

*To Saml Webb Esq Morgan Esq
with the Author's best regards*

STURMER;

A TALE OF MESMERISM.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OTHER SKETCHES FROM LIFE.

BY ISABELLA F. ROMER.

“ Truth severe by fairy Fiction dressed.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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STURMER,
A TALE OF MESMERISM.


There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Hamlet.

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VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

There are mysteries in and about us, which are not the more to be questioned because they cannot be expounded.

GALT.

IN an age like the present, and in a country like England, where “the march of intellect” halts not, and where the diffusion of knowledge has become universal, (thanks to the Penny Magazines and Encyclopædias,—those *literary railroads* to the Temple of Science, which rapidly whirl all classes thither without toil or fatigue,—perhaps, also, without giving them time to obtain more than a superficial view of the ground they are so smoothly carried over,) it would be little less than insult to suppose that any person can remain ignorant of the

principles and properties of *animal magnetism*, or of the extraordinary *physical* phenomena developed by it in the human frame. Of its action upon the *mind*,—a subject of the highest philosophical interest,—little is yet known in England, and still less believed; for it is strange, but true, that in this same enlightened country, prejudice and fanatical scruples (far more difficult assailants to contend with than mere ignorance) have arranged themselves in battle array against the introduction of this wonderful discovery as an auxiliary to the healing art; and the few liberal and philanthropic individuals who have struggled to bring it into practice for the relief of suffering humanity, have been treated (in all save imprisonment) as Galileo was in a darker age, when, in the teeth of bigoted persecution, he boldly maintained that the earth revolved round the sun! Perhaps time may do for them what it has done for “the starry Florentine;” and succeeding ages, while wondering at the obtuse-

ness that overlooked practical results to dwell sneeringly upon wild theories, vindicate the memory and applaud the exertions of those who are now branded as impostors, dupes, or, at the best, shallow enthusiasts; for it is not less true that the earth turns round the sun, than that there exists in some human organisations a latent principle which only requires to be called into action by the mysterious agency of Animal Magnetism, in order to produce a result so astonishing, that I will admit *it must be seen to be believed*,—namely, the phenomena of the body being plunged into a death-like slumber and insensibility to pain, while the mind, apparently emancipated from the thralldom of matter, takes a range which, in a waking state, it never could have aspired to; sees, comprehends, and discusses subjects of which it was previously ignorant; is endued with previsional faculties; and, when aroused from the magnetic trance, is utterly unconscious of all that occurred while it lasted.

The writer of these pages, in thus expressing herself, affirms *only what she has witnessed*. Originally sceptical upon the subject, she was yet willing to be convinced by the testimony of her own senses, and shrank equally from the injustice of withholding, or the weakness of according, belief upon *mere hearsay*; and, in order to preclude the possibility of deception, submitted herself, in the first instance, to a series of experiments, under the direction of a skilful and experienced physician, Dr. C——, of Vienna. Deep sleep and insensibility to pain, and what is technically called *lucidity*, were successively produced in her; and although she has no recollection of anything that occurred during those experiments, except her own energetic struggles to resist the sleep that was stealing over her and at last locked all her senses in oblivion, the notes that were taken of all that occurred on these occasions by a friend who was present, were a startling evidence to her of not merely the existence

of the magnetic principle, but of its wonderful and mysterious influence upon mind as well as matter. The results in her case fell far short of those she has since witnessed in others; but they were sufficient to set her previous doubts at rest for ever, and to awaken in her mind a train of conflicting reflections as to the incalculable benefits that may be derived from Animal Magnetism when properly and conscientiously exercised, and the dreadful abuses to which it is liable from the extraordinary moral ascendancy obtained by the magnetizer over the magnetized,—an ascendancy which, in the hands of a corrupt and unprincipled person, may be, and has been, turned to the most dishonourable purposes. The trust should, therefore, never be lightly confided, and the character and habits of magnetizers should be thoroughly ascertained before they are invested with the awful responsibility which attaches to their functions, or suffered to exercise an agency which may shed

its influence either "as airs from heaven or blasts from hell" over the moral as well as the physical being of the persons who are for a time spell-bound under the dominion of their will; and therefore unaccountable for the actions to which that will may lead them.

When the writer of these pages was in Germany, where magnetism is more thoroughly understood and more extensively practised than in England, many miraculous cases were related to her of cures performed by it when all the art of medicine had failed in bringing relief; and among others, one instance which so forcibly illustrated her previous opinions of its uses and abuses, that she made notes of the occurrence at the time she heard it, and has since been prevailed upon by a dear friend and enthusiastic disciple of Mesmerism, to draw those notes from the deep recesses of her "Scrap Book," and give them to light in their present form.

CHAPTER I.

The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

ST. MARK, chap. v. verse 39.

It was on a stormy evening, in the latter end of October of the year 18—, that a young student, who was travelling on foot from Dresden to Prague through that romantic region which divides the kingdoms of Saxony and Bohemia, and is known by the name of the Saxon Switzerland, was overtaken by the tempest before he could reach the little inn at the Bastei, where he intended to pass the night, and was induced to apply for shelter from “the pitiless pelting storm” at a lone house situated

on the skirts of the Ottowalder-grund. The wind rushing through the trees and whirling their last withered leaves in eddies to the ground, and the hoarse dashing of the angry Elbe, apparently overpowered his efforts to make himself overheard by the inhabitants of the house; for, although he perceived lights from the upper casements, he was left standing at the entrance, exposed to all the fury of the elements.

At last, after applying his thick, knotted walking-stick to the door with such force that the noise resounded through the house, a step was heard in the passage, the bolts were withdrawn, and an elderly servant woman cautiously opened just enough of the door to enable her to ascertain who was the intruder. The traveller, in a very few words, made known his wants. Probably his countenance spoke in his favour; for the woman, observing that "it was no weather to keep a dog out of doors," without further hesitation admitted him.

“ You come in an unlucky moment,” said she, ushering him into a sitting-room on the ground-floor; “ you will find but poor accommodation with us to-night; we are all in a bustle — there is death in the house, and my poor master and mistress are beside themselves.”

The stranger assured her that the permission to dry his clothes, and to pass the night in an arm-chair under shelter, was all that he required of her; that he would not intrude himself upon the family, and that by daybreak on the morrow he should proceed on his way.

The woman assented to the reasonableness of this proposal, and, having left the room, returned presently with some cold meat and bread, a flask of beer, and one of those enormous drinking-glasses that are used in Saxony, which she placed upon a little table before him; and after replenishing the fire in the stove she wished him good-night and left him alone.

When the young man had refreshed himself

with the homely fare set before him, he turned his attention to the apartment in which he found himself, and began to inspect it in its details; everything there was simple and humble, but there were the evidences of feminine taste and good order in the midst of its homeliness. An old piano stood in one corner; some plain book-shelves filled with a tolerable collection of books, a tapestry-frame with its accompanying worsted-baskets, a writing-table, a stand of beautiful flowers, and a cage of canary-birds, made up the remainder of the furniture. The walls were hung with several well executed water-coloured views of the neighbouring picturesque sites; but the most remarkable object in the room was an oil-painting suspended over the piano, representing a young girl apparently fourteen or fifteen years of age, of such exquisite and ethereal beauty, that he would have supposed it to be a fancy picture, but for the name of Charlotte which was carved upon the

frame. Beneath it was suspended a faded chaplet of white roses.

There was something in the expression of that lovely countenance that irresistibly attracted the stranger's attention; "all youth, but with an aspect beyond time," the pensive smile seemed not to belong to this world; he returned more than once to examine it, and when at last he stretched himself upon the sofa to sleep, those large blue eyes, and that high thoughtful brow, were mingled with his dreams.

He had not slept above two hours, when a noise in the hitherto quiet house aroused him; he started up, rubbed his eyes, remembered where he was, and then listened. There was an opening and shutting of doors above, the sound of hurried footsteps upon the stairs, and as he opened the door to ascertain the cause, he encountered the old woman already alluded to, in an agony of tears.

"Oh, sir!" she sobbed forth almost inar-

ticularly, "it is all over with the Fraulein Lolotte, poor dear child! she is at the last gasp — and I have not courage to see her die! My poor mistress will die too; and to think of the unfeeling doctor refusing to pass the night here, though I begged him upon my knees not to leave us! Oh! what shall I do, what shall I do!"

"What is the meaning of all this?" said the stranger. "A doctor did you say? perhaps then I may be of use, for I have studied medicine."

"Oh, sir! it is too late to be of any use to our poor dear young lady; Doctor Schramm said, before he went back to Schandau, that she would not pass through the night, and that there would be no use in his remaining; but now that it has come to the last, my mistress has not courage to bear her up through the scene; she goes out of one faint into another, —she will die too! O sir, she will die too!"

"Show me up stairs," said the young man;

“perhaps I may be of use ; at all events it is well worth trying.” And without waiting for an answer he bounded up the narrow staircase, followed by the old servant, and entering the first open door on the landing-place found himself in the chamber of death.

Upon a little white bed, which had been drawn into the centre of the room, was stretched a young girl, in whose wan and delicate features he recognised the original of the picture which had so forcibly struck him a few hours before ; one of her hands was clasped in those of a female who knelt on the ground at one side of the couch, her face buried in the bed-clothes, in an attitude of the most helpless despair ; on the other side knelt an aged man, his long white hair falling on his shoulders, his streaming eyes raised to heaven, and his hands joined in mute supplication, for the unuttered prayer died upon his trembling lips. The stranger approached the bed and gazed upon the countenance of the dying girl, over which

a strong light was cast by the lamp which stood upon the table near it. Her eyes were closed, and through their transparent lids the blue orbs were discernible, fixed as though in death; the foam that stood upon her parted lips told of the struggle that had recently taken place; and the chill dews that were gathering on her brow seemed to be the harbingers of instant dissolution. He placed his hand upon her heart — its pulsations were weak and uncertain; he took the hand that lay upon the coverlet in apparent lifelessness — it was cold and clammy, and while he yet held it the pulse fluttered and then stopped.

There was something in the whole scene which struck powerfully upon the heart of the young man who had thus so strangely become a witness to it; — the raging of the storm without — the silent sorrow within — the solemn midnight hour — all conspired to fill him with the deepest emotion, and to invest a naturally exalted imagination with the most superstitious fancies.

“Would to heaven that I could save her,” thought he; “and why should I not try? Something within me tells me that I shall succeed; I feel that I have been sent here for some especial purpose; I feel as though endued with a power to scare away death from its prey, and to infuse into that almost breathless frame the life and warmth that animate my own!” Then turning to the old man, he continued aloud, “Life is not quite extinct, but it hangs by a fragile thread; still there is a hope, and I feel as though it would not be a fallacious one; allow me to take your place for a moment.” And the old man, as if subjugated by the tone of confidence which the young one had assumed, moved silently away, and took his station at the foot of the bed, his eyes fixed upon him in wondering anxiety.

The stranger who still retained the hand he had taken of the inanimate girl, gently disengaged the other one from the grasp of her apparently unconscious mother, and held them

for some moments in his own, with his eyes fixed upon her death-like countenance; then stooping down he breathed upon her forehead, applied the tips of his fingers to it, and drew them downwards to her feet without coming in contact with her limbs. He continued these manipulations for some minutes without producing any apparent effect, but with a concentrated energy that seemed to absorb all his faculties. At last a slight change became perceptible in the countenance of the young person; her features lost their rigidity; the ashy paleness that had overspread them gave way to hues less livid; tears stole through the long lashes that lay upon her cheeks; and her lips moved as if essaying to speak, but struggling sighs only issued from them. The stranger bent over her, "Tell me," said he, "what can I give you to relieve you?"

"Water!" she answered, in an almost inarticulate murmur.

He poured out a glass-full from a decanter

that stood upon the table, dipped his finger into it, and then raising her head presented it to her lips. She drank it eagerly, drew a deep breath as if relieved from some painful oppression, and sank back upon her pillow.

“What more can I do for you?”

“Let me sleep.”

“How long?”

“Eight hours.”

“Will you then awaken of yourself?”

“Yes.”

“And, if I follow your injunctions, will you be relieved from your sufferings?”

“*I shall be saved!*”

These answers were all made in a distinct though feeble tone of voice, and as the last one was articulated a smile for a moment hovered around her lips.

“Sir,” said the old man, for the first time recovering his speech, “you perform miracles! for the last twelve hours our poor Lolotte has been speechless and insensible, and we were

told that in that state she would die ; and yet by a look you have restored her lost faculties ! *Who* and *what* are you, that have thus wonderfully interposed to snatch *her* from death, and *us* from despair ?”

The youth placed his finger on his lips to enjoin silence, laid his watch upon the table, and drew a chair to the foot of the bed for the old man ; then suddenly perceiving the prostrate mother, he raised her in his arms and deposited her upon a sofa at the further end of the room. She was in that state of stupor and exhaustion that proceeds from over tension of feeling, and made no resistance to anything that was done ; indeed she had ceased to be conscious of what was passing around her, and thus was spared the intense anxiety of the moment. As for the other two persons present, they scrupulously followed every implied direction of the stranger who had worked such wonders, and silently occupied the seats to which he had pointed ; while he, having placed

himself in an arm-chair close to the bed-side, silently watched the countenance of the sleeper during the space of two hours, and then after a few ineffectual struggles to keep himself longer awake, fell into a deep slumber.

His sleep was visited by harassing dreams ; but fantastic and disjointed as they were, the fair form of Lolotte appeared as a prominent feature in each. He saw her, as but a short time before he had in reality beheld her, stretched apparently lifeless before him, but it was in a different place : the cold walls of a sepulchre surrounded her ; the clothing of the grave wrapped her rigid limbs ; her blue eyes were unclosed, but fixed and glassy ; her marble lips were parted, and although they moved not, sounds issued from them like the chill blast rushing from some icy cavern, and formed themselves into accents that froze his heart. “ Seek not to bring me to life,” she said, “ where sin and sorrow alone await me ! As yet I have known neither, and happy are they

who can thus early escape from the evil to come. Heaven is opening to receive me; why does thy shadow interpose between me and its glories? stay the impious hand that would drag me down to earth! forbear, rash man! thou knowest not what thou doest; thou would'st save my body for a time, in order to prepare my soul for everlasting perdition; but death must come at *last*, and after that THE JUDGEMENT!"

Then "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream." He was in a gothic church; the sunbeams streamed in gorgeous tints through the stained glass windows; the organ rolled its rich tones through the lofty arches in peals of solemn harmony; a bridal party stood before the altar, and in the bride he again beheld the countenance of Lolotte, but of Lolotte in all the pride of health and beauty. He endeavoured to approach her, but the crowd intervened and prevented him; the ceremony commenced and finished—the party moved away—

he followed them, and as they passed through the church door he stretched forth his hand and grasped the veil of Lolotte; at his touch, her bridal chaplet of white roses became withered, like that which he had seen suspended over her picture in the little parlour below, and fell from her brow, while the veil remained in his hand; she cast upon him a mournful and imploring look, and moved quickly away across the churchyard; but when he would have followed her his foot stumbled over some unseen object, and he fell headlong into a yawning grave.

Again there was a change in his dream. He was in the streets of Prague, his native city; crowds of people were pouring from all quarters towards the old bridge that crosses the Moldau, in the centre of which was erected a scaffold prepared for some public execution. Again was Lolotte there! She stood at its foot, clothed in black, her eyes wildly strained in the direction by which the expected criminal was to approach. At last he appeared, but a

thick veil shrouded his features from the gazer's view. As he mounted the scaffold, every steeple in Prague pealed forth a death knell, but above their solemn clang arose the piercing accents of Lolotte. "Save him!" she shrieked. The student struggled to obey the wild entreaty, and the efforts he made caused him to awaken with a start; the horrid vision was dispelled, and he was aroused to that chilling sense of discomfort that is occasioned by having slept long in an uneasy position. Still the bells appeared to be ringing in his ears, but it was only the house clock striking the sixth hour of morning; and as he cast his eyes around the room, now partially lighted by the cold grey dawn, they fell upon the watch he had placed upon the table, and he perceived that only half an hour remained unexpired of the eight hours which Lolotte had predicted that she should remain asleep.

There she lay, in a slumber so calm and profound, that, but for the gentle and regular

breathings that visibly stirred her nightdress, she might have been mistaken for an alabaster statue—so pale, so placid, and so pure was that virginal countenance; all traces of suffering had vanished from it, and the small hand that lay locked within his own was yielding and moist as that of a sleeping infant.

The other persons had kept vigil faithfully, and it was evident that during his long slumber the mother had shaken off her stupor and been made aware of all that had passed; for she had resumed her place at the bedside of her child, and with eyes, in which hope and fear struggled for mastery, fixed upon those loved lineaments, she sat intently watching her every breath. But no sooner had the student started from his dream than she moved hastily towards him, and grasping his hand pressed it convulsively to her lips and heart. “Oh, sir!” she at length said, “she will live, will she not?” and she fixed her eyes upon his with an intensity of expectation that made her gasp for breath.

“ She herself has pronounced that she will be saved, and I firmly believe in the prediction,” was the reply.

“ God bless you !—God for ever bless you !” ejaculated the mother, while tears and sobs spoke her thanks more eloquently than the most studied expressions of gratitude could have done.

“ The blessing of the widow be on you, and prosper you, young man !” said the old gentleman, laying his hand upon the student’s head ; “ you have, under Heaven, saved the life of our precious Lottschen—of her mother, and her old grandfather ; for we should not long have survived her, should we, my poor Meta ? But let us not, in the excess of our gratitude to this good youth, forget that which we owe to the Giver of all good—to Him who directed his steps hither, and bestowed upon him the power to heal—in whose hands alone are the issues of life and death, and to whom, above all, praise and thanksgiving are due. Let us pray,

my daughter !” and, falling upon his knees, the old man poured forth the fulness of his heart in a flood of such eloquent devotion that the stranger, as he gazed upon his pious countenance, and listened to the deep tones of his voice, murmured to himself, “ *Almost thou persuadest me to believe !*”

While he yet prayed, the sun slowly rose above the horizon, and its first ray fell like a glory upon the saint-like countenance of the sleeping Lolotte, and seemed suddenly to warm the statue into life ; for, slowly unclosing her eyelids, she raised herself from her pillow, clasped her hands as if in prayer, and with eyes raised to heaven, fixed and dilated, she remained rapt and motionless, as though in ecstatic communion with unseen spirits.

“ As you value her reason,” said the stranger in a whisper, “ be silent ! A word, an unguarded exclamation in her present state might alarm her to a degree that would produce fatal consequences. Consciousness is gradually re-

turning, but we must not precipitate it; above all, she must not see *me*, as the sight of a stranger would inevitably hurry her spirits; and she has not strength to contend with any great agitation."

So saying, he glided round the room to the head of the bed, where a large folding screen had been placed, and taking up his position behind it awaited the coming scene.

As he had predicted, consciousness slowly returned to Lolotte, and the heavenly vision that had rapt her spirit from the earth appeared gradually to fade away; her eyes lost their fixed and upward gaze, and wandered bewilderedly from the countenance of her mother to that of her grandfather, without at first seeming to recognise either. For a moment she passed her hands over her forehead, then looked again:—"Mother! dear, dear mother!" she murmured, bending forward; and the fond parent, voiceless from emotion, cast her arms

around her child, and burst into a passion of tears, as she strained her to her heart.

“Where am I?” resumed Lolotte, in a weak and hurried voice; “and why do you weep, mother? Ah! I see it all. It is because I am dying! And must I die, then?” she muttered in an under tone. “So young and so happy, it is hard to be taken from all I love; but, God’s will be done!” And her voice was lost in a low, nervous sob, which gradually increased until it assumed the character of a violent hysterical paroxysm, that seemed to shake her debilitated frame almost to dissolution.

As, weak and exhausted by the struggle, she lay upon her mother’s bosom, tears pouring through her closed eyelids, and every breath checked by convulsive sighs, the stranger, emerging from his concealment, placed one hand upon her forehead, while with the other he described the *mesmeric* passes, which he had

already so successfully employed, and which in this instance produced a still more rapid effect; for, not only did the hysterical emotion at once subside, but in a very few seconds she was plunged in the same deep and dreamless trance that had characterised her first magnetic sleep.

“ Lolotte, are you asleep?” said the youth.

“ Yes,” was the answer.

“ And do you suffer now?”

“ No.”

“ You said, when last you slept, that when you should awake all danger would be over; that you should be saved? Yet, when you did actually awake your sufferings returned. How is this?”

“ I said, that I should be saved, and *I am saved*,” replied Lolotte impressively. “ At least,” she continued, as if correcting herself, “ I shall be so if my directions are followed.”

“ Point out what is to be done, and rest assured that it shall be fulfilled to the very letter.”

“In the first place, I must be allowed to sleep for the next twenty-four hours without being awakened, and during that period I shall regain sufficient strength to support the convulsions that will return to me to-morrow after I awake. When the fit is over I must again be put to sleep, but only for three or four hours; and every day during six weeks the same process must be observed; at the end of which period the fits will cease entirely, and I shall be saved.”

“But,” said the student, “I cannot remain with you for the period you specify: I must depart to-day, Lolotte. What is to be done?”

Lolotte drew his hands, in which her own were clasped, towards her, and placing one of them upon her forehead and the other upon her heart, sighed deeply, and remained silent.

There was an eloquence in this mute appeal that made the heart of the stranger thrill with emotions hitherto unknown to him; a mysterious sympathy appeared to have esta-

blished itself between him and the unconscious Lolotte, as though for every sensation that influenced her soul a corresponding one was to be found in his own, an echo for every sigh breathed by her; an instinctive divination of her untold wishes. Should he yield to the influence, and remain? or, rending asunder the links that fate had so lightly and rapidly woven round his imagination, fly, while it was yet time, from the strange fascination before his heart also became enthralled? Inclination prompted him to the former, and he was upon the point of following its dictates, when a few words from Lolotte's mother checked the headlong impulse, and forced back the current of warm feelings that had gushed forth, until it recoiled upon his heart with a suddenness that almost sickened it.

“You hear her, sir,” said Meta imploringly. “You alone can save my child! and if you abandon her she must perish! Oh! if I dared

to supplicate you to remain with us yet a little longer, that she might be restored to health, and the happiness that awaits her. Not in my name alone do I ask it, but in that of my father, of my Lolotte herself, and of an absent one, her betrothed —”

“It is impossible,” interrupted the stranger, coldly and sharply; “I must leave you this very morning. I have remained too long as it is. But let us ascertain whether the magnetic influence I possess over your child cannot be exercised by yourself for her benefit; if so, my presence will be no longer necessary; and, by following her own directions, you will be enabled to effect her recovery without my assistance, or that of any other person.”

Then turning to the sleeper—“Lolotte,” he said, in a softened tone, “I must leave you! But is there no one near and dear to you who can replace me when I am gone? no one who can produce the same effects upon you that I

have done? Your mother, for instance, will she have the same power over you that I possess?"

"Yes," replied Lolotte.

"And is there no other person?"

"There is no other."

Why was it that the stranger's heart felt lightened by these words, and that, as he placed the hand of Lolotte within that of her mother and clasped them in his own, to establish the magnetic communication between them, he adjured Meta, in an under tone, to delegate the influence she was about to acquire, to no other human being; to suffer no other person to approach her child in the same character? Perhaps he could not precisely have resolved the question himself; perhaps, too, he would have shrunk from believing that an undefined sentiment of jealousy against an unknown person had insidiously crept into his bosom, and assumed the garb and language of prudence and precaution; for the human heart, "deceit-

ful" as it is, "above all things, and desperately wicked," will sometimes carry its plausible deceptions so far as to mystify even itself as to the precise nature of its own motives and impulses.

That which Lolotte had pronounced was verified; for no sooner had she been put into magnetic communication with her mother than she freely discoursed with her upon her own state of health, and pointed out the remedies that were to be adopted for its improvement and final restoration; and having done so, she repeated her injunction, that she should be left in undisturbed silence and repose for the next twenty-four hours.

Meanwhile, the old woman-servant, Babet, had prepared breakfast in the parlour below; and the father and daughter, having in a great measure regained their tranquillity, and buoyed up with the hopes that had been infused into them by the stranger, descended to do the honours of the morning repast to their guest;

and while they hospitably pressed upon him the best fare that their humble roof afforded, they, in the fulness of their hearts, unreservedly communicated to him not only the circumstances which had caused the extraordinary illness of their beloved Lolotte, but the family arrangements, which Meta had already touched upon, when, in her uncontrolable burst of sorrow, she had spoken to the stranger of Lolotte's future husband.

They were simple people; but theirs was not the simplicity of ignorance or vulgarity. The Pastor Hartmann was celebrated for his learning and piety; his daughter Meta had received from him an education above her station in life; she had married, when very young, an officer in the Saxon army, who had died a very few months after their marriage; and Lolotte was the posthumous issue of that union. She was now sixteen years of age, and had been betrothed a few months before to a nephew of her father's, who had also been a pupil of her

grandfather's. Franz Möller had subsequently gone to make the tour of Germany on foot. He had crossed the Tyrolese Alps, and penetrated into Italy, and, having sojourned for a time in the various cities of both countries, most celebrated for their learning and universities, he had announced, that in the ensuing spring his wanderings would terminate, and that he should return to his fatherland, and claim his youthful bride.

“That is Lolotte's picture,” said Meta, pointing to the beautiful portrait which had so powerfully attracted the stranger's attention on the preceding evening; “it was painted by an Italian artist, who had been sent for to Dresden by the King, to restore some of the pictures in the Royal Gallery; and beneath it is her ‘*couronne de fiancée*’; and those drawings were done by Lolotte, from nature; and there is her piano. Oh, if you could but have heard her play and sing! Angels might listen to her harmony and mistake it for their own!”

“ And so good, so gentle, so pious as she has ever been,” said the old Pastor ; “ with sense that has outstripped her years, and a mind whose innocent maturity has led her to contemplate with pity and wonder the follies and vanities which occupy almost all other young girls of her age. Thoughtful and sedate at a time of life when others are giddy and unreflecting, she has for sixteen years been our blessing and our joy, and the first sorrow, the only pang she ever cost us was when we feared that we must resign her to her God ! ”

“ We were too proud of her, too happy, too secure of our blessing,” said the mother meekly ; “ and our pride, and love, and security, required chastening. But, oh ! how stubborn, how rebellious have our hearts been under the infliction ! How far are they yet removed from the Christian’s unmurmuring submission ! We selfishly forgot that *our loss* would be *her gain*, and we could not resign her, even into the hands of Him who gave her to us, without a

struggle, and a prayer to be spared the sacrifice !”

And then, in a voice tremulous from emotion, she proceeded to relate that Lolotte's illness had originated in a violent shock produced by seeing the boat in which her grandfather, with several other passengers, had embarked to proceed by the Elbe from Herrnskretschen to Schandau, upset in a squall of wind at some distance from the shore ; and although other boats had put off immediately to their assistance, and rescued them from the waves, the terror of Lolotte had been so overwhelming as to throw her into convulsions, from which she was with difficulty recovered, and which had returned periodically with such obstinacy and violence as to baffle the skill of her medical attendants, and to reduce her in a very few months to the brink of the grave.

“ They averred that nothing but a miracle could save her,” continued Meta, “ and they were right. But there were no workers of mi-

racles among them; and so, with folded arms, they calmly contemplated the rapid break-up of her strength, and, when the last struggle was near, left her to sink under it unaided. But a saviour was at hand, and in the very depth of our despair we were made to feel that, with God, all is possible. Oh! could you but understand the tumult of emotions with which I was aroused to a consciousness of what had passed during my insensibility — the miracle had been performed — the dead brought to life!”

“ You were, however, aware of the agency employed by me?” inquired the stranger.

“ We had already heard of Animal Magnetism,” said the Pastor, “ but chiefly from those opposed to it, who treat it either as a delusion or a vehicle for imposture and the most shameless quackery; and if we thought upon the subject at all, it was only in the point of view in which it had been represented to us, as a thing to be reprehended and discountenanced. But

you have convinced us of its wonders in a way that leaves no possibility for doubt or dispute—you have enlisted all our best feelings, all our energies, in its cause; and, from having been sceptics, we are likely soon to become fanatics.”

“It is a subject which admits of no half measures in point of faith — no restrictions upon our belief,” observed the student with enthusiasm; “as for myself, I believe in it as firmly as you do in the Bible! Many persons sweepingly discountenance Mesmerism, because they cannot comprehend or account for the principle which produces its phenomena; as if the action of the loadstone upon the needle were not to the full as wonderful and inexplicable as the sympathies and attractions exhibited by Animal Magnetism: others frown it down because it interferes with their pre-established theories; — for instance, the Materialist feels that, by its action on the mind, is developed the strongest argument that can be adduced against his own annihilating creed — and

Evangelical believers (many such I have met with) will not hear of it, because it accounts by natural means for the so-called miracles related in the Christian narrative, which were one and all performed by Jesus *laying his hands upon the sick*, and straightway they were healed."

"Young man," said the Pastor, in a tone of grave rebuke, "if my belief in Magnetism were likely to disturb, or even to call in question, my belief in holier things, I would close my understanding against it as resolutely as I now close my ears to your last argument. The miracles of our Lord are not to be tried by such a test, nor must they be compared to the discoveries of Natural Philosophy. They are evidences of the divine mission of Him from whom they emanated—they gave birth to Christianity—and the power of performing them was delegated by Jesus to his disciples because, in the first promulgation of revealed religion, nothing but miracles could establish its authority. I cannot listen to any other—"

But the youth, impatiently waving his hand, interrupted him by exclaiming, “ I know all that you would say, but we are not here to enter upon theological discussion. *You* are a disciple of revealed, *I* am a follower of natural religion ! Let us not attempt to interfere with each other’s belief ; you would fail in converting me, and I, on my part, have no wish to disturb those conscientious convictions of yours in which I cannot participate, even while I respect and admire the unaffected piety that springs from them. Could I bring myself to belong to any particular sect, it should be to Christianity, because it bears a stamp of greater moral perfection than any other ; but my views of religion are as infinite as the attributes of the Great Being himself who formed the world. I cannot consent to enthrall my spirit by adoring Him in forms that my reason rejects, or to pray to Him at stated times in temples built by the hands of men. My soul springs forth in spontaneous adoration of Him when I gaze upon

the myriad stars or listen to the whirlwind, but all my devotional aspirations would become chilled were I to be obliged to confine them to the words of any particular creed; and I feel that walls and roofs built by human hands draw down my thoughts to human things, and interpose between God and me. But enough of this—it was of Mesmerism and its antiquity that we were speaking; for Mesmer was not the *discoverer*, but merely the *reviver*, of Animal Magnetism.”

“You believe then,” said Hartmann, “that it was known to the ancients?”

“Unquestionably,” rejoined the stranger; “it was understood and practised by the ancients throughout the East, not, indeed, as a healing art, but as a priestly artifice, to subjugate and enthrall the minds of the multitude for especial purposes. I will not again offend you by reverting to the miracles of Christ as connected with these natural causes, nor will I even dwell upon those of Elisha recorded

in the Old Testament, but I will instance the Delphic Oracles, as being, to my firm belief, pronounced under the influence of Animal Magnetism. All the accounts that have come down to us of the state of the Pythoness, before and after she was placed upon the tripod, agree precisely with the phenomena I have so often seen produced by the action of Mesmerism upon epileptic patients—the convulsions—then the syncope or trance, and then the lucidity under which the oracle was pronounced, were but the natural effects of that agency being properly developed in highly susceptible patients.”

“Can you,” said Hartmann, “define to me the precise nature of this wonderful agency?”

“My own opinions,” was the answer, “are as follow:—Assuming as the basis of my argument, that the magnetic fluid forms a component part of every human organisation, the derangement of that fluid I look upon to be the cause of epilepsy, insanity, convulsions, and the whole train of minor nervous disorders

which fall under the denomination of Hysteria. Now, those persons who are the most susceptible to Mesmerism, are invariably epileptic or insane patients, and the first visible effect of Magnetism upon them is to dispel, during its action, the painful characteristics of those visitations. This, according to my theory, is accounted for by the equilibrium of the fluid being restored by magnetic action, and equally distributed throughout the organic system, superinducing for the time being a return to a natural and healthy state, but presenting none of those wonderful phenomena which you have just witnessed, which those who have not witnessed will not believe, (because it is too much the habit of ordinary minds to measure all things by the narrowness of their own experience,) but which I shall also endeavour to account for by a continuation of the chain of reasoning I have already adduced. It is in the power of the magnetizer to direct so superabundant a mass of the magnetic fluid upon

the patient's brain as to leave all the other organs totally deprived of it, and therefore *completely insensible*, while the brain itself accumulates all their superfluous susceptibility, and acquires those prodigious faculties of perception which are known by the denomination of *Hellsehen*, and which the more fashionable phrase of *clairvoyance* so much more feebly conveys to the understanding. In this state, objects the most subtle and far removed are beheld, futurity is looked into, the thoughts and wishes of the magnetizer are divined, and the physical conformation of the magnetized and of those persons placed in magnetic communication with them is revealed to them—they hear, see, and comprehend all things, not indeed with the organs of the flesh (for those are dead for the time being); but the eye of the spirit is opened, the mind, illuminated by a supernatural light, more nearly approximates to the divine essence of which it is an emanation, and for a moment soars into that spiritual

state of existence which will be ours after death, when the imperishable soul, emancipated from the thralldom of matter, shall drink at the fountain of Eternal Truth, and nothing shall be hidden from it! This, the highest point at which magnetic lucidity can arrive, is never developed in a healthy state, for it is an incontestable fact, that the more the body is shattered, the more acute, clear, and oracular do the previsionary faculties become. The subjugation of the somnambulist is then at its height, and the will of the magnetizer all powerful over every sensation: in proportion as the patient recovers his health the lucidity diminishes; and when strength is completely re-established it frequently disappears altogether. All of the most remarkable previsionary cases of somnambulism that have come under my own observation, as well as all that I have ever heard of, have been developed in cases of *idiocy* or of *epilepsy* (which is a temporary frenzy); and this fact accounts to me for the

origin of that belief which is current throughout the East, that insane persons are chosen beings whom God has inspired with a higher gift than reason, and therefore are they looked upon with a respect amounting to veneration, and their ravings believed to be prophecies."

As with flashing eyes and a flushed cheek, the young enthusiast gave utterance to opinions that to the sober judgment of his listeners appeared like the vagaries of a distempered imagination, the good Hartmann gazed upon him with melancholy interest, and sighed to think that the false meteor-like glare of modern philosophy had so dazzled and lured that young and ardent mind, as to make him close his eyes to the pure sunbeams of Gospel Truth, which alone can be "a light to our path and a lantern to our feet," and that with the presumption of youth and of *error* (for conviction is ever modest), he had rushed upon conclusions as false as they are fatal, and had chosen a path where, if he continued, he must surely fall.

“ My dear young friend, suffer me to call you so,” he said, laying his hand upon the stranger’s arm, “ I have listened to you uninterruptedly, not because I agree with all that you have said, but because persuasion and not passion are the arms with which I would combat some of your delusions. I do not mean your opinions upon magnetism, (for I am not competent to argue upon a subject which is still a mystery to me,) but I allude to the deplorable error which causes you to reject the Highest and Holiest of all subjects, and sweepingly to condemn the Christian Faith, with all other forms of established worship, as mummeries incompatible with the exercise of your reason ! I do not despair, however, of reclaiming you to better thoughts, for your mind is of that fine order which error may for a time mislead but cannot finally pervert, and which Truth can alone satisfy ! give me but an opportunity, and,” he added, looking reverently upwards, “ with the aid of Him whom you now reject, of the blessed

Saviour who died for your redemption, I shall lead back the stray lamb to the flock from which he will never more wish to wander!"

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by Babet bustling into the room, and announcing that Doctor Schramm, mounted upon his mule, was approaching the house. Meta, at this intelligence, hurried out of the parlour and ascended to the chamber of her daughter, while the Pastor sallied forth to the garden-gate to meet the new comer, and having assisted him to dismount, they both proceeded into the house together, and followed Meta up the staircase into the presence of the sleeping Lolotte.

No sooner did the stranger find himself alone, than approaching the picture he gazed upon it for some moments in mute admiration; then apostrophising it with passionate emotion, "Beautiful Lolotte!" he exclaimed; "what strange mysterious charm dwells in the depths of those Sybil eyes, that even upon senseless canvass

their glances should awaken in my soul visions of passion, and joy, and confidence, shared in by thee, despite of cold reason, which recalls the vow that binds thee to another ! Alas ! it was predestined that I should look upon that fair face, and that it should become my fate. I fly from thee, because I know the fatal power that I could exercise over thy soul, (for thou would'st love me, Lolotte !); but I fly in vain, for my heart is darkened with thy shadow, and never more can the sunbeams of love warm it even into transient passion for another ! Lolotte ! thou shalt be the bride of my soul — the haunting spirit that shall purify me from every grosser impulse ! On earth we may meet no more, but in another world I will claim thee as mine own, and with this chaste kiss I seal the holy compact !”

So saying, he mounted upon a chair, and pressed his lips to the picture with impassioned tenderness. As he descended with trembling haste, the bridal wreath, suspended beneath,

fell to the ground; for a moment he gazed upon it with a changing countenance. “Detested symbol of another’s felicity! even as *my* hopes have been crushed, even so will I stamp *thee* into annihilation!” he exclaimed, gnashing his teeth, and raising his foot to trample upon the withered flowers; “but, no!” he continued, in a softened voice, “thou hast bound the brows of Lolotte, and that touch has consecrated thee — thou hast become to me as the holy relic of some saint, to be approached only in prayer, and thus I place thee upon the shrine where she is worshiped!” And raising the chaplet from the ground, he thrust it into his bosom, slung his knapsack across his shoulder, and rushing out of the house was soon lost in the depths of the Ottowaldergrund.

In less than half an hour afterwards the party assembled in the chamber of Lolotte, were heard descending the staircase in eager disquisition, the angry voice of Doctor Schramm predominating over the calm accents of the old

Pastor and the deprecating tones of Meta, while the epithets of “quack,” “knave,” “sorcerer,” “dupes,” and “credulous fools,” rung in various changes by him, supplied the place of cool reasoning and dispassionate argument.

“Magnetism !” he vociferated, “fiddle-stick, —humbug,—nonsense ! there is no such thing —it is physically impossible ; and those empirics who pretend to practise it, laugh in their sleeve at the silly dupes they make !”

“But,” said Hartmann ; “we have witnessed wonders done by it, and those who *see* must *believe*. Have you ever examined the subject, Doctor, or seen any experiments performed ?”

“Never !” he replied ; “and nothing should tempt me to do so, because I have no fancy to be made a fool of — because such impudent charlatanism ought to be discountenanced — because——”

“Doctor,” interrupted the Pastor hastily, and betrayed into momentary anger by the rudeness of the Schandau practitioner ; “I have

no hesitation in saying that the man who believes nothing but what he sees, and the man who believes everything that he is told, are equally fools. Those only, who take a middle course between the two extremes, and will investigate for themselves, can hope to arrive at the truth."

"And do you know where your investigations will lead you?" said the Doctor; "to Sonnenstein,* my good friend, to Sonnenstein, where there are already so many discoverers of new systems."

"Calm yourself, dear Doctor Shramm," interposed Meta mildly; "and when you hear all, I think you will revoke your opinions — indeed I am sure I shall yet make a convert of you, for I have learned the art, and intend to practise as well as preach magnetism."

"I tell you, *Frau Möller*, that you are a

* Sonnenstein is a village between Dresden and Pirna, on the road to the Saxon Switzerland, where there is a celebrated asylum for lunatics.

silly dupe, and I am ashamed of you; but as you are a weak woman I pity you, and can forgive you too; but as for Herr Hartmann, I looked for better sense in him, and have no words to express my wonder and indignation at his credulity! I affirm that the last potion I ordered for the *Fraulein* Lolotte has done wonders for her, as I predicted yesterday when I told you the effects it would produce, and—”

“Nay,” said Meta mildly; “you yourself told me last evening, that all was over with my child, and that before midnight she would be an angel in heaven; when your potion arrived she was past the power of swallowing it, and there it stands on the landing-place untouched! But speak to the stranger yourself, and he will explain to you by what wonderful means he recalled my Lottschen to life; he is here to answer for himself,” and she threw open the parlour door, and as they all entered they looked around for the object of their discussion, but the room was empty!

Babet was called — she had not seen him ; the house and garden were ransacked — he was nowhere to be found ! They gazed upon one another with blank countenances ; at last the Doctor broke the silence, and shrugging his shoulders said in a compassionating accent:—

“ My poor friends, grief and watching have made you light-headed, go to bed and repose yourselves ; you have had the night-mare, or between sleeping and waking have dreamed all that you have told me ;” and then catching a glimpse of Babet, as with a significant shake of the head she negatived his supposition, he spitefully added, looking at her that his words might produce the terror he intended, “ or, (my dear friends, such things are possible, although I do not believe in them,) you have seen a vampire, or the devil himself, and I wash my hands of whatever may now happen to the *Fraulein* Lolotte !”

CHAPTER II.

She pined in thought.

Twelfth Night.

QUEEN.

Whereon do you look?

HAM. On him! on him! Look you, how pale he glares!

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain.

Hamlet.

YEARS rolled on, like billow succeeding billow, upon the ocean of eternity, and in their restless and unerring course had borne towards "the silent shore" two generations of the Pastor Hartmann's family. The good old man and his gentle daughter Meta slept with their fathers in the quiet churchyard of *Lohmen*, and Lolotte, and her husband Franz Möller, with Babet the old servant, and a younger assistant, had become the sole occupants of

the lone house in the Ottowaldergrund. Few changes had been made in its interior decorations. The old piano stood in the same place; but the book-shelves had been enlarged, (for Franz was a *savant*,) and a writing bureau covered with the litter of authorship, had usurped the place of Meta's tapestry-frame. The beautiful picture of Lolotte was still suspended over the piano; but not alone, as before: two seraph countenances had been added, with eyes serenely bright, like those of angels, and golden hair falling back in wavy clusters from the calm expansive brows, and a sweet serious smile, unlike that of infancy, parting the baby-lips,—two infant transcripts of Lolotte's ineffable loveliness,—the children which had blessed her union, and which, after a brief space of maternal happiness, she had been required to resign to Him who had given them to her!

Poor Lolotte! her fate had not been a happy one; the loved, the loving, and the lovely, had,

one by one, been taken from her,—her mother, her grandfather, and her two children,—and it seemed as though her heart lay buried with them in their graves; for, although Franz was a good man, and loved his wife with as much warmth as it was possible for him to love anything, except musty folios, he was too much absorbed in his studies, too much satisfied with the honesty and loyalty of his heart towards her, to bestow upon her any of those thousand nameless little demonstrations of tenderness, those refinements of sentiment which take captive the heart and imagination of woman, and charm her into the happy consciousness of being the first and dearest object in her husband's thoughts. In that interchange of fond endearment in which she had been brought up by Hartmann and Meta, he took no delight; and when the time came that there was no longer any one to lavish it upon her,—none on whom she might bestow it,—she drooped and languished, like a flower

from which the dews of heaven have been suddenly withdrawn. No complaint passed her lips, for she esteemed her husband's good qualities and admired his talents; but she was made for the poetry of life, not for the mere mechanical performance of its duties, to which, in conformity with his tastes, she had circumscribed her efforts to please. The charm of existence had passed away from her, with its innocent illusions: it was as though there was no music in the temple, no perfume in the flowers, no sunshine on the waters. All was dark and colourless around her; she felt alone in the universe with one who did not understand her, —and for her to feel so, was to wish to die!

Slowly her health failed beneath the despondency that had crept over her; languor and depression were succeeded by nervous paroxysms and fits of insensibility. The sickness of the mind had communicated itself to the body; and, at the expiration of eight years after the period at which this tale commences, Lolotte

was reduced to a state of health as alarming and as impracticably proof against medical treatment as that from which she had been rescued by the efforts of the wandering disciple of Mesmer.

Just eight years, day for day, from the date of that mysterious person's visit to the Ottowaldergrund, Lolotte and her husband were seated, towards the decline of day, in the little parlour already alluded to. The season had been unusually mild for that northern climate, and autumn, in all its glorious hues of gold, and crimson, and russet lingered amidst the wild scenery as if loth to resign it to the cold breath of winter's heralds. The garden was still gay with China-asters and late roses, and the windows were garnished with pots of Balsams and other late-blooming flowers; while the interior of the room was decorated with rare plants and a profusion of bouquets, as if for some particular occasion. As long as Meta and her father lived, they had kept the anni-

versary of the day, from which they dated the wonderful recovery of their child, with extraordinary rejoicings. It was to them not only a festival of the heart, but a day of pious thanksgiving; and after their death, that observance did not fall into disuse, for it still continued to be a *jour de fête* for the little household in general, and for Lolotte a day dedicated to tender and solemn recollections.

As she sat by the casement in the old Pastor's arm-chair, plunged in deep thought, fancy peopled the airy solitude with sounds and forms that had long since passed away. The joyous laugh and the bright faces of her children, the mild accents of her mother, the venerable countenance of her grandfather, seemed once more to ring in her ears and flit around her. It was but for a moment; for in the next, her eyes, which had been wistfully fixed upon the clouds, wandered from them to the distant church spire, as it gleamed brightly in the golden sunset, and pointed out the spot where those loved ones

slept their last sleep; and a sigh so deep and hollow burst from her bosom, that it startled Franz from the writing with which he had been busily occupied. He looked up, and for the first time seemed to become fully aware of her sad state, and of the inroads which mental suffering had caused in her slender frame; and that conviction indued him with a delicacy and gentleness of feeling not habitual to him. He forbore to remark upon what had so suddenly struck upon his heart; but laying down his pen, aroused her from her melancholy pre-occupation in a voice of unwonted tenderness.

“Dear Lottschen,” he said, “it is long since I have heard your voice: sing me one of those simple airs in which our good grandfather used so to delight, and it will cause my ideas to flow more freely and harmoniously than they do at present;—sing to me, *mein kind*, and your music will inspire me with eloquence.”

“I will sing you *his* favourite,” said Lolotte, with a pensive smile; and opening the piano,

she ran over the keys with admirable skill and science for a few minutes, and then struck into the accompaniment of that beautiful song of Goethe's, "Könn'st du das Land, &c." the music of which was so popular some years ago throughout Germany, that the whole country resounded with it from the palace to the cottage — from the well-organised orchestra to the itinerant ballad-singer and hand-organ grinder. Lolotte was one of Nature's own musicians; the deep rich tones of her sweet and powerful voice would have made the fortune of a public singer, but the great charm of her performance consisted in the expression which she threw into it, and the judgment with which she adapted that expression to the *words* she sang — not treating them, as so many professors do, merely as vehicles for sweet sounds, but joining *sense* to *sound* with a truth and sentiment that spoke to the hearts of the most insensible, and showed that she ever identified herself with the subject to which she gave ut-

terance. And now, as she poured forth those exquisite lines in a flood of harmony, there was a passion and a pathos in her voice, a pleading eloquence in her eyes, that gave to her song the character of an extempore outpouring of the heart, and roused even the phlegmatic Franz to undivided attention. With his eyes fixed upon her, he listened until the last notes had died away into silence; and then a pause ensued. Lolotte was the first to break it.

“I wonder,” she said, in a solemn voice, “if it be accorded to the spirits of the departed to behold what passes upon earth,—to be conscious of the enduring sorrow with which their memory is cherished—”

“Lolotte,” interrupted her husband, somewhat sharply, “you are always thinking of the dead! That is not very complimentary to me: have you no thoughts for the living also?”

“Surely on *this* day I may be pardoned for thinking of *them*,” she answered, repressing a starting tear; “and that song which you made

me sing just now, my dear grandfather's favourite, brought back the past so vividly to me ! I thought I saw his benignant face smiling upon me again ; I thought I beheld them *all* once more ! I fancied they might be hovering near, and watching me ; and yet," she continued, in an under tone, "I ought not to desire it ; for then they would know all that I feel, and that knowledge would surely change their blessedness into bitter anguish !"

"These are foolish fancies," said Franz, in reply to the first part of her remark, (for the latter part had not been heard by him ;) "and if you loved me, you would not indulge in them. However, let us change the subject. When I was yesterday in Dresden, I casually heard that the famous Dr. Wolfgang Sturmer, of Prague, has been staying there for a short time, and has performed some wonderful cures by means of Mesmerism ; now, I should wish you to see him, and consult him about your fainting fits : so to-morrow we will go into town for

that purpose : but you must not fall in love with the Doctor, Lolotte, as all the Dresden ladies have done," he added, laughing. "His picture is in all the print-shops already; and I must own, that it is a very handsome one, and quite the sort of face to turn a romantic lady's head. But here is Babet with your chocolate."

Now, upon the anniversary in question, it had been the custom of each member of Lolotte's family to make her some little offering of love, for they looked upon it as *a second birthday* to her; and even the servants were not behindhand in furnishing some simple testimony of their affection to their beloved young mistress upon those occasions. On the day in question, Franz had prepared his gift in conjunction with Babet; a handsome silver chocolate pot, which he had brought from Dresden, was accompanied by a porcelain cup and saucer, which Babet had commissioned him to purchase for her; and as the good old creature, nodding

and smiling to her master, in anticipation of the pleasure which their gifts would procure to Lolotte, placed the tray upon the table, she hastened to fill her cup and present it to her mistress. But in doing so, her eyes fell upon the window close to which Lolotte was seated, and, uttering a loud scream, she staggered into a chair, clasped her hands before her eyes; and the cup and saucer escaping from her grasp fell to the ground, and were shivered to atoms.

“What can this mean?” exclaimed Franz and Lolotte in a breath, as they surrounded and supported the terrified Babet. The shades of evening had fallen around, and half shrouded in obscurity the little parlour and the clustering garden beyond.

“Get a light, dear Franz,” said Lolotte, “that we may see what is the matter with her;” but Babet clung to her master with all the strength of terror. At last, the power of speech returned, and, with a violent effort, she pointed to the window, and shudderingly exclaimed:—

“I have seen him! I have seen him!—
—there!”

“Who?” inquired Lolotte, turning pale.

“The devil!—the devil himself!—the vampire! who vanished, nobody knows how, this day eight years ago! There he was, outside of the window, with his eyes fixed upon the *fraulein*, just as they were when he bewitched her into talking after we all believed her dead; and the minute he saw me, away he vanished again! Lord save us!”

Away rushed Franz into the garden, followed by Lolotte and Babet; and every corner of it was visited and examined by them,—but in vain. No trace of any human being was to be seen, either within its precincts, or beyond in the wild woodland, that began to be partially lighted by the rising moon.

“You were dreaming, Babet,” said Franz, as they all returned to the little parlour; and the other servant lighted the candles and closed the window-shutters.

“ Yes,” replied Babet, slowly, “ dreaming as Doctor Schramm said my old master and mistress were eight years ago ! As sure as I live and am wide awake, I have seen the devil himself. What else, do you think, could have frightened the cup out of my hands ? Oh, my poor cup and saucer ! *alles in tausend stück*,” she added, stooping to pick up the fragments.

Lolotte raised her up, and kissed her cheek : “ Good Babet,” she said, “ I will keep the broken china for your sake, and put it by with all your other gifts to me on this day ; so fret no more about it !”

“ Nay, as for that, I am not thinking of the cup, and would rather break a hundred than that any harm should come to you ; but that face, that face ! why was it glaring there upon you ? and why did it vanish as soon as I looked at it, if it was there for any good ? Doctor Schramm was right, honest man ! when he said that nothing human could have come and gone,

and have done what that pretended traveller did for you eight years ago."

"He cured me, Babet," interrupted Lolotte; "would to heaven that I could but once more behold him!"

"The Lord forbid that you should!" ejaculated Babet; "if there had been any sense in his pawing and clawing, why should not Herr Franz be able to produce the same effects upon you that *he* did? and yet I have seen him try it hour after hour without making you wink, much less sleep. To be sure, your dear mother could, for it was one of *his* devices to teach her his sorceries, and then whenever she put you to sleep you would be talking of him as if you saw him; but I can testify that she never had her health for a single day after he came here, and that shews what he was, and that he came to kill, and not to cure! No, no, God keep us from such visitors for ever more, say I, for that it was the devil I am ready to testify — *der Teufel er selbst!*"

The next day Franz and Lolotte repaired to Dresden to consult Doctor Sturmer, but to their great disappointment they found, upon arriving there, that the distinguished stranger had taken his departure for Prague on the preceding day. Such, however, was the fame his deeds had left behind him, and so miraculous were the cures performed by him, that Franz (whose fears for Lolotte having suddenly been roused, led to a sort of remorseful feeling at having so long been inattentive to her declining state, which could only be appeased by some great exertion on her behalf) determined upon making a journey to Prague with his wife, for the purpose of placing her under the Doctor's care. That he did so may be gathered from the following letters, which are subjoined, in order to throw some light upon the *antécédens* of Doctor Sturmer.

LETTER FROM WOLFGANG STURMER TO
BARON ANTON VON PREINL.

“ Prague, October 29, 18—.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ ONLY two hours ago I returned home from Dresden, punctual to the very moment I had promised to meet you here; but the reward of my exactitude has been a bitter disappointment to me — a letter from you, instead of yourself in person! However, I feel that I have no right to reproach you for the substitution, since you tell me that nothing less than your sister's marriage could have interfered with our engagement, and that as soon as that happy event has taken place you will turn your horses' heads towards Prague. Assure my fair friend the Baroness Bertha of my heartfelt participation in her happiness, and tell her that the fame of her beauty and accomplishments has flown before her to Dresden, where, during my late *séjour*, I heard her universally cited as

the prettiest woman who had appeared at Toplitz this season. Expectation is on the tiptoe for her arrival in Dresden, as old Count Carlowitz, who has decided upon all matters of taste, at the court of Saxony, for the last fifty years, pronounces her to be in all respects the most charming German woman he ever met with; and as far as my own poor judgment goes, I have never seen but one countenance that could surpass hers; but of that, more anon.

“ Well, I have returned from my tour in Northern Germany, and I may, without exaggeration, compare it to a triumphal march. In Berlin and Dresden, my public lectures upon Animal Magnetism have produced the most successful and satisfactory results—that of inducing people to investigate the subject as calmly and dispassionately as *such a subject* will admit, and leading them to submit those persons in whose honesty they have the firmest reliance to be experimentalised upon for the developement of truth. In this manner I have been enabled

to make some wonderful discoveries of hidden diseases, and to perform cures which have startled the most sceptical into belief; and so great has been my success, and the popularity that has followed it, that I have been supplicated to abandon my native city, and to settle in Dresden, where fortune and honours would be showered upon me.

“ What a difference to the journey which I performed eight years ago through the same country — alone, on foot, unknown, with my whole fortune in my knapsack, and that fortune, I believe, did not exceed five gold Fredericks! but how rich was I in enthusiasm, and enterprise, and energy — how happy in the inexperience of twenty years! Life then appeared to me a beautiful romance, of which I impatiently longed to turn over the first leaves; now, at twenty-eight, I look upon it as a melancholy reality. I have scanned those pages, and found in them nothing but disappointment and vanity! True it is, that the chapter of ambition has sur-

passed my expectations; I have there seen the name of the obscure Wolfgang Sturmer raised to celebrity, and become known, not only in his own country, but throughout Europe, as the successful advocate of a persecuted system; but to the romantic temperament of the Poet and the Idealist fame alone has not been sufficient to secure happiness. As long as I had difficulties to combat and assailants to overcome, the blank in my heart was not felt by me; but now that I have rendered the path comparatively smooth for my successors in the same cause, and that by my writings and personal practice I have raised the veil of prejudice from the public mind, and prepared it to receive the lights of truth which our revived system will one day shed upon it,—although neither you nor I shall live to see that day,—I feel as though my mission were at an end; there are no more rocks against which the torrent of my energies may be broken—and the tide rolling onward unobstructed, and expending itself upon the smooth

and barren sands, now overwhelms my soul with an intolerable sense of restless monotony.

“ ’Tis when these dreary convictions press upon me that I sigh for the days of Göttingen, when the poor student, with his mine of imaginary happiness still unexplored, parted at the gates of the University with the only real treasure that he ever possessed — his friend Anton Von Preinl, and set forth in pursuit of ‘ the bubble reputation,’ which, now that it is attained, he finds insufficient to satisfy the cravings of his soul. Do you know that, in the midst of my late successes in Dresden, I became more than ever convinced of the predominancy of that feeling, and with a captiousness which so often follows the triumphs of mere vanity, I turned from the intoxicating flatteries of the most beautiful women there, to dwell upon an episode in my early life, in which, God knows, vanity had no share.

“ You may remember the circumstance that I related to you eight years ago, of my first

essay in Animal Magnetism, and of the romantic feeling which had sprung up in my bosom for the young person whom I had, through that mysterious agency, rescued from death. It was one of those sudden sympathies which would puzzle a philosopher to account for, but which are to me evidences of the truth of one of my favourite theories, which has so often met with your unqualified ridicule, namely, the doctrine of metempsychosis. That the soul of that young girl should have been known to mine in some pre-existing state, is an idea which I love to cherish;—we may have been friends, perhaps lovers;—and thus I account for the feeling with which, when all in that youthful form that could awaken the grosser impulses of passion lay cold and inanimate in the grasp of death, a love not less passionate, but more pure than earthly love, should have pervaded my whole being, and directed all the energies of my soul to recall her fleeting spirit, which, although struggling to emancipate itself from its mortal

coil, paused at the voice of its old companion, and, obedient to the call, returned to place itself under that loved dominion ! It matters not now to dwell upon the romantic dreams in which my imagination then revelled for a moment: the sum of them was, that I would remain near Lolotte, restore her to health, win her affections, and then make her my wife ; but one word served to dispel the visionary scheme of happiness. I casually heard from her mother that she was engaged to be married to another, and I tore myself from the spot that held her, before she could be restored to a consciousness of my presence there. But I never forgot her ; nor has it since been in the power of woman, however beautiful or captivating, to awaken in me the same tender emotions that she did. And so, at the end of eight years, when I once more found myself in the same country with her, and separated only by a few leagues from the very spot where I had first beheld her, an irrepressible desire took pos-

session of me to ascertain whether she still lived, and still inhabited that place. I had intended to make a solitary pilgrimage to it on my way from Dresden to Prague, but that plan was defeated by the decision of the Countess Mannteufel, who, resolved upon rendering my departure from Dresden worthy of my sojourn there, had organized a select party to accompany me as far as Schandau, where a sentimental farewell *fête* was to be got up for me, and our mutual regrets at parting were to be expressed by eating, drinking, and dancing !

“ As soon, however, as the latter part of the entertainment had commenced, I contrived to slip away unperceived by the society ; and taking the well-remembered path that leads from Schandau to the Ottowalder-grund, I arrived in sight of Lolotte’s habitation just as the shades of evening were falling around and enveloping everything in obscurity. Strange that it should have been the very anniversary of the day upon which, eight years before, at the same

evening hour, I had first approached that house; and now, as with a stealthy step and beating heart, I stole through the garden enclosure, a strain of music directed me towards an open casement, close to which I stationed myself, screened by the creepers that clustered around it from the observation of those within, and listened to one of our popular German ballads, so exquisitely performed as to give the character of novelty and freshness to it. The song was sung by a woman's voice of such wondrous sweetness and compass, that, as I hung entranced upon its rich round tones, I remembered the expression that Frau Möller had made use of when, in describing to me her daughter's singing, she had said, 'Angels might listen to her harmony and mistake it for their own,' and I felt convinced that I listened to none other than Lolotte. When the last chords of the piano-accompaniment closed the song there was a silent pause, followed by the murmur of voices in conversation, and then only I ventured to

emerge so far from my hiding-place as to be able to obtain through the open window a view of the interior of the apartment. It was the well-remembered parlour, from which I had fled like a felon eight years before ; but one object alone in it fixed my attention, the beautiful spirit-like figure of Lolotte, dressed in white, and seated at the piano close to the window, her face half shaded by the hand on which she leaned, but still sufficiently revealed to leave no doubt of her identity ; a young man, her husband, I suppose — and I could have hated him for being so, — was seated near her, holding her other hand, and speaking to her with earnestness. I caught the sound of my own name pronounced by him, and, incautiously advancing to hear more of his discourse, I discovered enough of my person to betray myself, for an old woman (the same who had admitted me into the house on my former visit) caught a glimpse of me while she was in the act of serving some refreshment to her mistress ; and whether she

remembered my countenance, or that she mistook me for a robber, I know not, but she uttered a piercing shriek, and letting the tray fall from her hand gave the alarm. Without allowing myself time for reflection I sprang over the garden fence, and quickly regained the road to Schandau, from whence, when I paused to take breath, I could perceive lights moving about in the garden, and hear the shouts of those who were in pursuit of me.

“I reached Schandau before the ball was terminated, and accounted for my absence as well as I could; but my thoughts were far from the scene, and still hovered round the spot I had so recently quitted; the transient view I had just obtained of Lolotte, instead of tranquillising my mind as to her fate, had revived in it all the folly and madness that had characterised my feelings during my first extraordinary approximation to her. I found that neither time nor absence had conquered that strange infatuation, and that now, as heretofore,

my only safety would be in flight; and thus convinced of the ungovernable nature of my sentiments for her, and of the existence of the insuperable obstacle which rendered the further indulgence of those sentiments a deliberate crime, I resolved never to attempt to disturb her tranquillity by obtruding myself into her presence, or allowing her to become aware of the extraordinary power which she so unconsciously exercised over me.

“I did not retire to rest until I had gathered from the innkeeper at Schandau some particulars of the actual state of Lolotte’s family; and from him I learned that the good Pastor Hartmann and his daughter were both dead, that Lolotte had been married more than seven years to her cousin, Franz Möller, who is a *savant* and an author, but, that since she lost her children her health has declined, and that she has not been once to Schandau during the whole of the summer. Poor beautiful Lolotte! she has not, then, escaped the common lot of

humanity, and afflictions and bereavements have fallen upon her in the very noontide of her life. May the undivided affection of her husband compensate to her for all that she has lost ! *Now*, then, I might be her friend. Her friend ? alas ! I fear that I could not be satisfied with that title alone !

“ I have been insensibly led on to make this written confession of my weakness, just as I should have confided it to you in the unrestricted flow of conversation, had we met ; just as I have ever opened to you every thought and feeling of my heart since the commencement of our boyish friendship, without shrinking from the consequences my candour has inevitably entailed upon me, in the shape of your (sometimes) well-directed censure, and ever good-humoured ridicule. In the present instance I am aware that I am furnishing you with arms against myself, upon a point which we have so often argued together, namely, the proneness of imaginative people in general, and

of myself in particular, to create their own misery by rejecting the real good that offers itself to them in the natural course of events, and running after visions of ideal happiness which exist in their exalted imaginations alone, and lead them from folly to folly, from disappointment to disappointment, until at last they are forced to comprehend *one* great reality—the moral of the fable—that in grasping at the shadow the substance has been sacrificed, and both have disappeared together in the treacherous waves. I feel that this may be very appositely applied to me, for I have all the elements of rational happiness within my reach,—moderate wealth, celebrity, popularity, youth, health; and yet all these positive blessings are overlooked by me in the morbid yearning for a shadowy felicity, the possession of which would not perhaps after all contribute to my happiness; for who knows whether Lotte is in reality what my imagination has loved to depict her? But in thus anticipating the

arguments which I know you will use against me, I feel that I have ensured your generous forbearance upon a subject, which I candidly confess to you I could not bear should be treated with *ridicule*; and it will be a sufficient triumph for you to read, under my own hand, the admission that I acknowledge the justice of your opinion, and that I envy the calm temperament and sober judgment which have ever enabled you not only to steer your own course clear of the shoals and quicksands of passion, but to pilot your friend through the breakers into which his rashness has so often precipitated him.

“ Adieu, my dear Anton ! a press of professional occupation will prevent my writing to you again for many days ; let me hear, however, in the mean time of all the gay proceedings at Falkenstein, and believe me to be as ever your faithful friend,

“ WOLFGANG STURMER.”

LETTER FROM WOLFGANG STURMER TO
BARON ANTON VON PRIENL.

“ Prague, Nov. 7th, 18—.

“ OF what use are our wisest resolutions, my dear Anton? idle vanities all! the puny efforts of pigmies to wrestle with a giant! Call that giant what you will, either *Fate*, or *the force of circumstances*, it eventually masters us all; we struggle for a season against its tyranny—we think we have escaped from its dominion—in vain! with an iron grasp it again clutches us, makes us its slaves, and laughs to scorn the idle show of strength with which we dared to brave its power. As for myself, I give up the contest, I feel myself to be *le jouet d'une étrange fatalité*, circumvented in all my best intentions, and come what will to me now, of weal or woe, I shall say with Diderot's hero, that ‘*c'était écrit là-haut!*’

“ When I tell you that the person whose presence I had, as you know, most religiously

determined to fly for ever, is *here* — that Lottte Möller, of whose strange power over my feelings I had made no secret to you, is in Prague, brought by her husband purposely to consult me, and to be placed under my professional care — that I am obliged to see her daily, watch the fluctuations of her charming countenance, listen to her gentle accents, and I fear I must add that I *would not now, if I could*, relinquish the dangerous delight of being of use to her !—when I tell you all this, Anton, the meaning of my preceding remark will be intelligible to you.

“ To render my recital coherent, I must retrograde, and begin by the beginning of this strange adventure. It was only two days after my last letter had been despatched to you that as I was sitting alone in my study in the dusk of the evening, Gottfried announced to me that a gentleman from Dresden wished to see me ; I desired him to be shewn in, supposing that it might be one of my numerous acquaint-

ances from that place passing through Prague, but, when the visitor entered and lights were placed upon the table, I beheld a person with whom I had no previous acquaintance, but whose countenance, nevertheless, struck me as being one of which I had some vague recollection, although I could not at that moment remember when or where I had seen it. He was a handsome young man, with one of those open, honest, phlegmatic German countenances, which prepossess one in their favour without exciting any particular interest; his manner was frank and gentleman-like, and, without any unnecessary circumlocution or attempt at compliment, he told me that he had heard sufficient of my success at Dresden (although he had heard of my stay there too late to profit by it on the spot) to induce him to follow me to Prague with his wife, whose health had been long in a declining state, from a complication of nervous disorders, which had resisted the skill of the medical practitioners

near her; but as she had once, a few years before, derived extraordinary benefit from Mesmeric treatment, he entertained a hope that it might again restore her to health; at all events, he was anxious to make the trial. He had therefore brought her to Prague, in order that she might remain a sufficient time under my care to enable me to ascertain whether her ailments were likely again to yield to the influence of Animal Magnetism, and he entreated that I would see her without loss of time. They were lodging, he said, at the hotel of the 'Drei Linden,' (which you know is on the Graben, a great distance from my residence near the Hraschin,) but he would bring his wife to me at any hour of the next day that I might name. I replied that I would wait upon her at the hotel at eleven o'clock on the following day; and in compliance with my request that he would furnish me with her name, he took a card from his pocket, laid it

upon the table, and making his parting compliments to me retired.

“No sooner had the door closed upon him than I glanced my eye over the card, and read upon it *Franz Möller!* At that name my heart leaped into my throat, and I felt thankful that he was not present to witness an emotion which I could not have repressed, neither could I have accounted for it to him, in any rational manner. I passed the night in a tumult of agitation, but before the hour arrived for my appointed interview with Lolotte the next morning, I had succeeded in regaining all the external calm which it was necessary for me to exhibit on such an occasion; and at eleven o'clock precisely I drove to the *Drei Linden*, where, upon inquiring for Monsieur and Madame Möller, I was shewn into a sitting-room where I found the husband alone. He told me that in consequence of the fatigues of her journey, his wife had been visited by some of her most alarming symptoms during

the night, and had therefore been unable to rise early enough to be ready to receive me, but that she was dressing and would join us in a few moments.

“ ‘ Poor dear Lolotte ! ’ he said,—and if there had been any previous doubt upon my mind as to the *patient* I was about to see, it vanished at that long-cherished name ;—‘ I cannot bring myself to think that she can be seriously ill, still less can I forgive myself for having been so long unconscious of her declining state ; but the fact is that her beauty is so little impaired, and she has so constantly abstained from any expression of suffering, that I have mistaken her increasing bodily languor for a protraction of the mental depression that followed the loss of her children. I must tell you that she has occasional aberrations of intellect, during which visitations she becomes quite *exaltée*, although perfectly harmless ; she will then write the most beautiful and sublime fragments of poetry, and compose music worthy of Weber himself, but

not a line or a note of either does she remember when she returns to her natural state.’

“ I at once discovered that what her husband mistook for aberrations of intellect, were manifestations of natural somnambulism, and I was proceeding to tell him so, when the door opened, and the subject of our discourse herself appeared.

“ How beautiful she looked, that fair and graceful Lolotte, and how little changed at twenty-four from what she had been at sixteen ! Years appeared to have glided so lightly over her, as to leave no trace of their passage on her smooth white brow and delicate child-like features ; there was none of the fretfulness of disease perceptible in her countenance — all there was characterised by a sweet, serious calm, which might have cheated the casual observer into a belief that she had never known sorrow or suffering ; but those who looked beyond the surface might read in the soul-subduing expressions of her eyes a history of feel-

ing repressed, something mystic and melancholy in their abstracted gaze, as though the objects upon which they wandered were not conveyed by the sight to the sense, and that her thoughts dwelt in inward contemplation upon things which had no link in the chain of passing events.

“ I know not what was said during the first moments of our interview ; I can only distinctly remember the moral agitation which her presence occasioned me, and the feeling of wonder almost amounting to displeasure with which I contemplated her own calm self-possession, and the modest dignity with which she met my gaze ; never recalling to mind that although she had been the romance of my life, I, to her, was a perfect stranger.

“ Very soon Franz led the conversation to the subject of her health, and at his desire Lolotte related to me all the circumstances of her former illness, and of the part I had acted in effecting her recovery, not a single particular of

which was either altered or exaggerated by her.

“ ‘I have,’ she said, ‘so often heard the whole circumstance related by my dear mother, that I could almost fancy I had seen it all myself; and her descriptions of my unknown preserver were so vivid,—his pale countenance, his dark flashing eyes, and his high, noble forehead, shaded by raven curls, were so minutely delineated by her, that I think I should recognize him in a multitude.’

“As she pronounced these words she raised her eyes to mine, and, for the first time, wistfully scanning my features, a deep blush suddenly overspread her transparent cheek. She hesitated in what she was going to add; but, after a moment’s painful embarrassment, proceeded to say, ‘Is it not strange that he should have disappeared as he did, without leaving a name by which we might remember him in our prayers? And is it not still more strange that he should never have returned, or in any

way endeavoured to ascertain whether the wonderful cure commenced by him had ever terminated successfully? I suppose that such events were of every-day occurrence to him, and that, in losing sight of us, he forgot us altogether; — but *we* can never forget *him*!’

“I could have fallen at her feet at these words, and, in avowing to her that the nameless wanderer and Wolfgang Sturmer were one and the same person, have discovered to her the fond secret of my soul; but I checked the wild impulse, and, forcing myself to remember that I ought now to be nothing more to Lolotte than her physician, I proceeded to suggest that a trial of my magnetic influence over her should be forthwith essayed.

“And now, Anton, mark what followed, as it will bear out what I have so often told you, of that most remarkable and unaccountable phenomenon elicited by Animal Magnetism in the human frame,—the developement in the person magnetised of a state of being wholly distinct

from their every-day existence, and apparently unconnected with it by any link of association or memory. This is one of the characteristics of the highly lucid state; and I have never met with it but in cases of extreme physical debility. It was some minutes before I succeeded in producing any visible effects upon Lolotte; but, at last, after breathing upon my hands and applying them to her forehead, she sank into a slumber so profound that her very respiration appeared to be suspended.

“Then stooping down, and taking her hand, I whispered to her the never-failing first question of ‘Do you sleep?’

“Instead of answering me, a smile of glad recognition irradiated her countenance, and the words ‘’TIS HE!’ burst from her lips!

“What I then felt it would be impossible for me to describe; if worlds had been offered to me as the price of another word, I could not, at that moment, have uttered it. To my inexpressible relief, Möller hastened to make some

observations, which, by occasioning a pause in my experiment, gave me time to recover my self-possession.

“‘You must know,’ said he, ‘that whenever my wife has been Mesmerised, her mind has reverted to the first person who acted upon her through that agency, and whom she always designates as *He* or *Him*. Her mother has told me, that each time she magnetised her, her allusions to that person were unceasing. She would call upon and apostrophise him, and any attempt to explain to her that he was beyond her reach, would produce such momentary exasperation, that it was thought advisable not to thwart her belief that she would again see him. His image seems to be so inseparably connected with every stage of her magnetic trance, that it is plain she now mistakes you for him. I think it better that you should favour the illusion by replying to her as though you were indeed that person,—for op-

position only irritates her, and, after all, the deception can create no dilemma; for when she awakens, she will have no recollection of anything that has occurred during her magnetic sleep.'

"I could almost have smiled at the simplicity and *bonhomie* of the unsuspecting husband; but to have resisted his suggestion would have been beyond human forbearance,—at least, beyond the share of it that I possess; so I obeyed him.

"‘Lolotte,’ I said, ‘’Tis I, indeed; have you anything to say to me?’

"‘You must leave me no more,’ she replied. ‘Why have you remained away so long?’

"‘I am now here to do your bidding,—to remain near you as long as you wish, and to give you all my attention. Where do you suffer, Lolotte?’

"‘Here,’ she answered, laying my hand upon her heart, and holding it there.

“ ‘Can you give me any insight into the cause of that suffering? and can you describe to me the actual appearance of your heart?’ ”

“ With surprising clearness she gave me a description of the state of that organ, showing that it was acted upon by a violent nervous contraction and spasmodic affection, which, although producing alarming and painful symptoms, was wholly unconnected with any ‘organic vice.’ There was also a morbid affection of the liver, such as I have frequently known to result from any great and continued mental affliction, — a spasmodic cough. The circulation of the blood was completely deranged, and the whole nervous system in a state of the greatest irritation.

“ All of this was described by her with anatomical precision, to the inexpressible astonishment of her husband; who, however, when he recovered his speech, assured me, that she must be quite mistaken, as it was the opinion of Dr. Schramm, of Schandau, that her symptoms

were all pulmonary. I told him, however, that I had such faith in the accuracy of all that she had just told me, which was not an *opinion*, but an *insight* into her case, that I should not balance my own, or any other professional person's opinion, against it; but treat her for the complaints she had pointed out, and according to the remedies she herself should suggest. I then asked her if magnetism would be beneficial to her, and she replied, that it would be indispensable to her recovery; but that other remedies must also be adopted, some of which she pointed out, but professed not to be *able* to see the rest of them *at that time*. She then declared herself to be wearied with my questions, and desired that I would suffer her to remain quiet for half an hour.

“Her injunctions were obeyed, and Möller and myself retired to the further end of the room to await the result. Precisely as the half-hour expired she stretched her limbs, raised herself upon the sofa, and rubbing her eyes as

a child does, when half roused from slumber, recovered her perception by degrees.

“ ‘ Well, Lottschen,’ said her husband, ‘ you have had a famous sleep: how do you feel after it ?’

“ ‘ Oh ! so well,—so much better,’ was her reply; ‘ surely I must have slept several hours; for all my fatigue appears to have passed away !’

“ ‘ No,’ said I, ‘ you have only been three quarters of an hour asleep; but tell me, have you had any dreams? Do you recollect anything that passed during that period?’

“ ‘ Nothing,’ she replied, ‘ except the indescribable sensation of calm that gradually stole over me. After that, all was oblivion.’

“ ‘ Well,’ I rejoined, ‘ having now satisfied myself of the power of Magnetism over you, I must hear from you a statement of your symptoms and sensations according to your waking perceptions of them.’ And then proceeding to question her closely upon the subject of her health, I drew from her a minute description of

all that she suffered, and also a confession of her own conviction that she was dying of an aneurism of the heart, to which had recently been super-added symptoms of pulmonary consumption.

“ Thus you see how widely dissimilar were the suppositions she hazarded *waking*, from the decision she had so oracularly pronounced while *asleep* ! When I told her of it, she shook her head with a languid smile and said, ‘ You are deceiving me, but you are mistaken in doing so. I am prepared to *hear* the worst — I have been long prepared to *meet it*, and have familiarized myself with the idea of death, even in its most painful form, so do not shrink from telling *me* the truth, Doctor Sturmer ! And as for my husband, he must learn to look it in the face also ; I shall have courage for us both ! Only tell me *when* it is likely to be — that is the only point upon which I have now any anxiety, for I have a yearning to die at home, that I may be laid in the same grave with my children ! ’

“ ‘ You talk of leaving me,’ said Möller, ‘ as if it would cost you no regret to do so ! Is it fair or kind in you thus to express yourself, and does it not look like a reproach for my having been so long unconscious that you were ill ? If you had only told me that —— ’

“ ‘ Pardon me, dear Franz,’ she interrupted, taking his hand, ‘ pardon me if I have pained you — and do not imagine I could ever intend to reproach you ; you have been all goodness and patience with me, and God knows, I feel it !’

“ *Goodness and patience !* they are often misapplied terms where *carelessness* and *apathy* would approach nearer the truth. *Love* and *tenderness* should have been the sentiments exhibited towards Lolotte by the man so blest as to be her husband. But are they in Möller’s nature ?—I fear not. Even at that moment there had been more of *pique* than of tenderness in the tone with which he had remarked upon those affecting expressions of Lolotte, (which,

in unconsciously revealing to me the desolate state of her feelings, had caused the tears to rush into my eyes,) but it vanished before the charm of her frank and gentle manner, and recovering his good humour he kissed the hand she had placed in his, and proceeded to read to her the notes he had made of the opinions pronounced by her in her magnetic trance.

“As for me I felt that it was time to be gone; I had tried my feelings to the utmost in that interview, and another moment might have betrayed me into some imprudence; so promising to return the following day, I took my leave of them, and left the hotel like one bewildered. Such are the particulars of my first visit to Lolotte; since then I have seen her every day, and by following her own prescriptions I have already produced most beneficial effects. I shall restore her to health, but it will be at the sacrifice of my own — of my peace of mind — perhaps of my reason. I cannot thus constantly approach her with im-

punity, and a nearer acquaintance with her, instead of destroying my illusions, has confirmed and strengthened the passionate predilection which the first sight of her awakened in me — and so matters remain for the present.

“I have never met with a case of greater lucidity than Lolotte’s, or one which more completely proves the existence of two separate states of being in the same person. One of the peculiar features of her magnetic state is a total oblivion of all her natural ties — the recollection of her mother, grandfather, children, and husband, is completely obliterated for the time being; that circle of affection which had been all the world to her, and which, when broken, had well nigh caused her heart to break also — the loves and the sorrows of her youth are then totally obliterated from the tablets of memory; — but she has moments of ecstatic delirium which occasionally supervene, when she will remain with her eyes

raised to heaven and fixed, her lips moving as though she spoke, (and yet no sounds issue from them,) and an expression so sublime and so beatified spread over her whole countenance and person, that one might imagine the glories of heaven were then revealed to her spiritual gaze. Once, and once only, as the vision appeared to fade away from her, she murmured ‘I have seen them!’ but nothing more could we extract from her, for the characteristics of her usual magnetic sleep immediately returned, and she again became ‘the queen of a fantastic realm,’ in which, apparently, two persons only exist — *herself* and *me*! At those times nothing can exceed the fond familiarity of her manner to me, or the tender deference with which she obeys my every injunction — but when she awakens to her natural state, all is changed; she is still amiable and charming — but retiring, almost reserved with me.

“I must not omit to tell you, that in conse-

quence of Lolotte having found the hotel too noisy and confined for a continuance, Möller has hired the small house communicating with my garden, which you know I have lately had thoughts of purchasing and fitting up as a pavilion, and they are settled there for the winter; he is busily occupied in a work connected with his particular studies (he is a Professor of Persian and Arabic), and she passing all her intervals from suffering in such feminine employments as are the evidences of a well-regulated mind. Every morning when I pay my professional visit there, I determine to restrict myself to that limited intercourse alone; and yet every evening I find myself again at the door of the little habitation, where a smiling welcome ever awaits me. I am ashamed of the feelings which I carry there, when I contrast them with the guileless confidence that is evinced to me by both husband and wife. Come to me, dear Anton, and snatch me from this too

dangerous society. I see her too often for my tranquillity — too little for my happiness ! I ought to fly, but were I to do so her health would be sacrificed ; if I remain, I am lost !

“ Ever yours,

“ WOLFGANG STURMER.”

CHAPTER III.

And her who was his destiny came back.

* * * * *

What business had she there at such a time ?

LORD BYRON.

UNFORTUNATELY for Sturmer, his friend could not then obey the call; family affairs rendered his presence necessary in a distant part of the country, and although his letters were filled with the best advice urged with all the good feeling and fearless candour that were his distinguishing characteristics, although he shrank not from placing before Sturmer a picture of the dreadful consequences to which the indulgence of his unauthorized feelings

must lead, and, divesting it of the dazzling sophistries of sentiment, held it up to him in its true colours, a black transcript of unlawful affection and dishonourable purpose — yet, those letters shared the fate of almost all *written* counsels — they were perused with emotion, aroused the mind to temporary compunction and virtuous resolves, and then were thrown aside to be forgotten in the whirlwind of conflicting feelings which a guilty passion had raised in his bosom, or to be superseded by the all-absorbing enchantment of a constantly sustained intercourse with its lovely object, where every good purpose — every wise resolution — everything but love and Lolotte were forgotten ! Whereas the *personal* authority of Anton Von Preinl would have been exerted to tear his friend from the scene of temptation, or, failing to do so, to have roused Lolotte to a sense of her danger, and have led her to remove herself in time from its consequences. This, however, was not to be, and

everything appeared to conspire to throw Lolotte and Sturmer more constantly together, and thus to rivet more strongly the fetters which passion had long since forged for the heart of the one, and love, with gentler but not less subtle power, was preparing for that of the other. Besides that the almost undivided attention which Möller gave to his literary labours left him little time to devote to his wife, and that satisfied with the exertion of having brought her to Prague, and placed her under the care of one of the most celebrated practitioners in Germany, he thought that further anxiety or derangement of his usual habits on her account would be a useless waste of time, he had found out two or three literary acquaintances at Prague, with whom he fell into the habit of occasionally passing the evening, and glad of an excuse for not leaving Lolotte alone, he invariably chose the moment of Sturmer's evening visit to absent himself for that purpose.

