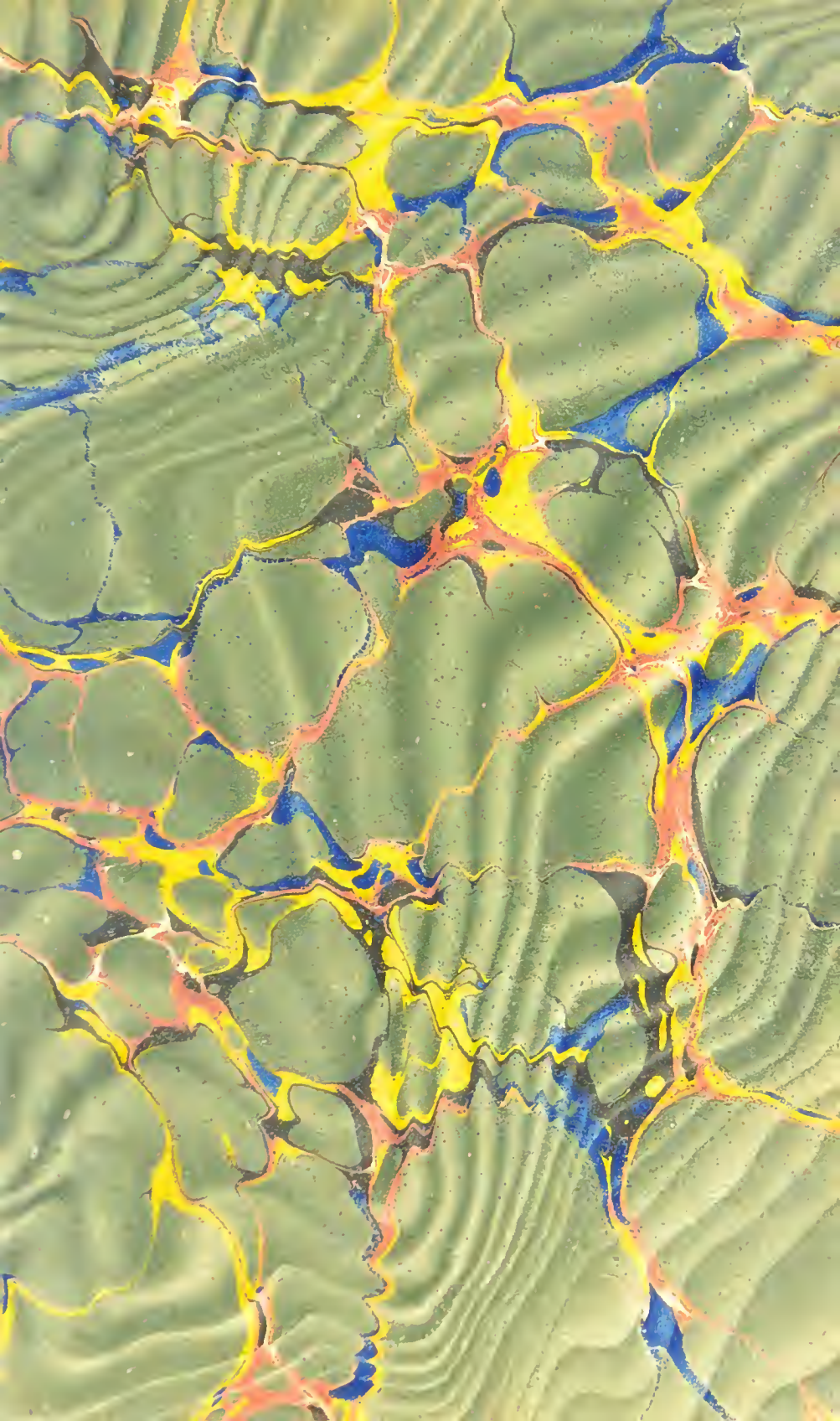

Fanny Forester

Christmas 1832.

A present from her dear and kind Mamma to declare her for improvement, and application.

TALES

OF

A PHYSICIAN.

BY W. H. HARRISON.

SECOND SERIES.

"We crave exceeding pardon in the audacity of the attempt."

SIR THOMAS BROWN.

LONDON:

JENNINGS AND CHAPLIN.

MDCCCXXXI.

CONTENTS.

COUSIN TOMKINS,

THE TAILOR.

COUSIN TOMKINS, THE TAILOR.

"Thou left'st me nothing in thy will:
And yet thou left'st me more than I did crave."

SHAKSPEARE'S *Sonnets.*

EDWARD STANLEY was a gentleman of good family, and liberal education, and held an official situation of considerable trust, and proportionate emolument. He was married, very early in life, to a lady, in the choice of whom he was guided rather by her personal attractions, than a regard to similarity of taste and congeniality of disposition. He devoted much of his time to the cultivation of the belles lettres, and delighted in the society of men of learning and genius, many of the most distinguished of which class were frequent guests at his table. His lady, on the other hand, was the daughter of persons of humble origin, who, from successful speculations, had risen suddenly into comparative wealth, by means of which they were

enabled to give her an education at one of the fashionable finishing-schools, where, with the tinsel accomplishments of the day, she acquired notions as much at variance with common sense and proper feeling, as they were unfitted for the society in which she had been accustomed to move. As one of a large family, she brought her husband a very moderate fortune: she knew, however, that his income was ample, and resolved to make it subservient to the taste for expense and display which her education had engendered, and which Mr. Stanley, who loved her affectionately, was too weakly indulgent to oppose.

They had one daughter, their only child, of whom her father was both fond and proud. Her mother, also, loved her, but she loved pleasure more, and, consequently, resigned her offspring to the care of menials in her infancy, and, subsequently, committed her education to a governess. The latter, however, was a young woman of piety, as well as ability, whose endeavours were not less strenuously applied to regulate the heart, than to improve the understanding of her pupil. Mrs. Stanley was too much absorbed by the business of fashionable life to afford the time, if she had cherished a wish, to interfere with the system of

instruction adopted in the case of her daughter, who was, on the other hand, preserved from the taint of her mother's example, by the latter's reluctance to "bring her out," and, thereby, introduce into her circle a rival claimant for that admiration which she was still eager to attract.

Much, however, as Mrs. Stanley's vanity was gratified by the notice which her splendid parties procured her, it was occasionally subjected to severe mortifications, and she was often painfully reminded of the humble sphere in which she and her parents had previously moved. Among her relations, there was one who happened to be a tailor, and who, to her inconceivable horror, had the undisputed honour of being her first cousin, and bearing the family name. Had he kept a chandler's shop, he might have been designated a provision merchant; or, if a cheesemonger, he might have been described by the style and title of a bacon factor; but a tailor is a tailor, all the world over, and there is no synonyme in our vocabulary by which to dignify the calling.

Her dread of being associated, in any shape, with this industrious member of a most useful trade, was said to have exhibited itself in the most ridiculous extremes. A table vegetable, vulgarly

supposed to be symbolical of the sartorial art, was never admitted at the banquet, lest its presence should give rise to an unuttered sarcasm, or a mental sneer, among her fashionable guests. Nay, it was even insinuated, that no other reason could be assigned for the stopping up of a side window in the house, than the fact of its commanding a view of a certain cutler's, who, by way of sign, had adopted a Patagonian pair of shears, which spanned his door posts, like a Colossus.

But Cousin Tomkins, the tailor, was as little ambitious of contact with his fair and proud relative, as she could be of his connexion. He was a sturdy and independent spirited man, who had too much good sense to be ashamed of a calling, by which he was not only gaining a livelihood, but accumulating wealth. He was, moreover, better informed than the generality of his caste, for he had studied other pages than his pattern book, and, above all, was well read in that volume, compared with which the wisdom of the most subtle philosophy that ever dazzled the world is foolishness and vanity.

Never, but on a single occasion, and that an urgent one of a family nature, did Tomkins intrude himself on the presence of his fashionable cousin,

whose contemptuous civility supplied him with little inducement to repeat the visit. Stung by the sense of treatment, from which common decency, if not his relationship, should have protected him, he was hurrying back through the lacquey-lined hall, when his progress was arrested by a fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, of about six years old, who, looking up in his face with an innocent smile, accosted him by the appellation of cousin, and, thrusting a little bunch of violets into his hand, dismissed him at the door with a laughing "good-by'e." It was little Clara Stanley, whom some of the servants, probably in sport, had informed of the visiter's relationship, and whose mother took occasion, on being told of the circumstance, severely to reprehend, for the familiarity of which she had been guilty. Children, however, are sorry casuists, and Mrs. Stanley's eloquence utterly failed in convincing Clara that there was less impropriety in romping with her cousin the guardsman, than in shaking hands with cousin Tomkins, the tailor. Tomkins, on his part, was much affected by the child's behaviour, and, on his return home, he placed the little bunch of faded violets between the leaves of his Bible, alleging that he should daily be reminded of the incident, and learn

to forgive the unkindness of the parent, for the sake of the innocence of the child.

But time passed on: the girl began to grow into the woman, and the work of education drew to a close. Her preceptress, however, in resigning her charge, had the consolation of feeling that, though the temptations, to which her pupil was about to be exposed, were many and strong, she was provided with panoply of proof against their power, in the humility of her mind, and her dependance upon God. Her taste, moreover, had not been corrupted into a relish for the dissipations of fashionable life. An authority, to which her piety, as well as filial affection, taught her to yield obedience, forced her occasionally into the ball-room; but, as love of display had never a place in her bosom, the scene had little charms for her, and she had discrimination enough to perceive that it was not, even to those who most frequented and most lauded it, the elysium which they would have it be accounted. To a few, the assembly may be, and doubtless is, a scene, if not of refined, yet of innocent enjoyment; but is it a scene of happiness, I ask, to the lover, who, like a moth flitting around the lamp, hovers about the goddess of his idolatry, only to see her coveted smiles

lavished upon another, and to behold the easy profligate and the shallow coxcomb preferred before him? Is it a scene of happiness to the fading beauty, when she finds the spell of her attraction broken; or to the pining girl, who beholds the homage, which she had deemed exclusively and securely her own, heartlessly transferred to some triumphant rival? Is it a scene of happiness to the manœuvring mother, who, when she has flown her daughters at herons of the highest soar, beholds them stoop to inferior game, and strike at the wrong bird? Oh, no! we can see the smile which mantles on the cheek of the revellers, but we cannot see the envy, the rancour, the jealousy, and the disappointment, which lurk beneath, and change the cup of pleasure into bitterness and poison!

Averse, however, as she was from the dissipations of high life, she was no stranger to the enjoyment arising from the cultivation of the polite arts. Her harp, her pencil, and her books, were the sources on which she drew for recreation; nor, ardent as was her piety, did she, in the gloomy spirit of fanaticism, deem the chords which were so often struck to the praises of her God, profaned by being attuned to many of those airs with which our

language abounds, and which are as pure in sentiment as they are plaintive in their melody. Although, like the dying poet, she deemed the Bible the best book, she was not one of those who cannot distinguish between a trashy novel, in which some accomplished profligate favours the world with a transcript of his history, or some discarded sycophant with the fruits of his eavesdropping, and the pages in which the genius of Mackenzie, of Scott, and of Irving, shine with equal purity and lustre.

It was not, as I have said, in the crush of the rout, or the glitter of the ball-room, that Clara sought her pleasures: and it was, therefore, with no ordinary sense of relief, that she escaped from the fashionable jargon of some vapid exquisite, to the society which her father's taste and hospitality were wont to gather around his board; where she was a silent, though not the less gratified, observer of the flashes of wit and genius which such meetings elicit. Yet was Clara not one of those epicene creatures, ycleped blue-stockings: it is true, she was mistress of French and Italian, and had just sufficient knowledge of the Latin langnage to insure correctness in the writing and speaking of her own; but she did not waste, on the acquisition of

more learned tongues or abstruse sciences, the time which might be devoted to employments more becoming her sex, and more useful to those around her.

Gifted as she was, too, in personal attractions, enhanced by a grace of manner which Nature needs not the aid of the dancing master to confer, it will not be matter of surprise that she had many admirers; yet it would be unjust towards the wiser portion of the other sex, to conceal that there were those who were as much enchanted by the accomplishments and virtues of her mind, as by the beauty of her person. Among them was a gentleman who was a frequent guest at the table of her father. The younger son of a respectable family, he had been educated for one of the learned professions, and, by the amiability of his manners, not less than by the variety and brilliancy of his talents, had rendered himself a general favourite in the society in which he moved. Upon his enthusiastic and poetical temperament, the beauty and virtues of Clara were calculated to make a powerful impression, which every hour passed in her company tended to deepen.

Ardent, however, as were his feelings, they were under the control of a well-regulated mind,

and he was awakened from the elysian dream into which he had suffered himself to be entranced, by the reflection that, situated as he was, straitened in circumstances, and dependant entirely on his success in the profession he had chosen, the object of his passion could not honourably be pursued. With a resolution and self-denial rarely evinced upon similar occasions, he withdrew himself from the magic circle, ere its enchantment became too strong for him, and suddenly, and at the hazard of much misinterpretation of his motives, ceased to be a guest at Mr. Stanley's.

The subject of this sketch was not fitted for the heroine of a romance, and the early years of her life passed away unmarked by any occurrence which it would be interesting to record. At the age of eighteen, however, an eventful year in her existence had deprived her of both her parents, who died within a few months of each other. Mr. Stanley had never been a provident man; his affairs, therefore, at his decease, were in such a state, that it required the sacrifice of all he left behind him, even to the furniture of his house, to satisfy the demands of his creditors.

The morning appointed for the sale arrived, and Clara retired to an apartment as remote from

the bustle of preparation as she could select. Sorrow for the loss of an affectionate parent was weighing heavily upon her heart, nor was the reflection that she must, in a few hours, quit the home of her childhood, to wander forth, she knew not whither, calculated to lighten her grief. Of the many who were wont, with smiling faces and flattering tongues, to flock to the splendid entertainments which her mother delighted to give, there was not one found to offer the word of comfort in her tribulation; but, as she had never relied upon their friendship, she could feel little disappointment at their desertion. Her prospect over the bare wilderness of life was, indeed, a desolate one: there appeared not a blossom to gladden her path, nor was there a tree between her and the gloomy horizon, to shelter her from the coming storm. But her view was not confined to earth: she turned upwards, with the eye of faith, to that beneficent God whom she had served in her prosperity, and who, she felt the blessed conviction, would not desert her in the day of her trouble. True it was, the means of deliverance were not visible, but faith assured her that His arm was not shortened that it could not save;

she had not trusted to a broken reed, which pierces the hand that seeks its succour.

In the meantime, the preliminary arrangements for the sale were in progress: the rooms were thronged with company, of which no inconsiderable portion was made up of the acquaintances,—they were once deemed friends,—of Mr. Stanley. Some were attracted by the amiable desire of witnessing the wreck of the prosperity they had envied; others, by the hope of securing, at a cheap rate, some article of furniture, bijouterie, or art, which they had admired in the lifetime of its late proprietor.

A few of the relatives of Mr. Stanley were gathered into a circle, in one of the rooms, who, after clubbing their pity for the forlorn and destitute situation of his daughter, proceeded to speculate upon the manner in which she could dispose of herself. One recommended that she should enter some family as a governess, for which her attainments adapted her; another suggested the more eligible appointment of companion to an elderly lady; while a third, who had heard of Clara having been once detected in making up some article of her own dress, after lamenting

the difficulty of obtaining situations of the former description, alluded to her qualifications as an attendant on some young ladies, in the enviable capacity of half milliner and half maid.

During this discussion, the attention of the group was attracted by the entrance of an elderly personage, in exceedingly plain, but respectable attire, consisting of a dark green single-breasted coat, drab doe-skin breeches, and top boots: his hat was remarkably broad in the brim, he had a stout walking-stick in his hand, and his general appearance was that of a man of respectability and substance. He contrived to insinuate himself into the midst of the conclave, and was an attentive listener to their conversation. Having heard the various propositions for the future provision of the orphan, he somewhat abruptly exclaimed, "But while the grass grows, the steed starves: surely there must be some of poor Mr. Stanley's friends who are both able and willing to afford his daughter the protection of their roof, until she can be, in some measure, provided for."

His observations were evidently not much to the taste of his auditors, all of whom, however, expressed the great pleasure they should experience in offering her an asylum; but, unfortu-

nately, not an individual of them was, at that particular juncture, in a situation to do so: the residence of one of them was under repair; the spare bed-room of another was occupied by a friend from the country; while a third had the scarlet-fever in the house, and would never forgive himself, if the "dear girl" should catch the disease. A smile of peculiar significance played on the lip of the stranger as he listened to their various evasions, and, perceiving that they eyed him with a look of inquiry, he drew from his pocket a silver snuff-box of extraordinary dimensions, and, tapping the side of it for some seconds before he opened it, afforded them an opportunity of observing the device which was chased upon the lid, representing a cabbage, supported by a pair of extended shears.*

The reader will have no difficulty in guessing that the stranger was our friend Tomkins, the tailor, who, among other peculiarities, had adopted this method of shewing that he was not ashamed of his humble calling. Some years had passed over his head since the affair of the nosegay, and they had been marked by that progressive pros-

* This is no fiction; the author has frequently seen the snuff-box in the possession of its respectable proprietor.

perity to which honest and unflagging industry so frequently leads. Mr. Tomkins, with an obsequious bow to the group, quitted the room; and, having inquired of a servant if Miss Stanley was in the house, sent his respects, and requested permission to wait upon her. His request was unhesitatingly granted, and he was introduced to the apartment to which Clara had retreated.

She was habited, of course, in deep mourning; yet, notwithstanding the lapse of time, and the change which sorrow, however temporary, will produce upon the countenance, he recognised in the faint smile, with which she requested him to take a seat, the expression that had so won upon him on the only occasion on which he had seen her when a child. Now Mr. Tomkins, although we do not pretend to bring him forward as a man of polished deportment, possessed that delicacy of sentiment which, as it is not the necessary concomitant of refinement of manners, is often found to influence the conduct of persons in the humbler grades of society.

He came to condole with the fair orphan on her bereavement; and the words in which his sympathy was conveyed, were well timed and to the purpose. But he came, also, to offer his assist-

ance, and was considerably embarrassed in his endeavours to do so, without wounding the feelings of the object of his benevolent regard. He expressed himself, however, to the effect, that he had heard of the sale having been somewhat unnecessarily precipitated, and much, he feared, to her temporary inconvenience; that supposing, therefore, she might not yet have fixed upon a residence, he had taken the liberty of calling, to mention that he had rooms, in his humble dwelling, of which he made no manner of use, and he should feel honoured and obliged by her occupying them, until she could provide herself with more suitable apartments. He concluded by saying that he presumed his gray hairs, his character, and, with some hesitation, he added, his relationship, were sufficient warrants for the propriety of the measure, if it were agreeable to her to adopt it.

