounded; her heart assured her she never could be so unjust, so ungrateful; her look was sorrowful, and a tear swelled in either eye.

Mrs. Doricourt repented the unkind expression that had escaped her lips—an expression not the impulse of a naturally-suspicious mind, but prompted by the painful remembrance of past neglect and ingratitude; she fondly pressed Cecilia to her bosom, she prayed her to forgive the unkindness of her speech, and assured her that she did not suspect, did not believe she would ever cease to love her.

"Oh, never, never, but with my life!" said Cecilia, fervently; "in my sight, in my heart, you will always be revered, always considered the first and dearest of women."

Mrs. Doricourt sighed; she had heard such protestations before, and she had been taught the misery of their insincerity—"I brought you hither, my love," said she, "to

shew you in what way I employ the hours when you are absent. But I have still more wonders for you—there yet remains an apartment you have not examined.”

Mrs. Doricourt pressed a panel; it slid back, and they entered a passage that received light from a glass dome.—“We are now,” continued Mrs. Doricourt, about to enter St. Herbert’s Hermitage.” As she spoke, she unclosed a low Gothic door. Cecilia no longer beheld heaps of rubbish and fallen stones; from the naturally arched roof a chandelier, made to imitate a branch of coral, threw a soft tremulous light over the rugged sides, that now glittered with spars and shells; the ground was inlaid with different-coloured marbles, and led to an altar covered with richly-embroidered white satin; at the back appeared a superb painting, by Raphael, of the Annunciation; a large silver crucifix stood on the altar, which had several other costly adornments.—“I have before informed you, my love,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “that I profess the Catholic faith, and that my domestics are of the same belief: this is my oratory; at this altar I pour forth my supplications to that merciful Being, who will bless and receive all, of every persuasion, who seek and serve him faithfully. To-morrow, my Cecilia, is the twelfth of August; that day with me is always a solemn fast; I shall spend the whole of it at the foot of the altar, in prayer and meditation. If the weather, my love, should continue so unfavourable as to prevent your going, as we intended, to the castle in the morning, you must contrive to amuse yourself with your music, your pencil, and your books; for we shall not meet during the whole of the day; and Ulric, Medor, and Fidelle, will be your only companions, as they are mine when you are absent.”

“I wish I was a Catholic,” returned Cecilia; “I should then be permitted to fast and pray with you.”

“The earl of Torrington is a Protestant,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “and he might not be pleased to find your religious belief differed from his own; and I, my beloved Cecilia, should be extremely sorry to incur his displeasure, by leading you from the church in which he worships, especially when I feel a perfect conviction that every denomination of Christians is acceptable in the eyes of infinite goodness and wisdom.”

Cecilia heard and acquiesced in Mrs. Doricourt’s sentiments, though she could not help saying—“A whole day—dear me, how long and tedious I shall think the hours! But shall I not see you before I go to bed?”

“No, my love,” replied Mrs. Doricourt, “not before Thursday morning.”

Though Cecilia was very fond of the dogs, she did not promise herself much entertainment in their company, and during the evening she often thought of the dulness of the following day—“How I shall wish for Thursday morning!” said Cecilia, as she kissed Mrs. Doricourt, and received her blessing previous to retiring to rest. “If the weather had been fine,” thought Cecilia, “I might have gone to see mamma Milman; but, oh dear, what a dull day will to-morrow be!” In the midst of her regrets Cecilia’s eyes closed, and in the morning when she awoke the sun was darting its bright rays through her window curtains.

Agreeable to Mrs. Doricourt’s arrangement, the yacht was prepared, and Mr. Baldwin, Mrs. Doricourt’s butler, saw her safe to Torrington Castle.

Cecilia’s affection for her first friend, Mrs. Milman, was undiminished; she loved her as a relation, and respected her for the care she had taken of her helpless infancy; but she had neither the sense, the education, nor the elegance of Mrs. Doricourt; and having ascertained that all her friends at the castle were well, she felt the hours drag away even

more heavily than if she had remained at the Hermitage, where her music, her pencil, and her books, would have beguiled the time. She thought unceasingly of Mrs. Doricourt, and of her wonderful attainments; she described to Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Milman the apartment full of statues and busts; she spoke also of the oratory, and of the piety of Mrs. Doricourt, who at that very moment was on her knees, fasting and praying.

“That is what these Papists call penance, I suppose,” said Mrs. Milman.

“No,” replied Cecilia, “that cannot be, for Mrs. Doricourt is too good, too pious, to have any sins to repent; and penance is a punishment for sin.”

“She is indeed a most amiable, a most wonderful woman,” said Mr. Wilson.

“Let her be ever so amiable,” rejoined Mrs. Milman, “she is but a human creature; and every body that lives commits sin. But, mercy upon us, Mr. Wilson! what a foolish notion, to suppose that going without meat all day, and making motions upon their forehead and breast, and sprinkling water upon themselves, will do away sin!”

“As this is a subject, my good friend,” said Mr. Wilson, “that we are neither of us competent to speak upon, we had better introduce some other.”

“Oh certainly,” replied Mrs. Milman. “I am but an ignorant woman, to be sure, but, for all that, I have more sense than to kneel down to images and pictures, and worship them, as they tell me Papists do.”

“You are told wrong, Mrs. Milman—very wrong, depend upon it,” said Mr. Wilson; “Catholics certainly do not worship images or pictures, for that would be idolatry. But we will talk, if you please of something else.”

Cecilia young as she was, could perceive that Mr. Wilson was anxious to change the conversation on her account, and with much warmth and earnestness she replied—“My dear Mrs. Doricourt does not kneel to pictures and images; she prays to the same God that we do, though she is a Catholic.”

CHAPTER III.

Thoughtless of beauty, she was beauty's self,
Recluse, amid the close embowering woods:
As in the hollow breast of Appenine,
Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
A myrtle rises far from human eye,
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild.

THOMSON.

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What is called the great world, contains but few worthy characters; fashionable society abounds with beings who despise and insult innocence, who, glorying in their vices, employ their thoughts solely in plans of seduction, ambition, and profligacy. *Extract from a Letter.*

*Fashionable Gallantries—Female Inconstancy—
A Return to England—Introduction to a Woman of Quality.*

As Mrs. Milman beheld the growing beauty and graces of Cecilia, she became more and more impatient of the long absence of the earl and countess of Torrington, whom she anxiously wished to visit Cumberland; for, much as she felt indebted to Mrs. Doricourt, she was half inclined to think her a little deranged; and she could not bear that Cecilia should be shut up continually at the Hermitage, which she often protested was as bad as any nunnery. But Mrs. Milman's anxious wishes were fated to be disappointed; for a fancy had seized the countess of Torrington to spend some time at Paris; and when there, she was persuaded by her dear friend, the duchess de Valencourt, to make the tour of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany.

The duchess de Valencourt was a little lively brunette, far inferior to the countess of Torrington in beauty; yet she threw such bewitching glances of invitation from a pair of large black eyes, that the very vulnerable heart of the earl of Torrington was not proof against their artful languishments. The duchess had a decided antipathy to John Bull; she could not endure his vulgar roast beef and ale; she detested his blunt honest sincerity; she despised the prudery and reserve of his females, who, in the midst of their boasted land of liberty, were as absolutely slaves as the wives of the grand sultan.—“No England for me,” said the lively duchess; “I will live a life of joy and freedom, among people with whom a little harmless *gaieté de coeur* is not considered a blemish on the reputation.”

The countess of Torrington secretly approved what the duchess openly professed—she was as much as enemy to English formality as herself. The earl had no objection to freedom, in its most extensive sense; he was enchanted with the *gaieté de coeur* of the little duchess; she was a charming widow, whom the French revolution had released from a tyrannic husband, and emancipated from narrow prejudices. The countess

declared her an enchanting creature; the earl was of the same opinion, and he fell in with her wishes, without a dissenting word. The duchess was the most dear and particular friend of lady Torrington, and he was too kind, too polite a husband, to conceive the cruelty of separating such congenial souls; therefore he consented to accompany them to Italy, as the duchess sportively said, in search of adventures.

The countess of Torrington having no other child than Oscar lord Rusdale, on whose existence the perpetuating the family honours depended, he was considered of too much consequence to be left behind; proper instructors were therefore engaged to travel in his suite, and the young lord began a tour, as many lords before him have done, without a capacity for observation; he was then a mere child, and would have considered a top or a drum more worthy of notice than broken marbles or ruined temples.

The servile respect paid by needy foreigners to wealthy Englishmen has been too frequently described to render further comments on the subject necessary, suffice it to say, the style in which they travelled, and the money they squandered, procured the earl and countess of Torrington such obliging friends and flatterers, that, despising the plain honest sincerity of their native country, they engaged an elegant villa that overlooked the Bay of Naples, where they remained till a circumstance occurred, fortunate in its consequence, but at that time extremely vexatious to the earl, which determined him not only to return without delay to England, but to spend the ensuing summer at his long-neglected castle in Cumberland.

Miss Delmore had just entered her seventeenth year, when the joyful order arrived to prepare for the earl and countess of Torrington, who, with a party of friends, intended to be down the following week. Mrs. Milman was almost out of her wits with anticipating the pleasure of presenting Cecilia to the countess of Torrington, and, busily employed in preparation, did not remark that the certainty of the noble family's arrival in Cumberland did not afford Mr. Wilson the same degree of pleasure that it did her, Mr. Wilson had a scheme projecting in his brain, which the earl's arrival at the castle would unavoidably postpone; and, like many other persons in similar circumstances, he had a favour to ask, of the attainment of which he had never for an instant permitted himself to doubt, while it was not exactly in his power to prefer his request; but now, when the presence of the earl would afford him the so-often-desired opportunity, he felt diffident of success, and his apprehensive fancy raised many impediments to oppose his wish.

Cecilia was now a young woman, beautiful, engaging, sensible, and highly accomplished; his nephew, Solomon Scroggins, was, according to all the accounts he had received from his family, a prodigy of learning; he had obtained several prize medals for his Greek and Latin orations, and he was declared to understand Hebrew better than any young man at college. On the very day that Mrs. Milman received the earl's letter, he had determined to write one to his nephew Solomon, to invite him into Cumberland, with the intention of introducing the young people to each other, that they might, by personal acquaintance, be made sensible of each other's talents, and fall in love, which he was certain would be the result of their meeting; Cecilia Delmore, the perfection of beauty, elegance, and accomplishments—Solomon Scroggins, the *ne plus ultra* of learning and comprehension, whose head was stored with the dead and living languages—for these young people to know each other, was to a certainty to love—consequently to marry. But all this delightful scheme was put to the rout by the arrival of the earl. While abroad, he

might consent to the match, and think the niece of Mrs. Milman very fortunately disposed of; but when he came to see her, and to be acquainted with her various elegant acquirements, he might be inclined to dispute her aunt's right to dispose of her hand, and arrogate to himself the privilege of choosing her a husband.

Mr. Wilson having read the earl's letter, returned it, without making a single observation.

"Why, bless me, Mr. Wilson!" said Mrs. Milman, folding up the letter, "you are as mute as a mackerel! What in the world are you thinking about? for I can see by your looks, as well as by your silence, that you are not glad to hear the family are coming down."

"You impute my silence to a wrong cause, Mrs. Milman," returned Wilson. "I rejoice as much as you do to hear the family are coming to the castle; they have been long absent, spending the money among foreigners that would have done so much good in their own country; though, to be sincere with you, I wish they had come into Cumberland a few years sooner, or staid away a year or two longer."

"Why, your words are a downright riddle," said Mrs. Milman. "But, dear me! I must dispatch a messenger to let Cecilia know the good news. The sweet child is buried alive at the Hermitage; I warrant she will be glad enough to hear that the earl, and the countess, and lord Rushdale, are coming down."

"I wish, from my soul," replied Mr. Wilson, in a tone of unusual gravity—"I wish, from my soul, she may have no reason to be sorry."

"Sorry!" echoed Mrs. Milman; "why surely you can never think, Mr. Wilson, that quitting that humdrum Hermitage, and being introduced to gay company, can make a girl of Cecilia's age and lively turn sorry? But perhaps you are thinking—"

"Yes," interrupted Wilson, "I am thinking, and my reflections just now are not the most agreeable."

Mrs. Milman turned round to hope that nothing had happened to vex him, but Mr. Wilson had left the apartment.

"Very odd behaviour, upon my word!" said Mrs. Milman, smoothing her apron and settling her frills—"very odd indeed, to take himself off in this way!" But Mrs. Milman was too full of business to dwell upon Mr. Wilson's abrupt departure, and her head was too intently occupied in chimerical fancies respecting Cecilia's advancement in life, to bestow more than a passing thought on Wilson's strange behaviour. Cecilia, in her opinion, was the most beautiful creature she had ever seen, and she thought it not only possible, but very probable, that she might marry a lord. She knew that her friend Wilson designed that his nephew, Mr. Solomon Scroggins, should be her husband; but then, who could tell whether the earl of Torrington would approve the match? or who could be certain whether Cecilia would like young Scroggins; or that Providence, so careful of her infancy, might not elevate her to high rank?