How fraught with dangerous delight were those long *tête-à-têtes* to both ! Sometimes Sturmer would read to Lolotte selections from Schiller's and Goethe's works ; sometimes Schlegel's translation of Shakspeare ; at others, portions of her favourite poem, Klopstock's Messiah. But such was his admiration of the innocence of her mind, and so great the involuntary awe and respect with which the modest dignity of her demeanour had inspired him, that he never attempted through the insidious agency of immoral writers to undermine that purity, which was at once the source of his admiration and of his despair. And in that reserve lay the greatest peril for Lolotte. It deceived her as to the state of Sturmer's feelings for her, and left her wholly unsuspecting of the nature of her own for him, wholly unguarded against their daily encroachments upon her heart ! For Lolotte had never before loved ; and, what is more, from having lived out of the world, she was a stranger to those conven-

tional flirtations, those privileged sentimentalities permitted in society, which impart such premature experience to the minds of young women, and, by accustoming them to the *language* of love before the *sentiment* is understood, endue them with the dangerous power of coldly playing with the passions; of interpreting every guarded word, and appropriating every unguarded look as vanity may prompt; of encouraging or repelling the advances of love, as prudence may direct; of venturing to the very confines of vice, and believing themselves to be virtuous because they have stopped short there;—finally, of becoming adepts in that heartless science which, while it makes the coquette, spoils the woman. Of all those arts of attack and defence poor Lolotte was profoundly ignorant; but in their place she possessed a charm more powerful for the delicate mind, more attractive, perhaps, even for the libertine, that “tender bloom of heart” which, once rubbed off, nothing can restore, that virgin

purity of feeling for which, if lost, the jargon of *sentiment*, or the calculations of the most refined coquetry, however artfully applied, can never compensate. She did not, therefore, attempt to conceal the pleasure which Sturmer's society afforded her, or to analyse the feelings which gradually led her to identify his image with all her thoughts and occupations; for they were naturally accounted for by her as evidences of her deep and grateful sense of all the benefits he had showered upon her. He had, by his unremitting care, relieved her from severe bodily suffering, and restored her to comparative health; he had opened new sources of intellectual enjoyment to her; he was, besides, her only society; the only person who had rescued her mind from preying upon itself; the only one who possessed the power to divert her thoughts from the gloomy contemplation of the grave. And, if those thoughts now dwelt upon him, absent as well as present; if she learned to live upon the expectation of beholding him

“ogni sera, ogni mattina, ciascun ora, e poi domani,” still, gratitude, exalted and enthusiastic gratitude, were the only feelings which she believed had caused that fond pre-occupation of her mind.

It was at this period of our history that Möller, having terminated the first part of his voluminous work, and anxious to present it to the public, announced his determination of going to Dresden to superintend its publication. The winter had then set in with unusual severity; the cold was piercing, and the snow lay many feet upon the ground; it was therefore out of the question that Lolotte, in her delicate state of health, should accompany him at that inclement season, even if he had wished that she should do so; but he did not; for her presence, and the care she required, would have entailed upon him more trouble than gratification; he therefore made hasty arrangements for his departure alone, and promising to return to Prague as soon as the nature of his business

would allow, he set out for Dresden in the month of January, leaving Lolotte to the care of the man whom he looked upon as his best friend, the soul of honour, the type of all that is noble and honest in human nature.

And Sturmer *was* an honest man ; his nature was essentially noble and generous, his intentions upright and pure ; but, alas ! we have seen that there was no governing principle of religion in him, none of “that strength which cometh from above,” to enable him steadily to wrestle with and overcome temptations, however alluring, or render easy the task of daily disciplining his feelings into the ways of peace and virtue. He was the creature of passion and impulse, driven hither and thither by them, sometimes to good, sometimes to evil, never to deliberate treachery. The confidence placed in him by Franz Möller touched him to the soul ; it called forth all his better feelings, and made him shrink with horror from the mere idea of abusing it. In the first glow of gener-

ous emotion which it had elicited, he believed that henceforward every sacrifice of selfish indulgence would be possible to him, and, strong in his virtuous resolve, he determined to impose such restraints upon his intercourse with Lolotte, during her husband's absence, as would leave him no opportunity of betraying the sacredness of the trust that had been placed in him. He had been in the habit of following his magnetic treatment of Lolotte always in the presence of her husband, that is to say, in the same room with him, and liable to his superintending and overhearing all that passed upon those occasions; but, after the first two or three experiments had been successfully made, Möller had ceased to give his attention to them, and, absorbed in his writing at the further end of the room, he would leave Sturmer in undisturbed communion with his wife, free to listen to, and to encourage those fond outpourings of her soul, which he had not the courage to

repress, and which so eloquently, and unequivocally convinced him of the power he possessed over her in that state, and of the strange mysterious sympathy which existed between them, and was then, and *then* only, revealed to him by look or word. But, to pursue those dangerous experiments with Lolotte *alone*, unrestrained by the presence of her husband, and exposed to the combined fascinations of her unequalled beauty and her unresisting tenderness, would have been an effort beyond his strength of mind to achieve, a mad tempting of fate, that could only have ended in defeat and remorse. He suddenly suspended his magnetic treatment of her, upon the plea that, for the present, her health would not require its continuance; and when in her presence sought for safety in the contemplation of that rare union of dignity and sweetness which characterized her natural state, and seemed to possess the magic power of awing into respectful adoration every wild, un-

hallowed wish of his heart, and of imparting to his feelings some of the redeeming purity and gentleness of her own.

But he soon grew restless and unhappy under this continued restraint; he had never accustomed himself to any sustained self-control, and his spirits and temper failed him in this first trial of his fortitude; even his courage sank to the lowest ebb, when, at the end of a few days, he perceived that Lolotte began to droop and languish under the too-suddenly altered system of treatment he had adopted, and that symptoms of nervous excitement were again becoming visible in her. Then wild thoughts and wilder wishes would obtrude, and assert their temporary sway over his reason. A thousand times in the day he determined to throw himself at Lolotte's feet, avow his mad passion for her, and urge her to fly with him to some distant land, where, forgetful of every other tie, they might be all the world to each other. Was she not already all the world to him?—

her love, her innocent, unconscious love he already possessed, but that was no longer sufficient for his happiness — earth held no blessing for him unconnected with the possession of Lolotte — she must participate in his guilty thoughts and wishes — she must abandon herself to him unconditionally — she must be his alone ! but would she ever consent to such a sacrifice ? and at that thought he shrank within himself, abashed by the imagined scorn of her calm reproving eye, and the bitter indignation with which he felt that she would resent so deep an insult to her purity, so ungenerous an advantage taken of her unprotected state !

Such were the struggles with which the mind of Sturmer was now torn, and against which he felt himself each day less equal to contend. During the day-time his innumerable professional avocations carried him away from the contemplation of his own misery, and procured him a temporary suspension of suffering, but in the evening the reaction was dreadful. He

had ceased to go into the world because the irritation of his spirits rendered him unfit to enact with proper calm and decorum his part in that heartless and frivolous comedy of which society is the theatre. He had ceased, too, to visit Lolotte in the evening as heretofore, and had contrived to time his interviews with her immediately after dinner, because at that hour he was sure to find her maid knitting in the same room with her, and he felt that the presence of a third person was now necessary to restrain his expressions within the bounds of prudence. Thus unsettled in mind he shut himself up in his study during the long evenings, and endeavoured to force his attention to the investigation of some point of scientific interest, but the effort was fruitless; his eye glanced over the page while his thoughts wandered far from it; and in a fit of uncontrollable exasperation against himself, against fate, against the world, which he accused of having created conventional rules of conduct, falsely termed

virtue and wholly inconsistent with happiness, he would dash his book to the ground, and pacing up and down the room abandon himself to those dreams of passion which have already been described.

One night when he had been more than usually excited by these conflicting emotions, and that, exhausted by the struggle, he felt the impossibility of longer protracting it, he came to the resolution of writing to Lolotte, and unfolding to her the whole history of his heart, from the first dawn of his affection for her, to the present period; yes, he would tell her all—even the encouragement which she had so unconsciously given to his love during her magnetic trances, and the mad hopes to which those looks and words of tenderness had given birth—she should know of the long struggle between passion and honour that had almost driven him to frenzy, and had ended in despair, because no sophistry could reconcile to his mind the possibility of *both* triumphing;

— either honour must be forgotten, or love sacrificed—vanquished it could never be by him ! He felt that he dare trust himself in her presence no more, for the pleadings of passion would silence the voice of virtue—he would tear himself from the place that held her ; but in this apparently heartless abandonment of the trust her husband had placed in him by leaving her to his care—in this humiliating avowal of all his weakness and all his misery, he would force her to confess that Wolfgang Sturmer was an honest man ! He sat down to embody these confessions in the most coherent language he could command, but the burning tears that fell from his eyes blotted and effaced the words as fast as he traced them, and rendered the task a work of time. When the letter was terminated it was almost midnight ; the cold was intense, and the snow, as it fell in thick flakes upon the ground, was drifted by the wind against the windows that opened into the garden ; all without was in unison

with his own dreary heart. Sturmer lighted a lamp and went into an adjoining room, where, in the drawer of an antique cabinet, was deposited Lolotte's bridal crown, which he had determined to send to her with his letter, as a symbol of his identity with the wandering student. Long and fondly did he gaze upon the faded memorial of his ill-fated passion before he summoned courage to displace it from the corner which it had so long occupied; at last, in doing so, the chaplet caught in something that lay beneath it, and, drawing forth both objects, Sturmer perceived that it had become entangled in the lock of an old pistol of his father's, the only relic he possessed of that parent. A gloomy thought, tinged with superstitious feeling, suddenly shot through his mind.

“Ha!” he said with a bitter smile; “fate placed you there together to point out to me the only cure for my ills — the hint shall not be given in vain!” and placing his lamp upon

the table he proceeded to examine the lock of the pistol.

At that moment the noise of a window opening in the next room startled him from his occupation. The lateness of the hour and the fact of all the servants having gone to bed rendered any such unseasonable intrusion a matter of considerable surprise to him, and he hastily advanced to the door that communicated with the study, to ascertain who the midnight visitant might be; but he suddenly stopped there, transfixed by what he beheld, and, for the moment, believed that he gazed upon some "unreal mockery," which, in the next instant, would "vanish into thin air." There stood the form that for ever haunted his thoughts. Was it the breathing form of Lolotte, or only a shadowy semblance conjured up by his disturbed imagination, to delude him into the belief that he beheld once more her whom he had but a moment before relinquished for ever? For an instant the figure remained motionless

at the open casement, then, stepping forward deliberately closed the window after her, and advancing into the centre of the room more fully revealed to him her features; and Sturmer saw that it was indeed the living Lolotte, but in that mysterious state of natural somnambulism which irresistibly impels the sleeping body to follow the impulses of the waking mind. She had evidently just risen from her bed, for her only vestments consisted of a loose white wrapping-gown thrown over her night-dress, and a pair of slippers into which her small white feet had been hastily thrust; the cap that confined her beautiful hair was covered with snow, and the light which she held in her hand had been extinguished by the falling flakes as she traversed the garden. There was a restless melancholy in her countenance not natural to its usual serene expression, and the sad abstracted gaze of her large dilated eyes told of some vision of sorrow that was passing within.

Sturmer dared not move; he scarcely dared to breathe, lest, by suddenly awakening her, he might occasion one of those alarming paroxysms which are the inevitable consequence of disturbing sleep-walkers in the midst of their wanderings; and so, with the pistol and chaplet in his hand, he remained motionless as a statue at the door, following her movements with his eyes only, but prepared to interfere should she meditate any egress that would involve her in danger.

When she had reached the table at which Sturmer had been writing, she paused for a moment in a listening attitude, then shook her head as if in disappointment, and sighing deeply sank into the chair which he had occupied while tracing his confessions, and buried her face in her hands — but presently removing them, with an impatient gesture she dashed the gathering tears from her eyes, and drawing the pen and ink towards her busily occupied herself in arranging materials for writing.

The first sheet of paper that fell under her hand was the blotted transcript of Sturmer's stormy feelings, which he had scrawled in characters as illegible and incoherent as the uncontrollable passion that had dictated them; and deliberately folding it in the form of a letter, she placed it, without reading its contents, in her bosom. Again she listened — then drawing the paper before her, with a rapid hand traced upon it her thoughts, while Sturmer, noiselessly advancing to the back of her chair, leaned over it, and followed with his eyes the course of those rambling reflections.

“It is strange,” she wrote, “that I cannot hear him, and yet I feel that he is not far off — then why does he not come to calm these terrors which have destroyed my rest?”

“We were but two in the world — we were everything to each other. Every day that brought us together but served to rivet more closely the links that united our souls. If I suffered, he stretched forth his hand, and that

magic touch restored me to ease ! Now all is changed — all is silent — I hear not his step, I hear not his voice — and yet I have watched for them, hung upon their expectation for days. What has become of the time when a wish of mine brought him to my side — when his presence dispelled all my sufferings, and shed life and light upon my darkened soul ? *Now* I am alone — always alone ! alas, what have I done to deserve so cruel an abandonment ?

“ Return to me, my only friend, I can bear this solitude no longer — the silence and the chill of death have suddenly surrounded me, and a vague terror of evil impending to both of us has scared away my rest — even now a mysterious voice whispers within me ‘ *the danger is near — seek him and save him, even if you perish in the attempt !* ’ ”

There was something so solemn and startling in this strange illustration of the theory of *presentiments* (those forebodings of evil which a French author has fancifully styled “ *Les fan-*

tômes du futur”) — an evidence so strong of that mysterious sympathy which binds with electric chain the soul of one being to that of another, that even Sturmer, prepared as his mind was to believe in every phenomenon of that nature presented by somnambulism, whether *magnetic* or *natural*, could not but marvel at the prophetic instinct which it had developed in Lolotte of misfortune impending to himself — an instinct so strong and so unerring that, although the precise nature of the evil appeared to be undefined to her,— yet he, who then held in his hand the instrument which had suggested to him the idea of self destruction, well knew its magnitude! — the sense of his danger had impelled her towards him with irresistible force at the exact moment when her presence might save him from himself. He flung the pistol from him with a mixture of awe and horror, but the noise it made in falling to the ground did not arouse the Somnambulist, who had no sooner traced the last words than she

threw the pen from her, and starting to her feet with a frenzied gesture, seized the extinguished light she had placed upon the table, and rushed towards the door which opened from the study into the vestibule; and it is a remarkable circumstance that although the pistol lay in her way, she turned aside to avoid it, shuddering as she did so.

There was no time to be lost in arresting her progress; her hand was already upon the lock of the door, and in another moment she would have been wandering through the house to the imminent risk of discovering herself to some of the servants; but Sturmer well knew that to have awakened her might have been fatal to her reason, and he, therefore, interposed the authority of magnetism to calm her delirium; advancing gently behind her he stretched forth his hand, and held it over her head for a second. The transition effected by that simple gesture was instantaneous—her countenance, which but a moment before had presented all the phrenzy

and exaltation of a Pythoness, suddenly became fixed and motionless as that of a statue; her eyes, which had been dilated to their utmost extent, closed; her hands fell powerless by her side, and she would have sunk to the ground had not Sturmer received her in his arms. He bore her to the chair she had just quitted, and placing his hand upon her forehead, “determined” by that magic touch the magnetic trance to the utmost limit of its profoundness and lucidity.

“Ah!” she murmured with a deep and prolonged inspiration, as though a weight of misery had suddenly been removed from her breast, “I have found him — he is here — he is safe!” and she stretched forth her hands towards him. Sturmer only replied by pressing those beautiful hands to his lips. “Oh, my friend!” she continued, “I see you at last; but let me hear your voice — speak to me — tell me that you will leave me no more — promise me that you will not abandon your poor Lolotte.”

“I promise it!”

“ Swear it to me.”

“ I swear it !”

A smile of rapture so sublime in its expression lighted up her lovely features, that Sturmer, in speechless admiration, fell upon his knees as though he beheld a being of another world before him. “ Oh !” she said in a tone of thrilling tenderness, and pressing his hands to her heart, “ now, indeed, I feel that death even cannot tear you from me !”

Lost in a delirium of happiness, intoxicated by the beauty and the tenderness of Lolotte, Sturmer paused not to weigh the peril of yielding to the temptation that assailed him — he forgot that the innocent being before him was unconscious of the power which she was so uncompromisingly giving him over her, and that *he* alone must be responsible for the consequences ; he forgot the sad resolves which but an hour or two before he had formed ; — he forgot that if Lolotte were to be discovered by any of his servants alone with him at that midnight hour,

that her reputation would be at their mercy ! With the selfishness of passion he thought only of the joy of being with her, and of prolonging to the utmost the dream of love that had succeeded to the darkness of his despair ; the moment for calm reflection had passed away, and impulse had asserted its wild sway over him. Kneeling at the feet of Lolotte, her hands clasped in his, he covered them with passionate kisses ; — a word from her recalled him to himself and to a sense of her situation : — “ I am cold ! ” she murmured, shuddering, and drawing more closely around her the light night-dress which so insufficiently shielded her from the freezing atmosphere, “ take me back to my room.”

Sturmer threw open the window, and raising the unresisting form of Lolotte in his arms, rapidly bore his light burthen through the garden, guided by the light which glimmered from her bedroom window across the white waste.

The door of her house was ajar, and everything within buried in the silence of profound repose. It was evident that the servant had not been awakened by her mistress descending the stairs and leaving the house; and the heavy breathings that proceeded from the half open door of her room as they passed it, told audibly of slumbers that would have required more noisy efforts to dispel.

Sturmer lightly ascended the staircase, the dim rays of the night lamp which streamed through the open door of Lolotte's chamber lending its mysterious light to guide his steps; not a word was spoken by either of them — the last step was gained — Lolotte was safe! For a moment he hesitated ere he crossed the threshold of her room — it was but for a moment — in the next he stepped forward, and with a throbbing heart deposited Lolotte in her chamber — that sanctuary which he had never before entered!

CHAPTER IV.

Les liens du sang qui ont tant de poids sur les natures vulgaires, que sont-ils au prix de ceux que nous forge le ciel dans le trésor de ses mystérieuses sympathies ?

GEORGE SAND.

WHEN, at a late hour the next morning, Lotte awakened, with no trace upon her memory of anything which had occurred during the night, or any recollection save that of having retired to rest in a state of nervous irritation, which had exhausted itself in tears; and subsequently yielded to a deep, dreamless, and unbroken slumber, the first object which her eyes fell upon was a sealed letter lying upon the table near the bedside, and directed in her husband's

hand-writing. Close to it lay a paper, folded in the form of a letter, but without any address. They had apparently been placed there by her servant before she awakened; and she hastened to peruse them, beginning with her husband's, which was as follows:—

“Dresden, January 31st, 18—.

“DEAR LOTTSCHEN,

“ALTHOUGH in my last letter I told you that I should by this time be able to announce to you my return to Prague, I find that it will be impossible for me to leave Dresden for some time longer, or at present to fix any certain period for my doing so; for the publication of my book is unavoidably retarded by the necessity of adding notes to it in the form of an Appendix, (which was suggested to me by Professor Winter, to whom I submitted the MSS.), and in the compiling of which I am now busily occupied; so that the business of printing, revising, and correcting, is yet all before me, and

I cannot see my way through it for several weeks to come,—certainly not before the beginning of March. At that period there is to be a sale of Retch's library, at Leipzig, which I would not miss attending upon any account, as he has in his collection several curious old editions, which I should be glad to purchase; therefore, a journey to Leipzig will be indispensable, and will involve a week or ten days longer absence from you;—say till the middle of March.

“In this state of affairs, I leave it to you to decide whether you will join me at Dresden or remain where you are until my business will allow of my returning to bring you home. I should recommend the latter alternative upon many accounts; principally because you are evidently deriving so much benefit from our good friend Sturmer's treatment of you, that it would be a pity to interrupt it prematurely, and thus throw away all the time and expense which it has cost us to place you under his

care. Besides, this is a bad season for travelling, and we shall, under all circumstances, be obliged to pay for the house at Prague until the spring; and should you come here, I must take a lodging for you,—an additional expense,—for a bed-room and cabinet now suffice for me; and I have brought in Babet from the Ottowaldergrund to manage my bachelor establishment. So, all things considered, you had better remain quietly where you are until the spring. However, do as you like; and if you have set your heart upon joining me, come.

“I hope you continue as well as when you last wrote. Say all that is kind from me to our good friend Sturmer, who is looked upon here as a demi-god. *Entre nous*, my writing goes on much better at a distance from you and him. Those musical evenings distracted my attention in spite of myself; but now that I have nothing to divide it, I throw off page after page in the evening with surprising celerity. I shall get a good price for the work when

finished. Adieu ! dear Lottschen, and believe me to be your affectionate husband,

“ F. W. A. MÖLLER.”

Lolotte perused the apathetic communication of her husband with fluctuating feelings; at one moment grateful for his indulgence in leaving to her own discretion to decide whether she should join him or not; then chilled and mortified by the absence of all expression of solicitude, on his part, as to what her decision might be, and the superior interest which, it was evident, his book possessed for him over his wife; and finally thankful that he had pronounced in favour of her remaining where she was: for at the mere suggestion of leaving Prague, a pang had shot athwart her heart, which it would have been difficult for her *then* to have accounted for, blind as she still remained to the precise nature of her feelings. She, however, quickly adopted her husband's views; and having determined to write to him

by return of post to acquaint him with her willing acquiescence, was rising to do so with an exhilaration of spirits which she had not experienced for many days, when the other letter, which had been overlooked by her in the flutter occasioned by Möller's epistle, caught her eye; and she paused to examine it also.

It was the confession of Sturmer's love and despair, which she had appropriated to herself during her nocturnal visit to him, and which must have fallen from her bosom when he bore her into her chamber on the preceding night, and, in all probability, had been picked up by her maid, and deposited upon the table when she had brought in the other letter that morning.

At first her eye wandered carelessly over the blotted lines; but soon her attention became riveted and absorbed by them. Her colour went and came, now fading to ashy paleness, now flushing to deepest crimson as she read on! Her bosom heaved until she gasped for

breath ! At last, a broken cry burst from her lips,—a cry where terror, surprise, and joy were mingled in strange confusion,—and crushing the paper to her heart as though she would have hidden it there for ever, she sank back upon her pillow overwhelmed by the intensity of her feelings !

Yes ! those passionate avowals of long-cherished, irrepressible love had suddenly awakened an echo in her bosom which death alone would henceforth have the power to silence. That incoherent yet eloquent history of Sturmer's heart had, as with a lightning flash, unveiled to her the secrets of her own,—she loved and was beloved ! Oh ! moment of unequalled felicity ! to be experienced but *once* in our lives ! and then to be experienced only by the novice in sentiment,—when the heart, with a thrill of ecstasy, awakens from its torpor of tranquillity to a sense of emotions beautiful as new,—the blessed consciousness of its *untold* yet *requited* tenderness ! Life has nothing to offer com-

parable to that fleeting joy,—why, then, is it so often doomed to be followed by remorse? Why are sensations, so gracious and heaven-born, destined so soon to catch the taint of earth, and become for ever quenched in tears of agony and repentance?

Alas ! for frail humanity that it should be so ! With Lolotte it could not be otherwise. That transient glow of ineffable joy, which for a moment had usurped the place of every other sentiment in her bosom, quickly subsided into the chill of despair, as, with a shudder, she remembered that she was the wife of another, and that Sturmer could never, without a crime, be more to her than he now was. With tearless, burning eyes, she resumed the perusal of his letter, and read to the end the too faithfully delineated struggles of a heart which passion had enslaved, yet had not blinded to the dictates of virtue, — the avowal of over-tasked energies, which had prostrated his mind to more than woman's weakness, yet had left him sufficient

strength to seek for safety from her fatal presence in flight, and to choose his own despair in preference to her indignation and scorn! All this she read with breathless attention; and, pondering over each expression, vainly sought for a word which might, by wounding her delicacy, arouse her woman's pride to resent the avowal of a sentiment forbidden by the laws of God and man. There was not one to be found!—not even in the allusion he had made to the tenderness she had so fatally and unwittingly evinced for him during her magnetic trances. Love, idolatry, respect, despair were there;—but the pleadings of passion had, with a last effort, been forced back upon his bursting heart, and no evidence of selfish weakness was to be traced upon that paper, save in the stains left by the burning tears that had fallen upon and almost effaced the confession of his misery!

This absence of selfishness in the love she had inspired, completed the subjugation of Lollotte's soul. One hope implied, one entreaty

urged by him, would have alarmed the dignity of outraged virtue into severity and reproach; but his hopeless devotion had totally disarmed her, and where she would have blamed she could only pity and admire, and, alas!—what is more,—love and despair as he did. Terrified by the vehemence of emotions so new to her, she fell upon her knees and invoked the aid of Heaven in restoring calm to her mind, and granting it strength to resist and vanquish the unhallowed sentiment that had thus insidiously crept into her heart. Who is there that has not experienced, in moments of painful excitement and self-abandonment, the benign influence of prayer? Who has not felt its efficacy in calming the troubled and bewildered spirit, when all the arguments of philosophy and the reasoning of worldly wisdom have failed to soothe, to persuade, or to control? Lolotte, from her earliest years, had been accustomed “to cast her cares upon Him who careth for us;” and now she rose from her knees purified

and strengthened in mind by that devout supplication to her heavenly Father. Tears,—the first that she had shed,—tears of humility and contrition for her involuntary fault, had fallen from her eyes, and calmed the tumult of her soul as she prayed; but they were not the childish tears of a weak and vacillating mind, vainly mourning over difficulties which it has not energy to contend with. They were the harbingers of loftier, purer thoughts, and, as they rolled unheeded over her pale cheeks, her courage and her composure returned: she blushed for the emotions into which a momentary delirium had surprised her, and resolved to atone for them by the sacrifice of every unholy sentiment upon the altar of duty and principle.

But, oh! the difficulty of conveying her resolution to Sturmer in language that should not betray the anguish of her soul! For, although she had determined to relinquish all intercourse with him for ever, she could not thus resign him without a pang that made her

heart die within her. Page after page was written by her, and torn in despair as expressing too much or too little of what she felt. She had not the courage to reproach him — and why should she? he had asked nothing of her but her pity and her esteem, and if his sentiments were unfortunately beyond his own control, he had proved to her that his actions were not; he had, to the last, behaved like a man of honour! Still less must she betray the tenderness of her soul to him, or raise one hope which virtue forbade should be realised; she would enclose his own letter to him, and confining herself to an announcement of her intention to leave Prague immediately, request that he would receive her farewell in writing, and not seek to see her before her departure; and having thus determined to restrain her feelings within the limits which prudence dictated, she wrote to him as follows:—

“ I return you a letter which ought never

to have been addressed *to the wife of Franz Möller!* that it has pained and surprised me in every way, you may well imagine; but I will not suffer myself to dwell upon its contents further than to tell you that they have pointed out to me the only course I ought to pursue, and which I shall adopt without delay. I anticipate your design of leaving Prague, and to-morrow I shall commence my journey homewards; a letter received from my husband this morning enables me to do so without any extraordinary appearance being occasioned by my departure, as he himself suggests that I should immediately join him at Dresden. Remain therefore where you are — where there are so many claims upon your presence — where you are identified with so many great and good actions — where you are so useful, so beloved, and so respected, that your absence would become a public calamity, — and in the fulfilment of those duties which have hitherto rendered your life a blessing to suffering humanity, you

will eventually, I trust, regain that peace of mind which my presence has so unhappily disturbed. Forget, if possible, that such a being as Charlotte Möller exists — or, if that may not be, remember her only as one whom your philanthropy has rescued from suffering and death, and as the wife of a man who loves and honours you above all others upon earth.

“ Farewell — farewell for ever ! do not seek to see me again — such an attempt would appear to me now as a deliberate insult, and would for ever deprive you of those sentiments which you now possess, and which I may own without a blush, namely, the gratitude, esteem, and respect of

“ CHARLOTTE MÖLLER.”

While Lolotte was thus employed, Sturmer had been aroused from the feverish slumber into which he had fallen at break of day, by the arrival of an express from Czaslau, despatched to him by the beautiful Bertha, the

sister of his friend Anton Von Preinl, to summon him thither without delay. The courier, who had travelled all night, was the bearer of a letter from that lady written in the greatest alarm, telling him that her husband, Count de Koenneritz, had been seized with an apoplectic attack at Czaslau, on their journey from Vienna to Prague, and was unable to move onward, and adjuring him to lose no time in coming to his assistance. It was one of those summonses that admit of no hesitation in obeying, and in the confusion of his ideas between sleeping and waking Sturmer started from his bed, and was mechanically preparing to comply with it, when a second packet was handed to him, and the superscription, in the hand-writing of Lolotte, suddenly brought back to his recollection the events of the past night; they crowded upon him in all the vivid confusion of a troubled dream, and so strange and impossible did they appear, that for a moment he doubted of their reality, but the contents of

Lolotte's letter, and the sight of his own incoherent scrawl forced the truth upon him; a whirlwind of emotions accompanied that conviction, but the feeling then strongest in his mind was terror at the idea of losing Lolotte; and regardless of her request that he would not again seek to see her, he hastily dressed himself and rushed into her presence.

After Lolotte had despatched her letter to Sturmer, she had tasked her energies to commence the various arrangements which her precipitate departure necessitated; and that nervous excitement, that fever of mind, which is neither strength nor courage, but which often assumes the semblance of both, and will sometimes, in great emergencies sustain the sufferer through exertions which at other times would be deemed impossible to encounter, enabled her for a brief space to perform wonders; and having despatched her servant to the Eil-wagen office to secure places to Dresden for the next day, she was busily employed in collecting together

the books and music which Sturmer had lent her, that they might be returned to him after her departure, when he suddenly appeared before her.

The sight of one arisen from the grave could not have startled and overpowered Lolotte more completely than did the presence of Sturmer at that moment; her heart beat tumultuously, her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and her knees trembled so that she would have sunk to the ground had she not grasped at the nearest chair to support her; and thus with averted eyes and a changing cheek she stood in speechless emotion before him. One glance at that speaking countenance revealed to Sturmer all that was passing within;—he read the struggles of her heart in her swollen eyes and quivering lips—they were evidences to him of the empire he possessed over her feelings, but they spoke eloquently, too, of the barrier which principle would oppose to the indulgence of those feelings, for he saw at once that she

would rather die than make an avowal of them to him, and perhaps that very conviction rendered more intense the unutterable tenderness with which he gazed upon her exquisite face. Lolotte felt that his eyes were fixed upon her; she struggled to regain her composure — to assert her dignity — to mark her displeasure; with a desperate effort to be calm she raised her eyes to his, but something in the expression she there encountered caused her suddenly to withdraw them, while a burning blush suffused her cheek and brow with crimson, and then left them paler than before. Sturmer seized her hand, and would have carried it to his lips, but hastily disengaging it from his grasp, and drawing herself proudly up, she waved him from her.

“Lolotte!” he exclaimed, “you now know all!—The secret of my heart, its madness, its struggles,—its long-enduring hopeless love have been divulged to you, and they have called forth your indignation, your scorn, perhaps; and yet

you know not all my madness—God forbid that you should ! for then your hatred might fall upon me too !”

“ Mr. Sturmer,” said Lolotte, in a tone and with a look of indescribable dignity, “ I had hoped to have been spared this intrusion ; I had hoped that my written request would have been respected by you ; but I see that you are bent upon offending me to the utmost. Leave me, sir, and insult me no longer by a repetition of sentiments which ought never to have come to my knowledge.”

“ Would to God that they had not !” he vehemently replied. “ Would that that fatal letter had never fallen into your hands !—you would not then have adopted the cruel resolution of flying far from me. Could I, by the sacrifice of all that I possess on earth purchase for you oblivion of its contents, I would joyfully resign all, and feel myself rich indeed in the restoration of your confidence and esteem ; but that may not be, and regrets are now all

too late, and unavailing. Nay, hear me !” he continued, seeing that she was about to interrupt him ; and kneeling at her feet,—“ Dearest, best-beloved, most respected of created beings ! I came not here to insult you by urging a passion which outrages your purity ; on the contrary, I came with deepest remorse to promise, to swear by all that is most holy never again to touch upon that forbidden topic, provided you will relinquish your determination of leaving Prague. Try me ; put my courage but this once to the test,—and if it should break down, if by a word I should allude to the past, then surely it will be time enough for you to visit that sin upon me, by withdrawing yourself from me for ever. But it shall not ; for, oh, Lolotte ! although but yesterday I thought that Heaven could bestow upon me no higher gift than your *love*, I now feel that there is a higher, dearer possession still, and that without your *esteem* I could not live.”

And he spoke truly ; for at that moment,

with the conviction full upon his mind of how completely he must have forfeited the confidence and esteem of Lolotte by the declaration of his guilty passion for her, he clung to that precarious possession with the trembling anxiety of one who, treading upon the edge of a precipice, feels the earth crumbling away beneath his feet, and, to save himself, grasps with desperate tenacity at the falling stones which are to crush him in the abyss below. He felt, that were the secret hopes of his heart to be revealed to Lolotte she would fly his presence with horror and execration, and that to retain her still near him, he must dissimulate; he felt too — oh, strange inconsistency of human nature! — pride in preserving her still unstainedly free from the guilt of yielding to his love; he shrank from the idea of beholding tainted by a participation in his own wild thoughts and wishes that lovely purity of mind which was her distinguishing characteristic, and without which the fatal beauty which had first enslaved

him would soon have ceased to charm; and his heart wept tears of blood when he thought of her modest self-respect withering beneath a sense of shame and debasement,—she, the innocent, the virtuous, the high-minded, — but yet to resign her was impossible! And these reflections communicated a melancholy earnestness to the eyes and voice of Sturmer, which thrilled to the soul of Lolotte.

“ You deceive yourself,” she said, “ for I will not think so ill of you as to believe that you would deliberately deceive me. But were I to yield to your arguments I should deserve to be again offended by a renewal of declarations, which no sophistry can reconcile with virtue. No! we must part! You yourself have pointed out to me the necessity of doing so, and it has required no reflection to convince me that your first decision was the only right one. My mind is irrevocably made up, and nothing can tempt me to alter it.”

“ Nothing, Lolotte!” he said reproachfully;

“not even a knowledge of the misery it will inflict upon me?”

“No!” she replied resolutely; “for my conscience will lend me strength to resist even that.”

“Beware!” he exclaimed; “beware, Lolotte, of driving me to desperation by this stern impracticability. Do you not know the power I possess over you, and that if I but raise my hand I can fix you, in spite of yourself, to this spot for hours?”

“I know it,” she replied calmly; “but I cannot believe you so lost to honour as to exercise that power over me for evil purposes.”

Sturmer buried his face in his hands and wept bitter tears of mingled passion and sorrow. At that moment he would have resigned even the affection of Lolotte to have been able to say to her with a clear conscience, “You do me but justice, Lolotte; I am worthy of your noble confidence, worthy of your tender commiseration; and sooner would I die than abuse the

one or forfeit the other!" But something passing within forbade him to utter that proud assertion of honest feeling. He was meditating to mislead her; he was about to make promises which he felt that he never could perform; and humiliated under the sense of his duplicity, unable to meet as it deserved the opinion which Lolotte had so fearlessly pronounced of him, he shrank abashed within himself, and made no effort to surmount his emotion.

Lolotte felt that it was time to put an end to the interview; the contagion of his tears was fast gaining upon her, and she feared that her courage would not long be proof against the deep anguish that overwhelmed him.

"Farewell, Mr. Sturmer," she said, in a softened voice; "time presses, and I have much to do. Farewell! and believe that at a distance I shall remember only the debt of gratitude I owe you as the preserver of my life and health. May God reward you for the good you have

done ! and may He soon restore you to better thoughts and to your better self !”

She dared not trust herself to say more, and was moving away from him when he started to his feet, and rushing between her and the door grasped both of her hands in his, and forcibly detained her.

“You disregard my protestations ; you overlook my solemn promises ; you distrust me, Lolotte. And perhaps you are right in doing so,” he exclaimed almost breathlessly. “Be it so. I will urge them no more. I will no longer appeal to your indulgence on behalf of my wretched self. But there are other considerations which I must not lose sight of ; and *for your sake* I will urge, entreat, enforce ;—nay, I will never leave this spot until you listen to them. This precipitate departure in a season so inclement, with no precautions taken to guard you against it, delicate and suffering as you are, must not be thought of. You are ill now, Lolotte, and you would sink under such

an effort. As your physician, I prohibit it; and as the friend of your — of Möller —,” and his voice faltered, “by whom the care of your health was confided to me, I feel that I have a right to interfere. Listen to me. I have been sent for by express to Czaslau, under circumstances of the greatest urgency. The brother-in-law of my dearest friend, Anton von Preinl, is lying dangerously ill in that comfortless place, and I ought already to be on the road to attend him; but your letter has arrested my departure. And now, Lolotte, mark me! I swear to you that I will not go to him *at all*, that I will turn my back upon the claims of friendship and humanity; that I will forfeit the regard of my best friends; that I will never lose sight of you unless you promise me not to leave Prague until I return. I shall not be absent above three days; and all I ask of you is, to remain those three days here. Let me but see you once more at the end of that period, and then, if you still persist in going, I will

no longer oppose your departure. I will myself superintend the arrangements for it, and secure proper protection for you during your journey. Is this asking too much of you?—and can even *your* virtue start at the idea of passing three days *in the place where I shall no longer be*, and then affording me the melancholy satisfaction of personally arranging a journey which is to remove you from me for ever?”

Lolotte hesitated. She knew not what to reply. She feared to exasperate him by a further refusal, and yet she felt that she ought to make no concession to him. In this dilemma she remained silent.

“Speak, Lolotte,” he said; and his dark eyes flashed impatiently. “I will not relinquish this dear hand until I am answered. Grant my request, and I leave you this moment to fly to Czaslau; but refuse it, and I will never quit you again; I will remain here in spite of yourself, and never lose sight of you until your natural protector comes to claim you

at my hands. You see what a heavy responsibility hangs upon your decision,—the life, perhaps of my friend's husband,—my own reputation,—yet, what are these when weighed in the balance against your safety?"

"Unhand me, sir!" said Lolotte; "I will not answer you under this unmanly force."

He dropped her hands, folded his arms upon his breast, and stood with his eyes fixed upon her:—"And now, Lolotte," he said, "I trust to your generosity alone to save me from a heavy delinquency against friendship. In the name of that friendship, in the name of your former confidence and regard for me, in the name of the past, I adjure you to grant my request!"

"Leave me," said Lolotte, struggling to repress her tears; "leave me this moment, and I will promise to remain here until your return."

Sturmer again seized her passive hand, and carried it fondly to his lips and heart:—"God

bless you ! God bless you ! beloved Lolotte !” he exclaimed, and then rushed from the room.

As he swiftly retraced his way along the garden walk to his house, she followed his receding figure with her eyes until it disappeared within the study window.

“ I have seen him for the last time !” she murmured to herself. “ Forgive me, O my God, for having deceived him !” And a deadly sickness came over her ; a black mist seemed to spread before her eyes ; her heart ceased to beat ; she grasped helplessly at vacancy to support her, and sank to the ground in total insensibility.

CHAPTER V.

Better be with the dead
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless eestasy.

Macbeth.

“MY dear Bertha,” said the Count de Kœneritz to his beautiful young wife, as, wrapped in her fur pelisse, she sat shivering by his bedside, on the evening of that day, in the barnlike room which served for saloon and sleeping-chamber, at the comfortless *gasthof* of Czaslau, “as you have sent for your friend Sturmer without my knowledge, I must stipulate before he arrives that I am not to be subjected to any of his magnetical malpractices. It is quite bad enough to be detained in such a hole as this,

and almost bled to death by a horse-doctor, without undergoing any other trials of human patience; and so, my love —”

“ Oh, never fear !” interrupted the fair *Gräfinn*, gaily, “ Sturmer is not such a maniac as to substitute magnetism for the lancet in such a case as yours. Besides, thank God ! the horse-doctor has saved your life, and has really left nothing for our good friend to do when he arrives; and you know, if magnetism *should* become necessary, I am a worthy pupil of his, and quite competent to become the operator myself.”

“ Yes, truly,” said the Count, smiling, “ you are nearly as mad as your master, and fit to be classed by my good friend Ludwig Tieck among his *Wundersüchtigen*.” *

“ Your friend Ludwig Tieck is my aversion,” exclaimed the Countess, “ notwithstanding his great talent; I am longing to know him only that I may quarrel with him ! He will write

* Wonder-mongers.

down the imagination of our good Germans as Cervantes wrote down the chivalry of Spain, and with a stroke of his pen consign to the regions of ridicule many of our national characteristics ;—in short, he is tearing up the flowers with the weeds in his ardour for cultivating *common sense* only, and will leave a desert where he found — a wilderness, perhaps, — but a wilderness of sweets !”

“ Bravo, Bertha !” replied her husband ; “ never surely had poor common sense a more inveterate opponent, or lucky nonsense a more charming advocate than yourself. Why, you will absolutely make me in love with the whimsical divinity who has enrolled *you* among her worshipers, and some of these days I shall be found gliding in your train into the vestibule of her temple.”

“ Very well,” said Bertha, laughing ; “ but pray remember that the divinity *I* worship does not acknowledge the name of *Nonsense* ; Imagi-

nation, Enterprise, Genius, Science, would be better adapted to her—”

“ My love, we will not dispute about her real name,” interrupted the Count; “ she shall, if you please, have as many *aliases* as the veriest rogue in the annals of cheating, and ——”

At this moment the sound of a postilion’s horn, and the deadened clatter of horses’ feet upon the hard snow, were heard approaching the Gasthof; the Count and Countess listened in silence for a few seconds while the carriage drove up to the door. “ And here,” resumed the Count, taking up the thread of his discourse where he had suddenly dropped it, “ here comes her high priest in person, to aid and abet in my conversion.”

The door was thrown open, as he ceased to speak, and the Countess’s Heiduque entering, announced “ Herr Von Sturmer.”

If any doubts yet remained upon the mind of Bertha that her terrors alone had magnified the

illness of Monsieur de Kœnneritz into apoplexy and approaching death, they were at once removed by the unhesitating opinion of Sturmer, that indigestion and imprudent exposure to the intense cold had alone caused the syncope which she had mistaken for an apoplectic attack, and that nothing now ailed him but the languor and debility consequent upon the copious bleedings which had been administered to him by the Czaslau Esculapius; and as both of the evils above stated were likely again to be visited upon him through the medium of the execrable *cuisine* and the ill-contrived doors and windows of the comfortless inn at which they had been detained, Sturmer advised a speedy removal from it; and the next day saw them all together on the road to Prague in the travelling carriage of Count de Kœnneritz.

“Pray, Sturmer,” said Bertha, as they were journeying along, “tell me something of your charming Somnambule, Madame, *what is her name*, of whom I have just heard enough from

my brother Anton to *piquer* my curiosity *au vif*, and too little to satisfy it; she must be a most interesting creature, and I am dying to see her, for two reasons — first, the female curiosity just avowed — and lastly, because I do believe, that if anything can convert that infidel of a husband of mine to our belief in magnetism, it will be your beautiful patient in one of her lucid trances. So I shall just remain twenty-four hours at Prague to get a glimpse of her, and then *en avant* for Dresden, where we ought to be already.”

This abrupt allusion to the object of his thoughts, whose very existence he believed to be unknown to the lively Countess, startled and confused Sturmer beyond his power of concealing; a crimson blush, which did not escape the piercing eyes of Bertha, mounted to his forehead as he replied, “that Madame Möller would feel herself honoured by being presented to the Countess Kœnneritz; but that she had an invincible repugnance to being exhibited to

strangers in her magnetic trances, and that he felt that he had no right to interfere with her feelings upon that subject."

"Precisely; I can understand all that," said Bertha, "but I really wish to be introduced to her upon her own account, and I am persuaded she will soon cease to consider as a stranger so old a friend and ally of yours."

"She could not but be flattered by your wishes, which I shall lose no time in making known to her when we reach Prague," replied Sturmer, "but she is on the eve of returning to Dresden, and I fear will have no opportunity of receiving you."

These repeated objections, joined to the unconquerable emotion which Sturmer had betrayed at the sudden mention of Lolotte, sank deep into Bertha's mind and aroused her suspicious conjectures. She said nothing of them, however, and speedily changed the subject, but she narrowly watched Sturmer during the remainder of the journey; and his

fits of preoccupation and absence of mind, the altered character of his countenance where melancholy had clouded the brilliancy of his fine dark eyes, and spread a paler tint over the clear olive of his complexion — the contraction of his brow, and the compression of his lips attesting to the painful workings of the mind within, spoke volumes to the penetration of Bertha. “So!” thought she, “he is in love with this fair dreamer — but he loves hopelessly!” As they approached Prague, his restless abstraction increased; fortunately for him the darkness of evening prevented it from becoming visible to his fellow travellers: he felt, however, the impossibility of sustaining anything like conversation with them, and feigned sleep to account for his silence. They had promised to become his guests during the short stay they were to make at Prague, and when the carriage drove up to his house and that they had alighted, Bertha felt the arm upon which she leaned as she entered the lighted saloon tremble violently,

and glancing furtively at his countenance beheld it pale even to ghastliness.

“Welcome, noble lady and dear friend,” said Sturmer, kissing Bertha’s hand, as he led her to the sofa; “welcome, Excellency,” turning to the Count, “to my poor abode. We want but the presence of the beloved Anton to fill the measure of my content!” But his face was in sad contradiction with his words, and told most eloquently and more truly of the measure of his woes being nearly filled.

“Anton,” said the Count, “is still at Vienna, and likely to be detained there for months to come, by his lawsuit. The dilatoriness of all legal proceedings under your government, Mr. Von Sturmer, are such as would lead one to suppose that the most difficult thing to be obtained in Austria is *justice*! and yet the Emperor Francis is an eminently just man, and truly the father of his people, be they Hungarians, Bohemians, or Italians; but the system of obtaining redress for their grievances calls loudly

for *reform*,—a word which, I suspect, grates so harshly upon his Majesty's ears as to make him cling to old abuses rather than favour innovations, however salutary, that would be ushered in under auspices so suspicious. And so our good Anton is suffering under this *slow and sure* policy, not, indeed, with Christian patience, but with most commendable loyalty, chafing upon the bit, but never kicking against the master's hand; *et pour passer le temps*, he has fallen in love with a very pretty woman, whose fascinations will enable him to bear his trials with equanimity."

While the Count, who was a declaimer and loved to hear himself talk, was speaking, the eyes of Sturmer had wandered from his interlocutor eagerly to fix themselves upon the window from which the habitation of Lolotte could be distinguished in the day-time, and, piercing through the obscurity that reigned without, they sought for the light which, for months past, he had been accustomed to

watch burning till a late hour in her chamber; but it was there no longer, — all was shrouded in darkness, — and the twinkling of the stars in the clear frosty sky did not afford sufficient light to enable him to distinguish even the outline of that loved abode. All was dark, vague, and mysterious as his own gloomy forebodings. “She is gone!” thought he; and, forgetful of the presence of his guests, he was about to rush from the room to ascertain the truth, when the sweet accents of Bertha recalled him to himself. She had remarked his perturbation, and with feminine tact and good feeling wished to relieve him from the constraint of their presence by an act of her own.

“My dear friend,” said she, “we are travellers and invalids, and claim permission to retire early; but before we disappear, pray explain to me the subject of that exquisite picture over the piano. Is it an original or a copy? a saint or a sinner? The upturned eyes and the redundant fair hair give it the air of a Mag-

dalen; but the countenance is that of a Magdalen who has had no cause for repentance.”

“That is the portrait of Madame Möller,” said Sturmer, with as much *sang-froid* as he could command, “painted in one of her ecstatic trances, by desire of her husband, who presented it to me. It is an admirable likeness.”

The Count and Countess drew near to examine it, and remained in silent admiration before what appeared to them a masterpiece of art. The artist had caught with rare felicity the unearthly character of Lolotte’s beauty in those moments of ecstatic delirium which sometimes followed her magnetic trances.—The smile of beatitude that parted her lips,—the rapt expression of her matchless eyes, in whose full orbs of deepest blue seemed reflected the holy joy of that heaven to which they were turned,—the serene and lofty brow gleaming in spotless lustre between the parted tresses of light golden brown hair, that fell luxuriantly round her swan-like throat and pure shoulders,—the deli-

cately rounded arms and slender hands, crossed meekly upon her snow-white bosom,—all were delineated with a truth and sentiment that gave to the performance the character of a heavenly inspiration.

“A noble and delicate beauty,” observed the Count, “and I should think a most perilous patient for a young physician to take charge of!”

“What an exquisite creature!” said Bertha; “she looks as though ‘no mortal mixture of earth’s mould’ entered into her composition. Positively, Sturmer, you must make me known to Madame Möller to-morrow. I am dying to see her! and now good night! I shall certainly dream of this lovely vision.” And with these words they parted.

Sturmer had no sooner attended his guests to the door of their apartment, than he hurried breathlessly to the habitation of Lolotte. The window-shutters were all closed, and the sound of the door-bell, as he repeatedly rang it, was

not followed by any answering footsteps within. It was evident that Lolotte had broken faith with him, and resentment mingled with his grief as the conviction flashed upon his mind. He hastily re-trod his way to his own house, and, ordering lights into the study, shut himself up there. The first object that he perceived was a pile of books and of music belonging to himself, which he had lent to Lolotte,—a sealed letter was laid upon them. He eagerly tore it open, and sought in vain for some glimmering of hope in the few lines it contained; but those tremulous characters, although betraying the physical agitation under which they had been traced, breathed only the spirit of moral firmness which had dictated them.

“FORGIVE me for having deceived you,” she wrote; “the idea of duplicity is so repugnant to me, that even in a case like the present, where the end may be said to justify the means, I blush to have had recourse to it; but you

have left me no alternative ! and, to save you from sinning against friendship, humanity, *honour*,—to shield myself from the coercion with which you threatened me,—to spare us both a renewal of that fearful struggle for mastery between passion and principle, which too surely must have been the consequence of another meeting, I have, for the first time in my life, stooped to falsehood. My lips assured you that I would await your return here ; but never, for a moment, did my mind waver from its first decision,—and by that decision I will abide. When these lines meet your eyes, I shall be beyond the reach of entreaties, threats, or reproach,—in that home which I ought never to have left, and which I shall never again leave, except for my eternal one,—in that home which I forbid you to approach : for, oh ! Sturmer ! we are severed by *more* than *distance* ! On earth we must meet no more ; but there is a world beyond the grave, where ‘the pure in heart’ may hope to ‘see God,’ and, in His pre-

sence, be re-united to those they loved in life. What would this pilgrimage of sorrow be without such a blessed hope?—and what, oh ! what, are the poor fleeting triumphs of passion, when compared to an eternity of joy? Sturmer, on my knees I write these words,—I adjure you to fix your hopes *there*, where nothing can defeat them. Let your soul soar above the earthly longings that now chain it to the dust. Purify your heart from the sinful passion that has led it astray, and the sacrifice shall not be made in vain; for, although virtue enjoins that we should be separated in *this* world, we may still look for a reward beyond earthly recompenses, and in exchange for a few brief moments passed together here, claim an eternity of happiness in those blessed realms where parting and tears are unknown.

“CHARLOTTE MÖLLER.”

The traces of tears were visible on the paper, and Sturmer pressed them to his lips with

reverential love. In his heart he could not but applaud and admire the firmness of Lolotte, so different from that *soi-disant* virtue which, springing from coldness, costs not an effort to exercise: but, with the selfishness which, alas! characterises man's love, he could have wished her less immaculate; and a feeling of irritation sprang up in his mind as he thought that she had preferred the repose of her conscience to the repose of his heart, and, with that feeling, a determination never to relinquish the object of his adoration but with life. "She has made me desperate," said he, "and she must take the consequences." He rang the bell, and Gottfried appeared.

"When did Madame Möller leave Prague?" inquired Sturmer.

"Early this morning, by the Eilwagen," was the reply.

There was no possibility of overtaking or intercepting her: she would be at Dresden the next morning. Besides, he remembered with

dismay that the Count and Countess de Kceneritz were to be his guests the following day and night, and that, under no pretext, could he absent himself from them. He must rein in his impatience until they departed, and then,—but let us not anticipate events.

How the next four-and-twenty hours were passed, Sturmer scarcely knew; but the fact is, that they were got over by him much better than he had expected. Lolotte's precipitate departure had driven him to a final resolution with respect to her, which nothing now could alter; and that irrevocable determination imparted a concentrated calm to his manner, so different from the nervous abstraction of the preceding day, as almost to deceive Bertha into a belief that she had been mistaken in her conjectures about him, and to restore the whole party to that ease which had been banished from them during the journey from Czaslau.

The whole of the night preceding their departure from his house was passed by Sturmer

in writing. He addressed a voluminous letter to his friend Anton explanatory of his intentions with respect to Lolotte, but as the first part of it contained a full account of the events which have been already detailed, it would be unnecessary to reproduce it here. Suffice it to say that amidst its incoherencies and its sophistries, glimpses of better feeling and touches of compunction occasionally predominated, like broken rays of sunshine piercing through the obscurity of a stormy sky, and for a moment lighting up the dark mass of clouds with a fleeting glory, only to render the succeeding gloom more terrible.

“ Light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts,
Mix’d and contending without end or order,”

were there. Good still appeared to struggle with evil for mastery in his bosom, even while announcing to his friend the desperate decision to which his ungovernable feelings had driven him; above all, he rendered honest and ample

justice to the purity of Lolotte's heart in the doubts which breathed throughout his letter that she would ever be persuaded to yield to his prayers, and plunge into irremediable guilt with him. Yet while explaining his reasons for making this communication to Anton, it was evident that something yet remained to be told; for the first time there was constraint and inconsistency in his confidences.

“And now, Anton,” he continued; “know that when this letter reaches Vienna, my fate will be decided! I shall either be the happiest of men, or I shall cease to be numbered among the living. The flight of Lolotte has convinced me of one great truth, that *without* her *I cannot live*. The mere idea of her belonging to another is now worse than a thousand deaths to me. She must know *all* that I feel, all that I suffer; she will then perhaps separate herself from *him* — she will be mine — mine *alone*, voluntarily and unconditionally! Oh! unutter-

able happiness, too great a recompense for mortal love ! Dare I, or ought I to expect, then, that it should be vouchsafed to one so undeserving as I am ? But between that supreme felicity and the annihilation of the grave, there can be no medium for me. To-morrow, as soon as your sister departs, I shall follow Lotte to the home which she has forbidden me to approach ; I shall unburthen my feelings to her, and hear my fate from her lips. Should she, vanquished by the force of my arguments, listen to the dictates of her heart and yield to my supplications, I shall fly with her to Italy, or wherever else she may choose, (for I know that her own country would then become insupportable to her,) and my life shall be one unbroken manifestation of grateful adoration for the sacrifice she will have made ; but should she reject me, her disdain will nerve my hand, and one moment will terminate all ! She will then know that she was my universe, my heaven, my fate — that in her hands were the issues

of life and death for me — that my existence hung upon her breath — she will know all this *too late*! — But mark me, Anton! the mystic thread which, living, bound our destinies together, death even shall have no power to snap asunder; she will not long survive me! — and virtue, the unbending idol to which she will have sacrificed me, shall not save her heart from breaking!

“ When I look back upon the various circumstances that have thrown us together, I cannot admit that chance has had any share in bringing them to pass; fate has ruled all — fate, which I have vainly endeavoured to elude, for it has baffled all my best intentions, circumvented all my most conscientious efforts, and made me what I now am, the underminer of innocence — the false friend — the premeditated suicide! Yes, we two were sent into the world predestined to form each other’s happiness or each other’s misery; and that strange sympathy was felt by me the first moment I

beheld her. Look back with me, dearest friend, to the opening scene of our first approximation : how unlike in every respect to those *liaisons* which the world mistakenly calls love !—and which flutter into life in the artificial atmosphere of ball-rooms, are nurtured by the smiles and glances of satisfied vanity, live upon the excitement of false sentiment, and when that temporary craving has exhausted itself languish into extinction and expire without a pang, leaving the unscathed heart free and willing to recommence the same hollow game ! Now mark the difference. A conflict of the elements, a terrible symbol of that conflict of passions which was afterwards to devastate my heart, drove me to seek for shelter in an obscure habitation where no welcome greeted me ; for death was hovering over that lonely roof ready to seize upon his prey, and desolate bosoms were gathered beneath, whose yearnings to save the fair young victim were fast chilling into despair. My presence there

was unheeded, and my only companionship was with *a picture* — a piece of senseless canvass ! and yet that picture exercised over my feelings the strongest fascination. I gazed upon the pure and youthful lineaments it represented with more than admiration of their beauty ; there was something in the expression of the eyes that vibrated through my soul like ‘ the music of a dream,’ indistinctly floating upon the memory in a waking hour, and reviving the mysterious charm that had in sleep ‘ lapped the soul in Elysium.’ It seemed to me that the harmonies breathing from that face had ever possessed an answering chord within me, silent to every other touch ; and that although for the first time they were revealed to my *senses*, they had haunted my *spirit* from the commencement of my being. Was this imagination, presentiment, or sympathy ? Weary and way-worn as I was, I could not for a length of time withdraw my eyes from that fair shadow ; at last I slept, and in my dreams it seemed to

hover around me. From those dreams I was suddenly aroused to be summoned to a scene of suffering and despair; I stood by the bed of death, and beheld stretched upon it the original of the picture which had so fascinated me an hour before, and with inexplicable emotion I gazed upon those lovely features fixed apparently in death, yet even in death so divinely fair as to awaken in my bosom a tenderness which no living beauty had ever inspired, and to close it for ever to the admission of any other love. With an energy unknown to me before — the energy of new-born passion, I exercised over her that mysterious agency which I had often seen successfully applied where every other remedy had failed; I infused into her sinking frame my own vital warmth, and she whom we had believed dead, awoke to life beneath my reviving touch ! Then I looked upon her as my own—her restored existence was *my* creation — *my* breath had

stayed her fleeting breath — *my* hand had rescued her from the icy grasp of Death !

“ The remainder of that night was passed by me at her bed-side, her soft hand clasped in mine; and again slumber stole upon my senses, and again in dreams did her image haunt me, but not as before; — mingled with visions of death and terror, she prophetically appeared to me exercising that power over my feelings which she was in reality destined to fulfil. — Were those dreams meant to warn me? if so, they were disregarded at the time, and I awoke from them to indulge in waking ones, to form rash hopes which were doomed to be crushed almost in their birth, and to hear that she, whom I fondly fancied fate had led me there to restore to life, and claim as my own, was the affianced bride of another! Then I fled from her presence; and years rolled on, and I beheld her no more; *yet she lived in my heart* — and when I turned

my thoughts to other women, her image rose up between me and them, and chilled me into indifference.

“ At the end of several years I found myself in the vicinity of her home, and a feeling of curiosity, of interest in her fate—no ! it was neither—it was that powerful attraction of sympathy, stronger far than my will, which, like the fascination exercised by the serpent over the struggling bird, has ever mastered me, led me to seek once more to behold her. In doing so, I almost hoped to find her so changed by the lapse of time, or the vulgar cares of life, that one glimpse would suffice to disenchant me of the romantic preference with which I still cherished her image in my bosom : but that furtive glance, in revealing her to me lovelier even than memory had depicted her, betrayed me into still deeper infatuation ; sad, yet serene, her pensive countenance eloquently told that even in that solitude she had not escaped the sorrows of a

world where, “les plus belles choses ont le pire destin.”

“Perhaps that very conviction lent a more dangerous charm to her loveliness. I might have successfully resisted the triumphant flush of conscious and happy beauty; but my heart was vanquished by the melancholy sweetness of her aspect, and bowed in tender commiseration before the untold sorrows that brooded there. She sang, and the enchantment was complete; but while my whole soul, dissolved in tenderness, hung entranced upon her divine accents, the spell was rudely broken by another voice — *the voice of her husband!* It recalled me to myself — what had I to do there? and again I fled the dangerous delight of her presence, determined that it should be *for ever!*

“But my worst trials were all before me. She whom I had resolved to shun was brought to the very spot inhabited by me, placed by her husband in my hands, delivered up to that mysterious power which I knew I possessed

over her, thrown into constant contact with me; in that state all her secret thoughts were revealed, and the treasures of her heart and mind were unlocked to my wondering admiration. Then I found that her beauty was her least charm — then I felt the immensity of the temptation which assailed me; she loved me, but her love was of that spiritualized nature which angels may be supposed to feel, — which few women understand, and of which no man is capable. I loved her like a madman, and yet my respect for her equalled my idolatry; the innocence of her soul and the purity of her thoughts, while they awed me into almost trembling adoration, increased tenfold the intensity of my fatal passion. Long and vainly did I struggle with it, and God only knows with what desperate energy I endeavoured to silence the guilty wishes of my heart! Her husband's presence was a barrier, of which I conscientiously availed myself, to prevent the expression of them to her; but the fatality that

pursued me ordained that he should absent himself from Prague, and leave us exposed to the peril of being constantly together alone. My courage and forbearance I knew would not be proof against such a temptation: she indeed was above all human frailty, but I could exercise a power over her which would leave her helpless; and what will not passion dare? With a last effort to remain true to honour, I resolved to tear myself away from opportunities which I felt I could no longer resist. I wrote to tell her all — all my love and all my madness — to account for my strange abandonment of her, and to bid her an eternal farewell! but my heart was crushed by the sacrifice, and I determined to end the struggle by death. At that moment she whom I was relinquishing for ever, because I knew that to see her would be to destroy my best resolutions, appeared before me alone, in her sleep! At that midnight hour, led by a mysterious presentiment, she came to snatch me from the despair

that had overwhelmed me. Fate thrust her between me and death, remorselessly determined that the measure of my temptations should be filled. But no more of this ! the struggle is over, and my mind has at last taken an irrevocable decision.

“ Forgive these repetitions, these outpourings of my heart, dearest Anton ! The unhappy love to speak of themselves, for grief is garrulous ; but these egotisms are, perhaps, the last with which your enduring friendship will be taxed, and they have flowed from my heart to my pen in the irrepressible desire to convince you that the man who for years was honoured with your confidence and affection was not a deliberate villain, a vile plotter, a systematic seducer ! No, from the seduction of innocence my soul has ever shrunk with an abhorrence that would doubtless cause many a man of the world to smile in pity at my scruples. The only deception which I can reproach myself with having practised towards her, was during

our last interview — when, to retain her within my power, and maddened by the fear of losing her, I was ready to promise anything — everything — far more (I will now admit) than it would have been possible for me to abide by: but I had dared to found most guilty hopes upon the presumption that she might be persuaded to remain near me after the avowal of my love had come to her knowledge; and to realise those hopes I shrank not from promising impossibilities. She, however, with that instinctive delicacy which is her peculiar characteristic, and that unerring sense of right which never abandons her, knew that the woman who *pauses* under these circumstances, ‘pauses to be o’ercome;’ and by opposing deception to deception, where to deceive was to remain true to virtue, she has defeated my scheme, driven me to desperation, and left me no alternative but that of throwing myself upon her mercy, and leaving her to pronounce upon my fate — either life devoted to her and her happiness alone —

or death at her feet in expiation of my guilty passion !

“ And now, beloved friend, you will understand the motives of this long confession, and that it has been made in order to account to you for the solemn farewell of which it is the preliminary — a farewell for years at least — perchance *for ever* in this world — to prepare you for all that may happen, and to break the shock that would be the inevitable result of your friend Sturmer’s name suddenly reaching you coupled with the epithets of *seducer* or *suicide*, and his memory blackened by the thousand false statements which public rumour never fails to bestow gratuitously upon private calamity.

“ I have arranged all my worldly affairs ; the copy of my will, here subjoined, will shew you in what manner ; — I make you the steward of all my possessions in case of a long absence from my country — my heir, in case of my

death. There is no injustice in this disposition of my worldly goods, as I have no near relations surviving, and the few distant ones that remain are richer than I am. My poor mother ! thank God she has not lived till now !

“ Farewell, Anton, my friend, my companion, my more than brother ! While I trace these words the memory of past years, rendered so inexpressibly happy by your friendship, rises up before my mental vision with a clearness which brings to light many a word and deed of devoted affection, not obliterated (for ingratitude has never been the vice of my heart) but obscured in the whirl of succeeding events ; and now as they appear before me in bright array, my heart smites me that in return for so much love I should inflict upon you the pang I am now doing. But I was born to bring sorrow upon all who ever loved me !

“ Still do I linger over these lines as I have often lingered over the last conversations that

have preceded our temporary separations, with a weak shrinking from the pang of parting — a fond wish still to delay the last painful moment — *the last!* there is something solemn and startling in that word as I trace it — something prophetic of the eternal separation to which perchance it *now* applies — it rings upon my heart like the knell of departed joys! — Oh, my Anton! until this moment I never knew how dear you were to me — until this moment I believed that love for *her* had deadened every other feeling in my bosom — but of that no more!

“ The clock is striking five — the stars have disappeared from the cold grey sky — the last feeble flickerings of my expiring lamp warn me to conclude — darkness and indistinctness shroud the earth as with a pall; but in two hours hence the bright sun will rise in glory to chase away the shadows of night. — Will it be so with me? and shall the darkness of the

Grave into which I am about to plunge be succeeded by the brightness of that Day which knows neither morning nor evening, but is ETERNAL?

“ *Espérons !* Farewell — farewell !

“ W. S.”

CHAPTER VI.

GENT. Lo you, here she comes ! This is her very guise ; and upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her ; stand close.

DOCTOR. You see her eyes are open.

GENT. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Macbeth.

THE Count and Countess de Kœnneritz left Prague at eight o'clock in the morning. Sturmer, who had thrown himself on the bed and slept soundly for two hours after the termination of his night's occupation, accompanied them to the door of his dwelling, and amidst the affectionate adieus of Bertha, and the cordial invitations of her husband to visit them at

Dresden, placed them in their carriage, and saw them drive off. No sooner were they out of sight than his own carriage drove up to the door, and Gottfried appeared at the same time to receive his master's last directions. They were soon given.

“Are my pistols and my *sac de nuit* in the carriage?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Very well. Gottfried, I have already told you that I am obliged to make a journey; it may be a very long one. I shall be absent for an indefinite period; but while I am away I have lent my house to the Baron Von Preinl, who will be here certainly in a few days, and will keep up everything as if I were still at home. You will retain the same confidential situation under him that you have filled under me, my good Gottfried.”

“Yes, sir,” replied the old servant; “but I had hoped, that during such an absence from home as you contemplate, I might have accom-

panied you; for surely you will require my services in a long journey?"

"No, Gottfried," replied his master gravely; "in the journey which I meditate I shall require no attendance, and your services will be much more available to me here, where I intrust everything to your care until my friend arrives."

"Well, sir, you know best; but I could have wished to have gone with you."

"No more of that," said Sturmer. "God bless you, my good Gottfried! *Mein lieber kind*;" and he stretched out his hand affectionately to him.

The faithful creature grasped it eagerly, and carried it to his lips. Sturmer felt a tear drop upon it; — that tear fell upon his heart. He could not speak, but, with a strong effort conquering his emotion, he forced a smile upon his countenance — a bright smile of other days; and the old servant deceived by it, dried his eyes, and let down the steps of the carriage.

“ Ah ! sir, that smile tells me that you will soon be back again. God bless you, sir ! God bless you, my dear master ! ”

And in another moment Sturmer was whirled from his home, and on the road, not to Dresden, but (in order to avoid the De Kœnneritzs) by a circuitous route to the foot of the mountains which form the barrier between Bohemia and Saxony.

His intention was to go to the Ottowaldergrund without appearing at Dresden.

Bertha and the Count divided their journey from Prague to Dresden into two days, by sleeping at Lobositz. The inn where they alighted contained only one sitting-room ; and they were told that the best sleeping-chamber contiguous to it was already occupied by a lady, who was very ill ; so ill that she had been forced to quit the *eil-wagen* in which she was journeying to Dresden, and remain there.

“ Poor thing ! ” said Bertha compassionately ;

“ we will make no noise to disturb her. Let supper be served immediately.”

And while it was preparing, she withdrew to the sleeping-room that was destined for her, and disencumbered herself of her fur wrappings.

They were in the midst of their repast; and the Count, who had arrived at that time of life—which we will not specify, that we may not offend—when the presence of even a beautiful bride is not sufficient to render a man indifferent to the evils of a *mauvaise cuisine*, was railing in no measured terms against the thinness of the *Brod suppe*,* the toughness of the *Rind fleisch mit Kartofflen*, the freshness of the *Huhn gebacknes*, the staleness of the *Gemüse*, and the sourness of the *compote*, which formed the

* Bread-soup; bouilli beef served with potatoes; roast fowl, vegetables, stewed prunes, or cherries. These dishes, occasionally varied by a very sour salad, or a very sweet pudding (*melch speisen*), form the inevitable menu of the *mittag* and *abend speisen* (dinner and supper), to be found in the inns throughout Germany, from the Rhenish provinces to the Banat of Hungary.

bourgeois supper, the triumph of the culinary art of Lobositz, that had been placed before them, when a door, exactly opposite to their table, opened suddenly, and a female figure entered, closed it after her, and, without appearing to be conscious that the room was occupied, slowly crossed it to the further end, where a piano-forte was placed.

“ Good God ! ” exclaimed the Count and Countess in the same breath, and rising to receive her : “ what a beautiful creature ! ”

The Count was advancing to salute the unexpected visitant, but Bertha, hastily laying her hand upon his arm to restrain him, whispered in his ear, “ Do you not recognise that face ? ”

“ Yes — no,” he answered in the same tone. “ I certainly have seen it somewhere before, but I cannot now remember where.”

“ It is Madame Möller,” she replied, “ Sturmer’s somnambule, the original of the lovely picture we saw at his house. It must be her ; no one else could be so beautiful.”

“Aha ! but what can she mean by coming among us so unceremoniously ? Besides, did not Sturmer tell us that she was already at Dresden ?”

“Yes ; but she may have been detained upon the road, as we were at Czaslau. I am sure it is Madame Möller. I am determined it shall be no other person. Oh ! I am so glad to have come across her ! And see, she is in a state of natural somnambulism ; she does not see us. We must not disturb or thwart her on any account, for to awaken a sleep-walker suddenly is highly dangerous.”

At that moment Lolotte (for it was no other than herself) opened the piano, and seating herself before it ran her fingers thoughtfully over the keys, as though arranging her ideas or recalling her recollections, previous to commencing her performances. But there was such brilliancy and pathos in that light touch that the Count and Countess, both of whom were fine musicians, listened with delight to the har-

monious combinations which successively sprang up beneath her fingers ; and followed with the keen relish of *Dilettanti* the various movements of the capricious, yet scientific “voluntary,” in which her imagination appeared to be revelling.

At last the performance gradually subsided into a few low chords, and the voice of the fair musician took up the last *motif* she had been playing, and gushed forth into such a delicious strain of melody that her listeners, as if irresistibly impelled towards her, silently and almost breathlessly drew so near to the instrument that they could obtain a full view of her countenance.

And certainly had Lolotte come forth bent upon conquest, instead of wandering helplessly in her sleep into the presence of strangers, she could not have appeared to greater advantage than she did at that moment, unstudied and disordered as her dress was. But it is the proud privilege of real beauty to defy the “foreign aid of ornament,” and to shine forth

triumphantly in the simplest array. The close black dress, bordered with dark fur, in which she was muffled, rendered more dazzlingly fair by contrast the alabaster hue of her throat, face, and hands, the only portions of her skin which were visible; her cheeks and brow, even her lips, were at that moment colourless, but so exquisitely chiselled, so touching in their "wan lustre," that no rose-tints could have rendered them more beautiful; her luxuriant hair, deranged during her sleep, had half escaped from the comb that fastened it, and fell in tresses of wavy gold down her shoulders; carelessly pushed back from her forehead, it left unveiled the whole expanse of brow, and the lovely eyes that shone beneath. Beautiful indeed were those eyes, since, although speculation had gone from them for the time being, they still possessed a power to charm and to subdue which few waking ones had ever exercised; but in colour, shape, and size they were faultless; and the long dark lashes that shaded them, the

dark brows that arched above, imparted to her countenance an expression and character that redeemed it from the insipidity which is the general defect of very fair and delicate-looking persons.

The words which Lolotte was breathing forth in such a flow of harmony quickly arrested the attention of Bertha, and she hung upon them with almost painful anxiety. They were the aspirations of a breaking heart invoking the intercession of those who had been dearest to her on earth, but who were now saints in heaven, to procure her pardon for a weak and guilty love which had led her heart astray. She described with terrible truth its combats, its tortures, its vain efforts to banish the loved image from that sanctuary, as she had banished it from her eyes — in vain ! Her heart, amid despair and death, loved on.

Then there was a change in the strain ; from the *agitato vibrato* character it subsided into a low wailing *morendo* movement.

That heart which had glowed with so sinful a flame had at last grown cold ; its frail chords had failed amidst the struggle, and in the peaceful grave it had found rest. And now she played the dirge of the departed in such sweet and solemn strains, that the impressionable Bertha, overcome by her emotions, leaned upon her husband's shoulder and wept.

Again there was a change. The dirge died away, and a song of triumph succeeded,—the song of angels welcoming the rescued spirit to realms of joy ; and there were the loved and the lost on earth lifting up their voices with the heavenly choir, rejoicing that she who had been almost lost was saved. But the disembodied spirit, faithful to its earthly love, cast a wistful glance around, and perceiving not him, without whom heaven would not be heaven to her, uttered a cry of despair—“ Where is he ? ”

At these words, which broke from her lips in soul-piercing accents, she suddenly ceased her

song, and burying her face in her hands burst into an agony of tears.

“What shall we do?” exclaimed the Count, in the greatest trepidation. “Let us ring to inquire whether there is any one belonging to her in the house.”

“No, no,” said Bertha; “call no one; and let me first try what I can do for her.”

And so saying, she gently approached the unconscious mourner, and placing one hand upon Lolotte’s head, with the other described a succession of mesmeric passes from the forehead downwards. The Count smiled incredulously; but when at the end of a few seconds the deep convulsive sighs of Lolotte calmed into silence, he gave his serious attention to what was going on. Very soon her hands dropped helplessly from before her eyes. Those eyes were closed, and their long lashes, wet with tears, lay like black fringes upon her cheeks. Bertha drew a chair behind her, and as Lolotte sank back

overcome by the magnetic slumber, she received her in her arms, laid her head upon her bosom, and tenderly wiping away the tears that still bedewed her pale cheeks, looked triumphantly at her husband.

“Now open that door,” said Bertha, pointing to the one by which Lolotte had entered, “and between us we will carry her into her own room, and place her on the bed.”

“Yes,” murmured Lolotte, replying to the last words of Bertha, “lay me on the bed.”

The Countess cast another glance of triumph at the Count. The magnetic ‘*rapport*’ so quickly established between herself and Lolotte had far exceeded her own expectations.

“Do you see me?” she inquired, laying her hand upon the sleeper’s eyes.

“Yes,” replied Lolotte, “you are very beautiful !”

“And do you see *me* ?” inquired the Count.

But Lolotte remained silent. She neither saw nor heard him.

Bertha placed her husband's hand in that of Lolotte, held them together in her own, and then asked her if she saw any other person besides herself.

Lolotte accurately described the Count's appearance. Still a doubt hung upon his mind, that by almost imperceptibly opening her eyelids she might have obtained a sufficient view of him to bear her out in her description.

"Pardon me, madam," he said, "if I still remain incredulous upon the subject of your lucidity; but it will be in your power to make a believer of me by replying to one question which I shall put to you: — Can you tell me what I have got in this pocket?" And he laid his hand upon the side pocket of his coat.

Lolotte remained silent for a moment. At last she said — "You have got a small pocket-book, covered with crimson."

"You are quite right," replied the Count, astonishment painted in every feature; "but what does that pocket-book contain?"

Lolotte considered again. "It contains," she said, "two miniatures; one is the picture of a lady, — stay, it is this lady's likeness; the other is that of a gentleman whom I have never seen. There is writing upon one of the leaves — a name. It is *his* writing — *his* name — *Wolfgang Sturmer*."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the Count. "I am convinced! There is no contesting such evidence as this." And putting his hand into his pocket, he drew from it precisely such a porte-feuille as Lolotte had described; and placing it in Bertha's hand, said: "This, my love, was given to me by Sturmer this morning, with more solemnity in his manner than I could account for. He said it was one of the things he most prized, as it contained yours and Anton's pictures, given to him by your brother, and for that reason he wished to place it himself in my hands. I confess, I cannot understand his parting with such a *souvenir*."

"He gave it to you as a legacy," said Lolotte solemnly.

“A legacy!” exclaimed the Count and Countess together: “why?—how?—for what reason?”

But Lolotte remained silent.

“Can you tell me where Sturmer is at this moment?” said Bertha, after a pause.

“He is travelling,” was the answer.

“This is very strange,” remarked the Count. “He did not even hint at an idea of travelling when we parted this morning. Is he going to make a long journey?”

“A very long one,” replied Lolotte, sighing.

“And when will he return home?” inquired Bertha.

“*He will never return home again,*” was the answer.

After this, she persisted in remaining silent; and, upon a sign of Bertha’s, the Count raised her in his arms, and, carrying her into the adjoining room, placed her upon the bed.

CHAPTER VII.

I have been patient ; let me be so yet.

————— Oh ! would it were my lot
To be forgetful.

LORD BYRON.

It was not till eight o'clock the next morning that Lolotte awakened; and she arose so much refreshed and invigorated as to feel quite equal to continue her journey homewards in the course of the day. She had slept so profoundly, that when, on the preceding evening, her maid (who had been indulging in the delight of a long gossip, during her supper, with the servants of the newly-arrived travellers,) returned to her mistress's room, and found her

plunged in that deep slumber, she had no difficulty in undressing and placing her in her bed without awakening her.

Since her last interview with Sturmer, Lottte had taken neither rest or nourishment sufficient to sustain her bodily strength; and the agitation of her mind, added to the unusual exertions she was obliged to make in order to hasten her departure from Prague, had been too much for a frame so delicate; but it was not until she was seated in the carriage that was to bear her thence, that she became aware of the utter prostration of her strength. Then, when the excitement of action was over, came reflection with its train of tortures and terrors to subdue her courage;—then did her sinking heart fail her;—then did all that she had yet to endure strike dismay into her soul. To the agony of a final separation from the being who, for the last few months, had been all the world to her, was added the terror of meeting her husband, with the dreadful secret of her newly-

discovered love weighing upon her heart. How should she conceal her misery from him? and how, alas! could she avow its cause? “Oh! that I had been suffered to die eight years ago!” thought she, with something like a feeling of bitter repining at her fate; “for what accumulated sorrows have I been reserved! And yet, my God, Thou knowest best!”—the habitual piety and meekness of her soul surmounting that momentary disposition to murmur — “forgive me for questioning Thy wisdom — and if this cup may not pass away from me, Thy will be done!”

Silently absorbed in her feelings, she leaned from the carriage window with her eyes fixed upon the regal towers of the Hraschin rising in proud pre-eminence above the innumerable spires and palaces of antique and aristocratical Prague, until a bend in the road shut them from her view. It was there that Sturmer dwelt—there she had first known him; and when she no more beheld them, the last con-

necting link between him and herself appeared to be rudely riven asunder; she closed her eyes with a feeling of such deep anguish that her heart sickened beneath it, and after an ineffectual struggle to resist the deadly chill that was creeping over her, she became insensible.

A succession of fainting fits caused so much alarm to her fellow travellers in the *eil-wagen*, (who feared that she was going to die among them,) that when the vehicle stopped at Lobositz, and she was lifted out of it motionless and senseless, they one and all refused to allow her to proceed, and advised her servant to let her remain there until she should be better; and one of them, an old military officer, who had been deeply interested by the appearance and sufferings of Lolotte, offered to become the bearer of a letter or message to her friends in Dresden to account to them for her protracted absence. But alas! Lolotte's maid, Gretchen, did not know how to write, and all that she

could do was to inform the kind-hearted stranger, that her mistress was the wife of Mr. Franz Möller, who was then lodging in the *Alt-Markt*, at Dresden, No. —, and to beg that he would send there, and inform him of what had happened. This he promised to do, and the *eil-wagen* proceeded on its way, leaving Lolotte and her maid at Lobositz.

But the nervous irritation of her spirits prevented her benefiting by the repose which such an arrangement was intended to procure for her, and it was only on the afternoon of the succeeding day, that from mere exhaustion, she fell into a sleep which terminated, as has already been described, by one of those exhibitions of natural somnambulism which always preceded or attended some crisis of suffering in Lolotte, and which the timely application of Animal Magnetism invariably prevented.

That Bertha's experiment upon her had produced the effect of soothing and calming her shattered nerves in that particular instance, has

already been shewn; and the many hours of undisturbed repose which it had procured for her, recruited her strength to such a degree that she immediately commenced her preparations for departure.

She had opened the door of her bedroom and was just going to cross the *Speisen Saal* in order that she might ascertain from the host the hour when the next *eil-wagen* for Dresden would pass, when she perceived that the room was occupied by a lady and gentleman; and hastily drawing back, she would have retreated into her chamber had she not been prevented by the lady quickly advancing and taking her hand.

“Pray, come in,” said she; “I am so glad to see you! Are you better this morning? We have already been inquiring for you, but no one could tell us how you were.”

“Madam,” exclaimed Lolotte in the greatest surprise, “you are surely under some mistake! I have never had the honour of seeing

you before, and I dare not flatter myself that the health of an entire stranger can interest you."

"Indeed, Madame Möller, I am under no mistake," replied Bertha, smiling; "it is *your* health which interests me so much at the present moment, and although I never saw you before last evening, I have heard so much of you that I do not look upon you in the light of a stranger. And now give me leave to present my husband to you, the Count de Kœnneritz."

"Ah, madam," replied Lolotte, after bending gracefully to the salutation of the Count, "I understand now! I have, indeed, often heard of you before; but I thought that the Count de Kœnneritz had been detained by severe illness at—"

"Yes, madam," interrupted the Count, leading her to a chair, "we were detained at Czaslau by a slight indisposition of mine; but our mutual friend, Sturmer, arrived in good time

to save me from dying there of cold and hunger, and he brought us with him to his charming house at Prague, where we hoped to have had the honour of meeting you: but you had flown before we arrived."