With the warmth which belonged to her character, Clara expressed her gratitude for the generosity of his offer, and the delicacy with which it was made, adding that, in frankly accepting it, she would not disguise from him that she knew not where else to find a shelter for the coming night.

While she was collecting, preparatory to her

removal, the few things which her father's creditors had permitted her to retain, Mr. Tomkins proceeded to procure a coach, to which, after he had whispered a few words in the ear of the auctioneer, he conducted Clara, and they drove off.

Having, probably, anticipated that their journey would terminate in some obscure and gloomy part of the metropolis, she was agreeably surprised, on alighting, at being introduced to a spacious house, in the Adelphi, to which her inviter welcomed her with unaffected cordiality. She was shown to her chamber by an elderly female, who acted in the joint capacity of housekeeper and cook; and who, having intimated to her that she would find her breakfast prepared in the adjoining apartment on the following morning, withdrew, leaving Clara to reflect on the occurrences of the last few hours, and to return thanks to the Almighty Being who had thus unexpectedly raised her up a friend in her distress.

On the next day, she rose early, as was her wont, and passed into the room which had been pointed out by her attendant, and which was spacious, and commanded a view of the Thames, and of the Surrey hills in the distance. The

reader will, perhaps, conceive the measure of her surprise when, on looking around her, she perceived that her own harp and bookcase, with its contents, had, through the delicate generosity of her benefactor, been added to the furniture.

Clara had too much activity, as well as independence of mind, to sit calmly down, and eat the bread of idleness. Her first object, therefore, was to turn her talents to account, by obtaining some private pupils, whom she could attend at their own houses; and, to this end, she determined on an application to a gentleman who was a frequent guest of her father, and whose acquaintance, from his connexion with the public press, was very extended.

He was a native of the green isle, in whom talents and genius of no common order were united to a causticity of humour that, sparing neither friend nor foe, detracted very much from the value of his society, which, when he could resist his propensity to satire, was amusing and instructive in the highest degree. Under much, however, that was rude, and even stern, in his manner, there were concealed a kindness of heart and a generosity of temper, of which Clara had, on more than one occasion, witnessed unequivocal

evidence, and which emboldened her to solicit his furtherance of her views.

In his reception of her, the Irishman completely overcame the cynic. He informed her that he had called at her late father's residence, on the preceding day, and was much disappointed on finding that she had quitted it a few hours before. He entered with such interest into her scheme, and followed it up by such strenuous exertions among his friends, that, in a very few weeks, Clara had no reason to complain of a dearth of pupils or occupation.

The interim of leisure she devoted to drawing, in which she excelled, and, when she had finished half a dozen subjects, she took them to the shop of a celebrated dealer in works of art, for the purpose of offering them for sale. She requested an interview with the principal, to whom she was, accordingly, introduced. She found him sitting in a little room, apart from the shop; he was an elderly, tall, and somewhat hard-featured man, and received her with a coldness of manner which chilled her to the very heart.

With a diffidence much augmented by her unpropitious reception, she produced her drawings, which Mr. **** examined, for some minutes, with

great attention. When he had finished his scrutiny, he turned abruptly to the fair artist, and said, "Well, miss, and what do you ask for these things?"

Clara, after expressing a reluctance to put a value upon her own productions, ventured to name a guinea.

"A guinea!" exclaimed the other, in a tone of surprise, and, after a pause, added, "No, young woman, I will not give you a guinea for them, but I tell you what I will do,—I will give you two."* He, accordingly, put the amount into her hands, and, on dismissing her, said that, when she had any more drawings to dispose of, he should be happy to see her again.

Three months passed away, at the end of which, Clara, after deducting, from the amount of her earnings, a few shillings for pocket-money, presented the remainder to Mr. Tomkins, with the expression of her regret that it was not in her power to offer him a more adequate remuneration for the kindness and accommodation she was experiencing under his roof. Mr. Tomkins regarded

* This anecdote was related to me by a gentleman who stands deservedly high among the artists of the day.

her, for some moments, with an expression of peculiar benevolence, and, with his characteristic tact and delicacy, appreciating the noble independence which prompted the offer, took the money; for he knew that his refusal would not only cause her present pain, but render a continuance under his roof irksome to her, and he had no wish to part from his lodger, as he jocularly termed her.

Tomkins, as I have already intimated, had been very successful in his trade, from the active labours of which he had felt himself justified in relaxing, and, therefore, contented himself with the general superintendence of his establishment. Much of his leisure was occupied in those offices of benevolence which draw upon the time, as well as upon the pocket. His deportment towards Clara was a singular compound of kindness and respect; the former being exemplified by the great attention which he paid to her domestic comforts, and the deference which he exacted towards her from his servants; while the latter feeling exhibited itself in the scrupulosity with which he refrained from intruding on her society. If, by any chance, they met in the street, he always passed her with a bow, which he would have made to a customer, or to one whose occu-

pancy of his apartments was a matter of pecuniary profit to him. He was, in fact, too generous to take advantage of the relation of benefactor, in which, he could not but feel, he stood towards her, to overstep the barrier which, he imagined, education, and their respective habits, had placed between them.

Clara, on her part, appreciated, to the full, the motives of delicacy by which he was governed in this particular, and neglected no occasion of proving to him that she was utterly free from that false and ungenerous pride, which renders little minds impatient of an obligation to one who has occupied an inferior situation to themselves. In one of her occasional interviews with him, she had heard him mention, with expressions of admiration and regret, the scenery around the place of his birth, which, it happened, she had once visited. She had made some sketches of the surrounding country, which she took an opportunity of finishing, and, one day, when he recurred to his favourite theme, she presented him with the set.

Matters remained, for some months, upon this footing of almost parental kindness on the one part, and grateful attachment on the other; during which, Clara pursued the plan of tuition

she had adopted, with unremitting perseverance and the most unqualified success. In about a year, however, the health of Mr. Tomkins, who was, as I have said, an aged man, began to fail: he was, no longer, able to take his accustomed walks, and, at length, became a prisoner to his room. The nature of his complaint was not such as to confine him to his bed, and, consequently, afforded Clara an opportunity of paying him many of those attentions which, though trifling in themselves, are so efficacious in soothing the sufferings, and raising the spirits, of the drooping valetudinarian.

Relinquishing the amusements to which she had been accustomed to devote her leisure, she passed most of her evenings in Mr. Tomkins's apartment, and, by adroitly discovering, and sedulously humouring his tastes, she succeeded in imparting a cheerfulness to the hours of his confinement, of which they had not otherwise been susceptible. She read to him, and played over his favourite airs on her harp, and, with the anxious solicitude of an affectionate daughter, always prepared, and, when at home, administered the little delicacies, in the way of nourishment, to which his diet was restricted.

Month after month passed away, and each found him worse than the preceding one; for his disease arose from that decay of nature which time, instead of alleviating, must necessarily promote. The old man had formed an accurate judgment of his malady and its tendency, and, as he had lived in a state of constant preparation for death, the awful summons did not appal him, for he had "set his house in order."

In the latter stages of his suffering, I was called upon to attend him, and thus became acquainted with his lovely protegée and her history. And, O! it was a holy and a blessed sight to behold that fair and youthful creature kneeling by his couch, and pouring, from the fulness of a pious and believing heart, a prayer to the "Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," for the continued supply of His all-sufficient grace, in the last hour of Nature's struggle, when the flesh is weak, and when the powers of hell are banded to shake the faith of the Christian!

Nor was that prayer, which we have the warrant of Scripture for knowing "availeth much," breathed in vain. The sustaining consolations of the blessed Spirit were vouchsafed to him, and he looked back upon his past life with an unshrinking

eye; for, though a multitude of sins appeared in the retrospect, repentance had robbed them of their terrors. He reflected, too, upon many a charitable deed; but he well knew that, at the great tribunal, they would be regarded as only the evidences of his faith—the fruit of the tree: his salvation had been purchased at a dearer price, even the blood of his crucificd Redeemer, upon whom he had "cast all his care." Like the apostle, he had "fought a good fight," he had "kept the faith," and, thenceforward, there was laid up for him, in heaven, a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

What a lesson, worth all the eloquence of the preacher, and all the learning of the commentator, does the death-scene of the Christian afford!

Good cause, indeed, had Clara to weep over his remains, for he was her only friend, and the world was, again, before her. The day following that of the funeral was appointed for reading the will of the deceased, whose relations were, accordingly, summoned, and Clara was, also, requested to be present on the occasion. This was a trial which she would gladly have avoided, for she was conscious that the fact of her having been so constantly about the person of the testator, during his

last illness, and the affection which he was known to entertain for her, had excited the jealousy of many of his relatives. And, truly, it was with no complacent eyes, that her presence was regarded by the majority of the party assembled; and the calm subdued expression with which she prepared to listen to the perusal of the will, was deemed only a mask to conceal the triumph which the consciousness of being well provided for was calculated to inspire.

The document, on being read, was found to direct a most equitable distribution of his property among the various members of his family; but, to the great delight of many, and the astonishment of all but Clara, her name was not even mentioned in it. The solicitor, in the course of the perusal, occasionally glanced from the parchment to the countenance of the orphan, and was surprised to perceive that it was as free from any indications of anxiety, as it was of disappointment when his task was finished, and the contents were known. Some coarse remarks were made in the hearing of Clara, by one or two of the party, but the consciousness of the injustice of the insinuations they were intended to convey, enabled her to endure them with her characteristic meekness.

When the company had dispersed, Clara found herself alone with the solicitor, a most respectable member of the profession, though an original in his way. He was a tall, and somewhat bulky personage of about five and forty, with an expression of countenance in which shrewdness was mingled with goodnature and a dash of humour.

"Well, Miss Stanley," said he, after a pause, it seems to have been a very general expectation that my old friend Tomkins would have taken care of you in his will, and I must confess myself somewhat surprised that he has not done so."

"I am neither surprised nor disappointed, sir," was Clara's reply; "and, as far as I am enabled to judge, he has made such a distribution of his property as might have been expected from his justice."

"But," rejoined the lawyer, "one would think he might have left you a trifle at least, as a token by which to remember him."

"His kindness to me, sir," rejoined the other, "was such that I shall carry a grateful remembrance of it with me to the grave; so that a legacy, on that score, would have been as unnecessary, as it would have been unjust towards

those whose nearer relationship gives them higher claims to his bounty."

"You are an odd girl," exclaimed the man of law, "and exhibit so much indifference towards the dross for which one half the world are at loggerheads with the other, that I am almost minded to fling into the fire a little packet with which I meant to surprise you; but as the law, to say nothing of conscience (which is a legal fiction), might be troublesome if I did so, I suppose I may as well hand it over."

Clara received the packet from the hands of Mr. Elphinstone, but found its contents, inexperienced as she was in matters of business, utterly unintelligible, and, accordingly, required an explanation.

"Well then," continued the other, "you will understand that the larger paper, with the pretty picture at the top, is a policy of assurance, of some years' standing, for five thousand pounds, payable, with accumulations, amounting, as I guess, to about as much more, on the death of our late friend Mr. Tomkins. The smaller paper, with the red seal, is a deed, dated about six months back, by which, "in consideration" (as it purports) "of his love and affection for his dear cousin, Clara Stanley," he

assigns to her, and her heirs, all right, title, and interest in the said policy of assurance for five thousand pounds, an act, which, if I had mentioned it in the hearing of the worthies who have just deprived us of their society, would have accounted to them, though not very satisfactorily perhaps, for the omission of your name in the will."

Clara, more affected by this proof of the affection of her deceased relative, than by the circumstance of her being suddenly raised to a state of independence, dropped the documents upon the floor, and burst into tears.

Mr. Elphinstone took a prodigious pinch of snuff, which operated so powerfully upon his visual organs as to require the instant application of his handkerchief, while he muttered, "The confounded draughts in this old house have given me a cold in the head:—extremely silly—preposterously unprofessional!"

At last, recovering himself, he continued, "The money for the policy will not be receivable for some weeks, and therefore, if you like to trust me with it, (and it will, probably, be safer in my strong room, than in your work-box or reticule,) I will take charge of it until it is wanted. As for

yourself, I dare say the executor will not object to your remaining here, in your old quarters, until the house is given up: yet, no, on second thoughts, as you will now have no further occasion to "teach the young idea how to shoot," you shall come and stay with my girls for a week or two;—nay, I will not be denied, so be pleased to get your paraphernalia together, and I will send my carriage for you at four o'clock: your heavy baggage may remain here for the present."

The family of Mr. Elphinstone consisted of his wife, a mild unaffected woman, some years his junior, three sprightly girls, and a son whom his father had educated for his own profession, and had recently taken into partnership. The latter was a fine-spirited, good-humoured young man, of rather prepossessing appearance, of frank yet gentlemanly manners, and gifted with talents considerably above par. From the whole of this amiable family, Clara received a cordial welcome, and experienced every attention and kindness which hospitality and good-breeding could suggest. By Harry Elphinstone, in particular, she was treated, I was about to write, as a sister,—but a brother does not always rise an hour earlier than his wont, to drive his sister round the Regent's

Park, before breakfast; neither does he think it necessary to afford her his personal protection whenever she has occasion to walk the length of the street in which she lives; nor does he, on her account, levy the album-tax upon every artist and author within the range of his acquaintance. Yet all this, and more, did Mr. Harry Elphinstone perform for Clara Stanley; while, on the other hand, it was surprising to witness the perfect complacency with which she received his attentions. From such premises but one conclusion could, of course, be drawn, by those who dive, at a glance, into the motives of their neighbours, and it was an understood thing that the young lady had not the slightest objection to unite her fate with one who had half of a fine practice in enjoyment, and the remainder in reversion, and that her ten thousand pounds were not altogether a matter of indifference to the gentleman.

Clara had been a guest of Mr. Elphinstone for some weeks, when he was remarked, on two or three successive days, to be unusually thoughtful and reserved at his meals, although his deportment towards Clara was distinguished by his accustomed kindness. One afternoon, when the cloth had been drawn, and the servants had retired, he

informed her, that he had had an application from the residuary legatee and executor of Mr. Tomkins, calling upon him to surrender the policy of assurance, of the existence of which the party had been made acquainted by some old receipts, for the yearly payments, found among the testator's papers, and, on inquiry being instituted at the insurance office, the answer given was that notice of the assignment of the policy to Miss Stanley had been given by Mr. Elphinstone in the life-time of Mr. Tomkins. The grounds on which the policy was claimed, as a part of the residuary estate, were the alleged imbecility of Mr. Tomkins's mind, at the time of executing the instrument by which it was conveyed, and the use of undue influence on the part of Miss Stanley, or her friends. Mr. Elphinstone added that he had, of course, peremptorily refused to give up the policy, and that the claimant had, in consequence, served him with notice of action.

It cannot be imagined that Clara received this intelligence without considerable uneasiness, which, however, was occasioned as much by the apprehension of being engaged in a lawsuit, as by the idea of losing the fortune which her generous benefactor had designed for her. She in

quired of Mr. Elphinstone what he would recommend her to do in the matter.

"Why, defend the action, to be sure, my dear!" was the reply.

"Surely," exclaimed Mrs. Elphinstone, "there is not a court in England which would not pronounce in Miss Stanley's favour."

"That is a somewhat rash remark for a lawyer's wife," continued her husband: "the law, it is true, always aims at justice, but she sometimes misses her mark; and this is just one of those cases which involve much that is matter of law, but more that is matter of opinion, and, therefore, matter of doubt. As to the assignment, I drew it myself, and I know it will hold water; but, with regard to the competency of Mr. Tomkins at the time of executing it, although I am as convinced of it as of my own existence, it may not be quite so easy to make it apparent in a court of law. The plaintiff I know to be a scoundrel, and his attorney is what is termed a keen lawyer; a fellow who is pre-eminent for his dexterity in getting rogues out of scrapes, and honest folks into them; an haranguer of mobs, and a reformer of abuses, with a vast superflux of public spirit, and a marvellous paucity of private principle. True it is, there is

enough of abuse to be reformed, and of corruption to be swept away, but purity cannot come of pollution, and when a knave puts his hand to the plough, honest men are deterred from aiding in the labour. By such opponents, every thing that can be effected by hard swearing will be put in practice. I have already spoken to a counsel on the subject, who, on my putting him in possession of the particulars of the case, entered into it with an extraordinary exhibition of interest, and absolutely refused a fee. Though a young man, he is a sound lawyer, and possesses talents which render him infinitely better adapted for our purpose than a mere case-quoter.

"Twelve months ago," continued Mr. Elphinstone, "he was a briefless barrister, and it happened that I had a cause, of a nature very similar to yours. I had had some opportunities of judging of his natural talents and legal knowledge, and determined to put the cause, which was one of considerable importance, into his hands; not from any favour towards him,—for I hold it dishonest to sacrifice a client's interest to private sympathies,—but because I thought him peculiarly qualified to plead it with effect. The result justified my confidence, and we were mutually benefited: I gained

a verdict, while he, from that hour, rose rapidly into notice, and has now (no thanks to me,) a very considerable and promising practice."

The trial came on in the following term, and it was deemed expedient by Mr. Elphinstone that Clara should be in court, as circumstances might arise, in the progress of the cause, to render a communication between the defendant and her attorney essential to her interests. It was with great difficulty that he overcame the natural repugnance of a diffident mind to appear in so public a place, and it was only on his assurance that she should occupy a situation as little conspicuous as possible, that she finally consented to be present.

The case was opened by the plaintiff's counsel, (of course, upon the ex-parte statement of his brief,) with the ability which distinguishes the English bar: the gist of his argument, in which he depended upon his witnesses to bear him out, was that Mr. Tomkins, at the time of executing the deed conveying the policy to Miss Stanley, was in a state of mind in which he would be a passive instrument in the hands of any designing person; that the defendant had, by a series of previous unremitting attentions, in which she allowed none to take a share, acquired an almost

unlimited control over his mind, and that she had turned that influence into the channel of her own selfish purposes. His speech was delivered with great ability and power, and had, evidently, produced no inconsiderable effect on the minds of the jury.

When he had called and examined his first witness, the counsel on the opposite side rose for the purpose of proceeding in the cross-examination. The latter was a young man, with a high forehead, a nose somewhat inclining to the aquiline, and a full and piercing grey eye; while the paleness of his complexion, partly natural, and partly the result of close application to study, gave to his features, when in repose, a somewhat cold and statue-like appearance.

The full deep melody of the tone in which he put his first question to the witness, startled Clara by its familiarity to her ear, and, on shifting her position, to obtain a sight of the countenance of her disinterested advocate, she was surprised at recognizing in him the individual who had been so welcome a guest at her father's table, and the sudden cessation of whose visits had been the subject of so much speculation, as well as regret.