While the head of Mrs. Milman was thus projecting and rejecting, the lovely object of her solicitude was more than content—she was perfectly happy in retirement with Mrs. Doricourt, who, though always pensive, was an entertaining as well as an instructive companion. Mrs. Doricourt had been abroad, and by her animated descriptions she made Cecilia acquainted with the manners, customs, and amusements of foreign countries; she had won her affections by the mildness, the humanity, and generosity of her disposition; to Mrs. Doricourt's unwearied kindness she owed the cultivation of her

talents and the polishing of her manners, and she loved her with an affection that united gratitude, respect, and admiration. Yet Cecilia, though very amiable, was not a "*faultless monster*;" she was not entirely free from the imperfections inherent in human nature; she had heard and read of the *haut ton*, and she had a strong curiosity to see and know something of the characters that give laws to fashion, and become models of imitation to those in less elevated situations. Cecilia had been told, as long as she could remember, that she was beautiful; she was not conscious of vanity, but yet she had a wish to prove what impression her charms would make on persons of rank, with whom Mrs. Milman had often assured her a handsome exterior was an unfailing recommendation; and while the note dispatched by Mrs. Milman, announcing the arrival of the earl and countess at the castle, heaved her bosom with joyful palpitation, she wondered to hear Mrs. Doricourt sigh heavily, and to behold her pale, agitated, and almost fainting. Cecilia flew to support her; she anxiously inquired if she was ill? but, unable to speak, Mrs. Doricourt burst into tears. Weeping appeared to relieve her emotion; and being restored to composure, she proposed a walk. It was a mild evening at the latter end of May; the moon had risen, and as its bright beams played on the branches of the trees, the path before them was checkered with silver. Mrs. Doricourt seated herself on a rustic bench, from whence they had an expanded view of the romantic Derwentwater and its emerald islet; not a breath of air ruffled the glassy bosom of the lake, where the moonbeams seemed to sleep in tranquil splendour.

"Oh, what a heavenly night!" said Cecilia; "how sweet, how soothing, to inhale the perfume of the flowers! What can exceed the beauty of those rocks, their craggy points silvering in the moonlight! Not a leaf stirs, not a sound disturbs the calm repose of nature."

Mrs. Doricourt sighed—"And yet, my Cecilia," replied she, "even here there are hearts which do not partake the sweet tranquillity of the scene; yours, for instance, my beloved girl, throbs with the expectation of emerging from these shades to mingle with the world. But I will not cast a sombre shade over the sunny future that your youthful inexperienced fancy assuredly pictures—no, I will not unnecessarily destroy the magic delusions of hope; for, alas! our happiness seldom survives beyond its expectation."

Cecilia pressed the hand that clasped hers to her lips—"I will not deny," said she, "the wish I feel to see the earl of Torrington, to whose adoption of me in my helpless infancy I owe so much. Should I not be wanting in gratitude if I did not ardently desire to pay him my personal thanks? for did he not extend his generosity to the cultivation of the mind of the poor orphan whose destitute situation excited his pity? and though your goodness, my beloved, my respected friend, has rendered the earl's generosity unnecessary, still my heart assures me my obligations to him are still the same. But yet I protest, and believe the assurance of the creature whose mind you have formed, having paid the duty that I owe the earl, I have no wish to remain at the castle; its festivities will not seduce me to forget the Hermitage, or prevent me making it my particular request to be allowed to return to you, in whose affection I am honoured, and in whose society I place my utmost expectations of happiness."

Cecilia's expressive eyes glittered with the holy drops of grateful tenderness; Mrs. Doricourt pressed her fondly to her bosom—"Do not suppose, my love," replied she, "that I blame the wish that impels you to the presence of the earl of Torrington—no; on the contrary, I approve—I applaud it, because I know it is excited by the best, the most

virtuous motives: but I dread lest the poison of adulation should be poured into the ears of my unsophisticated Cecilia—I tremble lest she should imbibe a taste for empty parade and frivolous amusement; and, worse than these, I fear, when she returns to this retirement, she may bring a heart subdued by a passion whose baneful influence will unfit it for the calm, rational pleasures found in these groves and shades, and that she will sigh for the society of one dearer than me, her early friend.”

Cecilia smiled—it was the bright emanation of a heart, pure, sincere, and convinced that no passion, no subsequent attachment, would ever render her insensible or indifferent to Mrs. Doricourt’s society.—“I understand you,” said she, gayly—“you fear that my inexperience will cause me to fall in love with some one of the beaux who are invited to spend the summer at the castle: but on this account, my beloved friend, have no apprehension, for really I do not think I have at all a susceptible heart, or an ear to be gratified with flattery. Have you forgot last winter that I captivated the bonny Scot, Archibald Ramsey, esquire, with singing “Jamie of Dundee”—a youth whom the ladies of Keswick call an Adonis?—Don’t you remember that he sent me a valentine all painted over with little chubby Cupids, shooting clumsy arrows at red blotches, which we were instructed, by the doggerel underneath, were bleeding hearts? Have no fears for your Cecilia’s peace; having remained insensible to the flames and darts of Mr. Ramsey, there is not the smallest danger that I shall suffer my head or my heart to be disturbed by unmeaning flattery, or, while rambling by your side through the paradise your taste has created, I shall sigh for any entertainment Torrington Castle can boast.”

Mrs. Doricourt knew that Cecilia was sincere and ingenuous; she was certain that she spoke exactly as she felt; but she was also certain that neither the person nor the education of Mr. Ramsey were likely to raise an interest in a bosom refined as Cecilia’s; she was now on the eve of being introduced to beings of a different order—to men of polished manners, deeply versed in all the arts that fascinate the senses, and steal the affections of confiding youth and innocence.

Mrs. Doricourt was by nature romantic—a disposition that peculiar circumstances had increased, nourished, and confirmed; she was also unhappily inclined to look on the dark rather than the bright side of events; no wonder then that she dwelt on the earl of Torrington’s assumption of the rights of guardianship over Cecilia with feelings of apprehension. In seclusion, and under her immediate care, this darling child’s life had glided unmarked by a single, unpleasant occurrence; but now she was to quit her protection, to leave the peaceful shades where her childhood had passed away so happily, where the death of old Triton had been the only sorrow that had ever assailed her bosom; she was now to be made acquainted with persons of rank, whose pursuits and pleasures were far dissimilar to any she had ever known; she was about to be associated with women of fashionable morals, and men of profligate habits, in whose estimation religion and virtue were of no value. By such an intercourse Mrs. Doricourt saw the dreadful possibility of her darling Cecilia’s innocence being ensnared, her happiness destroyed for ever; and, after the total wreck of her peace, small would be the consolation her unaltered friendship, or the asylum of her youth, would afford to a heart betrayed and despoiled of self-approbation and respect.

Such were the reflections that harassed the mind of Mrs. Doricourt, from the moment she heard of the earl’s intention of passing the summer at Torrington Castle; but when the time arrived for Cecilia’s quitting the Hermitage, she did not suffer her own

uneasy feelings to damp the joyous expectancy that tinged her blooming cheek with a deeper crimson; she repeatedly pressed her to her agitated bosom, and bade her remember, should any unforeseen circumstance occur at the castle to render her stay there unpleasant, the Hermitage was her home, and that in her she had a faithfully attached friend, whom no event should ever induce to forsake her.

Cecilia with equal affection returned her embrace, assured Mrs. Doricourt that she would write every day while she remained at the castle, and then, with a tearful eye, pronounced her adieu.

Stationed on the Chinese bridge, Mrs. Doricourt waved her hand to Cecilia, till the yacht that conveyed her from the island doubled a rock; and when she could see the child of her affection no longer, she returned to the house, to indulge in tears of regret, and pray for her happiness.

On quitting the yacht, Cecilia found Mrs. Doricourt's carriage waiting to convey her to the castle: this was a fresh instance of kindness, and designed by Mrs. Doricourt to impress the frivolous countess of Torrington with a conviction that Cecilia was not destitute of other friends, to whom her welfare was of consequence. The Hermitage was now no longer visible, a thick wood concealed it from her view, and Cecilia sunk back in the carriage, a thousand hopes, fears, and anxieties throbbing wildly in her bosom, as she was rapidly whirled from her fond, indulgent friend.

At the entrance of the long chesnut avenue that led to the front of the castle, while the carriage waited for the opening of the gates, Mr. Wilson appeared at the window. Having exchanged salutations, he informed her that he had hastened to meet her, to prepare her for the company she would find at the castle.—“It is very probable,” said Mr. Wilson, “you will see sir Cyril Musgrove before you reach the castle, for I heard him ordering his groom to bring out the horses.”

Cecilia declared she would not encounter him for the world; she then dismissed the carriage, and proposed to Mr. Wilson their walking through the shrubbery to the servants' offices.

Mr. Wilson informed her there were a great many guests at the castle, among whom was a foreign count, who did not appear to be much of a favourite with his own valet, who, in very broken English, had that morning been calling him every thing but a gentleman.—“The person of the earl of Torrington,” continued Wilson, “is much altered since I last saw him; but his sentiments towards you are unchanged; he has made many inquiries respecting you, and has expressed much impatience for your arrival.”

Just as they reached the door that opened into the shrubbery, two gentlemen passed through, the one a tall, elegant youth, the other a proud-looking, high-shouldered man, in the habit of a clergyman. The youth bowed with graceful affability; his companion did not touch his hat, but he gave a consequential nod.

“That youth,” said Mr. Wilson, “is lord Rushdale, the heir of Torrington; the other gentleman is his lordship's tutor, the reverend Mr. Oxley; whatever learning and piety he may possess, he certainly has not much politeness. Lord Rushdale is a very fine young man, but his tutor, the reverend Mr. Oxley, looks as proud as Lucifer; don't you think so, Cecilia?”

“Really, sir, I did not notice them,” replied she.

“They noticed you, however,” said Wilson, “for they both stared as if a pretty-looking female was as wonderful a sight as a mermaid or a unicorn; but that is quality

breeding, I suppose. But I hope, Cecilia, *'evil communication will not corrupt good manners;'* for, dearly as I love you, child, I would sooner follow you to the grave than see you transformed into the likeness of one of those half-naked ladies at the castle."

Cecilia blushed and smiled, and expressed a hope that the example and precepts of her friends would not be lost upon her.

"I hope so, from my soul," replied Wilson; "for in my eyes these fine ladies are odious creatures. I wonder they don't blush at their own indecent appearance; but I need not speak of blushes—through a plaster of red and white paint no blush could possibly be seen."

Cecilia knew that Mr. Wilson's notions respecting female dress were rather precise; therefore she made some allowance for prejudice, while at the same time his account raised her curiosity, and gave her no very exalted opinion of the characters she was to meet.

Mrs. Milman was too busy to add her communications to those of Mr. Wilson, but observing Cecilia looked flurried, she insisted on her taking a glass of wine and a biscuit, to recruit her spirits after her walk, telling her at the same time that the earl had rung twice within the last half-hour, to inquire if Miss Delmore was arrived.

Covered with blushes, and trembling she knew not wherefore, Cecilia was ushered into the presence of the earl of Torrington, who was waiting her arrival in the library, whither he had retired under pretence of writing letters, but in reality to prepare and strengthen his mind to meet the lovely creature, who, even in infancy, had occasioned his conscience many retrospective pangs.

The heart of Cecilia swelled with emotions, such as a child would feel for a parent from whom she had long been separated; impelled by gratitude, she would have knelt before the earl, to thank him for the various advantages his bounty had procured her; but preventing her intention, he caught her up, and pressed her in his arms; then holding her at a distance, he gazed on her face, with a scrutiny that filled her with confusion and terror; for, while his look indicated admiration, there was a wild expression in his eyes like insanity. At length releasing her hand, he said—"Offer me no thanks; towards you I have not been actuated by the generous motives you attribute to my conduct; it was neither humanity nor compassion that influenced my feelings when I adopted you; no, I will not add hypocrisy to the catalogue of my offences; it is more than probable that your orphan state would have been disregarded by me, had not your infant features resembled a person whose death—I cannot trust myself to speak on this distressing subject; many years have elapsed since that event; but remembrance still survives to torture me."

Cecilia wished that his adoption of her had been actuated by better motives; she felt her heart's enthusiastic warmth chilled by this acknowledgement; she had been taught to consider the earl as the most noble, the most generous of human beings, and while her eyes glanced over his really fine form, she lamented that he had himself disclaimed the virtues with which her youthful fancy had delighted to decorate him, and, unable to command her regretful feelings, she burst into tears.