Poor Lolotte felt her heart throb, and the blood rush to her cheek and brow at the mention of that beloved name. She would have given the world to have ascertained whether Sturmer was still with them; but all her self-possession had suddenly abandoned her at that one allusion to him, and, trembling and confused, she sank suddenly into a chair. Emotion so painful and irrepressible could not escape the observation of the Count and Countess. They exchanged glances, and Bertha carelessly remarked, "That they had very much wished Sturmer to have accompanied them to Dresden, but that he was unable to do so: she hoped, however, that he would visit them before long. Was Madame Möller aware of any particular business that detained him at Prague, or did

she know of any journey that he intended to make elsewhere?"

Thus called upon, Lolotte summoned courage to reply, "That she understood it to be Mr. Sturmer's intention to remain at Prague, his usual place of residence, which he had only left to attend the Count de Kœnneritz in his illness at Czaslau. She had never heard of any other journey contemplated by him; and she hoped,—that is to say, she believed,"—and here she stammered and faltered,—“she meant, she never had heard of his intention to visit Dresden.”

Here the Count and Countess glanced at each other again, as if mutually to recall the contrary opinion which Lolotte had so solemnly and decidedly pronounced on the preceding evening. They said nothing, and appeared by that one look tacitly to agree that no further mention should be made of Sturmer for the present; and then, with a warmth and cordiality of manner, which soon restored Lolotte to her natural ease, they

led her to speak upon other subjects, and finally prevailed upon her to breakfast with them.

It was during that repast that they related to her the occurrences of the past evening, and the success with which Bertha had exerted her magnetical skill in Lolotte's behalf. Her terror and confusion were inexpressible at the recital; and, had any such evidence been required, would have fully convinced the Count of her total unconsciousness of all that had passed during her somnambulism: but he had already seen enough to convert him, and he was not one of those persons who, when once convinced, retract or qualify their opinions in order to maintain an appearance of consistency with previously pronounced views on the same subject.

The curiosity of the Count de Kœnneritz was roused, and his interest excited, to investigate more deeply into the causes of phenomena so extraordinary; and partly from that

motive, but still more from a feeling of kindness to Lolotte, whose strange introduction of herself to them, added to her beauty and her sufferings, had established a peculiar interest for her with him as well as with Bertha, he was induced to propose that they should give her a seat in their carriage to Dresden, while Gretchen and the trunks should be left to proceed thither by the *eil-wagen*. An offer so cordially made was gratefully accepted by Lolotte; and before noon she had taken her seat in the Count's travelling *Berline*, and was once more rapidly whirled towards home.

It was night before they reached Dresden, and the postilions had some difficulty in finding the number of Möller's lodging in the dimly-lighted *Alt-Markt*. At last, however, they stopped before a dark-looking house, and the Countess's Heidugue, having ascertained that it was the one inhabited by Mr. Franz Möller, Lolotte took leave of her new friends, and, with a beating heart, entered. "*Au revoir*, dear

Madame Möller," were the parting words of Bertha; "I shall not fail to call upon you to-morrow morning."

Slowly she ascended the staircase, and many times before reaching the third story, she stopped to take breath, and, pressing her hand upon her heart, endeavoured to still its throbings. At last she reached a door upon which was nailed one of her husband's cards, and, summoning all her courage to her aid, she rang the bell. "Why should I fear to see him?" thought she; "surely my conscience absolves me from all sinful wishes." But she knew that her heart was devoted to another, and therefore did she tremble; for it is only in minds predisposed to vice that the *infidelity of the heart* is glossed over as a venial error: but the truly pure in soul start from it as from the *shadow of sin*, instinctively knowing that to excuse and to foster such wanderings, is to smoothe the path to others more fatal, although scarcely more reprehensible; since the woman who has once

accustomed herself to look upon the unlawful affections of her heart with indulgence and complacency, has not only ceased to be virtuous in thought, but is more than half won over to become criminal in deed.

Lolotte was not one of those who weakly cherish error until it grows into guilt, and, in the meantime, fondly and falsely persuade themselves that they are innocent, *because they have conceded nothing but their heart*. The knowledge of her love for Sturmer weighed upon her soul like a secret sin, from which she had vainly struggled to disburthen it; and she approached her husband with the feelings of a criminal, conscious that she had, for the first time, something to conceal from him,—knowing that she had never loved him,—and feeling that the duties and obligations of a wife had now become hateful to her.

She rang more than once before any sound or sign of answering the call could be distinguished; but at last a step was heard within,

and the well-known voice of Babet demanded,
“ Who is there ? ”

“ It is I, Babet,” answered Lolotte; “ open quickly.” And the door instantly flying back, discovered Babet in her night-clothes, with a light in her hand.

“ Oh, madam ! oh, my dear mistress ! is it you ? ” she exclaimed as Lolotte entered. “ *Küss die hand mein lieber kind*,” suiting the action to the word. “ But you are alone ! Where is my master ? ”

“ Your master ! ” repeated Lolotte, in amazement ; “ is he not here ? ”

“ No, truly,” was the answer ; “ he has gone to bring you home. A gentleman called here yesterday to tell of your being ill somewhere between this and Prague, and as he came after master had gone out for the day, he left a note to tell him all about it. When Mr. Franz came home in the evening and read the note, I never saw him so flurried or so angry ; and what made him worse was, that it was too late

for him to set off for you last night, so he was obliged to wait till this morning."

"He has gone to Lobositz, then!" exclaimed Lolotte, "and I must have passed him on the road. Poor Franz! how sorry I am that he should have had such vexation and trouble on my account." And yet, notwithstanding her regret, she felt inexpressibly relieved at the certainty of not meeting him for some hours.

"Yes, madam, he went this morning," said Babet; "and sadly it put him out of his way to go. But, oh, my dear child, how ill you look! Indeed, indeed, I could be as angry as my master is with you for not staying quietly at Prague with that great man, Doctor Sturmer, who did you so much good, instead of running back here in spite of master's advice; — and he so pleased with all the Doctor had done for you; and wanting to be off to Leipzig, and backwards and forwards about his book, and the great sale, and all the rest of it. And yet it

does my old heart good to see your sweet face again, pale as it is; — but what we are to do when master returns I know not, for there is no comfortable place here for you, only this one room, littered from one end to the other with papers, and no corner to stow away a mouse. When Mr. Franz got your letter, saying you were coming away from Prague, he was so vexed that he declared he should just remain as he was, to shew you that you could not stay here; and how much better it would have been for you to have done as he wished. Indeed, he has never been in a good-humour since that letter came. Pardon me, dear mistress, for telling you so, but I think it better that you should know all.”

“ Well, Babet,” said Lolotte, sighing, “ my husband will find that I have not returned to derange him in any way; and as soon as I have seen him to-morrow I shall go home to the Ottowalder-grund.”

And with the painful impression that no

welcome awaited her from him whose protection she had sought as her safeguard in the trials that assailed her heart, she laid down, not to sleep, but to meditate through the long watches of the night, and to endeavour to compose her mind for the meeting which she so much dreaded.

Morning at length came, and with it arrived Franz Möller. But, although Lolotte had been in some measure prepared for the dissatisfaction which she was to encounter, it far exceeded any exhibition of ill-humour that she had ever before witnessed in her husband. Franz was by no means a bad-tempered man; and indeed he enjoyed the reputation of being quite the reverse, thanks to a mild and open countenance, and to a total absence of violence or vindictiveness in his character; but he had other faults of temper, not less difficult to contend with; he was obstinate, and sullen under opposition, and naturally of a selfish and exacting disposition. Those faults had been strength-

ened by the yielding sweetness of Lolotte's character, the extreme softness of her temper, and the total absence of selfishness, which had ever led her cheerfully to sacrifice her own tastes and wishes to the slightest whim of her husband. This was the first time since their marriage that she had ventured to decide for herself, or to act in direct opposition to an implied wish of his; and an infraction of established rules so unexpected, a decision which involved such a derangement of his darling plans and occupations, stirred up and threw to the surface all the least amiable elements of his character.

“ Well, Lolotte,” said he, entering and throwing aside, in no very gentle mood, his *meer-schaum* and tobacco-pouch, “ you have led me a pretty dance for nothing ! ”

“ Dear Franz,” she answered, taking his hand, “ it was all unknown to me ! I never should have thought of asking you to come for me to Lobositz ; and had I been in a state to

know what was intended, I should have forbidden it; but I was so very ill as to be unconscious of everything."

"If you had done as I told you, you would not have been ill," he replied; "but women are all alike — tell them to do one thing, and they will be sure to do another, just for the sake of contradiction. And now, may I ask what very pressing motive induced you to come off to me in such a hurry?"

"Oh, Franz!" said Lolotte, tears, in spite of her efforts to repress them, filling her eyes, "can you ask me such a question? You wrote to say, that you would be detained here for an indefinite period, and I felt it to be my duty to join you, especially as you left me the option of doing so."

"Yes, but I also unequivocally expressed to you my opinion in favour of your remaining where you were, and it was therefore your paramount duty to have acted upon that wish."

Lolotte remained silent. An hysterical sob

rose in her throat and choked her utterance. Her thoughts involuntarily reverted to Sturmer; and as she contrasted the devoted tenderness of his character and his idolatrous love for her, with the cold harshness of her husband's reception, a deep sigh burst from her heart.

Franz was irritated, as all unreasonable people are, at meeting with silence instead of such rejoinders as are at once a provocative to their own ill-humour and an excuse for its continuance. "One would think," said he, after a pause, "that you fancied money and health were only obtained to be trifled with and thrown away upon the high roads. See what it cost me to take you to Prague; the least you could have done in return would have been to have remained there long enough to profit by the excellent care under which I had placed you. I left you improved in health and strength beyond my most sanguine expectations; my mind was quite at ease, from knowing you to be in such good hands, and I confidently looked

forward to returning to you in the spring, and finding you perfectly recovered. But, instead of continuing a treatment which had done such wonders for you, you have rashly taken upon yourself to act in direct opposition to your physician's advice and your husband's opinion, and the consequence is, that I find you in a worse state than when I took you to Prague. I might just as well have not taken you there at all !”

“ Would to Heaven that you never had !” thought Lolotte ; but she said nothing : the fulness of her heart had overflowed at her eyes, and she wept in silence.

“ Besides,” continued Franz, “ I had fully explained to you the position of my affairs here with respect to my book ; every moment of my time is occupied in finishing and preparing it for the press ; it is to be published at Leipzig, and I must be there to superintend proceedings. All this of course entails an outlay of money, for which, indeed, I expect to be remunerated

hereafter by the extensive sale of my work; but in the meantime I am pressed for means, and did not require the additional expense of your journey hither, and losing the rent of the house at Prague, for which I had paid in advance, and the prospect of doctor's fees during the rest of the winter; for we shall find no physician in Dresden like that noble-minded fellow, Sturmer, who never would take a florin from me. I repeat, I did not require all these additions to render my position embarrassing enough; and you see, Lolotte, it is quite impossible that you should remain *here*; nor can I, as matters stand, take another lodging for you in Dresden."

"If that is all that embarrasses you, dear Franz," said Lolotte, in her own mild persuasive tones, "be assured that I have no wish to remain in Dresden; indeed my only desire is to return immediately home, and I came here with a view of proposing it to you. Thus you see, no additional expense will be incurred by

the step I have taken, beyond the trifling one of my journey hither; for as the house at the Ottowalder-grund is shut up, and that at Prague already paid for, whether I live at the one or the other can make no difference in our household expenses; besides, you know that I am a good economist, and I shall now redouble my exertions to make up for the costs I have entailed upon you by this unfortunate journey to Prague; and in the meantime I shall in no way interfere with your literary business or your journeys to Leipzig. Believe me, Franz, I have done all for the best; — let me not then have the pain of witnessing your displeasure, when I hoped for, perhaps expected, your approbation !” And endeavouring to smile through her tears, she again held out her hand to him.

“ A soft answer turneth away wrath,” and the ungracious husband felt his irritability vanish before the patient sweetness of Lolotte’s manner, and the good sense of her argument.

“ You always were the gentlest and best of

beings, Lolotte," said Franz, drawing her towards him and kissing her cheek; "and that is the reason why I was so vexed at seeing you all of a sudden act in such a headstrong, unaccountable manner — so unlike yourself! Let it be the last time that you take any step without my concurrence, and then you will be sure never to do wrong; and now let us turn our thoughts to what is to be done with you. There is Gretchen below stairs with your baggage, she having come in the same *eil-wagen* with me from Lobositz, and you see that there is no accommodation for her here."

Lolotte proposed that she should in the course of the morning proceed home to the Ottowalder-grund with one of the servants, and that Franz should remain at Dresden with the other until his business between that place and Leipzig should be terminated; and as this plan exactly corresponded with his own wishes, Möller eagerly embraced it, and gradually recovered his good-humour.

Breakfast had been despatched, and Franz, full of his book and his journey to Leipzig, was descanting upon both to Lolotte, who, weary, sad, and suffering, had more than once reminded him of the flight of time, and that a carriage must be immediately procured to take her to the Ottowalder-grund, in order that she might arrive there before dusk, when the door-bell rang, and in another moment the Countess de Kœnneritz stood among them.

Lolotte's eyes were red with weeping — Möller's cheek flushed with talking; Bertha's quick glance noted the disorder of their countenances, and she drew her own inferences from what she saw. "I see it all," thought she; "he is grown suspicious of Sturmer — has obliged her to see him no more — and is now tormenting her with his jealousy by way of rendering his home and himself more agreeable to her! and such a home for a creature so lovely and so refined to be brought to! She will die if she stays in it!"

“Madame Möller,” said the Countess, quickly advancing to Lolotte and kissing her; “I told you yesterday what an encroaching person you would find me, and I have lost no time in verifying my assertion, by coming to see you before you are settled at home. I have, however, had the forbearance to leave Monsieur de Kœnneritz out of this unseasonable visit; he intends to have the honour of making Monsieur Möller’s acquaintance in a day or two,” graciously turning to Franz; “but I could not wait so long without again seeing my fair patient, and if I have come *mal-à-propos*, you must only blame the force of attraction which our magnetic “*rapport*” has established between us, and which has left me no power to resist the strong sympathy that draws me towards you.”

However inopportune such a visit might at that moment have appeared to Lolotte and Möller, the graceful warmth of Bertha’s manner soon placed them completely at their ease

with her. She related to the husband the curious circumstance which had introduced his wife to those who so ardently desired to know her, precisely at that interesting moment when the moral and physical phenomena exhibited by her in her state of natural somnambulism, had enabled Bertha so successfully to exert her magnetic power over her, and to change the hallucinations and delirium which had characterized her sleep-walking, into the profound calm and lucidity of magnetic *clairvoyance*. She did not, indeed, particularize the subject of Lolotte's visions, feeling the ground to be too delicate and dangerous for her to venture upon it with either of them; but she triumphed unrestrainedly in the conviction which the whole occurrence had brought to the Count's mind, hitherto so sceptical upon all that concerned Magnetism, and she congratulated herself upon the power she possessed of relieving Lolotte's sufferings, and offered to replace the efficient friend and physician she had left at Prague.

This led to a declaration of Lolotte's project of returning to the country on that day. Bertha's disappointment was at first unbounded and expressed without restriction; but after a while, looking round the room, she said, "This is indeed no place for you to remain in, and I cannot be so selfish as to regret that you should leave it; but I had counted upon your staying in Dresden and giving me a great deal of your society—I had fixed my heart upon taking your cure into my own hands—and, in short, I have done nothing but form plans about you since we parted last night. Is there no way of tempting you to remain among us a little longer?"

But Lolotte, whose unhappy state of mind made her long to be far away and alone, that she might throw off the constraint which her husband's presence imposed upon her, and dare to weep unquestioned and unobserved, firmly but gratefully assured her that there was none; and Bertha feeling that her recent acquaintance

did not authorize her to argue the point further, and knowing that her husband had not empowered her to make any offer that might tempt her new friends to alter their plans, gave it up; and after ascertaining the place of Lolotte's residence, and assuring her that she should very soon hear from or see her there, she took her leave, determined to lose no time in proposing to the Count that an invitation should be made to Lolotte to spend at their house the period of Möller's absence from Dresden. Interest for the lovely invalid in a great measure prompted Bertha to such a determination; but curiosity also had its share in the project, for Lolotte had said just enough of Sturmer during her trance to arouse the apprehensions of his friend upon his account, and not sufficient to satisfy her inquisitiveness; and she longed, while she almost dreaded, to hear more upon that subject, and to compare the previsionsal declarations of Lo-

lotte with the real state of Sturmer's affairs and movements.

In an hour after the Countess de Kœnneritz had quitted Möller's apartment in the *Alt-Markt*, Lolotte and her maid Gretchen left it also for the Ottowalder-grund.

CHAPTER VIII.

Dunque vien, Morte ; il tuo venir m'è caro :
E non tardar, ch'egli à ben tempo omai.

PETRARCA.

THE day was fast closing in when Lolotte reached her solitary home, and the last beams of a wintry sun shed a cold, sickly ray upon its slanting roof, and the icicles that hung from it; a thick covering of snow wrapped the earth like a winding-sheet; the leafless trees stirred not in the still frosty air; the deep waters of the Elbe lay locked in sullen silence beneath their prison of ice; the birds were mute — all nature appeared hushed into the cold breathless calm of death! Lolotte felt the dreary

scene to be in unison with her own desolate feelings, and without an effort to restrain them, she gave way to the anguish that oppressed her soul, and wept until exhaustion succeeded to emotions so intense. Oh, how sad are those tears which fall unheeded and unpitied!—how agonizing those sighs to which no sympathizing bosom responds!—how overwhelming that sorrow which must be endured alone and unsupported! Yet even in this extremity of woe and abandonment, Lolotte suffered no querulous murmurs to escape her lips, or brood in her heart; she remembered that many blessings had once been hers, and she questioned not the wisdom or the justice of Him who had one by one withdrawn them from her. But although the spirit still remained strong within her to repel the sinful suggestions of despair, the poor frail flesh failed in the conflict, and a very few hours produced so visible a change in her, that she felt the moment of her release was fast approaching.

It had been decreed, however, that before she was suffered to depart, her virtuous resolution should be tested by one more trial — a trial which conflicting circumstances rendered more difficult, perhaps, for her to resist than any of those which she had yet encountered. Whether principle triumphed over passion in that last fearful struggle, will be seen hereafter; the narrator's task is not to forestall events nor to encumber them with her own reflections, but to relate them as nearly as possible in the way in which they were repeated to her.

The day following Lolotte's return home was the Sabbath, and weak and suffering as she felt, she determined to make an effort to attend church-service that morning; it might be the last time she should be able to do so, and her soul yearned to listen once more to the word of God in the holy edifice where her beloved grandfather had officiated for so many years, and where all the most important events of her life had been solemnized. The dearest affec-

tions and the most sacred sentiments of her heart were identified with its old grey walls — there she had been christened, confirmed, married — the last Christian rites had there been performed over her children, her mother, and her grandfather — and their mortal remains reposed beneath the linden trees that shaded its quiet cemetery.

The unexpected appearance of Lolotte in the church of Lohmen, occasioned a sensation in its humble congregation which disturbed the devotions of many among them ; for she was beloved and respected by the poor inhabitants of that sequestered valley as a being of a superior order, and the sight of her brought hope and gladness to many a bosom that during her absence had languished for those timely kindnesses which she had never been known to refuse to the unfortunate. Humble as were her fortunes, and circumscribed as her generous propensities were by the parsimonious disposition of her husband, she had nevertheless, by dint of strict self-denial,

always managed to reserve to herself the power of ministering to the wants of many of her fellow-creatures who were unable to work for themselves. From her earliest youth she had been accustomed to abstain from those frivolous and selfish indulgences which the generality of her sex, old as well as young, learn by the force of habit to consider less as luxuries than as necessities without which their happiness would be incomplete; and restricting herself to the simplest style of dress—for a few natural flowers in her beautiful hair were the only ornaments she had ever worn—she devoted the sums which so many expend in vanity to clothing the naked and feeding the hungry. The wretched never applied to her in vain. When, as was sometimes the case, she had no money to bestow, she would divide her own wardrobe with them; kind words and gentle counsels she had for all—she worked for the old—she taught the young;—by the former she was adored, by the latter revered and looked up to;—and

verily she had her reward even upon earth: for amidst those cruel bereavements which had blighted the promise of her youth, and that absence of all sympathy between her husband and herself which had made her hopeless for the future, the conviction that she was of use to so many of her fellow-creatures who, without her, would be friendless, — that she, whose individual sorrows had left her heart a desolate waste, still possessed the power to shed a ray of brightness upon the dark shadows of human suffering,—had sustained and consoled her during many an hour of solitude and despondency.

For the first quarter of an hour after she had resumed her old seat in the church, her thoughts wandered in painful confusion to by-gone times, and many a vanished scene, many a fond recollection crowded rapidly upon her memory, and filled it with images of the past, to the utter exclusion of the present; but the Pastor's voice soon recalled her to herself; — it was not, alas! the beloved voice upon which for so many years

she had hung with love and awe as it uttered "truths divine" from that very same spot.— Where was he? — and where were those who had listened with her? She raised her eyes, and they rested upon the funeral wreaths that were suspended from the wall over the places once occupied by her family; those white chaplets were the only visible memorials that remained there of the beings she had so fondly loved and so bitterly deplored. She was alone — alone there for the first time! At that moment the deep accents of the clergyman fell upon her ear, pronouncing words which appeared to her like the cry of her own heart: "Turn thee unto me and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and in misery. The sorrows of my heart are enlarged: Oh, bring thou me out of my troubles!" From that instant Lolotte's attention became fixed, and she followed with feelings of the deepest devotion every part of the service.

When it was over, she walked forth into the churchyard, and was quickly surrounded by a

crowd of humble friends, each anxious to be the first to welcome back the gentle benefactress whom they had scarcely dared hope that they should see again, and all pressing forward to kiss her hands with respectful affection. Much they had to tell her, and many inquiries to make about herself; and to all of them she listened and spoke, with that kindness and interest which are so soothing and flattering, when they spring from the heart, and are addressed to an indigent inferior. “My old mother can walk no longer,” said one; “and yet when she hears that you have returned, the good news will set her on her legs again.” “And my poor blind child whom you taught to knit and to weave baskets, has put by all her best work to give to you, dear kind lady — and Konrad has been every day to feed the robins in your garden while you were away,” said another. “Oh, how we have missed you!” exclaimed several together; “but thank God you have returned, and this will, indeed, be a happy day

for us all, if we hear that you are to leave us no more !” And as Lolotte listened to these simple expressions of good-will from the poor and infirm beings who had gathered round her, and gazed upon her with looks of unfeigned affection, her heart once more expanded to those gracious emotions which human sympathy elicits, and a holy calm took possession of her mind as she reflected that although joyless herself, she could still bring joy to the hearts of others. “ No, my good friends,” said she, “ I shall not leave you while I live.” But she forbore to sadden them by saying that she had only returned among them to die.

While she yet spoke, she directed her steps towards that part of the churchyard which contained the graves of her family ; and the crowd, guessing her intention, fell back in silence, and remained at a sufficient distance from her not to disturb her meditations. She knelt by the snow-covered mounds, and, raising her eyes to heaven, prayed long and fervently : but she

wept not, for she knew that she should soon be with those who slept beneath; and although a thought of Sturmer intruded even there, it was one so holy that angels might have participated in it. Her aspirations were for his eternal welfare, her hope, that "the peace which passeth all understanding," and which the world cannot give, might be vouchsafed to him from above.

When she rose from her knees the good Pastor Hartmann's successor, Mr. Becker, was standing by her. He drew her arm under his own, and tenderly supporting her feeble steps conducted her in silence from the melancholy spot beyond the precincts of the churchyard, where some of her humble friends still lingered that they might speak to her again. He would have uttered words of consolation to her, but something in her countenance forbade it. It was not grief,—it was not resignation,—but a solemn abstraction, which shewed that her thoughts were not with the mouldering relics

of mortality over which she had just been kneeling, but with their immortal spirits which dwelt beyond the skies; and he felt that all he could express would then fall unheeded on her ears; and so, without breaking in upon her contemplations, he continued to support her steps homewards, and it was not until they were within sight of the house, that Lolotte became aware of whither she was going or by whom she was conducted.

The intelligence of her return home had quickly spread from mouth to mouth among the poor inhabitants of that wild district, and by the time she reached the garden gate a large number had assembled there, just to kiss her hand, they said, and bid her welcome back.

“Behold, how much you have still to interest you,” said Mr. Becker to Lolotte. “Much has, indeed, been taken away from you, my dear young friend; but the Godlike power of dispensing happiness to the poor and lowly still remains; and if ever pride was justifiable in

poor frail humanity,—if ever it could find a resting-place in a heart so meek as yours,—it might be at a moment like this, when the joy which your return has occasioned among these poor people attests so eloquently to your virtues, and their grateful voices call down blessings upon your head for the benefits you have so unsparingly bestowed upon them. Monarchs might envy you the tribute of love and gratitude that has been spontaneously offered at the shrine of unpretending goodness this day, by hearts which know neither flattery nor guile.”

These were gratifying words for Lolotte to hear, and they produced the salutary effect which Mr. Becker had desired. They recalled her to the interests of humanity, dispelled the feeling of isolation which had oppressed her, and falling like balm upon her bruised heart soothed her into serenity. Tears, indeed, swam in her eyes as she replied to them; but they were the first tears in which, for many a day, anguish had had no share, and she hailed them

as the harbingers of a calmer, happier state of mind. She then addressed a few kind words to each of her poor pensioners, and, thanking them for the demonstrations of affection which they had shewn her that day, desired that they would resume their old habits of applying to her for assistance and advice whenever their necessities required either. "And bear in mind," said she, "that if I do not go to see you as formerly, it will be because my bodily strength has failed me, and not because I have grown unmindful of you."

"My dear young friend," observed Mr. Becker, "you have exhausted yourself by the exertions of this morning. You must talk no more at present, but go and repose yourself; and, above all, I enjoin you not to think of attending church this evening. As soon as the service is over I will come and read prayers to you." And so saying, he left her at the garden gate, and she traversed the little enclosure alone.

As she approached the house the figure of a man was dimly distinguished by her through the parlour casement, seated with his back towards it, and apparently bending in busy occupation over her husband's writing-table. "It is Franz," thought she; and a momentary chill crept over her heart and forced upon her the unpleasant conviction that his presence there was not only unlooked-for, but unwished-for by her. "And yet," she reflected, "his coming to me so soon is a proof of his kindness. He wishes to shew me that he is sorry for the cold reception he gave me yesterday; and I ought to be grateful for this return to good feeling, and reward him with an affectionate welcome." These thoughts passed with the rapidity of lightning through her mind as she gained the entrance of the house; and imposing a strong effort upon her feelings, that she might meet Möller with unembarrassed cordiality, she hastily crossed the little vestibule, and throwing open the door of the sitting-room entered.

The noise of the opening door aroused from his occupation the person who there awaited her coming. He started to his feet, and rushing towards her, Lolotte beheld —— not her husband, but —— Sturmer !

CHAPTER IX.

Nought 's had, all 's spent,
Where our desire is got without content :
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy.

Macbeth.

IF in the overwhelming surprise which then assailed Lolotte, her first distinct sensation was one of joy at thus suddenly finding herself in the presence of the being dearest to her soul, and whom she believed she should see no more, instead of the one from whom it recoiled, and whom alone she expected to find there, that glad impulse was so short-lived, that no eye save the piercing one of love could have detected its fugitive traces upon her countenance,

so rapidly were they succeeded by the most unequivocal signs of terror and distress ; but they had not been lost upon Sturmer, and they infused hope and courage into his soul. He had impetuously advanced to meet her, and possessing himself of her passive hand had carried it to his heart in speechless emotion ; but the conflict of her feelings had so bewildered her that she appeared suddenly to have become unconscious of his presence, and remained transfixed to the spot where she had first recognised him, motionless as a statue, and betraying no signs of life save in the changing hues of her complexion. The blood which had rushed tumultuously to her cheeks but a moment before, lending them a bloom so brilliant as to cheat the gazer into a belief that health was there, suddenly receded to her heart and left them white as alabaster,—her lips grew colourless—her eyes closed—her limbs suddenly refused to sustain her ; Sturmer threw his arms round her, and supported her sinking frame

upon his bosom ; he bore her to the window, and throwing it open bared her temples to the keen air, and chafed her hands in his ; and as her head drooped helplessly upon his shoulder, and his eyes wandered fondly over that exquisite countenance, he for the first time became aware of the fearful changes that had passed over it since he last beheld it, and tears of agony burst from his eyes.

He thought of the first time he had seen her ;—even thus had she then appeared to him, wan, breathless, and inanimate ; Death was the ghastly rival from whose grasp he had then successfully struggled to rescue her,—not for himself, indeed, but to resign her to another. Was the dreadful conflict ever to be renewed under that roof ?—and had the inexorable tyrant again appeared to dispute her possession, and to triumph over him, when, after long years of despair, hope had once more dawned upon his heart ?

Happy, ah, happy, had it indeed been so !

happy, had she then died, the last feeble pulses of her heart fluttering only with joy ill repressed and love irrepressible ! happy, could she have escaped that knowledge, which was to bring with it worse than death ! But it was not to be ; the chalice was not to pass away from her lips until she had drained its contents even to the last bitter dregs !

A gasping sigh soon announced that Lolotte was reviving from her swoon ; she opened her eyes and gazed wildly around her for a moment, then closed them again, and a gush of tears relieved her oppressed heart ;—but it was not until Sturmer spoke that memory and consciousness returned to her. At the sound of that beloved voice, calling upon her name in tones of tenderest affection, her whole frame thrilled, and a smile flitted over her countenance ; she raised her head from his bosom, and looking wistfully in his face for the space of a minute, passed her hand over his forehead.

“It is no dream,” she muttered to herself;
“it is Sturmer. God help me!”

Then disengaging herself from his support she tottered to the nearest chair, and sinking into it covered her eyes with her hands, and remained silent.

Sturmer knelt at her feet.

“Rouse yourself, beloved Lolotte,” he said,
“and listen to me. I have much to say,—
much that you *must* hear!” and he gently
removed her hands from her face.

Lolotte did rouse herself, and cast upon him a look full of reproach; “You can have nothing to say to me to which I ought to listen,” she replied. “Why are you here, Mr. Sturmer? Oh, why have you thus cruelly disregarded my entreaties—my prohibitions?”

“You ask me why I am here, Lolotte, and I answer you by another question. Did you not promise faithfully to remain at Prague until I returned thither, and have you not broken

faith with me? I am *here*, Lolotte, because you are not *there*!”

“Oh!” said she, wringing her hands, “this persecution is too unjust,—it is cruel, it is unmanly! you well knew that a promise extorted from me under the influence of terror could not be binding,—you well knew that.”

“It matters not what I knew or thought,” interrupted Sturmer, “since you would not put my self-control to the test. Perhaps you were right not to trust me,—perhaps? nay, you *were* right; for your flight has convinced me that I could not have fulfilled the promises which I then made to you,—that I could not voluntarily have relinquished you on my return,—that I sought but a respite from the misery that menaced me,—that nothing but force should have separated you from me! It pointed out to me the necessity of having no further concealments from you;—all this I felt when you had removed yourself far from me. Oh, Lolotte, I was deceiving you,—perhaps myself,

—when I last saw you ; now I have cast deceit away from me for ever. I have come to speak the truth to you,—*the truth only !* Will you consent to listen to me without interruption ?”

“ No !” said Lolotte firmly, “ for I can guess what you would say. Spare me the pain and mortification of hearing arguments which your own judgment must condemn, and—”

But Sturmer interrupted her impetuously. “ I will spare you nothing,” he exclaimed. “ You *must* listen to me, Lolotte. I *will* be heard ! and,” he continued, speaking through his closed teeth, and starting to his feet, “ try not my patience beyond its bearing ; I have need of all my coolness, all my reason, at this moment ; for that which I have to say is, God knows, as dreadful for me to utter as it will be painful for you to hear !”

He paced the room rapidly for a few moments in silence and in the greatest perturbation ; then, approaching the place where Lolotte sat pale and motionless, and perceiving the dis-

may which his words and his manner had occasioned her, he, with a powerful effort, surmounted his own emotion that he might the more effectually tranquillise hers, and stood before her with folded arms, calm and self-possessed.

“In this room, eight years ago,” he said, in accents so sad and so impressive that they vibrated to the soul of Lolotte, “the first dawns of love warmed my heart; here the romance of my life commenced; and here, on the very same spot, fate has ordained that the crisis that is to terminate it should take place! Upon that crisis hangs life or death;—my salvation or my perdition;—eternal, I should have said, could I believe, as you do, that God will punish his imperfect creatures hereafter for failing to overcome the passions with which he has endued them,—for not vanquishing the destiny which he has allotted to them in this wretched world! *Mine* was to love you—”

“This I must not hear,” interposed Lolotte, tremulously.

“Yes, Lolotte, *this you must hear!*” he answered. “Let me, once for all, appeal to your heart in my behalf; or, if you have obdurately closed it against me, let me entreat you to consult your reason. Ask yourself whether I have not, by my long, long silence, deserved that you should for *once* hear me to an end without interruption?”

Lolotte remained silent, and he proceeded:—

“My destiny was to love you! and could I put faith in sorcery, I should believe that through the agency of that lifeless image,” pointing to Lolotte’s picture, “a spell had been cast over me to lead to my undoing; since, in looking upon it, my heart acknowledged by anticipation the mysterious, fatal influence which you alone were to exercise over it, and devoted itself, with the constancy of a martyr, to a worship which was to bring upon me tortures and sacrifices. Could that picture speak, it would tell of the vow breathed before it, when, as I then believed, I looked upon it for the last time.

It was the vow of a madman ; but I have kept it, Lolotte ! All this you already know, and I will not repeat what my letter has revealed to you ; but that which you do not know, and which you can never understand,—because you are the creature of sentiment, not of passion, of reflection, not of impulse,—is the suddenness and intensity of the host of feelings which then assailed me, and crowded the sensations of a long life into the space of twenty-four hours ;—admiration, pity, love, expectation, hope, jealousy, and despair alternately asserted their sway over me ; but, of those conflicting sentiments, two only were doomed to survive, and, like evil spirits, to haunt the tenement from which they had driven away every other inmate ! Love and despair took possession of my heart ! Lolotte, in the name of those enduring feelings, and all they have cost me, I now supplicate you !”

And again he knelt at her feet, and clasping his hands together fixed his eyes in impassioned entreaty upon Lolotte’s half-averted

face, where the confusion and resentment which had rendered her speechless shewed themselves in burning blushes.

“ If,” he continued, “ such were the feelings to which the extraordinary circumstances of our first meeting gave birth, judge of what they must have become when, after a lapse of years, we were suddenly thrown into such intimate contact that every sentiment of your soul became as distinctly revealed to me as the lineaments of your lovely face. It was a glorious and exciting contemplation, but one too perilous to be indulged in with impunity ! the beauties I there discovered made me almost forgetful of the beauties of your matchless person,—passion became exalted into adoration ;—but this, too, I have already told you ; and if I dwell upon it again, it is to shew you that the devotion you inspired was no vulgar sentiment,—that it was worthy, as far as human feelings could be, of its incomparable object ! ”

“ Cease, in pity cease ! ” said Lolotte, faintly

“and in the name of that respect which once taught you to be silent, let me be gone.” And she struggled to rise from her chair, but in vain; her trembling limbs refused to support her; and unable to fly the peril of listening to words which but too eloquently described the exalted nature of her own sentiments for him who uttered them—softened and gratified, despite her efforts to be otherwise, by the intensity of the love she had inspired, yet angry and confounded at the weakness which was creeping over her heart, and leading her to contemplate with complacent tenderness the avowal of that unhallowed passion,—the irritation of her spirits overcame her efforts to appear coldly and reprovingly calm, and she burst into a passion of tears.

Long and unrestrainedly she wept; and as Sturmer gazed upon her flushed cheeks and throbbing temples, which were but half concealed by the small white hands that were spread

before them, tears of tender compassion for the struggling victim rushed to his own eyes.

“ Oh, my beloved ! ” he exclaimed, “ how often have I thought of the different lot that would have awaited us both, here and hereafter, had God bestowed upon me the blessing of your hand ! How would your gentle influence have corrected the faults of my character, and repaired the errors of my education ! How would my devoted love have filled up the aching void which the death of those dear to you had left in your heart ! My pride and my happiness would have been to have given up my soul to your guidance. Your God should have been my God ; your faith my faith ! Such would have been the *past* ; and for the *future*,—think you that age could have the power to quench the fires of a love so pure and holy ? Oh, no ! immortal as our souls would be that sacred flame ! and when the moment should arrive that summoned

one of us to precede the other into the unknown world beyond the grave, the bitterness of death would be softened by the blessed conviction that *the same hereafter* awaited us both ! ”

Poor Lolotte ! The picture Sturmer had drawn of his devoted tenderness, and of the happiness that might have been theirs had Heaven destined them for each other, contrasted but too painfully with the apathetic neglect of her husband and the hopeless desolation of heart which had been the consequence of it ; but more especially the avowal he had made of what her influence might have effected for his immortal interests, could she have been his guide and companion during their earthly pilgrimage, impressed itself upon her heart with painful intensity, and every word he uttered sank deeply there, and called forth regrets which virtue would not have blushed to avow, so unstainedly free were they from the alloy of selfish passions.

“It was not to be,” she thought ; “it may not, — must not, — *never* can be ! Then why do my thoughts dwell thus vainly upon a dream ?” And raising her eyes with an appealing look to Heaven, she clasped her hands wildly together, and murmured to herself, “O my God ! give me strength to resist the pleadings of my heart in his favour ! Save me from myself ! ”

Sturmer read the emotions of Lolotte’s soul in her eloquent countenance, and remorselessly pursued his advantage over her.

“It is not too late,” he said ; “we may still be happy ; still may we realise that life of love which has been my day-dream for so many years ! and the future, the future *passed together* (oh, blessed thought !) shall indemnify us for the joyless past. Oh, my Lolotte, does not your heart plead for me — does it not plead for yourself at this moment ? Consult but its dictates, and they will forbid you to reject the elements of happiness that are

within our grasp — they will forbid you to inflict despair and death where you might bestow light and life. Give yourself to me, dearest, best beloved ! mine you have long been in heart and soul,—mine I supplicate you to become voluntarily and unreservedly — *mine alone*, now and to all eternity !”

“ I wonder at my patience in suffering you thus to address me !” said Lolotte, indignation struggling with, and surmounting, the tenderness which but a moment before had assailed her, and lending fire to her eye and bloom to her cheek. “ You presume too far upon the indulgence with which I have treated your request to be heard, and bitterly do you make me repent of having for a moment weakly listened to you. Let me go, sir ! I will hear no more ; your presumption has recalled me to myself !”

But Sturmer, grasping her dress as she attempted to rise, forcibly detained her ; and while his lips quivered and his eyes flashed

with ill-repressed passion, the efforts he made to master his strong emotion caused his voice to sink almost to a whisper.

“Lolotte,” he said, with that forced calm which is sometimes more terrible to witness than a burst of passion, “upon my knees, and with the desperate energy of one who feels that more than life depends upon your answer, I ask for the only boon that can render existence desirable to me—I supplicate for *life* at your hands! for, mark me, dearest, I have sworn it, and again I swear it in your presence, *without you I will not live!* One word from those dear lips will seal my doom; to *live with you*, or to *die for you*, such is the alternative that hangs upon your breath—speak then, Lolotte!”

She pressed her hands upon her throbbing heart, and sighed convulsively.

“Retract those dreadful words!” she exclaimed wildly. “Have mercy upon me!—oh, have mercy upon yourself, Sturmer!” Then

sinking upon her knees, and raising her clasped hands towards him, she continued in broken accents, “ I adjure you by all that is sacred !—by all that you once respected !—in the name of God who hears us !—in the name of honour and virtue, which *once* spoke to your heart !—by your hopes of eternal salvation, I adjure you, Sturmer, not to tax my courage beyond its bearing ! Think of what you require of me,—think of what you threaten me with, rash, ungenerous man ! and recall the barbarous vow that would force me to choose between *your death* or *my own dishonour* !”

“ No, Lolotte !” he replied, raising her from her knees, and speaking in the same calm determined tone, which made her blood freeze with horror, for it sounded like the knell of hope ; “ I will not deceive you by revoking what I have said. I am weary of a struggle which has embittered my existence : life, with you for my companion, would have been to me heaven upon earth—a foretaste of the joys of

Paradise ! without you, it becomes a loathsome burthen, under which I have not the courage to toil ; and, therefore, after mature reflection, I have determined to cast it from me. I did not impart this resolution to you as a *threat*, but as a *warning*, to save you from the remorse which I know will overtake you when I am no more, and that you vainly remember how you might have snatched me from death, but would not !”

“Talk not thus dreadfully of death,” said Lolotte, shuddering ; “or, if a life must be sacrificed to end this struggle, let it be mine ! Kill my body, Sturmer ; it will be a less cruel deed than to kill my soul.”

“You offer me your *life*, Lolotte ; and yet you refuse me your *love*,” replied Sturmer bitterly ; “but it is your love alone that I covet, and that alone will I accept ! On those terms only will I live.”

“My love ?” said the unhappy Lolotte, speaking to herself, and in the overwrought

state of her feelings, unconscious that she was doing so audibly. “Does he not know that I would not withhold it, could I bestow it upon him without a crime? but I must not open my heart to him — no, not even to save it from breaking! And what does he ask of me? To forget my mother’s precepts; — to forfeit my hopes of heaven, — to change innocence into guilt, — to become the thing he himself would despise, — to abandon my husband! —”

“Your husband is incapable of appreciating the treasure he possesses; he does not love you, Lolotte!”

“Sir!” exclaimed Lolotte, starting, and suddenly restored to a sense of her situation, and to all her self-possession by this remark: “you calumniate my husband; he loves me, — at all events, I am satisfied with his affection, and I both love and honour him!”

“Now God give me patience!” cried Sturmer, stung to the quick by this unexpected declaration, which (although by no means con-

vinced of its truth,) he could not hear from the lips of Lolotte without a jealous pang, which rendered more intolerable the reproof it was intended to convey, and doubled the disappointment her last words had inflicted; for he had watched her previous agonies, her irresolution, and her temporary wandering with a fast increasing hope that they were the dying struggles of Principle, and that Passion would triumph, and lead her to surrender herself to him a willing victim at last. But this sudden, proud assertion of her duty confounded his expectations, and transported him almost to frenzy.

“Now God give me patience! for you drive me to desperation; you force me to disclosures which, indeed, I came here determined to make, but which I would thankfully, oh, how thankfully! have receded from, had you allowed me. I wished to owe every concession to *your love alone*, Lolotte, and nothing to *the force of circumstances*; but now know *all!*” and drawing close to her, and grasping her

hands, to prevent her escaping from him, he, in a voice almost inarticulate from emotion, breathed a few low words into her ear.

Transfixed with horror, no exclamation escaped the blanched lips of Lolotte,—that dreadful whisper appeared to have changed her to stone !

All his anger vanished, all his good feeling returned during the agonising disclosure ; but that sudden transition from overbearing passion to deepest humility, was lost upon the unhappy Lolotte. A start of dismay had marked her consciousness of his guilt ; but after that, no visible sign shewed that she still heard him, or still saw him near her, until, exhausted by the tumultuous emotions of his desperate avowal, Sturmer cast himself at her feet, and with passionate tears and broken supplications for mercy sought to embrace her knees. That touch appeared to restore Lolotte to herself ; she shuddered, and recoiled from it as she would have done from the contact of some noisome reptile,

and rising from her chair removed herself beyond his reach to the further end of the room, where a door opened into a small cabinet.

“Approach not!” she said, in unfaltering accents, and bending upon him a look beneath which his soul quailed; for although pity was mingled with the indignant sorrow it conveyed, it was pity such as the Accusing Angel may be supposed to exhibit when laying before the Judgment Seat of God the black catalogue of human offences, which its celestial nature can neither comprehend nor stoop to excuse. “’Tis not that I fear you,” she continued, with a gesture of incomparable dignity; “all danger from you is *now* at an end. You have indeed, by an act of unequalled treachery, triumphed over this poor perishing clay, which a very few days, at the utmost, must restore to the dust from which it sprang; but think not that you shall triumph over my immortal spirit, too, and send it stained with guilt into the presence of its Maker! No; the avowal of

that dark deed has placed an eternal barrier between us; it has cured my heart of all its weak delusions! Do not interrupt me," she continued, seeing that Sturmer was about to speak; "these are the last words you will ever hear me utter, and I enjoin you to listen to them."

Subjugated by the solemnity and the collect-
edness of her manner, Sturmer mechanically
obeyed her, and without pausing she conti-
nued.

"Yes, Sturmer, those weak delusions shall
now be acknowledged — *I loved you!* how in-
tensely, how exclusively I loved you, God who
read the struggles of my heart alone knows!
You were to me the best, the noblest, the
purest of created beings, the man who wrestled
victoriously with a guilty passion and would
have preferred death to dishonour! — the man
who sought to *vanquish himself*, not to vanquish
the woman he loved! That conviction enno-

bled you in my eyes! — *then, indeed, you were dangerous to me*, and I fled your presence for ever — not to forget you, but to cheat my breaking heart into the belief that its unhal-
lowed devotion might be pardoned, for, that in loving you, I worshipped Virtue's self. This was a wicked self-delusion, but it was my last, my only consolation; I am punished for it — punished through you. You have torn the veil from my eyes, and shewn me the worthlessness of my idol. Sturmer, *you have forced me to despise you!* may God forgive you the agony with which I pronounce these words!" She looked upwards for a moment, with clasped hands raised, as if appealing to Heaven for strength to support her through that dreadful trial; then turning upon him a look of mingled scorn and anguish, "Farewell, Sturmer," she said, "farewell for ever! — *we are separated TO ALL ETERNITY!*" and pushing open the door of the cabinet as she

uttered the last words, she disappeared through it.

Sturmer, who had sprung to his feet when he perceived her intention, rushed forward to arrest her, but only reached the door in time to hear the key turn twice in the lock. He called in frantic accents upon the name of Lolotte, and repeatedly supplicated for admission — no answer was returned ; he knelt and listened at the key-hole — not a sound was heard within ! with one blow he might have burst open the slight door, but he forbore to commit that outrage ; and finding all his entreaties to be heard ineffectual, he returned to the writing-table from which Lolotte's entrance had disturbed him, took up the letter he had been writing, and read it over.

It was the full confession of all that he had just personally communicated to her,—the more coherent, because uninterrupted history of his

love and his guilt,—the passionate exhibition of his wishes and his expectations! There was not one expression there that could be construed into triumph over her; he dwelt upon her purity with veneration—her spiritualised tenderness for him with adoration—his own madness with remorse and execration! He did justice to his own purity of intention up to the moment when, in her sleep, Lolotte had surprised him writing her an eternal farewell, and he joined to his letter the written evidence of her deep devoted affection for him in the paper she had then made the depository of her bosom's secret. But there his self-justification ended; and he sought only to cover himself with shame, that her spotless virtue might show more bright by the contrast—to humble himself in the dust before her, that he might raise her upon a pinnacle, alone in her excellence—an object to be knelt to and worshipped—a being endued with all

the tenderness, and none of the frailty of humanity — she, the innocent, the virtuous, the betrayed! — the victim of a treachery as fatal as it had been unpremeditated! To these he added a few lines, alluding to the agonizing interview he had just had with her, and the severity with which she had thrown him from her for ever; and, as a last appeal to her mercy, he besought her to reflect *for two hours only*, before she irrevocably pronounced upon his doom. He would await her answer at a particular part of the Ottowaldergrund, which he designated about half a mile from Lolotte's abode; and if at the end of that period no mitigating reflections offered themselves to her mind, and induced her to change her stern resolve, he would no longer persecute her with his supplications; but he warned her that she should find upon the threshold of her door the lifeless body of him upon whose heart she had coldly trampled, whose repentance she

had rejected, and whose devotion she had spurned ! If he might not devote his life to atoning for an unpremeditated crime, he would die to expiate it.

When Sturmer had folded his letter, he left the parlour to seek for Gretchen, that she might carry it to her mistress ; but Gretchen had obtained permission to go and visit her mother at Lohmen, whom she had not seen for several months, and thither she had repaired as soon as Lolotte had returned from church ; so that finding no person in the house that might do his bidding, Sturmer returned to the locked door ; and, after another vain effort to obtain an answer from within, he slipped his letter underneath it, and with a heavy heart left the house, and walked slowly towards that part of the Ottowaldergrund which he had particularised to Lolotte as the spot where he should await her last decision. In less than half an hour afterwards Franz Möller arrived

in great haste at the garden gate, and without alighting there drove round to the back of the premises, put up his sledge and horse in the coach-house, and walked into the house by the offices. The motive for his unexpected appearance will be explained in the succeeding chapter.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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STURMER;

A TALE OF MESMERISM.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OTHER SKETCHES FROM LIFE.

BY ISABELLA F. ROMER.

“ Truth severe by fairy Fiction dressed.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1841.




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STURMER,
A TALE OF MESMERISM.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Hamlet.



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CHAPTER X.

This is Fate, be it as you will.

GALT.

It has been seen that the Countess de Kœnneritz had separated from the Möllers on the preceding day with the firm intention of obtaining her husband's permission to invite Lolotte to become their guest during the absence of Franz at Leipzig. Various motives induced her to fix her heart upon the realisation of this project, but she found it a more difficult point to compass than she had previously supposed. The Count was full of courtier-like gallantry for his beautiful young wife, devotedly attached to her, and as indulgent to all her whims as

husbands generally are, whose superiority in years over their fairer halves may be reckoned in *scores*. But on some points he had what he called fixed principles (*ergo*, rooted prejudices), and the pride of birth and the claims of etiquette were to him subjects of such sacred importance, that no consideration could, in his opinion, justify any encroachment upon, or temporary forgetfulness of the privileges of either. In all the German States, a distinct line of demarcation is drawn between the aristocracy of the land and the unprivileged classes; no fusion takes place between them, either of intermarriage or of familiar association, for the purity of their noble descent is far more highly prized by those magnates than the acquisition of wealth from channels which might dim by plebeian contact the lustre of their knightly blazons, or introduce a flaw into the heraldic economy of their sixteen quarterings of nobility. Any mingling of casts in the ordinary course of society is unthought of; the *roturier*

does not seek to glide into the magic circle of the *Hoch-geborenen* (high-born), nor do the "High-transparencies" descend to illuminate the sober moral atmosphere of the rich citizen; each keeps his distinct place in the great community, and thus it is that in the upper classes of German society, one never meets with the aspiring *parvenus* and obsequious tuft-hunters, who beg and buy, push and toady themselves into notice in London and Paris, and whose attempts to make the world forget their little beginnings and obscure ancestry by inordinate assumptions of exclusivism, their amusing daily illustrations of "how we apples swim," are so supremely ridiculous to all, and to none more than to their noble models and patrons, who seldom fail to avenge the plebeian invasion of their rights by some occasional *mot*, which suddenly wings the unlucky soarer when he least expects it, and brings him down from the seventh heaven of noble associations to the revolting realities of the sugar-baking or

soap-boiling establishment, the manufactory or the fusty counting-house from which his wealth sprang.

Monsieur de Kœnneritz was a purist in the strictest sense of the term in these matters, and any attempt to disturb the equilibrium of society as established in his own country would have been looked upon by him as nothing short of *lèse-noblesse*; nobody treated his inferiors in rank with more polished affability than he did, but it was an affability which marked their respective places, which denoted high-bred condescension, and never degenerated into familiarity; and thus, when Bertha proposed that Madame Möller should be invited to spend some days with her in Dresden, he gravely pointed out to her the impossibility of acceding to such a request, and explained that although Madame Möller was a beautiful and interesting person, well educated, and highly accomplished, her birth and station in life did not warrant

her being produced in the society of the Countess de Kœnneritz as her *friend* ;— as an artist, a professional musician, or even a *professional* somnambulist she might have appeared there, and have repaid by the exhibition of her talents the honour of being patronized by the noblest family in Dresden ; but as she was none of these,—as she was nothing but Madame Möller, the wife of a professor of Arabic, the daughter and grand-daughter of a village pastor, she could not be admitted ;—such an innovation must not be attempted by the young and noble bride, herself a stranger and a *débutante* in the courtly circles of the Saxon capital. It was one thing to give her a seat in their carriage for a few miles,—another to take her by the hand and produce her in their aristocratic saloons ! However, the chagrin visible in Bertha's countenance at this decision led her husband to make a compromise with her ; he proposed that she should invite Lolotte to pass

a few days with her in the strictest privacy at Freudenthal, a beautiful little Rietter Schloss (Gothic castle) which he possessed on the banks of the Elbe near Pillnitz, and that they should repair thither for that purpose before they opened their house to the world and formally announced their arrival in Dresden. Bertha, enchanted by this *mezzo termine* to the affair, wrote that very evening to Franz to solicit his acquiescence in it ; she informed him that she should proceed early on the following morning to Freudenthal, the Count would join her in a day or two, and that as it was within a moderate drive of the Ottowaldergrund she would present herself there in the course of the day and bring Lolotte home with her, provided Monsieur Möller would empower her to use his authority for such an arrangement. Franz was too well pleased with this proposal to offer the shadow of an objection to it ; he therefore accepted at once the Countess de Kœnneritz's invitation for Lolotte, and fearing that the

latter might retreat from it if taken by surprise, he determined to run over to the Ottowaldergrund on the following day, and prepare his wife for Bertha's visit. Such was the reason which brought Franz Möller so unexpectedly to his garden gate half an hour after Sturmer had quitted the house as we have already stated.

Franz found the house door unfastened, and entered without knocking; the kitchen and the parlour were both empty, but in the latter he saw Lolotte's hat and muff lying upon the sofa as if just thrown off; she was, therefore, probably above stairs, and there he immediately sought her; but, like the lower rooms, the upper chambers were deserted, and after repeatedly calling upon Lolotte and Gretchen and receiving no answer, he again descended somewhat disturbed in mind, and began to examine the premises below.

The first thing he remarked in the parlour was a pair of men's gloves on the floor close

to his writing-table, and a little further off a black velvet ribbon which he remembered to have seen Lolotte wear round her neck on the preceding day, lying upon the carpet near the door of the little book cabinet. Could there have been a struggle—robbery—murder? He tried to open the door, but it was locked inside and the key was in the lock; as he knew that there was no other door to the closet or no outlet but a window looking into the back garden, this circumstance appeared so extraordinary that it filled him with terror. He hastened round to the window; the shutters were closed, but with a powerful effort he wrenched them open, and breaking a pane of glass pushed aside the bolt of the casement and jumped into the little room. The first object that met his eyes was Lolotte motionless and, as he believed, lifeless on the floor! her hair was disordered, but there were no marks of violence upon her person; she was bent backwards almost into an arch, her limbs per-

factly rigid, her teeth set, and her eyes open, but the whites alone were visible. Franz kneeling down ascertained that she was not dead; although the pulsations of her heart were not to be distinguished, she still, almost imperceptibly, breathed, and he remembered that once before he had seen her in the same awful state of *tetanus*, on the day when she had looked upon the dead faces of her two children for the last time, just before their coffin-lids were closed upon them and they were shut from her sight for ever!

Some dreadful mental shock, he felt persuaded, must have thrown her into this alarming state, but nothing in the appearance of the cabinet could afford him any clue to the mystery of her strange appearance there, until unlocking the door that he might carry her into the adjoining room, Franz perceived a folded paper lying just within the door as if it had been pushed underneath by some person on the other side. He took it up, and opening

it saw that it was a closely written letter; the first few words fixed his attention painfully, and as he read on his excitement increased; cold drops of agony stood upon his brow and fell upon his livid cheeks, and his whole frame shook with unrepressed emotion. When he had finished the fatal letter, he thrust it into his bosom, raised his clenched hands in fury to Heaven, and breathing a curse "not loud but deep" upon the author of his misery, cast one shuddering look at the motionless form of Lolotte, and then without waiting to give her any assistance, rushed like a maniac from the house.

CHAPTER XI.

That woman was liable at times to fall into a syncope, and when questioned as she lay in that state concerning things yet in the depths of the future, she was instructed what response to make by pictures seen in her trance, of the things that were to be, even as they would visibly come to pass.

GALT.

It was exactly three o'clock when the Countess de Kœnneritz in her elegant *traineau à la Russe*, preceded by an outrider on horseback, drove up to the humble abode of the Möllers ; she alighted at the garden gate, and proceeded on foot to the entrance of the house, where having knocked more than once, she was at last admitted by Gretchen. The girl's eyes were swollen with weeping, and consternation was visible in her countenance ; and when Bertha

asked for her mistress, and told her that she had come to take her away with her to Freudenthal for some days, Gretchen with a fresh burst of tears exclaimed, "Ah, madam ! my dear mistress will never leave this house but in her coffin ! she is dying, if not dead already—for pity's sake, come and see what can be done for her."

Bertha obeyed the summons, and following Gretchen up stairs into a sleeping room, beheld Lolotte stretched upon her bed, apparently in the last stage of physical exhaustion, with closed eyes, collapsed features, and feeble fluttering pulse ; the dreadful symptoms of tetanus had subsided, but had left her without the power of rallying, for she was quite senseless ; and, but for her low, irregular breathing, might have been pronounced lifeless also.

To Bertha's terrified inquiries as to what had produced this alarming crisis, the servant replied, "Noble lady, I know not. Yesterday afternoon I came here with my mistress from

Dresden, after having been absent some months at Prague. I know not whether it was that returning without my master to this lonesome place affected her spirits, or that she was still suffering from her illness at Lobositz, but my mistress did nothing but weep all last evening, and this morning when she rose she looked like a ghost ; she, however, persisted in going to early service at church, notwithstanding all my entreaties that she would remain quietly at home for this one Sunday, but she remarked that it was perhaps the last time that she should be able to go, and that she wanted to see the old place once more, and so, madam, she went. She had not been gone long when whom should I see standing outside of the garden fence, but Dr. Sturmer, of Prague, who I thought was far away to be sure ! He beckoned me to him, and asked me after my master and mistress, and if they were at home ; I told him that master was at Dresden, and that my mistress was gone to church, and described how

ill she had been at Lobositz, and how kind you, madam, had been in bringing her in your own carriage to Dresden, and how she had come on immediately here alone with me, and how poorly she continued, and how glad I was to see him, for if any one could do her good it would be himself. He said he would walk in and wait for my mistress, so I shewed him into the parlour, and there I left him; and when I went in soon after to put wood upon the stove, I saw that he was very busy writing. Well, madam, my mistress had told me before she went out that as soon as she returned from church I might go over to Lohmen to see my mother, whom I had not seen since we went to Prague, and that I might bring her back with me to stay here until such time as my master can spare Babet back again: so, as soon as I heard my mistress let herself in after church, I set off to Lohmen, quite glad to think that as Doctor Sturmer was here, she would not be alone while I was

away. I made all the haste I could, and was back again with my mother before two hours were over ; but, oh, madam ! God only knows what could have happened during my absence ! I found all the doors of the house wide open, Doctor Sturmer gone, and my mistress lying in a fit upon the ground, just inside of the little book-closet there, the window and shutters of which, looking into the back garden, (and which I had not unfastened since our return,) have been broken open as if by force. It is my firm belief that thieves must have burst into the house that way, and my mother thinks so too ; for she says there are some strange bands of gipsies lurking in the neighbourhood,—and perhaps the Doctor may have driven them away, and gone in pursuit of them, and my mistress, I suppose, went into fits from terror ; but I can only guess at all of this, for she has never come to herself, although since my mother and I carried her up stairs and laid her upon the bed, her teeth are no longer

set and her eyes turned upwards as when we found her. I have sent my mother to the Bastei to get a man from the inn there to go to Schandau for Doctor Schramm,—but it is a long way off, and he will be long in coming. And, oh ! why does not Mr. Sturmer return—he who I verily believe can bring the dead alive—the only person that ever did any good to my dear mistress.”

At this part of Gretchen’s lamentation, Bertha bethought herself of her own powers, and the magnetic influence she had once so successfully exercised over Lolotte in a painful crisis, and disencumbering herself of her pelisse and gloves she prepared to put her Mesmeric knowledge once more to the test ; but whether it was that the flutter of her spirits had weakened her influence, or that the sinking state of Lolotte baffled the successful application of such an agency, no visible result was produced by the exertions of Bertha for a length of time, and exhausted by her ineffectual efforts, the

young Countess was about to relinquish them in utter discouragement when a gradual change came over the countenance of Lolotte, her features resumed a more living expression, warmth and colouring were partially restored to them, and her respiration became regular and more perceptible. It was evident that the magnetic slumber had stolen over her, and that her physical sufferings had yielded to the action of Mesmerism, but her mind still seemed to resist its influence, for as yet nothing like lucidity was elicited.

Bertha, however, was satisfied that she had produced a composing effect upon the sufferer, and directing all her efforts to prolong that state of calm, she sat down by the couch and held her cold hands in her own that she might communicate to them the vital warmth of her own healthy frame. In a few minutes Lolotte drew the clasping hands of Bertha towards her, and laid one of them upon her heart and the other upon her forehead; the Countess under-

stood by this mute language that Lolotte was herself pointing out the method that would determine her lucidity, and bending her face close to the sleeper's she whispered to her, "Do you hear me, — do you see me now, Lolotte?"

"Yes," replied Lolotte in a low voice, "I can see you dimly."

"You have been very ill, my poor friend," resumed Bertha, "but you are better now, — you will soon be well, will you not?"

"I shall soon cease to suffer," said Lolotte.

"You mean that you will soon recover."

No answer.

"Dear Lolotte, tell me what I can do to relieve you?"

"Nothing," replied Lolotte feebly.

"But if Sturmer were here, he would be able to restore you to yourself?"

The face of Lolotte became contracted as with sudden agony; she groaned deeply, and tears burst through her closed eyelids.

“ Why does the mention of Sturmer afflict you, Lolotte ? He was here but just now, and he will presently return, will he not ? ”

“ Ask my mistress where Mr. Sturmer now is,” suggested Gretchen. Bertha repeated the question to the sleeper, but she made no answer, and continued to weep convulsively.

“ Can you see Sturmer ? ” asked Bertha.

“ No,” said Lolotte shuddering ; “ there is blood before my eyes ! ”

“ Here are Mr. Sturmer’s gloves,” said Gretchen ; “ I have often known him make my mistress see, in her magnetic sleep, persons who were a long way off, by putting in her hands something that had belonged to them ; try her with the gloves, madam ; she will be sure to see clearly then.”

Bertha disengaged her hands from those of Lolotte, and placing Sturmer’s gloves* upon her forehead and heart, held them there for some

* A case similar to this, startling and incredible as it may appear, came within the author’s Mesmeric experience.

time. An expression of horror took possession of the sleeper's countenance and she struggled violently for a moment. "What do you see now?" inquired Bertha.

"Blood—murder—he dies!—save him!" shrieked Lolotte.

"Who dies?" asked her friend, trembling.

"Sturmer!—He bleeds to death—save him!—save him!"

"Madam," said Gretchen, turning deadly pale, "as sure as there is a God in Heaven, my mistress's words are true; and it must have been as I feared,—robbers and murderers have been here, and have surely killed Doctor Sturmer!"

"Hush!" said Bertha, horror-stricken herself by the words of Lolotte; "I will ask her. Do you see Sturmer, and where is he now, Lolotte?"

"Under the oak-trees to the left of the foot-path, leading to the Bastei."

"Is there any one with him?"

"No."

"Who did the deed, Lolotte?"

She made no answer.

“Was it done by robbers who broke into the house?”

“No robbers have broken into the house.”

“Somebody broke open the window of the closet—was it done by that person?”

“Yes.”

“Where is he?”

“He has fled.”

“Lolotte, do you know the person who has murdered Sturmer?”

A profound silence followed this question; Bertha repeated it yet more solemnly, and an almost inarticulate “Yes,” fell from the lips of Lolotte.

“I charge you to tell me his name,” urged Bertha.

“Ask no questions!” cried Lolotte wildly; “but save Sturmer! He bleeds;—he dies! Will no one succour him?”

“When you have answered my question he shall be succoured,—he shall be brought here.

Now then, Lolotte, for Sturmer's sake, tell me who is his murderer?"

"*Franz Möller!*" she replied, in hollow accents.

There was a dead silence, during which the Countess and Gretchen gazed upon each other in consternation. The latter was the first to speak.

"This must be raving," she said; "my master is not here.—We left him at Dresden yesterday. He was to go to Leipzig in a day or two, and had no intention of coming to the country for some time."

Bertha made no reply; she was revolving in her mind the scene at Lobositz,—the secret it had betrayed,—the tearful eyes of Lolotte at Dresden,—her determination to proceed immediately to the country, and Sturmer's sudden appearance there the following morning. There was a connecting chain of evidence in these various circumstances which strengthened her original suspicions of an unhappy attachment existing on the part of the wife, and a very na-

tural jealousy on that of the husband : nor was it difficult for her to jump to the conclusion that the suspicions of the latter having been aroused, he had followed Lolotte to the Ottowaldergrund, detected the presence of Sturmer, and that a duel had ensued. But then again, she had in her bag a letter from Franz Möller, written late on the preceding evening, in which no *arrière pensée* was to be detected, and where, after gratefully acceding to her invitation for Lolotte, and her offer of going in person to bring her to Freudenthal, he specified that he should start for Leipzig in the course of the following day. Would he have written such a letter, authorising the Countess to go and bring away his wife at the very moment when he himself intended to surprise her with her lover ? Pained and perplexed by these conflicting suppositions, Bertha could only come to one decision, and that was to put no further questions to Lolotte in the presence of her servant. Besides, much as her curiosity was excited, and anxious

as she was to read more deeply into the terrible mystery which had thus been partially developed to her, the agony that was visible in the sleeper's countenance and the convulsive struggles which shook her frame alarmed the Countess to a degree that rendered her distrustful of her own powers in guiding the lucidity of Lolotte ; and fearful that their misapplication might produce some fatal result, she resolved to terminate the experiment. Therefore, after having admonished Gretchen to say nothing to Lolotte of her presence, or of anything that had passed through her agency, she hastened to dispel her magnetic slumber, taking care before she completely recovered her natural perceptions, to withdraw herself out of sight, behind a large folding screen, which stood between the bed and the door, lest the sudden sight of a stranger might increase the nervous excitement of the invalid.

From this place of concealment she could hear all that passed, and she could also leave

the room without being seen ; and from thence she anxiously watched the progress of Lolotte's return to a waking state.

“Where am I ?” were the first words she uttered. “What has happened to me ?”

“Here, in your own room, dear mistress !” replied Gretchen. “You have had a bad fainting fit ; but, thank God, it is all over.”

A long silence ensued, during which Lolotte repeatedly passed her hand over her forehead, as if endeavouring to dispel the confusion of her ideas, and her eyes wandered fearfully around the room.

“Is he gone ?” she at last said, in a voice so faint and tremulous that it could scarcely be heard.

“Who, madam ?” inquired her maid.

“Mr. Sturmer,” she whispered. “Did you not see him ?”

“Yes, he is gone ; but perhaps he will return.”

“Did he say so ?” asked Lolotte, in great perturbation.

“No, madam; he was gone before I came home.”

“Then,” replied Lolotte, evidently relieved by this assurance, “he will certainly not return. He was to go back to Prague immediately.” A struggling sigh followed these words, and again she was silent, but the agitation of her countenance betrayed the painful nature of her thoughts. “Gretchen,” she continued, after a pause, and with an eagerness that appeared completely to exhaust her, “should any one come here,—*no matter who*,—remember I make *no exception*,—you will say that I am not to be seen. Let no one come near me,—no one,—no one!” and she actually gasped with emotion.

“But my master, madam,” said Gretchen, hesitatingly.

“Your master is at Dresden,” was the reply, “and therefore is out of the question.”

“Are you sure he is there, madam?”

“Of course,” replied Lolotte.

“For I was thinking,” pursued her maid,

“that as you are so unwell, it would be right that he should be here ; and I wished to know where you supposed him *now* to be, that I might send for him.”

“He is of course at Dresden,” said Lolotte, without the least hesitation ; “but it is unnecessary to send for him at present. To-morrow, if I am not better, it will be quite time enough to let him know.”

“Did any one else besides Mr. Sturmer come here while I was out ? ” inquired the maid.

“No one,” replied Lolotte. Then complaining of weariness and exhaustion, she turned her face towards the wall, and desired Gretchen to leave her to repose.

The girl obeyed and glided out of the room ; but Bertha, who had heard enough to be quite satisfied that the waking impressions of Lolotte bore no analogy to her magnetic visions, still lingered in her hiding place.

“To-morrow ! ” said Lolotte, when she believed herself to be alone, and clasping her

hands together; “yes, to-morrow Franz may come! All will be over then. I feel the hour approaching,—and the fatal secret that has hastened it, will be buried with me.”

She said no more; and the uninterrupted silence which ensued leading the Countess to suppose that she was composing herself to rest, she stole softly out of the room and rejoined Gretchen on the staircase. But the horrible vision that Lolotte’s former words had conjured up—the image of Sturmer, her valued friend (whom she had so lately seen full of life) wounded, and expiring for want of timely assistance, within reach of her, yet abandoned to his dreadful fate, haunted her imagination, and unable to rest under the painful idea she descended to the parlour, determined at once to ascertain the truth by sending her servants to the spot which had been particularised by Lolotte as the theatre of the catastrophe.

While she was giving her orders accordingly, a new personage appeared on the scene. It

was Mr. Becker, the clergyman, who had accompanied Lolotte home from church that morning. Gretchen hastened to repeat to him the statement she had already made to the Countess, of the mysterious events which had passed during the last few hours ; while Bertha, having in her turn explained the purport of her visit, testified to the state in which she had found Lolotte ; the wild words that had been drawn from her in her magnetic sleep, and the contradictory tenor of her waking declarations. Mr. Becker, lost in wonder, did not attempt to offer an opinion upon so bewildering a subject ; but he fully concurred in the Countess's suggestion, of sending to verify the truth of Lolotte's fearful revelation, and offered himself to accompany one of Bertha's servants to the place designated, as being more competent than they could be to find it out, from his long familiarity with every spot of ground in the district. Then, in a few touching words he described the effect which Lolotte's unex-

pected appearance at church that morning, had produced in his lowly congregation; dwelt upon her goodness and her piety; her trials and her resignation; and while tears dimmed his eyes, expressed his conviction that it was the last time he should behold her there alive.

“But why should I regret her removal to a state of being, better befitting her angelic nature?” said he. “If ever human creature might be pronounced *sinless*, that creature is Charlotte Möller: yet, sorrow has been her portion on earth! and still, even with this conviction of the happiness of the change that awaits her, we cannot reconcile ourselves to the idea of losing her; and her translation to immortal joys will wring tears of selfish sorrow from many a mourner’s eyes!”

Bertha felt her own fill as the good man spoke, and her heart reproached her for having harboured a momentary suspicion of the purity of such a being; but there was not an instant to be lost in the indulgence or the expression

of sentiment, and dismissing Mr. Becker upon his strange errand, she continued walking up and down the little room after his departure, in a state of inquietude not to be controled, respecting the possible result of his research; now breaking off, and softly ascending to Lotte's room, to listen at the door if all within was still,—now returning to the parlour, and anxiously peering through the window, to see whether her messengers were on their way back.

A weary hour had thus dragged on its tedious length, when Bertha perceived a little knot of persons in the distance, slowly wending along the wide waste towards the house; as they advanced she could distinguish that they were bending beneath the weight of something which they supported between them; but her impatience could ill brook the delay of quietly awaiting their coming where she was, and, throwing on her pelisse, she rushed out of the house to meet them. At the garden-

gate she was stopped by the arrival of the little convoy, and there her worst apprehensions were confirmed. One glimpse revealed to her the inanimate form of Sturmer, helplessly stretched upon a sort of hammock, which had been contrived out of Mr. Becker's ample cloak, the ends of which were supported by that gentleman, the Countess's servant, and Gretchen's mother, whom they had met on the way: there was blood upon his clothes, his eyes were closed, and the expression of his livid countenance was calm and passionless as that which immediately follows the last struggle of mortality. Sick and speechless with the shock, Bertha clung to the gate for support, while her eyes anxiously interrogated those of Mr. Becker.

“Wounded, but not dead,” he whispered, as he passed her; “at least, he breathed when we found him.”

She followed the melancholy procession into the house; and when Sturmer had been depo-

sited upon the sofa in the parlour, where he had reposed during a part of the memorable night in which he had been first received beneath that roof, Mr. Becker drew her into a corner, and in a low voice said,—

“We found him precisely in the place pointed out by Madam Möller: he was stretched upon the ground, speechless but not insensible, and two pistols, one discharged and the other loaded, were lying close to him. It has, apparently been an act of self-destruction, for the muzzle of the pistol had been applied so close to the breast as to burn his clothes.”

“Those are Sturmer’s pistols,” said Bertha, glancing at the fatal instruments which Mr. Becker drew from his pocket; “there are his crest and initials engraven on them, — poor, poor Sturmer! — what could have led him to commit this rash deed?” She turned, weeping, towards the prostrate form of her friend, and although faint and heart-sickened at the sight of the blood with which his dress was satu-

rated, she busied herself, in conjunction with Mr. Becker, in applying the various remedies which were resorted to in order to restore the wounded man to animation. In the midst of these, as yet fruitless efforts, Doctor Schramm arrived; and while he proceeded to undress the patient and examine his wound, Bertha withdrew alone into the little book-room.

“Madam,—dear madam,—Oh, my God!” said Gretchen, putting her head through the window, some time afterwards, and speaking in the greatest agitation; “my master *has* been here! sure all that my mistress said in her sleep must be true!”

“What do you mean?” inquired Bertha.

“Oh, madam, I mean that just this minute, when I went to put Doctor Schramm’s mule into the stable, I found my master’s sledge there, and Hans, the poney, harnessed to it, poor beast! and all covered with sweat. Oh, who could ever have thought that my mas-

ter would have lifted his hand against Mr. Sturmer's life !—”

“ Hush !” said Bertha, almost sternly, “ keep these wild suppositions to yourself, and beware of inculcating an innocent person by repeating them to any one whatsoever,—not even to your mother, my good Gretchen.”

Here the door was softly opened, and Doctor Schramm and Mr. Becker walked in.

“ There is nothing to be done for the wounded man,” said the former ; “ the ball has passed through his lungs, and no human power can save him !”

“ I will send to Dresden, for the Court surgeon !” exclaimed Bertha impetuously.

“ As you please, madam,” replied the Doctor ; “ but my patient will be dead before he arrives. I shall not leave the house until all is over. And, now, if you please, I will go up-stairs, and see what ails *Frau Möller*.”

CHAPTER XII.

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well.

Macbeth.

Peace to her broken heart.

LORD BYRON.

NEVERTHELESS, Bertha was not disposed to abide by the opinion of the village practitioner alone; nor, despite the sentence so uncompromisingly pronounced by him, could she reconcile herself to the idea of leaving Sturmer to die without making an effort to procure for him all the assistance that human skill and science could afford. She, therefore, wrote a few lines to her husband, telling him what had happened, and desiring that he would send,

without delay, the best surgical assistance that could be procured in Dresden; and having ordered her *piqueur* to proceed express with her despatch to the Count, and directed that her *traineau* and servants should go back to Freudenthal, and return for her on the following day, she stole softly into the parlour, and sitting down by the couch which had been hastily prepared for Sturmer, wept while she watched over her dying friend.

He had recovered from the swoon which had been the consequence of his painful removal to the house, but his actual state was much more distressing to behold than the former one had been; the death-like repose of his countenance had given place to an expression of the most intense suffering, his struggling breath came thick and choking, like that dreadful rattle which is *the beginning of the end* — the commencement of the last agony,—and, restless with pain yet unable to turn without assistance, he tossed the bed-clothes from his chest, as though even

that light covering suffocated him. Bertha, with tenderest care, moistened his parched lips, and arranged his pillow at every uneasy move, and while thus employed her hand accidentally came in contact with Sturmer's; he started at the touch, opened his eyes, and recognized her, but unable to speak he feebly grasped her hand, and raising it to his lips endeavoured to smile.

“ Oh Sturmer, dear Sturmer ! ” exclaimed Bertha unable to check her feelings ; “ who has done this dreadful deed ? Oh, tell me that it is not you ! ”

Again he endeavoured to speak, and again was the effort unavailing ; but with an expressive gesture he went through the dumb show of writing with the fore-finger of one hand upon the palm of the other, and Bertha comprehending that he wished for writing materials, directed Mr. Becker to bring them to him. They raised him between them in the bed,

and the good Pastor supported him in his arms while Bertha held the paper and placed a pen in his hands.

Sturmer looked round him, and for the first time saw where he was ; his eyes wandered wistfully around the room, taking in every well remembered object, and at first fixed themselves upon the portrait of Lolotte, which hung opposite to his bed, smiling upon him in all her fatal beauty. He gazed upon the fair shade for some moments with an expression—inexplicable to those who beheld him—of tenderness, entreaty, and reproach, while his lips moved as though apostrophising it ; then seizing the pen he scrawled with an unsteady hand these words : —

“ That no suspicion may fall upon any person for the deed which I alone have done, I here solemnly declare that I have been my own destroyer. Weary of life, I have thought

fit to lay it down ; my blood be upon my own head.

“ WOLFGANG STURMER.”

Exhausted by the effort he had made, Sturmer sank back fainting upon his pillow, and when, through the effort of Doctor Schramm, he was once more restored to animation, it was evident that his mind had wandered ; he no longer recognized Bertha, no longer appeared conscious of anything that was passing around him, and, with no sensations save those of intolerable agony, he lay gasping and groaning upon that bed of anguish, his youth and fine constitution insufficient to save him, yet conducing to render the death-struggle more awful and prolonged.

“ Where is my friend Möller ? ” asked Doctor Schramm ; “ he ought to be sent for.”

“ He is at Dresden, I fancy,” said Bertha, “ for here is a note which I received from him

here last night ; ” and she produced Franz’s letter to her.

“ Careless fellow ! ” said the Docter, pettishly ; “ he ought to be here.”

“ Do you apprehend any danger for Madam Möller ? ” asked the Countess.

“ I have seen her as much reduced *physically* more than once already,” he replied, “ and she has rallied,—but I never saw her mind in such a state before ; there is a complete moral prostration, a sort of dumb despair which makes her turn from every remedy proposed. She rejects medicine and food with the same silent pertinacity, and will answer no questions respecting the seat of her sufferings. This exhaustion sometimes follows the sort of fit Gretchen tells me she has had ; but I suspect there has been some domestic quarrel to produce the crisis, for the only thing that induced her to speak to me, was an inquiry from me, for her husband, and a suggestion that he

should be sent for ; she then entreated, nay required, that I should refrain from any such thing ; at all events that I should wait until to-morrow. Nevertheless, I cannot conscientiously do so, he must be written to immediately." And sitting down he penned a few lines to Möller, and gave them to Mr. Becker to send off that evening.

"Doctor," said Bertha ; "Madam Möller has often derived great benefit from Mesmerism ; do you not think that the application of it *now* might —"

"Mesmerism ! *mummery* you mean !" interrupted the Doctor bluntly. "Noble lady, excuse my sincerity, but I always call things by their right names. I never did and never will encourage such imposture ; and if any one attempts to lay a hand upon Frau Möller to that effect, I will leave the house immediately."

The Doctor, exceedingly ruffled by an allusion to a subject which he had managed to forbid

throughout the range of his practice, spoke loud and angrily, and the fevered patient started and tossed at the sound of his voice.

“Hush !” said Bertha softly, laying her finger upon her lips ; “nothing more shall be said upon the subject since you prohibit it, only pray do not disturb my poor friend Sturmer.”

“Sturmer !” repeated the Doctor, “why that is the name of the greatest quack in Germany ; the famous Prague Mesmeriser !”

“It is he himself,” replied Bertha.

“Whew !” exclaimed the Doctor, “I always said he was mad, and that, like a mad dog, he bit every person he approached and communicated his madness to them. Now my opinion is verified, for no man in his senses ever committed suicide.”

* * * * *

That night the Countess de Kœnneritz and Mr. Becker remained at the Ottowaldergrund. During the earlier part of it they had both remained watching by Sturmer’s

couch, but, upon an assurance from Doctor Schramm that if anything required their presence he would immediately call them, and, also that they might economize their strength in order to relieve the Doctor towards morning, they were persuaded to retire to the respective rooms that had been prepared for them, and lie down for a few hours. Lolotte had at length sunk from exhaustion into sleep, and Gretchen was to pass the night in a cabinet opening out of her mistress's chamber. Doctor Schramm, ensconced in a large easy chair, nodded drowsily, ever and anon opening his eyes and fixing them upon the countenance of the dying man, whose fierce agony had at last subsided into a lethargic calm. The whole house was hushed into unbroken stillness; not a sound was to be heard in that little chamber, save the ticking of the house clock, and the laboured breathing of Sturmer. Doctor Schramm had placed the night lamp behind a screen that it might not glare upon the

eyes of the sufferer ; and the dim light, the solemn silence, the midnight hour, all conspired to overpower the good Doctor with unconquerable drowsiness, which despite his efforts to shake it off stole insidiously over his senses, and at last locked them in heavy sleep.

How long he slept he knew not, but at last the deep gaspings of Sturmer aroused him ; he started up, stretched his limbs, rubbed his eyes, and in that confused dreamy state, between sleeping and waking, thought he perceived a white figure by the bed side. "It must be the Countess," thought he, all at once remembering where he was, and hastily drawing near her.

A candle, which had been placed there by the new comer, was burning upon the table, and the window curtain having been drawn back, the cold rays of the moon fell full upon the bed, and mingling its ghastly light with that of the flickering taper enabled Doctor Schramm (now wide awake) to take in the

whole scene at a glance. Kneeling by the side of the couch, with one arm thrown round Sturmer, whose head was supported on her bosom, while her other hand was locked in both of his, he beheld, not the Countess, but Lolotte ; so still, so pale, so motionless, her eyes so fixed and abstracted in their expression that she looked more like a statue than a breathing being!—her white night-dress, as well as the bed-clothes, were deluged in the blood that was flowing from Sturmer's lips, yet she moved not!—she was plunged in that mysterious state in which the body sleeps while the mind is awake ; that phenomenon called *natural somnambulism* which no one has ever yet attempted to deny, although almost every one denies that it can be produced by magnetic action ; and yet why, since one is possible, should the other be impossible ?