Mr. Worthington, for such was his name,

conducted his cross-examinations with a degree of shrewdness and tact, joined to a mildness of manner, which, in many instances, encouraged the garrulity of the witnesses, who were, for the most part, persons in an inferior station of life, and thus elicited much which did not altogether "dovetail" with the context of their evidence. This portion of his duty having been accomplished, he commenced his reply, under the conviction that his task was one of no ordinary difficulty. He saw plainly that the opposite counsel had, by his eloquent and ingenious speech, succeeded in establishing a strong prejudice against the defendant, in the minds of the jury. He felt, therefore, that much of his chance of success depended upon the effect with which he could combat his adversary with his own weapons.

He commenced by stating the case of his client, and, in doing so, collected all its favourable points, and presented them to the jury in the simplest possible form. He then called their attention to the weaker points of his adversary,—animadverting upon the nature of the opposing evidence, and referring to the prevarication of one witness, and the extraordinary lapse of memory in another. Conscious of the justice of his cause, which, he felt,

consecrated any means of its promotion, not in themselves culpable, he concluded his address by a direct appeal to the feelings of the jury. With the graphic skill of a master, he gave a short, but vivid sketch of his client's history, touching upon her youth, her misfortunes, her virtues, her accomplishments, as eminently calculated to enlist the sympathies, and engage the affection of her benefactor. He put it to the jury if they would lend themselves to negative the kind intentions of the deceased, and dwelt feelingly upon the situation in which a verdict for the plaintiff would place her. Then, by a sudden transition, which shewed him an adept in his art, he flung back, with indignant scorn, upon his opponents, the imputation of selfishness. As he proceeded in his harangue, his features gathered animation at every sentence, his cheek became flushed, and his eye flashed like lightning, and he concluded his speech with a sweeping torrent of eloquence, which, if it did not convince, had the effect of electricity upon his hearers.

The judge, alone, of all present, was unmoved: he preserved, throughout the scene, the same calm dignity so much in keeping with his office, and so characteristic of a British judge. Once or twice

he interposed between the counsel and a brow-beaten witness, or reminded the former that he had asked a similar question before, and was trespassing upon the time of the court by putting it into other words.

Clara's counsel then proceeded to call his witnesses, of whom I was one, and whose testimony, generally, went to establish the fact of Mr. Tomkins having been of perfectly "sound and disposing mind" at the time of the execution of the disputed deed, as well as to prove that, so far from the defendant assuming an exclusive control over the deceased, she had afforded every facility to his relations in their intercourse with him, and had actually, and at the risk of his displeasure, interposed her good offices in reconciling him to some branches of his family, with whom he had been at variance, and who gave testimony, in court, to that effect.

The cross-examination of his witnesses elicited nothing which could shake their evidence, and the judge, after a short summary of the case, informed the jury that the question was more a matter of fact than one of law, and that, therefore, their verdict must be governed by the degree of credit which they attached to the witnesses on the

respective sides, and left the issue entirely in their hands.

The jury retired to consider their verdict, and, from the duration of their absence, it was to be inferred that they had some difficulty in making up their minds. In the mean time, a breathless anxiety appeared to pervade the court: the very barristers, in spite of their professional coldness, exhibited signs of impatience, and, when the jury returned, the voice of the cryer, in his then unnecessary duty of enjoining silence, was the only interruption to the stillness which prevailed.

"We find for the DEFENDANT" were the words of the foreman, and no sooner were they pronounced, than a suppressed murmur of satisfaction ran through the crowd, which was, of course, instantly checked by the judge, though he could not help exclaiming, "I entirely agree with you, gentlemen."

In consequence of Clara's anxiety for an opportunity of expressing, personally, her thanks to her generous advocate, Mr. Elphinstone invited him to dinner, during which, the young barrister was frequently rallied on the unusual gravity of his manner. When the ladies had retired, the elder Mr. Elphinstone pleaded an engagement at an

evening consultation, and left his son and Mr. Worthington together.

"By the way, Arthur," said the former, "my mother, the girls, and Miss Stanley, are off to the cottage at Dorking, next month: you must go down with me for a week in the long vacation.

"Impossible, my good fellow!" was the answer: "you forget that I must go the circuit, and I have been retained in more causes than, I fear, I shall make myself master of in the interim."

"Nonsense, man!" rejoined the other, "you may con your briefs at the cottage, if you like; there is the library at your service; you know I do not trouble it much, and the girls are always out of doors from morning till night. Come, you may as well spend a few of my remaining days of freedom with me, for, I suppose, you have heard that I am about to commit matrimony?"

"I have," said Worthington, "and hope you may live long to enjoy the happiness which the virtues, beauty, and accomplishments of your destined bride cannot fail to confer."

"I thank you, Arthur; but pray what makes you so well acquainted with the young lady's beauty and accomplishments? Have you ever seen her?" inquired young Elphinstone.

"Have I not dined with her?" said Worthington.

"Where and when?" asked his companion.

"Why, to-day at this table," responded the other.

"You talk in riddles; pray speak out, and tell me whom you mean."

"Miss Stanley, to be sure."

"Clara Stanley!" exclaimed Harry, in surprise, "what caused you to think I was going to marry her?"

"The simple fact of your having been constantly, almost, in her company, and shewing her every possible attention, both at home and abroad. I am not singular in drawing the conclusion; all the world have set it down as a match."

"Then, my dear fellow," replied Harry, "I pray you take this as an example that what all the world says is not, necessarily, true. I was a doomed man long before I had the pleasure of knowing Miss Stanley, and, being perfectly aware of it, she has treated me with a degree of frankness which, possibly, has favoured the misconception into which you and 'all the world' have fallen. I thought you knew I was engaged to Charlotte Percy."

"No, I did not; but now that I do know it,"

responded Worthington, seizing the claret-jug, "I beg to drink to your happiness and speedy union."

"I am much obliged to you, Arthur," said the other, with a smile of peculiar significance, "for I am convinced of your sincerity; and, now that I have let you into a secret, which I thought every body knew, perhaps you will withdraw your plea, and go down to Dorking with us."

"But what will my clients say?" was the inquiry.

"Say," replied Harry, "why, that you are labouring in your vocation, and have only moved your cause from one court into another, resembling it, in one point at least, since the presiding divinity of each is represented as being blind."

Worthington appeared not to understand the inuendo, but proposed their joining the ladies in the drawing-room, where his vivacity and glee formed a striking contrast to the gravity of his demeanour at the dinner-table; a change which, though contributing, in no trifling degree, to the amusement of the evening, was perfectly inexplicable to every one but Harry, who kept his own counsel upon the subject.

About three weeks afterwards, as young Elphinstone, with his two sisters and Clara, was walking

in the grounds at Dorking, they observed a horseman approaching in the direction of the cottage. "The man of briefs," exclaimed Harry, "and mounted on a real horse, as I live!"

"Is there any thing very wonderful in that?" inquired one of his sisters: "I suppose you think no one can mount a horse but yourself, Mr. Harry."

"No, my love," he replied, "I am quite aware that it is possible for any man, with the assistance of a groom and a joint stool, to get upon the back of a horse, but it is not every person who can keep there. Have a care, sir," he continued, as he perceived Worthington, who had diverged from the road, riding up to a fence, by way of a short cut, "have a care, Arthur; remember you are retained in 'Dobbs *versus* Jenkins,' and have no right to break your neck without the plaintiff's permission."

"Never fear," said his friend, as he cleared the fence; "I could ride almost before I could walk, and, though a little out of practice, am not to be brought up by a gooseberry bush."

While he was speaking, he rode up to the wicket, which opened from the meadow into the lawn, and, giving his horse to a servant, joined

the party, from every individual of which he was welcomed, and not the least cordially by her whose form, from the first day in which he had seen her at her father's table, had never been absent from his mind.

It would be somewhat antiquated, in these days of refinement, to speak of love, with reference to rural life, and, therefore, I will not shock the taste of my reader by quoting Shenstone on this occasion; the old poets, however, had a pretty notion of things in general, and, when celebrating the influence of romantic scenery in disposing the heart to the tender passion, they drew as largely, I doubt not, upon their experience as on their imagination. For my own part, had I forsworn matrimony, I would confine myself to the metropolis, and plunge fearlessly into society, under the conviction that a man may carry his heart, like his purse, in safety through a crowd, and yet be robbed of it in a retired lane, a shady copse, or a lonely common.

Arthur Worthington, however, had not taken the vow of celibacy, and was well content to lose his own heart, provided he could obtain another in exchange. I know not the particular spot, or the precise terms, in which he made a declaration of the sentiments with which Clara Stanley had in-

spired him; I only know, that he sustained his reputation as an eloquent pleader, and gained a verdict from one whose gratitude and admiration he had previously excited by the generous and disinterested manner in which he had undertaken her cause, at a time when he believed her to be the betrothed of another.

THE LIFE OF AN AUTHOR.

THE LIFE OF AN AUTHOR.

"A fireless room, and, where a fire had place,
The blast loud howling down the empty space."

CRABBE.

TOWARDS the close of an unusually prolonged winter, I was sitting, at noon, in my study, felicitating myself on not being called to face the storm which was raging bitterly without. About a fortnight of clear, but intensely cold weather had been followed by a fall of snow, which continued for three days, almost without intermission, and had covered the surrounding country, to a depth "without parallel," to use a newspaper phrase, "in the memory of the oldest inhabitant."

I was interrupted by the entrance of my housekeeper, with the intelligence that there was a person dying of cold and exhaustion, in a ruined cottage, on the skirts of a heath, within a mile of the village. In an ordinary case of distress, I

should, perhaps, have been content to despatch the necessary succours by the hands of my trusty Jonathan, with discretionary powers of acting according to circumstances; but as, on occasions like the one in point, the injudicious application of restoratives, not unfrequently precipitates the catastrophe they are designed to avert, I determined on superintending their administration in person.

The roads were impassable in a carriage, while to have proceeded on horseback would have retarded, rather than expedited our journey. We, accordingly, set out on foot, and, after an hour's walking, or rather wading, through the snow, we arrived at our destination, and of all the abodes of misery which it has fallen within my duty to visit, it was the most desolate.

The house, or rather hovel, which stood upon the most exposed part of the heath, without a stick or a stone to shield it from the snow-laden blast, had long been tenantless;—the very beasts of the field, although there was little to oppose their entrance, appeared to have preferred the lee side of a ruined wall to the comfortless shelter within. The thatch had been stripped off by the violence of successive storms, and had left the roof a

skeleton, while the doors and window shutters had fallen, or been forced from their hinges, and had been taken for firewood.

We made our way to an inner apartment, the entrance to which was partially closed by a hurdle, and never shall I forget the spectacle which its removal presented. Three sides of the room had become green from the effects of damp, and the fourth was plastered by the snow, which was making its unobstructed passage through the unglazed casement, while, in the most sheltered corner, upon a heap of straw, resembling rather a litter for a dog, than a resting place for man, was extended a human being. He was lying upon his back; his eyes were closed, his cheeks sunken, his lips colourless and parched, while a dark beard, of many days' growth, exhibited a ghastly contrast to his pallid features, which had already assumed the hue of death. Stretched out upon his breast, lay a small terrier dog, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion, yet testifying its faithfulness and affection by feebly licking the face of its hapless master. The dress of the latter, although worn and travel-soiled, was that of a gentleman; and his thin white hand, as I took hold of it to examine his pulse, appeared not to belong to

a person accustomed to get his bread by the commoner arts of life.

Disease, either from observation or experience, is familiar to most men; and I had contemplated it in all its forms, and under every aggravation with which sin and poverty are wont to invest it: it is, in fact, the portion of our existence, and the common door by which we quit it: but starvation, positive literal starvation, is, if I may so express myself, so out of the course of nature, that it cannot be contemplated without horror; it is a sort of murder, in the guilt of which, it is scarcely too much to say, every member of the community among whom it occurs participates.

The extremities of the unhappy man had become cold, and it was only by the warmth, attended with a very faint pulsation about the region of the heart, kept up, in all probability, by the contact of his faithful terrier, that I ascertained that life had not altogether abandoned the wretched tenement. It was not, however, until after a long perseverance in the means to which experience resorts in such cases, that we succeeded in restoring him to consciousness, by which time, a party, whom I had directed to follow me, arrived from the village. Upon a litter, which they brought with them, our

patient, with his dumb friend, was placed and conveyed to a cottage, upon my own estate, which I had recently furnished for my gardener, who had not yet taken possession of it.

For many days, the recovery of the stranger was doubtful; his youth, however, for he was scarcely five and twenty, and the unremitting attention of myself and my humble coadjutor, Jonathan, under the blessing of Heaven, at length prevailed. My groom, to whose experience I had consigned the poor terrier, had been equally successful in his way, and the first meeting between the faithful brute and his master would have extracted a tear of sympathy from the eye of a stoic:—each was to the other his only friend.

On visiting my patient, one morning, I found him, for the first time, seated by the window, a situation wherein I had a better opportunity than I had hitherto possessed of observing his features, which, although his restoration to health was essential to the filling up of the outline, were endowed with that kind of beauty and expression which an artist delights to transfer from nature to the canvass. He welcomed my approach with a languid smile, but immediately relapsed into the appearance of pensiveness, or rather melancholy,

in which I found him. "Come, my friend," I said, "you must not allow your spirits to flag in this manner, or you will bring shame upon my skill. Behold," I continued, pointing to a bed of crocuses and snowdrops, which were forcing their way through the white carpet that winter had spread beneath the window, "behold the harbingers of spring, the emblem of youth and the season of hope. What saith the poet—"

"For pity's sake," said he, interrupting me, "talk not to me of poetry!"

"What!" I exclaimed, "so young, and yet have you forsworn poetry!"

"Sir," he continued with bitterness, "I have worshipped her, with an ardour and devotion befitting a holier shrine, and a more grateful mistress. I have sacrificed health, and friends, and happiness at her altar, and to what has she brought me? to the wretched hovel where, but for your humanity, I should have perished, like a dog upon a dunghill. But I will relate to you my history:

"My father was a respectable and extensive farmer in ****shire, who was early left a widower, and who, being tenderly attached to me, was desirous that I should have the advantage of an

education somewhat above that usually possessed by persons in my rank of life. He, accordingly, placed me, as a private pupil, under the master of a free grammar school in a neighbouring town. I soon became distinguished by an insuperable objection to the mechanical art of penmanship, and by an absolute horror of the mysteries of arithmetic. My deficiencies, in these points, however, were amply compensated, in the opinion of my worthy, though pedantic preceptor, by the rapidity with which I proceeded in my classical studies. In an incredibly short space of time I rose to the top of every class in which I was placed, gained most of the prizes which were proposed for excellence in that branch of education, and, in fact, carried every thing before me.

"At the close of the last half-year of my continuance at school, a reward was proposed for the best English poem on a given subject. In an evil hour, I entered the lists, and, as my ill stars would have it, I triumphed. My verses, heroic of course, were exact in point of measure, my rhymes were unexceptionable, and, the whole having been found to be mechanically correct, was pronounced to be poetically perfect. My schoolmaster was in raptures, my father regarded me as a prodigy of genius, and

my performance was honoured by the compliments of several of the surrounding gentry, to whom the worthy pedagogue had exultingly exhibited it.

"For my own part, ambitious by nature, and rendered conceited by the lavish praises of injudicious friends, I sighed for that distinction in the world which I had gained in the limited sphere of my school. My day-dreams were of literary fame, and in my sleep I received the laureate honours of Petrarch. I first tried the strength of my imperfectly fledged muse in the poet's corners of the country newspapers: I was the Δ of the **** Chronicle, the Γ of the **** Herald, the Ω of the **** Journal, and the blockhead of them all. Encouraged by my success, for such I deemed the admission of my articles, I, at length, put forth from the provincial press nothing less than an epic entitled "The ****," which was published by subscription, and was, of course, lauded to the skies by the newspapers whose columns I had so industriously assisted to fill. I was then a person of importance—an object for the gaze of wonder, and the lion of my village,—I had written a book! a work, which I took for granted would spread my fame from Penzance to the Hebrides; and I was in daily expectation of being inundated with appli-

cations from editors and publishers, anxious to monopolize the talents of the author of the ****.

"At this juncture, I had the misfortune to lose my father, and a bitter calamity I felt it. In my grief for his death, all my views of fame were, for a time, absorbed. My regretted parent having devoted the greater portion of his savings in business to procure me an education which, he fondly hoped, would be more valuable to me than house and land, left me the heir of but a small portion of this world's goods. Enough, however, I had to enable me, with the aid of industry and perseverance, to gain a livelihood in the humble path which he had trodden before me. But alas! I had taken ambition for my counsellor, and deemed myself born for better things. In the teeth of the remonstrances of friends,—for when did ever youth listen to the voice of experience?—I converted every thing I possessed into ready money, and, with this inconsiderable sum, I set out for London, having resolved on commencing author by profession.

"My first step, on my arrival in the metropolis, was to wait on one of the principal publishers, to whom I deemed it merely necessary to announce my name, and when, to my surprise, I found that

it was unknown to him, I explained that I was the Δ of the **** Chronicle, &c. &c.; but, so far from recognising me by any of these classic symbols, he had not even heard of the papers which my lucubrations had enriched. When, at last, proposing to overwhelm him, I proclaimed myself the author of the ****, he repeated the word once or twice to himself, and inquired if it was a satire or a tragedy. Exasperated at his inconceivable stupidity, I rushed out of the shop, to meet with similar success but less civility at another; and, after running the gauntlet from Piccadilly to the Poultry, I returned to my lodgings, fatigued and disappointed, and venting my spleen upon the whole race of bibliopoles from A to Z inclusive.

"'But what are booksellers,' I consoled my vanity by asking, 'but tradesmen after all, mere men of pounds, shillings, and pence, who never read a page of the volumes they publish? From persons of liberal education, I shall, doubtless, experience different treatment.' I, accordingly, addressed a kind of circular to the editors of all the magazines in town, enclosing to each a different specimen of my talents, and offering my services as a contributor.

"Not receiving any written replies to my appli-

cations, I waited, with all the patience I could muster (and my stock was ever too small,) for the end of the month, hoping to find the wished-for communications in the 'notices to correspondents.' From the greater portion, however, I received no answer of any kind; while of those who did condescend to reply, three stated that 'Δ will not suit us,' and one had the cool impudence to add that 'my MS. had, with a bushel basket of others, equally appreciated, been committed to the purifying ordeal of the flames.' I had hunted over the wrappers of nearly all the publications to which I had addressed myself, and was on the point of giving up the task, in disappointment and disgust, when my eyes was attracted by the welcome sentence, 'A communication for Δ lies at our publishers.' To the publishers, then, on the wings of hope, I hastened, and with trembling hands, received a packet of ominous magnitude; on opening which, an operation which I performed as soon as I got into the street, I found my MS., with a note expressive of the editor's regret that his poetical department was already too full to admit of his availing of my polite offer of service.