The earl's emotions, though not subdued, were calmed; he perceived that he had distressed the mind he intended to assure; again he took her hand—"Nay, do not weep," said he; "in my justice, in my honour you might safely confide, even though the resemblance that first attracted me had vanished; but it is now more perfect than in childhood, and renders you an object of more interest to me than ever; yes, yes, you are

now the exact counterpart of her who once—oh, memory! torturing memory!—the same look of angel innocence, the eyes, the hair, the fascinating smile—all, all remind me of her. Oh, Edith! lovely, injured Edith! could my deep sorrow recall thee from the grave!—Thou art happy, and I—but no more of this weakness.”

The earl took two or three turns across the library, with the evident intention of subduing his agitated spirits; he then turned to Cecilia, who, nearly fainting, was sending many an anxious sigh towards the Hermitage, and her now-more-than-ever beloved Mrs. Doricourt. Perceiving the alarm he had occasioned, the earl gently seated her on a couch, and then, in a steady voice, said— “I am extremely sorry my agitated feelings have so distressed you; compose yourself, my sweet girl, and bind this assurance on your heart: in the earl of Torrington you shall find a father, a protector, and a friend.” He then made inquiries relative to her acquirements, her amusements, and her friends.

Of her acquirements Cecilia spoke modestly, though she acknowledged all her obligations to Mrs. Doricourt; and dwelt with grateful pleasure on her expanded genius, her wonderful accomplishments, her beauty, and her benevolence of heart.

The earl replied, that the account he had received from Wilson of Mrs. Doricourt, was such as in less enlightened times might lead him to believe she was not of “*earthly mould*.” he expressed himself much indebted to her for the notice she had bestowed on his adopted daughter—“I am told,” continued the earl, “ she has declined the acquaintance of all the neighbouring gentry, and admits no visitors. But the improvements she has made on the island are, according to Wilson’s description, astonishing; this excites my curiosity, and, joined to my obligations to her on your account, will urge me to solicit an interview.—But come, Miss Delmore, I must now introduce you to the countess of Torrington, who will no doubt consider you an agreeable addition to her guests.”

The earl led the way to the dressing-room of the countess; but the moment chosen for Cecilia’s introduction was most unlucky; they found the countess in the midst of trunks and packages, in a temper not exactly amiable, owing to an accident having happened to her waiting gentlewoman, whose hand had been terribly bruised, and two of her fingers broken, by the sudden falling to of the door of the antichamber.

“Emily,” said the earl, “I have brought Miss Delmore, whom I am anxious to introduce to your notice.”

“You have chosen a very unfortunate time, my lord,” replied the countess, without raising her eyes from a casket, out of which she was selecting ornaments, “I am so distressed and so busy.”

“You cannot be too busy to receive Miss Delmore,” replied the earl, “who comes to offer you congratulations on your arrival at the castle.”

The countess levelled her eyeglass at the blushing face of Cecilia; its youthful beauty was by no means pleasing to her envious mind.—“Who did you say, my lord?” returned she—“Miss Delmore?—Oh, I recollect—the young woman you have adopted—the housekeeper’s daughter. Oh, very well, child, I am glad to see you; you come very opportunely, for Smithson having unfortunately disabled her hand, I was really at a loss for some decent-looking person to assist me to dress.”

The earl frowned; Cecilia coloured highly.

“There, child,” continued the countess, “take the things out of that imperial; be careful how you proceed; but I suppose you are accustomed to this sort of business, as I

understand Mrs. Milman is a clever, notable woman. Why, how you stare! Don't you understand me? In that imperial you will find a blue satin robe, on which you must run this chinelle trimming; and be expeditious too, or I shall be under the necessity of putting off the dinner to seven, instead of six o'clock."

The earl was amazed; anger deprived him of utterance. Cecilia, more collected, with a look of dignity replied—"I am really sorry, madam, that I cannot on this occasion render myself useful; I am totally unacquainted with trimming dresses, and should, I fear, rather retard than expedite your toilet, having never yet officiated as an attendant."

"Really," said the countess, drawling, and again applying her glass to her eye; "I humbly entreat your pardon, Miss, for the error I have committed; I ought to have considered that a young lady, attired in French cambric and Brussels lace, could not possibly submit to assist at the toilet of the countess of Torrington."

The earl, darting a furious look at her, sternly commanded her silence—"Subdue your arrogance," said he, "and reflect whether insult and rudeness become the rank of the countess of Torrington."

He then supported rather than led Cecilia from the dressing-room, who had no sooner quitted the presence of the countess than she fainted. The earl bore her in his arms to the library, and, terrified by the death-like paleness of her lips and cheeks, called loudly for restoratives, when, with the assistance of Mrs. Milman, she returned to recollection.

Cecilia's first words were—"Oh, my friend, my beloved mistress! truly did you prophesy that I should regret the groves that cherished my infancy. Take me, take me back to the Hermitage; restore me to my more than mother; let me instantly return to Mrs. Doricourt; she will not insult, she will not deride the creature of her bounty."

Mrs. Milman wept, and lamented over her dear child; her repeated inquiries of what had happened to distress her, at length roused the earl, whose pride forbade exposing the conduct of the countess to a domestic. Cecilia being recovered, he ordered Mrs. Milman to withdraw—an order she very reluctantly obeyed.

On Cecilia's tearful and agitated request to be permitted to return immediately to the Hermitage, the earl put a negative; but he let his refusal wear the form of entreaty; he was shocked at the gross, unfeeling conduct of his wife, he was offended at the insult she had offered to the daughter of his adoption, and he was bent on compelling her to apologize for her rudeness, and obliging her to solicit Cecilia to remain at the castle.

Cecilia cast a tearful eye on her dress, and said it was Mrs. Doricourt's pleasure that she should wear her presents, which certainly were too expensive for her pretensions—"but in the indulgence of my too-partial friend," continued she, "I have ceased to remember my humble birth."

"You are the daughter of my adoption," replied the earl, "and, as such, are entitled to the habiliments of a gentlewoman. But I entreat you, sweet Cecilia, forget the behaviour of the countess, who, little accustomed to disappointment, was out of temper at the accident that had befallen her favourite attendant; remain at the castle, and, I promise you, the countess shall apologize, and request your company."

The answer of Cecilia, which would have declined the promised condescension of Lady Torrington, was prevented by the entrance of lord Rusdale and his tutor. Mr. Oxley looked surprised; the earl of Torrington was seated on a couch with a young female, over whom he was bending with looks of tenderness. Mr. Oxley begged pardon

for intruding, and would have retired with his no less astonished pupil; but the earl, quitting the side of the abashed Cecilia, bade them remain; he then presented them by name to Miss Delmore—"To your attention, Oscar," said the earl, addressing his son, "I particularly recommend Miss Delmore; she is my adopted daughter, with whom you are already well acquainted from Wilson's letters; consider her, I command you, as your sister, and let her always experience from you the kindness and friendship of a brother."

Lord Rushdale's expressive eyes sparkled with pleasure; he raised the white hand presented to him by his father to his lips, and with a warmth of manner that evinced the sincerity of his heart, he promised to be all the earl had enjoined to the lovely sister he felt proud to acknowledge.

"How different," thought Cecilia, "is lord Rushdale to his arrogant, unfeeling mother!"

Mr. Oxley's bow, on his introduction, was stiff and haughty; he had learned Cecilia's pedigree, and, though the *protegee* of the earl of Torrington, he could not bring his pride to forget she was only the niece of the housekeeper; though he would have been highly offended if any person had hinted that his father had been many years paid for responding amen, and giving out the psalms in the humble capacity of a parish clerk: but this was a piece of family history he wished to consign to oblivion, as well as having himself been the Draco that gave laws to a little school in a country town. Some lucky chances had introduced him into the church; he had married the daughter of a vicar, with a little money; and the son of the parish clerk, the master of a paltry school, had grown into consequence with himself—he was, in every sense of the word, a high priest; but having buried his wife, and failed to persuade his parishioners to tremble at his nod, or admire his denouncing doctrine, he sold the living he had bought, and engaged to put the finishing stroke to the education of lord Rushdale.—Mr. Oxley's bow to Cecilia was that of a proud superior, who condescended to notice a person of no consequence—a nobody; for he was one of those selfish high priests who do not throw even a bend of the body away: he had a lowly humble bow for a bishop, or any other person who boasted rank or possessed extensive interest, but to the untitled and the poor he was stiff, austere, and unbending; like the countess of Torrington, when actuated by no sinister motive, he was haughty and repellent; vain of his person, though possessed of little attraction, he believed that, once adorned with lawn sleeves, he should be irresistible; to attain this dignity, this crown of his ambition, he believed was in the compass of possibility, from the ascendancy he flattered himself he had gained over the mind of his pupil, lord Rushdale, and from the favour in which he was held by the countess of Torrington, to whose vanity he had unceasingly sacrificed truth, and made liberal offerings of flattery.

Hitherto Mr. Oxley had not wasted a thought on the insignificant niece of the housekeeper; but when he perceived that lord Rushdale's reception of her was so unequivocally warm, he found it would be politic to descend from his stilts, and become, in this instance, an imitator of his pupil. The beauty of Cecilia had not escaped the notice of the reverend Mr. Oxley, for, though a vehement advocate and stickler for the observance of all the outward forms of propriety, report whispered he sometimes threw aside the cloak of austerity and self-denial, which he conceived necessary to his views of promotion, and in private indulged those passions which he publicly reprobated and condemned—the reverend Mr. Oxley was suspected and accused of violating, in his own person, the commandments of temperance and chastity, while he thundered eternal

reprobation as the reward of those who made even an accidental deviation. The Hebe bloom and grace of Cecilia could not be viewed without inspiring admiration, and as the reverend gentleman was apt to indulge in speculations, he thought, if the earl would only make it worth his while, her beauty would undoubtedly render the matrimonial pill palatable.

The earl of Torrington, though possessing a fine person, good health, high rank, and immense wealth, had never been able to purchase happiness; like a shadow, it had eluded his grasp, though he had unceasingly sought it under every alluring form that the enchantress Pleasure holds out to her deluded votaries. A recent disappointment had severely mortified the vanity of the earl, and taught him that wealth and splendour presented no shield to ward off the barbed arrows of falsehood and ingratitude. Disgusted with foreign manners and fashionable levity, his thoughts reverted to persons with whom he had been intimate in early life, whose unsophisticated hearts he had reason to believe enshrined the pure essence of sincerity, of friendship, and affection; but the recollection of those beings, beloved, since lost to him beyond recall, filled his bosom with regret, embittered by the conviction that he, by his own act, had cast these treasures from him; he remembered with agony that a form of loveliness, relying on his faith and honour, had yielded up to him her heart, replete with every virtue, and that he,

“Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe.”

While his mind rankled with discontent and mortification, the earl of Torrington beheld the clear unclouded skies and verdant shores of Italy with eyes abhorrent of their beauties; he peremptorily insisted on returning without delay to England—a command strongly opposed by the countess; but neither violence, tears, nor entreaties, had power to change the resolution formed by rage and disappointment. Having hastily recalled lord Rushdale, who was absent on a tour of pleasure through Calabria, the earl gave orders to his domestics to prepare for a return to England; and with a coolness that marked decision, he replied to lady Torrington’s avowed preference for Italy, that if her infatuation for foreign countries and foreign friends outweighed her sense of propriety, duty, and obedience as a wife, that a separate establishment could immediately be formed; that he had determined on a return to England, and had also made up his mind to spend the ensuing summer at his neglected castle in Cumberland.—“I have no wish,” said the earl, “to tyrannize over your inclinations; you are at perfect liberty either to be the companion of my voyage or remain where you are; but, once separated, remember, Emily, we unite no more.”

To remain at Naples would assuredly have been most agreeable to the inclinations of the countess of Torrington, for as yet she had found no diminution of the flattery and attentions of the count del Montarino, who, captivated by her beauty, but more by the luxuries the earl’s princely establishment afforded him, found it extremely convenient to be her adoring slave, and make the impassioned love he affected to feel for her, the secretly breathed reason for professing himself the friend of the earl of Torrington, and living constantly beneath his roof.

The count’s extravagances and vices had nearly swallowed up the whole of his possessions, and such had been the infatuation of the earl, so completely had the artful

duchess de Valencourt held him enslaved, that, having no eyes but for the witchery of her blandishments, the count's very particular attention to his wife had passed absolutely unobserved; nay, so far from dreaming of dishonour, he had felt grateful to him for the amusements he had so continually planned, which, engaging the frivolous mind of the countess, had left him at liberty to pursue, unrestricted, his amour with the duchess, on whom, with lavish generosity, he had expended large sums in the purchase of gems, to adorn her person and gratify what he, in the day of his debasement, called her delightful whims. And what was the expenditure of paltry gold, compared with the entrancing recompence he received, when enjoying the dimpled smiles of the woman whose coral lips vowed she adored him, that she existed but for him and love? While this delusion lasted, Naples, its beautiful bay and classical environs, presented all that was sublime and enchanting in nature. The duchess was the sovereign of his will—she preferred residing in Italy; and England, his native country, the soil of the worthy and brave, the nursery of arts, the emporium of the world, was not only relinquished, but forgotten.