“ Why, Frau Möller,” whispered the startled Doctor, quite unaware of her state, “ what in God's name brought you here ? Move away,

move away, and let me come near the poor fellow !”—Still she answered not,—still she moved not.—“ Why, woman, what ails you ? ” he continued in the same tone ; and, at the same time, leaning over her he felt Sturmer’s pulse, and then glided his hand from thence to his heart. “ Dead ! ” said he, in an under tone. “ Come, my dear child, this is no place for you. Go back to your room, like a reasonable creature ; ” and after gently laying Sturmer’s head back upon his pillow, he seized Lolotte round the waist, and abruptly raised her to her feet.

His touch aroused the sleeper ; she started convulsively, and speculation returned to her eyes. For the first time the Doctor became aware that she had been *sleep-waking* * ; but it was too late to repair the mischief he had done in violently arousing her from that state. She

* A term adopted by the Rev. Mr. Townshend in his clever work upon Animal Magnetism, which better expresses than any word hitherto employed the state of somnambule lucidity, whether *natural* or produced by *Magnetism*.

trembled in every limb; and, casting her terrified glances around, they at last fell upon the ghastly spectacle of Sturmer, dead and weltering in his blood before her. A shriek so wild, so piercing, and so woe-begone, burst from her lips, and echoed through the silent house, that those who heard it never forgot its ominous sound;—it was the farewell cry of Reason! In the next moment Lolotte was stretched upon the ground, tearing her blood-stained garments into shreds, grinding her teeth, and struggling against some unseen phantom with all the strength and violence of frenzy.

Everybody in the house gathered to the spot in an instant; but some time elapsed before their agitation subsided sufficiently to enable them to understand what had happened. At last, Doctor Schramm explained the whole circumstance to them; and Bertha, comprehending the terrible mistake he had made in awakening Lolotte, could not restrain her anger.

“Oh, Doctor Schramm!” she exclaimed,

“you have destroyed her by your folly ! If she had not been thus violently aroused, she might have been removed without danger from this terrible scene, and never have known that she had been here ;”—Bertha remembered how skilfully she had averted such a crisis at Lobositz by the timely intervention of Mesmerism, which had changed the excitement of Somnambulism into the calm of Magnetic slumber ;—“but it is too late now ; the mischief is done, and if she lives, it will be to become a maniac !”

But she did not live. Towards sunrise the awful struggle diminished, and Lolotte who had been overpowered by force in order to be carried to her room, sank into that helpless, pulseless, breathless state in which she had been found in the morning,—hearing nothing, seeing nothing, and recognizing no one. Bertha, the Doctor, and the two women servants, were gathered round the bed, kneeling in solemn silence, while Mr. Becker recited aloud the

prayers for the dying. Suddenly a change came over the countenance of Lolotte ; an expression of ecstatic rapture, such as had characterised some of her Magnetic trances, broke, like a light from Heaven, over it, investing her with more than mortal beauty. It was as though the earth and its dark stormy sufferings had faded away before the glories of the cloudless Day which was dawning on her from on High. With eyes and arms raised to Heaven, she remained fixed in that sublime contemplation for some moments ; then gently sinking back upon her pillow, she passed without a struggle from Life to Immortality.

CHAPTER XIII.

Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate, and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man!

Macbeth.

THE remains of Lolotte and Sturmer were committed to the earth on the same day; but, as in life they had been doomed to remain apart, so even in death they were to be divided. The laws of God had interposed a barrier between their love, and now the laws of man raised another one between their dust. The Suicide's Grave was placed outside of the paling which enclosed the holy ground where Lolotte's clay had been gathered to that of her kindred; but so near to it, that the summer wind could scatter over the unconsecrated spot

blossoms and leaves from the lime-trees that shaded the last resting-place of the Möllers; and their waving boughs sheltered alike the graves of the Innocent and the Guilty, even as God's Mercy is extended to the Erring as well as to the Just!

Nothing, however, had been heard of Möller, although every effort had been made to find out where he was. His extraordinary disappearance, coupled with the fact of his sledge and horse having been found at the Ottowaldergrund on the day of the catastrophe, and at a time when he was supposed to be at a distance, gave rise to some natural suspicions that he must have been accessory to Sturmer's death; but on the other hand, appearances bore out with the greatest consistency the declaration which Sturmer himself had made of having been his own destroyer. The deed had been done with his own pistol,—there was no trace of any struggle on the spot where he had been found; and perhaps that which was the most convinc-

ing circumstance of all was a sealed packet found in the pocket of Sturmer's coat after his death, containing an old faded chaplet of white roses, and two letters directed to himself in a woman's hand, which had been resealed with the signet ring he wore (they were the possessions he most prized upon earth—the bridal chaplet of Lolotte and the two letters she had written to him at Prague). Upon the envelope containing these objects was written in Sturmer's hand, — “ *I desire that this packet may be buried with me ;—*” and then followed the date of the day on which he was found wounded.

The general belief, therefore, was, that a disappointment in love had led him to commit suicide ; and this opinion was strengthened by the declarations of Baron von Preinl, Bertha's brother, who, in consequence of Sturmer's last letter to him had left Vienna and his law-suit at a moment's notice, and had flown to Prague, and from thence to Dresden, in hopes that he might reach the latter place in time to prevent

the catastrophe which his friend had so unequivocally announced. But he arrived too late ! Whatever might have been his own surmises respecting the extent of his friend's guilt, (and there were dark, unexplained, expressions in Sturmer's letter, which had awakened the worst suspicions of Anton,) he, out of respect to the memory of the man whom he had loved so well, suppressed them even from his brother-in-law, nor suffered himself to give utterance to a supposition that was but too well calculated to cast infamy upon the name of Wolfgang Sturmer. Admitting the fact of his unlawful passion for Madam Möller, and the check which it had received from her, as well as Sturmer's desperate declarations to him in the event of her sustained severity, Anton von Preinl, in expressing his conviction that Sturmer had destroyed himself, said only what he most conscientiously believed to be the case.

All that had been traced of Möller was, that on the Sunday in question he had absented him-

self from Dresden for some hours during the early part of the day,—that he had returned thither in the evening, and had again departed that night, telling Babet that he was going to Leipzig. At Leipzig he *had* appeared, had touched the sum that had been offered him for his manuscript, and had quitted the town on the same day, announcing that he was going back to Dresden. *But to Dresden he had never returned* ; and from that day all trace of him was lost.

However, the mystery was not destined to be buried in doubt for any length of time ; a full elucidation of it was furnished by the sole surviving person involved in the tragical event, and those who perused the solution of the enigma could not but wonder and admire how awfully correct had been Lolotte's magnetic revelation, when she named Franz Möller as the murderer of Sturmer.

About a fortnight after the funeral of Lolotte, a letter, bearing the post-mark of Trieste,

reached Mr. Becker ; it was in Möller's handwriting, and enclosed a closely written letter in another character, and without any superscription. Möller's letter was as follows :—

“MY DEAR SIR, — friend, alas ! I dare no longer call you, for will you not disown me as such when you know all ? *The curse of Cain is upon me !* I have murdered the man whom I loved as a brother, and I am a wanderer upon the face of the earth ! The enclosed letter will explain the injury which maddened me to perpetrate that bloody deed,—read it before you proceed further, and you will then better understand the fatal circumstances which have made me an outcast and a murderer.”

* * * *

Here Mr. Becker turned to the paper alluded to ; it was Sturmer's letter to Lolotte, which Franz had found underneath the door of the book cabinet, where he had discovered his wife senseless, and contained, as has al-

ready been stated, the full avowal of Sturmer's guilt,—the expression of his wishes and expectations,—and lastly the few passionate lines which he had added after Lolotte had quitted his presence, in which he implored her indulgence, and dwelt upon the dreadful alternative that her rigour would precipitate him into, if at the expiration of two hours he heard nothing from her at the place where he should await her last decision. Having perused that document, Mr. Becker resumed Franz's letter ; but as the next part of it related to what has already been described, we shall omit it, and take up the narrative further on.

* * * *

“ When I knew all—when I understood the base treachery of which my poor Lolotte had been the innocent victim, I rushed out of the house with vengeance in my soul ; but, so help me God ! I did not meditate the crime I have committed. I had no weapons with me—and I only meant to cover with confusion the villain

who had dishonoured me, and to challenge him to meet me upon equal terms, and according to the laws of honour, in the presence of witnesses, to answer for the injury he had done me. The sight of him, however, transported me beyond all self-command,—I shewed him his letter, and reproached him with his crime ; — he avowed it, — and then like a tiger I sprang upon him, and would have throttled him ! ‘ Stay ! ’ said he, ‘ I will furnish you with more expeditious means,’ and he drew two pistols from his pocket, and offered them to me ; — ‘ ’Twill only be saving me the trouble of doing it myself.’ ‘ Take your ground,’ said I, snatching one of the pistols ; ‘ stand ! ’ ‘ No, Möller,’ he replied, throwing the other one upon the ground, ‘ I will never fire upon you ! ’ ‘ Coward ! dastardly villain ! ’ I cried, ‘ do not think to disarm my just vengeance by this base evasion ! ’ His face flushed crimson, and then turned deadly pale, yet he contained himself. ‘ Even this insult I will

bear,' said he, 'from the husband of Lolotte.' That name from his lips rendered me furious—I rushed up to him, placed the muzzle of the pistol to his breast, fired, and he fell! Then I fled, without daring to look upon the face of him I had murdered; and, fearful of returning to my home, anxious only to escape, I regained Dresden by the Pirna road, and set out for Leipzig that very night, meaning to pass the Saxon frontier without loss of time, and go to Frankfort where I have relations.

“But at Leipzig I met with an old friend, whom I had not seen for many years, a man, who, when I travelled through Germany before I was married, shewed me the greatest kindness in his own country. I thought I might trust him with my horrible secret, and I did so. I threw myself upon his generosity for assistance and advice, and he did not cast me from him. He is a Würtemberger, and has been a Missionary to the East; he had returned to Germany for a short time, and was

then about to proceed to Alexandria, whither he proposed I should accompany him, as my proficiency in Arabic would render me very useful to him there. I closed with the offer ; and having signified at Leipzig that I should immediately return to Dresden, I left the town on foot, and was joined at some miles distant from it by my friend, Albert Stœrkel, with whom I journeyed hither in the disguise of a servant. To-morrow we are to embark for Alexandria, and I shall return to my own country no more.

“ I have not the courage to write my farewell to Lolotte ; will you, my dear sir, break my resolution to her ? Tell her that I acquit her of all participation in the foul crime that has desolated our home ; and that I never knew how well I loved her until I was parted from her for ever ! But after what has occurred, it would be impossible that we should ever meet again,—even if I could forget the stain that has been cast upon her, she would never forget

that *his blood* is upon my hands, for she loved him! — Mr. Becker, *she loved him!* — ay, there is the sting!

“ You see, sir, that I have not abandoned my wife from heartless caprice. My heart bleeds when I think of her; but God, who ‘tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,’ will have mercy upon her. I commend her to your care; remember that she is innocent, undefiled in soul as the child unborn, and that I, her injured husband, swear it to you! Oh, sir, I feel that you will be kind to the forsaken Lolotte!

“ I enclose a deed, making over to you, for her use during her lifetime, all the little property I possess. In the country to which I am going I shall be able to make my way by my own exertions; and I take with me nothing but the money which my manuscript produced, and the Prayer-book which Lolotte gave me on the day of our marriage. Should you kindly acknowledge the receipt of this commu-

nication, a letter enclosed under cover to Mr. Albert Stœrckel, Minister of the German Protestant Church at Alexandria, will reach me."

"FRANZ MÖLLER."

The perusal of this letter occasioned the greatest anguish of spirit to the good Mr. Becker; but in the midst of his grief and amazement at the dark history it unfolded, he could not but render justice to the feeling with which Franz Möller had treated the subject of his unfortunate wife; and he saw with satisfaction that sorrow had purified his heart, and that the apathy and selfishness which had hitherto been the governing faults of his character had vanished before the magnitude of Lolotte's misery. He immediately proceeded to Dresden with these documents, and having obtained an interview with Baron von Preinl, submitted them to him. Anton then, in his turn, communicated the whole of

Sturmer's correspondence to Mr. Becker, and the good man shed tears over the history of that long struggle, in which, alas! Sturmer's better self had been at last vanquished.

"You see, my dear sir," said Anton, "that my poor friend was neither an unprincipled libertine, nor a calculating seducer; there was nothing base or dishonourable in his nature; his admiration of the Good and the Beautiful amounted almost to a worship; and his loathing of Vice, even in its blindest form, was equally intense. Even in our wildest days, when we were at the University together, and that I and others of our age were constantly getting entangled in one sort of dissipation or another, Sturmer remained pure from such contaminations:—he was a Poet and an Idealist, and in the exuberance of his imagination he had created to himself a vision of female beauty so perfect in its moral as well as physical attributes, that no reality could bear a

comparison with it. Like another Pygmalion he became enamoured of his own creation, and God only knows how many odes and epistles he addressed to this Goddess of his brain! and, as nothing less ethereal could satisfy his fastidious taste, he turned with indifference from all that *we* then found so charming and attractive. This was the secret of his infatuated passion for Lolotte Möller, which blazed out with such violence at first sight, and, unlike other sudden passions, the meteors of a day, never afterwards cooled. In her extraordinary loveliness he beheld the realisation of his dream, the incarnation of his visionary idol; that idol was not displaced; but henceforth it bore the name of Lolotte, and he loved—nay, adored—without questioning the possibility of her moral beauties falling short of her physical perfections. Afterwards, when he found out that her loveliness was her least charm, the fair exterior was only worshiped as the envelope of a fairer mind! Poor fellow! know-

ing the utter impossibility of such an attachment ever ending happily for him, I have often wished that Lolotte had been less admirable, less pure in mind than she was ; one evidence of levity or grossness would have diminished, perhaps destroyed her empire over him ; for Sturmer was not a man who could have loved through the senses alone."

"He was an erring, but not a vicious man," said Mr. Becker.

"All his impulses, all his intentions were virtuous and honest !" rejoined Anton, impressively.

"Ay, sir," continued Mr. Becker, "his virtues and his honesty were the instincts of a noble nature ; but not being based upon the strong foundations of religious principle, they were not proof against the tempest of passion that assailed him, and were broken down and swept away by the whirlwind. He looked not for strength to resist temptation, where strength alone can be found, from on High !—*he was not*

a Christian, sir,—he was a Philosopher!—and behold, to what has his philosophy conducted him !”

* * * * *

Mr. Becker wrote to Möller acquainting him with his wife's death, and returning the deed of trust which he had enclosed to him for Lolotte's use ; but he received no further intelligence of Franz Möller, nor did the self-exiled wanderer ever return to his own country.

CONCLUSION.

In the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his soul drank their sunbeams ; he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects ; he was not
Himself what he had been ; he was a wanderer.

LORD BYRON.

SEVERAL years afterwards, when Anton von Preinl and one of his friends were in Egypt, and travelling between Cairo and the Fayoom, (that lovely Oasis whose rose-gardens are celebrated throughout the land,) they halted one evening to pass the night in a Bedouin camp, upon the edge of the desert, where their Arab guide, who belonged to the same tribe, assured them that they would be very well received. The

appearance of this encampment was extremely agreeable and picturesque; the camels'-hair tents pitched in the form of a crescent at regular distances from each other, and having their entrances turned towards the East, were clean and airy; and upon the short grass before them gamboled a troop of noisy little Arab children, disputing the territory with the goats and kids belonging to the wandering colony.

The chief of the tribe, or, as he was called, the Scheik Mourad, received them with patriarchal hospitality, and his wife Hadidjé, a handsome young Arab woman, prepared with her own hands the supper that was to be offered to them; while her two sons, sturdy urchins of five and six years old, hung upon her skirts, eyeing the strangers with that half bashful, half playful curiosity which only required a little encouragement to glide into familiarity. There was something in the appearance of the Scheik,

however, which struck Anton as being foreign to the scene ; although he wore the Bedouin *Abbas*, there was wanting in him the eye of fire and the freedom of limb which belong exclusively to the Children of the Desert, and his fair complexion, clear blue eyes, and honest, contemplative, but somewhat heavy countenance, appeared to the German traveller better suited to the characteristics of his own Fatherland than to the rude and primitive *encadrement* in which he had found him. This opinion was justified when, upon finding that the Baron and his friend were quite ignorant of Arabic, Mourad addressed them in French, but in French with so obstinate a German accent that Anton exclaimed, “ My friend, I fancy that you and I come from the same part of the world, and that we shall get on much better in our native tongue ; pray tell me what induced you to turn Bedouin ? ” — and he immediately proceeded to speak to him in German.

The Scheik coloured, drew up haughtily, and replied still in French,

“Sir, I do not ask you whence you come, or what are your motives for being here ; the laws of hospitality do not exact that we should open our hearts to one another ; you are welcome to all that I can give you — except my confidence.”

Anton, apologizing for his indiscreet curiosity, took care that no relapse into it should draw upon him such another rebuke ; but later in the evening while his friend and himself were standing outside the door of the tent in which they were to sleep, looking at the solemn beauty of the starlight night, and questioning the host about the arrangements for their next day's journey, Anton in a pause of the dialogue carelessly whistled the air of “*Konns't du das Land wo die Citronen blühen?*” as his thoughts reverted to his own distant country. The painful effect which this simple snatch of an old song produced upon the Scheik was so powerful that

he could neither control it nor conceal it from the two strangers ; his countenance became blanched, his lips quivered, tears rose to his eyes, and his whole frame trembled so that he was forced to lean against the tent for support ; in the next moment he quitted the spot without uttering a word, went into his own tent, and closed the entrance of it.

Anton and his friend continued where they were for some time longer, when the latter having retired to rest, the Baron unwilling to lose the beauty and freshness of the night, paced up and down between the green sward which separated his host's tent from his own, ruminating upon the strange mystery of finding a German at the head of an Arab tribe in the desert, and wondering at the churlishness which had repelled all his advances to confidence. In the midst of these meditations he heard sounds of distress issue from the tent of the Scheik Mourad. He drew near to the entrance and paused to listen ;—then he distinguished the

voice of a man broken by sobs, repeat in the pure German which is peculiar to Saxony, these verses of the fifty-fifth psalm :—

“ For it is not an open enemy that has done me this dishonour : for then I could have borne it.

“ Neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me ; for then, peradventure, I would have hid myself.

“ But it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend.”

Here the voice of the speaker became lost in deep heart-rending sobs, and Anton unable to resist the impulse which led him to offer consolation to the suffering man, suddenly raised the entrance of the tent and presented himself before him.

The Scheik was seated upon the ground with his face buried in his hands ; a lamp was burning near, and an open book lay at his feet. Anton took it up, and saw that it was a German prayer-book ; the page at which it was

open was wet with tears; he turned to the front leaf and saw written upon it in a woman's hand "LOLOTTE MÖLLER. Ottowalder-grund, 17th of May 18—!" An exclamation of surprise escaped his lips, and he repeated the name aloud. Mourad looked up; — all traces of sternness had vanished from his countenance as he met the scrutinizing gaze of Anton,— "And you are—you are —?" inquired the latter,—

"*Franz Möller!*" replied the Bedouin Chief, "the Husband and Avenger of Lolotte!"

Dresden, 1838.

THE GRISETTE;

OR,

AVANT, PENDANT, AND APRÈS.

“ ‘I thought love had been a joyous thing,’ quoth my
uncle Toby. ‘’Tis the most serious thing, an’ please your
Honour (sometimes) that is in the world.’ ”

Tristram Shandy.

N. B.—As I am aware that the frequent introduction of French expressions into English writing, is considered highly objectionable upon the general principle that when a writer can render his or her meaning in their *own language* they ought not to have recourse to any other, I must anticipate the blame that is likely to fall upon me for having in the course of the following narrative departed from a rule, the good sense of which I fully subscribe to, by observing that there are special cases where such an innovation may be pardoned, and that in writing a narrative which refers exclusively to a class of Parisians whose phraseology abounds in popular idioms and vulgarisms, it would be as difficult to translate such expressions into English as it would be to render Cockney eloquence into French.

I. F. R.

CHAPTER I.

Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight ?

As You Like It.

It was the fête of Pentecost ; the season of lilacs was drawing to a close ; the glories of early June had burst upon the Parisians, and the good city of Paris appeared to have emptied its pleasure-loving population upon the Boulevards, that centre of attraction to all classes of idlers, where they may exhibit to the best advantage their elegant toilettes, and partake of the thousand and one gradations of entertainment which that magnificent line of buildings offers, from the Boulevard des Italiens with its brilliant and aristocratic Cafés and Glaciers, to the less pretending, but not less gay and noisy

Boulevard du Temple with its ambulatory, *Marchands de Coco et de Tisane*. The chairs before the Café de Paris exhibited more than their usual number of fair occupants, dressed in the latest fashion, and heroically braving, upon the give-and-take principle of seeing and being seen, the sun, the dust, and the artillery of libertine glances (all three, alas! equally withering to the freshness of the toilette, of the face, and of the mind!) levelled at them by the *gants jaunes* (or dandies of Paris), who never fail to congregate at that favourite corner, and to ‘*promener leurs loisirs*’ between the hours of two and five from thence to the opposite corner at Tortoni’s, where at an earlier hour, the élite of the financial world put themselves, as Robert Macaire says, ‘*au courant de la Politique et de la Rente*.’ The whole of the Boulevard des Italiens rang with the confused strains of Rossini and Bellini, chanted to popular French words, in the cracked voices of various groups of itinerant musicians, to the accom-

paniment of squeaking fiddles and twanging harps, and producing—not a concord of sweet sounds—but such admired disorder as can only be tolerated in the open air, where it is overpowered by the louder running accompaniment of every sort of carriage-wheel, from Omnibus to Citadine inclusive, rolling, rumbling, rattling, and jingling along in unceasing activity. The Boulevard Mont-Martre was redolent with the sweets of a host of *Bouquetières*, who displayed their blooming merchandize at the entrance of its brilliant Passage des Panoramas, (as though to counteract the poisonous emanation of the cigar-smokers who infest and infect that gay thoroughfare,) and tempted many a sober citizen to the domestic gallantry of presenting his wife with one of those tastefully-arranged bouquets which are the triumph of Parisian flower-girls, and without which no fair Parisian thinks her toilet complete. Even the graver Boulevard Poissonnière was on that day “frightened from its propriety” into partaking of the general

bustle and hilarity, and exhibited under the shade of its spreading elms and acacias, (the only trees, alas! which the Vandalism of the July revolutionists has spared to this once magnificently-planted line of buildings,) groups of *bourgeois* from the solitudes of the Marais, or from the wholesale and retail bustle of the Rue St. Denis, resting midway between their homes and the yet distant Tuileries and Champs Elysées, and whiling away their fatigues by looking at the antics of divers little Savoyards and Italian boys, armed with hurdy-gurdys and portable menageries of monkeys, marmosets, Guinea-pigs, white mice, ‘*e ogni sorte di bestioline*,’ whose tricks are exhibited for the sum of one *sol*. But who shall attempt to describe the continuation of the Boulevards on such a day?—*véritable pays de Cocagne*, where the humours of the Parisian *badauds* may be studied in perfection! where, in the successive line of Bonne Nouvelle, St. Martin, Temple, and Filles de Calvaire may be seen booths and

baragues containing every monstrosity of Nature and Art, from the largest giant and smallest dwarf in flesh and blood, to Prince, Potentate, Prelate, Democrat, and murderers in wax-work ; *Saltimbanques* and Conjurors, *Charlatans* and *debiteurs de nouvelles inventions*, tumbling and prating their hour ; and as each remove displays a decrease of refinement in the character of its amusements, so do the distinct classes of *habitués* peculiar to each, show a gradual descent in the social scale, until at the entrance of the faubourg St. Antoine *on est tout-à-fait en bas de l'échelle, et au milieu de ce qu'il y a de plus grivois et de plus populace au monde.*

If I wished to give a stranger a complete *aperçu* of the French nation, I would desire him to traverse the Boulevards from the Madeleine to the site of the demolished Bastille on a fine spring day, and to make good use of his eyes and ears. No other capital in Europe possesses anything to be compared to it. The

Graben of Vienna, the Newski-Perspekt of St. Petersburg, the Unter-den-Linden of Berlin, the Corso of Rome, the Toledo of Naples, and the Piazza di San Marco of Venice, are all remarkable in their kind ; but they offer to the stranger's casual observation one feature only in the national characteristics of those various capitals, namely, their aristocracy and wealth : whereas the Boulevards of Paris differ from them all in presenting to the view a many-sided picture, where every style of colouring, every variety of grouping may be distinguished, and every *phase* of society, and every national peculiarity, studied in its turn. It is a chain, the first links of which are composed of diamonds and the last of rough iron ; it is—but enough, and too much of comparison,—and, as I did not sit down to write an essay upon the Boulevards, but the history of a very humble individual (with whom they have nothing in the world to do beyond being the spot chosen for her first introduction to my readers), let me resume the thread of my

discourse, and recommence at the commencement.

Well, then, it was the fête of Pentecost, a general holiday for the working classes in Paris, and among the innumerable groups of happy loiterers who were enjoying themselves in the open air on that day, (home is the last place where a Parisian seeks for amusement or even rest !) two young girls were seen sauntering from the Rue de Richelieu towards the Boulevard du Temple, earnestly engaged in conversation, yet not so much absorbed by it as to prevent one of them, the eldest of the two, having remarked that they had been assiduously followed for some time by two handsome and well-dressed young men.

The young women in question were of that class denominated *Grisettes*, a class peculiar to Paris, and very little understood elsewhere, (especially in England, where the morals and customs of our sempstresses, and milliner's apprentices are established upon a wholly different

footing) — a sort of connecting link between the virtuous and industrious members of the social community, and its vicious and idle outcasts — creatures whose virtue consists, like that of Italian wives, not in abstaining from unlawful love but in remaining faithful to one lover — whose propensities, half sensual, half sentimental, are divided between *gourmandise*, *coquetterie*, *et le besoin d'inspirer une passion* — who are willing to labour in their comfortless garrets, at their respective occupations of *brodeuse*, *frangère*, *fleuriste*, *lingère*, &c. &c. for six days in the week, provided that on the seventh they may exhibit their Sunday toilette in public escorted by the favoured '*bon ami*,' dine with him at a Restaurant *dans 'un cabinet particulier*,' and finish the evening at the ball of La Chaumière, or in the Paradis of the Théâtre de la Gaieté; — sometimes capable of every refinement of disinterested devotion for the object of their affection — sometimes guilty of the extremes of levity and bad

faith towards them — always *gentilles*, *semilantes*, light-hearted, and attractive — such are the characteristics of the grisettes of Paris; and of that class were the two young girls, whom I have left (while thus again digressing) sauntering quietly towards the Boulevard du Temple, and sedulously followed by their two unknown admirers.

They were both remarkably pretty, although quite dissimilar in their style of beauty; the elder one, who might be about one or two and twenty years of age, was dark complexioned and black-eyed, with an *espiègle* and decided cast of countenance, a low forehead, from which the dark glossy hair was drawn up *à la Chinoise*, displaying a pair of strongly marked eyebrows, a nose slightly *retroussé*, and a somewhat large mouth, whose *animalâtre* character was however redeemed by the freshness of her lips and the whiteness of the teeth they disclosed. Altogether it was a brilliant countenance, and its possessor evidently knew how

to make the most of it, for her sparkling eyes were never in repose for two minutes together, nor were her red lips ever completely closed over the pearly treasures within. She was above the middle size, but by no means symmetrically formed, yet her clothes were so well made and well put on, she had so much air about her, and the *tout ensemble* was so agreeable, that no one would have paused to criticise the faults of her figure or to wish that her waist had been smaller, her shoulders less square, and her limbs more delicate than they were. Her younger companion was less striking, but far lovelier. There was an expression of ingenuous sweetness and modesty in her youthful face which would have been sufficient to render it attractive even had it possessed no other charm ; but to beauty of countenance were added harmony of feature and softness of colouring ; the fresh and delicate bloom of extreme youth tinged her fair cheeks with its fluctuating hues ; her dove-like eyes

were of deepest blue, and her smooth white forehead was shaded with clustering locks of the most beautiful light brown hair. She appeared to be scarcely seventeen, and her slight and well-formed figure, just rounding into womanhood, gave promise of still greater perfection, when time should have more fully developed it. Nothing could be more simple and modest than her dress, and yet the humble white *batiste capote*, lined with pale rose colour, and the unornamented robe of pink *indienne à mille raies*, of which it was composed, acquired, from the natural gentility of their wearer, an absolute air of elegance which the silk dress, embroidered *canzou*, and *moire* bonnet of the brunette had failed in producing; in short the latter looked like what she was, a handsome Griset *endimanchée*; while the fair young girl might have been easily mistaken for a gentleman's daughter, *en négligé de matin* — she was “one of Nature's true gentlewomen.”

“We need not be in a hurry,” observed the *brunette*, looking at her watch, and glancing backwards to ascertain whether they were still followed; “my aunt does not dine ’till three o’clock to-day, and it is now only half past one, so there is no occasion to heat ourselves by walking so fast; besides, I told her that we should amuse ourselves by the way, and that to-day she must contrive to make the *crêpes* (pancakes) without me.”

“You are very happy in having so kind an aunt, Hortense,” remarked her companion with a sigh.

“*Ah, ma chère Clotilde!*” replied Hortense, shrugging her shoulders, “there are drawbacks to everything in this world! my aunt is, indeed, a very good creature, and loves me as though I were her own child, but she is horribly vulgar! *cela n’a ni ton ni tournure—cela manque tout-à-fait d’usage*, and every time she opens her mouth, I am seized with shudderings lest she should commit herself. In short, I am

half ashamed of introducing you to her, and I assure you that nothing in the world would tempt me to walk on the Boulevard in her company ; *elle est toujours si mal fiçelée.*”

“ I should forget her vulgarity, and think only of her kindness, were I in your place,” said Clotilde ; “ would that we could change aunts, Hortense !”

“ *Tiens !*” exclaimed her companion, “ *tu as une tante aussi, et tu ne m'en as jamais parlé —c'est drôle !*”

“ I had nothing pleasant to say about her,” was the answer ; “ besides, I have never yet seen her, and I fancy that I never shall. She lives at Nevers, and is very old : she was mamma's aunt, and quarrelled with her for marrying papa, for which reason she disinherited her, and never would forgive her even when poor mamma was dying : so you see I have no reason to think of her with pleasure.”

“ No, indeed ; but why did she quarrel with your mamma for marrying ?”

“Oh, because my aunt, Mademoiselle de Vassoigne, is of a very good family, and has great pride of birth. She never married; because, being deformed, and not very rich, she could not find any man of family who would accept of her hand, and she was too proud to bestow it upon any one who was not *at least* as well born as herself; so she remained single, and turned all her thoughts to devotion. But I cannot think that hers is the right sort of devotion, since it has closed her heart to all natural affection, and taught her to be harsh and unforgiving to one who never injured her. Mamma was an orphan, and left to her aunt’s care at a very early age; her home there was not a happy one, she was glad to quit it, and she married in spite of her aunt’s disapprobation, a captain of infantry in garrison at Nevers, whose father had been a peasant, (he was not ashamed to own it!) and had worn *sabots*. Besides his low birth, my father was a republican in politics; and as Mademoiselle de Vas-

soigne is a royalist as well as an aristocrat, she felt herself doubly called upon to mark her dislike of the connection her niece had formed. She formally signified to mamma that the wife of le Capitaine Remy must henceforward become a stranger to her in every sense of the word, and after the marriage they never met. Unfortunately, my father's conduct subsequently justified Mademoiselle de Vassoigne's prejudice against him; he was imprudent, fond of play, and soon dissipated mamma's little fortune to the last *sol*; finally he involved himself in a conspiracy against the government, and with many others was arrested and sent to Paris to be tried for his life. Mamma, reduced to poverty by his imprudence, followed him thither, and contrived to maintain herself and me by embroidering and making purses and other sorts of fancy works for the shops. She lived in one room, kept no servant, and used to sit up half the night that she might earn as much as possible,

and not be obliged to apply to strangers for relief. Once a week only she was admitted to see my father in prison. At last, after many months of confinement, he fell ill of a fever which terminated fatally just one month before he was to be brought to trial. I was then only five years old, and too young to be of any use to poor mamma, who thus found herself a destitute widow, burthened with a helpless child, and without a single friend in Paris to assist or console her. She wrote to her aunt, setting forth her desolate and miserable position, and beseeching her to compassionate it for the sake of her unoffending child. That humble and heart-broken letter produced in reply from Mademoiselle de Vassoigne the harshest and coldest rejection of her unhappy niece ; she alluded to my father's death in the coarsest terms, recommended that mamma should apply to some of *his* family for assistance in her calamity, advised that I should be brought up to wear *sabots*, as my grand-

father had done, and concluded by desiring that she might never again be molested by any communication from one whom she had long looked upon as an alien to her blood.

“Poor mamma never again appealed to her hard-hearted relative, either on her own behalf or upon mine. She continued to labour night and day to support us, and brought me up, not to wear *sabots*, indeed, but to earn my bread as an *ouvrière*; and, as I never had known a better lot, I felt no hardship in adapting myself to such a destiny. Mamma taught me to embroider and to do all sorts of fine works for sale, and, when I was old enough to turn my lessons to account, our joint labours enabled us to live without misery, especially after Madame Bouvier employed us to supply her *magazin de lingerie* with embroidery, for then we never knew what it was to be out of work. In short, if mamma could have forgotten what she had been, we might have been very happy, but recollections of the past, together with fearful

anxieties upon my account for the future, embittered her existence, and hastened the close of it, which she only dreaded because it was to leave me friendless and unprotected."

Here the voice of Clotilde faltered, and she paused to subdue her emotion, feeling very properly that the street was not exactly a suitable place for the indulgence of those natural feelings which her recital had called forth.

"Dam ! ce n'est pas étonnant que'elle s'en-nuyait à la mort, c'te pauvre femme !" exclaimed Hortense ; "in her place I should have thrown myself into the river. Ah ! my dear, what a misfortune ! to be born and bred a lady, to be accustomed to the pleasures of the world, an elegant toilette, good dinners, balls, fêtes, and *spectacles*, and then to be forced to give all up, and work for one's bread like a femme du peuple ;—Dieu des Dieux ! quel malheur ! I know of nothing to equal it !"

Clotilde thought that the misfortunes of her mother could indeed scarcely be surpassed, but

she thought too that they might have been contemplated in another light, and have elicited compassion upon higher grounds.

“Poor, poor mamma!” was her only audible remark, as she brushed away her tears; “she thought only of her poor friendless Clotilde”—and then in a hurried voice added, “when she knew that she was dying, she intreated the *Curé de la paroisse* to write, as from himself, to Mademoiselle de Vassoigne, and give her a simple statement of facts; representing to her the destitute state in which I should be left, and conjuring her to afford her dying niece the last and only consolation she could know upon earth,—that of hearing that when her poor orphan should be motherless, that the protection of her aunt would not be withheld from her. Mademoiselle de Vassoigne never replied to that letter, and mamma died in the sad conviction that there was nothing to be hoped for in that quarter, and that she left me alone and unsupported in a world, where her own

experience had taught her that the poor and the wretched rarely meet with friends. The only kindness to which she could recommend me, was that of the porters of the house in which we lived ; and, although not left to their care, I have chosen to remain near them ever since her death (now three years), esteeming myself fortunate that Madame Bouvier should have continued me in her employment ; and still more so, that by taking me into her *magazin* she should have been the means of procuring me such a kind friend as yourself, dear Hortense."

"Bonne petite Clotilde !" was the reply, "I am sure I shall always consider it the luckiest thing for me that you should have come to our *magazin* just at the moment you did, for if it had not been for the great friendship with which you inspired me I should certainly have made away with myself, I was so furious at the perfidy of that *monstre de Rodolphe qui m'avait plantée* in order to marry his cousin. *Ah ! les*

hommes ! les hommes !—ne t'y fie pas, Clotilde ; à propos, have you never had an *inclination*, my dear ?”

“Never,” said Clotilde, smiling ; “the only men I know are Monsieur Le Curé who is more than sixty, and Père Benoit the porter, who is nearly as old, so you see I am in no fear of losing my heart. Ah, I forgot—there is Hyacinthe, the porter’s son, a good-natured foolish young man, who fancied himself in love with me, and asked me to marry him, but I refused him, which I believe has cost me the good-will of his mother, who has never been the same to me since. She fancies that my rejection of him is the result of pride instead of indifference ——”

“And very natural and proper that it should be,” interrupted Hortense ; “a porter’s son, indeed ! you must look higher than that, my dear.”

“Oh,” said Clotilde, laughing, “I neither look high nor low, for the truth is, I never

think upon the subject at all, and am quite content to remain as I am, loving no he creature in the world except Titi, *mon gros chat Angola*."

"Yes, but I assure you, Clotilde, that a *connaissance* — an *amitié* with some amiable young man, is very useful as well as agreeable. Imagine how desirable it is to have a *joli cavalier* to offer one his arm, upon such an occasion as this for instance, when all the world is abroad, instead of strolling along unattended as we are now doing, just as though we were too old and ugly to be cared for;— then the contrast of a fine dinner at the Cadran Bleu, of six *plats*, a dessert and champagne, perhaps, (J'adore le vin de champagne!) the contrast, I say, of such a repast with *un mauvais dîner de quatre sols*, such as my aunt will give us to-day, with *de la piquette* for wine, and *les quatre mendiants* for dessert! And then conceive the pleasure of going to the theatre in a *loge grillée*, or, at all events, in the *balcon*,

with a *joli garçon* who is *aux petits soins* for one, provides one with a magnificent bouquet, an opera-glass, and all sorts of refreshments *à discrétion* between the acts, instead of going to the *Paradis avec des billets de faveur* as we must do with my aunt to-night, and being regaled with *bière* and *échaudés* when the piece is over !

“ Voilà, pourtant, l'existence que j'ai menée pendant un an avec ce brigand de Rodolphe, qui a eu l'infamie de me quitter après tout, pour se marier ! The worst part of it is, that Virginie, and Agathe, and Fifine, and Mimi, and all the rest of Madame Bouvier's demoiselles, who were so jealous of my good fortune in having such an *amitié*, so superior to any of their own, are now exulting over me for having lost it ; and there is Virginie, gone to-day with her *petit Clerc* to Romainville, and Agathe and her medical student are to pass the day at St. Cloud ; and Fifine,—would you believe it ?—is actually to be driven to the Bois

de Boulogne, in a tilbury, by an *agent de change*, and dressed too, in a bonnet trimmed with blonde, and a real Ternaux shawl; and Mimi, qui n'est autre chose qu'un paquet de chiffons, has made the conquest of an English milord, who is to take her to see the 'Muette de Portici,' to-night, at the Opera; it is true, that he is ugly and stupid, and cannot speak two words of French; mais c'est égal, c'est toujours un milord! Ah! Je crève de rage, when I think that to-morrow when they will all be relating the pleasures and triumphs they have enjoyed to-day, you and I will have nothing in the world to say for ourselves, except that we dined upon a *gibelotte de lapin* with a blanchisseuse de dentelle, upon the Boulevard du Temple!"

"And are all Madame Bouvier's demoiselles going to be so well married?" inquired Clotilde, with the greatest simplicity.

"My dear creature, how you talk," rejoined her friend, laughing; "really, Clotilde, for a

person who is not quite a fool, your remarks are sometimes very silly, and I can only attribute their being so to your having hitherto lived so completely secluded at home ; when you have been among us a little longer, you will get *un peu dégourdie*, and understand that marriage is not the necessary consequence of those demoiselles having lovers."

"But were you not engaged to be married to Monsieur Rodolphe, Hortense ?"

"Oh, no ; there never was a question of marriage between us ; and since I have found out what he is, I am sure I am very glad that there was not ; for now I know that with him I should have been *malheureuse comme les pierres !* c'est un fameux égoïste, et je le déteste maintenant autant que je l'aimais autrefois.— Ah ! how I loved him ! I adored him, my dear, —I would have gone through fire and water for him ; when he had the *grippe*, I spent all my money in buying *sucré de pommes, et des petits pots de confiture* for him. But that is all

over now ; if I heard that he were dying I would not shed a tear ; he thinks, perhaps, that I am breaking my heart about him ;—plus souvent ! il verra si j'ai du caractère ou non."

"I don't understand all this," said Clotilde timidly ; "I think that if I were ever to love any one as much as you say you loved Monsieur Rodolphe, I could not hate him afterwards."

"Wait a little, mon enfant ; you know nothing of love yet ; but your time will come, *et alors vous ferez comme les autres.*"

Clotilde thought otherwise, for she felt very sure in the first place that she never could listen to love from any man who did not offer marriage with it ; secondly, that she never could love a vulgar and uneducated man ; and lastly, that no other would ever offer himself to the acceptance of one so poor and obscure as herself. Whatever she thought or was about to express was, however, interrupted by finding herself and her companion jostled among

a crowd of persons who had assembled round an itinerant vender of some new invention, and had completely intercepted their passage; while his manner of showing off his merchandize was such as to induce every idler to linger and listen to his voluble vociferations.

“Messieurs et Mesdames!” he cried, holding in one hand a flat candlestick, and with the other flourishing in the air a tin extinguisher, “I claim your attention for the wonderful invention which I have the honour to offer to your notice—an invention as surprisingly ingenious in its conception as it is simple in its execution,—an invention which must become a real benefit to suffering humanity, and a safeguard to the lives and properties of our illustrious fellow citizens,—an invention, the offspring of a great mind, which is destined to do away with the establishment of fire engines, to *enfonder la Compagnie d’Assurance contre l’Incendie*, to become universally known for its utility and economy, and to be adopted by general accla-

mation throughout the whole world, and in many other places besides! Ladies and gentlemen, give yourselves the trouble to examine the mechanism of this surprising and admirable extinguisher, which is henceforth to enable you to read in your beds with as much safety as if you were in your saloons lighted by *quinquets*, wax lights, or even Carcel lamps!" (His auditory was of that class which never has at its disposal any means of physical enlightenment beyond that afforded by one tallow candle, and whose moral attainments were of an order to exclude the supposition that such a love of literature as reading in bed appears to intimate, would be indulged in by them.) "Every body knows that of late years an archbishop of France lost his life from his curtains having taken fire, when he had been reading in bed either petitions, letters from his curates, or sermons, and had fallen asleep without extinguishing his candle, (not that I would infer that the sermons sent the Reverend Father to sleep! Dieu

m'en garde, Messieurs !) Eh bien ! look at my extinguisher, ladies and gentlemen, formed to prevent such a catastrophe,—behold the simplicity and the profound genius exhibited in this philanthropic invention, and all for five sols ! — twenty-five centimes for this *éteignoir sans pareil*,—twenty-five centimes only ! Achetez en, Messieurs et Mesdames, c'est pour un rien ! Si Monseigneur L'Archevêque de Bordeaux eût su c'te bêtise-là, il seroit encore de ce monde ; tandis que, *faute de cela*, son Eminence a été calçiné dans son lit !”

This eulogium was accompanied by practical illustrations upon half an inch of tallow candle, which were so far satisfactory that they left his auditory in the dark—as to any particular novelty in the process of putting out a light.

“Tiens,” said Hortense, “c'est une fameuse invention tout de même ; I must have one of them ; I who am so fond of literature that I pass half my nights in reading Paul de Kock's novels. Ah, ma chère, la belle chose que l'édu-

cation ! here, Clotilde, hold my handkerchief while I find my purse ;” and she commenced undrawing the strings of a little green silk bag, taking care as she did so to let half of its contents fall upon the ground ; for her motive in purchasing an extinguisher was not so much to possess herself of such an article as to enable her to take a full survey of the two young men who she knew were close behind her, and to whom she felt willing to accord a better view than they could yet have obtained of herself and of her companion ; and with that philanthropic intention she allowed several *gros sols*, a smelling bottle, and a little box of *bonbons* to roll about on the ground. One of the young men quickly seized the opportunity thus opened to him to introduce himself, and stooping down he rescued the scattered property, wiped the dust from it, and restored it with a look of admiration to its fair owner. “ Mon Dieu ! Monsieur,” said she with a smile which displayed to the best advantage her fine teeth,

“I really am ashamed of my awkwardness ! — I am in despair at giving you so much trouble ;—for Heaven’s sake, Monsieur, do not stoop in the dust to look for those sols.”

“Eh ! Mademoiselle,” he answered, “who would not glory in kneeling in the dust to serve you ? But permit me, Mademoiselle,” he continued, “to procure for you the article you were desirous of purchasing.” And darting through the crowd he approached the extinguisher seller, and interrupted him in the midst of a new harangue, to make his purchase.

“Breveté de plusieurs cours étrangères,” said the man, as he handed one of his extinguishers to his well-dressed customer. “Allons, Messieurs et Mesdames, voyez l’éteignoir merveilleux,—l’éteignoir politique adopté par Monseigneur Le Prince de Metternich lorsqu’il travaille la nuit dans son cabinet pour le bonheur du peuple Autrichien ; car (soit dit en passant,) son Excellence craint toujours que trop de

lumières *n'amenassent* des incendies. Voyez l'éteignoir classique, romantique, philosophique, polytechnique, et qui deviendra même historique ; oui, Messieurs, mon éteignoir deviendra historique, car ce que je vais avoir l'honneur de vous dire est un fait averé ; Sa Majesté le Roi, Louis Philippe, en possède un ; et l'autre soir, étant occupé avec ses ministres sur une question d'état, (n'importe laquelle,) Sa Majesté, s'apercevant qu'on voyait plus clair qu'il ne fallait, a daigné bien vite appliquer avec sa main royale mon éteignoir sur la plus grande partie des lumières, ainsi laissant Messieurs les Ministres dans une obscurité assez satisfaisante !”

And whilst the self-created patentee paused in his harangue to distribute to various applicants the contents of his box of tin ware, the young man who had taken upon himself to fulfil Hortense's behests, rejoined her with his purchase, for which he received, as she deposited it in her bag, such smiles and thanks as

fully encouraged him to continue his conversation with her.

Meanwhile his companion had stationed himself near Clotilde, and was evidently transfixed with admiration at the beautiful countenance of which he had only then caught a distinct view, and which was rendered still more captivating by the smiles that flitted over it as she listened to the grandiloquent discourse of the indefatigable Charlatan, unconscious of the effect that she produced upon the gazer. He was a very handsome youth, apparently not more than twenty years of age, with a *figure méridionale* full of vivacity and expression, an olive complexion, light blue eyes that appeared to darken when he spoke, shaded with black eyelashes and dark glossy hair, curling round a finely developed forehead. His person was graceful, his dress perfectly gentlemanlike ; and Clotilde thought that she had never before beheld so engaging an exterior, and when he spoke,—albeit, his southern accent was strongly

defined,—she fancied she had never before heard so musical a voice.

“And you, Mademoiselle,” said he to her, “have you no wish to guard yourself from the fate of my late respected archbishop, Monseigneur de Bordeaux, by becoming the possessor of one of these wonderful extinguishers?”

“No, Monsieur,” replied Clotilde, blushing, and half offended at being addressed by a stranger; “for as I do not read in bed, it would be useless to me.”

“You are right,” he answered; “and it would be a thousand pities to spoil those beautiful eyes by so pernicious a habit.”

Clotilde made no answer to this compliment, but Hortense, who had no intention of allowing the conversation to languish, immediately remarked, “Can any one think of their eyes when they are interested in an agreeable book? for my part, as I have already said, Paul de Kock has caused me many a sleepless night. It is true that he is sometimes very common

in his ideas ; and since I have read George Sand's works, I do not enjoy his so much. — Ah, parlez moi de George Sand ! voilà du génie — quel homme charmant* ça doit être ! J'en deviendrai folle si jamais je le voyais !”

The young man who had shewn such eagerness in her service, significantly pressed his friend's arm to make him understand that what he was about to say must be seconded by him ; and then assuming a conscious look as he addressed Hortense, he said, “ George Sand has never yet received praise so flattering as yours. I thank you for him, Mademoiselle.”

“ What !” exclaimed Hortense, “ do you know George Sand !”

* It is evident that the Grisette was not aware that George Sand is the assumed name under which a celebrated French female writer has published her clever works. Madame Dudevant has rendered public homage to that purity which is the most beautiful characteristic of woman's mind, by thus attributing to a masculine pen sentiments and principles which not even the prestige of her genius can redeem from the charge of gross indelicacy.

“Si on se connaît soi-même, je dois le connaître,” was the reply.

“Is it possible?” exclaimed the over-joyed grisette, “that I have the honour of seeing the celebrated George Sand? — Monsieur George Sand, I mean. Good God, what a happiness! what an honour!” and in the excess of her agitation she opened her bag, and applied the extinguisher to her nose instead of her smelling-bottle.

“Himself in person,” returned the young man with imperturbable gravity; “and this is my friend, Maxime de Nérac, lately arrived from Bordeaux, and who is, as you see, struck dumb with delight by the happy chance which has procured us so charming an acquaintance.”

The *soi-disant* George Sand was a stout, good-natured-looking young man, with a roguish eye, a *gaillard* cast of features, on which were plainly written *bon enfant et mauvais sujet*, and a hat ‘*mis en tapageur*’.

“If these demoiselles would permit us to accompany them in their walk?” said Maxime hesitatingly, for there was something in the countenance and manner of Clotilde which involuntarily inspired him with respect.

“Mon ami,” interrupted George Sand, “tu as là une excellente idée! Je t’en fais mon compliment; for the first time in your life you have got the start of me—I was just going to offer my services—permit me, Mademoiselle?” and suiting the action to the word, he ranged himself by the side of Hortense, to whom he presented his arm, which was immediately accepted with a declaration that “ce n’était pas de refus;” while his more modest friend placed himself by Clotilde, who, however, with that sense of propriety which is an instinct in some minds, persisted in holding fast by the arm of Hortense, and declining that of her accidental acquaintance.

The young men were speedily informed by the communicative Hortense of their en-

gagement to dine with her aunt the lace-cleaner, (whom she however designated as *une dame qui vivoit de ses rentes*,) and afterwards to go to the theatre of the Ambigu Comique, with free admissions procured by her cousin, the above-mentioned lady's son, one of the garçon coiffeurs of the theatre, whom she with the same ready imagination transformed into an "*Artiste de l'Ambigu*." But to lose sight of the two charming grisettes without an understanding that they were soon to meet again was not to be thought of; and therefore, when Monsieur Victor Giraud, alias George Sand, and Monsieur Maxime de Nérac, who had no alias, deposited them in the Rue du Pas de la Mule, at the door of the house, of which the lady living on her *rentes* occupied two small rooms on the fifth story, it was with a mutual understanding that they should meet again that evening at the theatre.

I must do Clotilde the justice to say that if she remained passive during these arrange-

ments, it was because she saw the inutility of attempting to check Hortense in her career of imprudence, not because she participated in it ; something within told her that it was all wrong, and although she felt attracted towards Maxime and gratified by his respectful manner to her, which strongly contrasted with the bold and flippant tone adopted by the fictitious George Sand, she felt ashamed of becoming known to him under such circumstances, and humbled and depressed by the whole transaction.

Not so Hortense ; for although such adventures were not new to her, the idea of having captivated the author of such delightful immoralities as George Sand has put forth to the world, gave the zest of novelty to the affair ; and to prove herself worthy of such a distinction, she felt ready and willing to put into practice any or all of the extremely liberal theories which have rendered that author so popular with the free-thinking part of the community.

In this frame of mind they proceeded after dinner to the theatre, under the auspices of the worthy *blanchisseuse*, who, on the road thither, received so many injunctions from her niece as to what she was to say, and what she was not to say, in the presence of a gentleman so distinguished in every way as Monsieur George Sand, and who had written more books than she could enumerate, that by the time they reached the upper gallery of the theatre the good lady was so awed by the anticipation of finding herself, for the first time in her life, in the society of a genius, (though *what* a genius might be, she was not exactly prepared to comprehend,) that her spirits fell to zero, and her conversation and her *lazzis* subsided together. She, however, solaced herself by eating *pain d'épice*, of which she had brought a large provision in her bag, assuring Clotilde, in an under tone, that whenever the melodrama was very deep, (and such would be the case that night,)

she found it necessary to fortify herself beforehand in order to prevent the vacuum within, which weeping never failed to occasion her. In the midst of the sentimental explanation of the merits of *pain d'épice* versus *les fortes émotions*, the young men appeared, and Monsieur Victor Giraud, who again took the initiative, after requesting to be presented to "la respectable tante de Mademoiselle," begged that she and her two young friends would honour him by repairing to his private box, where they would see and hear much better than in their present elevated situation.

Clotilde cast an imploring look at Hortense, and ventured a whispered remonstrance against such a measure; but she was overruled by a hasty "*y penses tu, ma chère? mais une loge particulière! c'est très bon genre;*" and then aloud, "*nous acceptons, Monsieur, nous acceptons. N'est-ce pas ma tante? Allons, Clotilde!*" And hastily replacing her bonnet upon

her head, she stepped over the benches, and was soon in the lobby, hanging upon the offered arm of her admirer; while Maxime after a momentary hesitation, presented his hand to the *respectable tante*, and, with an eloquent glance at Clotilde, which told her of the sacrifice he was making of inclination to politeness, he suffered her to retain possession of the lace-cleaner's arm, (which she had clung to at the first mention of a move,) and conducted his unwieldy charge through the lobby and down the stairs with as much attention as if she had been a charming young lady, and the object of his preference. This manner of proceeding, so consonant with her own feelings, placed Clotilde much more at her ease with Maxime; and when he had seated them in a box in the second circle, and disappearing for a few moments, returned with three elegant bouquets, the most *recherché* of which he presented to her, she thanked him with a smile so sweet and ingenuous, that he felt more than repaid

by it for the reserve he had imposed upon himself towards her.

It was the first time Clotilde had ever seen a dramatic representation ; and her feelings soon became so entirely absorbed in what was going on upon the stage, that she forgot the presence even of the handsome youth, whose tell-tale eyes had caused her heart to flutter every time they met hers. The subject of the first piece given was the loves of Henri Quatre and Fleurette, that tragic tale, whose simple pathos is so eminently calculated to interest a youthful imagination and tender heart. Clotilde hung upon every word with breathless attention, her varying countenance presenting a speaking index to her thoughts, where successively appeared curiosity, expectation, alarm, indignation and sorrow ; and when at last the catastrophe took place, and that the betrayed and gentle Fleurette sought for refuge from her despair beneath the deep waters of the fountain, where she had so often listened to her royal lover's

vows, Clotilde, overpowered with emotion, leant back in her chair, and covering her eyes with her hand exclaimed, "Le Malheureux !"

"What !" said Maxime, who had watched her during the whole performance with intent interest, "is your pity reserved for the destroyer, and have you none for his victim ?"

"In dying, she ceased to suffer," replied Clotilde ; "but he, unhappy man ! had prepared eternal remorse for himself."

"But to die so young," he urged, "so lovely, and in so sad a manner !"

"Ah !" said Clotilde, with deep feeling, "mieux vaut mourir ainsi que de vivre méprisée et abandonnée !"

Maxime gazed upon the charming countenance of the youthful speaker with an expression of passionate admiration, and leaning towards her, murmured in a voice so low that none but Clotilde could hear him, "heureux celui qui le premier fera battre ce jeune cœur

d'amour ! Malheur a celui qui méconnaîtra un si doux privilège—trois fois malheur à celui qui jamais en arrachera un soupir !”

There was something in the tone of his voice that encouraged her to look up at him ; for a moment their eyes met, and the language which that mutual glance but too eloquently conveyed, rendered words superfluous ; Clotilde's heart beat so tumultuously, that its pulsations might be counted through her dress. Alas ! had love already taught it to palpitate ? her innocent eyes, unconscious of the language they had spoken, filled with tears, and fell beneath the dangerous glances they encountered ; and to conceal her embarrassment she bent over her bouquet, and appeared lost in the delight of inhaling its perfume.

“ Clotilde,” said Maxime, still in the same low accents, “ laissez moi respirer ces fleurs que vous avez embaumées de votre haleine !” and as she held them out to him in silence, he detach-

ed from the bouquet one among them upon which her tears had fallen, pressed it to his lips, and then hid it in his bosom.

After this little episode, which had passed unobserved by the other occupants of the box, it was in vain that Clotilde endeavoured to restore her attention to the stage ; she appeared, indeed, to be deeply engrossed by the extravagant melodrame, which had succeeded to *Fleurette*, but everything swam confusedly before her eyes, and although a variety of sounds fell upon her ear her understanding took in the sense of none, save the few low words which *Maxime* occasionally addressed to her. Not even the sensation created amongst the rest of the party, by the entrance of several sorts of refreshments, to which all but herself did ample justice, roused her from her delicious stupor : at last the curtain fell, and a variety of exclamations and preparations for departure warned Clotilde that her happy evening had drawn to a close. When the whole

party found themselves at the door of the theatre, some demur as to how the two young girls should return home, took place. George Sand proposed that he and his friend should set them down in a *fiacre*, but the night was so fine that Hortense, as well as Clotilde, expressed a preference for walking, at least, part of the way ; they therefore set forth under the escort of the two friends ; and this time, when Maxime offered his arm to Clotilde, it was no longer rejected by her. Insensibly, as they sauntered along, her embarrassment subsided, and their conversation assumed a more confidential tone, for he knew so well how to draw a line between familiarity and forwardness, that her timidity was not once alarmed by his encroachments towards a better acquaintance with her. The fair young girl learned from him that he was the son of a gentleman du Pays de Béarn, and that he was studying the law at Paris ; and he, in his turn, contrived to draw from her all that he

wished to know, namely, her unprotected orphan state, the address of the magazin in which she was employed during the day-time, the allotment of her time, and the hour at which she was accustomed to return home. Strange power of sympathy ! by the time they reached the door of the house inhabited by Clotilde, in the Rue Neuve Vivienne, they felt as though they had been long acquainted ; and as they bid each other adieu, Clotilde knew, although no appointment to that effect had been made, that she should surely see Maxime upon the following day. It was not until she had regained her little room on the *cinquième étage*, and found herself at last alone, that she was enabled to think calmly over the occurrences of the day ; then they appeared to her in their true light, pleasant but wrong — and yet the only fault with which she could tax herself was in having listened with too much pleasure to the amiable stranger — and that fault was an involuntary one ! Well, she

would never willingly repeat it — she would endeavour to avoid seeing him for the future — she would forget him if possible ! And as she made these wise resolutions, the bouquet he had given her was carefully placed in a glass of water by the bedside ; his words and looks when he had restored it to her, again made her heart throb, and when she fell asleep it was not even then to forget him, for in her dreams she once more listened to the insidious accents, and once more beheld the dangerous eyes of the handsome young Gascon.

CHAPTER II.

Can it be

That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary
And pitch our evils there?

Measure for Measure.

MAXIME DE NÉRAC was in reality what he had represented himself to be to Clotilde, the son of a gentleman of ancient family in the Pays de Béarn, whose limited revenue obliged him to devote his son to some profession more lucrative than the noble one of arms. Maxime had therefore been sent to Paris three years before, to study the law, technically called *faire son droit*; but, alas! it must be owned that he had applied himself much more

sedulously to *faire des folies*. Young, handsome, and insinuating, he had the talent of ingratiating himself with all who knew him, and was generally well received in society, where his *succès de salon*, united to an inherent love of pleasure and want of application, conspired to render the dry study of the Code, or indeed any other study — intolerable to him.

“His only books
Were woman’s looks,
And folly all they taught him!”

Very much of a young man’s general conduct in after-life depends upon the society he is thrown into on his first introduction into the world — and much of that particular part of it which relates to women is influenced by the character and disposition of the object of his first attachment. In France especially, where the state of society unfortunately tolerates the indulgence of sentiments which have no legitimate end in view, it too often happens that a young man’s career in the world com-

mences by having formed a *liaison* with a married woman, older than himself, who, for that reason, and from her position in society, naturally acquires a great empire over the inexperienced mind of her boy-lover ; and, if her errors be redeemed by generous impulses and noble feelings, may direct his aspirations to higher aims than those of ministering to the wretched vanities of an *exigeante* and time-worn coquette.

The opinion formed of the sex in general by a youth so situated, will be strongly influenced by this his first intimate knowledge of it in particular. Should the woman he loves be gifted with a lofty mind, his sentiments towards all other women will be tinged with the chivalrous respect with which she has inspired him ; if, on the contrary, she is libertine in thought, word, or deed, he will be tempted to believe with the poet, that

“ Every woman is at heart a rake,”

and will comport himself accordingly.

Maxime had not been fortunate in his first attachment. The lady was flimsy though formal, vain and pedantic, and nearly old enough to be his mother ; and she delighted so much in telling him that he resembled Faublas in character, that he did not long hesitate to justify her opinion to the very letter, and by his numerous infidelities mark his true sense of the delicacy of mind which, in adopting such a comparison, could have given it the approving sanction of her love. With strong passions and weak principles, he launched into those ephemeral gallantries which it would be blaspheming the *sentiment* of love to attribute to it ; every new face had the power to charm him, and he conceived that he possessed a prescriptive right to meet with a corresponding return — nor had he yet been *désillusionné*, for in Paris his life had been passed among the *façile* and the frivolous, and in such a set it was not difficult for his successes to be numerous. He was, in fact, as often the

seduced as the seducer, yet his vanity led him to believe the reverse ; and his folly, when the truth was impressed upon him, to regret it. Thus fickle and *passionné*, he had, until the age of twenty-two, fluttered from triumph to triumph, “*aimant trop pour le moment, et pas assez pour le lendemain*,” when accident threw in his way the young, lovely, and humble Clotilde Remy ; and for him to see, was to covet, and to determine upon the possession of so much beauty. She was apparently of a class which offered peculiar facilities to his designs, and he fancied that no obstacles could be thrown in the way of their prompt realisation ; and it was with this persuasion that he had induced his friend Victor Giraud to join in his plan of seduction, and delegated to him the *premier rôle*, of active admirer to Hortense, while he remained passively observant of Clotilde, and revolving in his mind the means best adapted to promote his success with her. But

he soon perceived that he had been mistaken in the estimate he had presumed to form of her virtue ; the stamp of genuine innocence and purity was impressed upon her every look and word, and there is a holy power in innocence which will awe even the libertine into involuntary respect.

This was not a conquest that could be achieved by a dinner at Romainville or St. Cloud, or even the gift of a Cachemire de Lyons, or any of those *moyens de séduction* which are usually employed to advance vulgar *amourettes* ; for he who was a deep reader of countenance and character had watched the developement of Clotilde's fresh young feelings during the representation of Fleurette ; he had marked the involuntary tenderness and irrepressible confusion with which she had met the declaration which his eyes alone had dared to make to her, and he felt that already her heart had been touched in his favour, but that if

it succumbed to the seduction of love it must be love so artfully enveloped in the veil of sentiment as not to startle her maiden purity.

But this conviction in no way deterred him from his intentions ; on the contrary, it lent a new charm, a fresh impetus to the pursuit ; he was beginning to be weary of the conventional smiles, the practised oglings, the feigned coynesses, the *minauderies*, and the *agaceries* of the well-drilled coquettes to whom his homages had hitherto been addressed, and to sigh for the devotion of a heart untainted by the contact of the world—that contact which hardens or breaks whatever is long exposed to it ! and, lo ! what he had wished for, was found ; youth and beauty unsophisticated by society — and simplicity and inexperience unalloyed by vulgarity. He would stoop to gather this modest violet, place it in his bosom, intoxicate himself with its freshness and fragrance, and when it ceased to charm fling it heartlessly away !

Such were the reflections and such the in-

tentions with which Maxime parted from Clotilde on the night of Pentecost; and the following day beheld him already commencing operations, for at noon he strolled down to the elegant *magazin de lingerie* of Madame Bouvier in the Rue de Richelieu, and having by a hasty glance ascertained in what part of the shop Clotilde was seated, he approached the counter nearest to her and requested to be shewn some cambric handkerchiefs. Clotilde who was bending over her work, busily employed in affixing the last knot of ribbon to a *fanchon*, started at the sound of his voice, and Maxime could perceive the flush that suddenly overspread her face, and the tremulous movement of her fingers, which betrayed the sudden emotion his presence had occasioned; but she neither looked up nor attempted to move, nor did she by any voluntary demonstration appear to be conscious that he was there; therefore, after tossing over the goods that were shewn him as long as he could, and finding that he

could not attract her notice, he was forced to make his selection, and was about to depart when the young person who served him asked where the parcel should be sent ?

“ Chez Monsieur de Nérac, Rue de Chantereine, Numero ———,” replied Maxime, aloud.

“ Mademoiselle Clotilde, voulez vous prendre l’adresse de Monsieur ?” said the young woman to Clotilde, whose superior penmanship caused her to be always applied to on such occasions. Thus called upon, she was obliged to lay aside her work and to open the address-book that lay near her, awaiting with downcast eyes the direction he should give her ; however, as instead of speaking he remained silently contemplating the length of her dark eye-lashes, the distinguished cast of her features, and the graceful contour of her head and throat, she was at last compelled to look up and timidly inquire,

“ Monsieur demeure ?”

But that look had revealed to her, first, the eyes of Maxime seeking hers with an expres-

sion of melancholy reproach, and, secondly, the faded flower he had abstracted from her bouquet on the preceding night, affixed to his button-hole, and a conscious blush again mantled to her very brow, and caused her quickly to withdraw her eyes, and fix them upon the open book before her ; “ Monsieur de Nérac, Rue Chantereine,” he said in a subdued voice ; “ but here is my card, Mademoiselle,” and Clotilde, having with trembling fingers written *Monsieur de Chantereine, Rue Nérac*, waited until he had quitted the shop, to slip the card with eager haste into the little pocket of her green-silk apron ; and it was not until later in the day, when the parcel was about to be forwarded to its destination, that she became aware of the mistake which her trepidation had caused her to make, by the *commissionnaire* protesting that he knew not where to find the Rue Nérac, and Madame Bouvier requiring that Mademoiselle Clotilde should again refer to the entry she had made of it in the address-book.

That evening, when Clotilde left the magazin, to return home, she had scarcely proceeded a hundred yards ere she was joined by Maxime, who evidently had been lying in wait for her.

“Pardon me for detaining you, Mademoiselle,” he said; “but I could not rest until I had ascertained whether you were displeased with me for going to Madame Bouvier’s to-day.”

“*I*, Monsieur?” interrupted Clotilde; “why should I be displeased with you for giving your custom to Madame Bouvier?”

“Because,” he replied, determined not to allow her evasion to pass, “because you must know that it was not to give my practice to Madame Bouvier that I went there, but that my sole object was to see you; and yet you withheld from me a single look of recognition!”

“Then, sir,” said Clotilde firmly, “I must once for all intreat that you will desist from returning there for the purpose you have avow-

ed. I wish you a good evening ;” and curtseying to him she moved quickly away.

But he followed as quickly, and walking by her side continued to address her. “Alas ! Mademoiselle, what is the meaning of this cruel change in your manner ? Have you already forgotten last evening, and the happiness you conferred upon me by confiding yourself to my protection ? Surely, if I know myself, I did nothing then to forfeit the kindness you were willing to extend to me,—and what has since happened to alter your opinion ? How can I have so soon fallen in your estimation ? Parlez, Mademoiselle,—ah, parlez, je vous en conjure, chère Clotilde !”

But it would have been difficult for Clotilde to have answered the question thus earnestly put to her ; for had she told the truth, she must have owned that instead of having forfeited her good opinion he had rendered himself only too agreeable to her ; and that she distrusted her own new-born, undefined feelings

far more than she distrusted him, of whom in the plenitude of her guileless admiration there was not room in her mind for one unworthy thought ; so she remained silent, and redoubled her haste to scape from him until nearly breathless.

“ Will you not speak to me, Clotilde—Mademoiselle, I mean ? ”

“ Monsieur,” she replied, “ I am a poor unprotected girl—without friends—without fortune—with nothing but my good conduct to maintain me in the opinion of my employers, and nothing but my own esteem to sustain me in the complete isolation that surrounds me ! I must not encourage appearances which would be disadvantageous to my character and lead to false conclusions respecting my conduct. Yesterday, by the imprudence of my friend, I was drawn into forming an acquaintance and accepting attentions which my own sense of what is right disavowed ; I will not deny that I was gradually led into a temporary forgetfulness of

its being wrong by the—the—charm of your conversation; but when we had parted I felt my fault in its full force, and were I to-day deliberately to renew it, I should be worse than thoughtless, worse than imprudent! No, Monsieur, we must meet no more! Our lot has been cast in different spheres; there can be nothing in common between Monsieur de Nérac and the poor friendless Clotilde Remy. The attentions of one like you can only be offered in derision, or worse perhaps, in dishonour! Cease, then, to persecute me with a notice which instead of flattering my vanity is only insulting to my pride; and think not that because I have no father, no brother to protect me, that I have no spirit to assert myself!”

These words, pronounced with a modest dignity and self-possession as far removed from bravado as they were from weak entreaty, struck Maxime with astonishment. “By Heaven!” he exclaimed, “you wrong me by sus-

picious unworthy of the sentiment of respectful admiration with which you inspired me the first moment I beheld you—”

“Prove to me that I have wronged you, then, by granting my request and leaving me,” she replied with mild earnestness, “and I will not be too proud to ask your pardon for having misjudged you, or too wilful to own that I was mistaken.”

“To retrieve your good opinion, what would I not do?” he exclaimed; “and yet to ask me to leave you thus precipitately is perhaps exacting too great a sacrifice—too great an atonement for what after all has been but the error of a susceptible heart! If you would thus punish all who admire you, charming Clotilde, you would soon be obliged to banish all mankind from your presence; but can you not give me credit for admiration upon higher grounds than those you have attributed to me?—Can you not believe me capable of loving you without a wish to injure?—Can you not fancy me re-

placing the affection of the father you have lost, or filling the place of a brother to you—watching over your interests, shielding you from insult, and becoming your friend, confidant, and monitor? You look incredulous—you believe me to be incapable of all this because my hair is not yet grey! Ah! Clotilde, grey hairs are not always the symbol of wisdom; and when you have lived a little longer you will find that the young and beautiful have as much to dread from the selfish persecution of the old as from that of the young.”

“Pray leave me!” said Clotilde, perplexed and bewildered by the sophistries he had so vehemently uttered. “If you will only grant this request, I will promise to believe you capable of all that is great and good; but indeed if you persist in disregarding it, you will force me to think you too selfish to sacrifice the slightest gratification of your own wishes to the feelings of another.”

“Suffer me only to accompany you as far

as your own door," he urged, "and, if you exact it, I will not open my lips to you on the way; but indeed, you are too young and too lovely to expose yourself with impunity at this hour in the streets without protection."

"I must accustom myself to it, Monsieur, for the nature of my employment necessitates that I should do so, and I hope that I know how to repel insult; you however appear bent upon impressing upon me how much more difficult it is to repel kindness; but in this particular I must not be over-ruled—good evening, sir!"

"One moment longer, and I am gone! The handkerchiefs I chose to-day were only bought in the hope that you would give them value, in my estimation, by affixing my cypher to them, but you would not afford me an opportunity of asking this of you to-day. Will you, however, allow me to send them to you for that purpose?"

"Willingly, Monsieur," replied Clotilde,

who felt that to refuse a request which partook of the nature of a commission in her employer's interest would be an unjustifiable stretch of prudery.

“And may I not call for them when done?”

“No sir; they shall be sent to your house as soon as finished; and now once more, and for the last time, good night, sir.” And she hurried away, while Maxime crossing to the opposite side of the street, followed in the same direction, keeping in view the light form of Clotilde as it flitted through the crowded thoroughfare.

She had not proceeded far, when a tall military-looking elderly man, with grizzled moustaches, and a red ribbon at his button-hole, after peering several times under her bonnet, accosted her. With her head averted from him she redoubled her speed, hoping thus to escape further importunity; but the gallant veteran was not thus to be repelled, and with

sundry expressions of admiration, more energetic than refined, he offered his arm to the unprotected girl.

“Pass on, Monsieur,” she said, “you are mistaken ; I do not know you !”

“Eh, mille tonnerres ! Mademoiselle,” he returned, “if that is all, and you are willing, we shall very soon know one another !”

And as they were now at the crossing of the street, he seized upon her arm to assist her over it. But at that moment Maxime, who from the opposite side had seen all that was passing, rushed between them, with his face flushed with passion, and wresting the arm of Clotilde from the stranger’s rude grasp, placed it under his own, while with his other hand he pushed him away with such violence as to cause him to stagger and fall against a shop-window, a large pane of which was broken by the shock.

While the unlucky author of this accident was seized upon by the shopkeeper, in order to compel him to pay for the damage he had

occasioned, and a crowd gathered round to listen to the contention, Maxime hurried on with his trembling charge, and turning round the corner of the Rue Feydeau, soon lost sight of the disturbance. Tears of indignation, which had gathered in the poor girl's eyes at the insult offered to her, now rolled over her flushed cheeks, and mingled with those which sprang from softer feelings.

“ You see,” said Maxime, “ that I was right, and that my double assertion was verified almost as soon as uttered ?—you *were* insulted, and by an old man !”

“ Yes—yes,” she answered in broken accents ; “ but you were there to save me !—thanks—thanks, for having rescued me from that wretch !” and she drew her handkerchief from the pocket of her apron to wipe away the tears that would not be repelled.

Something which had been drawn forth with it fell to the ground, and Maxime, stooping hastily to pick it up, perceived that it was the

card he had given to Clotilde that morning, to enable her to enter his address into Madame Bouvier's books. The sudden movement he made in stooping induced her to look at him, but when she beheld the card in his hand she felt as though she would have sunk into the earth; it seemed as though her inmost feelings had been betrayed by this evidence of the value she had attached to the possession of that little bit of pasteboard, and a conscious blush suffusing her face with crimson, left it the next moment so pale that even her lips grew white.

"Dear Clotilde," said he, wishing to restore her composure by delicately attributing her present emotion to the alarm she had experienced from the mustachioed hero, "this fright has been too much for you; lean upon me," and again drawing her arm through his, he could not this time refrain from pressing it against his heart. Clotilde made no resistance; she felt betrayed and humiliated by what had just

occurred, and in silence she continued to walk by his side until, when within sight of her own habitation, she suddenly stopped, and extending her hand to him said, "In the name of the good feeling you have just shewn for me, do not go farther ! I am safe now,—safe, thanks to your kindness !"

"I obey you," he answered, raising her hand to his lips ; "but we must meet again ; Clotilde, I must see you to-morrow !"

She returned no answer, but swiftly bounding forward, was the next moment lost to his sight within the entrance of her own dwelling.

With a light heart and a fleet step Maxime retraced his way to the Rue de Richelieu, and found, as he had fully anticipated, Clotilde's military Don Juan where he had left him, still vociferously protesting against the injustice of being obliged to pay for what had been broken through no fault of his own ; while the shop-keeper, determined not to be argued or bullied out of his just demand, had sent for the com-

missaire de police, to enforce the settlement of it.

“*Cré mille bombes !* I tell you that I did not break your window, and I will not pay for it ! What ! because a little *blanc-bec* of a fellow takes the liberty of smuggling my *belle* from me, pushes me against the wall, and then runs away to get beyond reach of my chastisement, I am to be made to pay for his tricks ? *Nom de Dieu ! Je ne me laisserai pas embêter de la sorte ; non, non, mille fois non !* and if I could catch hold of my *beau muscadin*, I would give him a drubbing that he should remember all his life, to teach him to meddle with my amours !”

“He is here !” cried Maxime advancing, and coolly placing himself in front of the enraged blusterer, who, struck dumb for a second by the unexpected appearance of his adversary, made a violent plunge forward to grapple with him, but was forcibly withheld by the shop-keeper.

“Sir,” said Maxime to the latter, “*I* was the cause of your window being broken, and I have returned to pay for the damage occasioned. This gentleman thought proper to molest a respectable young person of my acquaintance, in the street, and to insult her with his odious propositions. I rescued her from his brutal insolence, and in doing so pushed him against your shop-window; whatever expense may be incurred in repairing the mischief done, I am here to defray it. As for you, sir,” he continued, turning to the officer, and looking at him sternly, “here is my card; if you have anything to say to me, you will know where I am to be found.” And then handing him his card, and counting out to the shopkeeper the amount named for repairing the window, he turned on his heel and walked leisurely away.

He was soon overtaken by the militaire, who, still under the dominion of his first anger, and freshly exasperated by the terms in which

Maxime had just adverted to his behaviour to Clotilde, felt as if the only relief his feelings could experience would be by insulting the youth who had treated him with such cool contempt ; therefore, quickly advancing behind him he contrived to jostle him so roughly as to push him off the *trottoir*.

“ Aha !” said Maxime, regaining his position, and drawing himself up, “ Vous voilà, Monsieur ?”

“ Oui, Monsieur, me voici !” was the answer.

“ Well, sir,” resumed Maxime, “ and what have you to say to me ? Je vous écoute.”

“ What have I to say to you ? I have to tell you that you are an impertinent fellow, Monsieur ; and that if I had a cane in my hand, Monsieur, it should very quickly become acquainted with your shoulders, Monsieur !”

“ As I am not of a class who indulge in fighting in the street like hackney-coachmen, I shall not be tempted to chastise your insolence

on the spot," returned Maxime ; " but I shall be at your service to-morrow morning, on the terms upon which gentlemen fight, either with swords or pistols, at the Bois de Boulogne, or the Bois de Vincennes. Name your weapons, hour, and place, and I shall not fail you there. Sir, you have already my card, but I have not yet the honour of knowing who is to be my adversary."

" Soit !" replied the indignant hero ; " demain matin à sept heures, au bois de Vincennes, à l'épée. Je ne vous manquerai pas ; voici mon adresse !" and fumbling in both pockets he at last produced the half of an old playing-card, one side of which exhibited the head and shoulders of the Knave of Hearts, and the other, in pale ink, which had been dried with sand, the style and title of " Grognard, Ancien Chef de Bataillon, Rue Neuve St. Eustache ;" and having mutually relieved their feelings by determining to run one another through the body, Maxime and Monsieur Grognard politely took off their

hats to each other, and separated to engage the attendance of their respective seconds, and then to finish the evening, Maxime in a *stalle* at the Opera, and Monsieur Grogard in playing dominoes at the Café Valois, in the Palais Royal.

CHAPTER III.

Pour confier son bonheur à l'amour, il ne faut pas connoître l'homme et sa destinée.

LABRUYÈRE.

It may be imagined that in the fulness of her heart Clotilde related all that had befallen her to her friend Hortense on the following day, and that it was not very difficult for that more experienced and cunning person to read through the transparent feelings of the artless girl, and to enlighten her as to the precise nature of the predilection which she did not attempt to deny that she felt for Maxime.

“Eh ! ma chère, tu l'aimes, voilà tout !” said she ; “it is quite clear, you are as much in

love with him as he is with you. I knew how it would be the moment I saw you together."

"*I in love with Monsieur de Nérac!*" repeated Clotilde, aghast at the assertion which Hortense had enounced with the same easy carelessness with which she would have spoken of '*la pluie et le beau tems*;'—"in love with a man whom I scarcely know, whom I had never seen two days ago! Oh no, no, Hortense, you are mistaken, or you are only laughing at me—you cannot in reality think me so weak or so wicked as to fall in love with one who is so far removed above me, and who is besides still a stranger to me."

"Nothing more natural than that you should do so, my dear, and yet nothing more natural than that you should at this moment not be able to believe it. It was just the same with me in my first *affaire de cœur*; I believe it is the same with us all the first time; love at first sight takes one by surprise,—cela vous

tombe comme une tuile sur la tête,—cela vous étourdit!—mais peu-à-peu on s'y accoutume, et on s'arrange là-dessus.”

“Oh! I should never accustom myself to such an idea, never!” said poor Clotilde, tears springing into her eyes as these new lights were forced upon her affrighted mind; “reason, propriety, good sense—all are against it! if we were equals in station, then indeed, perhaps, I—but I must not think of *that* now,” and in spite of herself she sighed as she uttered the vain resolve. “The best thing that I can do,” she continued, “is to avoid seeing him for the future; I thought so yesterday when I believed that—that I only—admired him; but since you have spoken to me as you have done, I feel that I never again could look him in the face! and yet I fear that he will this evening be seeking to see me,—you must come home with me, dear Hortense, and should we meet him on the way, give me courage by your pre-

sence—to—to—What *can* I say to him, Hortense, if he asks me to give my reasons for desiring to see him no more?”

“*What*, indeed!” answered her friend, “I am sure *I* cannot tell you, for I never yet found myself in the same predicament; nor can I understand the reason why because a man is very handsome, very tender, very *empresé*, and pleases you very much, it should necessarily follow that you must banish him your presence!”

“Because,” said Clotilde, “that man cannot be my husband.”

“Your husband! no, indeed, it is not likely that he can; but if you are bent upon marriage, my dear, why you must be satisfied with your *gros niais de Hyacinthe* who could find no better way of declaring his wishes than by giving you a pot of hyacinths with a label inscribed, ‘*Ah que je serais fier de vous en offrir un qui durera pour la vie!*’ Voilà l’étoffe dont se composent les maris pour nous autres, ma

chère ! As for myself, I will own to you that the idea of anything so vulgar is revolting to me ; and when I compare it with the elegance of such men as George Sand and your handsome Maxime, with their white hands, and yellow gloves, and perfumed handkerchiefs, and varnished boots, and soft voices, and distinguished manners, I more than ever feel how impossible it would be for me to give up one for the other —therefore j'ai pris mon parti, —I shall never marry !”

“ Nor I, either,” thought Clotilde, as the image of Maxime rose before her mind’s eye in all its seductive grace, and the homelier form evoked by Hortense’s ridicule appeared there too, side by side, invested with even more than its natural coarseness and absurdity by the force of contrast. The comparison was a dangerous one to dwell upon,—she felt it to be so, yet she could not banish it from her thoughts ; the utmost limit to which her courage extended was to refrain from owning to

Hortense that she felt the full force of her ridicule ; and this was already obtaining a mastery over her feelings, for they had arrived at that point when, vibrating between right and wrong, a word,—a look opportunely directed will give a fatal preponderance to the scale of inclination, and that word,—that look are too often eagerly grasped at by the vacillating mind as an *appui* which may serve to excuse its present weakness, and share the blame of its future misery. But Clotilde who was no sophist, sought not for an excuse which was either actually or prospectively to lighten the load of self-reproach, and, feeling that from Hortense she would meet with no counsels calculated to fortify her mind against the temptation that assailed her, she sought refuge in silence ; and when her friend spoke again it was to discuss her own affairs and the merits of George Sand,—subjects so full of interest to her that they absorbed all her attention until the moment arrived for the *demoiselles*

to disperse and return to their respective homes.