"In the course of time, however, by good fortune, and dint of perseverance, I obtained an

engagement in one of the minor periodicals, but, so scanty was the remuneration, and so limited the space which I was permitted to fill, that the monthly produce of my labours rarely exceeded two pounds; a sum so inadequate to my support, humble as was my abode, and simple as was my fare, that I found my stock of ready money frightfully diminishing.

"At length, like a desperate gamester, I determined on doubling the stake. I had, long since, made the discovery that my epic had never reached beyond the county in which it was published; I, therefore, carefully revised the poem, and, devoting the last fifty pounds of my father's legacy to printing a new edition of it, prevailed upon a goodnatured bookseller, of some eminence, to become the publisher. The work fell still-born from the press, and I verily believe that not a copy beyond the number sent to the various reviews, ever found its way out of the bookseller's shop, and it had been well if they also had remained upon the shelf.

"With what trembling anxiety did I take up each periodical, to which my volume had been sent, and, having glanced at the expected critique, how suddenly did I drop the book, as if it had

been a serpent, and had stung me! None of the leading reviews deemed my work of sufficient consequence for a notice in their columns, but it proved excellent food for the small wits of the minor ones. I was the subject of one reviewer's pity, of another's ridicule, while a third condemned my production in sweeping terms and in a manner which clearly evinced that he had not read a page of it.

"Thus it happened, that the means which I had adopted to redeem my declining fortunes, only precipitated my ruin. For some time, indeed, I contrived to drag on a wretched existence, on the miserable pittance, irregularly doled out to me by the magazine in which I was engaged, aided by the liberality of the projector of a Dictionary of Musicians, who employed me to collect biographies at the rate of half-a-crown a piece.

"From the first of these resources, I was, at last, cut off by a quarrel with the editor, with whom I had presumed to remonstrate on some unwarrantable curtailments of an article I had sent him; and, shortly afterwards, the Dictionary, in spite of the economy with which it was conducted, proved a losing speculation, and I was left without a shilling among strangers.

"For some hours I brooded over my fate, in the miserable garret which served me for a dwelling; the only articles of furniture it possessed were a mattress on which I slept, and a crazy deal table, which I was wont to drag to the window seat when I had occasion to write. My watch, some trinkets which had belonged to my mother, and every garment but the clothes in which I stood, had already been pledged, to enable me to keep even this humble shelter over my head, and to procure me food. To add to my misery, it was winter—you know how severely it set in—and I had no fire.

"At length, hunger, which forces the wolf from his covert, drove me into the street, to seek for some employment,—I cared not what, so it were honest and would provide me with a meal. I sought it in every grade, from the merchant to the tallow chandler. From all I encountered rejection, aggravated, in some instances, by insult. One person, whose counting-house was in a dark alley in the city, condescended to inquire my qualifications, and what remuneration I looked for, which latter, humble as were my expectations, he no sooner heard, than he told me he could get a man to perform the business for half

the money, and clean his boots into the bargain.

"You marvel, perhaps, that I did not prefer to perish in the streets, rather than submit to a repetition of such indignities; but you know not, and, I pray God, you may never feel the power of hunger,—a tyrant to whom the sternest and fiercest passions, and pride among the rest, must succumb. Harassed, at last, by petty creditors, whose demands a few shillings—but I had them not—would have satisfied, I abandoned my lodgings, and quitted London, in the hope of being able to reach my native village, where I once had, and might still possess a friend. The faithful creature which you see before you, refused to abandon his master in his sorrow, and it is through his sagacity and attachment that I was supported so far on my way: he had picked up a cloth, containing a few sandwiches, which had been dropped upon the road, and brought it to me in his mouth, and, as hunger and despair have few scruples, we divided the scanty meal between us. At the end of another day, however, my strength failed me, and I crawled into the wretched hovel, where I remained, as I imagine, some hours, and where, had your humanity been less prompt, I should have been re-

leased from a world, which, whether I regard the past or the future, presents to me little but misery and sorrow."

Such was the tale of my ill fated patient, and similar, doubtless, would be the narratives of an immense majority of aspirants for literary fame. Myriads start for the prize, and few reach the goal; while the histories of those who perish by the way are unrecorded; else what a picture would they present of toil, and privation, and pain,—of fruitless struggles, and baffled hopes. It is impossible to withhold our sympathy with sufferings like these, while we are bound to admit the injustice of an author charging them upon the stupidity of publishers, the indifference of the world, or the malignancy of reviewers, rather than upon the ambition which lured him from the beaten road of life, into devious and briary paths, in search of that temple whose niches are so few, and so seldom gained. Those who rail at the neglect of genius, should moderate their complaints when they look around them, and behold virtue, with higher claims, pining in poverty in every street.

On visiting my patient, a few mornings after he had related to me his adventures, I found him in a state of considerable excitement, and, on my in-

quiring the cause, he put into my hands a newspaper, and pointed to a paragraph containing a pathetic account of his having perished of famine in a hovel near ****, and stating that he was the author of the ****. It was wormwood to his pride, chastened as it had been by adversity, to reflect that a name, which it had been the main object of his life to force into notice, should, at last, have obtained notoriety by its connexion with a story of such abject and deplorable misery. In thus deeming the publicity of his misfortunes an aggravation of their bitterness, he but yielded to a weakness common to most men who have not been schooled in that religion which teaches that "pride was not made for man."

After a short pause, during which he appeared to be struggling with his feelings, he exclaimed, "It is well: perish the name, and with it the ambitious hopes which it was my delight to cherish, and beneath whose ruins my spirit has been crushed! The world believes me dead, and dead to it will I remain, for by my own name shall they know me no more. I will go forth into the fields, and earn, by the work of my hands, and the sweat of my brow, that pittance for which, in the field of literature, I have so long laboured in vain."

I bade him dismiss such melancholy thoughts, adding, with a smile, that I feared his performances in the one field would be as severely criticised as they had been in the other, but that, when his health was completely reestablished, it would be time enough to talk of his future proceedings.

Of course, I saw my new acquaintance very frequently during his convalescence, which was considerably retarded by a depression of spirits naturally enough induced by the uncertainty of his prospects. On one occasion, after repeating his warm acknowledgments for what he termed my humanity and kindness, he expressed his intention of relieving me of his presence.

I ventured to inquire of him the path which he had resolved to pursue. He replied, that his health was perfectly restored; that he was quite strong, and could, doubtless, find employment, now that the approach of spring had given activity to agricultural labours. I laughed at so romantic a notion, and said that I could not believe him to be serious. He assured me that he was never more in earnest, and that his resolution was irrevocable; that he had bidden an eternal farewell to literature; he had seen the folly and vanity of the pursuit, and was determined to work no longer for

that most ungrateful of masters, the public; in fact, that his wishes, as well as his hopes, of distinction in the path of letters had perished never to be revived.

Alas! how little do we know of our own hearts, which have been well described in that volume whose words are truth, "as deceitful above all things!" I drew from my pocket a number of an influential Review, and directed his attention to an article in which the merits of his long-neglected epic were set forth in a style of unqualified panegyric, and the misfortunes and untimely fate of the author lamented in a strain of pathos that proved the writer had forgotten the sternness of the critic in the sympathies of the man.

The desire of fame, which had been so completely subdued by the pressure of calamity, that he was not even aware of its existence in his bosom, was, in an instant, rekindled by the stimulant I had applied. His countenance was lit up by hope and exultation; the prize he had so long toiled for was suddenly placed within his reach, at the very juncture in which he had deemed himself the farthest from its attainment.

The enthusiasm of the poetical temperament was called into play, and his feelings found relief

in a flood of tears. Nor was his gratification diminished when I produeed other reviews corroborating the opinions of the first, and an advertisement of the "Seeond Edition" of his poem.

On the following morning, the delighted and impatient author proceeded to London, and went immediately to his publishers, who, when they recovered from the eonsternation into which the sudden appearance of the supposed dead man had thrown them, shook him cordially by the hand, congratulated him on the unexpeeted sueeess of his book, and assured him they should have mueh greater pleasure, in accounting for the profits to hinn than to his exeeutors.

The world is notorious for dispensing tardy justiee, and to poets and statesmen in particular; and, no sooner was the report of our author's untimely end eirculated, than the reviewers began to ransack their literary lumber-closets, and the reading public to inquire for the long negleeted ****, the first edition of which soon made way for a second, and the second for a third; so that he not only realised a considerable sum by his poem, but continued theneeforward to grow in fame and request as a writer.

He is, at this time, deriving a very handsome

income from his literary labours, and is living within a short distance of me, in a house which commands a view of the very hovel that had so nearly proved his tomb. On being questioned as to the motive of his preference for the situation, he replied, that he had chosen it, in order that if, at any time, in the intoxication of success, he should forget the lesson which adversity had taught him, he might have a monitor of humility before his eyes.

REMORSE.

REMORSE.

"The attribute
That speaks his Godhead most, is merciful;
Revenge is proper to the fiends you worship,
Yet cannot strike without his leave. You weep,—
Oh, 'tis a heavenly shower! celestial balm
To cure your wounded conscience!"

MASSINGER.

I MENTIONED, in the first series of these Tales, that I had a cottage on the coast, within a few miles of my estate, to which, during the summer and autumnal months, I occasionally removed. I was, one evening, towards the latter end of July, at the verandah of a little room which commanded a prospect of the sea, with an extent of coast for many miles to the right and left: a breeze had sprung up at sunset, but was too light to disturb the bosom of the ocean, which was lying, sublime in its tranquillity, at my feet.

The moon was up, and flung a beauty and a charm on every object on which her beams de-

seended; on the water she shed a broad silvery traek over whieh the vessels glided, like giant forms in a magie mirror, and disappeared in the darkness beyond. Here and there, upon the beaeh, were drawn up, high and dry, the little fishing craft, over which their nets were spread, like a veil, in the moonbeam, objeets upon whieh the peneil of a Sehetky would delight to seize. Far away to the right, on a point of land, whieh formed, if I may so express myself, one of the horns of the bay, was the lighthouse, whose revolving beaeon appeared and vanished like an ignis fatuus.

The evening was so still that I eould hear the soft ripple of the waters as they stole over the pebbles on the beaeh beneath me. I was roused from the calm whieh the eontemplation of sueh a seene was so well ealeulated to produee, by the tramp of a foot upon the garden walk, and, immediately after, a sailor introdueed himself to me with his best sea bow, and a simultaneous sweep of his hat upon the gravel.

The purport of his visit was to inform me that the eommander of the vessel to whieh he belonged had, for some time past, been in a very indifferent state of health; that, within the last

few days, he had kept his bed; and, the ship having been becalmed in the bay, the chief mate had availed himself of the opportunity of sending ashore for medical assistance. He proceeded to state that he had called on the village apothecary, but finding that the latter was on a cruize, he had taken the liberty of soliciting my attendance.

The fellow stood before me in the broad moonlight, and I looked upon his countenance, for I have more confidence, it may be, than skill in physiognomy, and fancied I could read on it the characters of honesty, which, it is said, writes oftener in old-english than in court hand. I had no sooner signified my acquiescence, than the tar darted off in advance of me, and prepared for my embarkation, by causing the boat to be drawn up on the shingle, and, when I was safely deposited in the stern, two or three of his comrades leaped out of her, and, at the expense of a wetting up to their knees, succeeded in launching her again upon the ocean. With such good will did the gallant fellows ply their oars, that we soon reached the vessel, a remarkably handsome craft of considerable size.

I was forthwith conducted into the cabin, which was a comparatively spacious and well-

fitted apartment. Upon a couch, on one side, was lying the person on whose account I had been summoned. He was, apparently, about five and forty years old, and was distinguished by a cast of features from which disease, disguiser though it be, had not erased the traces of their original manliness and beauty.

He smiled at my approach, and thanked me, in the honest phrase of a seaman, for putting-off to his assistance, "although," he added, "my gallant fellows acted in disobedience of orders, in making signals of distress. But human aid avails not; I am aground, Doctor, hard and fast, and neither wind nor tide will heave me off. I have braved many a tempest, by sea and land, but I shall not weather this."

I addressed to him some words of comfort, telling him that our lives were measured by Him who gave them, and that it was not for human wisdom to mete their duration. A detail of his symptoms would add little to the interest of this narrative: it will be enough to say that they were of a character which justified the presages of the patient. I however administered to him, from the contents of the well supplied medicine-chest of the ship, a draught, in order to the alleviation

of the pains of a disease, which I could not hope to arrest, and determined on remaining with him until the following morning.

During my vigil, it was gratifying to observe the tender interest with which the rough sons of the ocean, the partners of his dangers, regarded their commander, as, one by one, with silent step, they approached his couch; and many an eye which had so often looked death in the face with the stern unblenching courage characteristic of the British sailor, was streaming with tears, as, with a forced smile, and half-choked utterance, they bade him "cheer up." With what anxious foresight did they anticipate his wants! More expert nurses I have seen among the other sex, but never more tender or more kind.

After some hours' sleep, during which I was watching alone by his side, the patient awoke considerably refreshed, and, looking earnestly in my face, he said, "Doctor, I need not ask your opinion of my condition, for I have read my death-warrant in the looks which you have exchanged with my gallant messmate; nor would you fear to announce to me my fate, did you know how few and weak are the ties that bind me to a world, my passage through which, like my path

upon the waters, has been marked by storm and conflict. O, it is not death, but the awful eternity beyond it, at which my soul quails in its extremity! The sufferings of the body I have borne up against, with the fortitude that becomes a man, but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

He then inquired of me how long, in my opinion, he should be able to hold out against the attack under which he was sinking; and, on my replying that he might possibly survive some days, he continued, "I have that upon my conscience of which I would gladly employ some of the few moments that are left me in disburthening it, and, when you have heard the history of my eventful career, you who are more familiar, it may be, than I am with the holy volume which lies open before you, will be able to apply some of its blessed promises to my soul's comfort.

"My father was a soldier of fortune: he died when I was in my boyhood, leaving myself and my sister, my junior by a year, to the care of my mother, who had little else than her widow's pension wherewith to support us. We lived in one of the maritime counties of England, where I was so fortunate as to obtain a situation in a mer-

cantile house, the emoluments of which enabled me not only to maintain myself, but to add materially to the comforts of my surviving parent and sister.

"I should have told you that my mother was a well educated woman, and had bestowed no ordinary pains in informing the minds of her children. For myself, I was well read in most of the historians of our country, and was an enthusiast in poetry, of which my sister was, also, a passionate admirer. How shall I describe her to you? she was the fairest, the gentlest, and the most artless of human beings. Even now the beautiful vision of what she once was is floating before me.

"Blest with the affection of such a sister, and such a mother, our little cottage was, to me, the home of peace; and you will more readily imagine than I can portray to you, the feelings with which, after the fatigues of the day, I returned to its sanctuary. It was indeed a paradise, and, like that of Adam, was destined to be invaded by the arts of the tempter. The owner of the estate, of which our dwelling formed a part, had lately come into possession of it; his wealth was almost limitless. He was a man of refined education, agreeable exterior, and fascinating manners, but, although

we knew it not, was accounted the most finished profligate upon the town.

"During one of his occasional visits to his property, my sister's beauty attracted his notice. I dare not trust myself to dwell upon the arts and deceptions which this remorseless and unpitying profligate put in practice, to sap the virtue of the unsuspecting girl. It is enough to say that he succeeded in inspiring her with a passion for which she lost the world and was content to lose it. I deemed her as pure as she was lovely; but, alas! I had yet to learn the humiliating truth, that the blight of sin is on the fairest of earth's blossoms, and that the pride of maidenly virtue, opposed to the torrent of passion, is as the reed before the whirlwind. I had yet to be taught that there is no safeguard against the power of temptation but that preventing grace which suggests the reflection, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'

"On my return home, one evening, I was thunderstruck by the intelligence that my sister had eloped with Sir Edward. I followed them to the metropolis, with the intention of snatching the prey from the spoiler; but I was repulsed, with scorn and insult, by the liveried lacqueys at his

door, to whom my person and errand were well known.

"Boiling with indignation, I returned to my lodgings, which were at the eastern end of the town, to meditate on the means of vengeance, and have reason to believe that I was dogged by one of the menials of Sir Edward. I had scarcely set my foot without the door, on the following morning, ere I was surrounded by a press-gang, and, in spite of remonstrances, enforced by a desperate resistance, hurried away to the tender. The fact of the officer in command of the gang being a minion of the baronet, by whose interest he was, shortly after my caption, promoted, gives a strong colour to the suspicion that the seducer of my sister was the cause of my arrest.

"The victim of a system so disgraceful to a country which boasts, and, in many instances, with justice, of the freedom of its institutions, I was sent to sea, and, urged by a desperation which bore the name and did the work of courage, I so distinguished myself, in several engagements, as to attract the notice of my officers, who proffered me promotion. I declined, however, to avail of their good intentions towards me; my indignation at the manner in which I had been forced

into the service had not yet subsided, and I had also other views, for the thirst of vengeance was strong upon me.

"After three years of privation and peril, I returned with the ship to England, at the close of the war, and was discharged. The first news which greeted me, on my arrival, were that my sister, after having graced the triumph of her seducer for some months, had been flung 'like a loathsome weed away,' and returned to her mother, by whom she was received like the prodigal in the parable, and in whose arms, at the end of a year, she died repentant, and, I trust, forgiven. My mother, robbed, as she had thus been, of both her children, did not long survive the loss, and sunk broken-hearted into the tomb where, but a few months before, she had laid her child. I passed one night by the place of their rest, and the wintry blast, which whistled among the rank grass upon their grave, mingled with my curses on the head of their common destroyer, and my vows of deep and bitter revenge.

"On inquiry, however, I found that the object of my pursuit was on the continent, whither he had repaired at the conclusion of hostilities. Baffled for a time, my next thought was on the means

of subsistence, until the opportunity for wreaking my revenge should present itself. My known desperate and daring nature recommended me to the owners of a smuggling vessel, who invested me with the command of her. My sense of injury at the hands of the government, in the matter of my impressment, was, you will readily conceive, sufficiently strong to overcome the scruples I might, under other circumstances, have entertained at thus becoming accessary to frauds upon the revenue.

"We were, for the most part, fortunate: my vessel was the fastest sailer, and the best sea-boat I ever saw; and thus we uniformly eluded the vigilance of the revenue cruizers, without, in any instance, being obliged to resort to force; a contingency, nevertheless, for which we were always well prepared. On one occasion, however, I was not so successful on land. In a case of some difficulty, and great importance, I superintended the running of some goods up the country, in the vicinity of my former dwelling, when, by some accident, I was separated from my men, and unexpectedly surrounded by a party of king's officers, in numbers which placed flight or resistance equally out of the question. My companions, when they dis-

covered my situation, hastened to my rescue, but I commanded them to retire, expressing my determination that no blood should be spilt on my account.