The duchess de Valencourt was not handsome; she possessed neither mind nor accomplishments; her only knowledge was how to make use of a pair of large black eyes, and to shew two rows of very white teeth: her Parisian education had given her manners an imposing polish, and taught her to combine, in the adornment of her *petit* person, the becoming with the fashionable. The duchess, though deficient in sense, was mistress of consummate art; she had smiles and tears at command, she could trifle agreeably, and with these slender recommendations she contrived, by flattering his self-love, by affecting to renounce, for him, friends, reputation, and country, to wind her fetters round the earl; and so rosy, so magical did they seem, so replete with all of felicity, that a wish to break them never entered his infatuated mind, till the capricious fair one, yielding to her passion for variety, boldly and openly encouraged the attentions of a German baron.

Irritated and jealous at the flirtation that took place before his eyes, the offended earl upbraided and expostulated, till, with a provoking calmness, the duchess told him that she had positively loved him as long as she possibly could; that she was sorry, very sorry, she could not command her affections: she confessed she had been very happy with him, but her heart had received a new impression, and that he ought to admire the sincerity of her avowal, and to remember, that the inconstancy of her disposition was the fault of nature, who had given her a heart alive to the pleasurable impressions of novelty.—“But though the charm of love has ceased,” said the duchess, “I shall always recollect you with esteem. Within an hour I shall be on the wing for Germany. Adieu, my lord; I recommend to you a new attachment; pursue my plan—be happy, as I intend to be.”

The earl of Torrington was not disposed to follow the advice of madame la duchesse; her *toujours gai* was a motto quite incompatible with the state of his feelings, which were wrought almost to frenzy when he found she had really left Naples with her innamorato; the so-late-enchanting Bay suddenly lost its attractions, he detested the blue sky reflected in its waters; the rumbling explosions of Vesuvius were horrible, the odour of the orange-groves oppressed his nerves, and the rains of ancient magnificence wearied his eyes. But while the perfidy of the duchess de Valencourt, by wounding his pride, made him insensible to the beauties of nature, it had the salutary effect of rousing his slumbering conscience; he thought with pangs of remorse on former occurrences, in which he had acted a perfidious and deceitful part; the anguish he felt at being

ungratefully deserted, recalled to memory his betrayed friend Saville, and one other tender bosom, which he had lacerated, deceived, and forsaken.

In the midst of the agony he sustained by the dereliction of the duchess, dispatches arrived from Torrington Castle, in which Miss Delmore's beauty and accomplishments were described in very glowing terms. Many of the steward's former letters had spoken of Mrs. Doricourt, the improvements she had made on St. Herbert's Island, her very recluse way of life, and the various great advantages Cecilia had derived from her partiality. Eager for relief from mental suffering, which was not to be hoped for in the gay parties and amusements where the duchess de Valencourt had so lately moved the mirthful goddess of the scene, the earl resolved to occupy his thoughts with looking over a parcel of papers, which it was necessary he should examine, but which, while under the infatuating dominion of a disgraceful passion, he had neglected; the chief of these papers were accounts and letters from Wilson; all of them spoke of Mrs. Doricourt and Cecilia, whom, having accustomed himself to consider a child, he had left to the entire direction of the housekeeper and steward, satisfied of their integrity, and that she was taken proper care of. In Wilson's last letter she was brought before his eyes, a young woman, and, if his account of her was not dictated by partiality rather than truth, beautiful, sensible, and highly accomplished. The earl's memory now recalled the lovely engaging child he had promised Mrs. Milman to adopt; he recollected too the strong resemblance she bore to a person who had once claims upon him, claims which he had despised and denied; the recollection brought with it such agonizing remorse, that he solemnly swore to return to England, and repair to Cumberland with all possible expedition, and to perform through life the character of father and protector to the orphan Cecilia.

The countess of Torrington having failed to overcome or retard the earl's return to England, was constrained to bid adieu to the delightful freedom of Italy. As yet, she had not shaken off all respect for reputation; though the reality of virtue was lost, she considered it necessary to keep up appearances; therefore, to accompany her husband became an indispensable, though unpleasant duty.

The earl would gladly have taken leave of his foreign friends—his late painful experience had made him suspicious of their ardent professions; but the count del Montarino declared he had long projected a voyage to the land of liberty, and that he should be happy to embrace the opportunity of visiting England in the earl of Torrington's suite.

Politeness forbade the earl uttering the negative that rose to his lips; he felt reluctant to make the count the companion of his voyage; but the countess constrained him to suppress his objections, by protesting she should only be reconciled to leave Naples, and undertake the voyage, by having a friend with her who could enliven her spirits, by conversing with her on the pleasures of the dear Misenum, the enchanting rides to Portici, and the delightful opera.

The count del Montarino, so necessary to the spirits of the countess, of course embarked with them for England; and when arrived at London, he made part of their family in Berkeley-square.

Even in the month of May the countess found such attractions in London, that her repugnance to the odious country became every day more confirmed; but the earl was peremptorily bent on quitting town; and as no remonstrances would soften his obstinacy,

the countess, shrinking from the solitude of an old castle, or what, in her opinion, was equally as bad, the society of the Cumberland gentry, by her denominated boors and Hottentots, she invited lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, her cousin, lady Eglantine Sydney, lord Melvil, and sir Cyril Musgrove, to spend the summer at the castle.

The earl of Torrington did not object to this arrangement, but while he suffered her to pursue her own plans, and draw round her the friends she approved, he resolved she should understand it was his pleasure that she should receive, respect, and countenance his adopted daughter.

The countess had not been an hour at the castle before a note was put into her hand, in which an anonymous correspondent informed her that Miss Delmore was the natural daughter of the earl by the housekeeper, Mrs. Milman; that she had been educated by a person not always in her senses, of the name of Doricourt; and that it was the earl's intention to give her a large fortune. The countess having glanced over this very friendly intimation, gave it to the perusal of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, who, throwing it down with a contemptuous smile, said—"I never pay much attention to anonymous communications; besides, if the contents of that delectable scrawl are true, whether the earl has or has not a natural daughter can make no difference to you."

"Not in the least," replied the countess, with the utmost *nonchalance*—"my fortune, you know, is settled; and as to his affections, you will, I trust, do me the credit to believe they are perfectly at his own disposal."

"This is the little miracle, I suppose," resumed lady Jacintha, "with whose graces and elegances the earl wearied us yesterday."

"The very same," replied the countess—"the lovely, artless, angelic creature, who has happily escaped the contagion of high life and fashionable morals. I hate these monsters of perfection," continued she, with a sneering laugh. "But do advise me how to act in this affair. The earl, I know, intends to introduce this Arcadian princess, this pupil of a bedlamite, among us; it will be monstrous disagreeable, but how to get off it puzzles me. What shall I do, my dear friend? shall I honour this illegitimate scion of the noble house of Torrington with my countenance, or shall I offend the earl, and refuse to receive her?"

"Oh, receive her, by all means," said lady Jacintha—"her *mauvaise honte* will amuse us; besides, as the earl has taken so unaccountable a fancy to simplicity, this child of nature, as he calls her, will occupy his attention, and prevent his being observant of the actions of his friends, who have been educated in the world, and incline towards what his wisdom may denominate follies."

"Your advice is actually judicious," returned the countess, "and shall be followed; for, on second thoughts, were I to object to receive the girl, the earl might fancy I was piqued at the discovery of his having had a low amour; which, though it must have taken place about the time of our marriage, gives me no pang of jealousy, no uneasy feeling; for Plutus, not Cupid, joined our hands at the hymeneal altar; and then, and now, he has my free permission to make love wherever he pleases."

"Perfectly right," said lady Jacintha; "with persons of sense, matrimony is always a compact of interest and convenience."

"I shall follow your advice, my dear friend," resumed the countess, "and receive the fair miracle graciously. As you observe, her ignorance of fashionable life will afford

us entertainment; besides, it will really be doing an act of charity to put the girl in the way of marrying well.”

“You are all goodness and amiable consideration,” said lady Jacintha; “and as the earl intends to portion her off handsomely, some needy gentleman may be found ready to forget her birth in consideration of her golden advantages.”

From this conversation the countess retired to her dressing-room, to commence the important mysteries of the toilet; for though, when dressed, she still appeared a handsome woman, the roses of her cheek had in reality faded, and were to be renewed with *oeillet carne*; and her neck, once white and elastic, required the aid of pearl powder and madame Dupont’s elastic corsets. Intending to look more than usually captivating, she had sent her attendant Smithson to the antichamber, to unpack a trunk that contained a new dress; but the accident that happened to her hand deprived the countess at once of an assistant and of her good temper.

While exclaiming and lamenting her ill fortune, and fearing, as Smithson could not dress her, she should not eclipse her more youthful guests, the earl unfortunately introduced Cecilia. One glance at her face was sufficient to awaken envy in the bosom of the already-irritated countess; the glossy chesnut ringlets that hung on Cecilia’s ivory forehead, and shaded her graceful neck—her sunny eyes, beaming animation and intelligence—her dimpled smile—the elegant simplicity of her unadorned, yet conspicuously-lovely appearance—destroyed all her self-command, and provoked the vain, narrow-minded countess, to endeavour at mortifying the innocent creature, in whom she could find no fault, but that most unpardonable one—exceeding her in beauty.

The timidity of Cecilia, while it gave her inexpressible charms, did not prevent her highly-cultivated understanding from appearing, in the replies the earl drew from her relative to Mrs. Doricourt, of whom she spoke in terms that did honour to her own grateful heart, and evinced the high sense she entertained of her friend’s transcendent genius. While she spoke, the now-attentive and obsequious Mr. Oxley’s frigid countenance relaxed into something like smiles of approbation; but the expressive eyes of the more ardent lord Rushdale sparkled, his handsome features glowed with the delighted sensations of his generous heart; and it was only when he heard her request the earl’s permission to return to the Hermitage, that he believed Cecilia’s lips could utter a sound but what would give him pleasure.

The earl was convinced of the propriety of her return to Mrs. Doricourt, should he be unable to prevail on the countess to apologize for her late insulting behaviour. Mrs. Milman, though a very worthy character, he no longer considered a fit companion for Miss Delmore; the housekeeper’s parlour was now the resort of valets and *femmes de chambre*, with whom she could by no means associate.

Requesting lord Rushdale to entertain Miss Delmore till his return, the earl left the library to seek the countess, who had not yet left her toilet. Her mirror having flattered her into the belief that she did not look more than twenty, she began to regain her good temper, and to reflect with no little self-condemnation on her very rude behaviour to her liege lord’s adopted daughter, and to apprehend that, in revenge for her insulting conduct, he might offend the guests she had invited to the castle, and thus deprive her, unless she sacrificed all pretension to fame and propriety, of the count del Montarino’s society; and without his adulations, his attentions, she thought it quite impossible to live. She wished she had acted up to the advice of her friend, lady Jacintha; but then the girl was so

provokingly beautiful, it put her out of all patience. While casting about her thoughts to mollify the earl's resentment and extenuate her own insulting behaviour to Miss Delmore, her eye fell on the anonymous letter.—“This shall be my excuse,” said the countess; “jealousy and offended delicacy shall bear the weight of my misdemeanour.”

This point was scarcely settled before the earl entered her dressing-room, and dismissing the attendants, without further preface, insisted that she should apologize for her unfeeling and grossly-insulting conduct to Miss Delmore, and solicit her to remain at the castle.

Sullenness and jealousy was the part the countess had planned to act; with well-affected resentment she pointed to the letter; she bade him read, and let his conscience decide whether, deceived and injured as she had been, his illegitimate child had a right to expect a more gracious reception from her irritated feelings.

The earl, in a more solemn manner than she expected, denied an affinity with Miss Delmore; he assured her, in a way she could not doubt, that the innocent object of her displeasure was really the niece, and not the daughter, of Mrs. Milman.

The countess, with great effort, squeezed out a few tears; she expressed concern that she had suffered her tender affection for him, and her idea of his infidelity, at so early a period of their marriage, to hurry her into a conduct for which she now stood self-condemned.

The earl having brought her to make this concession, was not long in persuading her to accompany him to the library, where Miss Delmore no doubt would accept her apology, and oblige her by remaining at the castle.

This was a stretch of condescension rather beyond the wish or intention of the countess; but, fearing to irritate her moody lord, she suffered him to take her hand. In the gallery they were met by lady Eglantine Sydney, who, with a childish lisp, declared she thought Torrington Castle a sweet, pretty place; and that she did not at all regret not having gone with her aunt, lady Granville, to Weymouth, though part of the royal family were to be there, and no doubt the season would be very crowded and fashionable.