Arm in arm the two young girls left the magazin together, Hortense still talking, Clotilde silent and *distracte*, when they were suddenly joined by Maxime, who seated in an adjoining shop had been anxiously watching for the approach of Clotilde. He appeared scarcely able to sustain himself; his face was pale and bore the traces of suffering, and his right arm was supported in a sling. Clotilde could not repress an exclamation of terror at his altered appearance.

“It is a mere trifle,” said he smiling, “a scratch which a few days will heal; if I had thought that this black silk handkerchief looked so alarming, I should have left it at home.”

“Nay, then you would have done wrong,” said Hortense, “for it is extremely becoming to you; and were it not that you really look very pale, I should fancy that you had put it on merely in the spirit of coquetry, to give

you the air of a hero of romance.—Qu'en dis tu, Clotilde ?”

“ For God's sake, tell me what has happened to you ?” exclaimed Clotilde, hurried by her apprehensions into stronger marks of interest for Maxime than she would have willingly evinced, and totally regardless of Hortense's flippancy.

“ Nothing to excite any uneasiness,” he answered ; “ I have merely chastised the insolence of a hoary libertine who fancied himself privileged to insult a virtuous young girl in the streets because she had no ostensible protection ! and in giving him a lesson which he will not easily forget, I have received a scratch in my sword-arm which will make me left-handed for a day or two,—that is all !”

“ Good God !” she cried, wholly overcome by this intelligence, “ and was it for me that you thus exposed your life ? Oh, Monsieur, what cruel imprudence ! and did you not think of the misery that must be entailed

upon me had you fallen in so unworthy a quarrel?"

"I thought only of the happiness of avenging you," he answered with emotion, "a happiness which would have been cheaply purchased with my life's blood."

"Sont-ils bêtes, les hommes, quand ils se battent pour les femmes!" remarked Hortense; "pourtant ça nous fait plaisir. Je sens que j'adorerais un homme qui ferait cette bêtise pour moi! Ah oui, ça fait bien plaisir!"

"Pleasure!" repeated Clotilde, shuddering; "horror, you mean,—grief—and regret!"

Poor girl! in the scattered state of her spirits she had apparently forgotten the wise resolutions with which she had left the *magazin* that evening, or, if they did recur to her, it was only to make her shrink from the cruelty and ingratitude of inflicting pain, by banishing from her presence one who had so recently risked his life to avenge an insult offered to her. Instead therefore, of imparting the pru-

dent decision which she had so firmly resolved upon pronouncing to her dangerous young admirer, she suffered him unchecked to continue walking by her side, and to gather presumptuous hopes from the tender emotion but too visible in her countenance. What he read there, determined him upon immediately following up the advantage his devotion for her had gained him, by establishing himself upon such a footing with Clotilde as would render it very difficult for her afterwards to displace him from ; and unhappily for the poor girl's peace of mind, Hortense was there to assist in bringing them to bear.

They were within a few paces of Clotilde's habitation, and Hortense with her usual volubility had been filling up the deficiencies occasioned in the conversation by the *distractions* of her two companions, when, having addressed some direct question to Maxime, and receiving no answer, she turned abruptly towards him to repeat it, and remarked a change in his

countenance, which drew from her the exclamation of, “ Mon Dieu ! Monsieur ; qu’avez vous donc ? vous allez vous trouver mal ! ”

“ I — I feel faint, — ” he stammered, and the paleness of his lips corroborated the assertion. “ A glass of water will revive me.”

“ What shall we do ? ” said Clotilde, in uncontrollable terror ; “ he will faint here ! ”

“ *Do*, my dear ? ” repeated Hortense ; “ why, take him *chez toi*, to be sure ! ”

“ Oh, no, no,” rejoined Clotilde, “ I cannot—I must not ! What will Père Benoit, what will Madame Benoit say ? ”

“ If that is all that hinders you,” returned her friend, “ leave it to me ; follow me, and all I ask of you is, not to contradict what I say.” So saying they all entered the house, and Hortense, stopping before the porter’s lodge, and perceiving Père Benoit poring over the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, addressed him in the easiest manner possible as follows :—
“ Bon soir, Père Benoit ; here is a relation

of Mademoiselle Clotilde's just arrived from Nevers, who has been very much hurt by the diligence overturning. Will you have the goodness to give him a glass of water to revive him before he attempts getting up stairs? Poor Mademoiselle Clotilde is, as you see, quite overcome at seeing a cousin whom she did not know that she possessed until this evening."

The ready-witted girl could not forbear directing a triumphant glance of intelligence towards the *cousin improvisé*, which was returned by him with one of grateful acknowledgment; while poor Clotilde, abashed by the necessity of countenancing a falsehood thus forced upon her, dared not raise her eyes to Père Benoit lest he should read there the tacit deception she was practising upon him.

"Here is a glass of water," said the old man, quite unconscious of fraud, and settling his spectacles upon his nose to take a look at the cousin from Nevers: "and here is your

key, Ma'mselle, and moreover here is Titi, who is wearying to death after you, although he has just supped with me, *pauvre chéri* ! ”

And he handed successively through the window of his *loge*, a glass of water, a key, and an immense white Angola cat, which latter was eagerly seized upon by Clotilde, and half smothered with caresses to hide her confusion.

By the time the little party had ascended the five flights of stairs that led to Clotilde's solitary chamber, Maxime's strength was wholly exhausted ; and she had scarcely time to unlock the door, when he staggered forward and sank into the nearest chair, motionless, and apparently insensible. The wound he had received that morning in his duel with Monsieur Grognard was more serious than he had chosen to avow, and his surgeon had recommended absolute repose for a few days, as necessary to his speedy re-establishment ; but the excitement of a new-born passion rendered it difficult

for Maxime to obey the prudent injunction, and he was unwilling to forego the advantage, which he knew he should obtain over Clotilde's feelings by shewing himself to her with all the evidences of suffering consequent upon his chivalrous *dévouement* for her, apparent in his person. Nor had he erred in his calculation. Pale as himself, trembling with terror, yet mastering her emotion, that she might be of use to him, she bathed his temples with water and chafed his cold hands, and when he revived, it was to find his head gently supported upon her shoulder, his hands clasped within her own, and her eyes fixed upon his countenance with an expression of the tenderest solicitude. In the fulness of his joy an avowal of love trembled on his lips — but Hortense was there ; and he checked the passionate impulse, restricting all expression of his feelings to an eloquent glance, and a fond pressure of the soft hand in which his own was locked. This time neither eyes nor hand were withdrawn

from him, and he felt that he had not suffered in vain.

From that evening might be dated the complete subjugation, not only of Clotilde's feelings, but of the scruples which had previously led her to determine upon breaking off her acquaintance with Maxime. Gratitude had strengthened, and insidiously lent its sanction to pre-established inclination ; and the deportment of the too amiable youth towards her was so irreproachable, his admiration so happily tempered with respect during the whole of that first visit, that she felt as though it would be an absurd exercise of prudery to persist in banishing him from her presence. And never before had Maxime felt so happy, never had he appeared so amiable, never had passion so closely assimilated itself in his nature to virtuous love ! At that moment he would not have exchanged the humble garret of Clotilde for the most luxurious boudoir that Paris

could have offered ; and as he gazed with interest upon the scanty furniture which told a tale of poverty and privation, he sighed for the happiness of placing her in a temple better suited to such a divinity. She who had never known a richer abode, felt no shame in the wretchedness of her home being revealed to Maxime ; but he who was accustomed to the refinements of life, could not forbear wondering that one naturally so elegant as Clotilde could preserve her cheerful content of mind in such a habitation ; for everything there was of the humblest description ; a little white-curtained bed, two rush-bottomed chairs, a table, *commode*, and *lavabo* of walnut wood, and an old *bergère*, which appeared to be the favourite refuge of *Titi*, composed the whole of the furniture ; yet cleanliness, which has been so happily designated as *l'élégance des pauvres*, presided over the scanty arrangement, and the most scrupulous neatness imparted something

of comfort, to what in other hands would have been a wretched attic.

One or two objects there attested to some superior position in life having once been held by the person who possessed them; *objets de luxe*, not generally to be found in the garret of a Grisette: there was a guitar lying on the commode, and a richly-bound *livre d'heures*; and affixed to either side of the little glass over the chimney-piece were two handsomely mounted miniatures, representing a very pretty young woman, dressed according to the fashion worn twenty years before, and a remarkably handsome man, wearing the uniform of a French infantry officer, whose fair complexion, deep-blue eyes, and regular features bore a striking resemblance to those of Clotilde; they were, in fact, the portraits of her father and mother, painted in the first year of their marriage, and over that of the Capitaine Remy was suspended the *croix de la légion d'honneur*, with which the

Emperor's own hand had decorated him upon the field of Wagram, and which as long as he lived had been the object of that religious devotion which characterises the feelings of all who have ever enjoyed the distinguishing approbation of that extraordinary man. These pictures which had riveted Maxime's attention, led to a disclosure of Clotilde's birth, and the misfortunes which had overtaken her family, and left her alone in the world dependent upon her own exertions for bread; and the melancholy particulars were related by her with a simple dignity which rendered her sublime in the eyes of Maxime; her courage and her resignation filled him with respect as well as admiration, and for a moment led him to contemplate the possibility of wooing and winning her honourably, and thus restoring to her rightful position in society one so admirably formed to adorn it; but that generous impulse was quickly superseded by the reflection that whenever he *did* marry it must be to better his fortune; and as

he had never accustomed himself to vanquish his passions, or to resist temptation when it came before him in a form so fair as Clotilde's, he, alas ! quickly relapsed into the *ornière* of unholy desires and unprincipled projects, and again looked upon her as game which he was licensed to pursue and to possess himself of, upon whatever terms might be most agreeable to himself.

Another object calculated to interest his selfish feelings, was his own bouquet carefully placed in a glass of water upon the chimney-piece, and still blooming,—thanks to the care with which the stalks had been clipped, and the water daily renewed by Clotilde,—who, when she perceived the pleased surprise with which he contemplated the tell-tale flowers, thought it necessary to account for their presence by a generalising declaration of, “I am so fond of flowers !” Even this maladroit disengenuousness, betraying as it did the conscious feeling that suggested it, lent a new charm to the blushing

girl, in the estimation of her lover. Had she been less reserved, he would have been less fascinated, for, libertine as he was, that which he most admired in women, was delicacy of mind; and although beauty without modesty might for a while enthrall his senses, it possessed no power, even for a moment, to captivate his heart: in a word, he felt the strange inconsistent desire of respecting that which he longed to destroy. Had the principles of Maxime been as sound as his taste was good, he would have been an admirable character.

They parted mutually enchanted, and they parted with the understanding that on the next evening they were to meet again; but when on the succeeding day Clotilde returned home, accompanied by Hortense, no Maxime met them on the way. His absence was accounted for by a note and a little packet which Père Benoit put into her hands, and which, he said, had been brought by a *commissionaire*, "With some pots of superb flowers for Ma'mselle

Clotilde, from her cousin the gentleman from Nevers." The note was hastily torn open; Maxime was ill; he had paid the penalty of his imprudence, and had been seized in the night with fever, which rendered it impossible for him to leave his bed; but he fully expected to be well enough on the following day to go out again, and then he would use the privilege of a *cousin*, and present himself at her door in the evening. In the meantime he enclosed the handkerchiefs, entreating that she would mark them for him with her hair, and he ventured to send her some flowers, remembering the predilection she had expressed for them the evening before.

Poor Clotilde! she sat up half that night, (for anxiety had driven sleep from her pillow) busily employed in fulfilling his wishes, and vainly wishing that she too might assume the privilege of a *cousin*, and establish herself by the sick-bed of the wounded Maxime, to watch over him, wait upon him, and anticipate all his

wishes ; but her native delicacy forbade her to do more than *wish*, and she wept bitterly to think that more availing proofs of gratitude and interest for him might not be shewn by her without violating propriety.

But what became of her when another day, and another succeeded, and still no Maxime—not even a line from him ! Was he worse ?—could he be dead ? she asked herself, shudderingly, and then she appealed to Hortense for comfort ; but, for the first time, Hortense was grave and uncommunicative ; she professed to know nothing, and, contrary to her usual custom, abstained from supposing anything. At last, on the fourth evening after Maxime's visit, the handkerchiefs being finished, Clotilde announced to Hortense her intention of leaving them at Monsieur de Nérac's door, and requested that she would accompany her thither, and thus give her courage to inquire from the porter how he was. It was then that Hortense revealed to her that Maxime had been danger-

ously ill, “à la mort,” as she termed it; and that in the ravings of the delirium which accompanied his fever, he had called incessantly upon the name of Clotilde, coupling it with the tenderest epithets, and stretching out his arms to her as though she had been near. George Sand, from whom Hortense had obtained her information, had been his head nurse, and had agreed with her that until the danger should be over, Clotilde was to be kept in ignorance of it. That was the case now; the fever had subsided, and the delirium disappeared, but the patient was so weak that he could not yet leave his bed, and any emotion might be most injurious to him.

“That man loves you to desperation, my dear,” she concluded; “and if you do not return his passion in the same way I shall think that you are a perfect tigress, or, indeed, that you have no heart at all. Es-tu heureuse d’avoir un amant comme celui-là; si beau, si jeune, si passionné! Tiens, Clotilde, si J’étais à

ta place Je passerais par le feu pour lui faire plaisir !”

“ God knows,” responded Clotilde, “ that I would pass through fire and water to do him good !”

“ Well, but as burning or drowning yourself would do him no good in the world, but quite the reverse, we must think of what *will*; and in the first place, nothing I am sure will be half so efficient as letting him know how miserable you have been about him these last four days. Ah, this love is a strange sentiment, Clotilde ! it leads one to revel in the torments of the object beloved even more than in their joys—to delight in making their misery if we cannot make their happiness ! I remember when I was ill of the scarlet-fever, and that Rodolphes told me how his anxiety for me had destroyed his digestion, I felt as much delighted as if he had given me a Cachemire ! Pourtant Je l’adorais dans ce moment,—l’ingrat !”

When once Hortense was *lancée* upon the

chapter of her *anciennes amours*, there was no knowing to what lengths it might lead her. In this instance, however, it led her no further than Maxime's habitation, at the door of which stood one whose presence put to flight all tender reminiscences unconnected with himself; the hero who had succeeded in her pliant affections to that ungrateful Rodolphe, whose quondam tenderness had so affectingly illustrated the well-known axiom about bad hearts and good stomachs, — Victor Giraud himself, alias George Sand.

From him they heard that Maxime continued to mend, — to him were confided the handkerchiefs, which he promised should be delivered the next morning, — and by him they were accompanied back to Clotilde's house, at the door of which she bid the light-hearted pair adieu, and left them to their own devices, glad to escape to the solitude of her chamber; where, unseen by all save Titi, she might give unrestrained course to the emotions

which had been suffocating her for the last hour—weep for the past danger of Maxime—rejoice in his recovery—read over and over the precious note he had written to her—mingle his name in her prayers—and then lie down to dream of seeing him again !

And soon was that dream realised. He came again, and it was to speak of love—how could she chide ? for it was to speak of marriage, too,—but of marriage at a distant period, contingent upon some event over which he had no control. He explained the narrow circumstances of his family, which so ill accorded with their family pride, and which had driven himself into a profession wholly repugnant to his tastes ; he spoke of an uncle of his mother's, the Baron d'Esclignac, an old retired admiral residing in Paris, who was rich and unmarried, and had given Maxime to understand that he would make him his heir, provided he did nothing to forfeit his good-will ; one of the conditions of which was that he

should form an advantageous marriage connection that should not *froisser* his family prejudices. But the admiral was old and infirm—he could not live very long—it would be unwise to offend him at the close of his career ; and when he should be no more, Maximé would then be his own master, free to declare his choice, to ratify it in the eyes of the world, to claim the hand of his Clotilde, and to devote the whole of his life to her and her alone.

What could the gentle, the guileless, the loving Clotilde object to sentiments and declarations, which were to all appearance so noble and honourable ? Then, and then only did her lips confirm the tender secret which her eyes had before so unconsciously betrayed ;—then did she own to her lover the sudden impression he had produced upon her untried heart at their first meeting ;—then dwell with *naïve* sensibility upon the struggles which had ensued between prudence and inclination ;—then paint

the emotions that had torn her heart during his illness, emotions so agonising as no longer to leave her the shadow of a doubt respecting the nature of her sentiments for him, — and then with modest joy contrast her actual feelings with her past sufferings. Hope and confidence had succeeded in her mind to doubt and despondency; she trusted religiously in all his protestations—all his promises, because she loved him, and because she believed him to be honest and true as herself; and without a scruple she pledged herself to become his wife whenever the obstacles to such an event (which he had already explained to her) should be removed, because she judged of his heart by her own; and felt that had *he* been poor and despised, and that she had possessed the treasures and distinctions of the world, she would have placed them all joyfully and without restriction at his feet.

Alas! could not such truth and tenderness move him from his dishonourable purpose? and

did he not shrink from misleading candour so unsuspecting, and sullyng purity so confiding ? No ! they only served to augment his passion, and to render easy every semblance of good faith, every fair promise that was more effectually to secure its triumph. Beyond that moment he looked not—he closed his eyes to the dreary picture of broken vows, blighted hopes, and ruined happiness that lurked behind, and which he knew must inevitably follow the discovery of his falsehood to Clotilde ; he thought only of the selfish joy of making her his own, unfettered by any legal tie—of leading her on step by step, blinded by her confidence in his honour, to the last irreparable sacrifice ! When, oh when, did the love of a libertine ever soar above the indulgence of selfish passion ?

CHAPTER IV.

“Quand on n’aime pas trop, on n’aime point assez.”

BUSSY RABUTIN.

SUMMER had passed away—autumn come and gone; the mists and mud of winter had given place to the bright sunshine of closing February, and a foretaste of spring shed its vivifying balm over the latter days of the Carnival. Much had happened between that period and the preceding June to develop the experience of the youthful Clotilde in the ways of the world, and of its slave and woman’s despot,—man! much that we must pass over cursorily, because we love not to dwell upon so dark a picture as that which the triumph of perfidy and the

defeat of innocence offer to our saddened contemplation. Suffice it to say that the selfish calculations of Maxime had been realised, and, that Clotilde had awakened from a dream of happy security to find herself a lost and guilty being. Situated as she was, so young, so desolate, so totally left to her own guidance and to the evil counsels of a light-minded and unprincipled friend, so constantly exposed to the seductions of one who but too well knew how to shed the halo of sentiment over the wild pleadings of passion, and but too well knew also how to turn to his own account the boundless confidence, the unutterable love with which her heart was overflowing ; nothing but a miracle could have saved her. That miracle was not forthcoming ; and her very purity, her trusting innocence accelerated her fall.

But although deep remorse followed the first sense of her degradation, no misgivings accompanied that pang ; for the love of Maxime appeared for a while to increase daily, and the

tender attentions with which he embellished her humble existence were marked by the most delicate respect as well as the most thoughtful consideration. Whenever a shade of sadness clouded that fair and open brow he knew how to dissipate it by fond allusions to the marriage that was hereafter to bind them in holiest ties to each other, and by fonder protestations that no empty ceremony could render her dearer to him or more indissolubly his wife than he now considered her. Nor did he then exaggerate in thus expressing himself, for the mind and person of Clotilde had inspired him with feelings such as he had never before experienced, and more than once he contemplated the possibility of compensating to her hereafter by a legal union for the blind devotion and the fatal confidence which had placed her so completely at his mercy. But there would always be time enough to decide upon that at a later period, he argued to himself,—such a step would at all times be dependent upon his own will ; and, in

the meantime, his only thought was how to enjoy his present happiness without any care for the future deteriorating from its brightness—how to *énivrer sa victime pour mieux s'énivrer*.

It was his wish to withdraw Clotilde from her employment at Madame Bouvier's, and to settle her in a pretty little apartment in the immediate vicinity of his own lodging, where she would be mistress of her own time, and where he would have the facility of seeing her at all hours of the day; but to such an arrangement she opposed the firmest though gentlest resistance; because there was something intolerable to her honest pride in the idea of becoming dependent upon a man who was not yet her husband;—something repugnant to her delicacy of mind in placing herself in the position of a *femme entretenue*. No! until she could become *his wife*, she would continue to support herself by her own industry, was her unchangeable determination, and the same noble

independence of spirit and delicacy of feeling led her to reject the gifts he would have lavished upon her in the plenitude of his love ; and, out of the multitude of tempting *bagatelles* which he had tendered to her, to accept of nothing but the simple gold *alliance*, which he had placed upon her finger when she had pledged herself to become his wife, and which was the symbol of that union upon which she as firmly relied as she relied upon the protection of Heaven.

“ You have bestowed upon me,” she would say, “ the only treasure that has any value in my estimation, the only one I ever coveted — your heart ! Do not think so meanly of me as to believe that, *possessing that*, anything else could add to my happiness ! ”

And, true to her resolution, she continued to lead the same simple and laborious life as before she had known him ; and the only visible change in her existence was, that every evening Maxime was in waiting at Madame

Bouvier's door to conduct her home, and that every Sunday he accompanied her either to Montmorency, or Versailles, or St. Germain, where she might breathe the pure air of the country after the confinement of the week, and ramble through the woods the live-long day with him.

Thus passed the summer ; and Maxime honestly believed that he should never wish for any happiness beyond that which he then enjoyed in his undivided devotion to Clotilde, and in the intense tenderness which it had called forth in her young heart. But in the latter end of autumn other pleasures began to put in their claims for participation ; the society he was accustomed to frequent returned from the country to Paris for the winter season in the month of November, and balls and soirées, of which he had hitherto been one of the favourite guests, recommenced, and his presence was again eagerly solicited to enhance their delights.

Self-denial did not enter into the character of Maxime, and therefore it never occurred to him to reject the pleasures of that world from which the fond being, to whom he was *more* than the world, was excluded, merely because the hours thus devoted by him to frivolous amusements must necessarily leave her to lonely meditation, rendered more lonely and sad by the force of contrast with the happy evenings which for the last few months had never failed to reunite them after the compulsory separation of the day, and had compensated to Clotilde for all the other privations that marked her laborious existence. He, indeed, at first complained of the necessity that existed for leaving her occasionally — railed against the *convenances du monde*, which exacted from him the sacrifice of his own tastes to the claims which society had upon him ; contrasted the ineffable happiness, the tender familiarity of their tête-à-tête evenings with the heartless bustle and

glare of the fêtes in which he was compelled to appear, and seemed really to enjoy so completely his return to Clotilde after such temporary absences, that her security in his affection and good faith remained for a time unshaken.

But gradually those absences became more frequent, and gradually too he ceased to express any regrets about them. He thought perhaps that because Clotilde abstained from remarking upon such proceedings, she had become accustomed to them, and acquiesced in their continuance; but had he not already grown more careless and *distract* in her presence, he would have observed traces of inquietude in her countenance—a paler cheek, and eyelids occasionally heavy with the tears that his neglect had wrung from them in secret. True, the cheek flushed with glad emotion, and the eye lighted up with smiles when he appeared, and tender and cordial as ever were the words with which she welcomed him; but when the shortened

interview was over, and that he was gone, she would lean her head upon her clasped hands and weep, for she felt that already had

“ A change come o’er the spirit of her dream,”

—she felt the disparity of feeling that existed between herself and Maxime ! *He* was all the world to her ; dearer than a thousand worlds ;—without him there was neither happiness nor enjoyment for her—for him, she would have turned her back upon all that the world could offer to seduce her heart from its fond allegiance ! But alas !—the world which he professed to condemn was dearer to him than she was ; its frivolous pursuits, at which he laughed, more alluring than her society. If both were incompatible, he hesitated not to sacrifice *her*—its hollow smiles were more necessary to his happiness than her peace of mind !

Oh, it is a cruel moment in the history of woman’s heart, that in which she is first driven by startling facts to weigh her lover’s affections

in the balance against her own, and find them wanting!—many a heart has been broken by the sad discovery; some have been only crushed into temporary insensibility; others irremediably withered, and hardened into stone! But whichever of these should be the result, never, even though she lived to the utmost limits of human existence, will the woman who has thus suffered, forget the dreary chill which gathered like the damps of death round her heart in that moment when the illusion that had been its life was torn from it, to return no more!

Clotilde resisted as long as possible this fatal enlightenment. She clung to her dear delusion with the tenacity with which the shipwrecked wretch clings to the slightest spar that will bear him over the wild billows raging around to engulf him; but the moment came when that frail support escaped from her grasp, and the deep waters of despair closed over her soul!

CHAPTER V.

To love another, is too often the sad, yet sweet seal, put upon a bond of wretchedness, at least to a woman. How is her earnest, her self-sacrificing, her devoted attachment repaid? By neglect, falsehood, and desertion!

L. E. L.

Foiled was perversion by that youthful mind.

LORD BYRON.

THERE are never wanting officious people to direct the attention of their friends to circumstances respecting which it would be far better for their peace of mind that they should remain in ignorance, since, in nine cases out of ten, knowledge brings with it the reverse of happiness. Nor was Clotilde destined to be an exception to a rule which would be so much

more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Isolated as she was from the world and worldly pleasures, her peculiar position did not on that account exempt her from sharing the penalties which worldly friendships privilege and inflict: for Hortense was still near; and the dangerous companion who had been so zealous an advocate for Maxime during the early part of his acquaintance with Clotilde, was the first person to point out to her his altered sentiments. Circumstances had developed to that wily person at an early period of the *liaison* the real nature of the young man's attachment; and, truth to say, she never had given him credit for designs more honourable than those she had detected, and she secretly wondered and laughed at the credulity of her friend in believing that marriage was to sanctify the adventure.

Her own affair with Victor Giraud, although it had survived for a short time the discovery of his assumption of literary celebrity, had gone

the way of all such light engagements, and once more left her excitable fancies (for we cannot exalt them into affections) at liberty to roam in quest of new objects of interest ! In this interregnum, something occurred to involve her own selfish calculations in the rupture that she foresaw was pending between Clotilde and Maxime, and from that moment she devoted herself to the affairs of her friend, with the most indefatigable zeal, and in a spirit which left it difficult to determine whether she were actuated more strongly by the malicious love of tormenting her victim, the disinterested wish of opening her eyes to the falsehood to which she had been sacrificed, in order to rescue her from it, or the determination of corrupting her mind by evil counsels until she should reduce it to the level of her own heartless and unprincipled levity.

There is a love of intrigue inherent in some female minds which irresistibly leads them, when they cannot be *principals* in affairs of

gallantry, to become *accessories* to those of their acquaintance ; such women are the most dangerous inflictions upon society that ever usurped the title of friend, and of that description was Hortense. Had she lived in the world, the mischief perpetrated by her would have been incalculable ; but her field for action was so narrow as to leave her no object whereon to exercise her talents but the defenceless Clotilde ; and unhappily for the latter, Hortense, (to use her own expression) “avait épousé ses intérêts si chaudement,” as to leave her no escape from the sympathies and the counsels which wounded and irritated far more than they consoled the heavy heart of the unhappy girl.

It had happened during the month of January, that Hortense and Clotilde having been sent one morning by Madame Bouvier to the house of a certain Madame Prosper, of gallant notoriety, with a quantity of the latest novelties to be tried on by her, had been seen

there by an old Muscovite prince, who was one of that lady's most magnificent protectors, as well as a professed patron of all the fair and facile of her sex who came within the reach of his golden temptations. Struck by the extreme loveliness of Clotilde, so different from the usual cast of Grisette beauty, the old amateur had ample opportunity as she tried caps, pelerines, and canezons upon the somewhat *passée coquette*, to admire her natural and modest grace, and the fresh yet delicate bloom which imparted such a rose-bud-like appearance to her whole person, and which seemed to acquire additional charms when compared with the faded countenance and meretricious glances of Madame Prosper, and the voluble *minauderies* of Hortense. The result of his observations was a determination to raise the young *lingère* from her humble station to the honours of his harem, nor did he lose any time in putting into requisition the usual means of seduction which he had hitherto found to

be all powerful with persons of her class ; but his presents were returned, and his ambassadresses indignantly dismissed by Clotilde : and when the *carte blanche* which he sent her, desiring her to name her own terms, had been rejected with unmitigated scorn, the old Celadon, *piqué au jeu* by the difficulties thus opposed to his wishes, betook himself to Hortense, and secured her good offices with Clotilde by the *weighty* arguments which he advanced to propitiate her services in his favour.

Affairs were in this state, and Clotilde, whose pure heart and generous mind would have shrunk from the bare idea of repeating any part of the transaction to Maxime, lest he should fancy that she made a merit to him of her disinterested fidelity, had carefully concealed from him the persecutions to which Prince Pugnoseffsky's passion had exposed her ; when, in the beginning of February, he announced to her that his father had written to require his presence at Pau upon some

family business, and that he must immediately obey the summons, and would in all probability be absent from Paris for the next six weeks. His departure followed so speedily, that poor Clotilde had scarcely time to prepare her mind for it ere he was gone, — and it was not until she was alone that she became sufficiently collected to remember that all the grief in parting had been upon her side, and that Maxime's chief care in that sad moment had been to terminate his adieus as soon as possible. "Perhaps to spare my feelings," she thought, — but she wept bitterly as she remembered that but a few months before, he would have felt more keenly and have lingered more fondly over the last moments of only a single day's separation from her.

She was sitting alone over the dying embers of her fire, one evening after her return from Madame Bouvier's, lost in a whirlwind of conflicting emotions, half joy, half terror, — for the belief that she was likely to become

a mother had, for the first time, impressed itself upon her, and brought with it a latent hope that such an event would awaken all Maxime's best feelings, and induce him to hasten the performance of his promise to her, that their child might not come into the world with the stain of illegitimacy upon it,—and with her heart and head full of this anxious subject, she was revolving in her mind how she should write to Maxime to impart it to him, when her meditations were broken in upon by Hortense, who, with a face full of meaning entered, and deliberately taking off her bonnet and shawl, laid them upon the bed, and established herself in the arm-chair at the opposite corner of the fireside.

“Clotilde,” said she, “make up the fire ; I am come to pass the rest of the evening with you. I have brought you a *pâté* from Lesage's, and a bottle of wine, for you never have anything fit to eat at home, and we will sup together as we gossip over the fire. I have a great

deal to tell you which I could not communicate at the shop, lest the other demoiselles might overhear us, and your agitation might betray you into some weakness."

"For God's sake what is the matter?" said poor Clotilde, looking at her with terror. "Have you heard any bad news from Pau—is Maxime ill?"

"No, no!" rejoined Hortense, "*mauvaise herbe croit toujours!* Maxime is very well. I have seen him to day."

"Seen him!" repeated Clotilde, "that is impossible! You know that he has gone to his father's near Pau upon business which will detain him there six weeks; it is only ten days since he set out, and on Thursday I received a letter from him."

"From Pau?" inquired Hortense.

"No, from Bordeaux," was the reply. "He wrote me word he was to remain there a few days with one of his uncles, and then go on to his father's."

“ He has never been further than Bordeaux,” said Hortense, “ and it is two days since he returned to Paris.”

“ I will never believe it !” persisted Clotilde, “ why should he thus deceive me ?”

“ *Why*, my poor child ? because he has deceived you from the beginning,—because this is only a continuation of the game he has played with you all along,—because he is now preparing the last finishing act of his treachery ! Be counselled by me Clotilde ; now is your time to strike a blow ;—you may secure for yourself a brilliant existence, make your own terms with the old Prince, and plant Monsieur Maxime before he abandons you ! Voilà ce qui s'appelle montrer du caractere ! and when he sees you driving about in a fine equipage with a chasseur behind, it is ten to one but all his love for you will return,—and there is no reason why, after tormenting him until he nearly loses his senses, that you should not then restore him to your good graces ; you can pass

him off to the Prince for *le petit cousin de Nevers*,—ces vieux sapajous de Princes sont toujours fort raisonnables sur le chapitre des petits cousins, — ça ne compte pas comme amant ; ainsi si tu tiens toujours à ton beau Maxime, tu peux le garder de cette manière.”

“ Hush ! ” exclaimed Clotilde with more anger than she had ever before betrayed to Hortense, “ if you would retain my friendship, never speak to me in that shocking way again ! I should hate myself if I could listen to you with patience ; — nay, Hortense, I should hate *you*, could I suppose that you were in earnest in the advice you give me.”

“ Then,” returned her friend laughing, “ you would be making a very ungrateful return for my friendship. Listen to me, my dear, and then tell me whose advantage I have in view in giving you the benefit of my superior experience ? believe me, Clotilde, I know men better than you do, and not one of them was ever to be *retained* or *regained* by weeping, senti-

mental, fidelity. Give them a rival, and that makes them feel the value of what they possess, —give them a successor, and they will long to repossess what they have lost ! That is the way to bring them back to their senses ; but shut yourself up alone, and weep till your eyes are bleared, your nose red, and all your freshness gone, and do you think your *volage* will find you more attractive in that state, and that he will prefer such a Madeleine to a gay laughing face ? My poor little Clotilde, I told you from the first that you never knew how to manage this selfish lover of yours. Instead of working like a slave all day, and shutting yourself up alone with him in the evening to talk sentiment, you ought to have accepted his first offer of removing you to an elegant lodging, — you ought to have shewn yourself at the theatres and in the public walks with him, *mise avec coquetterie et attirant les regards de tout le monde* ; his amour-propre would have been flattered at seeing you admired and followed ;—he would have felt happy in

the possession of what others envied him ;—he would have feared to lose you, and thus you would have made him your slave, instead of becoming *his* as *you* have done. And now, see what is the consequence ! He leaves you alone to pine in your garret, working your fingers to the bone, while his love, his time, and his purse are all devoted to Madame Prosper !”

Clotilde clasped her hands in silence ; dismay and anguish were painted on her countenance, but she struggled to recover her presence of mind, and in a few moments succeeded.

“ This cannot be,” she said with forced calm ; “ Hortense, you are deceiving me,—you have been deceived yourself ! This is a calumny invented by some enemy of Maxime’s to injure him. Oh, no ! he would not be a day in Paris without letting me see him.”

“ I tell you that I saw him with my own eyes to-day when I went to Madame Prosper’s with her *robe de guipure* ; and moreover that I was directed by her to furnish Monsieur

Maxime de Nérac with the bill for that identical dress as well as for the scarf of *application de Bruxelles* which you are now lining with rose colour," and she pointed to Clotilde's work-basket.

"And did you see Maxime — there — to-day?" gasped Clotilde.

"There, to-day," repeated Hortense deliberately. "When I was announced by the *femme-de-chambre* he made an attempt to leave the room by an opposite door, but Madame Prosper prevented him, and with her odious *simagrées* engaged him to remain whilst she tried on the dress. He had the grace to look confused when he first saw me, but I have too much presence of mind to be embarrassed upon such occasions; so I let it appear as if I had never seen him before, and his belle had no suspicions of our being old acquaintance. 'Mon ange,' said she to Maxime, (for they are already *aux anges* it seems!) 'what coiffure do you advise me to adopt with this beautiful dress?'—

‘Everything becomes you so well,’ said he with that wheedling tone and manner which you know he can put on, ‘that it would be difficult for me to decide.’—‘And you, *petite*,’ said she to me with her insupportable air of grandeur and protection, ‘what do you advise?’—‘Since Madame asks my opinion,’ I replied with the easiest and most natural manner in the world, ‘I would recommend her to arrange her hair *à la Clotilde*! Monsieur has too much taste not to acknowledge the charm and sentiment which that style of coiffure imparts to the countenance of a pretty woman!’ Monsieur Maxime looked at me as if he would have stabbed me to the heart if he dared, but I preserved all my appearance of unconscious ignorance, and—”

Here a deep groan from Clotilde checked the volubility and the pantomimic gestures with which Hortense had been personating the different actors in the above conversation; and, looking up she stopped in a fright at beholding the death-like paleness of her friend.

“Go on,” said Clotilde impatiently, and with a ghastly smile ;—“let me hear all !”

“Well !” continued Hortense, “I was no sooner in the street than Monsieur followed me ; and, as I reproached him with his perfidy towards you, and indignantly rejected the money with which he attempted to bribe me into silence, he thought it no longer necessary to keep any measures with me, and boldly declared that he had seen you for the last time, and that it was your *béguéulerie* that had originally driven him into the deception of a promise of marriage ; that I ought to know that marriage between a gentleman of noble blood and a Grisette was too ridiculous a thing to be contemplated seriously ; that he had taken care never to commit himself by giving you a written promise, and that he was, therefore, quite beyond the reach of any claims on your part, ‘In short,’ said he, ‘I have been obliged to devise this pretended absence from Paris, in order to accustom Clotilde to be separated from

me before I should apprise her of what sooner or later she must know, namely, that my journey to Bordeaux has been to settle the preliminaries of a very advantageous marriage, which my uncle has arranged for me there; and that, in the month of April, I am to return thither to be married. If Clotilde is only reasonable and willing to shew her disinterested affection by abstaining from molesting me, I shall make some little provision for her future comfort; but if——”

“*Je suis perdue !*” said poor Clotilde, in a hollow voice and with the fixed look of despair; “*et mon enfant n’aura pas de père !*”

“Your child !” cried Hortense, “what, then, are you,—*bah !*” she pursued, with a joyful accent, and as if some happy inspiration had suddenly come to her aid; if you will only act with sense and spirit, your child shall have a Prince for its father and be sumptuously provided for; but you must lose no time in accepting the old gentleman’s proposals. He has not

the most distant idea of his having had a predecessor in your good graces ; so I leave you to imagine how his alleged paternity will delight him, and the immense empire it will give you over him. You really are a very lucky creature, Clotilde ! By one little *yes* you revenge yourself at one and the same time upon that heartless Maxime, — you deprive the odious Madame Prosper of her magnificent lover, — you secure a rich provision for your child, — and you suddenly raise yourself from misery and labour to wealth and luxury ! Here are pens, ink, and paper just ready for you to write a pretty little note to Monsieur le Prince, telling him that you accept his offers.—”

“Never ! never !” exclaimed Clotilde, wringing her hands.

“What is to become of you, then ?” inquired Hortense, with that cold scrutiny which pitilessly speculates upon the straw-grasping of despair, and therefore spares nothing to render more dreadful the representation of misery,

which is to terrify the poor victim deeper into the abyss of dishonour; “what is to become of you? Of course, when your situation becomes apparent, you can no longer go to Madame Bouvier’s; and, as you have no means of maintaining your child, you must put it into *L’Hospice des enfans trouvés*. If you have the feelings of a mother, my dear, you will do any and everything to avoid such a horrible destiny for your poor unborn!”

The unfortunate Clotilde listened to the accents of the temptress with a haggard, vacant look, as the dreadful picture of misery and destitution, which her words had conjured up, stood in fearful array before her; then, drawing the paper abruptly towards her, she snatched the pen from Hortense’s hand with a sort of desperate resolution, dipped it in the ink, and paused a moment, as though to collect her ideas, while she held it suspended over the paper. But the native rectitude of her heart triumphed over the wild dictates of despair, and

violently dashing the pen to the ground, she fell back in her chair in strong convulsions.

“She is a weak-hearted fool, but I cannot help pitying her, poor little thing!” said Hortense to herself, as she cut the laces of Clotilde’s stays, sprinkled her face with cold water, and did all that she could to restore her to her senses. “Well,” she continued, “I have done the utmost to bring her to reason, and to make her accept the good fortune that has fallen in her way; let us hope that I shall at last succeed, and that one of these days she will acknowledge that I have been her best friend!” And all that night Hortense remained watching by the bed-side of the sufferer, partly from a feeling of compassion, and partly because she wished to prevent the possibility of Clotilde escaping her machinations by throwing herself in that hour of misery and abandonment upon the kind offices of the old porter and his wife.

Before the morning, Clotilde’s sorrows and anxieties for the future had subsided into the

narrow circle of self; that terrible glimpse of her situation which had given her a foretaste of the responsibilities and the agonies that are involved in the prospect of maternity to an unwedded mother, had passed away like a fearful dream,—the germ of a second life within her, which, by doubling her existence, would have doubled her sorrows, had perished. She had now no one to think of but herself; and, while the sense of her own desolate condition pressed heavily upon her heart, she thanked God that it was so! She blessed his name for having ordained that she was to be the only victim of her own weakness and another's treachery.

CHAPTER VI.

Will you use him kindly? He will line your apron with gold.

Mar. What he will do graciously, I will thankfully receive.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre.

DURING the ten days confinement to her own room, which Clotilde's illness and consequent debility rendered imperative, her thoughts had unceasingly revolved around the last communications of Hortense; and startling and defined as they were, she yet permitted a doubt to creep into her mind that all was not exactly as she had represented it to be. It is so difficult for a young and generous nature to believe in the utter unworthiness of what

has been most dear to it, that she determined to be convinced of Maxime's falsehood only by learning it from his own lips. Nor was she wholly wrong in her conclusions that Hortense had misrepresented his conduct to her; for although his infidelity and perfidy were, alas! incontestable, there was still a certain varnish of sentiment about him which served to cover the rottenness of his principles with the smooth outward seeming of kind words, and which would have led him to shrink from the brutality of expressing himself, as Hortense had described him to have done. It was the cowardly feeling of not liking to *witness* the pain which he shrank not from *inflicting*, that had led him to separate himself from Clotilde in the way he had adopted. It was some remains of what nature had intended for a good heart still asserting itself amidst the corruption which had deadened the rest, that made him feel that the tears and the despair of the betrayed Clotilde would be a spectacle which he had

not the barbarous courage to behold. It was quite true that he had involved himself through vanity alone in an amour with Madame Prosper, one of the class of professed *femmes galantes*, whose talent in turning the heads and emptying the purses of her admirers had raised her to a celebrity which left all her compeers in the shade, and caused her to be more recherchée than any other woman of that description in Paris? It was true that he was spending a great deal of money (or rather plunging very deeply into debt) to satisfy her extravagant caprices; it was true that Hortense had obtained a glimpse of him at her house; it was true that his uncle the old Admiral had procured a rich marriage for him at Bordeaux, and that upon the condition of Maxime's accepting it, he had promised to pay his debts and make an immediate settlement upon him of part of his property; it was true that Maxime had gone to Bordeaux to throw himself at the feet of the wealthy young widow who

only awaited that personal demand, in order to accord her hand and her fortune to the handsome young *roué*. But it was *not* true that he had confided his projects and prospects to Hortense ; it was *not* true that he had followed her into the street, and bribed her to be silent ; it was *not* true that he had spoken of Clotilde with the harshness and levity which she had represented ! She had obtained all her intelligence from Victor Giraud, whom she had visited for that purpose ; and the cruel and supposititious conversation with which she had broken the heart of Clotilde was the offspring of her own prolific brain, intended to work out her projects in favour of the Prince by raising the indignation of the deserted girl to the highest possible pitch against her seducer!—to that pitch which in nine cases out of ten—be the offenders husbands or only lovers—drives women to revenge their injuries by *retaliation*, and forces many a one into that whirlpool of guilt from which in a healthier state

of mind she would have shrunk back with horror and loathing.

The period of Clotilde's indisposition had not been lost by Hortense. She had seen Maxime more than once during those ten days, and she had artfully given him to understand that Clotilde had fully prepared her own mind to follow his example of infidelity ; that another lover had presented himself and had not been rejected, but that he had been condemned by her to a state of probation until she could ascertain whether Maxime intended to fulfil his engagement to her.

“She is all for matrimony,” said Hortense ; “but still if you do not marry her, she will not break her heart about it ; she has taken a very wise decision, and is determined, should you fail her, to accept of the other offer ; and indeed upon the whole it will be a better thing for her, as she has stipulated for, and obtained the promise of, a handsome settlement. *Elle est fine, cette petite Clotilde !* more artful than

you believed her ; she played the part of disinterested love with you because she thought it the surest way, by exalting your sentiments for her and attaching you more passionately to her, to lead to the object of her ambition,— marriage ! But I know that she is completely tired of her humble existence, and has determined upon a *coup* to release herself from it ; I know that she intends to appeal to your feelings by pretending that she is *enceinte*, and she is not so at all ! So be prepared for this little artifice.”

This latter part of Hortense’s communication filled the mind of Maxime with indignation ; and the idea of an ignorant young girl pretending to dupe *him*, the duper *par excellence*, suddenly appeared to transfer the part of injurer from his own person to that of Clotilde, and to relieve his conscience from whatever remaining scruples had weighed upon it with regard to his conduct towards her. In reviewing the latter period of their intercourse he

thought he could now detect faults in her which had hitherto escaped his observation. Her uncomplaining gentleness now appeared to him in the light of apathy ; her occasional dejection was *bouderie* ; and her actual silence under a knowledge of his being at Paris, and not at Pau as he had represented to her, was artifice ; deep heartless artifice ! She was passing her time, not in regrets for him, but in a double preparation to entrap him or supplant him ! It is astonishing with what facility the mind when it is once warped can distort every circumstance to its own crooked view of things. Even the virtues and good qualities of an adversary, when contemplated through the discolouring medium of passion or prejudice, are perverted into grounds of increased dislike, and I have known persons so far led away by these unjust animosities as to close their minds against the evidence of any merit whatsoever in the object of their obloquy, and to fancy themselves insulted when an attempt has been

made to clear by a sunbeam of truth the black and smoky atmosphere of their mental perceptions.

It was in such a frame of mind as this that Maxime received from Clotilde a letter, which she had written to him as soon as she had recovered from her illness, and which, to prevent any mistake, she had herself left at his door ; and, at the same time, had ascertained from his porter the fact that he *had* returned to Paris from Bordeaux at the period Hortense had stated to her. That letter contained no reproach. In a few touching lines she described the shock which her feelings had received at learning that he had deceived her with respect to the purport and duration of his absence, and that he had actually returned to Paris without seeking to see her ;—at a moment, too, when she required all the support of his tenderness and his presence, and when the certainty of her situation, and the impossibility of long being able to conceal it, had filled her mind with

anxiety and terror, and made her turn towards him for counsel and consolation. She told him that she had at first rejected the belief that he could have thus acted towards her ; and during many days of illness, produced by the unhappy state of her mind, she had daily looked for some proof that was to bear her out in her confidence in his loyal affection for her. —But none had come ; no letter, no visit ! Yet she had ascertained that he was in Paris, and she wrote to ask him, in the name of their past happiness, what she had done to merit so cruel a change. “ You are too just, too kind, to treat me thus without a cause, either real or supposed ; let me know in what I have offended. Tell me who has misrepresented me to you. Only give me an opportunity of justifying myself ; that is all I ask of you, Maxime ! And is it too much that you should accord to your poor Clotilde that which is granted to every criminal before he receives sentence of death—the permission of making his defence before his judge ! ”

The only notice that Maxime took of what he believed to be a consummate piece of artifice, was, first to throw it into the fire, and then to give orders to his porter that if any more letters were brought to the house by the same person, or that any one of the name of Clotilde Remy should inquire for him, that they were to say he was absent from Paris for an indefinite period ; and, in order to smother the little twinges of conscience which occasionally obtruded when the image of the lovely and tender Clotilde forced itself upon his recollection, he plunged deeper and deeper into every excess of gaiety and dissipation which the carnival season—the Saturnalia of the Parisians—offered ; as though determined that the last weeks of his bachelor life should comprise all those selfish and prodigal pleasures upon which the endless *Carême* of matrimony would so soon close the door ; and as though wishing by a surfeit to deaden his regrets for those brilliant orgies, which would in so short a

space be beyond his reach to participate in, as his marriage was to remove him from Paris and fix him at Bordeaux.

Clotilde awaited an answer to her letter during four-and-twenty hours of agonising suspense—but none came ; and then, fearing that it might not have reached Maxime, she went to his residence, and inquired of the porter whether it had been delivered to him. The man assured her that it had. “Is he at home ?” asked Clotilde timidly.

“Yes, but he is not up yet ;—he was out all last night at a ball, and gave orders that nobody was to be admitted before two o’clock to-day, as he is to be out again all to-night to finish the carnival at Musard’s. This is *Mardi Gras*, you know.”

Clotilde did *not* know it, for she had forgotten everything but her own misery, and absorbed in that, had taken no note of time ; but a thought suddenly flashed upon her that she would go to Musard’s ball too, and under

the disguise of a domino and mask follow the faithless Maxime, and speak to him once more.

“Do you know at what hour Monsieur de Nérac will go to Musard’s?” inquired Clotilde timidly.

“I never trouble myself about his outgoings,” replied the man gruffly; “I only know that he returns home later than any other lodger in the house, and that I am obliged to get out of my warm bed to let him in every night, or rather morning, long after every reasonable body is in bed and asleep. He was much more regular all last summer and autumn.”

Clotilde sighed deeply as this remark brought to mind the short-lived period of Maxime’s devotion to her, and tears unconsciously filled her eyes.

“Ah ça, Mademoiselle,” said the man, observing her emotion, “is your name Remy, pray? Clotilde Remy?”

“Yes,” she replied eagerly, for the question led to a sudden hope that some message or

letter for her had been confided to him by Maxime.

“ Well, then,” returned the porter, “ if you are Mademoiselle Clotilde Remy, I have a piece of advice to give you ;—don’t take the trouble of writing or coming here any more, for Monsieur de Nérac has given orders that if you do, you are to be told that he is not in Paris, nor likely to return soon.”

Poor Clotilde turned away with a burning cheek ; all her pride and her indignation were aroused by this last blow, and without trusting herself to utter a single word, she hurried out of sight of Maxime’s dwelling, and never stopped until she had reached the house inhabited by Hortense. Her mind was in such a tumult, that the arguments and sophistries of her dangerous friend were quite lost upon her ; she could only form one distinct wish, that of seeing Maxime once more at Musard’s *bal masqué* — afterwards all was a blank — there was no afterwards for her—that meet-

ing would seal her fate ! But she had no money to procure herself a costume ; her illness had completely exhausted her slender purse,—the misery of her mind had rendered it impossible for her to return to her employment at Madame Bouvier's, and therefore no money was coming in to her ; and, besides this, her last month's rent would become due in a few days, and she had not wherewithal to pay it, so that she had not courage to apply to Père Benoit to lend her money for a purpose which she could not conceal from him, and which must appear to him under such circumstances both frivolous and unprincipled.

In this total destitution of ways and means to carry her through a project which had seized upon her mind with all the tenacity of an *idée fixe*, Clotilde cast herself upon the friendship of Hortense for assistance, which that wily person took care to withhold until she had made such conditions, and stipulated for such

concessions from Clotilde, as would draw her more securely within the toils she had spread for her.

“ You know, my dear,” said she, “ that I am a bad manager, and never have any savings by me, and at this moment I am literally like yourself, without a *sol*, and have been obliged to pawn my watch and chain at the Mont de Piété, so that I have no means of assisting you myself ; there is only one way that I can devise of getting a sufficient sum of money to equip us both for the *bal masqué* ; (for it will require more than a hundred francs to procure the costume of a *Débardeur* for me, and a handsome black satin domino for you at Babin’s, not to mention satin shoes, silk stockings, white gloves, a bouquet and a mask for you,) but I cannot have recourse to this method without your leave.”

“ Only enable me to go to this ball, dear Hortense !” exclaimed Clotilde, with a wild earnestness in her manner which convinced Hor-

tense that she was at last in her power, "and you may do with me as you will."

"Well," replied her friend, "all that I shall require you to do will be to offer your thanks in person to the gentleman who I know will advance the money as soon as he hears that it is *for you*."

"Yes, yes!" said Clotilde hurriedly, and with a vacant smile, "I will thank him on my knees,—I will see him, if you wish it, *to-morrow*."

"Of course, I mean to-morrow," was the rejoinder. "Wait here until I go and settle this business at once, and in half an hour I shall be back again;" and, putting on her bonnet and shawl, Hortense quickly disappeared.

Now the poverty which she had pleaded was a mere pretext to induce Clotilde to sanction an application in her name, to the Prince, for money; and as her belief in the truth of the old adage, "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*," was unrestricted, she felt assured that

the ice once broken, and Clotilde's pride and rectitude once subjected to the abasing test of receiving money from a man who sought for her love, all the rest would follow without difficulty, and that she should speedily see Clotilde realise her old admirer's hopes, — hopes which she had not scrupled to exalt almost into certainties, by setting before him the most encouraging pictures of the poor girl's growing inclinations in his favour, and the consequent diminution in the struggles of her expiring virtue. These flattering reports always won for Hortense golden rewards from the Prince, so that in point of fact, her exchequer had never before been in so flourishing a condition. But, as we have already seen, it did not suit her views to own this, or to allow of any one but the Prince in *propriâ personâ* becoming the banker of Clotilde. And here it may not be inopportune to remark that the secret of her pertinacious endeavours to compass the gratification of that susceptible old gentleman's wishes, lay

in the promise which he had made to her, that as soon as Clotilde should place herself under his protection, that she, Hortense, was to make one in the establishment, as *dame de compagnie*, to attend them in the journey which the Prince had determined upon making with his new conquest to Naples ; a step which she believed, would lead to the making of her own fortune, as she felt, that with her superior talent for intrigue, and the influence she could not fail to exercise over the disinterested, unsuspicious mind of her friend, *she* would in reality be the directress of the whole establishment, without being condemned to pay so dearly for the privilege of lavishing the Prince's wealth, as poor Clotilde would be. Thus when Hortense found that every other argument had failed in bending the unhappy girl to her will, she placed her last trust in the pinching one of poverty, and, resolved upon starving her into terms, carefully concealed from her the resources that she possessed ; so that when Clotilde unexpectedly

threw herself upon her generosity, that her last desperate determination of seeing Maxime might be gratified, Hortense unhesitatingly pleaded her extreme poverty as a pretext for having recourse to the liberality of another, and with glad surprise, perceived that no further objection was offered on the part of Clotilde, to such a course, or to the stipulations with which she had proposed it.

The manner in which Hortense executed her commission, was worthy of the preceding diplomacy she had exhibited. To have owned to the Prince that Clotilde was going to a *bal masqué* that night, would have been to induce him to go there also, and would have inevitably led to his discovering the motive that alone took her to such a place ; so, with that promptitude which characterised all her decisions she determined, as she walked towards the Pugnoseffsky Hotel, upon a more plausible tale.

“ Monsieur le Prince,” said she, as she entered a luxurious boudoir, which, from the cha-

racter of its costly decorations, and the various portraits of beautiful women suspended from its walls, might have rivalled the celebrated *petite maison* of the Maréchal de Richelieu, “I bring you good news; Clotilde consents to see you at last! There is only one little obstacle that can interfere with her desire of waiting upon you to-morrow.”

The Prince, who was reclining upon a *causeuse*, half buried in its down cushions, raised his head with unwonted vivacity at this announcement. “Dieu! le vilain petit monstre!” thought Hortense to herself, as her eye glanced over his shrivelled form, wrapped in a gorgeous gold-brocaded *robe de chambre à la Louis Quatorze*, from beneath which peeped a pair of Kasan boots, and his chimpanzee face, surmounted by an Indian Cashmere handkerchief, twisted round his head *en Madras*, and doing duty for the juvenile bay wig, which was at that moment absent on leave under the

hands of the *friseur* ! “ he certainly ought to be sent to the Jardin des Plantes ! ”

“ Sit down by me, mon enfant,” said the old gentleman, drawing Hortense into the vacant seat on the *causeuse*, and chucking her familiarly under the chin ; “ you speak of obstacles interfering with the wishes of this adorable Clotilde, to grant me an interview to-morrow, and yet if they are obstacles which *money* can remove, you ought to know that they no *longer exist*.”

“ I know that Monsieur le Prince is the most generous of men ; and as it is precisely from the want of money that the dilemma of Clotilde arises, I will not scruple to make it known to you. She has been very ill for the last fortnight, poor child ! with the influenza ; and doctors, and medicines, and dainties, have exhausted the funds with which you so generously supplied me, and which I have scrupulously devoted to Clotilde’s comforts, so that now that she is recovered, we are both without

money sufficient to provide her with a proper *toilette*, in which she can present herself to you; and without which, she declares that she will not appear in your presence. Voilà l'affaire, mon Prince."

"Is that all, *ma petite chatte*?" inquired the old lover; and, approaching a table which was covered with costly baubles, he took from it a bouquet of exotics, and twisting a *billet de mille francs* round the stems, placed it in an elegant Russian *porte-bouquet* encrusted with turquoises, and then put it into Hortense's hand. "Carry this bagatelle from me to my charming Clotilde," said he; "and tell her that I shall await her visit to-morrow morning with the utmost impatience, and that before the evening the richest *trousseau* in Paris, shall be at her disposal. And this for yourself, *ma belle enfant*," putting a ring upon her finger; "you are a treasure of a friend; you must never leave Clotilde. I shall take her immediately to Naples, the climate of which will quite cure

her influenza, poor dear angel," (here a violent fit of coughing interrupted him, and lasted until, breathless and nearly strangled by it, his eyes had almost started from their sockets, which by no means improved the interest of his countenance;) "I myself have a slight cough, as you may perceive," he continued, when he had recovered the powers of speech; "but it is a mere trifle, that will disappear with change of air; so you may prepare to accompany us at the shortest notice: does that suit you, eh?"

"My greatest happiness will ever be to obey your wishes, Monsieur le Prince," replied Hortense, with a demure look.

"*Embrasse moi, donc, friponne!*"

Hortense cast down her eyes, and turned her cheek towards the old gallant with an admirable expression of modest submission. "*Elle est jolie à croquer!*" said the Prince to himself, when the kiss had been duly accorded.

"*Le vieux singe dégoûtant!*" muttered Hortense, between her teeth, and rubbing her cheek

with the corner of her shawl, as she tripped down the staircase of the Pugnoseffsky Hotel. And thus ended their interview.

Hortense returned to her lodging, and to the expectant Clotilde, followed by a porter carrying two large, flat band-boxes, and sundry smaller parcels; and no sooner had she paid and dismissed him than she proceeded to report to her friend, her version of the success of her application, and to spread before her eyes the various accessories which she had in consequence prepared for the night's adventure.

“See what an elegant domino!” she exclaimed; “how rich the satin is, and the *pélerine* and *capuchon* trimmed with such beautiful lace! but no wonder that it is handsome, for the hire of it for one night only, costs fifty francs. It is the very best one that Babin had; and as the Prince told me to spare nothing for your gratification, I of course chose it; it is he who pays for everything;—the moment he heard of your wish to go to the ball, he gave me ten

Napoleons to equip us both. ‘Cette chère Clotilde!’ said he, ‘qu’elle s’amuse; mon Dieu, qu’elle s’amuse, pauvre ange!’”

Clotilde groaned in spirit; but Hortense, heedless of her emotion, went on.

“There is something quite paternal in his affection for you, and when I told him that you were desirous of thanking him in person for his kindness, he suggested with the greatest delicacy that I should accompany you to his house, not for that purpose, but to see all the beautiful pictures and curiosities which it contains; so I have fixed that to-morrow morning we are both to go there. Well, but,” she continued, noticing from Clotilde’s absent looks that her thoughts had wandered far away, “I must now shew you the rest of the accoutrements in which you are to mystify Maxime. Look at these loves of black satin shoes and these beautiful black silk *bas à jours*,—your little feet will look like those of Cinderella in them!—what a happiness to be always *chaussée*

in that way !—and here are white gloves from Boivin's, and a Pompadour fan and perfumes from Lubin's ; and here is your bouquet,—the Prince sent it to you himself exactly as it is," (she had unwound the billet de banque from the stalks and transferred it to her own bag !)
“for as he very justly remarked—”

“I will not touch that bouquet !” interrupted Clotilde with a look of horror, the remembrance of Maxime's first offering at the theatre on the night of Pentecost recurring to her thoughts and almost suffocating her.

“Yes you will,” returned Hortense calmly ;
“your wish is to attract Maxime's notice to-night, and to *intriguer* him, is it not ? Now if you are dressed in a domino like any one else, and carry a bouquet like every one, he certainly will not think you worth looking after ; but such a *bijou* as this in your hand will attract and puzzle him ;—he will think you are a princess at least, and will follow you all the evening, and to keep up the illusion

I intend to lend you one of the pocket-handkerchiefs which I have just finished trimming with lace for the Princess de V——'s *trousseau*, —a pocket-handkerchief of six hundred francs value, with her coronet in the corner ! What a famous mystification for Monsieur Maxime !”

The last part of the argument was irresistible to Clotilde. To be followed by Maxime and to be able to speak with him was the only distinct wish which she had the power to form in the chaos of despair that had overwhelmed her mind, and mechanically grasping at whatever was to facilitate the realisation of that wish, she no longer opposed her friend's decrees respecting the Prince's bouquet and the Princess's handkerchief, but gave a hurried assent to everything proposed by her ; and as it had been settled that Clotilde should dress at Hortense's lodging, and that they should proceed together from thence to Musard's, they separated for a few hours, and Clotilde returned to her solitary home, there to occupy herself

in a manner which formed an extraordinary preparation for the scene of folly and disorder in which at a later hour she was to mingle.

At seven o'clock she left the house to repair to Hortense's, and contrary to her usual custom she did not leave the key of her room with the old porters, who therefore remained in ignorance of her having again gone out until about two hours afterwards, when a letter by the *petite poste* having come for her, one of them carried it up stairs and found that her door was locked, the key taken away, and she herself absent.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face !
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave ?

* * * * *

Was ever book, containing such vile matter,
So fairly bound ? O that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace !

Romeo and Juliet.

To those persons who are familiar with the humours of Musard's *bal masqué* on the night of *Mardi gras*, a description would be superfluous ;—to those who have never been there, (and as a spectacle,—a picture of national manners,—every sojourner in Paris should see it *once*,) no description could convey any adequate idea of that motley scene. There, the Carni-

val, wrought up by degrees through every stage of gaiety to its last feverish crisis, expires in a convulsion of delirious joy which would lead the sober spectator to question whether the actors in such a scene were rational beings, or whether Pandemonium had given up its host to hold their revels there ! There the naturally graceful dancing of the French is abandoned for exhibitions so absurd and indecorous, that compared to them the movements of the Egyptian Almas and the Indian Bayadères may be pronounced modest and blameless ; there, the eccentric and indefatigable Monsieur Chicard leads on his satellites to deeds of *legs* as well as *arms* so monstrous and incomprehensible that one can only account for them by supposing the Terpsichorean fugleman to be possessed of a legion of St. Vituses ; there, the *contredanse* becomes an orgie,—the *galop* swells into an *avalanche*, noisy, overpowering, irresistible, sweeping all before it into one chaotic tumult,—and the sounds of the

magnificent orchestra are drowned in the *brouhaha* of scuffling feet, cracking whips, tinkling bells, and the shrill screams of Pierrots, Polichinelles, and Paillasses.

Into such a scene of mad mirth, with her feelings previously wound up to the most painful state of excitement, Clotilde was introduced at midnight by Hortense (who, truth to say, with her *découplé* air, and her natural audacity as well as her natural advantages, looked admirably in her male attire as a *Débardeur**). For the first half hour, such was the effect produced upon Clotilde by the novel and bewildering spectacle before her that her head reeled, her limbs trembled, and unable to support herself she sought for refuge upon a bench in an obscure corner of the *Salle*. Had any one then accosted her she would certainly have

* The *Débardeurs* are the watermen of the Seine, whose picturesque costume has rendered it a very favourite disguise for the frequenters (female as well as male) of the Carnival masked balls in Paris.

answered them by bursting into tears ; but as dominos are generally understood to take the initiative in the mystifications which their disguise privileges, she fortunately remained unmolested, and ample time was thus afforded her to recover herself before she ventured to mix in the crowd, or trusted herself to speak without trembling lest her voice might betray her. But the very confusion which had at first overwhelmed Clotilde, at last tended not only to restore her courage but to impart to her a hardihood very foreign to her nature. The contagion of the scene produced its effect ;—a wild recklessness, which was not gaiety of heart, —a self-possession, which was not ease of mind, came over her,—she was like the *vendangeurs* whom the fumes of the wine-press intoxicate although the juice it contains has not moistened their lips ; the spirit of joy was far from her bosom, but its inebriating semblance floated upon the atmosphere she breathed, and for a space she looked and acted as if like those

around her she were under the dominion of the most unrestrained enjoyment.

It was not until long after midnight that she caught a first glimpse of Maxime. He had looked into the Bal de l'Opera en passant, but had found it too decorously dull to induce him to spend more than an hour there ; and, anxious for more piquante adventures, with his spirits wound up to the licence of Musard's, he repaired thither with a band of noisy associates. Clotilde trod upon his footsteps with a throbbing heart, as he pushed his way round the crowded room ; and almost immediately she beheld him accosted by a mask in the costume of Madame du Barry, whose unveiled bosom and shoulders, and equally undisguised manner of expressing herself, were peculiarly fitted for a representation of the celebrated courtesan, whose *grivois* manners had perhaps contributed even more powerfully than her personal beauty in establishing her empire over the worn-out heart and palled mind of the

depraved Louis Quinze. Clotilde had first fancied that it must be Madame Prosper, but a few moments undeceived her; the mask in question was a much shorter person, and besides it was evident from the conversation that ensued between her and Maxime that he had recognised her, for he addressed her by the name of Athenais, and alluded to her theatrical profession. The equivocal hilarity in which they indulged, although perfectly suited to the atmosphere of Musard's, would be quite unfit for the pages of our narrative; Clotilde, as she listened to them, blushed with indignation that such coarse wit could possess a charm for Maxime, and with shame that expressions so licentious should fall from the lips of a woman. But although every word she heard pierced her to the heart, she still lingered within ear-shot, as though enamoured of her own misery, and unable to tear herself away from it. Must it be owned that the fact of finding herself once more near the faithless yet ever beloved

Maxime, fascinated her with a strange fearful delight which she *could* not shake off, and *would* not if she could? The very sound of his voice thrilled to her inmost heart, and almost subdued her into casting herself at his feet, and imploring him to restore his tenderness to her; but then the knowledge that it should be addressed to another than to herself, in accents of love and admiration, as she then heard it, nerved her soul to the deed she contemplated; and the tears that had rushed to her eyes in soft regret, froze there with indignation, and left no tell-tale stain upon her cheek to mark her momentary weakness.

The colloquy between Maxime and the gay Du Barry ended with a proposal from the former that they should sup together *en partie fine* at Véry's, in the Palais Royal, when the ball was over, which engagement was ratified in these characteristic terms: "Une douzaine d'huitres et mon cœur!" said the lady.

"Ta parole?" inquired Maxime.

“D’honneur !” rejoined the joyous mask, (who certainly mistook the *sound* for the *sense*,) pirouetting away from him on one foot, and at the same moment giving a smart rap with her fan upon the shoulder of a Louis Quinze, dressed in all the glories of purple velvet and gold, a bag-wig and sword, the cordon bleu, and a paste star. “Allons, la France ! ta main royale pour la contredanse qui se forme ;” and, suiting the action to the word, she swept her way into the nearest quadrille ; while Clotilde grasping Hortense by the arm, dragged her after her into the space vis-à-vis to the courtly couple, which thus enabled her to place herself exactly opposite to Maxime, who had taken his station behind the Du Barry.

However Maxime’s truant fancies might have been momentarily fixed by the petulant vivacity of Mademoiselle Athenais, she had not succeeded in absorbing him so completely as to render him unmindful of other attractions ; his eyes, even while he listened to the sprightly

remarks with which his easy conquest filled up her pauses in the dance, wandered over the moving figures before him, and soon rested upon one wearing a black domino, who formed the vis-à-vis to Athenais. She was tall and slender, and the beauty of her feet and ancles, and the decent grace which characterized her dancing (so different from every other exhibition then going on) induced him to examine her with as much curiosity as admiration. Her domino was of the most elegant description; but the capuchon of it was so closely drawn around her mask, as to leave not even a stray curl visible, and the orifices for her eyes were so Chinese in their form, as to baffle his curiosity respecting the colour or size of the orbs beneath. Maxime had never seen Clotilde dance, neither had he ever beheld her feet in a more becoming *chaussure* than white cotton stockings and black leather shoes; and as he would just have soon have expected to meet his mother at Musard's as to find

Clotilde there, not the most remote suspicion of her identity with the mask before him glanced across his mind ; besides he imagined the incognita to occupy a very different social position from that of the humble *lingère*, for he noticed that she carried a nosegay of the rarest exotics, fixed to a splendid *porte-bouquet*, and that her pocket-handkerchief was one of those costly *chiffons* which characterize the toilettes of the wealthy and the luxurious, and the price of which would feed and clothe a starving family for a whole winter. The hands that held those expensive objects were, by their delicate symmetry, worthy of the feet that had first fixed his attention, and he felt assured that they must rival in whiteness and softness the gloves that fitted them so exquisitely. In short, everything about her bespoke a refinement which he had not expected to meet among the dancers there ; and almost repenting of his hastily-formed engagement with the Du Barry, he determined to profit by

the interval which must elapse before the hour of their rendezvous arrived, to introduce himself to the notice of the more attractive stranger.

She seemed to have divined his wishes, and to have decided upon anticipating his intentions; for as she glided past him in the last figure of the contredanse, she dexterously contrived that her handkerchief should fall at his feet. Maxime hastened to pick it up, but not to restore it; he held it until the dance was over, and then before returning it to its fair owner, he raised it to his lips.

“Eh, bien! beau Béarnais,” she said, in the feigned shrill treble masquerading voice, which is *de rigueur* upon such occasions,—
“tes amours sont-elles toujours *prospères*?”

“Oui et non,” replied Maxime with a laugh, as he seized the meaning of her words.

“Mais pas toujours fidèles?” pursued the black domino, interrogatively.

“Est-ce que *prospère* et *fidèle* sont synonymes?” inquired Maxime.

“Pas trop,” returned the unknown; “du reste la fidélité est une folie qui mène à——”

“L’ennui, et au dégoût!” interrupted Maxime.

“A l’hospice des fous, ou à la Morgue!”* concluded the domino, with a bitter laugh. Then fearing that she might have betrayed herself by this remark, she added with a quick resumption of levity, “After all, of what consequence whither it leads, provided that neither you nor I are disposed to be led by it? Vivent la joie et les caprices! voilà ma devise.”

“And mine, too, charming stranger!” responded Maxime.

“How long will it remain so?” resumed the domino; “à quand la noce? and will that be a proper device for Maxime the married man?”

“You know me, then?” asked Maxime, eagerly.

* The Morgue is a place where the bodies of unknown persons who have perished either by suicide or assassination, are exposed, in order to be claimed by their friends.

“ Too well, perhaps — perhaps, not well enough ! ” was the reply ; and just as it was uttered, with a coquettish movement of the incognita’s head, which more than sufficed to convey to Maxime’s excitable imagination the most flattering interpretation to this somewhat ambiguous avowal, an overgrown *gallope* came thundering along, as if purposely to break the thread of their discourse, and the black domino starting aside to avoid the crash, the long phalanx interposed between him and her, and when it had passed by, she was nowhere to be seen.

More than half an hour was vainly spent in seeking for her in the crowd ; at last, as he was about to relinquish the pursuit in despair, a light form brushed by him, and raising her handkerchief to her mask, as she did so, Maxime at one and the same moment recognised his fair unknown, and perceived a Prince’s coronet in the corner of her handkerchief. “ Ah, pour le coup, Je te tiens, ma Sylphide ! ”

he exclaimed, laying his hand upon hers, which she did not withdraw, “et tu ne m’échapperas plus.”

The mask made no reply, but passed her arm familiarly through his, and as Maxime pressed it significantly to his side, he felt her whole frame tremble, and lean heavily upon him for support; little did he deem that it was with anguish and indignation called forth by that endearment, at once the proof of his faithlessness and of his presumptuous levity!

“And will you not tell me,” he continued, with one of his dangerous glances, “where and how we have met before?”

“Not now,” she replied; “let it suffice you to know that I have long watched you with interest, and long wished for the happiness of this moment;”—and she returned the pressure of his arm;—“but I must be upon my guard for fear of discovery—*he* is here!”

“Ah, *he* is here!” repeated Maxime;

“well, let him remain ; I hope he will amuse himself!”

“Oh, there is no doubt but that he *will* both remain and amuse himself,” she returned ; “but he knows nothing of my being here amusing myself also : he believes that I am safe at home, and asleep at this moment ; and if he found me out he would never pardon my *escapade*, especially as he has forbidden me to have any communication whatever with a certain amiable *mauvais sujet* called Maxime de Nérac.”

“Ah ! he has forbidden you—”

“Yes ; for which very reason I am here. There is something pleasant and piquant in the certitude of thus taking him in under his very eyes, (for I see him now,) and I can imagine the rage and dismay that would flash from his countenance were I to take off my mask, and he were to behold us together !” And the same light, ringing, bitter laugh which he had before heard, again burst forth.

“But shall not this envious mask be for

one moment removed," urged Maxime, in his most persuasive tones, "and reveal to my longing eyes the charming features that it now conceals? For that they are beautiful and bewitching, and in harmony with every part of this graceful form, I am most firmly persuaded."

"On le dit!" replied the mask, with a coquettish affirmative movement of her head.

"One glimpse, then!" and Maxime attempted to raise the fall of satin that covered her lips; but laying her hand upon it she prevented him, and stamping her little foot, "Not here I tell you, for he would inevitably recognise me, and then we must separate immediately."

"Waste not another word upon this unreasonable tyrant," said Maxime, "and tell me that if not *here*, you will let me behold you unmasked *elsewhere* to-night,—after the ball—"

"You forget," she replied, "that after the ball you have a rendezvous at Véry's."—Maxime bit his lip with vexation.—"Ah, volage,"

she continued, laughing at his impatient gesture, “*toujours des bonnes fortunes—toujours des triomphes!* You ought to be detested; nevertheless, I feel that you can only be loved.”

She sighed deeply, and this time her exhibition of feeling was natural. Maxime seized her hand, and raised it to his lips. “I will never release this lovely little hand,” he said, “until you tell me when and where I may see you unreservedly.”

“To-morrow,” was the reply; “I will write to tell you when and where; and you must promise to come immediately at my bidding.”

“But what guarantee have I for the performance of your promise?”

“The love which has brought me here.”

“Love for *me*, enchantress?”

“Ay, for *you*, even to madness!” was the vehement reply. “You have long been the idol of my thoughts—the sole object of my love and of my jealousy. I have watched your

intrigues with other women in the hope that such evidences of your inconstancy would bring me to my senses ; but in vain ! I could not tear your image from my heart,—and I am here,—I am here only to look upon you, and to tell you so ! And now do you doubt the performance of my promise ? ”

“ *Pardieu, quel emportement !* ” thought Maxime, when the unknown, having talked herself out of breath, stopped short. “ She must be a Spaniard or an Italian. Frenchwomen have less passion and more coquetry. Doubt you, my dearest angel ! ” he continued aloud ; “ I would sooner doubt the love with which you have so suddenly inspired me, and which I feel must last — ”

“ As long as that which you felt for Madame Bergerac, or Madame de Chauvilly ; ”—interrupted the unknown, running over two or three other names of some of Maxime’s former conquests which had come to her knowledge, through the medium of Hortense, who had in

her turn gathered them from Victor Giraud ;—
“or Lucile, the pretty little Bordelaise dancer ;
how long did you love her ? or Clotilde, the
poor *lingère*, of whom you appeared to be so
fond for a short time—fie upon the bad taste
that could stoop so low !”

Maxime shrugged his shoulders, and laugh-
ingly replied, “All that you are talking about
is *ancient history* ; those follies are over, and
have not left a trace behind them here,” laying
his hand upon his heart ; “at best, they were
but *amourettes*—mere idle pastime, and I should
blush for the bad taste you reprobate, could I
ever have contemplated them in any other light.”

“Ah, monstre !” interposed a blue domino,
who had been attentively listening to the last
words that had passed between Maxime and
his incognita ; “do you make no exception
in favour of Clotilde, that beautiful creature
whom you once loved so well, and who still
believes in your promises to her ? What will
become of her if you break them ?”

Provoked by this mal-à-propos interruption, Maxime turned sharply round upon the intruder, and said, "If you are a friend of Clotilde's, the sooner you advise her to change her belief the better; it would be a pity that she should waste more of her time in such unprofitable nonsense."

"And her child, if it ever sees the light?" persisted the blue domino.

Maxime laughed contemptuously. "If it ever sees the light," he replied, "she will have no difficulty in finding a father for it!"

The blue domino shook her hand at him reprovingly, and tripped away; and in the same moment, the black one, who during this short interruption had mournfully hung down her averted head, perceived beneath the long blue skirt the *Débardeur's* shoes of Hortense. A momentary pause ensued, during which the incognita raised her eyes, and steadily perused the ruffled countenance of Maxime; anger and vexation were legibly

written there, but not one sign of compunction, not the shadow of a regret.

“And so,” said she at last, “of all these idols of a day, not one has left a trace upon your volatile heart ! Well, I flatter myself that the countenance you shall behold unmasked to-morrow will make a more lasting impression upon you.”

“Yet how am I to be convinced that the promise you now make me is not a mere mockery, a *tour de Carnaval* ?”

“Ah ! you believe that I am only playing off a Carnival trick upon you ? Be assured, on the contrary, that I never was more seriously inclined in my life than in thus arranging for you *un beau commencement de Carême ; tu te souviendras long-temps du Mercredi des Cendres — ce jour-là fera époque dans tes amours*. But if my word is insufficient to convince you of my sincerity, let us exchange pledges which we will mutually restore when we meet ; here is my bouquet, give me your handkerchief—”

(Maxime had just drawn from his pocket one of those which Clotilde had marked for him with her hair ;) “ no, I see by that *chiffre en cheveux* that it is a love-gift, and perhaps you would not like to part with it even for a few hours.”

“ I only wish that it were a *sentiment* that I might have the happiness of sacrificing it to you,” replied Maxime. “ But notwithstanding the romantic appearance of that cypher in hair, I can assure you that the handkerchief has no extrinsic value in my eyes ; *c’est tout bonnement un mouchoir de poche, et pas un souvenir d’amour.* Let me in preference offer you these tablets, and to-morrow when we meet I shall inscribe Ash Wednesday upon them as the happiest day of my existence.”

“ No, no, the handkerchief ! ” returned the mask in a smothered voice, grasping at it as she spoke and thrusting it into her bosom ; “ to-morrow morning you will receive a note

from me appointing an hour and place of meeting for us ; do not delay a moment in obeying the summons ; you will be assured of my identity when you see this handkerchief in my hand, 'till then farewell !”

“I should recognize those beautiful little feet and that graceful form among a thousand,” exclaimed Maxime glancing his admiring eyes over her figure. “But will you not leave a kiss upon those flowers to add to their sweetness, and to console me for the tedious lapse that must intervene between this moment and to-morrow ?”

The unknown raised the bouquet silently to her mask, and as she presented it to Maxime he perceived that her hand trembled. “Ah !” said he gallantly pressing the flowers to his lips, “c’est toi que je retrouve là — tu les as embaumées de ton haleine !”

The black domino shuddered and walked quickly away from him. “The same sentiment, the same words !” she muttered to her-

self with a convulsive sigh. "Oh heartless, irreclaimable, and utterly hardened!"

She had not proceeded more than half way down the room towards the door, when her arm was familiarly caught by the blue domino.

"Well, Clotilde," said she in her natural voice, "you see that all I have told you of Maxime was true. Are you satisfied of his falsehood now that you have heard it from his own lips?"

"I am *convinced*," replied the unhappy girl.

"Well then, you have I hope made up your mind to act with spirit, and to shew this heartless reprobate that you know how to conduct yourself in such a predicament?"

"My mind is made up," answered Clotilde firmly; "Mon parti est pris!"

"That's right!" returned Hortense; "I always thought you would shew your good sense at last. Remember that to-morrow Prince Pugnoseffsky expects to see you, so

make yourself as handsome as possible for your first interview; at what hour shall I call for you?"

"Come at twelve," said Clotilde; "you will then be able to judge whether my appearance is likely to please the Prince or to awaken emotions of love."

"Apropos," said Hortense, who forgot nothing, "give me back the handkerchief I lent you; you have now no further occasion for it, and by this time to-morrow you will have as many as you please of the same materials at your own disposal."

Clotilde surrendered the Princess de V——'s property to Hortense, and wrung her hand as she did so. "Adieu, Hortense!" she said in a voice so sad and thrilling as to startle her friend.

"Adieu, ma mie," replied the latter, looking keenly at her for a moment; "*à demain, n'est-ce pas?*"

"*Oui, à demain!*" repeated Clotilde in a

low voice. In another moment she was lost in the crowd.

In less than half an hour afterwards, Hortense in her Débardeur's dress, and divested of her blue domino, accosted Maxime without attempting to disguise her voice. "What have you done with Clotilde?" said she, in the most natural manner possible. "I cannot find her; and I see she has left her bouquet in your charge."

"Clotilde!" repeated Maxime incredulously; "I know nothing about her or her bouquet."

"*Tiens, tiens, tiens!*" exclaimed the grisette; "you have been talking to her for the last hour, and there is her bouquet in your hand,—Prince Pugnoseffsky's last present to her! How charming she was this evening,—wasn't she? Depend upon it, she will make a noise in the world now that she is *lancée*. But I must find her out; we are engaged to dance together again. Good night!" And away she went, satisfied that by these few words she had, in the first place, destroyed any romantic illusion

which Clotilde's mystification might have created in Maxime's mind ; secondly, prevented any private meeting taking place between them ; and, lastly, by indentifying the costly accessories of Clotilde's dress with the name of Prince Pugnoseffsky, had given him to understand that the circumstance of her being upon the very best terms with that liberal old gentleman, was an acknowledged and undisputed fact.

CHAPTER VIII.

Gli occhj tuoi pagheran, se in vita resti,
Di quel sangue ogni stilla, un mar di pianto.

TASSO.