"I was, of course, conducted to the nearest prison, and, on the following morning, was brought before a bench of magistrates, among whom was my enemy, the destroyer of my sister. A smile of malignant triumph, which, however, he instantly suppressed, passed over his countenance, as I approached the bar. I returned his glance with a look, beneath which, hardened profligate as he was, he appeared to quail; but I was a prisoner, and, scorning to use the woman's weapon, remained silent. To the address of the dignitary who took upon himself the office of examiner, I replied, that it was not my intention to answer any questions, and that, therefore, they must make the most of the evidence which they already possessed, and which, unfortunately for me, was sufficiently conclusive.

"Finding that they could extract nothing from me, the bench remanded me to the town prison, intimating that I should be transferred to the county gaol on the following day. Melancholy indeed, were my reflections when I found myself alone in the dungeon to which they had, in the in-

terim, consigned me. My hopes of vengeance were crushed, and the ignominy of the felon's fate awaited me. Nature, at last, prevailed over the conflict of my feelings, and I sank into a feverish slumber, from which I was awakened by a confused noise, followed by a crash, and, the next instant, the bolts of my prison were withdrawn, and I was surrounded by my crew.

"The prison was situated on the skirts of the town, near to the sea, and, independently of its being in a ruinous state of dilapidation, was committed to the care of a gaoler who was in his dotage, and whose deputy, on the night in question, was drunk. In vain did they call upon the king's lieges to assist in preventing the rescue of the prisoner; the townsfolk, themselves smugglers to a man, cheered my deliverers when they succeeded in forcing the gates, and I regained my ship in safety. My friends had heard of my intended removal to the county gaol, upon which, they well knew, my conviction would follow, and determined, at all hazards, to attempt my rescue.*

"In the course of time, our lugger became so

* This circumstance, which took place at a small market-town on the coast of Kent, in the winter of 1819-20, is, probably, in the recollection of some of my readers.

well known, by her daring and successful enterprises, that it became an object with the government to put us down, and the owners deemed it prudent to withdraw her from the free trade. We had succeeded in landing our last cargo, and were on our voyage back to Flushing, when a sail hove in sight, and made us a signal to lie to. She was much larger than the revenue cutters, and, at the same time, had the appearance neither of a merchant-man nor a man-of-war. Finding her signal disregarded, she fired a shot, which passed through the lugger's gunwale, and slightly wounded the man at the helm by a splinter.

"As I was reconnoitering the stranger, through my glass, I perceived a fashionably dressed person on the deck, whom I instantly recognised as Sir Edward. He had been cruizing about in his pleasure yacht, and, I suppose, was desirous of signalising himself by the capture of so notorious a smuggler as the Flying-fish.

"It was contrary to my general policy to come to an engagement, when I could avoid it, which I could easily have done, in the present instance; but the voice of my injured sister was calling to me from her dishonoured grave, and the hour of retribution was at hand. Eager, however, as I

was for vengeance, I was unwilling to involve the crew of my enemy in the consequences of their superior's crime; I, accordingly, directed my fire at the rigging, and having, by those means, succeeded in crippling her, I ran her alongside, and threw myself upon her deck, at the head of a party of my own men, whom I had previously enjoined to abstain from interfering in my quarrel, and to content themselves with driving the enemy's crew below.

"I rushed towards the object of my vengeance, who though somewhat taken aback on recognising his opponent, prepared to defend himself with a courage which formed the sole noble point in his character. He exhibited, also, no ordinary skill in the use of his weapon, which, like mine, was a cut-and-thrust sword, and, for some minutes, the issue of the conflict was doubtful. At last, however, I succeeded in striking down his guard, and, following up the advantage, I ran him through the body, and left him lifeless upon the deck. At that instant, the sight of a man-of-war brig, on the horizon, suggested the necessity of an immediate retreat to our vessel, in which we, shortly afterwards, arrived at Flushing, when I abandoned the Flying-fish, and the free trade, for ever.

"Never, I believe, save to the mind of a fiend, did revenge, saturated by blood, produce aught but remorse; and my sword was scarcely returned to its scabbard, ere my conscience was awakened by the awful words in that book, which was once familiar to me, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' I felt the curse of Cain burning upon my brow, and the anticipated agonies of the damned within my heart. The last look, and the dying groan of my victim were ever present to me, and much as I had hated, and, humanly speaking, had cause to hate him, I would gladly have laid down my life, could the sacrifice have recalled his.

"There lived, at Antwerp, an English merchant, whom, together with his young wife and infant daughter, I had once, when in command of the Flying-fish, and at some personal hazard, rescued from shipwreck, under circumstances the most appalling. On my rejecting the pecuniary reward which his gratitude would have bestowed upon me at the time, he extorted from me a promise that, if I were ever placed in an emergency in which his assistance could benefit me, I would, if practicable, claim his friendship. To this man I unreservedly disclosed the history of my injuries, my crime, and my remorse, and nobly did he re-

deem his pledge. He placed me in command of one of his own ships manned by a crew of my countrymen, which traded between Antwerp and South America.

"I performed several voyages, the unusual success of which my employers were pleased to attribute to my zeal and management, in the united characters of master and supercargo. The consciousness of having been useful to my benefactor, was to me a sense of no ordinary gratification, but the undiminished sense of my crime was the poisoner of my peace. The still small voice of conscience was ever in my ear; it invaded the retirement of my cabin, and rose above the crash of the storm.

"My friend at Antwerp, when I had disclosed to him the remorse to which my mind was a prey, put a Bible into my hands, telling me that it had, within its leaves, a balm for the bitterest affliction, and salvation for the chief of sinners. Many an hour have I spent in searching for its precious promises, and frequent and fervent have been my prayers for grace, and for the mediation of Him who was given as a ransom for many. Yes, sir, and there were times when I have experienced a faint assurance that my supplications have not

been breathed in vain, and when, dark as is the cloud which my crime had flung upon my spirit, I have perceived a ray of hope above the gloom.

"For some months past, I have found my health giving way, and have struggled with the disease, until it threw me upon the bed on which you see me. Homeward bound, we were driven, by stress of weather, into this bay, where we have since been becalmed, and my chief mate, having become alarmed for my safety, availed himself of the detention of the vessel to send ashore for medical assistance. And oh, what an awful conflict between hope and fear have the last three days, during which I have felt conscious of approaching death, witnessed in my bosom! One hour I gather consolation, and the assurance of pardon, from the pages of that blessed volume, and the next, the busy fiend who tempted me to crime, suggests to me that there is no forgiveness for it with my God."

At the conclusion of his narrative, I inquired of him the surname of the Baronet who had thus been his persecutor and, finally, his victim. On receiving the information, I bade him be of good cheer, for that he whom he had supposed slain by his sword, had eventually recovered of his wound

which was, at first, deemed mortal. I added that I had heard, from the medical attendant of Sir Edward, that, although some symptoms of remorse had escaped the latter while his case was doubtful, as soon as he regained his strength, his first thought was revenge; that I had reason to know he had spared neither pains nor cost in tracing the subsequent progress of the object of his vengeance; and that he had applied to the government, to procure its interference with the Dutch authorities, in order that the criminal might be sought for, and surrendered to the British laws; but that, from causes altogether unknown to me, the application had been coldly refused.

"Thank God," said the dying man, with fervour; "thank God, I am relieved from the reflection which has so long haunted me, of having destroyed body and soul, by sending a sinner, with a weight of unrepented crime into the presence of his Judge: but sir," he continued, after a short pause, "I feel that the tide of life is ebbing fast, and I would that the few and precious moments which are left to me, be consecrated by prayer. You can do nothing more for the perishing body, but much may yet be done for the undying soul."

I am not one of those who would usurp the functions of a more sacred profession, but I have too often witnessed the consolations of prayer, by the bed of the departing, to hesitate to supply, however imperfectly, the absence of the minister of religion. I, accordingly, read some portions of scripture, which I deemed appropriate to the occasion, and concluded by some of the appointed prayers of our church, in which I was joined by as many of the crew as could be spared from the watch.

When the service was finished, the patient, who during its performance, was lying on his back, with his eyes partly closed, and his hands clasped together upon his breast, exclaimed, "Blessed be God, who has visited with the consolation of His Spirit the bed of a dying sinner: now I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that, 'though my sins be as scarlet, they shall be made whiter than snow; though they be red like crimson, yet shall they be as wool.' "

Shortly after he had given utterance to these words, the last mortal struggle ensued, and his spirit abandoned its tenement of clay, to be received, it may be hoped, into the blessed companionship of those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

This was not, be it remembered, one of those sudden, I may not say impossible, conversions which are alleged to take place between the passing of the sentence and its execution on the scaffold, and in many of which instances, it is feared, a dread of punishment is mistaken for a hatred of the crime; it was the result of a deep and humiliating consciousness of sin, and a long and persevering use of the appointed means of grace. In making this distinction, I do not presume to set bounds to that mercy which is illimitable, and to urge the inefficacy of a repentance which is wrought by the prospect of death; God forbid that I should attempt to weaken the faith of the dying: but I would wish to caution the living against the danger of believing, that purification from a life of pollution and crime, is the easy work of a few hours.

THE SEXTON'S DAUGHTER.

THE SEXTON'S DAUGHTER.

"Were he a stranger, not allied to me,
The danger of his soul would make me mourn:
I fear me nothing will reclaim him now."

MARLOWE.

RICHARD TURNER was the best cricketer and wrestler in his village; in fact, he was skilled in all rustic sports, and his superiority in them had obtained for him that ascendancy, among those of his caste, which power, mental or physical, commands in every grade of society. He was young, too, and handsome; of an ardent temperament and free disposition; while his athletic acquirements attracted the notice of one or two of the neighbouring 'squires who were, what is technically called, sporting characters, and he was, consequently, led oftener into company, and was a more frequent guest at the alehouse, than, as

a less distinguished character, he would probably have been.

He had, moreover, the misfortune to have a weakly indulgent mother, who, having a small freehold of her own, was enabled to supply him with the means of gratifying his convivial propensities, while her knowledge of agricultural concerns qualified her for giving that superintendence to the farm, which Richard, in the eager pursuit of pleasure, neglected to afford. Richard was a favourite with the other sex, and was fond of their society; but, of all the damsels of the village, none attracted so large a share of his attention as Dinah Homestead, who was the only daughter of a widowed mother, and whose beauty, manners, and temper, were sufficient warrants for the preference she obtained. She was not insensible to the admiration of Richard, whose fine person, and the reputation he had acquired, rendered him an object of no ordinary attraction among the country maidens. But Dinah liked not his attachment to the alehouse, nor did she admire some of his associates, and, when he proposed for her hand, she told him so, and refused him.

But Richard, who was ardent in the pursuit of

any object on which he had fixed his mind, was not so easily repulsed. He fancied, too, that there was some hesitation in the manner of Dinah's refusal, and he indulged a hope that her repugnance might be overcome. Like the rod of the prophet, his master passion, for a time, swallowed up the weaker ones, and, to the surprise of all who knew him, he suddenly withdrew himself from his club at the Red Lion, forsook his dissipated companions, and was, to all appearance, another man. Months passed away, and he relapsed not: he repeated his proposal, and Dinah, who not only deemed him sincere in his repudiation of his bad habits and loose associates, but laid to her soul the flattering unction of the belief, that she was the cause of his reformation, in an evil hour, accepted him.

Instances of moral reformation not having for its basis a total change of heart, which nothing but the blessed influence of the grace of God can effect, may possibly be quoted, but sure I am that such reformations cannot be depended upon for a single hour. A man may acquire sufficient mastery over himself to abstain from the vice of drunkenness when he finds that it is hurrying him to the grave, or interfering with his worldly interests;

but a very broad line of distinction is to be drawn between an abhorrence of the crime and the dread of its consequences, which last may, nevertheless, be perfectly co-existent with a love of it.

In a very few weeks the smothered flame broke out with renewed violence, and Richard returned to his former habits with an appetite, to which abstinence had added keenness. Although much of his time was spent abroad, he continued to treat his wife with kindness, and when she presented him with a daughter, the better feelings of his nature appeared to be called into play, and the smile of his infant would often win him from the society and the pursuits to which he was wedded both by inclination and habit: but the force of the attraction passed away with the novelty.

It is painful to mark the gradations by which the sinner arrives at the lowest abyss of turpitude, and, therefore, I shall pass over the first sixteen years which followed their union: let it suffice to say, that, in the course of that time, his heart had been entirely weaned from the lovely being who had so implicitly, yet so imprudently, placed her happiness in his keeping; that, after suffering long from the unkindness of his manner, she at last became the

object of his cruelty, and, finally, died of a broken heart.

But the same courses which had embittered and, eventually, terminated the existence of his wife, were equally fatal to his own fortunes, and, shortly after her death, becoming bankrupt, he was, at length, compelled by his necessities to accept of the situation of parish sexton. The innocent, however, as is not unfrequently the case, suffered with the guilty, and his daughter Barbara was the companion of his adversity.

She inherited all the beauty of her mother, who had taught her child early to seek that God to the blessed consolation of whose religion she herself had resorted in her trouble. The example of her father was, indeed, a baneful one, but the shield of the spirit of God preserved her from the poison of the upas, beneath whose shadow she had been planted.

Her father's house was the resort of persons as vile as himself, and he, at last, became the cause of such scandal to the parishioners, that nothing but the superstitious dread which rendered it difficult to supply his place, preserved him in his office of sexton and grave-digger. There was one, however, of a different stamp who sought the dwelling

of Barbara. He was a young farmer, who had a small paternal estate of his own, and rented a few acres in addition. He also held a deputation from the lord of the manor,' the game of which was under his care. It was to his mother that Barbara had been accustomed to fly from the violence of her father's temper; and her misfortunes, her virtues, and her beauty had early excited an interest in the heart of Adam Heseltine, and time ripened it into an affection which even the vices to which she was, in a manner, allied, had not the power to repress.

Richard Turner had been, for some months, in the exercise of his new function, when Barbara began to notice his frequent absences during the night, and also remarked that he began to be less straitened, in the way of money, than she had recollected him to have been for some years. His habits of intemperance had so obliterated all the better points in his character, and he had become so morose and sullen, that she dared not venture a question as to the source of his sudden prosperity, but she entertained the most distressing apprehensions on the subject. She observed, too, that he was occasionally visited by persons whom she had never seen before, and by

whom he was very often roused from his bed, at all hours.

It happened, one night, that Barbara had retired to rest, and, in a short time afterwards, she recollected that she had omitted to put out a fire which she had kindled in an apartment adjoining the kitchen. She, accordingly, arose, and, putting on some of her clothes, flung a cloak over her shoulders and proceeded down stairs, for the purpose of remedying her negligence, when, in her progress towards the grate, she stumbled over something heavy, and, on removing a sack that was flung over it, the moon, which was shining through the window, discovered to her the livid features of a human corpse! Uttering a loud shriek, she rushed into the contiguous apartment, where her father was sitting, and told him, with horror depicted in her countenance, that there was a dead body in the washhouse.

"And what business is that of yours, Miss?" said Turner, "it did not bite you, I suppose. But what brought you down stairs at this time of the night? Go along to bed, and if you speak a word to any one of what you have seen, I will pluck your tongue out."

"But, father,—"

"Go along to bed, I say," thundered her wretched parent, interrupting her, "or I will shut you up in the room with the piece of carrion which has scared you so."

"Yet oh, my father! for the love of Heaven, remove the agonising suspense in which that fearful sight has placed me. It was not, oh, it could not be, by your hand that the murdered person fell."

"Murdered! silly girl," was the surly reply, "what put that into your goose's head? Murdered quotha! if he was murdered, 'twas by the apotheeary, and not by me, for he was dead enough before I laid a finger on him."

At that instant, a knock was heard at the door, and, obeying the mandate of her father, which was repeated in a voice and manner that precluded expostulation, she flew up to her bedroom, from which, however, in consequence of the imperfect state of the flooring, she was enabled to glean something of the conversation between her father and his newly arrived visiters.

"A murrain on your lazy limbs!" was his greeting, "to keep me shivering in that cursed churchyard for a whole hour, by the clock, until the moon began to rise, and forced me either to do the job by myself, or give it up."

"Nay, Dick," said the other, "don't grumble: it was not my fault; the cart stuck fast in Clay-pit lane, and we were an hour helping the gray mare to get her out; and as for the cold, if your work has not warmed you, here's something that will,—a bottle of right Hollands."

Here the conversation became inaudible, and Barbara retired to her bed, but scarcely, as the reader will readily imagine, to sleep. Her mind, it is true, was relieved from the dreadful suspicion of her father's participation in the death of the person whose body she had discovered, but she was yet inconceivably shocked to find him engaged in a traffick, so revolting in itself, and so likely to bring down upon his head the vengeance of the laws. She tried, indeed, to compose herself to rest, but she could not chace from her mental vision the livid and distorted features of the exhumated corpse, and, when she arose in the morning, she dreaded to enter the room where she had seen it, lest the ghastly spectacle should again meet her view. When, however, she had summoned resolution to open the door, she discovered, to her infinite relief, that the appalling object had been removed.

The following day was the sabbath, and Adam

Heseltine, as was his custom, called for Barbara on his way to church. The house of God, in which the inhabitants of the little village assembled, is romantically situated, being almost embosomed in trees, yet commanding two vistas, through one of which the distant sea was observable, while the other conducted the eye over a fertile track of inland country, beautifully wooded, and watered by a narrow and winding river.

A country churchyard is always an object of interest to a contemplative mind, and, by the simple villagers, it is viewed with a kind of superstitious awe, which we can pardon if we cannot sympathise in it. It is, by them, regarded as the threshold upon which they have parted with many a friend, bound upon that journey whence the traveller returns not; and, though the hand of time may have obliterated the labours of the rude sculptor who has chronicled their humble names and unpretending virtues, they are both engraven indelibly in the hearts of those who dearly loved, and have bitterly mourned for them. On a Sunday morning, the interest of the scene is heightened; "the bell which calls the poor to pray," is sending forth its summons over hill and valley, and the peasantry are gathered around the church-porch,

or seated upon the tombstones, and appearing, by their orderly and subdued demeanour, and the cleanliness of their apparel, to be honouring the day, and the God who has set it apart for His worship.

As Barbara entered the churchyard, her eye was attracted by a newly closed grave, around which were gathered the relatives whose grief for the departed, like the sod which covered the spot, was yet fresh and green; and the sight of the sorrowful group, who were indulging their regret for the lost one, unconscious of the profanation which had been committed upon his remains, so powerfully affected her, that she was compelled to cling to Adam for support; and it required the exertion of all her energies to regain the tranquillity essential to the performance of the sacred duties upon which she was bent.