“No, my gentle coz,” said lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, who that instant joined them, “no one suspects you of regretting the company of your formal, querulous old aunt, while you can listen unreprieved to the pretty love-tales of lord Melvil. But have you considered that your father, the right honourable viscount Batford, earl Ledwick, baron Riverton, will never consent to your giving your fair hand, and eighty thousand pounds, to the poor lord Melvil, whose lack of dirty acres will separate you, take my word for it, ‘far as the poles asunder?’ You had better turn your languishing blue eyes on sir Cyril Musgrove, who can count his hundred thousands.”

“No,” interrupted the pretty lisper—“no, Jacintha, I would not be so ungenerous—I would not deprive you of a lover.”

“You mistake, child,” said lady Jacintha; “sir Cyril is no Philander of mine, I promise you—I have no design upon his heart; and, to let you into a trifling secret, I believe ‘there is nothing under heaven’s wide hollowness’ that he so much admires or loves as his own divine person; my sweet coz, he is another Narcissus.”

“Narcissus!” lisped lady Eglantine; “why that is a flower!—How can sir Cyril be a narcissus?”

“Sweet simplicity!” replied lady Jacintha; “he is the flower of modern beaux. But, for your edification respecting Narcissus, look into Lempriere’s Classical Dictionary, and read.”

“No, I can’t indeed,” said lady Eglantine; “I hate reading, it is so troublesome.”

The earl was impatient at this nonsense, and he reminded the countess that Miss Delmore waited his decision respecting her return to the Hermitage.

The countess took the arm of lady Jacintha, and begged her support in the moment of her humiliation. The earl’s look expressed displeasure, but, for the satisfaction of Cecilia, he determined the apology should be made in the presence of her ladyship’s guests, and he invited lady Eglantine to accompany them to the library, who, being assured it was not a reading party they were forming, suffered the earl to hand her down stairs.

When the fashionable party entered the library, lord Rushdale was reading aloud this passage in Milton:—

With thee conversing, I forgot all time,
All seasons, and their change.

Cecilia was attentively listening to the graceful enunciation and harmonious voice of lord Rushdale; the reverend Mr. Oxley was pondering in his mind the probable advantages that would result from his marrying the earl’s adopted daughter—he was calculating the value of the livings in his patron’s gift, and the possibility of rising, through his interest, to the high dignity of lawn sleeves.

The timid Cecilia received the apology of the unblushing countess with a dignity that rather disconcerted her and surprised the earl; but having received their pressing entreaty, and heard the earl’s wish that she should remain at the castle during the summer, with condescending sweetness, though not without secret reluctance, she consented to submit to their pleasure, at the same time stipulating to pay frequent visits to the Hermitage.

That Miss Delmore should become an inmate of the castle gave sincere pleasure to lord Rushdale, but very little to the female trio, who, with sickening envy, beheld a faultless face and form, and in Miss Delmore dreaded the rival of their hopes.

The earl led Cecilia to the drawing room, where the countess introduced her, much against her will, to the count del Montarino, lord Melvil, and sir Cyril Musgrove. The count’s gaze of admiration was restrained by the watchful glances of lady Torrington, whom it did not suit his slender finances to offend. The large fortune of lady Eglantine Sydney was of too much consequence to be put to hazard by lord Melvil; and though in reality he considered her insipid, and very nearly an idiot, yet his “lack of dirty acres” compelled him to confine his admiration where interest pointed. Sir Cyril Musgrove was a coxcomb by nature, and possessing more wealth than he knew what to do with, he was seldom in the humour to admire any thing but what appertained to himself; his own person, his own dress, his own equipage, were, in sir Cyril’s estimation, the most elegant, the most captivating, the most *nouveau*, in the fashionable world. When introduced to Miss Delmore, he thought, next to his own, hers the handsomest face and figure he had ever seen; and before the dessert was removed, he had settled it in his own mind that she would be exactly the mistress he should like. She was under the earl of

Torrington's protection—the earl was his friend—but what did that signify? a man of the world annexed no meaning, beyond his own pleasure of convenience, to the word *friend*. But would not the seduction of Miss Delmore be a breach of hospitality? Sir Cyril considered that a matter of little importance; modern friendships, and modern attachments, and modern hospitality, meant nothing more than lip-deep professions, and the ostentatious display of a richly-decorated table. Miss Delmore should be his *chère amie*; and when he drove her round the ring in Hyde Park, the gaping multitude should confess that sir Cyril Musgrove and Cecilia Delmore formed the handsomest, if not the tenderest attachment in the purlieu of St. James's.

Mrs. Greville was severely hurt by the displeasure and inflexibility of sir Alan Oswald; but her husband was brave, handsome, and possessed talents that rendered him, in her eyes, the first of created beings; and, encouraged by his tenderness, she was taught to hope that time would restore her to the affection of her father. The lieutenant and herself were young and thoughtless; while the five thousand pounds lasted, they entered into every fashionable amusement, and fancied their happiness would only end with their lives. But, alas! they were soon convinced that gold has wings, and that poverty brings in its train cares, mortifications, and inquietudes. Debts began to pour in, and creditors became importunate, till, at length unable to preserve appearances in the fashionable world, they were obliged to retire to a small cottage in Gloucestershire, provided for them by the father of Alfred Greville.

Mrs. Greville still loved, and was fondly beloved by her husband; and their happiness was increased by the infantile graces and engaging prattle of their little Julia, then too young to be sensible of the change that had taken place in the circumstances of her doting parents. Their cottage was beautifully situated on the banks of the Severn, and, rich in connubial happiness, they had ceased to regret the glittering gewgaws which experience taught them were not necessary to content.

Already the strong genius of her father, who delighted to instruct and unfold her budding talents, was conspicuous in the little Julia, when the lieutenant received a heart-rending order to join his ship. Alfred Greville was brave, the enemies of his country were to be chastised, and he parted from his wife and child, his sorrow cheered by ardent hope, for his sanguine fancy led him to believe he was going on a fortunate cruise, and that he should return, after adding fresh laurels to the British flag, with prize-money sufficient to place his beloved wife and his cherub Julia in happy independence. But, alas for them! the noble-hearted Greville returned no more—he died, bravely fighting the battles of his country, and left his deprived widow and orphan no other support than the slender pittance allowed by government to the desolate widows of the “slaughtered brave.”

Mrs. Greville, young, inexperienced, and fondly attached to her husband, felt his loss with a deep sorrow, that neither vented itself in tears or lamentations—it sunk on her heart with an overwhelming force, that would soon have hurried her to a premature grave; but the dark hazel eye, the dimpled smile of Julia, so like her lost Alfred’s, roused her from the despondency of grief; and while she gazed with all a mother’s tenderness, and all a widow’s sorrow, on the child so dear to her lost husband, she fancied that she heard his voice commanding her to live for the sake of his child. Roused to exertion by this idea, Mrs. Greville forced herself to admit the society of her husband’s relations, and by their advice, and with their assistance, after many struggles and difficulties thrown in her way by the pride of her unfeeling and inexorable family, she at length established herself at the head of a boarding-school at Cheltenham, where the knowledge of her being a person of family greatly contributed to her success; and Mrs. Greville’s seminary for young ladies became the most fashionable establishment for the daughters of bilious nabobs and gouty persons of distinction, to whose diseases the waters of Cheltenham had been prescribed.

As Julia Greville grew to womanhood, her finely-formed figure attained the middle height; her face, a long oval, was interesting, without being exactly handsome; the usual expression of her dark hazel eyes was tender melancholy, but, when animated by the account of heroic actions, or when the energies of her mind were awakened by

peculiar circumstances, they sparkled with all the brilliant sublimated fire of genius; her mouth was beautiful, and her smile so magical, that it seemed to irradiate her features, while it discovered unthought-of dimples playing round her coral lips.

The extraordinary talents of Miss Greville added much to the fame of the school, and induced many East Indian families to place their daughters with Mrs. Greville, and among these, the daughter of a Mr. Saville, who had sent his children, a son and daughter, to England for education. Miss Saville was a beautiful, giddy romp—so very beautiful, that Julia Greville, an artist and sculptor, frequently made her animated countenance and symmetrical form the subject of her pencil and her chisel.

These interesting girls were nearly of an age, and fondly attached to each other, though Miss Saville's mind partook not of the pensive character of her friend's; for, never having felt sorrow or disappointment, she expected that her path through life would be strewn with flowers, and that every new day would awaken her to new enjoyments. The first cloud that darkened this vision of happiness, and taught Miss Saville the possibility of her being made sensible of sorrow, was her separation from Julia Greville.

An uncle of Alfred Greville's, on the maternal side, returned from the East Indies, where he had become immensely rich by a marriage contracted with a woman of colour, who died in giving birth to a daughter; gratitude to the person who had made his fortune, if not parental affection, induced Mr. Doricourt to pay every attention to her offspring; the health of the child was delicate, and her education totally neglected. Though himself ignorant of polite literature, Mr. Doricourt wished his dingy heiress to be acquainted with the belles lettres, and to attain accomplishments suitable to her expectations: these considerations hastened the settlement of his affairs in the East Indies, and induced him to bring his little Almora to England.

After some time spent among his own relations, whom he found a set of narrow-minded, selfish beings, he began to inquire after the widow of his favourite nephew, Alfred Greville. From his nieces he learned the situation of Mrs. Greville; they informed him that Alfred's widow was too proud of her high family, and her daughter thought too much of her genius, and her learning, and her music, and her painting, and nobody knew what besides, for them, who were only plain, ignorant folks, to be very intimate with, or to visit often.

“But I will visit her directly,” said Mr. Doricourt; and his relations, with much envy and discontent, heard him order his carriage to Cheltenham.

The elegant manners of Alfred's widow, the unassuming modesty of Julia, her graceful affability, and her very superior attainments, soon convinced Mr. Doricourt that they could not be pleasant companions to his coarse-minded and illiterate relations. Under the care of Mrs. Greville he would have been most happy to have placed his Almora, but her health was so precarious, that the faculty recommended his removing her to the south of France as speedily as possible. To preserve the life of his little dusky blossom, as he called her, was the wish nearest the heart of Mr. Doricourt; his next was to see her graceful, elegant, and accomplished, as Julia Greville: to unite these points was in the compass of possibility, and he made it the interest of Mrs. Greville and her daughter to give up their establishment, and accompany him and Almora to Marseilles.

Mrs. Greville knew that Julia had no predilection for the laborious task of tuition; in the gratitude and kindness of Mr. Doricourt she saw a provision for her idolized daughter when she should be no more, and for her sake she consented to his

arrangements. The mind of Julia, proud and delicate, had ever revolted from what she considered the degradation of keeping a school—she had nourished in her bosom the consciousness of high family; with the sorrow she felt for the fate of her brave father, she had also appreciated her own uncommon genius and talents, and felt them shorn of half their genuine lustre, while debased in the endeavour to instruct those who had neither capacity nor application.

Of all her pupils, Miss Saville alone possessed genius and feeling—to her alone she was attached; and while she thought of the immense distance that would soon divide them, her only consolation arose from the promise of a constant correspondence. They parted, with tears and assurances of eternal friendship: Miss Saville remained with the lady who took Mrs. Greville's school, and for some months a correspondence between the two friends was kept up with spirit and regularity. The letters of Julia were filled with animated and accurate descriptions of the country through which they travelled, and entertaining anecdotes of French manners and customs; those of Miss Saville spoke of a gentleman whom her brother had introduced to her as his particular friend: at first he was mentioned merely as an elegant, agreeable young man; but it soon appeared he had created no inconsiderable share of interest in the heart of Miss Saville. Julia warned her volatile friend against the allurements of this agreeable stranger, and bade her, as she valued her future peace, make a confidant of her brother, before she entered into any love engagement. To this letter of friendly advice Miss Greville received no answer; and after many anxious inquiries, to her inexpressible regret she learned that her fondly-beloved friend had eloped from school with a young man, who, taking advantage of her brother's absence from England, it was feared had from the secrecy with which he had conducted his plans, seduced her into a dishonourable connexion.

While Julia wept the imprudence of her friend, she was called from the indulgence of her sorrow to console and keep up the spirits of Mr. Doricourt, who had the regret to see that consumption had seized on his “dingy blossom,” and was bending it to the grave. Almora was an interesting child; her voice was naturally plaintive, her disposition mild, and her manners gentle and affectionate. Her love and admiration of Miss Greville amounted almost to idolatry: it was impossible for a heart like Julia's to be insensible to the warm respect and regard of this lovely, fragile creature: she was fond of music, and she would sit like the statue of Attention, while Julia swept the strings of her harp, or sang to her the soft pensive ballads in which she delighted. Every day increased the malady of this interesting child, and every day seemed to render Julia dearer to her: at last she was unable to leave her chamber, and then her eyes would dwell with delight on Julia—from her hand alone she would receive her medicines or accept nourishment. At this awful crisis the attentive tenderness of Julia shone conspicuous; on her knees the emaciated Almora would sink into slumber—on her bosom repose her pale cheek.