MEANWHILE Clotilde had effected her escape from the scene where her last lingering hopes had perished, and with a bursting heart and a burning brain she flew rather than walked along the Rue Neuve Vivienne, until she regained her home. Without stopping even to ask for a light when she entered, and perfectly unconscious that the old porter between sleeping and waking had called twice upon her name as she passed by his lodge, she hurried up stairs, and never paused until she found herself in her

own room. Her first impulse, when she had closed the door after her, was to cast herself upon her knees; but the wholesome exercise of prayer had formed no part of the education of the neglected Clotilde, and nothing but unconnected exclamations flowed to her lips; like the generality of young persons in France, belonging to that class into which she had been thrown, she had been brought up in complete negligence of the spirit of religion. The utmost that she knew of religious practices consisted in an occasional careless observance of its outward forms; but she had never been taught to look up to it as a refuge in affliction: and now, in her hour of need, when she was compassed round about with evil thoughts, and her soul darkened by the dictates of despair, although a natural impulse brought her upon her knees before her Maker and her Judge, it was not with that perfect reliance upon his goodness and his wisdom,—that resignation to his decrees, that patient waiting upon His will

which constitute true piety, and enable the heart-stricken, even in their severest trials, to say "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!" It was with the impatient sorrow of an undisciplined mind bursting forth in tumultuous anguish, not supplicating to be enlightened and sustained,—rushing upon mad conclusions, yet in the midst of its blind presumption vaguely feeling that the deed it contemplated would be a violation of God's commandments,—and praying, not for strength to *resist*, but for pardon for *yielding* to, the sinful temptation.

When Clotilde arose from her knees, she struck a light and busied herself for some time in writing a letter, which having directed and sealed, she placed upon the table, together with a small sealed parcel and an open memorandum. Then, looking round the wretched little room, she seemed to take a last farewell of the inanimate objects which had become endeared to her by long familiarity, and had been the mute

witnesses of her contented poverty, of her short-lived precarious felicity, and of her degradation and misery ! Her eyes rested, lastly, upon the miniatures of her father and mother, and, approaching them with strong emotion she pressed them convulsively to her lips ; then, without venturing a second glance, she turned to the window and threw it open : “ *Nous nous retrouverons là-haut !* ” she murmured, as her eyes, cast upwards, rested upon the cloudless heavens.

The casement, like the generality of garret windows in Paris, was at some distance from the floor ; and, in order to enable her to reach the sill of it, the assistance of a stool or chair to step upon was necessary. There was none near her ; but, as if purposely placed there to second her desperate resolution, the wooden cases of flowers, which had formed Maxime’s first gift to her, were ranged conveniently beneath. During her illness, the plants they contained had perished from want of air and water,

and now, stripped of their verdure, withered and leafless, they appeared to her a fit emblem of her own seared heart ;—neglect had destroyed them both ! To her morbid imagination it seemed as though the hand of fate had placed them there expressly to facilitate her destruction. “Lui, toujours lui qui m’y pousse ! *pour lui et par lui !*” she thought, as she stepped upon the cases. Something at the same moment sprang from the floor to the window-ledge, as if to intercept her dreadful design, and interposed its opaque form between her and the clear cold sky, from which the stars were slowly fading at the approach of dawn. It was Titi, her Angola cat, who, aroused from his slumbers by her entrance, had been vainly endeavouring, during the whole time Clotilde had been absorbed in writing, to attract her attention by every variety of feline caress, walking round and round her chair, with tail erect, purring his recognition, and rubbing himself fondly against her dress ; but, although finding himself,

for the first time, disregarded by his gentle mistress, Titi had perseveringly followed her movements, so that when she raised herself to the open window he sprang thither also, and resumed his claims to notice in a way that could be no longer overlooked, by placing his fore-paws upon her shoulder and rubbing his face against hers. "My poor Titi!" exclaimed the unfortunate girl with a burst of agonized feeling, as she took her old favourite and play-fellow in her arms, and covering him with her tears and kisses thought of the peaceful time when he had been her only companion ;—"my poor pet, the only living thing that loves me! the only one that will miss me! Ah! why did I ever love any thing but you, my poor Titi?" Then placing him gently upon the ground, she quickly regained the window-ledge.

At that moment Père Benoit (the old porter who, after mature deliberation, having dressed himself, had decided upon following Clotilde up stairs, partly to lecture her upon the impro-

priety of her conduct in having for the first time passed the night from home, and partly to give her the letter which had arrived for her the evening before,) knocked at the door. No answer was returned; “Ma’m selle Clotilde, open the door, I have a letter for you!” Still no answer. “Tiens! la clé est sur la porte,—est-ce qu’on peut entrer sans indiscretion?” he continued opening the door. Nobody was in the room; a light was on the table, the window was wide open, and Titi the Angola cat, seated upon the ledge of it, was diligently passing his paw over his ears. “That’s strange!” cried the old man looking around him, “certainly I heard her voice talking to the cat when I knocked at the door—can she have—?” stopping short, and something like the truth suddenly flashing upon him;—“Oh, my God! my God!” and he hurried down stairs.

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The grey dawn was just beginning to peep when Maxime, accompanied by the fair Du Barry, quitted Musard's ball to fulfil his engagement with her at Véry's; not a *fiacre* was to be procured at that hour, but the weather was so fine, the pavement so dry, and the streets so full of masks dispersing in various directions, that Mademoiselle Athenais wrapping her bournous round her, declared that she should of all things enjoy walking to the Palais Royal. They had not proceeded above half the length to the Rue Neuve Vivienne when the dead sound of something falling heavily upon the pavement behind them, caused them both to start and to turn back; several persons rushing from different parts of the street had already gathered to the spot, and cries of, "It is a woman who has thrown herself out of window!"—"Go for a surgeon!"—"Send for the Commissaire de Police!" struck upon Maxime's ear. He pushed through the crowd and beheld a dark mass lying mo-

tionless in the middle of the *trottoir*, and stooping down, ascertained by the dim light that it was a woman dressed in a black domino and mask, and that she still lived, for her bosom heaved convulsively and deep groans issued from her lips.

“She is not dead—she may be saved—bring a light—let us carry her into the house, for God’s sake, gentlemen!” cried Maxime, who was the only person present that thought of offering any assistance to the sufferer. At the same moment lights were brought from several of the nearest houses, and Maxime kneeling down upon the pavement, untied the capuchon of her domino, and removing her mask revealed to his horror-stricken eyes the lovely countenance of Clotilde discoloured and contracted with agony!

“Clotilde!” he cried in a voice of anguish so piercing that it appeared even to reach the stunned faculties of the dying girl, and to rouse her into momentary consciousness. “Oh, God!

my poor Clotilde !” She opened her eyes, and their wild gaze rested with an expression of terrified wonder upon the countenance of Maxime bending over her in an agony of emotion, until, softening into recognition, tears gathered into them and slowly rolled over her cheeks.

“She lives—she knows me ! help ! a surgeon !” exclaimed Maxime with frantic energy to the by-standers. “Oh, my Clotilde !” he continued in a burst of repentant tenderness, and joining to her name all those fond epithets which in the days of his devotion he had been wont to lavish upon her, “it is I that have driven you to this dreadful act ! look at me once more, and tell me if you can, that you forgive,—that you still love your wretched Maxime !”

It was evident that the passionate appeal had been understood, for the lips of Clotilde moved as if in a vain attempt to articulate. Had she spoken, doubtless her words would have been full of peace and pardon to the guilty

one who had requited the unbounded devotion of her heart by a duplicity and abandonment which had driven her to this fearful act of despair ;—but although her gentle accents were silenced for ever, her eyes still spoke, and all the fleeting energies of her soul seemed to have taken refuge there as if to testify by a farewell glance to the truth, and tenderness, and fervour of a sentiment which had resisted the bitter pangs of desertion, and over which even the agonies of death could not triumph. There was pity, pardon, and love in the look which Clotilde bent upon her destroyer, and it sank deep into his soul and heaped coals of fire upon his head. Oh ! what would he then have given to be able to cancel the last few weeks of his existence ! how cheap would any sacrifice have appeared to him which could have recalled Clotilde to life and love and happiness—to the confidence which but one short month before she had placed in his honour—to the union which he

would now have laid down his life to have ratified ! How did he loathe the levity which had tempted him to win, how execrate the worldly considerations which had led him to betray that fond confiding heart ? but all in vain ! Speechless with grief, his soul tortured with love too late revived, and remorse too late awakened, Maxime bent over Clotilde and joined his lips to hers ; with a last effort she returned the kiss of peace which he had imprinted there, but while its tremulous pressure thrilled to his heart, a deep gasping sigh followed by breathless silence proclaimed to him that the last struggle was over, — the gentle spirit had exhaled itself in that act of forgiveness, and the lips of her destroyer were dabbled in her life-blood !

All this had passed in less time than it has taken us to relate it ; and while Mademoiselle Athenais enacted a fainting fit in the arms of one of the by-standers as gracefully as she could possibly have done upon the stage be-

fore a more crowded audience, and Maxime hung in frantic emotion over the lifeless form of Clotilde, Père Benoit reached the street door and beheld his worst fears confirmed. His presence of mind, however, did not desert him, and owing to his prompt exertions a surgeon and a Commissaire de Police were sent for, the body of Clotilde was laid upon a mattress and conveyed to her own room, the inquisitive crowd excluded, and no one but Maxime suffered to follow it thither.

The attendance of the two functionaries was simultaneous, but nothing remained for the surgeon to do but to pronounce that life was extinct, and that the extensive fractures of the lower limbs and the spine were sufficient to have occasioned almost instantaneous death. The duties of the commissary were more lengthened ; he had to take depositions, and to examine the premises, and, from what he saw there, it appeared that the dreadful act had not been one of sudden frenzy, but a premeditated deed,

for everything in Clotilde's chamber was arranged in a manner that shewed how deliberately she had taken her measures for self-destruction. Upon the table were a sealed paper packet and a letter, both of them addressed to Monsieur Maxime de Nérac, Rue Chantereine, and an unfolded half-sheet of paper, from which the commissary proceeded to read the following words :—

“As I die without possessing a single franc, I request that my old friend, Père Benoit, will sell the furniture of my room, in order to pay the last month's rent of it, and to defray the expenses of my funeral. I also request that he will accept the miniature pictures of my parents which I am sure he will value for my dear mother's sake, and that he will present my little wardrobe to Madame Benoit, in token of their kindness to me. I entreat that they will take care of poor Titi, in remembrance of Clotilde Remy.”

“Monsieur,” said the old porter, sobbing like

a child, “ she was the sweetest and the gentlest creature that God ever formed, and, till the last few days, the steadiest and the most industrious ;—and yet she was born to better things than to work for her bread ! I have known her since she was not higher than my knee, and never had I a fault to find with her till last night, when, it seems, she went out masquerading and stayed out the whole night, without telling us anything about it. My wife, to be sure, had taken her *en grippe*, many months ago, because she would not marry our son Hyacinthe, (although she well knew that Mademoiselle Clotilde had a right to look much higher than him,—but she never reasons, poor woman ! and so, instead of looking at the business in the proper light, she did nothing but visit her disappointment and ill-humour upon Ma’m selle Clotilde,) and that was the reason that she had ceased to come and pass an hour with us in our lodge in the evening, when she came home from the shop, as she used always

to do formerly, and which kept her from making other acquaintance,—but the fault was all my wife's and not hers, poor dear lamb ! for in spite of Mère Benoit's crossness she was always the same civil, sweet-spoken creature to us all, and whenever I saw her frolicking up the stairs with her cat, and heard her sweet merry voice singing out, ' Bon soir, mon petit père Benoit ! ' it used to make my old heart glad to see her innocent ways, and to think what a different life she led to the grisettes of Paris. Well, sir, she had a friend, a Ma'mselle Hortense, and a cousin, a Monsieur Maxime (looking significantly at Maxime, who was kneeling by the bed on which the remains of Clotilde had been laid, and contemplating her sweet face with the haggard stupor of a maniac,) and it is my belief that between them they ruined her ! Tenez, Monsieur, here is a letter which came last evening by the post for Ma'mselle Clotilde ; perhaps it may give some insight into this sad affair."

The commissary of police opened the letter, and found that it was from a *notaire publique* of Nevers, announcing to Clotilde that her grand-aunt Demoiselle Marie-Clotilde-Louise-Victoire de Vassoigne having died suddenly there without a will, the whole of her property, consisting of a house at Nevers, a farm and *métairie*, at some distance from the town, *inscriptions* for eleven thousand and seventy-five francs *rentes* upon the Grand Livre de France, several *actions* in the Canal du Midi, and all her personal property, comprising furniture, plate, wearing apparel, and farming stock, had legally devolved to her sole surviving relative, Demoiselle Clotilde-Philippine Remy, only child of the late Captain Philippe Remy, of the ——— Regiment, and of Louise-Victoire-Françoise de Pléville, his deceased wife niece of the aforesaid Demoiselle de Vassoigne.

“Voyez donc ce que c’est que le sort !” said Père Benoit, bursting into tears afresh. “I

had gone up, not a quarter of an hour ago, to Ma'mselle Clotilde's door, with this letter in my hand, which was to announce such great news to her, and, although I heard her voice within, as I knocked at the door, respect forbade me to open it, until she gave me leave, so I waited to hear her say *entrez*, and in that very moment she must have done the deed! Ah! if it had not been for my *chienne de politesse*, I should have just been in time to save her, and she would have been alive, and rich, and happy at this moment."

"This other letter," said the commissary, without noticing Père Benoit's self-accusation, "is for Monsieur Maxime de Nérac, and this parcel also. Do you know who that person is, and where he—"

"I am that unhappy man," said Maxime, in a sombre voice, rising from his knees and receiving the letter of Clotilde from the commissary's hands. He tore it open hastily and ran his eyes over it, but, overpowered

by intense agitation, could distinguish nothing. "There is a mist before my eyes,—I cannot see a single word," said he; "have the goodness, Monsieur, to read it for me."

The commissary complied with his request, and, while Maxime sank helplessly into a chair, he read aloud to him as follows :—

"Although I had heard of your falsehood to me from others, I would not believe in it until it had been confirmed to me by your own lips. I have just seen you—I have just quitted you—and the accents which convinced me of your perfidy are still ringing in my ears! I trusted in your honour, and you have destroyed my illusion.—I believed in your love—it was everything in the world to me; and as long as I possessed it, all other privations were unthought of; but you have withdrawn it from me, and nothing remains for the unhappy Clotilde but to die. Oh, Maxime! I write not these words to reproach you, but to bid you an

eternal farewell ! In a few moments all will be over with me, and I shall have escaped from a world where I have no friends, no money, no confidence in my fellow-creatures ;—for in whom could I trust now that *you* have deceived me—*you* in whom I *believed* as I *did* in *God* ? Yes, it is time that I should die, and I will not shrink from the deed. But a few days ago, the thoughts of destroying *your child*, Maxime, would have withheld my hand ; but *grief* has done that which *I* dared not even contemplate, and God in his goodness has not suffered a disowned and fatherless being to behold the light.

“ Do you remember the first evening we ever passed together, and how bitterly I then wept over the wrongs of Fleurette ? Alas ! I little thought that my own fate would be so closely assimilated to hers.—I little thought that the words you then uttered were but the heartless prelude to a tragedy as dreadful ! ‘ *Heureux celui qui le premier fera palpiter ce jeune cœur !*

malheur à celui qui méconnaîtra un si doux privilège—trois fois malheur à celui qui jamais en arrachera un soupir !—the happiness of that triumph—if such you ever thought it—was reserved for you alone. Oh, may Heaven avert from you the imprecations which you then invoked upon the head of him who could betray that fond privilege ! For, deeply as you have wronged me, Maxime, I cannot teach my heart the stern lesson of hating you ; or tear your image from thence to replace it by another's ; or lightly exchange for gold that which was only conceded to what I believed to be the unbounded and loyal devotion of your heart ! If I could have done all these (and goaded on by despair, and want, and evil counsels, I have tried to follow your example, but in vain !) I should now be surrounded by wealth and luxury ; but death was preferable to such dishonour, and I have to the last remained true to *you* and to *myself*.

“ To-morrow, when this letter reaches you, you

will know that the mysterious stranger, whose favour you have this night so eagerly sought to obtain, was no other than the deserted Clotilde. Do not, however, fail to keep the rendezvous she promised to give you, and which these lines are intended purposely to recall to your recollection; and, although you will not find new pleasures or new loves awaiting you in that meeting, come nevertheless, and look upon the face you were so desirous to behold, and gather from its icy lips the farewell kiss of love and forgiveness, which my heart *even now* yearns to impress upon yours!

“Farewell, Maxime! —The wishes of the dying are sacred bequests, and I feel that you will not disregard even mine; in the sealed packet addressed to you which you will find upon my table, is enclosed the only earthly treasure I possess—the faded remains of the first bouquet you ever gave me; let it be placed in the coffin with me *upon my heart*. Upon my finger you will find the wedding-ring, the

pledge of our future union, which you placed there on the day when you asked me to become your wife, and which I then swore to you should never be removed *while I lived*; I have kept my vow, Maxime! and now I charge you to take the ring from my lifeless hand, and to wear it in memory of me; and should you ever again be tempted to pursue the same heartless course with another, then look upon that silent monitor, and *pause* while you remember the fate of the unfortunate Clotilde!"

The Commissaire de Police, albeit inured to scenes of violence and self-destruction, and enabled, by long familiarity with their melancholy consequences, to behold them unmoved, could not read the above letter without betraying some emotion; his voice faltered in the concluding lines, and his eyes glistened as they glanced from the paper in his hand to the youthful form that lay cold and inanimate upon the bed; the tears, still wet upon her lovely

face, although the fountain from which they had flowed was frozen up for ever; the blood that had burst from her lips in the death-struggle, and stained them with its crimson dyes, alone telling that a violent and dreadful deed had snapped asunder the thread of her young existence. "A case of seduction under promise of marriage!" said he, with a sigh; "poor child, she seems to have deserved a better fate! What beauty and softness combined!—what perfect harmony between the mind and the countenance of this unfortunate young creature! I would not for the wealth of the world have the crime of her destruction upon my conscience! You see, sir," he proceeded, turning sternly to Maxime, "the effects of your lawless and selfish passion."

But Maxime heard him not! With his face buried in his hands he had listened to Clotilde's letter, stifled groans bursting from his bosom as every sentence plunged a dagger there, and awakened remorse which could never slumber

more ! But when it was concluded, he staggered towards the bed, and again sinking upon his knees, fulfilled in gloomy silence and with the fixed look of despair, the last request of his victim : he drew the ring from her finger, and placed it upon his own ; he threw his arms around her cold remains, and wildly joining his lips once more to hers, clasped her to his heart with frenzied energy ; but the contact of that lifeless form shot like an ice-bolt through his frame, for, uttering a smothered cry of horror, he relaxed his grasp, and sinking upon the ground lost all consciousness of his misery in temporary insensibility.

Little remains for us to add to this melancholy history. When Hortense, punctual to her appointment to Clotilde, arrived at noon to conduct her into the presence of the hoary libertine to whose vices she had so obsequiously pandered, and that she heard of the dreadful catastrophe which had placed the unfortunate girl beyond her snares, she wasted no time

in useless regrets, nor did she pause to consider how far she had herself been accessory to the horrid deed in aggravating the misery of Clotilde's mind by every species of misrepresentation addressed to Maxime as well as to herself; but thinking only of how she could explain the business to the expectant lover, (who upon the strength of her assurances had given orders for the splendid outfit of Clotilde and their immediate departure for Naples,) she hurried to the Pugnoseffsky hotel, and succeeded so well in persuading the Prince that she, as well as he, had been thoroughly deceived by Clotilde (who notwithstanding all her prudery, had turned out to be a *fille perdue* unworthy of his protection,) and expressed such charming sympathy for the derangement of his projects, such disinterested offers of service, &c. &c., that before they separated it was decided between them, that Hortense should take the place which had been originally destined for Clotilde in the Prince's establish-

ment; and two days afterwards, precisely at the same moment in which the humble funeral of the ill-fated Clotilde Remy, followed only by Père Benoit and his son Hyacinthe as mourners, entered the gates of the cemetery of Montmartre, Hortense, seated in Prince Pugnoseffsky's chariot-and-four, preceded by a courier à *franc étrier*, and with a chasseur (the object of all her ambition) seated in the rumble behind, dashed through the Barrière de Fontainbleau on her way to Naples, *lancée* in the world of gallantry as the mistress of the "*vieux sapajou coiffé en perruque*," who had excited her personal disgust but a few days before as being worthy only of figuring in the monkey department of the Jardin des Plantes.

Maxime de Nérac, when removed to his own abode, was only restored to consciousness to be attacked by a brain fever which reduced him to the brink of the grave. But heaven dealt with him more mercifully than he deserved; he was not cut off in the midst of

his wickedness, with all his sins upon his head, unrepented and unatoned for ; he lived to loath his former career, to abjure his former associates, and to turn his thoughts and his energies to wiser and better things. The rich widow to whom his uncle had betrothed him at Bordeaux, having heard from her friends in Paris of the melancholy adventure in all its details which had caused the dangerous illness of Maxime, signified to him without loss of time that the engagement between them was dissolved. This was an inexpressible relief to his mind, for during the slow progress of his recovery the image of Clotilde, in all the virgin charm which had first captivated his imagination, in all the tender devotion which had for a moment fixed his heart, in all the silent suffering, the sublime forgiveness of injuries which had in the closing scene for ever sanctified her memory to his soul, took possession of his thoughts to the utter exclusion of all others. Her shade appeared to interpose itself between him and the contemplation of

every worldly love, and her ring which had never quitted his finger since the awful moment in which he had fulfilled her dying wish, seemed to forbid not only the renewal of his former vices and follies, but even the possibility of a legitimate union with another woman; he felt as though he had by that solemn act wedded himself to the memory of Clotilde, and he vowed a fidelity to the dead which, alas ! he had not observed to the living.

His uncle, touched by the sorrow and the sufferings which had bowed him almost to the grave, consented at last to see his nephew and to extricate him from his pecuniary difficulties. But Maxime's only wish was to leave France that he might not only tear himself at once and *sans retour* from his dissipated associates, but lose in new scenes and in a distant land that acute and ever present sense of misery which, as long as he remained in Paris, threatened to terminate in melancholy madness. The old Admiral therefore procured for him a legal appointment in the island of Martinique,

STURMER;

A TALE OF MESMERISM.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OTHER SKETCHES FROM LIFE.

BY ISABELLA F. ROMER.

“ Truth severe by fairy Fiction dressed.”

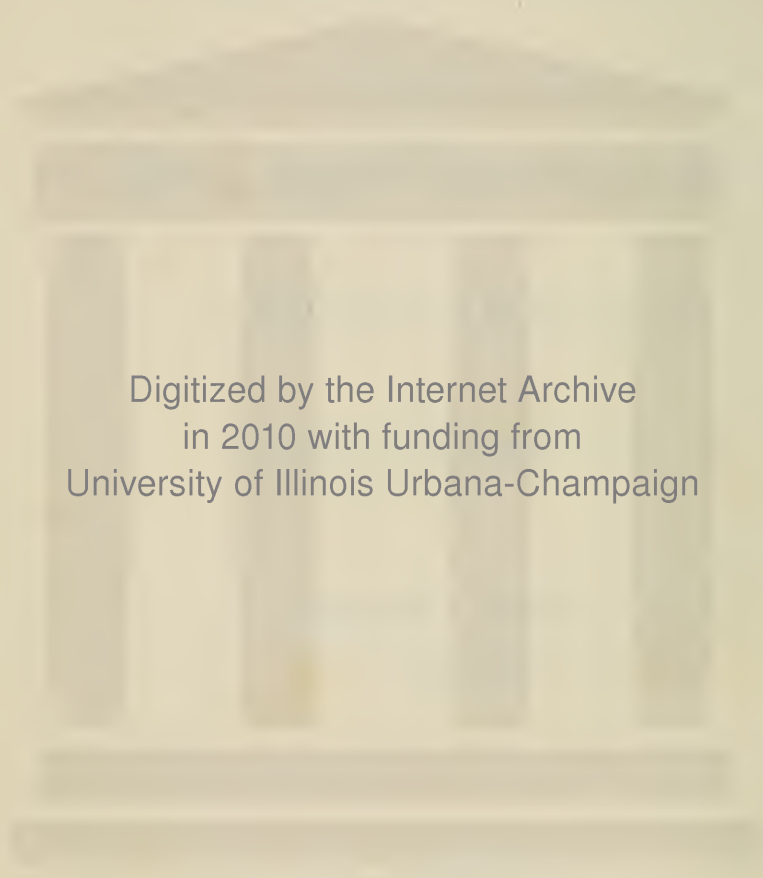
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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HADGEE EYOOB.

“Hark to the hurried accent of despair—

‘Where is my child?’—an echo answers ‘where?’”

Bride of Abydos.

HADGEE EYOOB.

PERHAPS in no capital of the civilised world are the lights and shadows of national character so little discernible to a stranger as in Constantinople. The city, in its external appearance and its internal distribution, presents none of those startling contrasts of luxury and squalor, of the refinements of society and the cynicism of vice, which exist in other capitals and are evident to the most superficial observers. No one can wander from the precincts of St. James's to the purlieus of St. Giles's without silently subscribing to the oft-repeated truism, that the perfection of civilisation brings in its train the

excess of vice and social degradation ; even as the vivifying power of the sun, while developing to their fullest luxuriance the flowers and fruits of the earth, gives vitality to the noxious insects that prey upon and deface their leaves. But in Constantinople such disparities are nowhere visible ; no escutcheoned equipage awakens the echoes of its silent streets ; nor does the spectacle of inebriation in rags, and unblushing depravity, offend the eye and sadden the heart. The physical wants of the people seem to be few, and easily satisfied ; sobriety and dignity mark their external demeanour ; the habitations of all classes of citizens bear the same simple exterior ; the pride of birth appears to be unknown or wholly disregarded ; while the aristocracy of power and place alone asserts its sway, and capriciously elevates to the highest grades in the state individuals so obscurely born, that in other countries they could only be thrown to the surface by the convulsion of some political revolution. This absence of the ine-

qualities which mark the outline of society elsewhere, would lead the casual observer to inquire whether the followers of Mahomet are “wiser in their generation” than their Christian neighbours; and whether to superior virtue and forbearance, or to apathy alone, are to be attributed the absence, among them, of those evidences of vice and misery which debase the civilised capitals of Christendom. But because vice and misery are unseen, are we rashly to argue that they are unknown? *Les extrêmes se touchent*; and the very apathy which apparently opposes an armour of ice to the shafts of pleasure, when once thawed, degenerates into the most unbridled excess. Thus the seemingly austere and phlegmatic Turk will not shrink from exciting his torpid imagination by exhibitions of the coarsest buffoonery, — excesses which, being indulged in within the precincts of his home (not from hypocrisy, but from the force of his own unsocial disposition and habits), are calculated to mislead the casual observer

as to the quantum of licentiousness that may taint the moral atmosphere of Constantinople; and although the *use* as well as the *abuse* of *wine* has been forbidden by Mahomet to his followers, yet “*il y a des accommodemens avec le ciel* ;” and the pious Moslem will not scruple to indulge in the intoxicating delights of *opium*, until health, strength, and reason fail under the pernicious excess. The reigning Sultan,* wishing to eradicate the evil, has wisely abolished the public orgies of the opium-eaters; but the scene of their departed joy, the now deserted *Theriakee Tchartchee*, still remains to tell of the past; and close to it stands the public mad-house, erected by Solyman the Magnificent, as though by that hideous hieroglyphic he would have presented to his subjects the most forcible illustration of cause and effect,—the brief space which separates opium-eating from insanity. Strangers are always taken to visit that spot,

* This sketch was written during the lifetime of the late Sultan Mahmoud.

and those who run may read “sermons in stones,” whose mute eloquence may perhaps have convinced where human exordiums have failed.

The monotony I have already alluded to, and the total absence of all public as well as social amusement in Constantinople, soon weary the European traveller; for when once the Mosques and other public edifices have been seen, nothing remains to induce a second visit except the Bazaars,—that epitome of the life and animation of the East, where, during the day, the whole city appears *de s'être donné rendezvous*.

One morning I had been lounging, as was often my custom, in one of its gayest shops, that of Mustapha, the Sultan's perfumer (one of the celebrities of Stamboul, whose receptacle of sweets is occasionally honoured by the presence of the great Padishah himself, and whom all strangers wishing to put themselves *en bonne odeur* with the Osmanlies make a point of visit-

ing), and seated *à la Turque* upon his cushions, while his black attendants served round the usual hospitalities of Chibouques, coffee, and iced sherbet, and he himself sprinkled my veil and gloves with the costliest perfumes, I viewed the moving panorama before me, and for a moment almost forgot that I was a European. Nothing was to be seen but turbans and Armenian cone-like caps circulating through the thickly populated place; while here and there a Pasha on horseback, surrounded by a numerous retinue on foot, slowly passed along, or a gilt Araba, filled with veiled women and preceded by a black eunuch, caused the foot passengers to fall back and give way to the caged beauties thus taking the air, like wild beasts in a caravan. Numerous itinerant venders of fruit, confectionary, iced water, ready cooked *pilaff*, *kebabs*, and *yaoort*, temptingly arranged in porcelain saucers, hawked about their comestibles upon circular wooden trays of the most exquisite cleanliness; while the different merchants and shop-

keepers, in their oriental dresses,—the Turks, distinguished by their graceful turbans and quiet dignified demeanour; the Armenians, by their high black *calpacs* and finely chiselled features; —the Greeks, by their loquacity, slovenly finery, and long curling hair falling beneath their Fez caps; and the Jews, by their dark turbans and restless eagerness to sell their goods,—curiously eyed the stranger who had thus fearlessly and *barefacedly* ventured among them.

It was proposed to me that from this brilliant and bustling scene I should adjourn to one as opposed to it, in every sense of the word, as darkness is to light—the public madhouse before alluded to. In all countries the spectacle presented by a lunatic asylum is of so painful and humiliating a nature, that the feeling mind shrinks from witnessing evils which are beyond the power of sympathy to alleviate; but as I knew the Turkish superstition regards, with peculiar veneration and tenderness, those unhappy persons from whom the light of reason

has departed for ever, I imagined that their physical wants would be ministered to with an attention proportioned to the respect which their moral infirmity inspires; but, to my surprise, I beheld a scene calculated to sadden the sternest heart, and one which rendered superfluous the assurance which was made me, that the wretched inmates of that dreary abode have never been known to recover their reason. "*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate,*" might well be written over those gates, since the unhappy beings who have crossed their threshold, repass it only to be carried to the grave.

A quadrangular building surrounds the court, which is a public thoroughfare, and into that court the cells of the miserable maniacs look. Each individual occupies the recess of a large window grated with cross bars of iron, to which they are fastened by a heavy chain attached by an iron collar round their necks, like the most ferocious wild beasts. Religious fanaticism and opium-eating have brought the greater

part of them to this fearful pass ; and as I proceeded from cell to cell, I noticed that their insanity partook more of the character of idiocy than of frenzy, for not one of them betrayed any symptoms of violence.

One of those ill-fated beings arrested my attention, and awakened my interest in a particular manner. He was seated on the stone pavement of his wretched cell, while a cat occupied his cushion, and seemed to be the object of his especial tenderness and protection. He had placed it so that it could enjoy the only broken sunbeam that straggled through his dreary prison grate, and its sleek plumpness attested to the care with which he fed it, and contrasted with the emaciation of his own attenuated frame. He fixed his haggard and melancholy eyes upon me, and with kindly demonstrations beckoned to me to share his seat on the damp cold stones, while he offered his chibouque to my companion ; the traces of a loving and of a courteous nature were every-

where discernible through the ruin and desolation of his intellect; but when I passed my hand through the grate to caress his favourite, he suddenly threw his arms around it, hid it from my sight, and told me to be gone.

“ Fear not, oh my eyes ! ” said the Drogueman who attended me, to the poor maniac, “ Medjid shall not be taken from you.” But these words fell unheeded on his ear, and he continued to eye me doubtingly, and to beckon me to depart.

“ Who is this man ? ” said I to the interpreter; “ and what misfortune brought him here ? ”

“ It is Eyoob Effendi,” was the brief reply. “ Fate has always been against him — what more can I say ? He is here.”

But as this was not sufficient to satisfy my curiosity, I moved away from the window, and while pacing backwards and forwards in the quadrangle, I drew from my guide the outline

of those fatalities which had produced the madness of Eyooob Effendi.

He had been the favourite secretary of the Pasha of Erzeroum, who, in order to give him some signal mark of his regard, bestowed upon him a wife from his own harem, a fair Georgian slave, whose beauty had rendered her a temporary favourite, but whose violent and perverse temper made it advisable for her aged master to get rid of her. These arrangements are common in the East, and no inferior can venture to refuse the questionable honour of accepting as a wife the cast-off favourite of his patron. Eyooob Effendi was forced to feign a gratitude that was far from his heart, and to devote the greater part of his earnings to the purchase of a present suitable to the Pasha's dignity, and to his Highness's own sense of it ; for in Turkey nothing is given gratis, and from the Sultan down to the meanest subject, every person who presents a gift expects a *backschish*

in return, equivalent *at least* to the value received, and where the giver is a man of rank, very much surpassing it.

Eyoob's disappointment began with the day of his marriage. When the wedding festivities were over, and he was for the first time left alone with his bride, and approaching her with trembling eagerness he unfastened the long veil which had hitherto closely concealed her face and person from his view, he beheld beauty and symmetry indeed, but so clouded by scorn and ill-humour, that his heart sank within him; for it was but too evident from the expression of her countenance, that the fair Saliha resented the indignity which had been forced upon her by this alliance, and had amiably made up her mind to visit her displeasure upon the unoffending party, and from that moment she never relaxed in her endeavours to render her husband as wretched as she fancied herself to be.

In woman, the art of tormenting, I am com-

pelled to admit, is not so much *an art* as a *natural gift*; which, I must do them the justice to say, they cultivate with a perseverance worthy of a better cause. The excitement of quarrelling appears, to their working minds, preferable to the stagnation of calm happiness; and even this unsophisticated Odailsque, who had been secluded in a harem all her life, might have competed with the most worldly-minded *maîtresse femme* in Christendom by her ingenuity in every gradation of the *coup d'épingle* warfare. Beautiful as she was, and willingly as Eyoob would have loved her had she allowed him, he soon learned to dread her presence as he would have done that of the most unsightly hag, and to look upon the hours he was compelled to pass in his harem as the most miserable ones of his existence. But matters grew worse when the Pasha of Erzeroum was recalled to Constantinople, and that Eyoob, in his official capacity, accompanied him thither. Saliha's ambition had long pointed to the capital, as the

only spot where her beauty would be rightly appreciated ; but she had hoped to go thither as the ornament of some Pasha's establishment, and perhaps to be transferred from it to that of the Sultan himself ; all these bright visions, however, had set in the obscurity of an Ef-fendi's harem, and she could only revenge herself for her disappointment by tormenting her husband and beating her slaves more than ever.

She would expatiate for hours upon the luxuries of Yussuf Pasha's harem, its dancing and singing girls, the costly wardrobe that was at her disposal, and all the dazzling accessories of personal embellishment which constitute the chief enjoyment of eastern women. Then the gilded arabas in which she used to take the air, the milk-white oxen that drew them, adorned with tassels of scarlet silk, and mirrors set in pearls on their foreheads, preceded by a black eunuch with his sword drawn, ready to cut down the rash man whose curious eye dared to pry beneath the cashmere canopy of the vehicle, were

dwelt upon with querulous regret, until poor Eyoob would devoutly wish that she was still under the jurisdiction of the sable functionary, and subject to the corrections he had so often inflicted upon her, but which, from an inconsistency of memory truly feminine, she appeared all at once entirely to have forgotten. What a falling off in her position ! she was condemned to shuffle about the streets of Constantinople in a coarse *ferigee* and old yellow *papooshes*, with no attendance save one negro girl. When she went to the bath, she was mortified by the superior splendour of the other women she met there ; and, if she repaired to the *Guiuk Suey* (the Asiatic sweet waters), on a Friday, it was in a hired araba, so shabbily appointed that she blushed to be seen descending from it, and dared not mingle with the Pasha's ladies assembled in that favourite resort ; she was debarred all the enjoyments of her sex ;—she would go before the Cadi, turn down her slipper, and ask for a divorce !

“ In the name of Allah, let it be so !” Eyoob would reply, when she had wound up her chain of complaints with this threat ; but, as soon as she found that the fulfilment of it would be a relief to him, she magnanimously resolved to endure her own mortifications, that she might not forfeit the privilege of prolonging the miseries of Eyoob’s existence.

They had one child, a boy named Medjid, on whom Heaven had bestowed his mother’s beauty and his father’s gentleness. When Eyoob held the infant in his arms he forgot all his sorrows, and could almost have loved the woman who had given him so fair a child ; he looked forward with fond hope to the time when Medjid would become his companion and his friend ; but, in the meantime, as is the custom in Turkey, the child was confined to the harem, and Eyoob never saw him, but in his mother’s presence, and subject to the jealous caprices with which she resented the preference he already evinced for his father.

Thus even the source of the gentlest and holiest feelings was turned into a fountain of bitterness for Eyoob, and, disgusted with his home, almost weary of his life, he learned to wander from the *caffinet* to the *Theriakkee T'chartchee*, and seek for temporary oblivion in the ecstatic delirium which opium procures to its votaries.

The effects produced by this pernicious drug are various : some persons are stupified by it, some are worked up to frenzy under its influence, while others are thrown into a trance-like state and, abstracted from the cares and considerations of this world, are, for the time being, translated, as it were, to another state of existence, where they fancy themselves to be in communion with unseen spirits. Of this latter class was Eyoob. All his visions were tinged with devotional feelings, but exaggerated and distempered like the dreams of a fevered patient ; he heard a voice which none could hear, he saw a hand which none could see—and they pointed to Mecca, they bade him

drink of the waters of *Zem-zem*, and the thirst of his soul should be quenched ; he should return from his pilgrimage purified from all his errors and find that peace at home which had hitherto been denied to him ; Kadun* Saliha would learn to reverence the Hadgee† Eyoob, and Medjid — oh ! that *one* sad parting over, they should meet, never again to be separated.

One day, as he thus sat among the assembled opium-eaters, his eyes fixed on vacancy, his soul rapt from the things of this earth, and hanging breathlessly upon the voice that for ever rang upon his ear, the clatter of steeds and the clashing of arms was heard approaching the *Theriakee Tchartchee* ; there was a rushing sound, as of a multitude drawing near, and the discordant cries of human voices filled the air. It was the Sultan, who, on that memorable occasion, had come in person, at the

* *Kadun*, literally *the head of a harem*, is applied to Turkish women, as *Mrs.*, *Madame*, *Signora*, or *Frau* are bestowed in courtesy upon married women in Christendom.

† A pilgrim who has visited the Prophet's tomb.

head of his troops, to disperse the infatuated opium-eaters. Right and left the unresisting victims were cut down and ridden over, and, among the rest, Eyoob was stunned by a blow from the Imperial sabre, which laid him apparently lifeless in the dust ; he, however, recovered his senses some hours afterwards and returned to his home, maimed, bleeding, and exhausted. During the fever which was the consequence of his wounds, the one fixed idea which had taken possession of him remained unchanged, and, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered his strength, he announced to his family and friends his intention of joining the next caravan of pilgrims that was to set out for Mecca ; and as a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet, either in person or by proxy, is enjoined to all the followers of Islamism once in their lives, no one ventured to dissuade Eyoob from his undertaking, and his preparations were made forthwith.

It would take up too much time were I here

to describe the departure of the caravan which annually starts from Scutari for Mecca, characterized by all "the pomp and circumstance" of oriental splendour. The Sultan attends in person to witness the ceremony, and all the friends and relations of the pilgrims swell the pageant, and accompany it for some miles on its route. Herds of camels, troops of horse, the sounds of musical instruments, the accents of joy, and hope, and laughter mark its outset ! Far different is its return. It is like the pilgrimage of life ; all is sanguine confidence in the beginning, but at every advancing step an illusion is lost. The sun which shone so brightly in the morning, scorches the blood at noon ; the winds, which at first seemed so refreshing, soon freeze to the bones ; the barren places of the earth appear in all their hideousness ;—fainting and dispirited, the wanderer in vain seeks for an *Oasis* in the desert, but *mirage* alone mocks his eye and eludes his grasp ; one by one, the friends who started

with him on his pilgrimage have sunk under the hardships of the way ; still his courage bears him onwards ; the goal is attained, but at the price of health and strength. He turns to retrace his steps, alone and joyless, worn in mind and body ; and when he reaches the term of his wanderings, who among those who beheld him depart would be able to recognize the ardent and enthusiastic pilgrim in the weary and broken-down Hadgee, who appears to have no other boon to ask, but a grave in which he may lay down and be at rest ?

And so it fared with Eyoob. The privations and fatigues he had undergone in his journey to and from Mecca, had reduced him to the shadow of his former self ; and when he reached Scutari with the spectral-looking remnant of the joyous band who had left it with him but a year before, the friend to whose house he repaired started back in terror at his altered mien. But exhausted as Eyoob was in body, he would listen to no suggestions of repose

previous to returning home ; his feelings had gradually risen to the highest pitch of tender impatience as he approached the place inhabited by his wife and child ; and when, from the heights above Scutari, he beheld the swelling domes and slender minarets of Constantinople stretched before him in all their imperial beauty, the sight appeared to infuse new strength into his exhausted frame ; and, “like a giant refreshed,” he proceeded on his way, accompanied, as is the custom in Turkey, by a troop of friends, who escorted the Hadjee in triumph to his home ; some of them chanting to the accompaniment of flutes and drums, while others carried his praying carpet, Koran, scimitar, pistols, and wearing apparel with demonstrations of the greatest exultation and joy before him.

As Eyoob entered the street in which his house was situated, a funeral procession was seen issuing from the mosque near it ; but his thoughts were so absorbed in the happiness

that awaited him in being re-united to his child, that he was unconscious of all outward objects, and saw it not. How would Saliha receive him? and Medjid, the light of his eyes, would he recognise the father he loved in the altered and way-worn Hadgee? And at the thought, all the tenderness of his soul gushed forth at his eyes.

At last he reached the gate of his dwelling, dismissed his friends, and with a beating heart knocked at the door. It was opened by Ursi, the negro girl, who, the moment she beheld her master, uttered a shrill cry and retreated into the house, wringing her hands in a passion of grief. Eyoob rushed past her, and was directing his steps towards the harem, when the poor girl darting forward cast herself at his feet, and exclaimed, "As you love Allah, oh, my master, stop!"

"What is this?" inquired Eyoob. "Ursi, my eyes! where is Kadun Saliha?"

"Ahi! ahi!" she replied, "what can I say?"

Then, as if actuated by a sudden thought, she arose, took the hand of Eyoob, and leading him to the street door pointed to the funeral procession which was still in sight, with a gesture not to be misunderstood.

Eyoob was answered, — he turned silently into the house, — he would have pronounced the name of Medjid, but the word stuck in his throat. Was it thus that Saliha had come forth to meet him? and what further disasters were in store for him? He strode forward to the harem with desperate resolution, closed the door after him, and looked around. All was silent as the grave. The clothes of Saliha were lying scattered upon the sofa in the first room, just as she had last thrown them from her; the flowers she had worn were faded and trampled on the floor; and the disordered bed shewed the impress of the lifeless body which had so lately been removed from it. He entered the inner apartment, and beheld a sight that froze the current of his blood. On a heap

of cushions in a corner was stretched Medjid—his beautiful—his beloved—his only one!—fever in his eye—delirium in the stifled murmurs that fell from his parched and blackened lips—the hideous plague-spot spreading in dark festering wounds upon his once ivory skin. An old Armenian woman was seated upon the floor dozing over the fatigue of her last night's watch. Eyoob staggered forward, fell on his knees by the bedside, and in tones of the wildest anguish called upon the name of Medjid. The dying boy turned his eyes upon him,—a ray of returning recollection for a moment flashed from them,—a smile hovered round his lips. “*Babam!*” (my father,) he murmured, stretching his hands towards him, and clasping them round his neck; but it was the last effort of expiring nature: the fingers gradually relaxed their hold, the eyes became glazed and fixed, a convulsive shudder ran through the limbs; then came a gasping struggle for breath—a low rattle—then the silence, still more dreadful,

which told that all was over—and Eyoob held in his arms the dust of Medjid !

The revulsion of feelings he had so suddenly experienced, the stunning manner in which he had been precipitated from the height of joyful expectation and hope to the blackest depths of despair, was too much for the wretched father ; and reason staggered under the blow. He neither spoke nor wept, but sat in silent stupor, gazing upon the livid corpse of his child ; when the attendants came to carry it to the Mosque, (where the last ablutions and laying-out are performed,) Eyoob mechanically followed them like a man walking in his sleep, witnessed the last sad offices with a stony eye, and made one in the procession to the cemetery where Medjid was laid by the side of Saliha. The ceremony was hurried over (for the plague swept away its victims in such numbers that the living had scarcely time to bury the dead), and when the Imaun had mumbled over a few prayers, and the hired mourners had dispersed, Eyoob was

left alone. He sat down by the grave, his eyes fixed upon the fresh earth that covered his child, and hours rolled by, and night came, and found him still there as if transfixed to stone. There was a rushing noise in his ears like the hissing of serpents, and tongues of fire seemed darting into his eyes and scorching his brain, and an icy hand pressed upon his heart, and took from him the power of speech. In this state he was found at nightfall by the faithful Ursi, who led him unresistingly home ; but when he reached the threshold of his door the recollection of all that had passed when he last crossed it rushed upon him with agonizing clearness. For a moment he recovered his memory, darted into the harem, and casting himself upon the couch of Medjid the room echoed to the frenzied accents of his despair ; until exhausted by all he had undergone, he sank into a deep and death-like sleep which lasted for many hours.

While he yet slept, a cat which had been

the boy's favourite pet and accustomed to share his bed, crept into the bosom of Eyoob and rolled itself up there ; and by one of those unaccountable fancies that sometimes take possession of the minds of madmen, or perhaps some link in the chain of distempered dreams that had visited his slumber, he awoke to the belief that Medjid had been restored to him under that form. The transports of his joy were unbounded, and all the marks of tenderness he lavished upon the docile animal were returned with the engaging playfulness that characterises its species ; as long as it remained near him he was perfectly tractable, but if he lost sight of it for a moment all his frenzy returned with accumulated violence ; and thus matters went on for a few days, during which Ursi continued to keep her unfortunate master's state unknown to the public. At last he determined to take the supposed Medjid with him to perform their public devotions together, and

presenting himself at the Mosque with his four-footed companion was refused admittance. A scene of fury ensued, that left no doubts upon the minds of all present as to Eyoob's actual state. He was conveyed to the madhouse, and mercifully allowed to retain the object of all his affections near him ; and there he had remained ever since,—unconscious of the changing seasons,—unmindful of the irons that fettered him,—absorbed in one fond unbroken contemplation of the imaginary Medjid.

When the Drogueman had finished his account of the unfortunate Eyoob, I again approached his grated cell, and, with a sentiment of pity and respect for his sufferings, made my farewell salutations to him. He returned the courtesy by laying his hand upon his heart, and touching his forehead, with as much dignity as though that poor brain had not become a blank.

“ And this the world calls frenzy !”

How many people, thought I, have I seen in

that vast lunatic asylum, *society*, whose “fantastic tricks” are far less harmless and less amiable than the delusion of this ill-fated being! How much further my reflections might then have carried me, I know not; for, just as I reached the entrance of the quadrangle, and mounted my horse to return to Pera, an old Turkish woman diverted the current of my thoughts by deliberately unfastening the lower part of her *yasmak* (veil), that she might spit at me. She must have been an old *Mahometan tory*, holding in abomination the liberal principles of Sultan Mahmoud, and the spirit of reform which had encouraged the adoption of Christian usages in Constantinople, and sighing for the good old times when no *Giaour* could venture to ride through the city without being pelted and reviled by the followers of the Prophet. There was an end to my reflections; therefore, giving my horse his head, and reining in my own fancies, I cantered towards Pera, as fast as

the execrable pavement would allow me, and once more found myself in the cool latticed saloon of my Armenian habitation.

Pera of Constantinople.

July 1838.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S VISION.

Romeo. Peace ;
Thou talk'st of nothing.

Mercutio. True, I talk of dreams ;
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy.

Romeo and Juliet.

A

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S VISION.

It was Midsummer day. I had been loitering through the whole of that sultry noon in the streets and environs of Leipzig, seeing whatever is most worthy of observation in that populous and antique-looking place ; I had stood upon the banks of the narrow brook-like Elster, on the very spot where the heroic Poniatowski rushed into its waves and perished. I had visited the fatal field where, quenched in oceans of blood, Napoleon's star had set to rise no more. I had talked with eye-witnesses, and listened to anecdotes of those exciting times ;

and with my mind full of souvenirs, and my head teeming with *Idées Napoleoniennes*, I set off for Dresden, but was obliged to rest for the night at Oschatz, a miserable little town, whose natural dulness and discomfort had apparently derived no improvement from the gingerbread fair then being held in the very small *Gross Platz* opposite to the inn where I had put up. This same fair seemed to have frightened from its propriety the whole place, inn and all. I ordered *abend speisen* in vain; called (for bells there were none) upon *Kellner* or *Kammerfrau* to do my bidding: *Komm gleich* was shouted to me in return, but nobody came; so, in order to economise my breath and patience, both of which were waxing faint, I left my servants, who did not understand a word of German, to settle matters for me, and walked forth into the midst of the fair, where my attention was very soon attracted and fixed by a German *Farceur*, who was singing to the grinding of his barrel organ, sundry comic songs, with an effect

which drew forth shouts of laughter and applause from his numerous auditory.

This man possessed the genuine *vis comica*. Nature had sent him into the world a ready-made buffoon; and the couplets which he acted as well as chanted, and which were as broad in their humour as they were long in duration, were admirably *relevés* by the curl of a grotesque, thirsty-looking red nose, the leer of a moist roguish eye, and the knowing air with which a greasy old hat, of indescribable form, was cocked upon one ear. I have always had a *foiblesse* for such exhibitions; and so strongly did my sympathies, upon that particular occasion, keep pace with those of the assembled crowd, that not until it dispersed did I remember that I was both fasting and fatigued, or think that it was time for me to "take mine ease in mine inn," should such at last be vouchsafed to me.

When I returned thither, I found that the arrangements for my night's accommodation had

been completed, and I was shewn into a dark-looking narrow strip of a bed-room, containing nothing but the "short commons" of a German bed, an enormous German stove, a rickety old table, and two equally ancient chairs.

"Have you no better room for me?" I inquired, shrinking back from the gloomy comfortless-looking *couloir* which had been dignified into the rank of chamber, and of which so large a part was filled up by the monumental-looking stove aforesaid, whose form and proportions struck me as being better adapted to a churchyard than to a bed-room.

"A better!" was the rejoinder of my landlord; "'tis the best in the house! Why, in this very room the Emperor Napoleon passed the night on his way to Leipzig in 1813, after his temporary success at Dresden."

"Enough!" said I, "it will suit me very well!" And I believe that had the best furnished and most comfortable apartment been at that moment offered me in exchange, I

would not have foregone the privilege of passing the night in that gloomy chamber, haunted as it was by associations with one of the great ones of the earth, who had passed through the extremes of human grandeur and human suffering to a kingdom, compared with which the kingdoms of this world and the wretched ambitions that distract them are as nothing.

The temper of mind which my morning's occupation had induced, rendered this coincidence still more welcome to me, and I hastily swallowed my supper that I might shut myself up alone, and indulge in all my reveries undisturbed. For it seemed to me that something of Napoleon must cling to those walls which had reflected his shadow as he paced the long room,—something that would now image forth his reflections to me; that the very planks which had creaked beneath his foot-steps, ought to speak to me eloquently of his perturbed thoughts! How looked, how moved he then, the Warrior and the Despot,

from whose brow and whose grasp were so soon to pass away a crumbling crown and a broken sword? Did Hope still animate those giant energies with visions of Glory? or had cold misgivings crept in to paralyse and subdue? Baffled in his ambitious views—forsaken—betrayed—defeated—yet resolved to stand at bay and make a last struggle against his pursuers before he fled from the territory which had leagued with all the world against him, did no prophetic voice whisper to him that the struggle would be in vain?—and if he slept that night, what dreams hovered round his pillow?—were they, like those of Richard the Third, appalling visions of final defeat?—and did the bloody shade of Enghien arise to menace and to forewarn—“to sit heavy upon his *soul*,” and bid it *despair*?—did he, like that usurper, acknowledge,

“I have not that alacrity of spirit,
Or cheer of mind that I was wont to have;”

or did he, still like him, feel that a thousand

hearts were great within his bosom, although Fortune and Victory no longer sat upon his helm?

With these thoughts crowding confusedly in my mind, I at last threw myself upon the bed; and even between sleeping and waking the same images pursued me, but fantastically confounded with the objects that were actually in the room, and those which I had seen during the evening. The huge stove appeared to dilate, and spring up into the semblance of a column surmounted by a warlike figure, crowned with laurels; and in the deep shadow which it threw upon the wall, and which the flickering of the night-lamp caused to waver tremulously, I thought I saw the form of the German *farceur*, flitting to and fro with his barrel-organ; and lo! his lineaments were those of the present ruler of France; and his greasy indescribable hat pinched up into the heroic form of that little '*chapeau à trois cornes*,' which will go down to posterity immortalized by glorious

associations, was flourished in his hand in a begging attitude, with the gesticulations of one by whom "the smallest contributions would be thankfully received." Then followed indistinctness, darkness, and oblivion ;—I slept—and in a dream I was borne far away.

I thought that I stood alone in the deep valley of a rocky island ; the booming of the ocean billows fell upon my ear softened by distance, and mingled with the summer breeze that lightly rustled the foliage of low bending willows ; and beneath their weeping branches was a tomb, grand in its simplicity, upon which was inscribed the mighty name of Napoleon—that name which had caused the whole of vanquished Europe to tremble, save the Ocean Queen whose captive he had died ! And with a saddened heart I stood

“ In the hush'd presence of the glorious dead,”

marvelling and pondering over the vicissitudes that had doomed *his* dust to mingle with the

sands of an insignificant African island over which he had never held sway.

“Shame to thee, England!” I exclaimed, “for having betrayed the fallen enemy who confided in thy generosity!—Shame to thee for having rejected the guest who in his misfortunes threw himself upon thy hospitality!—Shame, thrice shame, that as the reward of such trusting belief in thy magnanimity thou didst doom him, like another Prometheus, to ‘the Vulture and the Rock!’ the Ocean for his prison walls—this lonely island his dungeon—thou the gaoler—and Death the liberator! Oh, bitter in thy enmity! could not his desolation move thee to nobler sentiments? Crownless—wifeless—childless—abandoned by the people whom he had so often led to glory, he turned his eyes towards thy shores—the boasted land of freedom and of freemen—and claimed to be received there as a citizen by ‘the noblest and most constant of his enemies;’ even that poor boon was denied to him, and the hand

which should have been stretched forth to welcome the illustrious exile, forged his fetters ! And thou, injured shade !” I continued, bending my forehead in deep humility over the sepulchral stone, “ what can atone for the long agonies endured by thee — the moral tortures which could not bend thy stern spirit albeit the frail flesh was vanquished by them ? What can atone for this unhonoured grave, where even thy ashes remain in captivity far from the land which once gloried in calling thee master ? what can atone — ”

But here a noise as of the rustling of mighty wings startled me from my soliloquy, and looking up I beheld in the grey light of dawn a form standing near, clad in imperial robes, like those of ancient Rome, the Victor's laurel wreath upon his brow, and eyes piercing and serene as those of angels bent upon me ; and I knew that I looked upon the spirit of him whose mortal coil lay mouldering beneath.

“ 'Tis well ! ” it said in a clear low voice ;

“I wish for no atonement which I have not already received,—the enemy who persecuted me even unto death, bestowed upon me (unwittingly, I will allow,) a boon far beyond that which could have been conferred even had she conceded to me all that I had asked at her hands! In chaining me to this rock, England exalted me into a *Victim*,—and, blind in her persecution like the fanatics of old, what she intended to dishonour has received through her means the honours of martyrdom. Think you that had she welcomed me upon her shores as I had dared to hope, and that I had subsided into a political cypher—an apostate from my faith (for my religion was Glory!)—a sleek country gentleman content to exchange my noble ambition for the creature comforts of life,—to fatten my beeves and till my own lands,—to *promener mes ennuis* from one noble castle to another, unhonoured by any sentiment save that of vulgar curiosity,—to herd with lords and flatter ladies,—to take my seat, when

bidden, at the board of Royalty, and feel humbly thankful that such notice should be accorded to me!—think you, I say, had such been the case, that my name and memory would have preserved the magic power which they still exercise over the hearts and imaginations of my ancient followers?—think you that France would have recognised in the apathetic guest of England, content to crawl through life like other worms, the warlike Napoleon who led her to a hundred conquests, who threw the spoils of other nations into her lap, and would have made her what Rome was of old—the mistress of the world!—or that recognising, she could have lamented one so self-debased? No! the poetry of this rock, this captivity, this lonely grave, was necessary to revive the sympathies of that fickle and excitable people whose idol I had been, so long as I led them from victory to victory, but who abandoned me to my fate when I could no longer minister to their vain-glorious ambition.

The vulgar, ignoble life of ease which would have been purchased by fraternizing with my conquerors and bitterest foes, would have made them blush for their former hero. As it was, they pitied me, they once more identified themselves with my feelings, and every fresh outrage heaped upon me by England served to reanimate their extinguished enthusiasm. But a life of inglorious freedom passed amongst the Penates of my conquerors would have cut me off from the sympathies of that handful of brave spirits who, in woe as well as in weal, had never deserted me. I should have *lived to die* in their memory and their esteem, whereas I have died to live *there* for ever,—not to perish with the present generation, but to be handed down from father to son to posterity, an oral tradition of success, grandeur, and adversity on the one hand, unparalleled in the annals of the world, and of enthusiastic devoted fidelity on the other, unequalled in the history of the human heart. This distinction and these sen-

timents have been preserved to me in all their pristine intensity, thanks to the unmeasured rigour of England!—and I feel *now* how much better service her distrust and her enmity have done me than her most loyal friendship and good fellowship could have conferred. True, while I still animated the poor tabernacle of clay that moulders beneath that stone, I thought otherwise; for the weaknesses and affections of the flesh clung to me, and clogged my perceptions;—the love of life,—the yearning to be united to what I most loved, blinded me to the humiliating consequences that must have ensued had my desires been granted;—*now* I see all with the eye of the *spirit*, and I repeat, 'tis well for me that England acted as she *has* done! She did not intend nor foresee the result in her short-sighted vindictiveness, but she has been a better friend to my memory than I should have been myself."

"But this obscure grave," said I, "for one 'whose tomb should pierce the skies,'—does

not your spirit, Sire, resent the disregard which has been observed towards your wishes respecting the destination of these sacred relics?"

"Bah!" returned the Imperial shade with a scornful smile, "where the tree falls there let it lie! Those wishes were expressed while I yet struggled under the thralldom of human feeling,—its wretched affections, and still more wretched vanities! *They* prompted me, blind and deluded as I was, to bequeath my heart to Marie Louise,—to the cold-hearted woman who never had appreciated its fond, proud devotion, and who abandoned me in my fallen fortunes,—to the faithless wife who could not wait until death had dissolved the tie that bound her to me ere she bestowed her heartless caresses upon another,—to the degenerate Princess who scrupled not to give to the son of Napoleon a spurious brood of brothers and sisters, the pledges of her wanton love for an Austrian Chamberlain! What could such a woman do with *my* heart,—and how would

she greet it? perhaps with the Italian proverb which says that ‘a living dog is better than a dead lion!’ Oh, Josephine! thy wrongs have been amply avenged by her for whom thou wert sacrificed!”

“But France, Sire, to whom you bequeathed these glorious ashes—”

“Yes, in the same blind belief that influenced me in the other particular, in the persuasion of her undying, disinterested devotion, France has repudiated my cause; she has forsaken my family; my name is still dear to her as a rallying point around which all her national vanity gathers, but that is all. France loved me for *herself* not for *me*; she too deserted me; and *twice*, in my adversity. With her *les vaincus ont toujours tort!* she turned from the dim rays of my setting star to bask in the beams of my adversaries’ rising sun; to fawn upon them with the same rank breath with which she reviled me. No! France loved me not; she was vain of me; a

few, a very few of her sons loved me, and some of them died to prove it, while others lived to prove it too ; in exile and sorrow, and disease and death, they forsook me not ; and they have had their reward. But they were only an exception to the rule by which that fickle and ungrateful nation marked her indifference for my cause. And shall I still wish my ashes to lie in the land which rejected me while living, and which has consigned to eternal banishment all who bear my name ?—As though power dwelt in a *name* and not in *deeds* ! —As though danger could accrue to the state from the presence of two or three aged money-loving American citizens, or the senseless projects of an inexperienced youth who, in his fond belief that France still loved the race from which he sprang, closed his eyes to this convincing fact : — that when, exasperated by the headstrong incapacity of her legitimate Princes, she drove them from the throne, and purchased with her people's blood the right

to choose another ruler, no thought of recalling the Imperial boy who was born to become their Emperor, occurred to her; the claims of *my* son were overlooked upon an occasion which offered so fair an opportunity for the restoration of the Napoleon dynasty, and our most sanguine adherents must have felt that the silence of the nation at that juncture was conclusive, and that the popularity of our cause had sunk into a tradition.

“The day will come, however, and it is not far distant, when my ashes will be recalled, and Princes will be sent to pilot them across the seas, and deputations formed to greet their solemn entry into France, and monuments will be raised, and orations pronounced over them; and wherefore?—to honour my memory? to appease my angry manes by a tardy fulfilment of my last wishes? Will a brother's hand be there to support my pall, or the sanctifying tears of kindred be shed over it? No! the government of the day will

require some *coup de théâtre* to ensure their popularity with a nation jealous of her present inactivity and susceptible to whatever touches her past glory ; they will find it necessary to throw dust into her eyes, and they will choose THE DUST OF NAPOLEON for that purpose. But my spirit recoils from the idea of these poor remains being made subservient to the claptrap of ministerial intrigue ; still more does it recoil from the paltry inconsistencies, the meannesses of party spirit, the jealousies and the chafferings which will form the programme to their reception. Better that they should remain where they are ; and since the living are banished, let the dead share their fate. I shall not repose more tranquilly beneath the Dome of the Invalides than upon this sea-girt rock ; and long after that Dome shall have crumbled into dust, and the very site on which it stood shall have become a problem which the pilgrims of future ages will vainly seek to resolve, this rock shall rear its head

unchanged in the midst of the wild Atlantic waves, imperishable as my fame,—stern and gloomy as my fate,—fit mausoleum for one who stood alone in his greatness and his adversity like me. The wanderers of the deep shall hail it in the distance as a landmark consecrated to immortal recollections; and when the very name which it now bears shall be forgotten, the proud distinction of holding my ashes will rescue it from oblivion, and History will record, and posterity recognize the lonely island as the Emperor's grave,—the tomb of the Great Napoleon!"

As I turned towards the shadowy speaker, to reply to these last observations, I perceived that its form had grown more transparent and indistinct as the grey light of morning brightened into the approach of sunrise, and while I strained my eyes to catch a glimpse of the fading features, the cock crew, and they vanished into "thin air." I started forward as though I would have retained the impalpable shade in

my grasp ; but at that moment the sun rose in all its splendour above the horizon, and, dazzled into momentary blindness by the intense brightness of its beams, I stumbled over the grave, and fell prostrate to the ground.

The shock awoke me ; the morning sun was streaming through the uncurtained windows of my room full upon my equally uncurtained bed and unprotected eyes ; the Chanticleer of the inn was straining his throat to the utmost to arouse the lazy sleepers within its walls ; for a moment the sound prolonged my illusion, and starting from my pillow I looked around for my visionary interlocutor, when the truth burst upon my awakened senses, and, lo ! I found that it was all a Dream !

Paris, June, 1840.

Several months after the above Dream had been committed to paper, the writer witnessed the imposing *spectacle*, (for such it was rather than a religious ceremony,) of the translation of

Napoleon's remains to the Church of the Invalides. Everything had been done through the medium of the public press, for many weeks previously, to excite the people to some public demonstration of enthusiasm for the Imperial dynasty, and revolt against the existing order of things. But all in vain ; perhaps the intense cold of the weather on that occasion may have contributed to the maintenance of public order ; but so it was, that the atmosphere and the temper of men's minds were both at many degrees below freezing point ; and the whole thing went off with the most frigid calm, thus bearing out the Spiritual Protest that has been embodied in the above Dream, and imparting to it the character of a Prophecy.

Paris, March, 1841.

THE MOTHER AND SON.

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home.

King Richard II.

THE MOTHER AND SON.

HERMAN CHRISTIERN, was the eldest son of parents whom misfortune and improvidence had reduced from a respectable position in society to a state of poverty and dependence upon such of their relatives as were able and willing to assist them. His father, Major Christiern, a Swiss by birth, had been originally in the service of the unfortunate Louis XVI, and was one of the few Swiss guards who survived the dreadful massacre of the Tenth of August. After seeing his father and elder brother perish by his side, upon the staircase of the Tuileries, he contrived to effect his escape from the san-

guinary mob ; and concealing himself in Paris for a few days, he quitted it in disguise, and passed over into England, where he entered into the British Service, and obtained a commission in a regiment which was chiefly officered by emigrants and foreigners. Young, handsome, and well-born, his misfortunes invested him with more than common interest in the eyes of the romantic and the tender-hearted ; nor was it long ere his manifold attractions beguiled the affections of a young and lovely girl, who, regardless of prudence and of the counsels of her family, and listening only to “the voice of the charmer,” who, in that instance, charmed “not wisely but too well,” bestowed her hand and her little fortune upon the portionless refugee ; and cheerfully left the comforts and luxuries of her father’s house to rough it through the world as the wife of a subaltern in a marching regiment. Promotion came slowly, and children came fast : Christiern was the very incarnation of thoughtless impru-

dence ; he knew not how to restrict his expenditure to his means : he was one of those who, if they possessed twenty thousand a-year, think it necessary to spend thirty. What wonder then, that with his slender income debts soon accumulated, and that the fortune of his wife was sacrificed to defray them ? She indeed was a model of prudence and self-denial ; all her exertions were directed towards stemming the torrent of her husband's prodigality ; she gave up society and quietly resigned herself into becoming a household drudge—but all in vain : her unceasing efforts could only retard, not ward off, utter ruin ; and after nineteen years of perpetual struggle, during which period the patience and the pecuniary resources of her family had been more than once exhausted by the perpetual demands of Christiern for assistance, she found herself a beggar, burthened with six sons, and a husband who was too proud “to dig,” although “to beg he was *not* ashamed !”

Christiern had sold his commission to save himself from a prison, and the whole family were dependent for bread upon the generosity of a widowed sister of Mrs. Christiern's, the last of her family who adhered to her in her misfortunes.

At that period of their history Herman, their eldest son, who had been educated at Sandhurst, was fortunately provided for by receiving a commission in a distinguished corps, then serving in the Peninsula; and thither he proceeded, as soon as his outfit had been completed, in all the happy exultation of eighteen, dreaming of nothing but glory, honourable scars, laurels, and promotion.

He was his mother's favourite: of all her children, dear as they were to her, Herman was the most precious; he had wound himself round the very fibres of her heart by his adorable disposition, and from his earliest infancy she could remember no single instance in which he had voluntarily caused her pain. Gentle,

though high-spirited, dutiful and thoughtful beyond his years, he seemed early to have understood the struggles and trials to which she was exposed, and to have resolved upon compensating as much as possible for her other privations by his unlimited devotion and obedience to her wishes. His affection for her had endued him with a precocity of judgment and feeling, rare as it was beautiful in one of his years and sex; the rudeness of the schoolboy was laid aside for the rational bearing of the matured friend and companion; and at an age when other youths are bent only upon boisterous pursuits and selfish indulgences, Herman Christiern had learned to place his greatest happiness in the society of his mother, and to feel that he was more than repaid for the sacrifice of his boyish tastes, when he had called forth an approving smile in her meek, fair face.

That gentle mother! she was one of those patient enduring beings, who never give ex-

pression to their grief, but courageously struggle to avert its dominion as long as possible ; and when they find the effort unavailing, silently resign themselves to become its victim, and die, as they have lived, without uttering a complaint. Calm and undemonstrative, she was by many pronounced to be apathetic ; but even while that judgment was recorded against her by superficial observers, the canker of care was corroding the vital principle within her. Her step was gradually becoming less firm, her smile less frequent ; her eye more sunken ; her cheek more transparent ! The utter hopelessness of her prospects, the misery of feeling herself a burthen upon the generosity of a beloved sister, ill able to sustain such a charge, the altered disposition of her husband, to whom misfortune had imparted asperity and not prudence ; all had combined to sap the foundations of a constitution which had never been very robust : she was dying of a chronic heart-

break, and nobody believed that she was suffering.

I remember, about that time, hearing her one evening, sing that beautiful song in the "Stranger," the music of which is said to have been composed by the all-accomplished Duchess of Devonshire ; and, child as I then was, being affected to tears by the deep pathos of her unrivalled voice, as she gave utterance to words, which I was afterwards aware bore so strong an analogy to her own sad feelings :—

" I have a silent sorrow here,
A grief I 'll ne'er impart ;
It breathes no sigh—it sheds no tear—
But it consumes my heart !"

I have often since remembered it with a sigh, and thought how touchingly she then illustrated the poet's idea of the nightingale singing with a thorn in her breast.

Still there was one drop of sweetness left to temper the bitter cup which fate had prepared

for her ; Herman was provided for ; he delighted in his profession, he had borne himself gallantly in his first campaign, (which was the closing one of the Peninsular war,) he was beloved by his brother officers, and had won golden opinions from those under whose command he had served ; a slight wound in his arm, and advancement to a lieutenancy, had put the finishing stroke to his contentment ; and when, after the affair of Toulouse, he embarked with his regiment from Bordeaux to proceed to Cork, it was with the promise of soon obtaining leave of absence to visit his family, and also with an assurance from the General of Division under whom he served, that he should be appointed to the first vacancy that occurred in his staff.

How did the tender mother exult when she heard all this ! How did her quiet eye brighten, and her sinking heart throb at the thought of once more beholding her gallant boy, dearer than ever to her from the dangers he had passed

through ! Forgetful for a while of her many sorrows and her daily increasing weakness, she dwelt only upon the prosperous future that was dawning upon him : handsome and amiable, and beloved as her Herman was, he *must* succeed in the world ; he would marry well, — perhaps Heaven would reward her past sufferings by permitting her to live to witness that happy event ; and then how thankfully would she close her eyes for ever, knowing that he at least was rescued from the destitution which had fallen upon her other children ; that when she was gone he would be to *them* all that he had ever been to *her* in affection—friend, comforter, counsellor ; and besides all these, yet another tie would be added—he would become their benefactor !

Yet these fond speculations, although they beguiled her sorrows, could not arrest the fatal progress of disease ; her decline had been so gradual, her courage in abstaining from all expression of complaint so unshaken, that it was

not until the churchyard cough struck like a knell upon the ears of her affrighted husband, and that frequent faintings testified to the exhaustion of her frame, that Christiern was aroused to a sense of her danger. Then medical aid was resorted to, but too late: for after a careful examination of her case, the physician pronounced that repose of mind and a warmer climate might prolong her life for a few months, but that ultimate recovery would be little less than miraculous. Under these circumstances, it was thought expedient to spare her the fatigue of a long journey, which must eventually terminate in a foreign grave; and she was removed to a quiet lodging at Brompton, there to await the slow fulfilment of her doom.

Meanwhile Herman was enjoying as much popularity in Ireland as he had done in the more trying scenes of his short but glorious campaign in the Peninsula, and all his letters were filled with pleasant details of the charming life he was leading among the hospitable, warm-

hearted Irish, who seemed bent upon making him forget that he was “a stranger in the land.” He had been sent with a detachment from head-quarters into a wild part of the county of Cork, where the society was widely dispersed; but it so happened, that one family—the most delightful in the world—resided near; and they had called upon him, and insisted upon his taking up his quarters at their house. There were seven daughters, all of them angels; an amiable mother; a father who was the best of good-fellows; two brothers, the best riders in the whole county; and with these loveable people he was domesticating as *enfant de famille*. A few weeks after this communication, Herman wrote to solicit his parents’ consent to his union with one of the fair daughters of his hospitable host, whose consent had been cheerfully given to an arrangement which was to secure the happiness of his child; and all that was wanting to complete the general satisfaction was the approval of Major and Mrs.

Christiern, without which Herman felt that his marriage would not be blessed. Then followed a lover's description of the fair object of his preference; and when every flattering epithet which the glowing imagination of a youth of twenty could lavish upon his first passion, had been exhausted, Herman acknowledged that his beloved had no dower but her beauty, and no expectation of ever receiving any marriage portion from her father except her wedding clothes.

The Christierns lost not a moment in writing to forbid this most imprudent connexion. The father made an immediate application to Herman's Colonel that he might be recalled to headquarters; while the poor mother, trusting that her influence with her son would not be exerted in vain, wrote to conjure him to listen to the voice of reason, and to be guided by the experience of those who had learned wisdom under the severe discipline of adversity. Then, for the first time, she unlocked the sorrows of

her heart to him ; and oh, what sad eloquence was there in that transcript of misery so long borne and never before told ! What truth in her description of the bitterness of dependence to a proud spirit, of the anguish of bringing innocent beings into the world predestined to beggary, or dependent for bread upon the precarious and unwilling charity of cold-hearted relatives ! With what force did she paint the power of misfortune to sour even the kindest nature, and to substitute querulous reproach and vain recriminations for the endearments of affection ! how feelingly dwell upon the romance of love vanquished by the vulgar cares of life ! All this she had experienced ; these fatal consequences of an imprudent marriage she now avowed to him were leading her to the grave ; and she adjured her son, by all his past affection for her, by all his future hopes of happiness for himself, to take warning from her example, and to forbear giving the last blow to her

breaking heart by wildly persisting in a step which must end in his utter ruin.

But when did Love ever listen to Reason? And what youth of twenty but thinks the world well lost for the bright eyes of a beautiful girl, who smiles like an angel while she assures him that poverty with him would be preferable to the most brilliant worldly position with another? Herman was staggered, but not convinced, by his mother's letter; he, however, felt it to be his duty to avow to the young lady and her family, his parents' objections to his marriage, and the motives on which they were grounded; but, to his glad surprise, he found that they carried no weight with them: the father was too anxious to marry his daughters, and too hopeless of marrying them well, to hesitate in giving them to any one with the name and profession of a gentleman. And as for the young lady, she bade him choose between his mother and herself, at the same time vowing that if she did not marry Herman Christiern, she would

consign her sorrows to the pond behind the house, and die like poor Ophelia, of “too much water.” For my part, I have always thought it a pity that he did not suffer her to make the experiment, as I have no doubt that she would have passed through the chilling ordeal with infinite advantage to all parties, and have left, (if not her *life*, like Sappho,) her *love*, at least, at the bottom of the muddy receptacle for fishes; but fate had ordained otherwise, and her sentiments and declarations but too well accorded with the feelings of Herman, for him to hesitate in acting upon them. He married the beautiful Honoria, and then wrote to inform his parents of the event, and to implore their blessing upon it. No answer was returned to that letter; and the young bridegroom, although grieved by this first proof of stern unrelentingness, was too much in love to be long depressed by it, and, in the fulness of his joy, soon forgot that his own gratification had been purchased at the expense of his mother’s, peace

—that this first solemn act of his life had also been his first violation of filial duty and obedience.

About a fortnight after Herman's marriage, his regiment was ordered to England, and, precisely at the same time, a vacancy occurred in General B——'s staff, who, remembering his promise to the gallant young soldier, wrote to him to express his deep regret that, by his recent marriage, Herman should have precluded the possibility of its fulfilment, as he, the General, made it a rule never to appoint married men to be his aides-de-camp. And thus early was the first consequence of his ill-advised connection visited upon the unfortunate young man.

Still, despite the wounding silence of his mother towards him, Herman's heart yearned fondly for her forgiveness and blessing; and when he heard that his regiment was to march through London, *en route* for its new destination, he determined upon presenting himself to his parents without any previous appraisal, trust-

ing that the sudden emotion of such a meeting would, by taking their feelings by surprise, do more towards effecting a reconciliation than volumes of letters could do written *à tête reposée*.

Accordingly, when in the course of a long march of many days; the detachment of the regiment to which Herman belonged, reached Kensington at an early hour one morning, he had no sooner seen his men billeted for their few hours' repose, than, without allowing himself a moment's rest—without even waiting to brush his dusty uniform, he flew, rather than walked, towards Brompton, where he knew that his family then resided. The quiet little street in which they lodged was still wrapped in deep repose; the shutters of all the houses were closed, not a housemaid had yet risen to her daily labours, and the uncertain glories of an April day were still unclouded by any vestige of smoke curling upwards from the chimneys. Herman knocked at the door with

a trembling hand, and in the silence that prevailed, the beating of his heart became distinctly audible to him ; at last, a half dressed, half awake, slip-shod maid-servant opened the door.

“Does Major Christiern live here ?” he inquired.

“Yes, sir,” was the answer ; “but nobody is up yet.”

“I know,” replied Herman ; “it does not signify disturbing any one to announce me.” And rushing by the astonished girl he ran up stairs, opened the door that presented itself on the landing-place of the first floor, and found himself in a chamber dimly lighted by an expiring candle.

There was a bed in the room, the curtains of which were unclosed, and the noise he had made in opening the door startled from slumber the form that was stretched upon it, outside of the coverlet.

“Who is there?” inquired a well-known voice,—the voice of his father.

“It is I,—Herman, your son,” he replied.
“Where is my mother?”

Where, indeed!

No answer was returned to this question; but Christiern slowly rose from the bed, and going to the window threw open the shutters. The bright morning light streamed into the apartment, and revealed to Herman an object which had hitherto been buried in deep shadow, and had escaped his observation,—a coffin, placed upon trestles, stood at the foot of the bed, and a white sheet was thrown over it. Christiern pointed to it.

“Your mother is there!” he said, in a voice husky and inarticulate from emotion. “Your disobedience killed her! Have you come here to triumph in the barbarous deed?”

And, as he spoke, he raised the white covering from the coffin, and displayed to Herman’s

bewildered gaze the marble features of his mother, rigidly fixed in death, and colourless as the ghastly trappings of the grave, in which the shrunk form was enshrouded.

“She was much better; she might, perhaps, have been saved,” continued the unhappy man, his haggard eyes almost fiercely scanning the countenance of his son, to watch the effect that his words produced, “when your letter arrived;—and she never held up her head afterwards. She scarcely ever spoke again, and never mentioned your name until her last moment had arrived. *Then* she prayed to God to forgive you, and to avert from you the agony of mind she was then suffering!”

Motionless with horror, Herman listened to the reproaches of his unhappy father, his eyes fixed wildly upon the lifeless form before him: and, oh! how much more dreadful than any that *words* could frame, were the reproaches conveyed to his heart by the aspect of that immovable countenance! How awfully elo-

quent the silence of those icy lips, which never more could uncloze, either to reprove or to forgive !

“ Mercy ! pardon ! ” he would have exclaimed ; but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and no sound issued from his lips. He would have knelt and humbled himself in the dust, before the unconscious remains of the beloved mother whose last moments had been so cruelly embittered by his disobedience ; but his trembling limbs refused to obey the holy impulse, and he fell prostrate and senseless upon the coffin.

When he recovered, he found himself in another room, and one of his uncles was standing near, watching him with a pitying countenance. There was a lumbering noise upon the narrow staircase, as if some unwieldy object were being carried down it ; and at the same moment, an undertaker’s assistant entered to announce that all was ready for the departure of the funeral procession. Scarcely con-

scious of what was passing, sick and giddy, Herman was supported by his uncle into a mourning coach, and in a few minutes more he was standing in the churchyard, by the open grave of his mother. He saw the coffin lowered into it,—heard the first shovel-full of earth rattle upon its lid, and the awful words that accompanied that rendering of “dust to dust;” and still no tear had moistened his burning eyes,—still no word or look of kindness had been directed to him by his father! He felt like one spell-bound under the dominion of a dreadful dream, from which he would have given worlds to awaken, but could not.

Just as the solemn rite had concluded, and the mourners were leaving the churchyard to return home, the sounds of military music swelled upon the air, and filled it with delicious harmony. Herman recognised the band of his regiment, and knew that it was again upon its march, and that he must rejoin it without a moment's delay. The air they were playing had

been a favourite of his mother's, one with which, in his infant years, she had often lulled him to sleep; and now, what a host of heart-breaking recollections were suddenly evoked by those joyous notes! All the cares, all the tenderness of that gentle being passed in review before his mental vision, with desolating distinctness;—and how had he requited them? He cast a look of agony upon her grave, and then turned his imploring eyes towards his father. That mute appeal was irresistible; the wretched widower silently stretched forth his arms to his repentant son, and Herman, falling upon his neck, for the first time found relief to his overcharged feelings in a flood of tears.

In another moment he was gone, and the father and son never met again.

And did the marriage formed under such melancholy auspices turn out happily? No! the sad predictions of Herman's mother were fulfilled to the very letter. Poverty, obscurity, and ruin, came upon him, one by one, to

paralyse the energies of his mind ;—family disunion, a discontented, useless wife, and undutiful children, have chilled the affections of his heart ;—more than the misery which he entailed upon his mother, has been his portion ;—and within the very last year, at a moment when sickness and discouragement had laid their heavy hands upon him, and bowed him to the earth, he has been made to feel, by the abandonment of his first-born, the daughter upon whom he had placed all his fondest hopes,

“ How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child ! ”

Paris, July, 1840.

THE
MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Yet though dull hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me ; though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation,—and a broken claim :
Though the grave closed between us, 'twere the same—
I know that thou wilt love me ; though to drain
My blood from out thy being, were an aim,
And an attainment,—all would be in vain,—
Still thou would'st love me, still that more than life retain.

Childe Harold.

CHAPTER I.

“FOR Heaven’s sake, papa, let us vary our ride to-day ! I am weary of the eternal Campagna, and the equally eternal Sir Allan Beaufoy and General Poyntz, who never fail to *accrocher* us there, to the utter extinction of all enjoyment ! I believe they have taken a lease of the Campagna, and mean to establish themselves there as permanent scarecrows to frighten away all other flutterers from the premises. I really wonder what such men do out of England ; they are only fit for the high-bred twaddle of Hyde Park.”

“ Alice, your remarks are very unbecoming and very uncalled for,” returned her father ; “ Sir

Allan Beaufoy and General Poyntz are both men of high fashion and large fortune, whose society is courted and coveted by the *élite* of the English now here;—you ought to feel highly flattered by their notice. They give the best dinners in Rome, and, at their house, one might almost fancy oneself in London again.”