But blessed be God, who has bestowed upon us the inestimable privilege of seeking Him in our affliction, the spiritual exercises of that morning were productive of the consolation which will never be denied to those who "draw near to Him with their whole heart." Yet the melancholy reflection on her father's crimes,—on their probable consequences in this world, and the certainty of their

punishment, if unrepented of, in the next,—still bowed down her spirit; and it was in vain that Adam essayed every art which affection could suggest, to win her back to that cheerfulness which, before the fearful occurrences of the preceding night, was wont to light up her expressive features.

Wretched as Barbara had been previously rendered by the intemperate habits and unhallowed pursuits of her father, the distress of her situation was greatly aggravated by the mysterious connexions he began to form. His frequent absences from home during the whole of the night could not, she well knew, be always occasioned by the prosecution of the disgusting trade in which she had such horrible evidence of his being engaged, and, therefore, afforded grounds for apprehensions of his being involved in transactions of a more nefarious nature, and consequently more obnoxious to the laws. Another source of her disquietude existed in the familiarity of manner which his associates adopted towards herself.

The hearth which should have been consecrated by a father's virtues, was polluted by his crimes, and there are few who would not have thought her justified in flying from the tainted spot, to the home of peace to which she was invited, and which

would have been secured to her by the tenderest and most sacred of ties. It is true, she loved her betrothed with an intensity of affection of which, perhaps, woman alone is susceptible. She loved him for his virtues, and for the generous devotion with which he clung to her, amid all the obloquy which her father's dissolute and criminal courses had flung around her. Gladly, indeed, would she have fled to the sanctuary which his affection had offered to her; but there was a voice which the Christian hears above the tumult of human passion, and the pleadings of a selfish heart,—the voice of Him who hath said "Honour thy father and thy mother." She had prayed to God, for strength to bring the affections of her mind into subjection to a sense of duty, and her supplication had been heard.

It happened that, one afternoon, her father had gone out, having previously intimated that he should probably not return until night. About an hour after his departure, Barbara, who was sitting at work in the kitchen, was disturbed by the entrance of one of his associates who was, to her, the most disgusting of all the mysterious visiters at the cottage. The man requested that some refreshments might be put upon the table, which were accordingly produced, and, when he had finished his re-

past, he took, from under his coat, a case-bottle of spirits, of which he partook freely, and endeavoured, though vainly, of course, to persuade Barbara to drink with him. His deep potations, at last, aroused the demon of his nature, and, after dropping some observations which excited the most horrible apprehensions in her mind, he seized her in the attempt to quit the apartment, and tried to force her to sit beside him.

In the struggle, the stool, on which he was seated, was overturned, and he fell to the ground. Barbara took advantage of this occurrence to escape from his grasp, and made towards the street door, which, to her consternation, she found the villain had taken the precaution, during her absence in the preparation of his repast, to secure. She then ran up the stairs, at the top was a door, which she fastened as well as she could, and retreated to her bedroom, at the end of a long passage, and locked herself in.

The cottage, I should have remarked, was in a very lonely and retired situation, having been built about three hundred yards beyond the churchyard, which was at the end of the village. It was accessible only by a footpath, crossing a meadow into a bridle road, which was rarely used. In a

few moments, Barbara heard the heavy footsteps of her pursuer upon the stairs, and, shortly afterwards, his attempts to force the door at the head of them, mingling his blows with threats and execrations of the most dreadful description. She flew to the window, flung it open, and, stretching forth her arms, uttered a piercing cry for help, and sank upon the floor of her chamber, overcome by apprehensions of the fate which awaited her.

The ruffian, in the meantime, had succeeded in overcoming the first obstacle to his progress, and next applied his strength to the door of the chamber, which, after some resistance, yielded to his gigantic strength, and he rushed into the apartment with a cry of brutal exultation. He made immediately towards his intended victim, but ere he could lay his polluted hand upon her form, he was felled to the floor by a man who had precipitated himself through the window into the room.

Her cry for help had not been uttered to the winds. It happened that Adam Heseltine was riding along the bridle road already mentioned as being divided from the cottage by a meadow. His ear was startled by the shriek, and, looking in the direction whence it seemed to proceed, he saw the arms of a female extended, for a brief mo-

ment, from the window which he knew to be that of Barbara's chamber. He rode his horse at the fence, cleared it, as well as the gate at the opposite end of the meadow, and, mounting on his saddle, contrived to attain a projection over the doorway, and thence ascended to the window from which the cry had issued. With the hammer of a hunting whip, he struck the ruffian senseless to the floor, and then applied himself to the recovery of his Barbara.

While he was thus engaged, the man started on his feet, and, muttering a threat of speedy revenge, escaped from the cottage. By the time that Adam had succeeded in restoring her to consciousness, Richard Turner came home, somewhat earlier than he had led his daughter to expect him. A long course of intemperance and crime had brutalized his disposition, almost to the extinction of every kindly feeling which he once possessed: he had ill-treated, nay, had beaten his child, when she had once ventured mildly to expostulate with him on the courses he was pursuing, and to plead with him "in his own behalf;" but, abandoned as he was, a faint spark of natural affection yet lingered in his bosom. The recital of the peril to which his daughter had been exposed roused the ferocity of

his nature, and called forth a torrent of imprecations on the head of the author of the insult; and, when the violence of his indignation had subsided, he thanked Adam, with a cordiality which had long been foreign to him, for his gallantry on the occasion. Adam knowing that, under the protection of her father, Barbara was, for the present, safe, took his leave.

Turner rose early on the following morning, and, after digging a grave, came home to breakfast, and went out again as soon as he had finished it. Scarcely, however, had he quitted the house, before some officers of justice entered it, with a warrant for his apprehension on a charge of felony. He had long been an object of suspicion, and, although no charge had yet been substantiated against him, the general tenour of his life had been such, that he had received an intimation that his services as sexton would shortly be dispensed with. The ruffian, however, who had been defeated in his designs upon Barbara, and who well knew that he could not more effectually revenge himself upon her, than by accomplishing the destruction of her father, in whose crimes he was a participator, lodged the information upon which the warrant for Turner's apprehension had been granted.

The constable and his party, having satisfied themselves that Turner was not in the cottage, continued their search for him in the public houses which he was known to frequent. Their inquiries proved fruitless until the evening, when they gained intelligence of his having quitted the house, where he had been drinking the whole of the afternoon, about an hour previously to their arrival, and that he had proceeded in the direction of his own dwelling, which they again examined, but with no better success than had resulted from their search in the first instance.

They next repaired towards the churchyard, where they heard he had been occupied in the morning, and, at the bottom of a newly-made grave, they found the object of their pursuit, a corpse! He had, it was supposed, in a state of intoxication, visited the scene of his previous labours, and, having stumbled over the mound of earth which had been flung up at the brink, had dislocated his neck by the fall; and there lay the unconscious digger of the grave which he was the first to occupy, having literally, though not in the scriptural sense of the passage, fallen into the pit which he had digged for another.

This appalling event, as will naturally be ima-

gined, created a strong sensation in the village and its neighbourhood, where it is, to this day, quoted as a warning to the drunkard and the profligate.

In a few days, Barbara was called upon to follow the remains of her wretched parent to the grave, and, in the performance of this melancholy duty, she was unhappily destitute of the consolation which supports the pious who mourn for the pious under their affliction: the blessed hope that, in putting on immortality, the lamented ones have exchanged the barren desert for the green pastures where the great Shepherd leads his flock for evermore; that, removed far beyond the tempests of human passion, and the power of change, they taste of that happiness which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Alas, for her! who could not turn to that blessed volume to which she was wont to resort in her sorrow, without reading her father's condemnation in every page. She knew that his course had been pursued and completed in crime, and she had many a fearful warrant for believing that they who sow to the whirlwind shall reap the storm.

She was preparing to set out, the solitary mourner at her father's funeral, when Adam, with the de-

votedness of that affection which clings closer to its object when adversity gathers around it, arrived, and offered her the support of his arm. The clergyman, a young man of exemplary piety, proceeded with the ceremony, but it was painfully observable by Barbara, that his voice faltered at the words, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," one of the few exceptionable passages, of general application, in a ritual which, taken as a whole, is unrivalled for simplicity of diction, solemnity of thought, and for its peculiar adaptation to the wants and weakness of our sinful nature.

On their return to the cottage, after the performance of the melancholy duty, they found the mother of Adam Heseltine waiting to receive them. With the kindness of a parent, she applied herself to soothe the mind of the afflicted Barbara, and finally prevailed upon her to go back with them to the farm; alleging, and with reason, that, after what had occurred, her living there alone would not be altogether free from danger, while it would excite and revive many painful reflections, and thus augment the grief which it was her duty, as a Christian, to moderate.

In about a twelvemonth after the death of her

father, Barbara gave her hand to Adam Heseltine. They have resided for some years in my neighbourhood, and, although the affection of such a woman cannot fail to make her home not only peaceful but happy, and her general demeanour towards him is that of cheerfulness, it may easily be supposed that there are hours when the remembrance of past scenes will fling a cloud over her brow, and bring the tear of regret into her eye.

THE OLD MAID.

THE OLD MAID.

"Full oft and many have I heard complain
Of discontents, thwarts, and adversities;
But a second to yourself I never knew."

ROWLEY.

THE parents of Emma Freemantle, in addition to no ordinary share of this world's treasures, were blessed in the higher endowments of piety and good sense, and thus, in their anxiety for the welfare of their daughter, they expended not only their money, but their time and personal attention, on her intellectual and moral improvement. They estimated at their true value the tinsel accomplishments which form the principal objects in a modern female's education, and which, like a diamond necklace or a court dress, are out of place in the quiet of the domestic circle.

The aim of the generality of parents would appear to be to qualify their children to shine abroad: the endeavour of Mr. and Mrs. Freemantle was to

fit their daughter to derive and to diffuse happiness at home. This, under the blessing of Heaven, they accomplished, by carefully watching the development of her mind, from her earliest years; by tempering the enthusiasm of her character, and directing her intellectual energies to proper objects; and, above all, by teaching her to consider religion as the highest knowledge, and the Bible as the best book.

The personal attractions of Emma, of course, procured for her many admirers, among whom Edward Bretherton was the most conspicuous for the elegance of his manners, and the superiority of his understanding. He was a distant relation of the family, and was in the habit of spending all the time he could spare from his official engagements in London, at Briarburn, the residence of Mr. Freemantle, who had, at an early period, sought the retirement of a country life, from which no inducements could withdraw him.

Edward had a fair character in the world, and, during his visits at Briarburn, had exhibited so many indications of high principle and an amiable heart, that he was a universal favourite with the family. His attentions to Emma, devoted and unremitting, were not lost upon her grateful and

affectionate disposition; while she was far from being insensible to his mental endowments, for he was an elegant scholar, a fair artist, and moreover known to have distinguished himself as a contributor to one or two of the leading periodicals of the day. These accomplishments, however, would have lost their effect upon her, had she not been convinced that they were united with higher qualities of the heart.

In the course of time, Bretherton proposed to her parents for her hand, and was accepted by them and her as her future husband.

Affairs were in this position, when an unexpected decision of a family lawsuit, which had long been pending, suddenly reduced Mr. Freemantle from affluence to comparative poverty. He had looked for a far different issue to his cause, and conceived that he had been unjustly dealt with; but, on his appealing against the sentence, it was confirmed.

Having used all the means in his power for obtaining redress, he, with the firmness of a well-regulated and pious mind, accommodated himself, without repining, to his altered circumstances, dismissed his establishment, sold his library and the bulk of his furniture, and prepared to retire to a distant part of the country, where, he hoped, the

cheapness of provisions would enable him to support himself and family upon the half-pay of a commission which he had formerly held in the army.

Emma carefully concealed her feelings of regret at this reverse of fortune, carefully concealed them from her parents, who, while they experienced an increased measure of her filial attentions, could perceive no diminution in her cheerfulness and good-humour.

For a few weeks previous to their departure for their newly selected residence, they took up their abode at the house of a very old friend, who had insisted upon enjoying their company until they had completed the arrangements for their journey.

It happened that, for some time after the issue of the lawsuit had been made known, Mr. Bretherton's visits to the Freemantles were less frequent, than, under such circumstances, they might have been expected to be; but an implicit confidence in his honour and the disinterestedness of his attachment, led them to attribute his absence to the pressure of his official engagements, which were known, occasionally, to confine him very closely to the metropolis. Their astonishment, therefore, will, perhaps, be more easily imagined than described, when they read, in one of the diurnal prints, of his

marriage with the heiress of the family to whom the property, of which the decision of the Chancellor had deprived the Freemantles, had devolved. The bride had been an intimate friend of Emma, who had ever treated her with the kindness and confidence of a sister, and whose engagement with Edward Bretherton was, consequently, no secret to her.

Emma had taken up the newspaper at breakfast; she was observed to replace it on the table with a slight tremor, and, immediately afterwards, to quit the room for her chamber, and was not seen for the remainder of the day. On the following morning she came down, as usual, and her countenance was anxiously scrutinized by those who had anticipated the worst consequences from the double perfidy of her lover and her friend: but, whatever had been the conflict, it had been succeeded by a calm. Her cheek was paler, and her eye had lost some of its lustre, but the smile with which she greeted her assembled friends had lost none of its sweetness. The expression of her features, indeed, was subdued, but it was not dejected.

She had been smitten, yet had been supported under the blow; but by what? By pride? It was

not in her nature, and, if it had been, it could not have sustained her beneath the shock. She had felt, indeed, the chastenings of the Lord, but she had also tasted of His consolation; for "He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up."

From that hour she never mentioned the name of him who had so basely abandoned her. That she felt the dispensation, none who knew the sensibility of her nature could doubt, but her complaint was never breathed in mortal ear. Nor were its effects perceivable in her conduct: it weakened none of her energies, it destroyed nothing of her usefulness; her spirit was chastened, but not soured. She remitted in none of her attentions to her parents, and when she discovered that their slender income was not, with all the advantages of cheapness combined with the best of management, sufficient to maintain them in comfort, she resolved to sacrifice her best earthly possession, their society, and to obtain a situation in which she could not only support herself, but ameliorate the circumstances of those who were dear to her, in their declining years.

She could not, however, obtain an engagement as a governess, for which her endowments and

talents more particularly fitted her, and, therefore, accepted a situation in the establishment of an elderly lady of fortune, who, it would seem, with all the luxuries with which wealth could surround her, was unable to obtain a "companion" without paying for one. Now the word companion, in its general application, like comrade among soldiers, and messmate among tars, conveys an idea of equality, which, however, is by no means involved in the kind of companionship to which Emma was called.

Miss, or rather Mrs. Oldham, for she had taken brevet rank, was an aged spinster, who had, early in life, experienced a disappointment similar to that which Emma had sustained, but she had met it with a far different spirit. Having no devotional feelings, she saw only the *human hand* which dealt the blow, and pride but served to aggravate the vexation which it vainly sought to hide. She identified the whole human race with the baseness of one; her temper was soured, and her ill-humour vented itself on all around her. Her friends grew wearied, and, one by one, deserted her. She advertised for a companion, but she exhausted the patience of half a dozen probationers, before Emma took upon her the duties of the situ-

ation; but they all wanted the quality which alone could fit them to encounter the disposition of Mrs. Oldham, namely, Christian humility. This virtue Emma possessed in an eminent degree; she had learned the great lesson, to bear and to forbear; and while her duty, as a disciple of Christ, taught her to forgive the indignities she experienced, her natural kindness of heart led her to pity the infirmity of temper to which they were attributable.

Emma's fortitude and forbearance were doubtless exposed to trials of no ordinary severity, and, differently circumstanced, perhaps it would have been an act of prudence to fly from the temptation to which she was exposed; but she had the high motive supplied by a sense of filial duty for endurance, since Mrs. Oldham, bad as she was in many respects, was no niggard; her allowance to Emma was liberal, and enabled the latter to add materially to the income, and, of course, to the comforts of her parents.

The result proved that perseverance in the path which duty points out, has sometimes its reward even in this life: Mrs. Oldham did not want for penetration, and was enabled to discriminate between the officious servility of a mere mercenary, and the uniform attention which she received from

Emma Freemantle. The old lady's surprise, on finding that her violent philippics, and peevishness of disposition, had not the power of disturbing the other's serenity of temper, gradually gave place to a kinder feeling. She could not help observing the consistency of character by which Emma was distinguished; a quality which seldom fails of inspiring respect, even among those who have the least claim to it themselves.

Mrs. Oldham had, hitherto, been a theorist in religion, her practice having been confined to the observance of its external rites, and, like many other persons, she appeared to study its precepts for the purpose of applying them to the conduct of her neighbours, rather than to her own. She occasionally, however, conversed on matters of religion with Emma, whose example gave weight to her observations, and who, without wounding the other's self-love, by assuming the tone of an instructress, contrived to state her own views on the subject, with a perspicuity and force which reached both the understanding and the heart of her auditor.

A severe fit of illness, at length, confined Mrs. Oldham to her chamber for many weeks, during which her conviction of the importance of religion became strengthened, and she arose from the bed

of sickness an altered and a better woman. The prayers and exhortations of her young attendant had not been breathed in vain; and, under the blessed influence of the Great Teacher, she had begun to know the things which belonged to her peace: but she found that, to overcome the infirmities of a long-indulged temper, and the force of confirmed habits, was not the work of a day, but the warfare of years. That she was finally triumphant, through Him whose strength is made perfect in weakness, if it be given to mortals to know the spiritual tree by its fruit, there is every reason to hope.

Mrs. Oldham had none, or, if any, very distant relatives, and, with the exception of a few inconsiderable legacies, she left her property to Emma, alleging, in her will, that she made that disposition of her wealth, not merely to shew her gratitude for a long course of attentions which Emma had shewn to her, but to ensure the charitable appropriation of it.

The first use her amiable legatee made of the riches, of which she found herself so suddenly and unexpectedly the mistress, was, by removing her parents to her own roof, to restore to them the comforts from which they had so long been es-

tranged; while her next object was to adopt a system of practical benevolence, which had for its aim the spiritual and temporal relief of all around her. But, as adversity could not depress, so prosperity did not exalt her: her charity, like her piety, was without ostentation, and, when she was called upon to admonish a sister "overtaken in a fault," she performed the ungrateful task with the humility resulting from a consciousness that she had no need to seek beyond the precincts of her own heart for evidence of the frailty of human nature, and its constant proneness to sin.

In the course of events, her parents, full of years, and rich in Christian graces, exchanged time for eternity, and Emma was left alone, sorrowing, indeed, for their loss, yet not as those who sorrow without hope, for she knew that their separation was but for a brief season.