The medical attendant had just informed Mr. Doricourt that he thought it was impossible that the sufferer should live to see another day, when, unclosing her eyes, she said—“I am quite content to die, for I have just seen my own dear mamma; and she told me I should go to heaven, and live with her.”

Mr. Doricourt was much affected; he stooped over her couch, to kiss her forehead.

“My dear father,” said she, “I love you dearly—indeed I do; but I know you grieve to see me so very ill; and as I can never get well in this world, you ought to be glad that I am going where dear Mrs. Greville says there is neither pain nor sickness.”

“You will be an angel,” sobbed Mr. Doricourt; “my Almora, you will be happy.”
“Yes,” resumed she, with a heavenly smile, “yes, and you must be happy too.
Father, you have often said you loved me.”

“And I said most true,” replied Mr. Doricourt.

“Will you promise me one thing?” asked she, earnestly.

“Any thing, my child,” said he; “name your request.”

“Give my beloved Julia,” returned she, “my casket of diamonds, and the same fortune that you designed—for me,” she would have said, but at that moment she was seized with such agonizing spasms that she became convulsed, and in administering to her relief the subject of her request was forgotten.

Her pains having subsided, Almora sunk into a short slumber; when she awoke, she pressed her pale lips on the hand of Julia, who still remained beside her couch.—
“Farewell, dear, dear Julia,” said the little sufferer, in a feeble voice—“I am going to my mother; and when I live with her in heaven, I shall be quite well.”

She then asked for her father; she entreated him to bless her—a request he fervently and devoutly complied with. Almora then made an effort to join her father’s hand with Julia’s, and fixing her languid eyes on his face, she, with great difficulty, articulated— “The casket—love Julia—give her—” and expired.

Mr. Doricourt, though a very worthy man, did not possess acute sensibility or strong feeling; he regretted the loss of his little “dingy blossom,” but not with a grief that defied consolation. His dying Almora had bade him love Julia; this was no severe task, for Julia was formed to inspire love; but, had she been homely in person and weak in intellect, her amiable and unwearied attention to his suffering child must have given her charms more impressive than beauty or wit in the eyes of a parent. But Mr. Doricourt, Julia’s senior by full thirty years, had not beheld her person or her genius with indifference; he was neither poet, painter, sculptor, nor musician; he had no great taste for classical lore, or veneration for the fine arts; yet he was proud of Julia’s fame, and felt gratified when he heard her spoken of as possessing a very superior genius. Almora’s dying words were— “Love Julia;” she had attempted to join their hands—Mr. Doricourt wished their hearts were joined; and was this utterly impossible? To be sure he was many years older than Julia; but then she was not giddy, vain, and eager after admiration, like the generality of young women; at any rate, he would disclose his sentiments to Mrs. Greville, and if she approved his intentions, why he would offer himself to Julia’s acceptance.

The health of Mrs. Greville had long been declining—the death of her husband was a never-forgotten grief, which, though confined to her own bosom, and never suffered to appear in idle lamentations and impious murmurs, was not the less poignantly felt. The death of the little Almora seemed to warn her of her own approaching dissolution; it roused all her maternal tenderness, and filled her with apprehensions for the future welfare of her orphan Julia, by nature and excessive sensibility, the cherished offspring of her elevated genius, so little calculated to make her way in the world, where mean flattery and servile compliance were necessary to win favour and obtain patronage.

While these uneasy thoughts agitated Mrs. Greville, and gave additional pangs to the idea of a separation from her beloved child, Mr. Doricourt surprised her by a declaration of his passion for Julia. At first the recollection of his advanced age seemed to be a grand obstacle, in her opinion, to his wishes; but believing the heart of Julia free, and

knowing her utter contempt of the frivolous young men that had fluttered round her since her residence in France, Mrs. Greville encouraged the hope, that gratitude to Mr. Doricourt, and her own influence over the dutiful mind of Julia, would have due weight, and dispose her to accept his generous proposals, and give her the felicity of seeing her not only in affluent circumstances, but safe in honourable protection, before she was summoned to join her husband in “realms unsullied with a tear.”

Mrs. Greville’s pale cheek and wasting form had not passed unobserved or unlamented by the tender Julia, who, with unremitting solicitude, watched every glance of her eye and every hectic glow of her cheek, trembling lest death should snatch away this almost-adored parent, and leave her a friendless, destitute orphan, to struggle with a pitiless world.

Mrs. Greville, conscious that she every day grew weaker, felt the necessity of declaring Mr. Doricourt’s proposals to Julia. She listened with sensations approximating to horror; his face was round and unmeaning, his person inclined to corpulency; could such a man be the choice of the elegant, refined Julia? Mr. Doricourt paid no worship to the divine emanations of genius, he had little taste for the fine arts; and though he had spared no expence to procure Julia the instruction of the most eminent artists, and seemed gratified at the celebrity her talents acquired, yet it was a feeling of pride, not the enthusiasm of delight; for he surveyed the exquisite productions of her pencil and chisel, he read the glowing productions of her muse, he listened to the harmony of her finely-modulated voice, and heard her perform the most complicated and entrancing compositions on the harp and pianoforte, with no higher pleasure than what arose from the rapturous praises of his guests. As yet the heart of Julia had remained insensible to the passion of love; when recovered from the surprise and consternation the avowal of his affection had occasioned her, she confessed he was entitled to her sincerest gratitude, her most perfect esteem; “but whenever I marry, dearer, warmer sentiments than these must accompany me to the altar,” said Julia, “and dictate my vows.”

“I wish not to shock you, my beloved child,” replied Mrs. Greville, “or to terrify you into a compliance with what your heart disapproves; but I feel my end rapidly approaching; your unprovided state fills me with apprehension—with grief unutterable. Remember, my love, you cannot remain under the roof of Mr. Doricourt when I am no more; the envious and censorious world will attach blame to his generous friendship, and see in your gratitude causes from which your delicacy would shrink; so well I know the pure mind of my Julia, that I am certain it would suffer pangs insupportable, should the malevolent breath of slander glance upon her reputation.”

Julia threw herself weeping into the arms of her mother—“Oh!” replied she, “do not, do not speak of leaving me!”

“Alas, my child!” said Mrs. Greville, “it would be cruel to deceive you:

‘I hear a voice you cannot hear,
That calls me hence away;
I see a hand you cannot see,
That beckons me away.’

But let me, while my strength permits, point out to you the dangers and inconveniences your unprotected state will be exposed to; and, I entreat you, subdue this unavailing grief,

and listen to me. Your genius, your accomplishments would be invaluable in many families of rank; but I am already well acquainted with your dislike to the labour of tuition; on this subject, therefore, I forbear to speak.”

Julia cast her dark eyes to heaven with a look of indescribable woe— “Mother! my dearest mother!” said she, “the same grave shall hold us both.”

“Julia,” returned Mrs. Greville, calmly and impressively, “life and death are only in the power of the Supreme, and to his almighty will, as Christians, we are commanded to submit, with humble resignation. Let me not have the anguish to suppose that the religious precepts I have, even from your infancy, endeavoured to instil into your mind, have all been shed on barren ground; let not my own example of fortitude be thrown away; remember I have suffered, in their unkindness and neglect, more than the death of all my relations; and remember also, when he, the beloved of my heart, my better self, for whose dear sake I had suffered scorn and unkindness, my only friend and consoler, died, and left me a widow, with an orphan babe, I sunk not under these accumulated woes, but, relying on the goodness of Him who promises to be ‘the Father of the fatherless,’ I bore up with all my power against the enervating encroachments of sorrow, satisfied that the trials of this life are but transient, and, if well sustained, will lead the way to an eternity of happiness.”

Julia, self-condemned, sunk at the feet of her mother— “Forgive me, dearest, best of parents!” murmured from her lips, while the tears chased each other down her cheeks; “I do not, I will not forget your sufferings, your piety, and resignation.”

Mrs. Greville’s pale lips pressed the forehead of the kneeling Julia— “In the world, my child,” resumed she, “genius and talent seldom flourish without friends and interest; and, well acquainted as I am with your mind, I am certain you would suffer every privation that could befall poverty and obscurity, rather than solicit patronage.”

“Yes,” replied Julia, a bright crimson flashing over her face— “yes; for I shall never forget that I am the granddaughter of sir Alan Oswald, neither can I bear to hire out, to the ignorant and unfeeling, those gifts which Heaven bestowed upon me, for the delight of my own life and the pleasure of my chosen friends.”

“Our true and only friend, Mr. Doricourt, is aware of all this,” said Mrs. Greville, “and of all the inconveniences into which your romantic mind will plunge your youth and inexperience, should you be thrown upon the world without a protector. This worthy, generous man loves you, my Julia, not with the impetuous ardency of youth, but with calm, rational affection, which has its basis in a knowledge of your virtues, as the wife of Mr. Doricourt.”

Julia started from her knees—she pressed her hands upon her bosom—her face became paler than marble, as she murmured—“Oh, gracious Heaven! can this be ordained?—I the wife of Mr. Doricourt!”

The mild eyes of Mrs. Greville turned with fixed regard on the agitated Julia—“Alas! then have I been deceived?” said she, faintly; “have I believed myself possessed of the confidence of my child? and am I fated to the anguish of discovering she has concealments from me?”

“What means my dearest mother?” interrupted Julia, her humid eyes expressing all the innocent unconsciousness of surprise.

“I fear, I fear,” replied Mrs. Greville, in hurried accents, “that your heart, unhappy Julia! has already received an impression inimical to your peace and my wishes. But, oh,

my Julia! I entreat, I implore you, reflect on the sorrows of your parents; remember that the indulgence of an imprudent passion has been the source of all my difficulties and calamities.”

Julia smiled; she pressed the hand of her mother to her lips and her heart.—“Feel here,” said she; “are these the throbs of love? Oh no, no. Be assured, I have no secret, no concealments from you, the best, the tenderest of mothers; my heart has received no impression—it is free.”

“Thank Heaven!” ejaculated Mrs. Greville, as she fondly returned the embrace of her daughter; “that assurance, my beloved child, is ease and comfort to me; and now I no longer hesitate to say that I have no regret, no uneasiness on my mind, but for your unprotected state. My Julia, would you but promise me to give your hand to Mr. Doricourt, I should quit the world in peace, and die happy.”

The ardent-minded, enthusiastic Julia would have promised to have sacrificed even love, had she felt the passion, to the happiness of her dying parent, but her bosom had hitherto been sensible of no attachment warmer than friendship; to give happiness to the last moments of a parent, whose whole life had been a series of tender solicitude for her welfare, by the sacrifice of inclination to her will, was an act that duty, obedience, and religion enjoined; should her beloved parent die ungratified by her compliance with her last wish, how greatly would the reflection, that she had suffered the spirit of her mother to quit its mortal tenement unsatisfied, and the certainty that the blessing breathed with her parting breath was mingled with regret, augment and embitter the sorrow she must feel for her loss!

These sad reflections were too much for the sensitive, enthusiastic Julia to bear, even in idea. Mr. Doricourt was more than twice her age; his round unmeaning face, his clumsy figure, passed before her “mind’s eye;” she was certain she could never love him, but she felt that he was entitled to her respect and gratitude. Her mother, whose virtuous fortitude in her days of misfortune, and whose patient suffering under a lingering disease, had, in her opinion, entitled her to canonization, had expressed a wish to see her united to him: Julia beheld this wish as the ordination of Heaven, and stifling her own regretful feelings, she became the wife of Mr. Doricourt.

Mrs. Greville lived till the following autumn; she had the satisfaction of beholding her daughter in affluence, she no longer feared that her exalted genius would be a misfortune rather than a blessing to her, and she died, as her last words expressed, happy.

If a magnificent establishment, a profusion of diamonds, and the uncontrolled disposal of money, would have conferred happiness, Mrs. Doricourt had all that wealth could bestow to make her happy; but the pursuits most delightful to her taste gave no pleasure to her husband—books, painting, and music, wearied him, except when he required their display to astonish his guests. The youth of Mr. Doricourt had been spent in accumulating wealth—to enjoy it was now his grand desideratum, and his enjoyments were confined to the delicacies of the table, to rich wines, costly apparel, and splendid furniture; to genius, sentiment, and fine feeling, he had no pretension, nor any idea how a person could be unhappy, surrounded with all the luxuries that wealth could purchase. Yet Mrs. Doricourt, in the midst of pomp and magnificence, felt an aching void in her heart, and her most happy moments were those when the absence of Mr. Doricourt allowed her to pursue the pleasing labours of her chisel and pencil, or to sing her

favourite plaintive ballads to the music of her harp, or, unseen by all, save Heaven, weep and pray at the tomb of her sainted mother.