“That is what I detest them for!” returned the lively girl; “their conversation is of a sort that makes me fancy I could smell the ‘*froust*’ of London while listening to them, if conversation that can be called, which consists in criticisms upon Lady C—’s last dinner, anticipation of Lady W—’s next ball, disquisitions upon the Princess D—’s diamonds, surmises of whether Lord R. will embrace ‘tea-totalism,’ sly allusions to the flirtations of Lords X., Y., Z., with their neighbours’ wives, and the other thousand and one *fadaises* springing from that spirit of exclusivism which condemns the ideas of a certain set for ever to tread the same dull

round with the same busy inanity, like a squirrel in its wheel, *toujours remuant sans jamais avancer*, and to confine themselves to the same narrow views of the world in general, and to the same bounded circle of their own particular *coterie*, whether it be in London, Paris, Rome, or Naples !”

“ Alice, Alice !” interrupted her father, reprovingly.

“ It is all very true, papa, and ‘pity ’tis, ’tis true !’ ” was the rejoinder. “ It is astonishing with how little profit to themselves some persons travel ; they carry their cherished prejudices with them everywhere, and return to their own country just as they left it, most fully illustrating the censure which was passed upon a certain restored dynasty, by the wittiest and most time-serving of statesmen, ‘ils n’ont rien appris, et rien oublié !’ Now, when I am at Rome, I should like to see more of the Romans, and less of such people as those two *ci-devant jeunes hommes*, whose whole energies

are, at present, directed towards keeping poor Lady Araminta Fitzblarney out of their set, because she is Irish and vulgar—”

“And a woman of ruined reputation, — a *divorcée*!” interrupted her father.

“Well, I don’t know how that may be, as Sir Allan never censures her *morals*, but only dwells upon her *manners*, which, it appears, do not bear the conventional stamp which alone can fix her value in the opinion of the fastidious old gentleman.”

“Alice, you seem to have imbibed a strange prejudice against elderly gentlemen!”

“Quite the contrary, papa, I assure you, for, yesterday, while at vespers with the Berties, at St. Peter’s, I almost lost my heart to an elderly gentleman, (at least, one nearly as old as yourself,) who stood near us! There was a great deal of silver sprinkled through his clustering hair, but he had the finest countenance and the most distinguished air I ever saw, and I assure you he never turned his

eyes away from me, so I may flatter myself with having made a most respectable conquest ! Not but that I must confess there was less of admiration than of grave interest in his countenance as he looked at me, something that seemed to say my aspect caused him as much pain as pleasure. We could not find out who he was, although he followed us to our carriage, and we inquired his name of two or three friends in the crowd."

"And no great consequence, I should think," was the reply. "Come, Alice, finish your luncheon and your romance ; the horses have been waiting half-an-hour." And a few minutes afterwards Colonel Wilbraham and his daughter, followed by their English groom, were seen turning out of the Piazza di Spagna and directing their horses towards the Ponte Molle.

It was a beautiful day in the middle of February ; Rome, at all other seasons of the year so dull and desolate in appearance, was fast filling with strangers for the holy week ;

English equipages, with their well-appointed servants and thorough-bred horses, formed a brilliant contrast in the streets to the lumbering coaches, the heavy, long-tailed horses, and the ill-dressed lacqueys of the Catholic, but not *Apostolical* Roman prelates; and groups of fair English equestrians, with their gay and gallant escorts, were seen issuing from the various outlets of the city, to invigorate themselves before dinner with a canter over the Campagna, under the bluest and serenest of skies, and “*cœlum non animum mutant*,” to awaken its echoes with accents better adapted to the dusty delights of Grosvenor Gate, than to the lonely grandeur of that plain which may well be denominated the sepulchre of empires.

But among the bevies of fair horsewomen thus sunning themselves under a Roman sky on that bright day, none was more conspicuous for youth, beauty of form and face, and *la grace plus belle que la beauté encore*, than Alice Wilbraham. Her large dark eyes, “now boldly

bright, now beautifully shy," mirrored every thought and sentiment of her frank uncompromising mind ; there was truth and talent as well as beauty in the smooth expanse of her noble forehead ; sensibility spoke in the changing hues of her delicately rounded cheeks, and fascination lurked in the dimples round her mouth. Add to these personal advantages, that she was the only child and heiress of a man of ancient family and large fortune, and it will not be wondered at that she should have become the fashion among the English congregated during that winter at Rome. Besides she had not yet been "brought out" in England, and her manners were totally free from the conventional jargon, and her mind quite unshackled by the diplomacy of any particular *coterie*, elect or select ; there was much originality about her, and perhaps a little too much decision of character for so young a person ; but the latter defect was owing to the mistaken system of education

which had been adopted for her under the superintendence of two persons wholly unfitted for such a charge, and whom at a very early period of her life she discovered to be immeasurably inferior to herself in intellect; namely, a father with a capricious temper, an uncultivated mind, and an unfeeling heart; and a mother-in-law equally destitute of abilities, whom nature had intended for a good-natured person, and circumstances had reduced to merely a harmless one; one of those women who in common parlance and by common accord are designated as “a very good sort of person,” by which term I always infer that they are very good for nothing in a *rational* point of view. To such persons, a girl of Alice Wilbraham’s sense and penetration could not look up with any great deference or respect, and although her manner towards them never betrayed any offensive absence of either of those sentiments, it was characterized by an independence of opinion and reliance upon self alone, which, while they were looked upon by

Colonel and Mrs. Wilbraham as indications of genius, by strangers were pronounced to be evidences of the self-willedness of a spoiled child. Nevertheless she was a charming creature, high-spirited, warm-hearted, generous-minded, and with a love of justice so inherent in her nature, that quick and impressionable as all her feelings were, she never adopted prejudices upon hearsay, and never suffered herself to be biassed unkindly towards any one until by their own faults they had forced her to judge them as they were ; not as she wished them to be.

She had lost her mother at a very early age, and retained no recollection whatever of that parent ; and one of her greatest sorrows had been that she was never allowed to allude to her ; never permitted to satisfy that tender curiosity so natural in a child to know what a lost mother was like in mind and person. There was no trace of the first Mrs. Wilbraham in Alice's home ; not a picture, not even a book bearing her name ; no monument in the

church—no grave in the church-yard to point out the place where she slept her last sleep ! it was as though such a person had never been. And when Alice one day ventured to remark to her step-mother upon the unusual obscurity which appeared to involve the memory of her departed parent, she was warned by her never to allude to the subject before her father, as it was a most painful one to him. Her mother had died abroad, and the many faults of her character which had disturbed the harmony of their domestic life, had been buried in the grave with her.

But to return to our equestrians. Colonel Wilbraham, under the guidance of his daughter, having arrived near the Ponte Molle, was following a narrow pathway along the banks of the yellow Tiber, and the latter was again congratulating herself upon having escaped from the *seccatura* of her inevitable Cavalieri of the Campagna, and expatiating upon the delights of exploring a new ride, when a horseman was

seen approaching them at a rapid pace from the opposite direction ; Alice's quick eye was immediately caught by his appearance, and directing her Father's attention to him, she exclaimed, " See, papa ! here comes my elderly admirer of St. Peter's ; is he not a noble looking creature ? "

Colonel Wilbraham's eye followed his daughter's as she spoke, and rested upon the countenance of the stranger who was now almost close to them. Had a basilisk met his view instead of the elegant and interesting looking person before him, the change produced in his countenance could not have been more appalling ; his face flushed to deepest crimson, and then became of an ashy lividness, while his features were convulsively contracted as though by some dreadful inward struggle.

" Turn round, Alice," he exclaimed in a voice tremulous with passion ; " you shall not meet *that* man !" and as she looked with surprise upon her father, and hesitated to obey,

he seized upon the reins of her horse so intemperately in order to enforce his commands, that the highly-managed animal backing suddenly towards the river, slipped his hind feet over the bank, and losing his balance was precipitated with his fair burthen into the turbid waves. The smothered shriek, the heavy plunge, and the splashing of waters that followed it, frightened Colonel Wilbraham's horse beyond his powers of management, and starting off in a contrary direction at the top of its speed bore its rider out of sight of the dreadful catastrophe which had occurred ; while the stranger whose unexpected appearance had apparently occasioned all the mischief, flung himself from his horse and without waiting to throw off his coat plunged into the river, and swam towards the spot where Alice had disappeared.

In a few moments she rose to the surface disengaged from her horse, which was now seen rapidly swimming down the stream, and the stranger cutting through the waves with

a powerful stroke, succeeded in reaching her before she again sank ; and while with one arm he grasped and sustained her insensible form, with the other he made almost incredible efforts to regain the bank, an achievement which was rendered doubly difficult by the embarrassment of his own wet garments, and the long heavy habit of Alice, the weight of which every moment threatened to drag them both beneath the waves.

At length, however, he touched the bank, and a few persons, whom the rumour of the accident had quickly drawn to the spot, with difficulty succeeded in extricating him and his unconscious burthen from their perilous situation : it was just time—his tasked strength was fast failing him, and another moment's delay would have been fatal to both ; for no sooner had he beheld Alice stretched upon the dry land, and that kneeling down by her he laid his hand upon her heart, and ascertained that it still beat, than uttering a fervent “ Thank

God she lives !” he sank down by her side, bereft of all sense, cold, motionless, and death-like as herself.

It was at that identical moment that Colonel Wilbraham, having at length mastered his startled steed, regained, in a state of mind not to be described, the spot where the accident had occurred. The first object that met his eyes was his daughter’s insensible form stretched upon the ground, her head supported by some poor *Trasteverine*, who were wringing the water from her beautiful long dark hair, and chafing her colourless temples. The first accents that fell upon his ear were those of his groom, who exultingly exclaimed,

“ Oh, sir ! Miss Wilbraham is safe, and only in a faint, praise be to God ! and this is the good gentleman that saved her, God bless him !” and he pointed to the stranger prostrate by her side ; but the moment Colonel Wilbraham’s eye rested upon him, the same deadly expression of hatred and rage that had been

called forth but a few minutes before by the sudden appearance of that person in his path, again overspread his countenance.

“Damnation !” he muttered, grinding his teeth as he cast a withering look upon him, “I would rather Alice had perished than that she should have been saved by that fellow !” and, snatching his daughter up in his arms, he bore her as rapidly as he could from so abhorred a vicinity, and the moment a carriage could be procured, conveyed her home, without uttering an inquiry concerning the being who had generously perilled his own life to rescue Alice from death, and whom he had abandoned apparently lifeless to the mercy of a few low-lived and ignorant persons.

CHAPTER II.

“KATE,” said Colonel Wilbraham to his wife, after Alice had been placed in a warm bed at home, restored to her senses, and pronounced by the physician who had been sent for, to be more frightened than hurt by her immersion in the Tiber, — “Kate, can you guess who it was that saved the life of Alice to-day?”

“Dear me, no! how should I be able to guess?” replied Mrs. Wilbraham; “Sir Allan Beaufoy perhaps, — everybody says he is very much in love with Alice, and I begin to think so myself, and that he would be a most desirable husband for her; and I am sure it is time to think of marrying her, for as Mrs. Bertie was saying yesterday—”

“D—n Mrs. Bertie !” exclaimed the Colonel, cutting short the discursive nothings of his wife ; “no, Kate, it was not Sir Allan,—would to God it had been him, or any other human being in the world but the man who rescued her !”

“Goodness gracious ! who *could* it be !” exclaimed Mrs. Wilbraham, half frightened by the singular expression of her husband’s countenance.

“CAVENDISH !” was the answer, uttered in a voice of suppressed rage.

A long pause ensued ; at length Mrs. Wilbraham broke the silence, “Well, who could have dreamed of such a thing ? what is to be done ?”

“We must leave Rome immediately—I will not remain here another day.”

“But Alice cannot be moved immediately ; Doctor Maxwell says that she must be kept in absolute quiet for a few days, her nerves have been so jarred by the fright.”

“I care not for what Dr. Maxwell says !

Even should Alice die on the road, she must be removed from this to-morrow ; worlds should not induce me to let her remain another day in the same place with those people."

"What, is *she* here too?"

"I suppose so. Infernal audacity to dare to shew their faces here at the same time with ourselves!"

"Perhaps, my dear, they did not know of our being here?"

"Not know of it, indeed! that is not likely;—besides, he, I find, has been watching Alice already, although she has no suspicion in the world of who he is. There is some plot in the wind, depend upon it; but I will counter-act it—I have *sworn* that they *never* shall meet, and they *never shall*!—no, not even if *she* were dying, and that nothing else could soothe her last moments!"

"What, Alice do you mean?"

"No, *Mrs. Cavendish*!" and there was a withering sneer on his lip, as he pronounced

that name, that spoke of deadly inextinguishable hatred. "And now, mark me, Kate," he resumed, "Alice does not know who saved her life to-day, she never must know it—*never!* We can easily tell her that it was some one else—either myself, or even Thomas; and to-morrow morning we will leave Rome, and there will be an end of the confounded affair."

What more they said, need not here be recapitulated, as it was irrelevant to the subject to which I wish to confine myself, and indeed, chiefly consisted in Mrs. Wilbraham's puerile lamentations at being obliged to leave Rome so suddenly, and her husband's equally puerile but far more intemperate imprecations against the persons and the circumstance which had rendered such a step necessary.

While they were still discussing it, Thomas the groom was giving *his* version of the affair to Parker the lady's-maid.

"Depend upon it, Mrs. Parker," said he, "that gentleman, whosoever he be, is a lover of

Miss Alice's that won't be let to have her anyhow, for it was all along of our meeting him that the Colonel jerked my young lady's bridle in that violent manner as was the instigation of her horse backing into the river with her, because, I take it, he didn't choose them to meet face to face. I never see'd anything more savage in all my born-days than master's conduct from beginning to end ! Why, when I shewed him the gentleman lying like dead by Miss Alice, after they were dragged out of the water, instead of falling down upon his knees before him to thank him for what he had done, he gave him such a look as a body would give to a toad before they ups with their foot to crush it to death, muttering something about wishing he and Miss was at the bottom of the river together ; and then, whipping her up in his arms, runs off with her out of sight, and goes clean away home, without ever asking or caring whether t'other was dead or alive. Why, dang it, my blood *rix* against the Colonel, and I saw

that all the people round cried shame upon him ! So, on pretence of looking after Miss Alice's horse, which to be sure was got in the most awkwardest way out of the water, I just ran back to see whether I could do anything for the poor gentleman ; and there he was in a dead faint, and the people round fumbling in his pockets to rob him, I suppose ; so I just took a search myself, to see if he had a card about him with his name and address, but no such thing forthcoming ; and what do you think I found instead in his pocket-book ? —Why a sealed letter, directed to Miss Wilbraham, which makes good my guess of his being sweethearting after her ; to be sure, he is *rayther* too old for such a young 'un as she be ; but he is a fine, handsome gentleman as ever I saw, and worth a cartload of the old *barrownight* that's so sweet upon her ! So I popped the letter into my own pocket, thinking Miss Alice would like to have it after all ; and when I had helped to carry the gentleman into the

nearest house, I ran off for a doctor for him."

"Give me the letter, Thomas, that I may carry it to my mistress," said Parker.

"No, no, Mrs. Parker! fair play is a jewel; the letter is not for *mistress*, but for *miss*, and nobody else sha'n't have it with my leave!"

"Well, I didn't say anyone else should," was the answer; "Miss Alice is my mistress as well as Mrs. Wilbraham, and what is more, I like her the best of the two, for she is twice as generous as the other; so you may be sure that I would be the last person in the world to do anything that would bring her into trouble; give me the letter, Thomas, and she shall be sure to have it."

"Honour bright, Mrs. Parker?"

"Honour bright, Thomas," and the latter delivering up the letter, perceived that Mrs. Parker's ideas of honour did not prevent her peeping into each end of it, and holding it up to the light, in order to make herself mistress

of its contents ; but in vain did she pry : the envelope was of such thick paper that not a line was to be distinguished through it ; and with a sigh of disappointment she dropped it into her bag, consoling herself, however, with the hope, that sooner or later, she must be let into the secret of her young lady's love affairs.

CHAPTER III.

THE month of October, of the same year, found Colonel Wilbraham's family established at Pisa, for the winter. The intervening months had been passed by them at Florence and Lucca, and Genoa, in search of health for Alice, whose life had almost paid the forfeit of her father's intemperate rashness, in carrying her away from Rome before she had recovered from the effects of her alarming accident. She had been seized with fever on the road to Florence, and had with difficulty been conveyed to the latter place, where her malady assumed the most distressing character, and ultimately fell upon her nerves; but youth, and

the strength of her fine constitution triumphed over the dangerous symptoms which had assailed her, and change of air and scene had been successfully resorted to in completing her recovery when her returning strength permitted her to travel.

Colonel Wilbraham had not scrupled to arrogate to himself (when he first spoke with his daughter upon the subject of her accident in the Tiber,) the merit of having snatched her from a dreadful death, at the risk of his own life; and such a circumstance could not fail to operate most powerfully upon a girl of Alice's quick and generous feelings; it established in her heart a sentiment of enthusiastic tenderness and gratitude for her father, which she had never before experienced, and it gave him an influence over her mind which he had never before possessed. "Dear, dear papa," she would often exclaim, kissing his hand, and smiling through tears in which grief had no share, "how can I ever repay you for all you

have done for me?" And so difficult had it become for her to resist his wishes in any way, that even when Sir Allan Beaufoy followed them to the Baths of Lucca, and became their daily guest and companion there, she so far overcome her distaste for his society, when she found how agreeable it was to her father, as to receive him with an amenity which she had never before shewn him, and which misled the matured Adonis into a belief that his well made-up person had produced the desired impression upon the virgin heart of Alice Wilbraham, and that her youth and beauty and fortune would be willingly bestowed upon him in exchange for the title of Lady Beaufoy whenever he chose to place that honour at her disposal.

Once and once only had Alice ventured to allude in conversation with her father to the stranger whose sudden appearance had awakened in him such fierce emotions; but Colonel Wilbraham had prepared himself for his daugh-

ter's question, and met it with apparent indifference.

"He was a person," he said, "whom he had known many years ago, but his infamous character having rendered it necessary for him subsequently to drop the acquaintance, it was upon that account embarrassing for them to meet."

"What had he done?" Alice inquired.

"Everything that was bad!"

"Was he married?"

"Yes."

"His name?"

"Cavendish."

Alice thought that never before were character and countenance so ill suited to each other, never so completely did the latter belie the former as in the case of this stranger; there was nothing to be perceived in that noble countenance that was not true to man's best attributes,—lofty intellect, deep thought, benignant feeling, sweetness of disposition and

penetration of mind were there combined, but not a shade, not a line that could mar their harmony; such a physiognomy could not be the index of a vicious or a debased mind! and, remembering her father's capricious disposition and the unreasonable prejudices in which he too often delighted to indulge, she more than half absolved Mr. Cavendish, in her own mind, from the sweeping censure which Colonel Wilbraham had passed upon him, and, having done so, would, probably, soon have forgotten that such a person existed, but for a circumstance which riveted his image, with a strange, mysterious interest upon her memory.

It is not to be supposed that Mrs. Parker, the trusty depositary of what she believed to be a love-letter for her young mistress, should have allowed such a fact to either escape her recollection, or to dwindle (literally speaking) into "a dead letter" in her hands. No; like other able diplomatists, she "bided her time," and, patiently waiting until the illness of Miss

Wilbraham had disappeared, together with the train of nervous symptoms which had followed it, she never brought the subject upon the *tapis* until the family had moved to the baths of Lucca, and that Alice had, in some measure, resumed her ordinary habits. *Then*, shortly after their arrival there, as she was one evening undressing her young lady, she artfully contrived to introduce the subject *à propos* to something else, and, commencing with admiration of Alice's magnificent dark hair, which she was preparing for the night, she congratulated her upon its having escaped the usual effects of fever, and being still, what it had always been pronounced to be, "the *beautifullest* thing in the whole world !"

"Why, ma'am," said she, "Thomas himself, that doesn't think much of anything but the manes and tails of his horses, says he never saw nothing like it, and declares that, when you was brought out of the river in the gentleman's arms that saved you, it fell all over his

shoulders, just like a black veil, and half covered him !”

“ What gentleman are you speaking about, Parker ? It was papa, you know, who brought me out of the Tiber.”

“ Oh, dear no, ma’am, indeed it was not ! The Colonel never had his foot wet in the whole affair, and never saw *anythink* of it, till it was over, and you were safe on dry land ! ’Twas the gentleman as you met out riding by the river side that day that saved you, and Thomas says nobody that hadn’t seen it could have believed all he did and the little thanks he got for it.”

Alice was petrified. Her father had so often repeated the history of his having rescued his daughter from the waves, that, as is often the case with intrepid liars, he had finished by persuading himself of the truth of what he advanced ; and, as for Alice, the shadow of a doubt had never before crossed her mind upon the subject, nor could she now suppose other-

wise than that Parker was grossly mistaken in the statement she was making, and, with her usual vivacity, she told her so.

“No, ma’am,” she replied, to the indignant contradiction of her young lady, “what I am telling you is all true, and no mistake; Thomas has repeated it to me so often, that I could almost fancy I had seen it all myself. Of course the Colonel had his reasons for not letting you know that it was Mr. ——” and she stopped, expecting that Alice would fill up the pause, and furnish her with the name she was dying to hear; but, as the latter did not gratify her curiosity by so doing, she proceeded, “Mr. *Thingummy* that saved your life, and making you believe it was himself; and, of course, he had his reasons for looking so savage at him as he did; but, as Thomas says, says he, ‘Why, if it had been my greatest enemy, Mrs. Parker, I couldn’t have demeaned myself to behave as master behaved to that gentleman!’ And then, says he, ‘Why he took to the water like a New-

foundland dog, and swam so gallant-like, 'twas quite a sight to look at ! and, when he had laid my young lady on the bank, it would have melted a heart of stone,' says he, 'to see how he took on for fear she was dead, and knelt down and kissed her hand, and cried, and said that if she died he would die single for her sake, for never would he think of any other woman for a wife but her, and then he fell down in a dead faint by her side ;' and, says he, ' 'twas then the Colonel came up and saw all as had happened, and *give* him such a look as would have killed him outright if his eyes had been knives !' and then whips you up, ma'am, and *scrimmages* off with you home, leaving the gentleman for dead and never even sending any assistance to him."

"I will never believe such a history," exclaimed Alice vehemently ; "Thomas must have been either drunk or dreaming when he told it to you, and I am surprised that you,

Parker, should venture to repeat his absurdities to me."

"Well, to be sure, did I ever hear the like!" rejoined Parker. "Why, ma'am, Thomas is the truest man and the most soberest, I will say, that ever I knew, and would scorn to tell a lie upon any account, which is more than can be said of some of his betters, ma'am!" And then, with the same volubility, and a little of the embellishment, (for Mrs. Parker was both imaginative and a reader of romances,) which had characterised certain parts of her preceding narrative, and with which she had improved upon Thomas's strictly veracious version of it, she proceeded to detail all the circumstances attending the finding by him of a letter addressed to Miss Wilbraham in the stranger's pocket-book, and the fact of that document being then in her own safe custody; "and, as seeing is believing, all the world over, why, ma'am, you shall see the letter, which

I only waited till you were quite well to give to you, fearing the sight of it might agitate you, when you was in such a poor nervous way." Saying which, Mrs. Parker drew from her own pocket a letter carefully enveloped in several folds of brown paper to keep it from being soiled, and, having disencumbered it of its covering, placed it in the hands of her young lady.

To describe the surprise and bewilderment of Alice would be impossible ; her indignation and her incredulity had kept pace with each other during the first part of Parker's recital, causing her to lend an unwilling ear to what she looked upon merely as one of Thomas's inventions ; but as the garrulous *soubrette* proceeded, the description she gave of Colonel Wilbraham's intemperate emotions, and of the strange conduct that had accompanied them, corresponded so exactly with what she had herself observed in his manner, but a moment previous to her accident, that her doubts were shaken to their

foundation, by this similar evidence of deep-seated hatred having again been betrayed by him, in a manner to strike upon the vulgar mind of a servant as it had done upon her own. There could be no imagination in such a coincidence, and the letter was there to vouch for the reality of what had followed. Then crowded upon her mind the vivid recollection of the stranger's marked observation of her at St. Peter's, his evident wish to approach her in the crowd, and his having followed her with his eyes until she reached her carriage and was borne out of his sight. What was she to him, or he to her, that he should thus watch her? and by what right had he presumed to address a letter to her? and then she remembered her father's assertion of the "infamy" of his character having rendered a cessation of all intercourse between them compulsory on his part. Was he, indeed, so infamous as, in defiance of all the decencies of life, to make her not only the object of an unprincipled pur-

suit, but to believe that she would listen to such an insult,—he, a married man, and nearly old enough to be her father ! All the pride of Alice revolted at the degrading thought ; she snatched the letter from Parker's hand, cast a hasty glance upon the unknown handwriting in which it was superscribed, and the seal, bearing the mysterious impress of "*Tace*," and then, tearing it in pieces, threw the fragments into the vacant fire-place.

"Thomas and you have both been very much to blame in this business," she said, with a severity which, as it was unusual in her, made a deep impression upon Parker ; "he for possessing himself of this letter, you for supposing that I would receive one coming to me in such a questionable way. The length of time that has elapsed since the occurrence, and my ignorance of all that concerns the person from whose possession it was taken, unfortunately render it impossible for me to return this paper unopened to him ; but, for your future govern-

ment, bear in mind, Parker, that thus do I treat all clandestine correspondence which cannot be so restored, and that a second attempt to convey to me any such, would not only deprive you for ever of my good opinion, but oblige me to lay the whole affair before my father, who would certainly punish the offence by dismissing you from his service."

But, if the truth must be told, the lofty feeling which had impelled Alice to destroy her unknown correspondent's "rejected address" unperused, did not survive the exit of her mortified attendant from the scene; for, scarcely had Parker closed the door, when her young mistress cast a wistful, inquisitive glance at the fire-place, where the fragments of the mysterious letter were scattered in tantalising confusion; then, approaching, she took up one piece of paper to examine the handwriting,—then another,—and, finally, overcome by an irresistible sentiment of curiosity to ascertain upon what grounds Mr. Cavendish had ventured to

address her, she rescued the whole of the torn letter from the ashes, over which it was scattered, and, setting herself seriously to work to put the fragments together, she at last succeeded, and then, with a beating heart, read the following words, to which neither name nor date were affixed :—

“ Whenever this paper reaches you, (and to ensure its doing so, the person to whom it is confided must bear it daily about with him, and trust to the chance of some fortunate opportunity favouring his intention of placing it in your own hands,) you are solemnly adjured to attend to the request that it contains. All that is asked of you is to repair, the day after receiving it, to the *studio* of Thorwalden, the sculptor ; whether you are *alone* or *accompanied* is immaterial, therefore you must perceive that nothing derogatory to your dignity is meditated. The artist will, (as of his own accord,) propose moulding a mask upon your face ; you

are *implored* to acquiesce in his request ; it is the only possible means of obtaining a copy of your features for one who would sacrifice every worldly possession to behold you but once ! and if inviolable secrecy is enjoined you upon the subject of this communication, it is *not* because the supplication it contains would not stand the test of the most rigid scrutiny, but *because* the unhappy circumstances, the fierce passions, and the deadly prejudices which have for ever separated your living form from the writer of these lines, would, in like manner, be interposed to exclude your inanimate image from one whose life, for years, has been one long thought *of* — one long regret *for* you !”

CHAPTER IV.

SOMETHING like stupefaction assailed Alice after the perusal of this strange document. Could it be a mystification; a bait laid by a wary and practised *roué* to entrap her vanity? The allusion to “deadly prejudices” existing in the bosoms of those in authority over her but too well agreed with the language which Colonel Wilbraham had adopted in speaking of Cavendish, and the sinister looks he had directed towards him which still haunted her memory; *deadly* indeed must be those prejudices, since they could have led her father deliberately to advance a falsehood, and unblushingly to appropriate to himself the gratitude that was due from her to another, rather

than allow her to suppose that to that other *she* was indebted for her life ; *he* for his only child. This moral dishonesty in one whom she would fain have respected and loved to the utmost extent of filial tenderness and devotion, was so revolting to her generous nature, so at variance with her uncompromising sense of justice (which never could be warped so as to withhold even from an enemy the meed of well-earned gratitude and praise), that it awakened in her bosom feelings of indignation so bitter as to overpower for the moment all other thoughts ; in proportion as she had before been elated by sentiments of the most unbounded gratitude and enthusiasm for her father, she was now depressed by a chilling sense of contemptuous disapprobation ; he had fallen in her esteem because “ the truth was not in him,” because he had evinced a meanness of soul which she could neither tolerate or understand ; in her first burst of scornful displeasure she would have rushed into his pre-

sence and fearlessly have taxed him with his fault, but a moment's reflection subdued the angry impulse. "He is my father," said she ; "I must not make him blush before his child."

It was not in the nature of Alice, however, to forget or to forgive this dereliction from truth and manly feeling in her father ; hatred she could comprehend, for she was herself capable of hating keenly, — but *honestly* ; but mean vindictiveness she spurned as she would have spurned the lowest vice ; it was the evidence of a cowardly mind, and long did it rankle in her soul that the parent whom she wished to honour should have shewn himself to be the slave of so ungenerous a feeling

On the other hand, something like strong sympathy for her unknown deliverer was the result of this painful discovery, and uniting to the deep debt of gratitude she felt that she owed to him, caused her to dwell much, too much perhaps, upon his image. The tone of deep and melancholy feeling which pervaded

the letter she believed to have been addressed by him to her; the strange request it contained, the recollection of all he had risked for her, and the belief that he was the victim of some inexplicable injustice on the part of her father; all combined to invest him with an interest in her imagination, which, had her mind been as weak as her heart was warm and generous, might have degenerated into the love-sick fancy of a romantic girl. As it was, the feeling which she *did* foster was perhaps not the less dangerous because it was more exalted—had she been thrown in the way of Mr. Cavendish, it might in time have assumed the character of love; but in the meanwhile it went not beyond a sentiment of strong gratitude, and the generous wish of atoning in her own thoughts, and by her own impressions in his favour, for the injustice which had been betrayed, and the ingratitude marked towards him by Colonel Wilbraham,

The necessity of keeping her thoughts to her-

self and the sad conviction that her father had sunk in her esteem, influenced painfully upon the fine spirits of Alice. She evinced an inequality of humour as unusual as it was unaccountable to those around her, and an occasional irritability when questioned as to the cause of her temporary depressions which at last compelled them to leave her to herself; but various were the reasons assigned by the different persons most interested in her state of mind, for the capricious humours in which she of late had indulged. Sir Allan Beaufoy believed that his own manifold attractions had taken captive her young affections, that hope deferred was making her heart sick, and that it was time for him to declare himself in form; Mrs. Wilbraham, whose imaginings in such cases never rose above atmospherical influences and their physical results, fancied that Lucca disagreed with her step-daughter, and that she would be better elsewhere; while Colonel Wilbraham, whose distaste for literature dated

from the days of his schoolboy disgraces at Eton, fancied that Alice was destroying her health by too intense application to the Italian classics, and threatened to throw her books out of the window. Finally it was determined that she must be *nervous*, and that sea-bathing would restore her to her wonted state ; and accordingly to Genoa they went ; but there no improvement was perceptible until Sir Allan, having made his proposals, was unceremoniously rejected by Alice, and took his departure for Baden, to the unutterable mortification of Colonel and Mrs. Wilbraham, and the infinite satisfaction of their daughter, whose spirits experienced a favourable reaction from the consciousness of having for ever put herself beyond the reach of his attentions by her unconditional refusal of his hand.

As the improvement, however, was only temporary, and as sea-bathing had failed in producing the results that had been anticipated for Alice, Genoa was in its turn abandoned

for Pisa ; and a noble apartment in one of the finest palaces on the Lung' Arno was hired by Colonel Wilbraham for the winter months, at the close of which it was his intention to return to England in order that his daughter might take her place among the fair *débutantes* of the ensuing London season with all the polish of her last year's "finishing on the Continent" fresh upon her.

CHAPTER V.

To those sojourners in Italy who have been accustomed to the busy gaiety of Naples or Florence, which unite all the empty flutter of English watering-places to the solid advantages of foreign capitals and royal residences, Pisa, with its languid aspect and silent streets can offer but few attractions; but it has its merits as a residence, and for the stranger whose aim is to "Italianize," it is preferable to the Anglo-Italian colonies above mentioned. Colonel Wilbraham liked it for the little reason of a little mind; he felt himself to be a greater man there than he had been at Rome or Naples, where himself and his belongings had been cast into comparative obscurity by the overshadow-

ing pre-eminence of so many of his aristocratic and wealthy compatriots; but in the quiet routine of Pisan society, where “one day telleth another,” and *magnificoes* are rare as cucumbers at Christmas, the solid hospitalities of the Wilbraham family—the Colonel’s excellent dinners—his lady’s weekly evening receptions—and the charm which Alice’s graceful gaiety and beauty imparted to them, formed a combination of advantages calculated to create a sensation; and their residence at Pisa was accordingly looked upon as a circumstance for congratulation by its inhabitants, native and foreign.

Shortly after their advent and settlement in the *Piano Nobile* of the —— Palace, the suite of rooms upon the ground-floor was engaged for a family from Bologna, — a lady, whose noble name and retinue of servants appeared to the judgment of Colonel and Mrs. Wilbraham, a sufficient guarantee of her respectability to authorize advances on their part towards an ac-

quaintance with their new neighbour. The cards they sent to her were, however, never returned ; and a civil verbal message, conveyed by her old *Maggior-domo*, signified to them that the *Marchesa Sampieri*, having visited Pisa merely for her health, declined entering into any society during her stay there.

Now this was a misdemeanour, in the opinion of Colonel Wilbraham, which merited the visitation of his most uncompromising dislike ; and therefore, although he had not yet beheld the *Marchesa Sampieri*, he never failed to speak disparagingly of her whenever any mention of her name happened to be made in his presence ; which, indeed, was seldom, as no part of the society at Pisa appeared to know anything about her except Mr. Egerton, a young English clergyman, who was passing the winter there in attendance upon a younger brother threatened with all the worst symptoms of decline. That gentleman professed to have known *Madame Sampieri* most intimately during a resi-

dence he had made at Bologna, and spoke of the qualities of her heart and mind in terms of such unqualified respect and admiration that Alice could not forbear regretting that she should be excluded from the society of so amiable a person by a rigid system of seclusion, which admitted of no exception, save in the person of Mr. Egerton, who never failed to pass an hour with her every evening.

“I suppose the Marchesa has good reasons for keeping so much to herself, eh, Egerton?” said Colonel Wilbraham one day to that gentleman, with that indescribable look and accent with which some people know how to imply a tale of scandal.

“Most melancholy ones she certainly has,” replied Mr. Egerton gravely; “having lost, only a few months ago, a husband whom she adored.”

“Oh, really! well, she has certainly shewn her good taste in selecting *you* to dry her

tears," rejoined the Colonel: "I made a run to see her get into her carriage this morning, but was just too late to catch a glimpse of anything but her hand as she drew up the glass. Egad, my dear fellow, they say all over Pisa that you have got to the soft side of the widow's heart, eh?"

"Colonel Wilbraham," returned the young man in a tone of the coldest displeasure, and looking steadily and indignantly in his face, "I have ever looked upon those anonymous defamers, who shield themselves under the vague and untangible designation of '*they say*,' as the most despicable class of poltroons and liars, and as such utterly unworthy that an honourable man should stoop to justify himself from their aspersions. In the present instance I have only to beg that, whoever may have been your informers, you will tell them so *from me*!" And as this conversation had taken place after dinner over their wine, when the

ladies had retired to the drawing-room, Mr. Egerton having thus expressed himself, immediately followed them thither, leaving the Colonel to digest the reproof with what appetite he could ; and, after passing half an hour with them, listening to Alice's music, he took his leave, pointedly specifying that he was going to visit their neighbour, the Marchesa Sampieri.

“ D—d close-mouthed, formal prig, that Egerton !” said Colonel Wilbraham, as soon as the door had closed upon him ; “ there is no getting anything out of him.”

“ Nay, papa, not formal or priggish,” interposed Alice, “ although, perhaps, a little cold and reserved in manner, and strict and severe in conduct ;—but that is all as it should be for a pious clergyman. I should hate to see one of his cloth (let him be ever so young and handsome,) either dancing, or flirting, or gossiping like any empty-headed trifler whose wit lies in his heels, and who, having no ideas of his own, is fain to retail the tattle of his

neighbours instead. Mr. Egerton appears to understand the dignity of his profession too well for anything of that sort."

"I don't know how you will reconcile the *dignity* of his *profession* with his daily dangling after a smart widow, Alice," said her father.

"Simply, papa, by presuming that there is no dangling in the case; and that his visits are authorized by the friendship and intimacy which he so openly declares to have long subsisted between the Marchesa, her late husband, and himself. Why should we travel out of the way for suspicious motives when reasonable ones are not withheld from us?"

"When a woman takes the line adopted by the lady in question," said her father, "and shuts herself up from general society to admit into a particular intimacy a good-looking young man and *no one else*, she must expect that such a deviation from propriety will draw suspicion upon her conduct."

“To be sure she must,” chimed in Mrs. Wilbraham, who generally echoed her husband’s opinions because she had no fixed ones of her own—“such conduct is neither reputable nor natural.”

“To me it appears quite natural,” said Alice, “that a woman who has recently lost her husband, should decline the visits of total strangers, and yet gladly receive those of an old friend without any violation of propriety.”

“Dear me, Alice, you are so fond of an argument! I do believe that you always take the part of the absent for the sake of arguing!”

“Give me credit for better motives,” replied her step-daughter; “I only do as I would be done by!” Then turning to her father, she added, “Pray papa, open the doors and windows; Mr. Egerton told me this evening that the Marchesa delights in listening to my singing, and always throws open all her doors that she may hear me more distinctly. Now upon the principle of returning good for evil,

I am willing to gratify this unsociable lady to the best of my abilities, although she will not vouchsafe to let the light of her countenance shine upon us !”

And seating herself at the piano, Alice sang with exquisite taste and feeling the sublime finale to the Norma, “ *Quel cor tradisti*,” while Colonel and Mrs. Wilbraham, seated at each side of the fire-place, slumbered comfortably in their arm-chairs through the charming performance, and never awoke until the barking of their little dog announced the arrival of a visitor.

CHAPTER VI.

SINCE her immersion in the Tiber, Alice had acquired a sort of nervous horror of riding, which she had vainly endeavoured to surmount; and therefore, during their residence at Pisa, instead of accompanying her father in his morning rides as had heretofore been her custom, she gave up her horse to Mrs. Wilbraham, and under the charge of Parker was in the habit of taking an early walk everyday in the environs. During one of these morning rambles, she unexpectedly encountered Mr. Egerton under the arcades of the Campo Santo, with a lady dressed in the deepest mourning leaning upon one arm, and on the other his sick young brother;

an elderly female attendant followed with a camp-stool, and Alice immediately conjectured that the lady must be Madame Sampieri. Although anxious to obtain a glimpse of her, she felt uncertain how she ought to act with respect to Mr. Egerton, and whether it would not be better for her merely to bow *en passant* than to stop and accost him while thus accompanied by a person who had rejected in so unqualified a manner all intercourse with her and her family ; but her dilemma was put an end to by that gentleman of his own accord stopping her and cordially extending his hand while mutual inquiries passed between them as to the extent of their respective rambles. Alice could not restrain her eyes from glancing for a moment towards the Marchesa during this short colloquy ; but the close bonnet and thick black crape veil worn by that lady baffled all her curiosity respecting her countenance, and the large black cashmere shawl that enveloped her figure prevented her from ascertaining more

than that she was tall and slender, and appeared to be suffering from a distressing shortness of breath.

This transient survey over, Alice resumed her walk without a second glance ; but Parker who was endowed with all the curiosity of her class, and had turned round to satisfy it more completely by a view of the group as they moved away, arrested her progress by an exclamation of, “ La ! ma’am, something must be the matter with that lady ! she has been obliged to sit down and looks as if she was going off in a faint.” Alice turned round too, and seeing what had happened immediately returned to offer her assistance. The Marchesa was seated on the camp-stool, with her head supported upon the bosom of her attendant, who had drawn her veil aside to allow the fresh air to blow over her features ; she had not fainted, but her face was pale as ashes, and large tears were forcing themselves through

her closed eyelids and rolling slowly over her faded cheeks. Even in that discomposed state her countenance was remarkable for beauty, and, although the freshness of youth had passed away from it, Alice thought that she had seen few younger faces more calculated to strike the beholder with admiration, such harmony reigned in the softly moulded features, the clear colourless complexion, and the dark hair and still darker brows and eye-lashes that rendered more dazzlingly white the pensive forehead of that lady.

“Madame Sampieri has walked too much, and over-fatigued herself,” said Mr. Egerton, in reply to Alice’s anxious inquiries and offers of assistance; “it is nothing more than an hysterical affection to which she is subject. But since you are so kind as to offer your services, I should feel much obliged, if you are on your way home, by your telling the Marchesa’s servant, (who was desired to follow her here

with the carriage,) to lose no time in coming to the gate, as it is desirable that we should get her home with as little delay as possible."

Alice lost no time in executing Mr. Egerton's commission, and as she found the carriage in waiting at the entrance of the Campo Santo, she despatched the servant to his lady forthwith, and had the satisfaction of seeing the equipage drive into the court-yard of their mutual residence, and Madame Sampieri alight from it with very little assistance, a few minutes after she herself had reached home.

After this occurrence, Alice noticed that each day when she descended the great staircase to take her morning walk with Parker, the doors of the Marchesa's apartment were standing wide open, and she could perceive the lady herself seated in an arm-chair in the first saloon of the suite adjoining the antichamber, and so placed that she commanded a full view of whoever passed by on the staircase ; yet, whenever at a later hour of the day she descended

with Colonel or Mrs. Wilbraham, the doors were invariably closed. Beyond these casual glimpses, she saw nothing more of Madame Sampieri; they never again met out of doors; and Alice, after the first inquiries she addressed to Egerton respecting the health of his friend, the day after their rencontre in the Campo Santo, did not again allude to her, feeling that she had no right to make a person wholly unknown to her, the subject of investigation, and not choosing that the approach to interest which she really felt for her should be confounded in his estimation with the idle and impertinent curiosity which had been already exhibited on the same subject by her father.

CHAPTER VII.

ALICE was to complete her eighteenth year on the 1st of January, and it was the intention of Colonel Wilbraham to celebrate the anniversary of his daughter's birth by the most splendid *fête* that had been given in Pisa for many years. Cards of invitation had been issued a month previously to all the beauty and fashion of the place, both native and foreign, for that night; friends were bidden, even from Florence, to swell the pageant; *tableaux vivans*, a *bal costumé*, historical quadrilles, and national dances, formed the programme of the *fête*; and during the last fortnight of December, Alice was completely ab-

sorbed in the various preparations it involved, consulting different prints of costumes, presiding over the arrangement of her own dress, rehearsing *tableaux*, and practising mazurkas. The only drawback to the keen delight with which she anticipated this gay anniversary was, that Mr. Egerton had excused himself from attending it, and, notwithstanding his gravity, Mr. Egerton was decidedly too great a favourite with Alice for her not to regret his decision; but she respected the scruples upon which his refusal was founded, and when he told her that since he had taken orders he had never once been into a ball-room, because he felt that such frivolities were incompatible with the sacred calling to which he had devoted himself, she acquiesced in the propriety of his decision with charming candour, and even refused to support Mrs. Wilbraham in the arguments, and Colonel Wilbraham in the ridicule, with which they severally endeavoured to combat his resolution.

“No,” said she, “I will not throw such discredit upon your consistency as to suppose that you could allow our foolish wishes to weigh against your own conscientious feelings in such a question. I will own that at first I felt much vexed with you for your refusal, because I fancied it was meant to convey a covert censure upon us for indulging in such frivolities; but my selfishness rendered me unjust, and now that I understand your motives, I am free to own that I would not wish you to retract them; *you* are right Mr. Egerton, and *we* are wrong.”

“Your good opinion is necessary to sustain my courage,” he replied; “for I assure you, Miss Wilbraham, that I never before felt so strongly the difficulty of keeping my resolution inviolate as in the present instance, where there is so much to tempt me to forego it; but I shall claim a reward for my self-denial, and request the permission of Mrs. Wilbraham to pass the eve of your *fête* — the last moment of the expiring year, with you.”

“Remember,” said Mrs. Wilbraham, “that on that evening we shall be very busy with the last finishing touches of our preparations for the morrow, and you will inevitably be obliged to see and hear a great deal of what is going on, for the ball-room is to be lighted up, that we may judge of the effect it will produce; and as you disapprove of all that sort of thing, I only think it fair to warn you beforehand of what will come to pass.”

“Pardon me, my dear madam,” he answered, “you have mistaken me if you imagine that I have expressed any *general* disapprobation of the gaieties you are meditating; and although I feel that my sombre black coat would be quite out of place in your brilliant ball-room, I am far from wishing to extend the prohibition to any but those of *my own cloth*. If you will allow me to pass the evening with you, you will see that I can enter into all the pleasurable anxieties entailed upon you by the preparations for your *fête*, with as much

relish as if I were to be one of the assistants, and if I am good for nothing else, I can at least play *audience* and *critic* for your rehearsal.

Mr. Egerton was punctual to his engagement, and late in the evening of the thirty-first of December presented himself at Colonel Wilbraham's just at the moment when the whole family had assembled to witness the effect produced by the decorations of the ball-room when lighted up; and so judicious was the admiration expressed by him at the taste and magnificence exhibited in the whole arrangement, so unfeigned the good-humoured patience with which he listened to Mrs. Wilbraham's oft-repeated details of all the difficulties she had had to compete with in the progress of her preparations, from the opinionated decorator of the theatre, who had planned the various embellishments, down to the lazy mechanics who had executed them,—for the good lady imagined that to admit that anything could be effected with ease was to take away

half its merit, and in all her little undertakings invariably surrounded herself with a *chevaux de frise* of self-created obstacles, that she might have the satisfaction of cutting them down single-handed, and thereby impress upon her friends the fact of her being a woman of unquestionable talent, tact, and management, — that, charmed with his politeness, she more than once remarked half audibly to Alice that she never before had seen Mr. Egerton so agreeable, and that he certainly was the most sensible young man of her acquaintance. She even went so far as to suggest that he might at last be persuaded to relent from his stern resolve, and shielding his scruples and his black coat under a dark silk domino, be tempted to mix in the gay scene; but as Alice was aware that Mr. Egerton was not one of those soft yielding spirits whose principles hang so loosely upon them that they can be laid aside with their garments, she discountenanced the proposal, and made her mother-in-law feel

that to press the question would be less complimentary than it would be indelicate.

Having thus won the golden opinions of Mrs. Wilbraham by the practice of that most difficult acquirement—the art of listening—the test and triumph of good breeding, which, springing from benevolence of mind and patience, enables very clever and sensible persons to listen to the egotisms and trivialities of those with whom they have no thought or feeling in common, without evincing any symptoms of ennui, Mr. Egerton was released from the labyrinth of grievances and difficulties through which he had for the last hour been wandering under the guidance of Mrs. Wilbraham; and when at last suffered to seat himself quietly in the only sitting room which remained undisturbed by preparations for the morrow, he petitioned Alice to indulge him with his favourite song, the “Ave Maria” of Schubert. She complied with that graceful readiness and absence of affectation which was one of her most

amiable characteristics ; and as her rich and flexible voice gave to the touching composition all the passionate pathos of which it is susceptible, the usually undemonstrative and grave Egerton leaned back in his chair with folded arms and closed eyes, lost in the emotions which those sweet sounds had called forth, and quite unconscious that the tears with which his cheeks were wet had betrayed them to others.

Alice was more flattered by this mute tribute to her powers from one who had never addressed to her any of the adulations of which others were so lavish, than if he had given utterance to the most high-flown compliments that lie within the scope of human hyperbole ; but no leaven of coquetry or vanity mingled with the gratification she experienced ; she sincerely esteemed and admired Mr. Egerton, but the idea of achieving his conquest had never once crossed her mind, and she would just as soon have contemplated a flirtation with her father

as with him, young and handsome as he unquestionably was. From the commencement of their acquaintance he had adopted a tone with her which no other person of his sex had ever assumed. He had permitted himself to speak to her unreservedly of the little faults he had discovered in her character : her proneness to satire ; her occasional absence of deference to the opinion of her elders ; and an avowed love of admiration, which he feared might eventually degenerate into coquetry ; all had been unscrupulously adverted to by him ; and while the impression produced upon Alice's mind by his severe judgment was that Egerton was alive only to her faults, and that only from that feeling of benevolence which extended to *all* his kind, he was anxious to correct them, the fact is that, amidst her little *travers*, he had discovered so much to approve, such rectitude of mind, such warmth of heart, such generosity of soul, so much forbearance in listening to the mention of her

faults, and so much candour in acknowledging them, that before he was aware of the extent to which his admiration of her excellence had led him, his heart—never before touched,—was irrevocably hers.

Other considerations also rendered Alice an object of peculiar interest to Egerton; he saw that her home was ill-suited to one of her character and pursuits; he had noticed and sympathised in the blank weariness that would occasionally overspread her speaking countenance when Mrs. Wilbraham, meaning to be particularly agreeable, had been particularly tiresome and prosing; he had detected still more alarming indications of impatience in the angry sparkle of her eye and the almost imperceptible smile of scorn that would curl her lip whenever Colonel Wilbraham indulged in any of those deviations from truth with which he was accustomed so unscrupulously to garnish his conversation, and which were always called into requisition when a malicious perversion of

facts could be advanced; he saw that she was painfully alive to the littlenesses of her natural protectors — that all the best feelings of her heart were thrown back upon themselves for want of proper sympathy and development; he *felt* as well as *saw* how beautiful she was, how good, how excellent, how bountifully endowed by Nature with all those qualities which were calculated to render her the ornament and blessing of a congenial home — the first as well as the fairest of created beings, if she fell into *good hands*. He knew that, with her worldly prospects she would become the object of speculation to many a heartless calculator, who would woo her for her wealth and not for her worth; and he feared that the moral discomforts of her home would lead her rashly to form some such connection—to plunge headlong into some ill-assorted marriage from which there could be no escape for her but through the portals of *guilt* or of *death*.

One whom he had known, as fair, as good,

and as gifted as herself, with the same high spirit, the same warm heart, the same abstract love of virtue, the same bitter scorn of vice and meanness, had thus been wedded and thus fallen, because *when she knew* the man to whom she was bound, her soul loathed him ; because where she would have honoured she was constrained to despise ; because, when *too late*, the knowledge came of one whom nature had formed to command her respect and love,—and then she was fated to prove how

“ Dangerous
Is that temptation, that doth goad us on
To sin, in loving virtue.”

And she fell, and the world proclaimed her vicious ; the world which fawns upon successful vice ! and those were most clamorous against her who themselves had been the most deeply steeped in its depravities ; and thus it ever is.

Something of all this was crowding upon the thoughts of Egerton as he listened with closed and humid eyes to the singing of Alice, for

certain strains of music have secret sympathies with certain ideas, and all the beauty and harmony of her soul seemed, to him, to be typified in those sweet sounds, and something, too, of the melancholy fate which he apprehended for her. But while he still mused, and the last *morendo* bars of the accompaniment died away beneath the light fingers of Alice, the chimes of the pendule, on the chimneypiece, told the hour of midnight, and in the next moment a burst of harmony was heard proceeding from a full orchestra, in the open air, opposite to the palace.

CHAPTER VIII.

EVERY one in the room rushed forward, and, throwing the windows open, gazed out to discover the serenaders. It was a clear moonlight night—an Italian moonlight—and the azure gloom of the sky was unbroken by a single fleeting cloud; the river lay deep and still beneath that glorious canopy, reflecting, upon its broad bosom, the silvery track of the bright moonbeams; the princely palaces that border the quays of the Arno were already wrapped in silence and repose, and threw their broad shadows on the ground; no evidences of living beings were to be seen, save the occupants of a large gondola-shaped boat, which was moored

opposite to the —— palace, from whence proceeded the concord of sweet sounds which had thus suddenly “awakened the dull ear of night.”

“A serenade!” exclaimed Alice, her eyes sparkling with pleasure, “how delightful! whoever has devised this piece of gallantry merits our warmest thanks for ushering in the new year thus harmoniously to us.” And she looked towards Egerton, more than half inclined to attribute to him the charming surprise which had been prepared for her, but he most seriously disclaimed the merit of having imagined it.

“It must be some of your Italian admirers, Alice,” said her father; “I should not wonder if it were Count Lanneci; he has all the opera people at his command, you know, and is just the sort of effeminate fellow that would think fiddling in the streets at night a pretty way of turning a lady’s head. For my part, I think Egerton too sensible a man, and too thoroughly English to give in to such foreign fid-fad.”

“And for my part,” remarked Mrs. Wilbraham, “I am pretty sure it must be one of the Temœreseffs — those Russians are so magnificent ! and you may remember what a fine serenade Prince Alexis gave to his mother on her *fête* day.”

“Which is no reason why he should give me one upon my birthday,” interrupted Alice ; “however, pray let us reserve our wonderings and conjectures until the music has ceased ; it is too delicious for a single note of it to be lost.” And she leaned entranced from the window as the floating orchestra executed, with a perfection which attested to the superior talent of the musicians, selections from her favourite operas of *Il Don Giovanni*, *La Semiramide*, *La Norma*, and *Il Pirata*.

Long before the serenade had terminated, however, Colonel Wilbraham and his lady had retired from the window to the fireside, and the more congenial amusement of their own conversation, leaving Alice and Egerton to the

undisturbed enjoyment of that which they were both so eminently calculated to appreciate—the one rapt from the earth and all that it contained in the intensity of her delight—the other feeling that of all the gratifications to which the *senses* merely are the channel, none is comparable to that of listening to delicious music by the side of the being one best loves.

And never had Alice appeared so beautiful in the eyes of Egerton as at that moment; all her usual brilliancy and animation had given place to an expression of pensive abstraction so sweet yet so sad, that it was evident the sounds which her ear drank in had caused some master chord of her soul to vibrate deeply and powerfully to that mysterious influence, awakening thoughts which he felt as though it would be little less than profanation for him to disturb. In a pause of the music, however, Alice herself spoke, and alluded to her feelings. “It is strange,” said she, in a low voice; — “no it is not strange—after all, it is but natural

that my first thoughts on the return of my birthday should always be devoted to my mother, although I have no recollection of her — although I may be said never to have known her, she died when I was so young ; and yet this anniversary — this 1st of January, apparently so joyous a day for us all, is always ushered in with tears shed in secret by me for that dear unknown parent. Mother ! there is something sweet and holy in the name. Oh, Mr. Egerton, how I should have loved my mother, had God spared her to me ; so well should I have loved her, so unceasingly do I deplore her loss, that I have never been able to bestow upon her successor the fond appellation which belonged, of right, to her alone.”

The eyes of Alice gushed forth, and those of Egerton grew dim too, as he gazed upon the youthful speaker, for the whole history of her feelings had escaped her in those few words ; that unceasing yearning, that irrepressi-

ble regret for her departed parent, told not more truly of the treasure of filial love and duty of which her nature was capable, than of the dreary fact, that the persons among whom her lot had been cast had failed to inspire her with the sentiments of devoted affection and respect, which alone could have developed those feelings in all their intensity.

“And have you,” said Egerton, looking at Alice, as though he would have read through her soul, “no recollection of your mother whatever? no confused glimpses of the period when you lost her?”

“None,” she replied, steadily returning his gaze, and in an accent so sorrowful that its sincerity touched him to the heart. “I was not quite three years old when she was taken from me. I do not even *remember to have remembered her*, and a system of silence has ever been observed upon everything relating to her, but too well calculated to have obliterated every childish recollection from my mind.

The most distant allusion to her name, in my father's presence, has, from my earliest years, been prohibited to me, on pain of causing him the utmost suffering ; and, as the subject has ever appeared more than painful, evidently distasteful to Mrs. Wilbraham, I have been able to gather no information from her, beyond the fact of my mother's maiden name having been Edith Stanley ; that her family is, at least, as good a one as our own, but that my father having had some serious differences with them, at the period of my mother's death, a rupture between the two families ensued, which has never been made up, and thus, all intercourse having been broken off between them, I have remained, to this day, a complete stranger to my nearest relations. I know not to which side of the question the most blame is to be attached, but, should I ever become my own mistress, my first care will be to communicate with my mother's family, wherever they may be, for my heart disclaims this unnatural isola-

tion from such near ties, and longs to exchange the rights of kindred with them !”

“ And would you, indeed, Miss Wilbraham,” said Egerton, so eagerly, that Alice felt surprised by the strangeness of his manner, “ would you, indeed, despite all obstacles, take upon yourself to make this step towards a reconciliation with your mother’s family ?”

“ Do not doubt it,” she answered, “ and even should they extend *to me* the enmity which, I am led to believe, exists between them and *my father*, and reject my advances, I shall, at least have the consolation of knowing that I have fulfilled a duty, in having endeavoured to establish a better understanding with them, and a still more sacred duty in striving to bring myself in contact with those who would speak to me of my mother, who would tell me where she died, and, perhaps, lead me to her grave, that I might cast myself upon it, and breathe over her dust the expressions of love and of sorrow, which have

so long and unnaturally been pent up *here!*" And she laid her hand upon her heart, with a gesture of indignant grief.

Then, without pausing to enable Egerton to reply, and in the same low, rapid voice, and with the same excited manner, she continued,

"If, from their immortal home, the spirits of the dead are permitted to be cognizant of that which passes upon earth, and sometimes to hover near those whom, while living, they loved, and whose feelings are all unveiled to their spiritual gaze, I would fain believe that, in this way, a knowledge has been accorded to my mother of her child's sentiments! Nay, there are moments when I feel as though she were so near to me that the influence of her unseen presence pervades my whole being. On my birthdays this persuasion always comes more strongly upon me, and but just now, while listening to those divine strains, at this calm hour, beneath yon dark, pure sky, it seemed

to me that she too was listening to them with me ! Don't laugh at me, don't blame me, Mr. Egerton, for what will, doubtless, appear to your judgment the fond superstition of a weak mind ; but, if it be a weakness, I am free to admit that I wish *not* to be cured of it, for it has afforded me a strange visionary enjoyment, which the brightest occurrences of real life never yet imparted to me, and a consolation which the exercise of cold reasoning could but ill replace."

"It is not given to us to know whether such things are permitted," replied Egerton ; "but there is something so beautiful and holy in the idea of a mother's spirit hovering watchfully near her spotless child, that even although it should be an error authorized by nothing but *the superstition of the heart*, an error so pure in its nature,—so harmless in its consequences,—could not merit censure,—no, not even from the sternest reasoner."

Here the conversation was interrupted by

the renewed sounds of the orchestra performing the symphony of Schubert's Ave Maria; and before Alice could express her surprise at the odd coincidence of the French air which she had scarcely an hour before been singing to Egerton having found its way into an Italian serenade, a female voice of exquisite sweetness and power sang in accents so clear and distinct that not a syllable was lost upon the listeners, an Italian version of the French words, so far altered from the original text, that instead of being the supplication of a mother to the Virgin for her *dying child*, it was the prayer of a *dying mother* for the welfare of a beloved child, which had been adapted to the beautiful air.

“How strange!” whispered Alice, almost solemnly, “it is as though some mysterious revelation of my feelings had been made to the directors of this serenade, and that they were in league to encourage my illusions!”

Egerton smiled, but made no reply.

“It is—it must be *you*, Mr. Egerton, who

have arranged all this !” exclaimed Alice ; “ I suspected you from the beginning, and now this Ave Maria has changed my suspicions into certainty ! All that now puzzles me is how you could have divined that the alteration of the words would have assimilated them so much more closely with my feelings as to give almost a supernatural colouring to the whole circumstance.”

“ I assure you, Miss Wilbraham,” replied Egerton earnestly, “ that I am neither the originator nor the director of this serenade ; but I respect truth too much to conceal from you that I *am* a party concerned, so far as that I have been employed as the *agent* between the director of it and the performers ; and to convince you of what I advance I will shew you the rough draft of the programme written by the person who has given you this serenade, and who sent it to me that I might transmit a copy of it to the artists engaged, and thus prevent the necessity of their coming

in contact with the individual who employed them, and who wishes to remain unknown." Saying which, Egerton took from his pocket-book the envelope of a letter, and placed it in Alice's hand.

She cast her eye upon the seal which bore the inscription of "*Tace*," and started; then, hastily turning to the folded paper within, opened it and the first sight of the hand-writing caused the blood to rush violently to her cheeks and brow, and then, receding, to leave them white as marble.

"In the name of Heaven," said she, with an impetuosity in her voice and manner which startled Egerton, "tell me, is the person whose writing and seal this paper bears, well known to you?"

"Most surely," replied Egerton; "but how come they to be familiar to you?"

"I have seen them once before," she answered tremulously; "tell me, is he here—in Pisa?"

“*He!*” repeated Egerton in irrepressible amazement.

“Alice, shut the windows!” cried Colonel Wilbraham from the fireside; “the music is over, it is to be hoped; and if not, we have had enough of it, and the air is getting sharp and cold,—do come and warm yourself, child!” And seeing that his injunctions were not attended to with that alacrity which he invariably exacted, he forthwith joined his daughter and Mr. Egerton at the casement, and closing it himself, would have led Alice towards the fire, but she resisted, and made an effort to remain where she was. She would at that moment have given worlds for a few words more of uninterrupted conversation with Egerton.

“Good God! what is the matter with you, Alice?” inquired her father; “you are as cold as death, and pale and trembling. Kate, come and see what is the matter with Alice.”

“Miss Wilbraham has become chilled with the night air,” said Egerton, who had hastily

returned the mysterious envelope to his pocket at the first approach of the Colonel.

“ Alice has taken cold !” cried Mrs. Wilbraham, “ she will be ill for to-morrow night if we do not take care ; she must go to bed immediately, and drink some warm lemon whey, and be wrapped up in hot flannels, and perhaps it will turn out to be nothing of consequence, after all. But indeed she has been terribly delicate ever since her dip in the Tiber !”

“ Indeed I am quite well,” said poor Alice, completely overset by this last remark, “ nothing at all is the matter with me !” and she endeavoured to laugh in corroboration of her assertion ; but the effort was too much for the excited state of her spirits,—the laugh died away into a low sob, and sinking upon a chair, she covered her face with her hands, and fell back in a hysterical passion of tears.

Parker and camphor julep were immediately sent for ; and Alice was borne off to her own

room between her step-mother and her maid, while Egerton, bewildered by the emotion which had been so unexpectedly betrayed by her, took his departure with all his anxieties aroused for the lovely young creature who had awakened so strong an interest in his bosom ; and deeply lamenting that the sudden manner in which their conversation had been interrupted should have left no possibility of a mutual explanation being made relating to the handwriting the sight of which had so powerfully affected Alice.

Miss Wilbraham slept but little that night, and arose in the morning with the firm resolution of obtaining an interview with Mr. Egerton in the course of the day, and demanding from him an explanation of the motives which had induced him to involve himself as he had avowed to her, with a person who had never ventured to approach her but under the shadow of mystery and concealment.

Her intentions were, however, frustrated ;

for she was only able to see him during the performance of divine service: and as he had undertaken, by particular desire of the resident English, to officiate in his clerical capacity upon the occasion of the new year, she was unable to exchange a word or even a look with him. Neither did he call, as was generally his custom, after church, upon the Wilbrahams; for he had remained to administer the sacrament, and returned to his own home immediately afterwards. Not till dinner-time, however, did Alice relinquish all expectation of seeing Egerton; but when that repast was announced, and that he had not appeared, she was obliged to postpone until the next day the hope of an *éclaircissement*, and turn her thoughts towards the festivities of the evening.

Alice could not divest herself of the idea that the person who secretly manifested so strange an interest in her welfare, — who had followed and watched her at Rome, — addressed to her that inexplicable letter, the fragments

of which she had carefully preserved,—saved her life at the peril of his own,—and, finally who was in Pisa, still watching over her, and offering her the romantic homage which had ushered in the earliest moments of her birthday,—that Cavendish, so reprobated by her father,—Cavendish, whose image was dwelt upon with such deep gratitude and mysterious interest by herself, would be present at the fête ! Under some disguise, she felt persuaded he would be there ! and with this idea foremost in her thoughts, she began her toilette for the ball.

She had unequivocally declined taking any active part in the *tableaux vivans* ; but she was to appear in the historical quadrilles, and had named all the persons who were to form the one to which she belonged, and which represented the court of Louis the Fourteenth in the youthful and most brilliant days of that magnificent voluptuary. Alice herself personated the beautiful and unfortunate Henriette

d' Angleterre, Duchesse d' Orleans ; and her costume, which was critically correct and of the most costly simplicity, was peculiarly suited to the noble cast of her beauty, and shewed to the utmost advantage the graceful symmetry of her form. Excitement and expectation had lent a heightened bloom to her cheek, and added brilliancy to her eyes ; her rich dark hair, parted from her forehead, and falling in spiral curls round her face, rendered more dazzling by contrast the transparent beauty of her complexion ; and the oriental pearls that encircled her swan-like throat were not more purely white than was that fair neck itself, and the graceful shoulders and bosom which developed their harmonious contours beneath. In short she looked like one of Vandyke's portraits just stepped out of its frame ; and when the folding-doors of the ball-room were thrown open, and she appeared at the head of her courtly band, led by the handsome young Prince Alexis Temœreseff (who, splendidly

attired as the *Grand Monarque*, looked “every inch a king”;) and followed by the other historical quadrilles, twelve in number, slowly paced round the room previous to taking their places in the dance, a murmur of applause greeted the fair vision, and every eye followed her light footsteps with wondering admiration.

CHAPTER IX.

A VERY different scene was passing in another part of the same house at the same moment. While the noble saloons of Colonel Wilbraham resounded to the accents of mirth and revelry, and a blaze of light, and strains of music poured from every window, sadness and silence prevailed in those immediately beneath them, save when the occasional opening of a door permitted the confused murmur of the festivities above stairs to penetrate into the dimly lighted rooms. The light-hearted and the light-footed were thoughtlessly pursuing their career of vanity above, while below, one who had known many sorrows was drawing to the close of her earthly pilgrimage, far

from her nearest ties, and surrounded only by her weeping servants. The darkness of the grave was closing round her; but her soul was not troubled,—she knew that the brightness of eternity was beyond, as surely as she knew that the light of day will succeed to the shadows of night! Steadfast faith and humble hope were hers. She had sinned, but her soul had not become hardened in guilt; and she believed in the promises of Him who has said that “there shall be joy in Heaven over the repentant sinner;” for *one* fault she had forfeited the world’s opinion and its countenance;—but she trusted that her errors would meet with that mercy from her God which had been denied to them by man.

If years of irreproachable conduct, if the practice of every Christian virtue, if piety the most exalted, humility the most unaffected, and charity in its most enlarged and Apostolical sense,—if these could atone in the eyes of a just and merciful God for a fault which

she had never sought to extenuate and never ceased to deplore, let us hope that her trust was not in vain, and that the resignation with which she awaited her last moments under circumstances peculiarly calculated to embitter them and to disturb her mind, was the forerunner of her translation to a higher, purer state of being,—the dawning of that glorious beatitude which has been promised to the contrite in spirit, as well as to the pure in heart, in the presence of their God ! In such an hour and with such an expectation, while the soul tremblingly expands her wings over that dark gulph which must be passed ere the blessed hereafter can be attained, how must the joys and the sorrows, the pains and the passions which make up the miserable sum of our existence in this vain world, shrink into insignificance before the contemplation of the bright futurity which awaits it ! How hollow must the fleeting affections of the flesh appear when compared to the Divine Love which is

to unite the spirits of the just in one endless act of adoration around the footstool of our Father which is in Heaven ! and, oh, how worse than vain—how utterly wicked must human resentments then appear ! The dying woman felt all this ; she had forgiven her enemies, and was preparing to depart in peace and goodwill towards all mankind : but one human affection still dragged her thoughts down to the earth, and when she struggled to detach them from it, and the task proved unavailing, (for the natural yearnings of the flesh would not be stilled !) she meekly offered up those bitter throes of a broken heart as a last sacrifice, and resigned herself to die, as she had lived, with her dearest wish still unfulfilled.

Who this lonely lady was, and what were the sorrows that had weighed so heavily upon her, remains to be told ; and when it is known that the Marchesa Sampieri and the mother of Alice Wilbraham were one and the same per-

son, the aggravated character of her sufferings will no longer remain an enigma to the reader.

Edith Stanley was an only child, and she had been married when little more than a child, and before her judgment could have been formed, to a man several years older than herself, and every way unsuited to her. She had first received his attentions from the childish vanity of liking to be treated like a woman, and afterwards accepted his hand because she had been assured that having encouraged his addresses she would be acting dishonourably were she to refuse to become his wife. But long before they were married she discovered the fatal mistake she had made in pledging herself to such an irremediable step as marriage with so uncongenial a being as Colonel Wilbraham; for the more she saw of him the less did his character, disposition, and pursuits tend to conciliate her affections. Had she been a few years older she would have paused ere she allowed the whole happiness of her future life to be

sacrificed to a mistaken sense of honour ; she would have revoked her word at the very steps of the altar, rather than have delivered herself up to such certain misery as this ill-assorted union was calculated to produce ; as it was, the world's dread laugh terrified her inexperienced mind, the disgraceful epithet of *jilt* rang harshly on her imagination—no judicious friend was near to win her confidence and strengthen her judgment in this the most important act of her life ; and thus abandoned to her own guidance, she, in an evil hour and with a heavy heart, ratified her engagement, and became the wife of Colonel Wilbraham.

Having solemnly promised at the altar to love, honour, and obey her husband, Edith conscientiously endeavoured to fulfil her vow, but it was only *in part* that she found it possible to do so ; she could *obey*, but she could neither *love* nor *honour* the man to whom she had bound herself for life ; indeed it is difficult to imagine a person not precisely vicious so utterly um-

amiable and contemptible as was Colonel Wilbraham ; he did not possess one redeeming quality to counterbalance the preponderating weight of his faults ; his head and his heart were alike deficient in everything that could render him tolerable as a companion or a friend. Both were equally hard and impracticable ; and Edith, after vain endeavours to elicit from either some trait that might fix her respect or esteem, gave up the task in hopeless despondency, her heart withered by the chilling consciousness of feeling nothing but contemptuous dislike for her husband.

Then she looked to society for relief from the miseries of her home, and rushed into the pleasures of the world that she might lose for a time in its vortex the sense of her own loneliness ; but every success that she met with in society served only to increase the harsh and jealous caprices which were reserved for her at home ; the world, too, to which she had turned for consolation, pronounced her to be vain,

frivolous, and heartless ; the women could not pardon her for her superior attractions, and the men could not forget her cold disdain of their unlawful homages. Could they have penetrated the profound contempt with which its hollowness had inspired her, or have beheld her cheeks still flushed with the triumphs which its adulations had prepared for her, covered with tears of pity for herself that she could descend to mingle in its futile pursuits, their enmity would have been still more bitter ; — for the world pardons not those who have discovered the secret of its worthlessness ; — it wages “ war to the knife ” against those who have been *with it*, and are not *of it*.

Edith was a mother, but her child was still an infant, and although she adored it with all the tenderness of her nature, it was an object more of prospective than of actual consolation to her ; the infant Alice was the one bright speck upon the horizon towards which all her hopes of future happiness pointed, — “ the friend,

to whom the shadow of far years extended,"—but in the mean time she was only a precious plaything, whose smiles brought joy to her heart, and whose cries wrung tears from her eyes; there was no companionship in her—only food for speculation—the fond speculation of a mother's heart, which exultingly appropriates to her beloved offspring every good gift with which Nature, our common mother, and Fortune, that capricious step-dame, can enrich poor humanity! It was at this period of her life that she first became acquainted with the person who was destined to exercise so fatal an influence over her whole future existence, and a suitableness of age and character, a similarity of tastes and talent rendered them peculiarly calculated to appreciate each other's society. We shall not attempt to follow, step by step, the progress of an attachment, of the nature of which Edith herself for a length of time remained in ignorance, mistaking the sentiments with which Mr. Cavendish had inspired

her for the admissible ones of friendship and admiration of his talents ; and believing, until he dared to avow the contrary to her, that his own feelings were equally blameless. When she at last became aware of the truth, she would have sought for safety in flight, and strenuously did she urge her husband to remove her from a place which had become so fatal to her peace of mind ; she proposed that they should travel on the Continent for some time—she would have gone anywhere to fly from the danger that menaced her ; — Colonel Wilbraham, however, influenced by one of those unfathomable inconsistencies which directed all his actions, chose to remain where he was, although his jealous fears had from the first taken alarm at the visible pleasure which Edith and Cavendish evinced for each other's society, and a system of petty tyranny and degrading *espionage*, calculated to alienate her mind more completely and to encourage her error, was the consequence. He had even fore-

seen the results of such a perversity of conduct on his own part, for he was known to have said to a friend, in allusion to his wife, "that if he gave her rope enough, she would soon hang herself!" Delicate and feeling allocution, which forcibly paints the calculating baseness of the mind from which it emanated!

The consequences of such a system may be anticipated, and those who can distinguish between vice and error will pity even while they condemn its ill-fated victim. Forced to remain in a place where she was exposed not only to the untiring persecution of a husband who, (even when her efforts to keep herself true to virtue and to her allegiance to him entitled her to all his sympathy and respect,) scrupled not to heap insult upon insult on her in the presence of her servants,—but the equally untiring and far more dangerous persecutions of a lover in whom passion triumphed over generosity, and who thought the world would have been well lost for Edith's love, —for more than a year

she struggled to sustain herself with dignity in this most perilous position ; but, worn out by the unequal combat, she at last yielded to the solicitations of Cavendish, and abandoned her home, her name, and her fame, to give herself unreservedly to him : circumstances of peculiar indignity on the part of Colonel Wilbraham, and a threatened expulsion from her home, while she was still innocent, had brought on this fatal crisis. The execrations of the world fell upon the erring wife, while all its sympathies were reserved for her husband, who had the satisfaction of wreaking upon the unhappy Edith all the vulgar vengeance of a little mind ; —the vengeance of wounded vanity, not of wounded affection ! He might have heaped coals of fire upon her head by another course ; for, such was the noble nature of Edith, notwithstanding her unfortunate lapse from virtue, that had he at that moment betrayed one spark of generous feeling—one glimmering of humanity for her, her heart would have broken with re-

morse for the step she had taken ; but the ingenuity with which he devised every species of mortification which he imagined could add to her misery, while it convinced her how very little *grief* had to do with his feelings, checked the wholesome current of regret for her fault, and in its place her soul overflowed with the coldest disdain.

The law took the course usual in such cases, and Edith was divorced, and remarried immediately to Mr. Cavendish. They left England, and after travelling for some years throughout Europe, finally settled in Italy, having altogether abandoned a residence in their own country. Truth compels us to avow that the predictions of their many *soi-disant* friends as to their subsequent conduct to each other were not fulfilled ; — that poetic justice did not overtake them in the shape of mutual abandonment or ill-treatment ; — and, that apart the one sad reflection which, in minds finely organised, is inseparable from the con-

viction of having done wrong, and with the exception of the one irreparable sorrow which had been inflicted upon Edith in a separation from her child, they were so entirely devoted to each other, so happy, and so independent of all other society, in their dignified retirement, as to forget the world which still busily occupied itself with their affairs.

All this, of course, will sound very immoral in the ears of many persons ; for the world abounds with rigid sticklers for morality, calling and believing themselves to be Christians, to whom the fact of a woman in Edith's peculiar position, recognising the justice of the punishment that has overtaken her, not struggling to emancipate herself from its consequences, yet redeeming her error by a life the most exemplary,—not for the applause of the world, of which she has for ever taken leave, but for the approval of her own conscience,—is so unintelligible to them, so utterly at variance with their preconceived notions of virtue and vice, that, far from being a subject of approbation

or of sympathy, it becomes one of the deepest and, we must say, most uncharitable lamentations, because it interferes with the narrow axiom they have eked out for themselves, *that it is impossible* for a woman who has made *one false step*, ever afterwards to recover a steady footing, and conduct herself with propriety, and that every effort to that effect, instead of being encouraged, should be coldly overlooked, or frowned down by them. As society is constituted, this system has been received as *a law* ; but it is not *Gospel*, for our blessed Saviour did not thus harshly judge, or close the door of mercy upon the fallen ; neither is it *virtue*, for that cannot be called real virtue which, reserving all its indignation for the weaker, and often less guilty party, dispenses its smiles and its patronage upon the seducer, and bestows blame upon him, only when sentiments of honour and affection lead him to adhere unshrinkingly to the person who has sacrificed all for him.

Cavendish, to whom these inconsistencies in the moral code of society were well-known, wisely resolved not to embitter his existence by vainly struggling against them; the world, which would have held out its arms to him, while it rejected Edith, would have been intolerable to him, and he, therefore, retired from it altogether, and devoted himself to pursuits of literature and science, in which his wife, by her talents and acquirements, was fully competent to participate.

CHAPTER X.

MR. CAVENDISH'S grandmother, Lady Margaret Cavendish, had been left early a widow, with an only son, and had remarried, a few years afterwards, the Marchese Sampieri of Bologna, one of the wealthiest noblemen of Italy, by whom she had also an only child. The son by her first marriage was the father of Mr. Cavendish; but the one by her second, who became eventually the sole representative of the Sampieri family, never married, and devoted the whole of his noble fortune to the encouragement of the arts. He was half-uncle to Cavendish, but never had become personally known to him, until the circumstances which

have already been related induced the latter to settle in Italy ; then, during a stay which they made at Bologna, the uncle and nephew accidentally met, and so favourable was the impression produced upon the Marchese by Cavendish, so strong the sympathy with which the fate of his wife inspired him, that he induced them to settle at Bologna, in order that he might have within his reach relations in whose favour he felt so strong a prepossession. Years of daily intercourse served only to strengthen this kindly feeling ; the scientific pursuits to which Cavendish devoted himself, exactly assimilated with the tastes of his uncle ; the refinements of Edith's mind, and her many accomplishments, were sources of recreation, as well as of unceasing interest to him ; finally, he adopted them as his children, and when, a few years afterwards, he died of a lingering and torturing disease, through the progress of which they had nursed him with all the tenderness of filial love and gratitude, it was found, upon

opening his will, that he had left the whole of his noble fortune and estates to Cavendish, on condition of his assuming the name and title which were inalienable from them.

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Cavendish became Marchese and Marchesa Sampieri ; but this accession of wealth and rank made no alteration in their mode of life, except by enlarging the sphere of their charities, and enabling their patronage of the arts to become more extensive. The Marchesa Sampieri adhered to the same retirement which, as Edith Cavendish, she had imposed upon herself, without ever suffering it to degenerate into a churlish *sauvagerie*, which would have rendered it painful for her husband's friends to frequent the house ; to these she did the honours of her home with dignified courtesy, but she never accepted the advances which were made to her to mix in society, never paid visits, and never appeared anywhere but in the Sampieri Palace.

The reputation which both her husband and

herself enjoyed so deservedly throughout Bologna for charity, generosity, and humanity, made their house a refuge to which the suffering always appealed, and it was in this way that they had first become acquainted with Mr. Egerton; eight years before the period at which this tale commences, and when Horace Egerton, then just twenty years of age, had quitted Cambridge to make the tour of Europe, previous to going into the church, he was seized, during his stay at Bologna, with a brain fever, which soon reduced him to the brink of the grave. The host of the Albergo San Marco, pitying the fate of the young stranger, thus abandoned to the care of an ignorant servant, and whose imperfect knowledge of Italian rendered it difficult for him to explain himself to the physician who had been called in, took upon himself to inform Cavendish, (for so we shall continue to call him,) that a countryman of his was dying at his inn, unattended by a single friend; this call was sufficient to insure

his active sympathies, and he caused the sufferer to be removed from the noisy inn to his own house, where Edith nursed him through his dangerous malady, with the tenderness of a mother, and the devotedness of a Sister of Charity. That he recovered, was entirely owing to the care which had been bestowed upon him by them, and he felt that, under Heaven, he was solely indebted for his life to the two charitable beings who had so generously stepped forward to succour him in his extremity.

An acquaintance commenced under such peculiar circumstances soon ripened into the warmest friendship; the Sampieris concealed no part of their former life from their invalid guest, nor did this confidence deteriorate from the grateful affection and respect with which they had previously inspired him. Horace Egerton's connections were amongst the first of the landed commoners in England; his mother was the daughter of a noble house, and what is more, she was a woman of unexception-

able character and rigid principles ; when she heard from her son an account of the kindness he had met with from the Sampieri family, and when to that account was joined a sketch of their history, and a dispassionate statement of the virtues and conduct which had invested their position with so much dignity, she lost not a moment in writing to the Marchesa Sampieri to thank her, with the effusion of a mother's heart, for all that she had done for her son. She did more ; in the following year Lady Catherine Egerton and her daughters visited Italy, and repaired to Bologna purposely that she might personally express her gratitude to the friends of her son ; she remained two months there, and when she left Bologna it was as the firm friend of Edith.

That lady possessed real virtue, and an inflexible cast of character which never suffered itself to be biassed by mawkish sentiment or to be talked over by hypocritical demonstra-

tions ; but in proportion as she was free from *weakness*, so was she divested of *prejudice* ; she was gifted with much penetration, and always chose to judge for herself, and from her own inductions, of the conduct she observed towards others. The self-directed question of “ What will the world say ? ” never presented itself to her mind or interfered with her actions, upon occasions where she felt that her conscience bore her out in doing good ; and yet her mind was too femininely organised for her to brave the opinion of the world, and too completely under the guidance of good sense for her to defy it,—she reserved to herself the privilege of despising many of its edicts, of emancipating herself from slavish adherence to them, of setting no value upon its applause, and even dared to discard from her society many persons who, by a strange anomaly, still contrived to enjoy the countenance and support of the world, and to tyrannise in its exclusive coteries even while

their vices and depravities were a secret to none. With all this, she dared to associate with a *divorcée*!