It happened that, about a year after the death of her parents, her house was entered, during the night, by robbers, who effected their depredation without disturbing any of her establishment, taking with them, however, only a few articles of plate, and a trifling sum of money, which had been deposited in a writing-desk in her library. Now, the county had been, for some months past, in-

fested by a gang of burglars, who had, hitherto, eluded the vigilance of the local police; the only intelligence, in fact, which had been gleaned of them was, that they were assisted in the negociation of such of their plunder as consisted of bank notes, by a person who, from the letters which had been intercepted, was evidently of a superior class to themselves.

The robbery of Miss Freemantle occasioned some stir in the neighbourhood, and one or two active magistrates undertook the investigation of the matter. Some time, however, passed away, and no tidings were gained either of the property lost or the purloiners. At length, one of the stolen notes was stopped at the bank, and traced to a person who was taken into custody on a charge, supported by other circumstances of a suspicious nature, of being concerned in the burglary. The result was that Emma, though extremely reluctant to come forward, was compelled to attend the examination, for the purpose of identifying the note.

I happened to be present at the investigation, and it was then that I first saw her. She was conducted into the room, where the magistrates had assembled, by a neighbouring gentleman of rank,

who had considerately tendered his services on the occasion. She was, at that period, about two and thirty, but time had dealt leniently with her, and she had the appearance of being much younger. Her countenance, though somewhat pensive in its expression, was exquisitely beautiful: she was tall, and well formed, and her manners were at once graceful and dignified.

The prisoner was a man whose age could scarcely have exceeded eight and thirty, but a long course of dissipation had made his cheek wan, and his eye hollow. His apparel was fashionable, though somewhat worn, and, combined with his language and bearing, gave him the semblance rather of a broken down *roué*, than of a vulgar thief, in which character he was then brought forward.

He had been examined, at some length, before the arrival of Miss Freemantle, and had repelled the charge with great indignation and scorn. When questioned as to the manner in which he had become possessed of the note, he replied that he had received it at a gambling table in Paris, of a person whom he had never seen before, and of whose name he was entirely ignorant. His demeanour, in fact, had been that of a man really innocent of the charge; but no sooner was Emma led into the

room, than his manner underwent a total change: his brow became flushed for a moment, and then his cheeks assumed a deadly paleness; his lip quivered, his knees trembled, and, leaning forward upon a sort of rail, or bar, behind which he had been placed, he buried his face in his hands, and exhibited every symptom of the most bitter mental agony.

Miss Freemantle commenced her reluctant evidence by deposing to the identity of the stolen note, and, after narrating such of the circumstances connected with the robbery as came within her own knowledge, she was directed to look at the prisoner and say if she had any knowledge of his person. With much difficulty the constables in attendance succeeded in inducing the accused to uncover his face, and no sooner did Emma's eyes light upon his features, than she uttered a faint shriek, and, sinking into the chair which had been placed for her accommodation, was removed from the apartment in a state of insensibility.

It was Edward Bretherton. From the hour in which he betrayed the being who had so fondly loved, and so implicitly trusted him, nothing prospered which he undertook. A desire of gain induced him, shortly after his marriage, to embark

the fortune he had received with his wife in some of the joint-stock schemes of the day, and his speculations were productive of consequences so ruinous, that he was compelled to resign his official appointment, and his wife and child were reduced almost to beggary. Driven by his necessities to every possible shift to obtain money, he lapsed from one act of turpitude into another, until, at last, he became the associate of the lowest frequenters of the gambling table, and an actor in the wildest scenes of debauchery and dissipation. It was in his case, as it has been in many others, a matter of surprise that a person of refined taste and cultivated understanding can sink to the level of such degrading vices; but knowledge, though it may sometimes be power, is not virtue, and will no more protect a man against the force of temptation, than a false chart will guide a mariner over the rocks and quicksands of the ocean in safety.

His licentious courses, and the known character of his associates, had tended to strengthen the charge on which he had been apprehended, under an assumed name; while the agitation which he had exhibited on the entrance of the principal witness, was treated as corroborative of his guilt.

Miss Freemantle was removed, in one of the ma-

gistrates' carriages, to her residence, and the prisoner was committed for trial at the next county sessions. It would be impossible to describe the conflict of feeling to which Emma, on her return to consciousness, became a prey. A sense of duty to society had overcome her reluctance to give evidence on such a charge, but when she discovered who it was against whom she had given testimony, and reflected upon the probable result, her anguish became almost insupportable. True it is, that in a strength not her own, she had cast down the idol which she had set up in her heart, yet his name, engraven by memory, remained on the pedestal, and she could not forget that she had loved him, although she loved him no more.

It was in this state of mind that she was sitting, one mild autumnal evening, in a favourite room, opening into a conservatory which communicated with the lawn: a lamp was suspended over her head, and she was reading, when she was startled by the sound of approaching footsteps, and, immediately afterwards, the branches of some orange trees which had been ranged at the entrance of the conservatory, were pushed aside, and a man stood at the table before her. He was a perfect

stranger to her, and had an air in which the gentleman and the desperado were strangely blended.

She made a movement towards the bell-rope; but the stranger interposed himself, and said "Stir not, fear not; as you would avoid the shedding of blood, summon not your domestics, for I am armed and desperate. Listen to the few words I have to utter, and I will depart without injury to you or yours."

Emma felt that she was in his power; but, however, resumed her seat, and, with a composure partly assumed and partly natural, awaited his communication.

"I know not," continued the stranger, "if you have been a willing or a reluctant witness on a recent occasion, but if a villain such as I am in the most extended sense of the word, shudder at the idea of the blood of the innocent being shed, I may reasonably take for granted that you would not lend yourself to his condemnation. The accused, against whom you have appeared, stained though he be by other crimes, is innocent of the offence on the charge of which he is now in custody."

"Upon what," inquired Emma, "do you ground your conviction of his innocence of the robbery?"

"My knowledge of those who committed it," was the reply.

"Surely," exclaimed Emma, surprised at the language and bearing of the person who was addressing her, "I am not speaking to an associate of robbers!"

"You," he replied, "who know not how deep in crime one step from the precipitous path of honour will plunge a man, may well marvel at the fact, yet it is not less true that I am. But to be brief will best consist with my safety. I repeat to you that he is innocent of the charge, and yet, such is the perverse nature of the evidence, and so strongly do circumstances make against him, that he will surely be pronounced guilty, if you interfere not to prevent it."

"Heaven knows," answered Emma, "that it is now the first wish of my heart to save him, guilty or innocent, from the fate which, I fear, awaits him; but what means have I of averting it?"

"Gold," was the laconic reply.

"What!" exclaimed his auditress, "would you have me resort to subornation or bribery?"

"To neither," continued the stranger: "but listen to me. At the time of the commission of the robbery, the accused was in Paris. Now, upon this

paper are the names and addresses of several persons, in that city, who could give evidence to that effect, and any two of them would be sufficient to establish the fact, but as they are beyond the reach of our courts, there are no means of compelling their attendance: indemnify them handsomely, however, for their expenses and loss of time, and they will come upon the wings of the wind. The prisoner, as you probably are aware, has not funds for this purpose, but you have;—will you use them?"

"Assuredly," was the answer, "if the manner of their application be made clear to me."

"I should scarcely gain your confidence, or consult my own safety," the stranger continued, "by undertaking the commission, but you have only to put that writing into the hands of your solicitor, explaining your wishes, and he will take care to have them fulfilled. He must be diligent, however; the trial will come on in ten days, and there is no time to be lost. Remember that upon your exertions depends the life of my friend."

"Your friend!" exclaimed Emma, mournfully, "and is he sunk so low?"

"Ay, lady," said the other, "we have been friends, though we are no longer associates, since

I have somewhat outstripped him in the race of crime."

"But why, oh, why," inquired Emma, "pursue your desolating career? know you whither it tends?"

"Yes, truly, to the gallows," he answered; "but what would you have me do?"

"Repent!" said Emma.

"Repent!" repeated the stranger with the horrid laugh of a despairing fiend, "repent! ha! ha!" and, darting again into the conservatory, disappeared.

Emma lost not a moment in repairing to her solicitor, whom she informed of the extraordinary visit she had received, and requested his assistance in putting into practice the scheme which had been pointed out, for the exculpation of the prisoner. The man of law immediately despatched a confidential person to Paris, for the purpose of procuring the attendance of the parties, and Emma waited anxiously for the result.

Some unexpected impediments had, indeed, occurred to the messenger in the execution of his commission, for, when the day appointed for the trial was come, the witnesses had not arrived.

The judge, however, with the humanity by which, not less than by its inflexible integrity,

the English bench is distinguished, on the circumstance being explained to him, consented to postpone the case until the end of the sessions; but, it would seem, to little purpose; for that period arrived, and no witnesses made their appearance. Accordingly the trial proceeded: Emma was again placed in the revolting situation of an evidence against the man whom she would have sacrificed her fortune to save, while the chain of circumstantial evidence was strong, and apparently complete.

The exertions of the prisoner's counsel, a man of eminence, whose advocacy had been secured by Miss Freemantle, strenuous though they were, failed in doing away with the impression which the evidence had made on the minds of the jury. He had, in fact, wearied their patience, by the length at which, for the purpose of gaining time, he had examined his own witnesses, and cross-examined those for the prosecution: his last witness was quitting the box; he had exhausted his ingenuity in inventing questions bearing, in the remotest degree upon the subject, and the names of the two foreign witnesses were called out by the crier; they were repeated, but no one replied to the summons; a third time the names were pro-

claimed, and all was silent. The prisoner's counsel threw down his brief in despair, and the judge began to look over his notes, preparatory to charging the jury, when the wheels of a carriage were heard under the window of the court-house; the judge paused,—a slight bustle was heard in the avenue from the street, and the arrival of the expected witnesses was announced.

Their testimony went, not only to establish the fact of Bretherton's having been in a gambling house in the Palais Royal, on the night on which the robbery was committed, but to prove that he had, in the same place, on a subsequent occasion, received a bank note from a stranger in payment of a debt. They underwent, of course, a very rigid cross-examination from the counsel for the prosecution, but it elicited nothing to shake their testimony.

The judge, in his charge to the jury, called their attention to the circumstantial nature of the evidence on the one hand, and to the somewhat doubtful characters of the witnesses who had been brought forward to establish an alibi, on the other; adding, however, as is usual, that if they experienced any, the slightest, doubt as to the criminality of the prisoner, it was their duty, as it would

questionless be their pleasure, to extend to him the benefit of it.

The jury retired, for a short space, and, on their return, their foreman delivered a verdict of "Not Guilty."

Not a murmur, not a sound disturbed the solemnity of the court, when the decision was pronounced; the feelings of the prisoner's friends were rather those of thankfulness than triumph.

To Emma, who had quitted the court immediately on having given her evidence, the intelligence of his acquittal was brought. "Thank God!" was her only but fervent exclamation.

Her solicitor, whom she had instructed to make inquiry as to the future views of Bretherton, informed her that the latter had expressed his anxiety to try his fortune in one of the newly established colonies, but that want of means prevented his carrying his scheme into effect. Emma, who anticipated many advantages from this project, instantly gave directions for his being supplied with a sum of money sufficient to enable him to put it into execution.

One evening, about a fortnight after the trial, it was announced to Emma that a person had called, who was desirous to speak with her, and

on her ordering the party to be admitted, a female entered the room, of whose features she had a vague recollection, and yet was unable to identify them with any one she knew. The voice of the stranger, however, recalled her to Miss Freemantle's remembrance. It was Mrs. Bretherton, but alas! in person how was she changed! Sorrow had done the work of time upon her form, and upon her brow, and, of the once blooming and sprightly girl, which Emma remembered her, not a vestige remained.

"Mary!" was the exclamation of the latter as she extended her hand, which the other took, and pressing it to her lips, poured forth, with a flood of tears, the expression of her gratitude for the benefits which her cousin, in spite of all she had suffered at their hands, had heaped upon her and her unworthy husband.

"The past, Mary," was Emma's reply, "has long since been forgiven, and we shall best consult the feelings of each of us, by avoiding a recurrence to it. Our business is with the future, and may God give us grace so to improve it, that, although seas may divide us in this world, we may meet in that blessed region where neither sin nor sorrow is known!"

With these words they parted. Years rolled away before Emma received any tidings of her self-expatriated cousins: at length, she heard that they had been joined by the stranger who had so mysteriously visited her a few days previous to Bretherton's trial, and pointed out the means of procuring his acquittal. She also learned that their enterprise had been crowned with success, and that, much of their temptation to crime having been removed with their poverty, they had become industrious members of the small society of emigrants in which they had cast their lot; where their names and their offences were unknown, and where the barrier which the frown of the virtuous often interposes between the outcast and his return to the better path he has deserted, was not reared against them.

They are gone from the crowded and the busy haunts of pleasure and of traffic, where art hath trodden on the heels of Nature and obliterated her footsteps, to those trackless solitudes which have rarely echoed the voice of man; where they will see the mighty hand of the Great Artificer in the flood and the forest, and will hear him speaking in the thunder of the cataract and the crash of the storm. Unlike the Israelites of old, may they re-

member their God in the wilderness whom they forgot in the city,—may they be taught to know themselves for what they are—a human ruin! and early and earnestly seek for that grace which alone can build them up.

Miss Freemantle is still an inhabitant of our little village;—an old maid, if the reader will have it so, and yet how unlike the picture of that character which the world is accustomed to present. Not averse from the society of those around her, of which she is at once the ornament and the treasure, she is yet independent of it for her happiness. With a countenance irradiated by the reflection of that heaven to which she is constantly looking, as the goal of her hopes, she is a striking exemplification of the truth of the promise, that God "will keep them in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on Him." The friend of the poor, and of "him that hath none to help him," the defender of the maligned, the last to condemn the aberrations of a fellow-sinner, and the first to put forth the hand of charity to lead him back, it may be said of her, as the man of Uz hath written of himself, "when the ear heard her then it blessed her; and when the eye saw her it gave witness to her."

THE PREACHER.

THE PREACHER.

"When good men pursue
The path mark'd out by virtue, the blest saints
With joy look on it, and seraphic angels
Clap their celestial wings in heavenly plaudits,
To see a scene of grace so well presented,
The fiends, and men made up of envy, mourning."

MASSINGER.

THE few acres of meadow by which my house and grounds are surrounded had been raised, by my predecessor, to the dignity of a "park," an appellation, however, which the same quantity of land could justly obtain in no country but Scotland, where it is, I believe, but another term for pasture. It is, nevertheless, of an extent which renders the privilege of passing through it of value to those who, belonging to an adjoining parish, are desirous of saving a quarter of a mile on their way to the church of my friend Mr. Everton, whom, first in his capacity as curate, and subsequently as the rector, I introduced to the readers of the first series of these Tales.

The gates at either end are, accordingly, by my direction, thrown open on Sundays to all passengers, among whom there was one, whose youth, personal appearance, and her regular attendance, as well as devout deportment, at public worship, had particularly attracted my observation during a period of two or three years. When I first noticed her, she was about sixteen; of a slight, genteel figure, and possessing a countenance, which, although too thoroughly English to be assigned either to the Grecian or Roman order, was exceedingly pretty and interesting. An occasional inquiry elicited some particulars of her history.

Her father, Simon Stringer, was a linendraper and general dealer in a neighbouring village. He had been educated at a charity school, and was afterwards taken, as an apprentice, by a tradesman, whose chief care was to instil into his mind those precepts of thrift and parsimony by which he himself had risen; and, finding the young man an apt pupil, he, ultimately, took him into partnership, so that, when he died, the business devolved upon Simon. Stringer, in his dealings as a tradesman, was regular and upright,—a punctual debtor and a rigid creditor. He was miserly in his expenditure, unsocial in his habits, and of a

stern and obstinate disposition. He married somewhat late in life, and was, in a few years, left a widower with one child.

If report belie him not, the days of his amiable wife, if not shortened, were much embittered by a series of harsh treatment, which the liberality of her own disposition provoked from her narrow-minded husband.

At her death, her sister, a widow lady in my own village, offered to take charge of the education of the little orphan, a plan which was too consonant with the economy of Simon to be met by any opposition on his part; and, accordingly, Mary Stringer was, at the age of five years, transferred to the roof and the care of her aunt Thomson.

The latter had no child of her own, and the artless and engaging manners of her young protegée, in a very few weeks, converted into a source of pleasure the task which she had undertaken as a matter of duty. She was a tolerably well educated woman herself, and had the art of imparting what she knew, so that Mary, while the chief object of her aunt was to bring her up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," was mistress of accomplishments not, at the period of which I am

writing, very common among young women in her station of life.

At the same time that Mrs. Thomson was scrupulously careful to instil into the heart of her niece sentiments of duty and affection towards her father, she was not very desirous of frequent intercourse being kept up between him and his daughter, until the mind of the latter was sufficiently fortified against the impressions which his unamiable example and saturnine manners were calculated to make: nor, to say the truth, was Simon Stringer, on his part, in any way anxious for the society of his daughter.

He had, shortly after the death of her mother, installed in the double office of servant and housekeeper a woman of a disposition, in some respects, congenial with his own, with whose arrangement of his domestic concerns he appeared to be perfectly satisfied. Although, as will readily be conceived, a woman of vulgar manners, she was possessed of much shrewdness and low cunning, and employed it so successfully as, in the sequel, to obtain over him an ascendancy which, however disagreeably it was sometimes exerted, he was seldom known openly to withstand.

On the death of Mrs. Thomson, Mary, at the

age of eighteen, returned to her father's roof, on which occasion she was welcomed by Simon Stringer with as much warmth as it was possible for his phlegmatic character to exhibit; but she very soon discovered that her presence was anything but agreeable to his housekeeper, who, on her part, was not very scrupulous in the measures she resorted to for the purpose of maintaining the station and authority in which there appeared a probability of her being supplanted by her young mistress.

It happened that, about a year before Mary's return to her father's house, he had had a violent dispute with the rector of his parish, and, being defeated in his object, he declared he would never enter the church again; and immediately attached himself to a dissenting congregation in the neighbourhood, the pastor of which was Benaiah Bender. Benaiah had been originally bound an apprentice to a sadler, but some early indications of talent having attracted the notice of a wealthy dissenter, he procured the cancelment of his indentures, and placed the youth in an establishment, where he was educated with a view to his becoming a minister of the Gospel, an office on which, in due time, he entered. In person he was tall, bony, and muscular, with a strongly

marked expression of countenance. In disposition, he was kind and open-hearted: and his manners, although much wanting in polish, were rather plain than rough or uncouth. In matters of religion, he was an enthusiast, but he was neither a visionary nor a bigot. His style of preaching was that of a man evidently in earnest, and who brought considerable powers of eloquence, with no limited extent of scriptural reading, to bear upon his subject. His sermons were rather striking than elegant; often wanting in taste, but never in power. Out of the pulpit, also, he was unremitting in the duties of his calling. Without exhibiting aught of an intermeddling or inquisitorial temper, he kept a watchful eye upon the spiritual wants and maladies of his congregation: consoling the afflicted, encouraging the fainting, and fearlessly reproving the backslider.