Thus passed three years of her life; she was visited, flattered, envied, admired, and all her numerous acquaintance believed Mrs. Doricourt the happiest of the happy; but the difference of years between Mr. Doricourt and herself forbade that endearing confidence that forms the bond of affection—the coldness and apathy of his disposition chilled and repressed the glowing warmth of hers; and though he was in all points indulgent to her wishes, yet her heart sighed for some one to love, some congenial spirit who would understand and share her emotions, to whom her talents would afford delight, who would participate her joys and her regrets. But Mr. Doricourt was a good-natured man, with a common understanding; he had no refinements; he was neither an enthusiast, a scholar, nor a philosopher; and Julia felt that respect and gratitude were insufficient for a heart like hers to bestow on her wedded lord.

Mr. Doricourt's increasing corpulency brought with it many inconveniences, and as the best means of keeping down the superabundance of his flesh, he was recommended to use much exercise, particularly walking. One morning crossing the street, he was seized with a vertigo, and was preserved from a dangerous fall by the timely support of a young gentleman whom he had before seen at his banker's. Henry Woodville, perceiving Mr. Doricourt's carriage was not waiting, politely offered his arm, and had the satisfaction to find the old gentleman much recovered before he reached home. Mr. Woodville, though ardently longing to see Mrs. Doricourt, of whose elegant person and extraordinary endowments he had heard so much, would here have taken his leave, but Mr. Doricourt, independent of the service he had just rendered him, was so much pleased with his new-made acquaintance, that he insisted on his staying to dine with him. The long-nourished desire of Woodville was now gratified, in an introduction to Mrs. Doricourt. He thought her person charming, and he believed that report had done no more than justice in declaring her genius elevated and uncommon.

From that time Henry Woodville made himself so agreeable and so necessary to Mr. Doricourt, that if a day passed and he did not spend the greater part of it at his mansion, he was peevish and dissatisfied. Mr. Doricourt had inquired into the family and prospects of his young favourite, and found that the small property left by his deceased father was barely sufficient for the maintenance of his mother, and that Henry Woodville had passed over to France, with the hope of obtaining a situation in the banking-house of messieurs De Launcy, to whom he brought letters of recommendation from a merchant in London. Mr. Doricourt thought the situation of clerk in a banking-house, too humble and laborious for Henry Woodville; but something must be done for him; he determined on making him his own secretary, with a handsome salary; Mr. Doricourt detested writing, and he had some commercial affairs to settle. Having arranged the matter in his own mind, he made his proposals to Mr. Woodville; they were too liberal to be rejected, and a few hours saw the young man perfectly at home in the mansion of his patron.

The company of Henry Woodville was a delightful relief to the long dull evenings which the gout, or other complaints of Mr. Doricourt, obliged them to pass alone; but, alas for Julia! his polite attentions, his insinuating manners, became destructive to her peace. Hitherto her bosom had remained ignorant of the inquietudes of love; but the deep blue, long-formed eyes of Henry Woodville, whenever they encountered hers, shot beams of tenderness that thrilled her frame with emotions new and painful; his expressive

glances had told her that he beheld her with affection; but, alas! she was already a wife—fate had thrown an insurmountable barrier between them, and to encourage love would be worse than madness, it would be inviting guilt. Nor was Henry Woodville, though gifted with an interesting person and a pleasing address, worthy the tenderness of a heart noble and generous as Julia's; in him sound understanding and real energy of mind were supplied by a retentive memory and a facility of imitating the tones, looks, and passions of other men; he had neither intellect, judgment, or taste of his own: but these were successfully counterfeited by echoing the opinions of others. Henry Woodville's mind was flexible, even to weakness, which made him the easy dupe of persuasion, and ever ready to follow the example even of vice and folly; yet, had he been destitute of these accommodating qualities, his mind would have been a sterile waste, without principle, sentiment, or idea.

How truly the artist understood the human heart, when he pictured Love blind! In the impassioned eyes and ardent imagination of Julia, Henry Woodville was all that humanity could present of perfection and excellence, and in vain she struggled to subdue the passion he inspired; the monotonous tranquillity of which she had once complained, was now succeeded by restless wishes, that crimsoned her cheek with blushes, and drove repose from her couch; her fevered dreams were full of Henry Woodville, and her first waking thoughts would picture the happiness that would have been hers, had they met before she gave her hand to Mr. Doricourt; for his sake she believed she could have been content to submit to the drudgery of tuition; and how happy would even that life have been! though her talents were employed for their support, his approving smile would have cheered her, and the blessings of congenial mind, of mutual love, would have been hers. Such were the day-dreams of the romantic Julia. That Henry loved her, was evident from every look and action; if she moved, his eyes followed her steps; if she read, or sung, or played, he was all ear.—“With Henry Woodville,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “how enviable would have been my lot! Together we should have wandered through the sublimity of poetry—his taste would have selected subjects for my pencil—he would have hung enraptured on the notes of my harp—our pleasures would have been similar—our ideas, our souls would have mingled—we should have been all the world to each other.”

Such were the delusions of love, such were the reflections of Julia, when the sudden death of her husband left her at liberty to indulge her passion for Henry Woodville, without a violation of the vows her obedience to an idolized parent had compelled her to make.

Mr. Doricourt had often desired that his bones might not remain in France, but that, in case of his death, his body should be removed to a little village in Surry, and repose in the same tomb with his parents. Mrs. Doricourt wept the death of a good man and a sincere friend, but her grief did not prevent her making arrangements for conveying his remains to England, whither, attended by Henry Woodville and four attached domestics, she also went. The interment having taken place, she sent for Mr. Doricourt's solicitor, in whose keeping she expected to find a will, made by her deceased husband shortly after their marriage; to her surprise, Mr. Waldron informed her that he had drawn a will at the time she mentioned, in which the whole of Mr. Doricourt's immense possessions, with the exception of a few legacies, had been bequeathed to her; that two gentlemen, then resident in London, had witnessed the will, which he had, agreeable to

Mr. Doricourt's order, transmitted to him for his signature, which was all that was necessary to its validity.—“And I would recommend, madam,” said Mr. Waldron, “that you make careful search after this will among Mr. Doricourt's papers, as I understand the heirs-at-law intend to endeavour at possessing themselves of a part of the property.”

Mrs. Doricourt commenced the search, assisted by Henry Woodville; but no will being to be found, she was obliged to yield to necessity, and accept a third, instead of the whole of her husband's wealth. Content with genteel independence, she cheerfully resigned the pomp and splendour to which she had been so long accustomed, and, without one sigh of regret, retired to a small elegant villa near Richmond. Propriety did not admit of Henry Woodville residing under the same roof, but he had lodgings at Richmond, and every day beheld him attending the fair widow in her walks and rides; nor was it long before the visionary Julia received the confession of his love. Hours, days, and weeks now flew on the rapid wings of delight, for Henry spoke only of the happiness he derived from being beloved by her. Henry admired her person, but he adored her genius; and poetry, painting, sculpture, and music, mingled their enchantments with the glowing illusions of love. There was now no aching void in the bosom of Julia—the image of Henry Woodville was there enshrined; she believed his soul assimilated with hers, and she looked forward to a life of happiness as his wife; her dark eyes now sparkled with pleasure, her beautiful mouth was dimpled with smiles—Henry was to her a newly-discovered object in creation, which made existence valuable; the inspirations of genius were now dearer to her than ever, for she had found a being who worshipped its sublimities, who could range with her through the fairy worlds of imagination, and glow, like herself, at the awful or tender touches of the pen and pencil.

It was after a day passed in all the confidence of youthful hope, in all the luxury of love, poetry, and music—after exchanging vows of eternal affection, and speaking of their marriage, which was settled to take place as soon as propriety allowed her to throw off her weeds, she accompanied Henry to the gate at the bottom of the lawn, to receive his adieu for the night; where, though these tender adieus had been often repeated, they still lingered to gaze on the sky, to mark the majestic orb of night gliding beneath a thin veil of transparent clouds, which did not obscure, but only softened her effulgence—which every instant silvered their fleecy edges, and melted them into forms of fantastic beauty. Oh love! how sweet and magical is thy power! in what dazzling colours do thy votaries deck thee! how bright and glowing are the roses with which they entwine thee! But, alas! how blind are they to the sharp and rankling thorns that are concealed beneath the silken leaves!—As Woodville pressed repeated kisses on the white hand of Julia, he turned his deep blue eyes to heaven, and remarked the uncommon beauty of the clouds and the clear radiance of the moon—“Farewell, my adored!” said he; “and if you love me, employ your muse against we meet to-morrow; describe for me, in a dozen lines, the beauty of this heavenly night.”

Every wish of Henry's met sacred observance with Julia; the talents she was gifted with were now doubly valuable—they were admired by the chosen of her heart—his approving smile was fame and happiness. Again she looked at the sky; the eyes of Henry resembled its deep blue; but the clouds so rapidly flying over the face of the moon, and every instant varying their forms—did they picture the mutability of his heart? A tear started at this idea, and hung on the dark silken fringes of her eyes, as she sat down to comply with his request.

“TO HIM,

*Who, admiring a beautiful moonlight sky, bade me write
him a dozen lines on the subject.*

“Queen of splendour! orb serene!
Floating transparent clouds between—
Sure in this sky, to mortal sight
Is giv’n glimpse of scenes more bright,
Where spirits, freed from earthly spell,
On plains for ever blooming dwell.
Effulgent moon! how silv’ry sweet!
Yet, ah! how soon ordain’d to fleet
Thy beams!—Bright now, in Henry’s eyes,
I see his soul’s emotions rise;
Yet who can tell but with thy ray
All he now feels may fade away?”

Julia was not satisfied with her production—she could not bear to believe that Henry would ever change—but yet it was possible; the idea was anguish, and at a very late hour she retired, with tearful eyes and a mind ill at ease.

Henry came to dinner; she read the lines to him; he saw and chid the tear that rose to her eye, he pressed the verses to his heart and his lips, and vowed that neither time or circumstance would have power to alter his affection for her.

In the midst of her own smiling prospects Mrs. Doricourt did not forget Miss Saville; her retreat still remained undiscovered, and all the information her anxious inquiries obtained was, that Mr. Saville had been constrained to make a voyage to Calcutta, to settle the affairs of his deceased father; and that, a few days after her brother had sailed, Miss Saville had eloped from school, no one knew with whom; for though her brother’s friend had at first been suspected of seducing her into this imprudent step, that idea had subsided, from the circumstance of his having called upon her friend, and given them incontrovertible proof that he had no hand in the mysterious affair, which he had shortly after confirmed by marrying. Mrs. Doricourt’s attachment for Miss Saville was not weakened by absence; she saw disgrace and sorrow the certain consequences of her imprudence, yet such was her friendship for the deluded girl, her pity for her inexperienced youth, that her liberal mind made a thousand excuses for her error; and gladly, could she have discovered her retreat, would Julia have flown to pour the balm of consolation into her bosom, and, despising the opinions of a harsh, un pitying world, would have taken her to her home, and reconciled her again to virtue and peace.

The time had now arrived for Mrs. Doricourt to throw aside her mourning, and Henry Woodville, all joy and rapture, won her blushing consent to meet him at the altar immediately on his return from Bath, whither the settlement of his mother’s affairs, who had involved herself in a lawsuit, obliged him to repair. The parting of Mrs. Doricourt and Henry Woodville took place with emotions of agonizing sorrow, such as might have attended an eternal rather than a temporary separation; their tears mingled in torrents, and

while he hung upon her with doting fondness, he urged her to accompany him to Bath, and let their nuptials take place there. But though the soul of Julia was shook with gloomy presentiments, she was ashamed to confess her weakness by a compliance with his often repeated request; she wished to put his love and constancy to some little trial, and though it cost her many severe pangs, she determined he should take the journey free, and with no restraint from her presence.

With tears, vows of fidelity, and promises of quick return, Henry Woodville set off for Bath. How dull, how lonely, were now the days of Julia! The miniature of Henry, which she had herself painted, was now her only solace in his absence; for as her tearful gaze was fixed on the beautiful semblance, she fancied that the expressive eyes threw mournful glances on hers, that the lips wore a smile of pensive sweetness, as if regretful of their separation. The arrival of a letter from Henry, breathing all a lover's tender anxiety, restored her to comparative happiness. He lamented and promised to expedite the business that detained him from her. Julia loved, and believed. He entreated that she would reply to him by return of post, to tell him she was well, and loved him with unabated affection. Julia kissed every word traced by the hand of Henry, and sat down to reply to him on the instant: a lily he admired had blown in his absence, and she introduced into her letter lines she had composed.

ON THE
FERRURIA TIGRIDIA,
OR TIGER LILY.*

“This graceful lily sure is love's own flower,
So deep, so dazzling are its flaming dyes;
And, ah! just like love's bliss! a little hour
It lasts—then droops, and all its lustre flies.

“Resembling truly love's enchanting dream,
While hope o'er rapture throws a splendid glow,
But fleeting as the evanescent gleam
Painting on summer clouds the shadowy bow.