To a woman of Lady Catherine's discriminating character, the study of Edith Sampieri was a subject of deep interest; and when she had won her confidence so fully as to induce her to speak of herself and of her own feelings, she found that seldom before had she met with a mind so unperverted, a heart so pure, and a soul so generous as in this fallen being. Her early removal from the frivolities of the gay world, and her constant companionship with a man of Cavendish's superior mind, had imparted a lofty stamp to all her thoughts, and weeded her conversation from the puerilities which are so often the characteristics of fine lady chit-chat; she was habitually silent, but when she spoke she was deferentially listened to, and the sweet seriousness of her manner and the soft melancholy expression of her fine dark eyes caused all that she said to sink into

the minds of her hearers. These however were not the considerations which had principally influenced Lady Catherine in her favour; it was her unfeigned penitence for her fault—the severity with which she judged herself—the generosity with which she abstained from all bitter reflections upon the husband whose conduct had driven her to the fatal step she had taken;—it was the deep and incurable anguish which she betrayed in alluding to her child—an anguish that never degenerated into complaint, for she admitted, while tears of agony burst from her eyes, that the privation which had embittered her life was a just visitation upon her for her fault,—yet, admitting it, she could not be resigned!—it was all this that had insured her the deep sympathy of Lady Catherine Egerton, and had spoken so forcibly to her maternal heart; nor was her sympathy shewn in sterile words alone, nor did it abate when distance had separated them; she had near connections living in the immediate neigh-

bourhood of Vale Royal, Colonel Wilbraham's seat in Leicestershire ; these connections were the Bertie family already alluded to as having been at St. Peter's with Alice on the day she had first seen Cavendish, and as they were in habits of the greatest intimacy with the Wilbrahams, Lady Catherine was enabled to obtain from them all those details of the welfare and progress of the young Alice which had hitherto been denied to her anxious mother, and by a constant correspondence with Edith, to transmit regularly to her information of everything relating to her child ; it was through this channel that she had learned the fact of Alice's belief in her death, and it was through the same medium that she afterwards heard of her being at Rome. This latter circumstance was calculated to throw her mind into the most distressing state of agitation ; as long as kingdoms and seas had divided her child from her, Edith had disciplined herself into the belief that a meeting was impossible,—but

now that she was so near yet so wholly separated from her, all the irritation of her first bereavement returned upon her with accumulated intensity ; the fever of her mind was not to be allayed,—she spoke not, it is true, of what she suffered, but she drooped in silent agony, and would have sunk irremediably, had there not been near her one who had made it the study of his life to watch her looks and anticipate her wishes. The subject of her child was one upon which Edith and her husband rarely spoke, but upon which they understood each other's sentiments perfectly ; delicacy forbade the mother to dilate upon her sufferings to him who had been the cause of her separation from her child,—tenderness for her led him to avoid recurring to a topic which always awakened in her emotions too violent for a frame so delicate ; Cavendish knew that the one absorbing wish of his wife's heart was to behold her lost treasure once more before she died,—Edith knew that her husband would

have laid down his life to procure the realisation of that fond desire ! and thus when they heard that Alice was at Rome, he was the first to propose taking her mother thither.

It was the first time for many years that Edith had quitted her home, and paramount as was the interest that was leading her from it, a feeling of dread and distrust chilled her heart as she left the Sampieri Palace ; she doubted the wisdom of the step she was taking ; she doubted that her own strength of mind would bear her through the trial that awaited her, and feared that she never could restrict herself to merely beholding her child without discovering herself to her ; but then the humiliating explanation that must ensue,—and should Alice coldly reject her guilty mother, how would she bear such an infliction ? Cavendish sustained her drooping courage with all the powers of his sanguine mind, and by the time they reached Rome Edith had recovered her equanimity sufficiently to enter

into the plans which her husband had devised for the realisation of her wishes.

Their change of name, and the complete obscurity with which they had surrounded themselves at Rome, (only allowing their presence there to be known to one or two of its most distinguished artists, with whom they had long been in habits of communication, and whom they had admitted to their confidence,) placed them beyond the reach of discovery by the travelling English who were there at that time. Edith only went out late in the evening, and then she was so closely veiled that an intimate friend would have had some difficulty in recognising her; and Cavendish, when once he had ascertained the residence of Colonel Wilbraham, confined himself to watching the movements of that family, acquainting himself with their habits, and following them at a distance wherever they went. We have shewn, upon the only occasion when he had ever beheld Alice unaccompanied by

her father or her step-mother, how he had struggled to approach her more nearly, and how his marked observation of her had attracted her attention ; and had not the crowd at that time leaving St. Peter's intervened so densely between him and her, he would then have slipped into her hand the letter which Edith had prepared for that purpose, and which afterwards passed so strangely into the possession of Alice. We have shewn also how on the succeeding day they had met on the banks of the Tiber, but, on that occasion, the *rencontre* was unintentional on the part of Cavenish, who, knowing that Alice always rode out accompanied by her father, avoided, on that account, following her on horseback, and was just returning from taking what he believed to be the most solitary and unfrequented ride about Rome, when he accidentally encountered Colonel Wilbraham and his daughter in his path. It now, therefore, only remains for us to relate the conclusion of the adventure,

which had commenced by Cavendish so gallantly rescuing the child of his beloved Edith from a watery grave ; and, taking up the narrative at that part of it which left him insensible and abandoned to the care of some poor fishermen, and to the precarious assistance which Thomas had taken upon himself to send to him, we shall proceed to give the sequel in as few words as possible.

Cavendish had ridden so far and so fast on that day as to have been much over-heated when he threw himself into the water ; the check of perspiration which ensued, added to the moral excitement produced by the strange meeting, and by his fears for Alice, and the extraordinary physical efforts which he had made to save her, tended to inflame the mass of his blood, and would have induced fever, even had he immediately been attended to, as common humanity would have dictated ; but, left as he had been by Colonel Wilbraham, in his helpless state, and without assistance, to

remain for an indefinite period in his wet clothes, the consequences were fatal. When he recovered from his long fainting fit, it was to feel shooting pains in his left side, a frightful difficulty in breathing, death-like chills in every limb, and a heaviness in his head, which almost took from him the consciousness of where he was, and of what had happened to him ; having, however, caused himself to be conveyed home, the sight of Edith restored the powers of memory to him : he related to her with the utmost precaution all that had passed, and as she wildly cast herself upon his bosom, and with deep convulsive sobs wept forth the thanks she could not utter, he pressed her tenderly to that noble heart whose pulsations were already numbered, and whispered, “ At last, dearest, I have done something to compensate for the many evils I have brought upon you—I have saved the life of your beloved child, Edith,—and you know that I would have laid down mine to spare a hair of her head ! ”

Alas! those were the last coherent words that fell from his lips. Before the arrival of the physicians whom Edith had sent for, pleurisy declared itself in its most alarming form; stupour and delirium succeeded each other, and copious bleedings brought with them no relief. Edith, that evening, despatched a courier to Bologna, for the celebrated Doctor T——, but when he reached Rome all was over—the Marchese Sampieri was no more! and he found that the Marchesa, in the paroxysm of her despair, had burst a blood-vessel in her chest, and was herself in imminent danger.

Thus cruelly were frustrated the projects which Edith had dared to form, of again beholding her child; and with her mind prostrated, and her heart broken by this new suffering, she looked upon her irreparable bereavement as a signal chastisement from Heaven for her presumption in attempting to circumvent those laws of society which had decided that she was unworthy to enjoy the tender preroga-

tives of a mother. She was conveyed to Bologna, (whither the body of her beloved husband had preceded her for interment,) and there, absorbed in the magnitude of her grief, and surrounded by objects which spoke to her only of his past love and care, she remained lost to all other recollections, and dead to every hope save that of soon rejoining in that better world, where parting and tears are unknown, him who had been the whole world to her on earth.

CHAPTER XI.

IT was not for some time after her return to Bologna that the poor mourner could summon courage to write to Lady Catherine Egerton; and not until more than one letter had reached her from that faithful friend, full of anxious wonder at her unwonted silence, that she at last imposed upon herself the painful task of apprising her of what had happened. Then the friendship of that excellent woman shewed itself to Edith in all its strength and purity; advancing years and infirm health had latterly rendered lady Catherine almost a prisoner to her own house, otherwise—such was the gratitude which had never slumbered in her heart during eight years, for all that Edith and her

husband had done for her son—she would have gone herself to Bologna, to have manifested it in person to the unfortunate widow on this trying occasion. She, however, lost no time in doing the next most feasible thing, and wrote to entreat that Edith would make an effort to return to England, and give her the happiness of receiving her in her own house, where she should remain as independently mistress of her own time and actions as in the Sampieri Palace.

“Do not refuse me this gratification, my dearest friend,” she wrote; “the shattered state of my health, and my increasing years (now approaching to sixty) forbid the hope that I shall ever again be able to quit England. I must not, therefore, look forward to visiting you in Italy; for, had such an undertaking been possible, I should *now* be on my way there to shew you, that not by words alone would I mark my deep sympathy in your just sorrows; but, my dear Edith, if the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet can go

to the mountain. You are young in comparison to me, and the first stunning effects of this cruel blow once over, your own exalted sense of religion will give you strength to bear up against it; and your total absence of selfishness (and who was ever so unselfish as you?) will lead you to remember the *many* to whom your existence is an actual blessing, and the *few* to whom your friendship is one of the greatest gratifications of their lives. Among these few I must be permitted to place all the members of my family who are already personally known to you; and I assure you, that those who only know you from our report and from your own letters, are anxious to be included in the same list. I must especially particularise my eldest daughter, Mrs. Grandison, who, with her worthy husband, is now staying with me, and whom you have often heard me remark was the very prototype of your friend Horace in mind and person,—the same good, exalted being, with the same quiet

reserved manners,—shunning the gay world, yet dispensing happiness and cheerfulness throughout her domestic circle. I am sure you will love her, and she is prepared to love you ! My two other married daughters, Lady Stanmore and Mrs Clayton, whom you remember as girls, are settled in my immediate neighbourhood, and are most anxious to renew their acquaintance with you ; and your quondam favourite, little Elizabeth, now a fine tall young woman of twenty, will not listen to the possibility of your not coming among us. I shall leave Horace to speak for himself, as in the course of a few days he will leave this for Bologna, to place himself at your disposal, and to claim the privilege of escorting you to our Westmoreland retirement. Come to us, then, my dear friend, and give us the sad satisfaction of sharing in your sorrows, if we cannot solace them and restore peace to your heart ! We will speak together of the beloved being who is gone, and your tears shall fall upon my

bosom, even as if you were my own afflicted daughter. Come, then, and fear not that in the zeal of our friendship we shall overstep the bounds of propriety, or intrude ourselves upon you except at such periods as you may choose to admit us; Ravenscrag is very spacious, and I have set apart a suite of rooms for your own especial use. We even hope that you will like our lakes and mountains well enough to be tempted into fixing yourself as a permanent resident among us; and, as a last inducement, I will observe to you, that I think such a measure would be judicious and beneficial in ultimately bringing about that event which I know lies so near your heart, and which I would spare no exertions on my own part to accomplish,—I mean an intercourse with your beloved child! All that report says of her is so favourable to her heart and character, that I am persuaded when she knows that her mother still lives, and when she is made acquainted with the conduct which for the

last sixteen years has rendered her an object of respect and interest to all who approached her, that her heart will assert itself, and spring forward to a reunion with her long lost parent !”

To this friendly appeal, Edith returned the following reply :

“ Thanks, dearest and best of friends, for your more than maternal kindness. I did not think that my desolate heart was still capable of experiencing any emotion allied to gladness,—I did not believe that my eyes could ever again shed any tears but those of misery, but your letter has come to convince me of my error, to shed a momentary gleam of brightness over my soul, and to reproach me for the selfishness which has hitherto caused me in the extremity of my sorrow to overlook the blessing which God has yet spared to me in your invaluable friendship. Yet, entering into all the noble feeling which has dictated your letter, and appreciating as I do every

sentiment that has flowed from your heart to your pen, I cannot yield to your arguments—no, not even to the last one! Think not, however, that this uncompromising refusal springs from that unchristian moroseness of grief, which leads us sometimes ungraciously to turn our backs upon every kind of happiness, because the *greatest* of *all* has been taken from us. No!—were you within my reach, I would eagerly turn to your maternal bosom to shed there the tears which now flow unheeded and unseen. I would speak to you of him whose name has never passed my lips, save in prayer, since he was taken from me—I would listen to the wisdom that dictated your consolations;—but these sad indulgences are now beyond my reach, for the hand of God has been laid so heavily upon me, that my heart is broken by the stroke! My days are numbered,—a very few months at the utmost will terminate my sufferings, and I will own to you that to this conviction alone am I indebted for the calm which has taken

possession of my mind. I daily read over these words in the book of Samuel: 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me,' and each day I peruse them with renewed consolation, because another twenty-four hours have been taken from our temporary separation! I scarcely dare ask myself if this be resignation, or if it be despair,—yet let me hope that it is the former; for, weak and sinful as I am, I do not mourn as one without hope,—‘my flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.’

“Yet, oh! my dear friend, there are moments when the impatience of selfish sorrow wholly overcomes me,—for everything here recalls my lost happiness only to make me feel my present desolation more keenly. I live in an atmosphere of recollections which daily revives my first agonies. I read his adorable goodness in the tears of the poor, who have lost their best friend!—I see his tender care of me in every inanimate object

that surrounds me—he is *everywhere* and yet *he is not!* When I cast my eyes upon the earth, *he is there*,—but when I raise them to Heaven *he is there also!*—and upon that blessed conviction do I anchor my hopes of an eternal reunion—and soon,—yes, soon!

“Forgive this egotism,—I have been led into it by the strong desire I feel to impart to you the motives that influence me in rejecting the noble proofs of friendship which you, my best friend, and your beloved family have so generously evinced for me in my hour of trial; assure yourself and them of my deep gratitude and affection: when I would express all that I feel for you individually and collectively, I find how cold and powerless are mere words in conveying sentiments such as those with which you have inspired me. Believe, too, that I fully concur in the opinion that you have expressed as to the favourable results which a visit to England as *your* guest might effect in bringing me in

contact with my child, and I know too well the weight which your name and character so justly carry with them to doubt that even Colonel Wilbraham would for ever persist in resisting a cause advocated by you. But it is *too late*!—the desire to behold my child is as strong within my bosom as ever,—it will outlive all other desires there;—the tie which yet binds me to earth is one which no human tribunal can dissolve, and my breaking heart will assert and cling to it as long as it beats.—But the fiat has gone forth which condemns me to die, as I have lived,—unknown to her; and while I feel the inutility of struggling longer with my fate, I feel also that upon the threshold of the grave, all selfish wishes ought to be abandoned,—that if this frail heart cannot be purified from them, they ought to be offered up to the throne of mercy as a last expiation for sins which have been visited less heavily upon the offender than they merited. My daughter believes me to be dead

long since ; she is ignorant of the story of sin, and shame, and sorrow which placed me beyond the pale of those holy affections, those sacred sympathies which bind mother to child when virtue is the bond which unites them. Should I, therefore, be justified in now disturbing her young mind by revelations which would only bring a blush to her cheek and a pang to her heart ? or ought I, for the sake of a momentary gratification to myself, to entail upon her the misery of knowing that her mother lives, at a moment when, even if Nature should triumph over Prejudice in her heart, and lead her to pronounce herself in my favour, the joy of such a conviction could not prolong my existence a single day ? Have I, who forfeited the proud privilege of fostering her infancy, the right of inflicting upon her the anguish of beholding me die ! I have thought over all this in my solitude, and the conclusion to which I have arrived is, that I ought still to leave my Alice undisturbed

in the peaceful ignorance she has been brought up in with regard to me,—at least, *until all is over*; then I should wish the truth to be broken to her, lest it should burst rudely upon her in her intercourse with the world; and to you, my dear friend, would I delegate this difficult and delicate task, for you have promised me that you would seek the acquaintance of the father for the sake of the daughter. Withhold from her nothing of the sad story except the harshness which drove me to the irretrievable step that separated me from my child! I must not, even to justify myself in her eyes, turn the heart of my Alice against her father;—and yet, let her not believe that her mother was a heartless wanton, who lightly abandoned the holiest ties of nature for the allurements of vice;—let her not suppose that callous indifference to my fault, or that total oblivion of the duties I had violated, were the necessary consequences of my error;—let her not spurn the memory of her mother as one

utterly lost to the feelings which ought to be inseparable from that sacred title ! Tell her of the unceasing remorse which embittered the best years of my life,—tell her that in the bosom of that unparalleled affection and devotion which sought to compensate to me during years of domestic harmony for all other privations, *my heart sickened and pined for her*,—tell her, that in the midst of wealth and luxury *I felt poor and destitute, because she had been taken from me*,—tell her of the effort with which I now relinquish all intention of appealing to her feelings, lest in doing so I should unavailingly disturb the tranquillity of her mind,—tell her that my last thoughts will be of her—my last regrets for her !—And oh ! if such a communication be admissible, tell her that he who had been identified with my worst actions, had identified himself with my best feelings also,—let her know that he shared in all my regrets,—tell her of the many virtues with which he had redeemed one single

fault,—and tell her, too, that not only would he have shed his blood to have accomplished the dearest wish of my heart in re-uniting me to my child, but that in furtherance of that wish he laid down his life to save hers, and regretted not the sacrifice !

“ Alas ! I fear that in this uncontrollable desire to propitiate the good feelings of my child, I am grasping at too much, and asking impossibilities of you,—yet the wish is so natural, that your heart will plead in its favour ; and to that and to your judgment do I leave the execution of it.

“ How can I express my gratitude for the new proof of his untiring goodness which my dear friend Horace is giving me in coming to Bologna at this trying moment ! His own reflections hereafter will be his best reward for this sacrifice of time and comfort to an unfortunate friend, and the great God whose precepts he so faithfully follows will bless his endeavours to bind up the wounds of a broken

heart. Already have the good effects of his truly Christian mission shewn themselves, for the anticipation of his presence here has aroused me from the selfish stupour into which I had sunk, and imparted an interest to the short period I may yet count upon in this world, of which I scarcely thought it susceptible. I have much to tell him, much to consult him about ; for I would ‘set my house in order’ before I go hence and am seen no more ! and in this I comprise not only preparing my soul for the great change that is approaching, but putting such order into my worldly affairs as shall prevent the possibility of disputes or displeasure arising to those who will succeed me in their management. If Horace does not object to such an arrangement, I should wish to name him as my executor, an appointment which will hereafter bring him into communication with my daughter ; and should his duties not interfere with a further sacrifice of his time to me, I will hope that he may be near me

at the last moment. What a support would his presence be to me in that hour which even the blameless cannot contemplate without awe, and with what fervent hope should I rely upon the efficacy of his intercessions to Heaven on my behalf! There is still another wish which I cannot silence;—if he does not condemn it, and should my wasted strength bear me out in the undertaking, I will yet make an effort to see (not to be seen by) my Alice,—for it seems to me that my dying eyes would close with greater tranquility could they but once have rested upon her countenance, and that the sick yearnings which still distract my thoughts from higher contemplations, and place her image between me and Heaven, would be appeased by that one look! But in this I will be guided by him.

“And now, dear and excellent friend, farewell! I ask you not to forgive the selfish garrulity of this letter; you bade me open my heart to you, and I have done so fearlessly,

knowing the inexhaustible goodness of yours, which ever leads you to lend a patient ear to the unfortunate, and to make their sorrows your own. Say to your dear daughters all that you know I feel for them; I shall often in imagination be in the midst of you all. Farewell once more, and believe in the eternal gratitude of your affectionate friend

“EDITH SAMPIERI.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE arrival of Horace Egerton at Bologna produced, after the first shock of beholding him was over, all the favourable results to Edith's mind which she had anticipated; and such was the serenity that pervaded her discourse and manner in her subsequent intercourse with him, that Egerton was deceived by it into a belief that the principle of life still lay deep within her, and that she might yet be spared for many years to the affection of his family. This delusive amendment, however, was chiefly owing to the consolation which she derived from speaking to him of Alice, (of whom until his arrival she had lost all traces

since the catastrophe which had been so fatal to Cavendish); and the assurance which Egerton gave her that not only would he find out the actual residence of the Wilbraham family, but personally co-operate in any plan which should tend to realise the first, last wish of her heart, appeared to infuse temporary strength into her exhausted frame, and awakened in her mind an energetic desire to live until that object could be accomplished.

The hope of ultimate recovery was, however, uncompromisingly negatived by Doctor Tomasini, in a conversation which Egerton had with him on the subject; but as he foresaw the probability of her life being prolonged for a few months, by a removal to Pisa early in the autumn, it was settled that Horace (whose arrangements, when he left home, had only been made for a short absence), should go back in the interim to England, and that before the period when Edith's journey to Pisa would be advisable, he should return to Italy with

his only brother, Frederick, the youngest of Lady Catherine Egerton's children, a beautiful youth of seventeen, who had so completely outgrown his strength as to make his family tremble for the consequences.

Yet when he again reached Bologna, such was Edith's repugnance to leave the spot which contained her beloved husband's ashes, that she would have resisted a removal from home had not Horace ascertained, from his relations the Berties, the fact of Alice then being at Pisa ; this unlooked-for coincidence caused every other objection to vanish from Madame Sampieri's mind, and it has been already seen that her wishes were immediately acted upon, and how, through the intervention of Egerton, the mother and daughter became inhabitants of the same palace.

But who shall venture to describe the moral sufferings of Edith when she found herself under the same roof with her only child, yet debarred from all communion with her? We shrink from the painful task, for we know,

from experience, that no language, however powerful, could do justice to the intensity of such feelings. A French writer has justly observed, that “il est plus facile d’abstenir que de se contenir,” and the truth of this axiom was experienced by the unhappy mother during every moment of the day. The punishment of Tantalus had fallen upon her, but she had sought it herself; and with the heroism of a martyr she suppressed, in the presence of her anxious friend, all expression of her sufferings, and it was only in the solitude of her own chamber, and in the stillness of night, that the agonies of her soul burst forth in bitter tears.

There was, however, one drop of sweetness infused in the cup of sorrow which she had drunk to the dregs, that mitigated its bitterness — the knowledge, through Egerton, of the generous and noble qualities which rendered her daughter’s heart and mind so eminently worthy of the lovely form that enshrined them, and upon which her eyes daily rested with all

a mother's pride;—and her penetration soon discovered that this rare union of intellectual and personal beauty had taken captive the affections as well as the admiration of the grave Egerton, and that his heart, although he knew it not, was no longer in his own keeping. Of all the contingencies which could have offered themselves to Edith's imagination as carrying with them the strongest probabilities of happiness for her child both here and hereafter, an union with Horace Egerton was the one upon which her judgment as well as her heart would have rested with unmixed satisfaction, and perhaps the latent hope that such a result would become the consequence of their being thrown together, had influenced her when she named him as executor to her will.

And now an interest, hitherto unknown, was imparted to her waning existence, and with a trembling fervour of supplication which betrayed her apprehension of its inutility, she prayed to Heaven that she might be per-

mitted to live long enough to behold the realisation of her hopes. Alas! the very intensity of her feelings defeated the object at which they aimed; and the fever of her mind, the wear and tear of her spirits, the perpetual transitions she experienced from suppressed hope to suppressed agony, — for to Horace she *could not* express her wishes, and *would not* express all the misery of her position, — in fine, the conflict of feelings that assailed her, reduced her strength so rapidly, that before Christmas arrived she was unable to leave her apartment.

At last Edith was forced to relinquish the indulgence upon which she had lived for the last few weeks — that transient glimpse of Alice which she daily caught as, seated at the open door of her saloon, she every morning watched for the light form of her daughter flitting unconsciously by in all the gaiety of youth, and little deeming that the echo of her footsteps caused her mother's heart to throb

with a violence that was precipitating it into eternal stillness. Edith had grown so feeble that the exertion of dragging herself thither, or of hurrying away when (as had more than once been the case) Colonel Wilbraham had unexpectedly appeared in sight, produced swoonings which daily became more exhausting in their consequences; but the solace of listening to her child singing in the evening, was still left to her, and as the dressing-room, which she now seldom left, was immediately under the drawing-room usually occupied by the Wilbrahams, the moment the first notes of the piano above stairs were heard, Edith would cause all her doors and windows to be thrown open, that she might not lose a particle of the rich and flexible tones of her daughter's voice, and stretched upon a sofa near the open casement, with her eyes closed, that every external object might be excluded, she would conjure up the fair form of Alice to her imagination, and cheat herself into the

momentary belief that she was actually in her presence. It was at that hour that Egerton always paid her his evening visit, nor was the *recueillement* of the young lover on those occasions less profound than that of the unhappy mother; for insensibly all his ideas of earthly enjoyment had associated themselves with Alice Wilbraham, and to hang upon her voice when he could not behold her form was a gratification which he sought for with an intensity second only to that which Edith herself felt.

At last the anniversary of Alice's birth approached; and unable to resist the fond impulse which prompted her to be the first to offer the homage of congratulation to her child upon that occasion, Madame Sampieri organised the serenade which had so completely puzzled the whole family, and intrusted the direction of it to Egerton. We have seen how powerfully it had acted upon the sensibilities of Alice, the associations it had awakened and the tone

of confidence with which she appeared to have been impelled to impart her feelings to Egerton. We have seen, too, the error which the sight of Edith's handwriting and seal had produced in the mind of her daughter, and the manner in which Colonel Wilbraham had interrupted the explanation which Horace meant to have given to her, by stating that the Marchesa Sampieri, having heard from him of the anniversary that was about to be celebrated, and wishing to return the gratification which she had so long derived from listening to Miss Wilbraham's music, had directed the serenade which had ushered in the first hour of her natal day. But this explanation was frustrated, and they parted mutually mystified, and mutually anxious to be enlightened; although unlooked-for events precluded the possibility of any *éclaircissement* taking place during the whole of the following day.

Nor was it until late on the morrow that Egerton was enabled to go to Madame Sam-

pieri's. The sacred duties he had engaged to perform in public on that day had interfered with his hitherto unbroken custom of reading the Church service to her every Sunday morning; and when at last he found himself at liberty to attend to his unfortunate friend, she was no longer in a state of mind to listen to him.

Edith had passed the morning in an exasperation of suffering not to be described, for perhaps the most intolerable trial that had yet assailed her was that of passing the birthday of her only child as she was doomed to do;—so near her, yet separated as if the grave had closed between them,—she, her mother, the only being that was debarred from approaching and congratulating her! Oh! how did she wish that she could change places with the lowest menial who on that day would be permitted to kiss the hand of Alice; and what would she not have given to ascertain whether a thought would be consecrated by

her to the memory of her unknown parent ! She had caused herself to be carried to the saloon from which her increasing weakness had for some time banished her, that she might at least catch a passing glimpse of Alice on that day ; but the voice of Colonel Wilbraham, as he descended the staircase with his wife and daughter on their way to Church, prevented even that imperfect gratification ; and as she closed the door between herself and the beloved object of so much solicitude, her heart seemed to be crushed under its heavy hinges.

Then Edith sought for consolation in prayer ; but, for the first time, she found it impossible to form a coherent supplication. Recollections of how other anniversaries had been passed, brought with them the image of Cavendish, and added bitterness to her sorrow ; they had indeed always been days of trial ; but the sympathy of a devoted heart, and the reasoning powers of a feeling mind, had ever been exerted to assuage their misery. Where was he, the tender com-

panion, the judicious friend, upon whose bosom the tears of the bereaved mother had been wont to fall—and who would wipe them away now? “Gone—gone!” exclaimed Edith, with a burst of passionate grief, “and I am alone and desolate!—I am abandoned by God—I cannot pray!”

Violent sorrow, by subduing the energies of even the strongest mind, often leaves it open to the influence of superstitious fancies which in a healthier state would be rejected as incompatible with its reasoning powers; and Edith was doomed to prove the truth of this. Terrified by her inability to form a prayer, she had opened the Bible that lay before her, to ascertain whether she was still capable of comprehending its contents, and the first words upon which her eyes fell were these: “*This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*” The chance which had directed that she should open the volume at that page, appeared to her, not the effect of hazard, but a revelation from on High, a warn-

ing to prepare for immediate dissolution ; and the gracious promise of our Lord to the dying malefactor was applied by her to her own particular case with trembling eagerness, “ Oh my Saviour ! ” she said, “ ‘ *Thou that hast opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers,* ’ intercede for me that my sins may be pardoned, and my soul be received into life eternal ! ”

A mysterious awe crept over her, and mistaking the temporary exhaustion to which the violence of her excited feelings had reduced her, for the approach of death, she remained motionless and almost senseless, with her arms crossed upon the open Bible, and her head resting upon them, while the tears that flowed unconsciously from her eyes blistered the holy page upon which they fell. And hours glided by, and she moved not.

Thus had she passed the morning in all the abandonment of grief, and in this state was she found by Egerton, who, in his own gentle and impressive way, roused her from her lethargy

and engaged her to listen to him. With the utmost precaution he introduced the subject of the last night, for he knew that what he had to tell was unexpected by her, and that joyful surprise is sometimes as fatal as that produced by grief; yet, although he had prepared his communication in such a manner as that it should not suddenly overpower her, he had not foreseen the terrible effect which the words of Alice would produce upon her mother, and his voice trembled, and his eyes were suffused with tears as he repeated them to her.

But Edith had neither tears nor words for such a communication; it had recalled her thoughts from their vague dreamy state back to earth—to its joys and its sorrows, its loves and its vain regrets; and the revulsion of feeling which it produced was too violent to find either expression or relief through those mediums which are accorded to ordinary emotions. She listened to his recital with breathless eagerness, her hands pressed convulsively upon her heart as though she would forcibly have con-

trolled its tumults, her head bent forward in an attitude of the most intense attention, and all the agitation of her soul depicted in her colourless face ; but when he had finished, a smile of rapture suddenly lighted it up, and throwing herself upon her knees she raised her clasped hands to Heaven in silent thanksgiving ; there was a visible effort to give utterance to her overcharged feelings, for her quivering lips moved as though they were forming words, but the struggle was ineffectual ; in the next moment her head sank upon her bosom with a heavy groan, and when Egerton raised her from the ground the blood that bubbled through her parted lips, and fell in warm streams over his hands, told that she had again burst the bloodvessel that had been ruptured when Cavendish died ; and Egerton knew that dissolution must follow in a very few hours.

The physician who attended her, was immediately called in, and by a prompt application of styptics the effusion of blood was stop-

ped, while to prevent the possibility of the sufferer attempting to speak or to move, a composing draught was administered which very soon threw her into a profound slumber.

It was now past seven o'clock in the evening, and Egerton took advantage of the interval of repose to write a note to Colonel Wilbraham, apprising him that the Marchesa Sampieri had suddenly become so ill that it was feared she could not pass through the night, and submitting to his good feelings whether it would not be advisable to postpone his fête, lest the noise inseparable from it should disturb the last moments of the dying woman. Egerton hoped that this intimation would be sufficient, even where the feelings of a mere stranger were concerned, and that sentiments of common decency and humanity would have influenced Colonel Wilbraham in meeting his suggestion by such measures as should prevent the possibility of that unnatural concurrence from which his soul recoiled, namely, that Alice should be

dancing above stairs while her mother was expiring below !

But that gentleman was by no means inclined to adopt so humane a suggestion, or to forego the festivities which had cost him such expenditure of time, trouble, and money, and which were to ensure so much applause to himself, while they caused the rest of the society to hide their diminished heads, and confess themselves vanquished by him in taste and magnificence, merely because a moping Marchesa whom nobody knew, and who had thought proper to reject his acquaintance, was taken ill on that particular day.

The note had been put into his hand by his own man, as he was sitting alone over his wine after dinner, and having read it through he crushed it in his hand, and threw it into the fire with a fretful apostrophe : “ This is expecting a little too much, Master Egerton ! — to put off my friends, and waste my supper, and disappoint the whole world

because your fair widow chooses to fall sick in the same house,—a pretty joke, indeed ! Besides it is now too late for anything of the sort to be done ; and, after all, if anything should happen to her, or that he speaks to me on the subject to-morrow, I can easily make it appear that I never got his note, and so, knew nothing at all of the matter !” And gulping down his incipient scruples with his last bumper of claret, he continued to mumble sundry witticisms about ‘prigs,’ and ‘puritans,’ and then, ringing the bell, gave orders that if Mr. Egerton either called or sent any message that evening, he should be told that Colonel Wilbraham was particularly engaged, and could not see him until the morrow ; and then he dismissed the subject from his mind.

And the preparations went on, — and the festivities commenced, — and Egerton’s worst apprehensions were realised ; for Alice, radiant with youth, beauty, and animation, was

flying round the ball-room to the measure of one of Strauss's most seductive waltzes, and dividing the admiration of all present with her partner, the handsome representative of the gayest and most voluptuous of monarchs, at the very moment that Edith, pale, gasping, and exhausted, stretched upon that bed from which she was to rise no more, was receiving the last Sacrament from the hands of Egerton, and with meek resignation preparing to appear in the presence of the King of kings.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE must now return to Alice. During the whole evening she had been haunted by the idea that Cavendish, under some disguise, would contrive to introduce himself into the fête and approach her, and that at last the mystery of who he was and why he pursued her, would be cleared up; at last, too, she should have it in her power to express to him all the gratitude she owed him for having saved her life,—and, as was always the case when she thought of Cavendish, she argued to herself the impossibility of his being that which her father had represented him to be.

The delusive expectation of beholding him

was kept up long after midnight by the successive entrance of several groups of masks who performed various mythological interludes, all of which had some complimentary reference to herself; bouquets and sonnets were showered upon her,—madrigals sung in her praise,—and all the poets and the parterres about Pisa seemed to have been laid under contribution to do honour to the beautiful stranger. But he whom alone she eagerly looked for in that brilliant crowd came not; her restless eyes sought him in vain; every tall figure that approached her caused her heart to flutter, but a moment sufficed to undeceive her, for nobody there resembled Cavendish.

At last, at the termination of the waltz already alluded to, as Prince Temœreseff was leading Alice from the ball-room into a cooler atmosphere, a servant approaching put a twisted note into her hand;—"The gentleman who gave it to me," said he, "is waiting to speak to Miss Wilbraham in the antechamber." It

must be Cavendish ! thought Alice with a flushing cheek, and she prepared to obey the summons.

“ Another sonnet, beautiful Alice,” said the Prince ; “ will you not permit me to read it to you ? ”

“ No,” she replied hastily, “ I must read it alone. I will return to you in a moment ! ”

And releasing her arm from his, she retired to a room immediately preceding the ante-chamber, and untwisting the note found that it contained these words scrawled almost illegibly in pencil, and without any signature :—
“ I entreat that you will let me speak with you *immediately*, and *alone*.—I shall await your answer in person.”

Alice turned precipitately towards the ante-chamber, and opening the door, beheld, not Cavendish, but Egerton.

“ *You* here, Mr. Egerton ! ” she exclaimed in irrepressible amazement. “ I did not expect this pleasure to-night ; why did you not come in at once ? But I suppose you required me

to act as mistress of the ceremonies in introducing you to so new a scene?" She talked fast and flippantly to hide her disappointment.

"No, Miss Wilbraham," replied Egerton, gravely and almost sternly; "I have no intention of calling upon your services in such a way. My presence is required in a very different scene," and he sighed deeply as he spoke; "but will you not grant the request I have ventured to implore of you, and give me a few minutes conversation in private? There is not a moment to be lost."

"Good God! what is the matter?" said Alice, now for the first time remarking the exceeding paleness of his countenance and the agitation of his manner.

"Are you not aware," he inquired reproachfully, "that Madame Sampieri is at the point of death?"

"Madame Sampieri!" repeated Alice in a tone of such unfeigned surprise that Egerton felt at once convinced that she knew nothing

of what was passing below. "Oh, Mr. Egerton, why did you not tell us this before?"

Egerton's countenance relaxed from its sternness, for the words of Alice had removed a weight from his heart and an irrepressible "Thank God! you did not know it!" burst from his lips; then in a softened voice he replied, "I took the liberty of writing to Colonel Wilbraham early in the evening to apprise him of Madame Sampieri's situation."

"He could not have received your note, be assured," said Alice, her own generous nature prompting her to attribute to her father those feelings which would have influenced herself; "or he would certainly have countermanded all these gay doings. Do you think that we could have been such barbarians as to be dancing here, while we knew that your friend, that anyone indeed, was ill and dying under the same roof? Oh no, Papa knows nothing of this sad affair; he will never forgive himself when he does!"

Egerton knew the contrary, for when he found that his note to Colonel Wilbraham had been disregarded, he had sought an interview with him and had been refused admittance ; but delicacy for the feelings of the daughter prevented him from remarking to her upon the conduct of her father, and he merely replied, “ I am now persuaded that *you* were quite ignorant of the melancholy situation of my friend ; and that conviction has given me inexpressible relief—”

“ We can still make tardy reparation,” interrupted Alice eagerly ; “ come with me to my father, Mr. Egerton, and tell him what you have just told me, and we will immediately dismiss our guests.”

“ No,” said Egerton, “ it is now too late ! the painful circumstances of the case could not be compensated by such a measure ; but,” he added in a hurried voice, “ in the name of Heaven let me speak with you in some more

private place. You know not all that depends upon what I have to say ! not here, not among these lights and flowers, — will you trust yourself down-stairs with me, Miss Wilbraham ?” and he held out his hand to her.

There was something in the grave entreaty of his voice and manner, that Alice dared not resist. She silently took his arm and accompanied him down the staircase ; the echoes of the music, the glare of the lamps, and the perfume of the flowers grew fainter and more indistinct at every step as she descended, until at last, when the doors of Madame Sampieri’s apartment closed upon her, all traces of the gay fête were completely shut out, and she found herself in a dimly lighted antechamber, where the Italian servants of the dying lady had assembled, and upon their knees were imploring the Madonna to restore their beloved mistress to them.

“ See how she is beloved ! ” said Egerton,

pointing to the prostrate supplicants. Then leading Alice into an inner chamber, he closed the door after him, and they remained alone.

“Mr. Egerton,” exclaimed Alice, in the greatest perturbation, “you will perhaps think that at such a time—in such a scene—under such circumstances as these in which you have sought me, that the curiosity which I am about to express is not only unseasonable and frivolous, but insulting to your feelings; yet I will candidly own that until my mind is relieved from it I cannot listen to any other subject. Will you tell me then, without reserve, whose handwriting and seal were upon the envelope which you put into my hand last night?”

“Certainly,” he replied; “it was my intention to have told you at that time, had we not been interrupted; they were the writing and seal of Madame Sampieri.”

Alice started. “I would have ventured to have staked my life upon their being the writing and seal of Mr. Cavendish!” she said,

looking keenly and almost incredulously at Egerton.

It was now Egerton's turn to start as he repeated the name of Cavendish. "And what do you know of Mr. Cavendish?" he inquired in a hurried tone, for the fear that Alice had been deceiving him, and that she knew more than she had avowed the preceding night, flashed across his mind, and he could have pardoned anything rather than duplicity.

But in a few words, and with all the convincing simplicity of truth, Alice related to him the memorable occurrence which had eventually occasioned the letter, written as she believed by Mr. Cavendish, to fall into her possession; nor did she conceal from Egerton that she had made herself mistress of its contents.

"And you may imagine," she continued "that putting together the mysterious tenour of that letter, the strange request it contained, my father's evident hatred of the writer,

implied in a few words of bitter allusion to him followed by the most rigorous silence—even by a determination,” and she blushed indignantly as she spoke, “to withhold from me the knowledge that it was to that person’s exertions alone that I was indebted for my life—you may imagine, I repeat, that these facts have been sufficient to harass my mind for months past with the deepest anxiety and curiosity; and there was nothing to lead me out of the chaos of conjecture into which I have been thrown, until that paper which I saw in your possession last night convinced me that you not only know its writer but that you are aware of the motives that lead him to take an interest in me; that you in short can explain the whole enigma.”

“I can, indeed,” replied Egerton; “and it was with that intention that I sought you to-night—”

“Tell me, then,” interrupted Alice, “for God’s sake tell me who is this Mr. Cavendish,

and how comes Madame Sampieri to be involved in this business, for I am bewildered by your declaration of the writing and seal being hers."

"Mr. Cavendish," said Egerton, "was the husband of the Marchesa Sampieri."

"Her husband!" repeated Alice, "I thought you told us that she was a widow."

"She is," was the reply; "Mr. Cavendish is no more! He died in consequence of his exertions to save your life, a few hours after he had extricated you from the Tiber."

Awe-struck by this unexpected intelligence, Alice sat pale and motionless, the tears coursing each other down her cheeks. "Dead!" she muttered to herself, shuddering—"and to save me! and I who was expecting to see him to-night! I who fancied—oh! dreadful, dreadful!" Then her thoughts reverting to the widowed Marchesa, she added, in tones of the deepest commiseration, "Poor thing! no wonder that the sight of us was hateful to her."

Egerton gazed upon her for a moment with tender compassion, and taking her passive hands in his besought her to be calm. "I have still much to tell you," he said, "much that will be so painful for you to hear, and so embarrassing for me to impart, that I shall require the aid of all your composure to enable me to make the communication as I ought to do; but the confidence which you reposed in me last night, has given me courage to be explicit upon a subject which I now know bears upon the most sacred feelings of your heart; Alice,—my dear Miss Wilbraham,—I must speak to you of your mother!"

There was a magic in the mere mention of her mother which had the power to draw the thoughts of Alice away from every other subject, and to concentrate them in that one alone.

"My mother!" she exclaimed, grasping his arm with an energy which betrayed the intensity of her emotion; "you knew her then? Oh! speak to me of her, Mr. Egerton, speak to me

of my mother !” and her voice sank into a hollow whisper as she pronounced the last words.

At that moment a door at the further end of the room slowly opened, and somebody from without beckoned to Egerton ; he immediately rose to obey the summons, and, telling Alice that he would return to her in an instant, disengaged himself from her hold and disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN she found herself alone, she endeavoured to collect her scattered thoughts, but in vain ; the little that had been said by Egerton, had only tended to bewilder her head and pain her heart, for as yet he had told her nothing except the death of Cavendish, and his connection with Madame Sampieri. And here the remembrance of the dying lady naturally occurred to her, and perceiving that there were writing implements upon the table, she drew them towards her, and addressed a hurried line to her father. “ Dearest papa,” she wrote, “ you will be shocked to hear that there is death in the house ; the Marchesa

Sampieri cannot live through the night. I am certain that under these circumstances you will immediately dismiss our guests, explaining to them your motives for doing so. Do not let my absence render you uneasy. I have been sent for here, and shall return home as soon as my presence is no longer required." And twisting the paper into the form of a billet, she directed one of the servants in the ante-chamber to carry it immediately to Colonel Wilbraham.

In the abstraction of her mind her fingers mechanically turned over the leaves of a large book that lay open upon the table, while her eyes wandered over its pages without taking in their sense (it was the Bible upon which her mother's head had rested that morning) until some written characters upon the fly-leaf suddenly arrested her attention; "EDITH STANLEY," the maiden name of her mother, was written there in the beautiful and well-remembered hand that had twice before met her eyes, but

the ink had grown pale with time ; and underneath, in another character, and evidently more recently written, were these words, — “ Henry Cavendish and Edith Stanley were married at Berne in Switzerland on the 12th of June 18—.” And again at the bottom of the page, in the first handwriting,—“ Henry Cavendish Sampieri died at Rome on the 24th of February 18—, in his forty-second year. He was taken from this life unexpectedly, almost suddenly, but *not unprepared*, a few hours after he had rescued my beloved child from a dreadful death, and in consequence of his efforts to save her. He died in faith and hope, and humble reliance on His Word who sent His Only Son upon earth to redeem the children of sin from everlasting death,—beloved and mourned by all who knew him. May my end be like his, and when the hour of my release shall arrive, may I be judged not unworthy of an eternal re-union with him.

“ EDITH CAVENDISH SAMPIERI.”

And now the mystery was solved ! For the first time the truth flashed upon Alice. With a rapidity that caused her brain to rock, the events of past years, and those of the present moment burst upon her ; the silence which had involved the memory of her mother in mystery, was accounted for — her father's hatred of Cavendish — the letter that had fallen into her hands — the presence of Edith at Pisa — her emotion at beholding Alice in the Campo Santo—her daily appearance at the open door of that very room in which she herself was then seated—the sere-nade of the past night—all were explained ; and as these circumstances rushed rapidly upon her startled comprehension, dreadful doubts and dreadful certainties crowded there in desolating confusion ; a flush of shame mounted to her brow, and veiling her eyes with her hand although there was none there to behold her, she groaned aloud in the anguish of her spirit.

The sound of an opening door roused her

from the helpless agony of that moment, and the reappearance of Egerton seemed suddenly to infuse into her an energy and self-possession which, alas! were far from being the reality of either, but were merely the result of feelings wound up to that dreadful state of tension which precludes all outward demonstration of grief, and invests the sufferer with a momentary calm so unnatural, so over-wrought, that it is more painful to behold than the most clamorous outburst of sorrow.

“Mr. Egerton,” said she, in a low, rapid voice, standing up and pointing to the writing upon the open Bible, “I KNOW ALL! Madame Sampieri is my mother.”

Egerton's eye followed the direction of her finger, and he saw that the truth had been thus strangely revealed to her during his short absence from the room. He would have spoken, but Alice, placing her hand upon his lips, prevented him.

“Not now, not now!” she exclaimed; “you

can tell me nothing that I cannot guess, nothing that I could *now* bear to hear ! I must see my mother !" and she was rushing past him towards the door by which he had just entered, but he detained her.

"Be patient, I implore you," he urged ; "you cannot see your mother now."

"What !" interrupted Alice, turning almost fiercely upon him, "does she exclude me from her presence ?"

"No," replied Egerton, mildly yet firmly ; "but at this moment she sleeps, and if you would see her *alive* she must not now be disturbed."

"True," said Alice, relapsing for a moment into the same terrible calmness ; "she is dying, I know. My mother !" she repeated to herself, "was it thus that I was to hear of you ? is it thus that we are to meet ? have I found you only to lose you ? Oh ! why did we not both die this day eighteen years ago !" and clasping her hands together, with an expression

of grief so passionate and heart-rending that the eyes of Egerton overflowed as he gazed upon her, she burst into an agony of tears.

Egerton sought not to check those salutary tears, for he knew that the exasperation of her spirits would be calmed by them, and that, when the first nervous paroxysm had exhausted itself, she would be able to listen to him with something like composure. Nor was he mistaken ; long and bitterly did she weep, but when, at last, her deep sobs had subsided into silence, he seized upon that moment to speak to her of her mother ; he placed all the events of Edith's life in review before her, and soon absorbed the attention of Alice by the melancholy interest of his recital.

No person was so well calculated to place such a history in its true light as Horace Egerton. His religious principles forbade him to extenuate the fault which had separated Edith from her family and from the world, but his sense of justice equally forbade him to allow

the whole weight of blame to rest upon her; and, without seeking to turn the heart of Alice against her father, he scrupled not to impress upon her that a course of conduct, very different from that which he had pursued, would have saved from ruin and disgrace one whose aspirations had ever been pure and virtuous. Nor did he conceive that the cause of morality could be advanced, by withholding the tribute of his approval from the exemplary conduct which had redeemed one fault, (fatal, indeed, in its consequences, and never to be obliterated,) by so many virtues; and therefore he dwelt, with the eloquence that springs from conviction, upon the irreproachable tenour of Edith's subsequent life, upon the noble qualities of Cavendish, and upon the mutual affection which had united them up to the last moment of his existence, and which, in minds like theirs, could only have resulted from the conviction of mutual worth and mutual good conduct. Lastly, he spoke of her maternal feelings, which

neither time nor absence, nor more recent ties had possessed the power to weaken ; which had enabled her to live on, broken-hearted as she was, that she might again behold her child ; and which in the moment when she had ascertained the tender sentiments of that child for her, had manifested their violence by causing the accident that had precipitated her last moments.

“ Yes, Alice,” he continued, “ the joy of hearing me repeat those sentiments which you expressed to me last night, was too much for your mother’s heart, so long enured to sorrow, and she has sunk under it ; but she will die happy, because she *now* knows how you love her ! How she loved *you*, can never be known by you ; nor can those understand it who have not, like me, watched her day by day, and beheld her sinking spirits revived by a casual glimpse of you, her exhausted strength rally at the distant sound of your voice, her very existence hang upon my words because they

spoke of you ! And yet, with that sublime abnegation of self which belongs only to a mother's love, she has resigned herself to see and hear you *only thus*, that she might not destroy the happy state of ignorance in which you remained concerning her. Read this letter, and you will see her sentiments under her own hand, expressed, when she knew that her doom was sealed, to the friend in whom she has the most confidence on earth, to my mother, who loves her as though she were her own daughter, and who, with my whole family, most anxiously desired that she should pass the remainder of her days among them."

These words, attesting to the worth of Edith, were listened to in religious silence by Alice ; they fell like balm upon her wounded heart, and calmed the frenzy of feeling to which she had been excited by the sudden discovery of her mother's existence, added to an imperfect knowledge of her position and a total ignorance of her sentiments towards herself. She re-

ceived the letter* from the hands of Egerton, pressed it to her lips and heart with reverential tenderness, and then, with many an interruption caused by the blinding tears that streamed from her eyes, she perused the sad document from beginning to end.

When she had finished it, she turned towards Egerton and held out her hand to him.

“Best and kindest of friends,” she said, in a tone of the deepest feeling, “may God reward you for all that you have done for my mother ! never, never, can I—”

“The *Signor Colonello* requires that the *Signorina sua figlia* will immediately return home,” said one of the Marchesa’s servants, entering from the antechamber, and unable to master the English name with which he had been intrusted.

* The letter to Lady Catherine Egerton, which has already appeared, and which her son had procured from her, for the purpose of shewing to Alice:

“Impossible !” replied Alice quickly. “Tell my father that I cannot return now.”

“*Ecco la di lei Signora madre, Eccellenza, che resta servita nell’ anticamera, bramando parlare con lei un momentino ; comanda ch’io la faccia entrare ?**”

“No, no !” and Alice, rushing out, found her mother-in-law walking about the anteroom with a disturbed air, and a vinaigrette held to her nose. The sound of the music above stairs came faintly through the half-open door.

“My dear Alice,” said Mrs. Wilbraham, “what is the meaning of all this ? what in the world can you have to do here with a perfect stranger, neglecting your own friends in such an extraordinary manner, and perhaps running the risk of taking some shocking infection ? Everybody is wondering where you are ; you must return home with me immediately.”

* “Your Excellency’s mamma is waiting in the anteroom, and wishes to speak with you for a moment ; shall I bring her in ?”

“Not for the world!” interrupted Alice wildly; “my duty is to remain here; do not detain me, or you will see me lose my senses on the spot!” and she was leaving the room, but Mrs. Wilbraham caught her arm.

“Alice, your father is already extremely angry with you for your strange conduct; it is with great difficulty that I have prevented him from coming down stairs and making a scene. What can I say if I go back without you? what can I tell him?”

“Tell him,” said Alice sternly, “to cause that music to cease, if he would not plunge his soul in eternal remorse! tell him that *my mother lies dying there!*” pointing to the inner apartment; and, with frantic haste disengaging herself from Mrs. Wilbraham’s grasp, she rushed back to Egerton and closed the door after her.

“Come!” said she, gasping for breath in her struggle to appear calm, “let us go to my

mother ; there is not a moment to be lost ! Trust me, Mr. Egerton, I will shew as much self-command as she has done. I will not disturb her, and when she awakens, the first object that her eyes rest upon shall be her child."

Egerton no longer resisted this appeal, nor would the excited state of Alice's mind have permitted her to listen to him had he done so ; she trembled so violently, that he drew her arm through his own to support her tottering steps, and leading her across another saloon to a room at the further end of the suite, drew aside the drapery that fell before the door, and they both entered the chamber of Edith. A physician and a female attendant were seated near the bed, both of whom arose at the appearance of the new comers, and placing their fingers upon their lips, to enjoin silence, withdrew noiselessly to the adjoining room ; while Alice, breathless and almost powerless with

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agitation, leaned, for a moment, against the wall to recover herself, and then with a sort of desperate courage advancing, in another moment she stood by the bed upon which her dying mother lay stretched.

CHAPTER XV.

THE curtains had been thrown back to admit as much air as possible, and Edith lay hushed in a repose so profound that almost might it have been doubted that a living form was there, so little of mortality appeared to cling to the lovely wreck ; the very character of her countenance had changed since Egerton last looked upon it ; all traces of sorrow and suffering had vanished from thence, to give place to a serenity almost ecstatic ; and its calm, mysterious beauty presented to his imagination a type of that ineffable peace which belongs to the world beyond the grave, and of which, perhaps, her spirit, almost emancipated from its vesture of

clay, had already obtained a foretaste in some glorious vision.

Awed by this touching spectacle, Alice for a moment stood transfixed by the bed-side, gazing in solemn silence upon the saint-like features of her mother; then, sinking upon her knees, she bent her face over the wan, transparent hand that lay motionless upon the coverlet, and approached her lips to it, with the reverence with which she would have touched some sacred thing.

The warm tears that gushed over it awakened the sleeper, and as Edith slowly unclosed her eyes, they rested upon the bright form of Alice kneeling by her couch,—her gorgeous robes sweeping the ground, her floating tresses glittering with jewels, and the whole of her splendid attire forming a strange contrast with that death-bed scene, and with the abandonment of grief that characterised her attitude.

Perhaps the wandering of Edith's mind, in

the confusion of that first waking moment, was tinged with the bright visions that had visited her slumber, and, under their influence, she mistook the prostrate form of her daughter for some celestial visitant, "on holy mission bent," for, rapt and motionless, she continued to gaze upon her in silent wonder, until, her perceptions gradually returning, the truth slowly broke upon her, and she recognised her child.

"Alice!" she whispered, almost fearing that it was still a dream.

Alice raised her streaming eyes, and her heart thrilled, as, for the first time, she heard the voice—for the first time met the gaze of her mother; those dark orbs wistfully fixed upon her, with an expression of tender inquiry, seemed to question the feelings that would be exhibited towards her by her child, but the answering glance of Alice dissipated that passing doubt, and changed the fear of Edith into glad certainty.

“It is—it is my Alice—my child—my treasure!” burst from her lips in a transport of joy, all her sinking energies rallying into momentary strength under the magic influence of that long wished-for look—“Speak to me, my own Alice! let me hear your dear voice—tell me that you do not reject me—tell me that you forgive your dying mother!” and raising herself from her pillow she clasped her hands together in earnest supplication.

“Mother, blessed mother,” said Alice in broken accents, as she flung herself upon the bosom of Edith, “live to prove that all my love, all my duty are yours! Oh, mother! why did you not call me to you sooner?—but we will never part again—never, never! and the whole life of your Alice shall be devoted to restoring you to happiness!”

“It is too late!” murmured the dying Edith, struggling to repress a sigh, the last which vain regret wrung from resignation in that

chastened heart; then raising her eyes to Heaven, the submission of the Christian triumphed over the fond desire of the mother, and with an expression of pious gratitude, she exclaimed, "Oh, my God! I thank Thee for this last blessing—the greatest of all—and thou hast vouchsafed me many. Give me strength now, *even now*, when life once more appears desirable to me, to say, 'not *my* will but *Thine* be done!'"

There was a silence of some moments, which was only broken by the stifled sobs of Alice as she covered the pale face of her mother with passionate kisses, and the low murmurs of Edith whispering words of consolation to her. Even then she thought not of herself.

"Speak to her, Horace!" she at length said turning towards Egerton who, moved to tears, had remained a silent spectator of the scene, not daring to break in upon the sacred sorrow of that moment; "comfort my child as you

have comforted me in my hours of agony—she is unused to suffering—console her when I am gone!” Her breath came short and gaspingly, and cold drops stood upon her brow, for the agitation of that meeting had exhausted the last remnant of her strength, and she could no longer raise her voice above a broken whisper.

Egerton, kneeling down by Alice, bent forward to catch the last words of his dying friend. “Teach her,” she continued, “to be resigned—tell her that I die happy—oh, *how* happy! since the blessing of her affection has been granted to my last moments—tell her that this hour compensates for all my past sufferings—that all is for the best! Had I lived, we must again have been separated—tell her all this, Horace,—be to her all that you have been to me—friend, guide, and comforter!—And you, Alice, my good, my beautiful, my spotless child! look upon this best of beings as your friend—follow his counsels, and

you will never err!—be guided by him, and you will escape the guilt and misery that have been my portion! And, oh! Alice, forget not all that he has been to your mother—more than a *friend*—he has been a *son* to me.”

Alice raising her head from her mother’s bosom placed her hand in that of Egerton; their hearts were too full for speech, but the expression of her countenance as she thus tacitly adopted the wishes and feelings of her mother, and the deep emotion with which he received that beloved hand, and for the first time carried it to his heart, rendered words superfluous. No thoughts of love, however, profaned that solemn moment; but boundless gratitude on one side, and devotion as boundless on the other, knit their souls together with ties more indissolubly binding than those of passion.

The fleeting spirit of Edith accepted the augury which that simple action conveyed, and

a smile, a bright smile of other days, lighted up her countenance with a parting ray of joy, as she drew their hands towards her, and laid them upon her heart. "My children!" she murmured, "bless you, — bless ——" but the words died away upon her lips. And now the grasp which held their hands, tightened convulsively for a moment, and then relaxed its hold: the heart to which they were clasped, fluttered feebly and then became still! Oh! how awful was that stillness! They understood its dreadful import, yet they dared not confirm it to each other by a word, and still they continued to gaze upon those marble features until the lingering smile that had irradiated them with such bright intelligence slowly faded away, and left them fixed in the rigid repose of death.

Then, silently and with filial reverence, Egerton passed his hand over the eyes of Edith, and closed them for ever; a black mist spread

before those of Alice as she beheld him perform this last melancholy duty for her mother. She saw,—she felt no more! and Egerton, raising her inanimate form in his arms, bore her away from the chamber of death.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Alice re-entered her home the dawn was breaking, and its cold wan light shed an air of indescribable cheerlessness over the deserted rooms, which everywhere presented vestiges of the last night's orgies. Drooping garlands, tinsel draperies, and expiring lamps hung from the walls; faded and trampled flowers strewed the floors; and here a broken fan, and there a black mask or a stray glove littered the divans,—relics of vanity in which the fête had originated, and which, triumphant for a moment, had left nothing for the recollection to dwell upon with satisfaction! and this was all that remained of the sumptuous entertain-

ment from which so much had been expected — for which so much had been sacrificed ! In the midst was Colonel Wilbraham, pacing up and down, like the Genius of Disorder, his face contracted with rage, and every gesture expressive of the most intemperate irritation. Alice clung to Egerton for support, and shuddered as she looked around. The comfortless scene was in unison with her own dreary feelings ; a few hours had changed it from a bright enchantment to a cheerless desert, and she sighed convulsively as she made the comparison.

The emotions of the last night had pressed too rapidly upon a heart so new to affliction as was that of Alice, and she had been prostrated by their violence. Her mind, undisciplined by trial, had revolted against this first heavy visitation ; and, “like sweet bells jangled out of tune,” gave forth nothing but dissonance, rendered still harsher by the contrast with its natural harmony. Her whole frame seemed instinct with suffering ; a sombre

fire flashed from her tearless eyes, and their burning lids drooped heavily over them, while cold tremors crept through her shivering limbs; her cheeks, even her lips, were of a deathlike paleness; and her beautiful dark hair, wet and uncurled by the remedies which had been applied to restore her to animation when she had fainted, hung in damp disordered masses round her face, rendering its whiteness more ghastly. Egerton placed her on a sofa, and, advancing quickly towards Colonel Wilbraham, intercepted him in his approach to his daughter.

“Miss Wilbraham is not in a state to listen to you at present,” he said, reading in his countenance the reception that awaited Alice; “the melancholy events of the night have overpowered her. She requires immediate repose, and if it be withheld the consequences may be fatal. In the name of humanity, I entreat that you will allow her to retire to her own room.”

But Colonel Wilbraham, wholly regardless

of Egerton's entreaty, pushed rudely by him, and placing himself before Alice gave unrestrained vent to his angry passions. "Miss Wilbraham," he said, in a voice almost inarticulate with rage, "you have thought proper openly to defy my authority, and to set at nought my feelings in a circumstance where delicacy and propriety should have taught you a very different line of conduct! Go to your room, and prepare to leave Pisa to-morrow. By this you will understand that all intercourse between yourself and *the person* below stairs must immediately cease! and upon your cheerful compliance with this order, and your future obedience to my wishes will alone depend my forgiveness of——"

"*Your* forgiveness!" interrupted Alice, looking up at him with flashing eyes, "it is *I* who have offences to forgive!—it is *I* who am the injured person!—I, who have been brought up in ignorance of all that most nearly touched me!—I, who was the only person to whom

my mother's existence remained a secret ! Have you treated me like a friend or a daughter by resorting to these unworthy concealments ? and into what fatal errors, oh, God ! might they not have betrayed me !" (She thought of the strange interest which her mistake concerning Cavendish's sentiments for her had awakened, and a thrill of horror crept over her as she felt how nearly she had been hurried into contemplating her mother's husband in the light of her own lover !) " Into what horrors have they not already plunged me ? I have trampled unconsciously upon my mother's broken heart, I have danced while she was expiring ! Had you told me the truth, all this would have been avoided,—and you talk of forgiving me ! May God forgive you, sir, the misery you have inflicted upon me !"

The vehemence with which these passionate reproaches burst from the lips of Alice, completely exhausted her ; for when she attempted

to rise and leave the room, her trembling limbs refused to sustain her, and she sank helplessly back upon the sofa, suffocated with hysterical sobs.

Mrs. Wilbraham, who had been attracted to the spot by this clamour of angry voices, here entered; and her husband, thunderstruck at the spirit in which Alice had met his displeasure, and speechless with anger at the violence with which she had hurled his reproaches back upon himself, made a sign to her to remove his daughter from the room.

“Poor thing!” said Mrs. Wilbraham, her natural kindness asserting itself as she took the burning hand of Alice in her own, “she is really very ill, and no wonder! she is in a high fever,—quite unable to move. How shall I ever get her to her room, Mr. Egerton? I don’t like to ring for any one *just at present*,” and she cast a significant glance towards Colonel Wilbraham, who was again pacing the room

in the utmost disorder ; “ family secrets, you know, ought not to be exposed to one’s servants ! But if you will assist me, I—”

Egerton did not allow her to finish the sentence before the wishes she had implied were acted upon by him ; for the second time that morning he raised the unconscious Alice in his arms, and, guided by Mrs. Wilbraham, bore his precious burthen beyond the reach of her father’s anger into her own room, where, having deposited her upon the bed, he left her to the care of her stepmother, and quickly returned to Colonel Wilbraham.

That gentleman was still striding backwards and forwards, gesticulating with all the violence of impotent passion ; but at the sight of Egerton he suddenly stopped, and assuming what he believed to be a dignified position, awaited his approach in the middle of the room.

“ Colonel Wilbraham,” said the latter, “ I am the person who required Miss Wilbraham’s attendance below last night,—I am the person

who brought her into her mother's presence, —I am the only person to blame in this transaction, and I am here to answer for what I have done."

"Sir," replied Colonel Wilbraham with a sardonic smile, "I am aware of the obligation you have laid me under; but as I have not yet given up the guardianship of my daughter to you or to any other person, the least that you could have done would have been to consult me before you took the responsibility of such a step upon yourself."

"Had you read the second note which I wrote to you last night," returned Egerton, "you would have seen that *I did so*. Early in the evening I wrote to you to state that Madame Sampieri had suddenly become so ill as to leave no hope that she could pass through the night; and I supposed that the knowledge of a fellow-creature being in the agonies of death under the same roof with you would have been in itself a sufficient motive to in-

duce you to suspend your gaieties. Later in the evening, finding that my communication had produced no result, I again addressed you, *telling you who the dying person was*, and entreating that you would permit her to behold her daughter before she expired. Still no answer was returned to me, and, supposing that you could not have received either of my notes, I then made a personal application to see you, but I was told that you had given such orders as precluded the possibility of either myself or my letters being admitted into your presence until the morrow. I knew that there would be *no morrow* for the dying woman ! I felt imperatively bound to stop the horrible sacrilege into which Miss Wilbraham was so unconsciously betrayed ; and, finding that I could obtain no hearing from *you*, I applied to *her* for an interview, which was immediately granted."

Colonel Wilbraham bit his lip until the blood started from it at thus discovering that he had himself been accessory to bringing about an event

which for years it had been the ruling wish of his mind to avert, and to insure the impossibility of which he had not hesitated to sacrifice truth upon every occasion ; he felt that had he listened to the dictates of common humanity, nothing of the sort would have taken place ; as is commonly the case with the shallow cunning of selfish minds, he had overreached himself, and that humiliating conviction irritated him beyond the power of self-command.

“ Much as I love my daughter,” he exclaimed, almost inarticulate with passion, “ I would rather have seen her dead at my feet than have known that she had for a single moment been within reach of her mother’s contamination ! I had sworn that nothing of the kind should take place either while I lived or afterwards : but there has been an infamous plot carrying on for months, by that worthless woman and her worthless paramour, to deprive me of my child’s affections ; and you, Mr. Egerton, have been made their dupe, or their —”

“Hold, sir!” interrupted Egerton sternly, “moderate your expressions! The mother of your daughter, the wife of your youth, lies dead in the room beneath you! Her husband lost his life in saving that of your child; he died a few hours after he had snatched her from death, because the common care that his exhausted state required was denied to him; and you best know by whom. They had both deeply injured you, it is true, but they paid the penalty of their fault in this world, and they have gone to answer for their transgressions at a higher tribunal, whose Divine Judge has said, ‘*I will not be angry for ever!*’ Death ought to destroy all enmities—the remembrance of injuries should be buried in the grave of the injurer! Whatever may have been your animosity towards those two persons while *living*, let it not be said that you wilfully insulted their lifeless ashes.”

Colonel Wilbraham was silent; the knowledge, now, for the first time, imparted to him,

that the two objects of his vindictive hate had ceased to exist, produced a visible change in his countenance and manner. He was not, indeed, capable of the generous sentiment which Egerton had advocated, for the spirit of forgiveness was not in him, but he felt relieved by the announcement of their death; his asperities were subdued by it—he had nothing more to fear from them with respect to Alice—a weight seemed taken from his breast, and he breathed more freely; for as long as they lived, the world had appeared to him too small to contain them all.

The selfish satisfaction which lighted up Colonel Wilbraham's countenance upon hearing that Edith and her husband were both dead, did not escape the penetration of Egerton, and he felt profoundly disgusted by it; but anxious only to rescue the memory of his departed friend from the stigma of having engaged in unworthy machinations against him, and determined to absolve Alice from all blame in the

last night's occurrence, he suppressed his indignation, and when the question was put to him of,—“What else am I to suppose when I find that Mr. Cavendish watched and followed Miss Wilbraham constantly at Rome, and that Mrs. Cavendish introduced herself as an inmate into the same house with me, here in Pisa, under a feigned name?”—he replied by calmly explaining the legitimate cause of Edith's change of name, and then continued :

“The supposition that a plot had been laid to tamper with your daughter's affection for you, is at once contradicted by the fact that her mother has lived under the same roof with her for more than two months, and has abstained from any attempt to make herself known to her. No ! the soul of Edith Sampieri was incapable of stooping to plot or subterfuge, even where the realisation of her dearest wishes depended upon such means ; and her heart was too generous to seek for its own gratification at the expense of her daughter's tranquillity.

She was aware of the determination you had adopted to separate her for ever from her child ; she was also aware of the deception you had practised towards Miss Wilbraham by bringing her up in the belief that her mother had died during her infancy ; and although she disapproved of such a course, and bitterly deplored it ; although her heart and her conscience protested against such a violation of truth, she recognised the right which *you* possessed, and which *she* had forfeited, to direct the mind and actions of your daughter, and she never *attempted to contravene it*. True it is, that she came to Pisa with the sole view of seeing her child. Aware that her end was approaching, she wished to procure for herself that sad and imperfect gratification—the last which earth afforded to her ; but faithful to the system of self-denial which she had imposed upon herself, she had the courage to live near her, yet remain *unknown*—she had the heroism to behold death approach, yet *not to break through her silence*. The thought,

the wish, the hope, that for sixteen years had clung to her heart with all the tenacity of a mother's love, were sacrificed that her daughter's peace might be preserved — that your family harmony might not be endangered. I ask you, sir, could you have expected or exacted more from her? And do not imagine that the sacrifice was an easy one, or that time had either blunted her feelings or worn out her affections; for I, who beheld her daily struggles, know what it cost her to obtain this victory over herself. Yet she believed that she had concealed her sufferings from me, and in truth I knew not *all* until the last few hours of her existence when the agony of death was upon her; then the stronger agony of her soul burst forth in supplications for resignation, in self-accusation that the stubborn affections of the flesh *still* rebelled against the completion of her sacrifice, in prayers for peace, for grace to yield up her spirit into the hands of her Creator without a murmur! Those prayers were listened to, and

the 'peace which passeth all understanding' descended upon her, and shed a halo over her last moments. It was then that I took upon myself to procure for her that boon which she had resigned with so meek and Christian a grace ; it was then that I sought you. You know the rest ; let me hope that, had we met, my prayer would have been granted — let me believe that I only anticipated your own wishes in bringing peace and joy to the dying hour of your once loved Edith, the mother of your still loved Alice."

The emotion with which Egerton had spoken communicated itself, in a slight degree, to Colonel Wilbraham, but ashamed of shewing it he turned away his head ; perhaps, too, the allusion to Edith by a name which had not been pronounced in his hearing for years, had touched some gentler chord of his heart by reviving the memory of his early days of happiness with the beautiful and ill-fated being who had successively been the object of his

passionate love, pride, vanity, jealousy, and vindictive hate. If so, the softening influence of that recollection was transitory, for almost immediately resuming his former manner, he remarked, "She deserved no concessions, no forgiveness from me; her fault was the greatest that can be committed by woman towards man, or towards society."

"True," replied Egerton, "and she *never forgot* that it *was so*. But can you absolve yourself from all blame in your conduct towards her? Did you remove her from the temptations that assailed her youth and inexperience? Did you seek to reclaim her wandering affections by gentleness and kindness, or endeavour to fix her in the path of duty by that appearance of confidence in her virtuous resolutions which is all-powerful with a generous and high-principled nature? for, believe me, it is only the vicious-minded and heartless of her sex who can bring themselves to deceive an indulgent and confiding husband; believe me, too, that

the duties which married men owe to society consist as much in *preventing*, as in *punishing*, guilt."

Colonel Wilbraham quailed silently beneath the searching look that was bent upon him, and Egerton continued; "Society, as well as yourself, visited with its utmost rigour upon your fallen wife the penalties which are awarded to such delinquencies, and she accepted the punishment as a just retribution for her fault, nor ever sought to evade its severity; in this, how different from almost all other women in her position who, unable to resign themselves to their exclusion from society, either endeavour by meannesses to propitiate the indulgence of the world, or avenge its frowns in the reckless spirit of bitter defiance. But hers was a better and a nobler course: go to Bologna, and you will learn how her life was passed; there, in a country where the fault for which she had suffered is looked upon as a venial one—where her beauty and her talents, and her hus-

band's name, station, and fortune, caused her society to be coveted and sought for by the most brilliant circles in Italy, you will not hear of her as having appeared in those gay scenes; she was a stranger to them; but in the abode of the miserable her presence was never sought for in vain; her name was in the hearts and upon the lips of all who suffered; she was the friend of the friendless—the mother of the orphan—the consoler of the wretched. While all who approached her forgot her fault in the contemplation of her virtues, she alone remembered it—she alone judged herself with severity; and are sixteen years passed thus to count for nothing! is the practice of—”

“Enough!” interrupted Colonel Wilbraham impatiently, and eager to put an end to this vindication of Edith's memory which, strange to say, irritated more than it rejoiced him; “what is done, is done, and cannot be recalled;

but I have no doubt that in acting as you did you meant all for the best. Give me your hand, Mr. Egerton, and let nothing more be said upon the subject. *Forgiveness* of injuries is not so easy as you appear to imagine, and to *forget* them is impossible; all that I can promise is never to renew the subject to Alice, and I hope that she will have the good sense to imitate my forbearance, and abstain from offending me by any future allusion to — to her mother. Of course I shall depend upon your prudence to prevent any part of this awkward business from transpiring in the town?"

Egerton knew perfectly well that this conciliatory tone was only adopted to secure his secrecy, and that if he had not been feared he would have been defied; but as he expected nothing better from a spirit so selfish and vindictive, and as, for the sake of Alice, he wished to avoid a rupture with her father, he suppressed the repugnance which would have led him to

decline all farther intercourse with Colonel Wilbraham. "Be assured," said he, with emphasis, as he received his proffered hand, "that I respect the memory of Madame Sampieri too sincerely, to make her the subject of idle conversation *here* or *elsewhere*."

CHAPTER XVII.

ALICE, a prey to fever and delirium, vibrated between life and death for many days, but at last youth triumphed over the aggravated character of her malady, and she was restored to the prayers of her almost despairing friends ; but her recovery was tedious and painful, for all the distressing symptoms of her last year's illness had returned with accumulated force. She arose from her sick bed, disenchanted with life ; upon its very threshold a terrible revelation had suddenly exposed to her the worst evils with which society abounds, and stript her heart of its most innocent illusions. She was like a traveller newly arrived in a strange

land, who eagerly casts his eyes around in expectation of beholding a smiling prospect, and sees before him a landscape devastated by the thunderbolt and the volcano; streams of lava, where he had looked for green fields; riven and uprooted trees, where he had sought for the shade of waving forests. The desolating influence of the passions, known only to her through their fatal effects upon her family, had equally embittered for her the sources of memory and of hope. Every thought of her mother was tinged with anguish, shame and regret; yet filial piety and tenderness were so inseparably entwined with those saddening reminiscences, that she felt as though it would have been sacrilege for her to have cast a reflection upon the memory of Edith — the all-atoning power of the grave had sanctified it in her heart; and the thoughts of Alice dwelt only upon her virtues, her sufferings, and her expiation.

But her father! From the moment in which

she had discovered the system of falsehood that he had observed towards her for so many years, (less out of tenderness to herself than to work out his vengeance against her mother, and to insure its continued operation even after his death,) all her confidence in him vanished to return no more. And thus, as is invariably the case with persons who blindly sacrifice truth and principle that some unworthy passion of their souls may be gratified, his machinations finally recoiled upon himself. Had he been true with his daughter, and placed that confidence in her which she so well merited — had he shewn himself to her in the light of a generous and noble adversary of the woman by whom he had been so deeply injured, the respect and adherence of Alice would have been for ever insured to him; but by a contrary course of conduct he had not only forfeited that fair position, but he had forced all the sympathies of his child to take refuge with her erring parent. And thus

the happiness of Alice, as a daughter, was at an end ; for the recollection of her mother was accompanied with bitter heart-burnings, that of her father with cold distrust.

Such, alas ! are the withering effects which the misconduct of parents entail upon their children.

Faithful to the last in his filial devotion to Edith, Egerton had accompanied her remains to Bologna, and pronounced over the tomb which had reunited her to Cavendish, the last solemn rites of the Protestant Church. When he returned to Pisa, Alice was progressing towards recovery ; but a deep gloom had fallen upon her spirits, and as the only circumstance which appeared to dispel it was the presence of Egerton, his visits at Colonel Wilbraham's were eagerly sought for by the family, and soon became a daily occurrence. She felt that he alone understood her feelings ; that to him alone could she ever bring herself to speak of the fatal events which had suddenly over-

clouded the joyous atmosphere of her youth ; — her heart leaned upon him for consolation — her mind recovered some portion of its confidence in the integrity of human nature while contemplating the loyalty of his. He, on his side, found her presence far more dangerous to his heart, while thus subdued by suffering, than he had ever done, when in the full radiance of her matchless beauty she had dazzled and captivated him with her gaiety and her talents ; and thus the sentiment which they had mutually inspired, took deep root in their hearts before they were aware of its precise nature, and it was only when the approaching departure of the Wilbraham family for England menaced them with a speedy separation, that they suddenly found in the blank dismay with which that announcement had overwhelmed them, how necessary they had become to each other's happiness.

On the day that Colonel Wilbraham had announced his intention of leaving Pisa, Alice,

for the first time since her illness, went down stairs, and, accompanied by Egerton, visited the deserted apartment of her mother, that she might fix upon her memory a spot consecrated by such sad and solemn associations. When there, she knelt by the bed upon which Edith had expired, and covering it with her tears and kisses, prayed with all that passionate fervour which is more the characteristic of strongly excited feelings than of healthful devotion.

“Alas!” said she, as she arose from her knees, “how miserably far am I removed from that blessed state of mind which enabled my dear mother to resign herself to the Will of Heaven without a murmur! how difficult, how impossible it is for me to think that all is for the best, when I am to see her no more! Ah, she is happier far than her child; *her* sorrows are over, but *mine* are only beginning!”

“Her hopes,” replied Egerton, “were placed

upon the infinite mercies of God, and this gave her strength to suffer like a Christian, and not to grieve like an unbeliever. She was persuaded of this great truth, that our *Heavenly Father alone knows* what is *best* for us ; and heavily as she was stricken, she never disputed His wisdom or His goodness."

"Would that I could imitate her !" exclaimed Alice earnestly. "Oh ! Mr. Egerton, how am I to commence this great work of self-discipline ? Teach me — counsel me — support me, and then, perhaps, I shall not fail in the task ; and yet," she added, suddenly recollecting herself, and tears rushing to her eyes, "in a few days we are to leave Pisa, and I must lose you, my best friend, too !"

The tears of Alice, and the melancholy inflexion of her voice, as she alluded to their approaching separation caused the heart of Egerton to thrill with the delicious certainty that his attachment was reciprocated by her.

“Alice,” he said, trembling as he spoke, “one word from those dear lips will authorize me to follow you, never again to be separated from you ; one word will decide upon the happiness or the misery of my future life ! Do you remember the last words of your mother, Alice ? She called us *her children* ! Tell me, tell me, my beloved, that your heart does not reject the interpretation which mine has dared to give to those words ? ”

“I will not affect to misunderstand you,” replied Alice, a deep blush suffusing the pale cheeks which recent illness had robbed of all their bloom ; “nor will I withhold from you that my feelings—my wishes—that—that—. Speak to my father, Horace !” she continued, suddenly breaking away from the confusion of a first avowal ; “I will do nothing without his consent ; but should he withhold it, believe that I will never give myself to another !”

She held out her hand as she pronounced these words ; but Egerton, in a transport of

gratitude drew her towards him, and folded her to his heart.

“Mother!” said Alice, raising her modest eyes to Heaven, “look down upon your children, and bless them once more!”

CONCLUSION.

ABOUT a year after the death of Edith Sampieri, as Sir Allan Beaufoy and General Poyntz were one day seated in the bay-window at White's, the latter, suddenly raising his eyes from the newspaper he was reading, exclaimed,

“Here is the announcement of the marriage of a friend of yours, Beaufoy !”

“Indeed !” replied Sir Allan, with that indescribable *nil admirari* tone and countenance which in England are considered to be the evidences of supremely high breeding, “pray who may it be ?”

The General replied by reading aloud the following paragraph :—

“On Thursday the 3rd inst. by special licence, at Vale Royal, Leicestershire, the Rev. Horace Egerton, of Raven’s-crag Court, Westmoreland, nephew of the Marquis of Coniston, to Alice, only child of Colonel Wilbraham, of Vale Royal, late of the Royal Horse Guards Blue.”

“Aha! pretty Alice Wilbraham,” said the antiquated Adonis, passing his fingers through his well-arranged *toupet*, with an air of fatuity; “she was a monstrous fine creature, and the pleasantest flirt in the world; but not at all fit for a parsonage.”

“We all thought that you would have been induced to perpetrate matrimony in that quarter,” remarked his friend, “for it was evident that you were *colpito*.”

“My dear fellow,” rejoined Sir Allan, with the same ineffable drawl, which would have inferred indifference had not an irrepressible flush betokening angry feelings been visible through the delicate tint of rouge which scandalous

tongues averred that he applied to his withered cheeks, "I am not such a fool as to take a wife out of a wild duck's nest ; the girl was devilish handsome and entertaining, and Wilbraham's house very agreeable on that account ; but when I found that she was growing too tender, and her *mauvais ton* father foolishly encouraging her expectations, I thought it high time to withdraw from the scene. On those occasions I have always found that the best way of making one's intentions intelligible, is to order post-horses."

"Yet, after all," said the General, "supposing a man makes up his mind to marry, he might do worse than take a fine girl with a fine fortune and a good name."

"Eh, *c'est selon !* I however will confess that I should strongly object to an alliance with a girl whose mother had behaved as Wilbraham's first wife did ; one always fears that the frailty may be hereditary."

"True ; pray what became of the first

Mrs. Wilbraham? I have heard that she was remarkably beautiful."

"The most beautiful creature I ever beheld! —handsomer even than her daughter. She was my first love; I was desperately in love with her when I was a boy!" (Sir Allan was at that time sixty-three, and Edith, had she lived, would have been thirty-nine!) "but she was all for a bolt from her husband, and it did not suit me to commence my career with an action for damages. When she found that out, she turned her thoughts to Harry Cavendish, and he, poor fellow! *donna dans le piège*, and carried her off. It was a great pity; for, as he thought it necessary to bury himself alive with her somewhere abroad, he became lost to *us*."

"And where are they now?" asked the General.

"Oh! as for Cavendish, she put him to bed with a spade at Timbuctoo, or some other out-of-the-way place, (for they took to travelling,) and then she married an Italian Marquis, and

determining not to be behindhand in the noble corps into which she had been enrolled, took unto herself a *cavaliere servente*; and now comes the best part of the history, for who do you think was the favoured individual?—this very young Egerton who has just married her daughter! Arthur Bertie told me that he went to Italy every year to pass some time with her.

“God bless my soul, you don’t say so!” ejaculated the General.

“*E vero!*” responded his friend. “You see, my dear fellow, the *antécédens* are bad;—this marriage is quite a *pasticcio*. I wish the Reverend bridegroom all manner of joy of it; but I congratulate myself at the same time, upon having managed my affairs so much better than he has done, and not having become, like him, the victim of the Mother and Daughter!”

A gentleman who had overheard the whole of the foregoing conversation, and who, happening to have been an intimate friend of Edith

and Cavendish, as well as of Lady Catherine Egerton, knew how much of it was entitled to *belief*, took up his hat as it ended, and sauntering down the steps into St. James's Street muttered to himself :

“ *Voilà comme on écrit l'histoire !*”

Florence, September, 1840.

THE END.

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