“Yet long the brilliant lily shall survive,
And lustrous wake from winter's torpid gloom;
But passion chill'd shall ne'er again revive;
Oh! faded love shall know no second bloom.”

“And this, dearest Henry,” said she, “is a mournful fact: should any circumstance occur to put aside our union, and separate us, which Heaven avert! never would my heart admit another object, never again would it be sensible of love; you are the first—you will be the last affection of Julia. I remember telling that departed saint, my mother, that I was formed to love but once, and that for ever: if she were alive, how fondly would her maternal heart participate in my felicity! how she would dote on Henry Woodville! how

* This beautiful flower, elegant in form, and rich in brilliant shades of orange, brown, and flame-colour, lasts only one day, and retains its splendour little more than an hour.

fervently, how devoutly pray for the happiness of two beings whom Heaven seems purposely to have formed for each other! Our hearts, my Henry, are cemented by the firm and tender bond of congenial feelings and sentiments; with you I look forward to a bright, unclouded destiny: placed by fortune above dependence, blest with an elegant sufficiency, and loving as we love, we must be happy.”

Thus did the romantic Julia write to a man who in reality had neither elevated mind nor superior understanding. Henry Woodville had heard the genius of Mrs. Doricourt echoed from every mouth, he had seen her like a goddess moving amidst a crowd of worshippers, who watched with devout attention the glances shot from her dark effulgent eyes, and who listened in breathless silence to catch the warblings of her voice—her temple decorated, by the lavish hand of wealth, with more than eastern magnificence. But, divested of two-thirds of her possessions, and living in retirement, devoting her genius and accomplishments to him alone, the spell that bound him to her dissolved—his cold ungrateful heart found that “beauty loses its power, even before it loses its charms;” he was incapable of appreciating the sacrifices her delicacy made to affection; he could not value the exalted tenderness that wished to live, that desired to be admired by him alone; and when he no longer heard the praise of her talents and accomplishments loudly echoed from the lips of admiring crowds, the correct delineations of her pencil, her delightful poetry, her tasteful singing, her scientific performances on the harp and pianoforte, were all tiresome and insipid.

Such was Henry Woodville; yet, with the assistance of a pair of fine eyes, and lips that uttered the sentiments borrowed from others, he concealed the deplorable sterility of his own mind, and, like a venomous serpent, coiled himself round the confiding heart of Julia—a heart rich in every noble and virtuous quality. Henry Woodville had nothing to look forward to, except a trifling property after the death of his mother; self-interest persuaded him to take advantage of the prepossession his imposing manners and insinuating flattery had created in Mrs. Doricourt’s bosom; her having, when in France, distinguished him, in preference to many young men of rank and fortune, who had professed themselves her slaves, had at first inflated his vanity; her continued disinterested affection he now determined should secure him independence; and though he neither felt nor understood the generous emotions of love, he feigned them so well, that the deceit was not suspected by the deluded Julia, whom he left with an intention of returning to claim her hand, and make himself master of her fortune.

For some time the spirits of Mrs. Doricourt were kept up by regularly receiving letters from him, expressing tender anxieties, deploring the unavoidable delay occasioned by the intricacy of the business in which his mother’s little property was involved, his impatience to return to her, and assurances of eternal faith and unchanging love. But, alas for the confiding Julia! the hope that sustained suddenly forsook her bosom, and left her to all the agony of doubt and fear. Her last letter remained unanswered—Henry ceased writing; week after week dragged slowly away, and no intelligence arrived to sooth her alarm and mitigate her misery—no replies were given to the repeated letters she addressed to Henry Woodville and his mother. What pen shall describe her torturing regret, her agonizing grief, when the flame of enthusiasm with which she had regarded the character of Henry Woodville expired—when all the virtues with which her partial fancy had decorated his mind faded before conviction of his baseness—when she was

constrained to know him, as he really was, faithless, heartless, and ungrateful—when all her glowing visionary hopes of future joys and blessings became extinct!

The interest Henry Woodville had created in her young and innocent heart every added interview had increased—his look, his voice, were deeply impressed on her romantic mind, which loved him with a passion pure as what angels might feel—he was her world, and having lost him, creation was to her a blank. She had supplicated Heaven for his return—her straining eyes had watched, through the long hours of many a weary day, for intelligence of him, who was still dearer to her than life—she had clung to hope till not a lingering ray illumined her benighted heart, for at length doubt and suspense were at an end; from a newspaper she gleaned the certainty of Woodville's ingratitude and perfidy, and the total annihilation of the hope that, in spite of probability, she had encouraged of his returning to justify his conduct and fulfil his vows. From a person recently returned from Bath the forsaken Julia learned that Henry Woodville had married an artful young woman, to whom he had, a year or two before, paid his addresses, without fortune, beauty, understanding, or accomplishments—whom he did not even affect to love; but that, weakly yielding to the persuasions of his mother, whom, it was supposed, had private reasons of her own, and the advice of pretended friends, who, from motives of envy, wished to mar his better prospects, in a state of inebriation the weak young man had completed a marriage that promised only poverty, discontent, and repentance.

Pride and reason presented arguments against allowing her thoughts to dwell on Henry Woodville—a being heartless and perfidious, in every respect unworthy her regret; but the heart of Julia was too deeply engaged to release itself from the enthralment of love; though the object of her tenderness had proved unworthy, she remembered only when he appeared devotedly hers; he was now married—his faith was irrevocably pledged to another—he was lost to her for ever; to love a married man was criminal, but Julia could not rend away the passion that she knew was disgraceful to pride, to reason, and virtue. Her struggles to conquer what she felt a debasing infatuation, brought on a nervous fever, that threatened her intellects; her lips would unconsciously murmur the name indelibly impressed on her heart, and her long-drawn sighs evinced the agonizing sorrow resulting from the sudden desolation of every blissful hope.

It was at this period of severe trial that Mrs. Doricourt experienced the faithful attachment of her servants; they had lived with her mother before she was born, they had followed Mrs. Greville through all the vicissitudes of her life, and after her death they had remained with Mrs. Doricourt, less her domestics than her friends; to their affectionate care she owed the recovery of her health; but, alas! it was not in their power to restore her peace of mind—that was gone for ever. Scorning the ungrateful cause of her misery, and beholding him a blot upon society—despising his weak, heartless conduct—yet still her imagination dwelt with mournful fondness on the days when she believed him possessed of principle and virtue, still her memory would present his deep-blue eyes beaming with tenderness, or sparkling with animation—still his voice, in the deep silence of the night, would seem to thrill upon her ear; and so delusively sweet, so blest were these visions of fancy, that she was displeased when awakened from their indulgence.

It was now when forsaken and sunk in woe, that her own misfortunes renewed the remembrance of her early friend, and Mrs. Doricourt again commenced an inquiry after

Miss Saville.—“Like me, perhaps,” said Julia, “my friend is deserted by him who won her heart with vows of affection now no longer remembered or respected; could I but find her, we would weep together the perfidy of man; and though I have not the loss of innocence to deplore, my tears will be no less bitter, for, alas! I shall weep not only my own disastrous fate, but hers.”

The villa, though delightfully situated, and elegantly embellished by the tasteful operations of art, and commanding prospects that combined the varied beauties of wood and water, had now become hateful to Mrs. Doricourt; it had once been the temple of happiness—genius, inspired by love, had designed its decorations; but, alas! perfidy had transformed it to a dark and gloomy cave—misery and discontent had changed its gay adornments to sad mementoes of desolated felicity. Julia threw her tearful eyes round the apartments—they had been new furnished for her marriage; she had pictured to her imagination the delights of connubial love—her prospects of felicity were now for ever blighted, and she determined to quit a place where every object renewed her unavailing regrets. A new-married pair applied for the villa, and Mrs. Doricourt consented that others should enjoy the paradise she had planned.—“Yes,” said she, with a deep-drawn sigh—“yes, though I am driven forth, a wanderer, hopeless to find a place of rest, let the villa become the temple of happiness to those whom a happier destiny has united.”

Mrs. Doricourt now prepared for her departure to Italy. The things being removed from a small cabinet she intended taking with her, and which had belonged to Mr. Doricourt, her maid, in pulling out the drawers, threw it down; the jerk it received in falling forced open an unperceived recess in the back—it was full of papers, among which was the lost will. This unexpected recovery of fortune gave no pleasure to Mrs. Doricourt—she even felt inclined to destroy the will; but the recollection of the legacies made her doubt the justice of her intention, and she sent for Mr. Waldron. The heirs-at-law had enforced their supposed right in an insulting and unworthy manner, and the solicitor convinced Mrs. Doricourt that she would be doing an injury to society if she did not reclaim her right. The will was proved, and a short time restored to Mrs. Doricourt the immense wealth which her benevolence rendered a diffusive blessing; her ear was never deaf to a tale of distress, nor her purse closed against the claims of poverty. But, while binding up the wounds of others, her own heart still bled with the lacerations of perfidy and disappointed love; her health was greatly impaired, her eyes were dim, her cheek pale, and change of scene and a warmer climate were recommended to the almost-broken-hearted Julia.

Attended by her faithfully-attached servants, she travelled to Rome, where her liberal encouragement of the fine arts made her known to the cardinal Avelino; and at a grand entertainment given by him, her genius was again awakened; and, as an *improvisatrice*, she was decreed a costly emerald tiara, superbly set to represent laurels. At this entertainment, while she gracefully swept the strings of the harp, in low, but correspondent tones, to the impromptu effusions of her highly-polished muse, she inspired a passion in a young nobleman, who, with all the ardency of love, strove to win her regard. But the heart of Julia had received a chill which no love, however ardent and sincere, could ever again warm; reason had convinced her that Henry Woodville had never deserved her devoted affection, but, unworthy as he was, she was fated to love but once, and that for ever. The tender pleadings of the count di Loverno, and the persuasions of his friends, distressed, though they could not alter the sentiments of Mrs.

Doricourt—she was henceforth dead to love, and resolved never again to enter the married state. Convinced of the amiable disposition of the count di Loverno and the sincerity of his passion, she saw but one way of restoring him to peace; absence generally proved the tomb of love; she resolved to quit Rome. She wrote her adieu to the cardinal Avelino and her other friends; to the count di Loverno she sent a brief sketch of her life, a candid avowal of her feelings, and the following lines:—

“Like the blue lotus trembling on the stream,
Beneath the golden glow of eastern skies,
Oh! such—remembrance yet surveys the beam—
Such was the lustre of young Henry’s eyes.

“Soft as the gentle melancholy strains
Given by the lyre when woo’d by Zephyr’s breath,
Oh! such was Henry’s voice: my heart retains,
And will retain the sound, till chill’d by death.

“But since those eyes no more on me must shine,
And since that voice no more my days must cheer,
No other eyes shall mix their glance with mine,
No other voice shall charm my list’ning ear.”

Mrs. Doricourt now made the tour of Italy: at Ancona she was introduced to the abbess of Santa Lucilla; romantic and inclined to superstition, she listened to the artful insinuations of the abbess, and became persuaded that having loved Henry Woodville, during the lifetime of her husband, was a crime that nothing but devoting her remaining days to penitence and monastic seclusion would expiate. Duped by the cunning of the abbess, to whom her wealth was a grand object, the melancholy Julia would have taken the veil, but for the tears and entreaties of her kneeling servants. It is said that women have but two passions—love and devotion; and when the former meets disappointment, the other takes such possession of the mind as to leave no room for sublunary wishes or concerns. Certain it is that Mrs. Doricourt’s heart did not resign its long-cherished passion, yet she became more than ever superstitious; the imposing ceremonies of the Catholic church made a strong impression on her visionary mind, and believing that her love was sinful, she inflicted upon herself fasts and penances, which, failing to overcome her rooted disease, gave a melancholy cast to her character, and added self-reproach to her other griefs. In this frame of mind she travelled through Switzerland and Germany, dragging a lengthened chain of woe.

Weary of foreign countries, she returned to England, to learn that Henry Woodville, unhappy in his marriage, had taken to drinking ardent spirits; that he had suffered the extreme of poverty, and, with his wife, had emigrated to America. This was intelligence that tore open the wounds time had rendered less painful; again the conflict of mental agony was renewed, and the suffering Julia was reduced to infantile weakness and shadowy thinness. Again change of air was recommended.—“I will go,” said she; “but in the grave alone can I hope to find tranquillity; ever, while I continue a wretched wanderer upon earth, shall I find its path thickly strewed with thorns.”

Mrs. Doricourt set out to visit the lakes of Cumberland: the beautiful Derwentwater and its emerald islands formed a picture attractive to her tasteful fancy; the history of saint Herbert and his hermitage determined her to fix her residence on the spot consecrated, in her idea, by the sanctity and prayers of a man, who, subduing every worldly passion, had dwelt there in holy retirement, and whose piety had canonized him.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-street, London.