Benaiah had, also, much strength and decision of character, and exhibited a moral courage in the discharge of what he considered his duty, which nothing could damp or overawe. On one occasion, a sermon he had preached elicited some remarks from the deacons or elders of his chapel: his reply was, "Gentlemen, I am quite aware that I hold my appointment as minister of this chapel,

under God, during your pleasure, and that you can cast me off; but God do so to me and more also, if, while I retain the pulpit, I preach not the truth, as I believe it to be in Jesus. I am content, if it be His will, to go forth from among you; but, not to obtain all that the world can bestow, or to escape aught that it can inflict, will I become the dumb dog that you would make me, or cry unto you 'peace,' when there is no peace."

He had, it seemed, experienced some disappointment early in life; the woman upon whom he had fixed his affections, had become the wife of another, and Benaiah, from that hour, appeared to have laid aside all thoughts of matrimony. He resided in a very small, and sufficiently inconvenient cottage on the skirts of the town, and devoted that part of his time which he assigned to recreation, to the care of his garden. He was a successful horticulturist, particularly in the way of fruit, which he reared in great perfection and variety, and distributed among the sick of the neighbouring poor, whether of his own flock or the rector's, with a liberal hand.

His attendant was an orphan, very much deformed, in the selection of whom, it was by some asserted, that he was guided by a desire to avoid

scandal; while others assigned to him the higher motive supplied by the girl's affliction, and the consequent difficulty which she would experience in obtaining employment elsewhere.

His mode of living was simple and frugal, so that of his stipend, slender as it was, nearly one half was appropriated to the relief of the poor. The idea of saving never occurred to him. I cannot conclude this sketch without mentioning another peculiarity in his character, which is, that although he was a frequent visiter in the houses of his congregation, he could never be prevailed upon to take a meal with them.

I am a member, albeit an unworthy one, of the established church, preferring, of course, its form of worship to every other, and numbering among my friends some of its best and brightest ministers; and, therefore, in attempting to delineate the character of this extraordinary person, shall stand acquitted of any feelings of partiality to the ranks of dissent. I have painted the man just as I found him: my limited knowledge, or rather my ignorance of the dissenting clergy, having incapacitated me from determining, by personal observation, the particulars in which he resembles or differs from the generality of his brethren. That,

however, there may be many Benaiahs among them, must be the devout prayer of every one, be he churchman or dissenter, to whom the religion of Jesus is the pearl above all price.

Simon Stringer had, as I have intimated, been, for nearly a year, a regular attendant on the ministry of Benaiah, when Mary returned from her aunt's. Simon, who had never troubled himself about the manner in which his daughter's religious instruction had been conveyed, informed her, soon after her arrival, that he had been ill-used by the rector of his own parish, and that, therefore, he expected she would accompany him to the chapel. Mary replied, that it would be extremely painful to her to give offence to her father, and therefore she would not go to the parish-church; but that as she had hitherto attended at Mr. Everton's, in the village where she had lived with her aunt, she would continue to do so. She concluded by saying that, as she could not conscientiously abandon the form of worship in which she had been brought up, she hoped that the middle course she proposed to take would be agreeable to her father.

Whatever might have been Stringer's thoughts with regard to this arrangement, he made no objection to it at the time. His housekeeper, Mrs.

Gibbins, however, was not a woman to allow such an opportunity of sowing dissention between her master and his daughter to pass unimproved, and, accordingly, took the first occasion to allude to Mary's conduct as a glaring instance of disobedience, and contempt of his wishes and authority. The result was a positive injunction from Simon Stringer for Mary's attendance on the ministry of Benaiah Bender, and a firm, though respectful refusal on her part to do so.

Now, it is believed that her father, in his heart, cared very little whether she went to church or to chapel, so that she attended not on the rector with whom he had quarrelled; yet, having signified his wishes on the subject, he was by no means indifferent to her non-compliance with them. It was while he was under the excitement produced by this resistance of his authority, that Bender happened to call, and, perceiving his perturbation, ventured to inquire of Simon the cause of it.

On receiving the explanation, Benaiah exclaimed, "And wherefore do you wish to withdraw the maiden from the ministry of one whose labours have been blessed to her soul's good, and how know you that the same blessing would be vouchsafed to mine? I know him for one of the sleep-

less watchers on the towers of Sion, who doeth not the work of the Lord negligently. May the Lord spare him long to his flock, and continue to send the dew of His blessing upon his pious labours! Of the sheep which He has given me, I will strive, with His grace, that not one be lost, but I seek not to entice a lamb from the fold of another."

Malice, however, is fertile in invention, and Mrs. Gibbins took especial care that sources of dissatisfaction between father and daughter should not be wanting, and thus succeeded in two important objects, namely, in estranging the affections, such as they were, of Mr. Stringer, and rendering his home extremely unpleasant to Mary.

For about two years, matters remained on this disagreeable footing, when a young gentleman, of considerable talent and high character, who had commenced practice as a surgeon under very favorable auspices, made proposals to Stringer for the hand of his daughter. He had, of course, previously ascertained the sentiments of the young lady; while the housekeeper, uniformly as she had opposed her wishes on every former occasion, gave her powerful aid to the furtherance of a scheme which promised to leave her again in undisputed

control of the house and its owner; while Simon himself was glad to part with his daughter to one who was disinterested enough to take her without a penny.

No sooner, however, did Mary quit her father, than Mrs. Gibbins practised her machinations upon a larger and a deeper scale; and so subtly and surely were her plans laid, that, in a very few months, she succeeded in exasperating Simon Stringer to such a degree against his unoffending daughter, that he forbade her the house.

Mary, however, much as she lamented the existence of the breach which fraud and malice had placed between her and her parent, had every consolation in the attentions and kindness of one of the best and most affectionate husbands. Mr. Godfrey, for such was his name, had rightly estimated the worth and qualities of his fair partner, who found all her hopes realised in him. Thus blessed in the most tender and hallowed of earthly unions, each the pride and treasure of the other, who will wonder that, despite the lessons of wisdom and the warnings of experience, they began to doubt that perfect happiness is a plant of which, though we meet with its blossoms on earth, the fruit can only be tasted in heaven.

Alas! they were not exempted from the common lot: they were awakened from their short sweet dream of security and peace, by the illness of Mr. Godfrey, who had taken cold in one of his professional visits into the country, during an inclement night, and the most alarming symptoms were induced. I was summoned to attend him, and for some weeks, was daily, and frequently for many hours together, by his bedside.

There is scarcely a profession in which the sympathies of its professors are more painfully excited than that of the medical practitioner. How often is he called to the bed of hopeless sickness; and that, too, in a family, the members of which are drawn together by the closest bonds of love! How painful is it to meet the inquiring gaze of attached friends, or weeping relatives, directed towards him in quest of that consolation, that assurance of safety, which he has not to give! and how melancholy is it to behold the last ray of hope, which had lingered upon the face of affection, giving place to the dark cloud of despair!

And when all is over,—when the bitterness of death hath passed from the dead to the living,—from the departed to the bereaved,—hark to that shriek of agony, that convulsive sob, that bitter

groan, wrung from the heart's core, which bespeaks the utter prostration of the spirit beneath the blow!

There, cold in the embrace of death, lies the honoured husband of a heart-broken wife,—her first, her only love! Or, it may be, the young wife of a distracted husband, the bride of a year, the mother of an hour, and by her, perhaps, the blighted fruit of their love,—the bud by the blossom, and both are withered.

And not less heart-rending than any of the scenes I have attempted to describe, and to the truth of which the memory of many of my readers will, I fear, bear melancholy testimony, was that which the chamber of my young friend Godfrey presented. He was quite conscious that medicine could do no more for him, and he felt that he was dying. He was not destitute of, nay, he was mercifully supplied with, the consolations of that religion of which he was a sincere, though humble professor; but when he saw through the curtains of the bed from which he knew he should never rise, the wife of his bosom and the child of his hopes,—the angel and the cherub of his earthly heaven,—few will marvel, and none can blame, if a pang of regret, for what he was about to leave in

this world, mingled with his aspirations for that to which he was speeding.

On the last occasion of my visiting poor Godfrey, I was accompanied by my excellent friend Mr. Everton. While the clergyman, whom I had previously informed of the utter hopelessness of the patient's case, was preparing to perform the solemn service appointed by our church for the sick room, Benaiah Bender entered. He had been in the habit of calling during Godfrey's illness, not in the character of a minister, but as a friend. He took Mr. Everton's extended hand in silence, and knelt down by the side of his fellow-labourer in the vineyard of his Lord, to join in the holy duty upon which he was entering.

As the worthy rector proceeded in the prayers, he was visibly affected by the scene of solemnity and sorrow in which he was placed; his voice became tremulous, and he was compelled to rally all the firmness of his nature to enable him to accomplish his task. Benaiah, too, successfully as, by the grace of God, he had wrestled with the fiercer passions of the human heart, was not invulnerable to grief: he had, when he knelt down, pronounced the responses, with which he appeared to be familiar, with a firm and clear articulation,

but, towards the conclusion of the service, his head sank between his hands upon the bed, and, at last, he sobbed aloud.

Meanwhile, the spirit of the siek man, although he was too mueh exhausted to speak, had evidently joined in the prayers which were breathed in his behalf, and derived the blessed consolations whieh they invoked.

We remained standing around his bed for some minutes: at length he turned his eyes upon his weeping Mary, with an expression of affeetion whieh even the anguish of the parting struggle eould not subdue. She knelt down beside him, and plaeed her lips upon his, but, alas! even her kiss could not arrest the spirit whieh was passing; for, while she was yet watching his pale features, her hand, whieh she had placed in his, was suddenly and eonvulsively clasped, his eye beeame fixed, and she was a widow!

The wild and piereing shriek, which proclaimed the consciousness of her bereavement, is yet ringing in my ears! She rose up, clasped her hands upon her beating bosom, and raised her eyes, for an instant, towards the souree whenee the blow had descended; then dropped her head upon her ehest, sunk into a ehair, and burst into tears.

We could not leave her in her sorrow, nor, on the other hand, could we hope effectually to oppose the consolations which man could offer to the sweeping torrent of her grief. At last, Benaiah, with a tact which did equal honour to his feelings and his judgment, took the hand of her little daughter, who, unconscious of her loss, was playing in a remote corner of the room, and led her to Mrs. Godfrey. Her father's smile was upon the dear infant's lips, as her mother looked at her through her tears: she caught her darling passionately to her bosom, and we left her with the only earthly comfort of which her grief was susceptible.

Mr. Godfrey had been too short a period in the exercise of his profession, to have been enabled to make any provision out of it for the future support of his widow, who, at his death, was left with a very inadequate income, derived from the rent of a house which her husband had inherited.

To enable her, therefore, to support herself and her little one, repeated applications were made to her father by Benaiah, who, after much importunity, prevailed upon him to allow her a trifling sum monthly; but, in spite of all entreaties and remon-

strances, the old gentleman persisted in his refusal to see his daughter. On some occasions, indeed, his worthy pastor flattered himself that he had succeeded in overcoming the obstinacy of Simon upon this point, but he uniformly found, on his next visit, that his labours had been in vain. The fact is, that it was no part of Mrs. Gibbins's policy to bring her master and his daughter together, and she therefore left no means untried of counteracting the efforts of Mr. Bender; while, unfortunately, the growing infirmities of Stringer, by confining him entirely to the house, and rendering him averse from provoking discussion with a woman of her violent temper, placed him more completely within her power than he had formerly been. The circumstance of his never going abroad, and the very limited intercourse he kept up with his neighbours, increased the difficulty of his detecting the falsehood of the inventions which his housekeeper employed to keep alive the feeling of hostility towards his daughter, which the old woman's malice and selfish views had first induced her to excite.

Simon Stringer's disorder, at length, began to develop symptoms, which, in spite of the hopes of recovery he had so long cherished, he could not

mistake, and which warned him of the necessity of arranging his worldly concerns.

It should be observed, that he had always manifested a great respect for Mr. Bender, to whose reproofs he was known to have submitted, with a better grace, than could have been expected from his morose and saturnine nature. Previously, therefore, to reducing the disposition of his property to writing, he sent for Benaiah, to whom he communicated his intention of providing, in his will, for the rebuilding of the chapel, and requested the minister's opinion upon some of the details of the undertaking. The latter, finding upon entering into explanations, that Simon's posthumous charity, if I may be allowed the use of the term, would be likely to absorb the greater portion of the wealth of which he was possessed, inquired of him in what manner he intended to provide for his daughter?

Simon answered, that he had determined, after arranging for the future support of an old and faithful servant, alluding to his housekeeper, to devote the remainder of his wealth to the glory of God, in preference to allowing it to encourage the idleness, and pamper the pride, of a disobedient child.

"Simon Stringer!" exclaimed Benaiah, somewhat sharply, in reply, "I will never credit that a good Christian, which I firmly believe Mary Godfrey to be, can be a disobedient child; but, admitting that she be such, how dare you, trembling, as you are, upon the very brink of eternity, expect that forgiveness from your God which you deny to your daughter? and with what face can you venture into His presence when, by the last act of your life, you rob your child of her birthright, and cast upon the cold charity of the world two beings, for whom, by every law of nature, society, and religion, you are bound to provide? Or think you that He will consecrate, by His presence, a temple built, in mockery of His justice, with the substance of the widow, and cemented by the tears of the orphan? Be not deceived; think not to raise a wall between God's vengeance and your guilty soul, lest, like the Babel-builders of old, you be confounded in your wickedness!"

Bender then proceeded to sift to the bottom the causes of Simon's hostility to his daughter, and, having succeeded in explaining away much that had been received as matter of offence, he expressed a confidence that, if her father would consent to see her, she would be able fully to acquit her-

self of the remaining charges which had been adduced to her prejudice. He concluded by assuring the old man, that he had always heard Mrs. Godfrey express herself respecting him in terms of filial respect and affection, and that she had often, and bitterly, lamented the distance which wicked and selfish persons had placed between them.

Benaiah perceived that he had made a greater impression on Stringer than he had ever produced before; that he had exhibited some touches of natural affection, for which the worthy preacher, extended as was his charity, had not given him credit; while it was equally apparent that Simon was still overawed by the violent disposition of his housekeeper, and feared to encounter the tempest which an attempt to bring back his daughter would infallibly raise about him.

The reader will probably inquire, wherefore did a man of Simon Stringer's morose and untractable nature submit so long to this species of domestic tyranny, of which he could rid himself at pleasure? In return, I would ask, why does the lion of the forest submit to the will, and frequently to the blows of its keeper, whom a stroke of its paw would annihilate? The querist's answer will be mine.

It was towards the close of a day in the autumn,

that Caleb Counterplea, the attorney, was sitting in his private office, at a little old-fashioned claw table, poring, with great earnestness, over an "indenture of lease and release," the *materiel* for which a score of sheep, at least, must have been immolated to furnish. He was a little fat man, with a east of features by no means improved by a slight obliquity of vision, the effect of whieh he vainly endeavoured to qualify by wearing spectacles. His eyes were small and fiery, while, over eaeh, a few long, projeeting gray hairs were gathered into a tuft, as substitutes for eyebrows. He was dressed in a black coat and waistcoat, not particularly modern, either as to fashion or fabrie; while his nether man was encased in a pair of buckskins, quite as polished, and nearly as black, as his boots.

He was roused from his meditations by a tap at the door, whieh opened, and discovered the housekeeper of Simon Stringer. "Walk in, Mrs. Gibbins, I beg," exelaimed the attorney, pointing to an elbow-chair, which was always placed at his left hand, for the accommodation of his clients; "and how is my old friend, your master?"

"Very bad, indeed," was the reply; "I am afraid, sir, he is not long for this world."

"So, going at last, I suppose," said the lawyer; "well, we must all go at one time or other; there is nothing permanent in this life but a chancery suit. But what is your pleasure with me, Mrs. Gibbins?"

"My master sent me to say that he wishes to make his will, and would be glad if you would step down to him as soon as possible."

"Ay, thus it is," was the rejoinder; "first comes the doctor, then the lawyer, and, after all, the parson; so that a man, in the last week of his life, has often more to do with the learned professions than he has had in the whole course of his existence before. But how is the widow, his daughter: she is with him, of course?"

"Bless you, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Gibbins, "she has not been in the house for years: he can't endure the sight of her."

"He is somewhat singular in his taste," observed the lawyer, dryly. "You mean to say, then, that the old gentleman will not forgive her? Well, well, she will have his money by and by, and that, I suppose, will console her for his displeasure?"

"Oh, no! sir," said the housekeeper; "master vows he will cut her off with a shilling."

"That's hard, too," replied the man of quibbles; "but I hope he will be more mindful of you, Mrs. Gibbins: you have been an old servant."

"Yes, sir," rejoined his visiter, "and a faithful one, as you know; but old people are apt to forget; and yet, if a kind friend, like yourself," and here she dropped, as if by accident, upon the table, a note of some value, (part of her *honest* savings,)— "if a kind friend, like yourself, as I was saying, would just put a good word into his ear—"

"Into his *will*, you mean," said the lawyer, with a look of cunning intelligence. "Come, come, I see you are a woman of business; therefore, let us understand each other. You know it is easy enough for a lawyer, in writing the will of a sick man, who cannot read it when it is done, to put down C. D. for a legacy, instead of A. B. Suppose, then, I were to do a kind thing of the sort for you, what proportion of the bequest is to be mine?"

The worthy housekeeper's liberality induced her to say that she should have no objection to allow him a quarter of it.

"Nay, Mrs. Gibbins," said Counterplea, "you are rather hard with me: *live and let live*, is a golden maxim; make it half, and I am your man."

The lady hesitated;—but feeling that she was in his power, she finally consented to the arrangement, and took her leave, the attorney having promised to wait upon her master in the course of two hours.

Accordingly, a little before that period had elapsed, Counterplea presented himself at the door of Simon Stringer, and was admitted by his confederate; whom he followed into the kitchen, and said: "Mrs. Gibbins, as the matter we have in hand is of a somewhat delicate nature, it has occurred to me that it would be quite as well if you were not on the spot, while it is accomplished; suppose then, to save appearances, you were to put on your bonnet, and favour my housekeeper, Mrs. Thrift, with your company over a cup of hyson. My clerk, Pounce, here, can attend to the door if any one calls, and will step down for you, in a moment, if your master should have occasion for your services."

The lawyer then proceeded to the chamber of Simon Stringer, whom he found in a state of considerable bodily exhaustion, although his intellect appeared to be as clear as ever. He gave directions for the preparation of the will in a perspicuous and methodical manner; the whole of his property, with the exception of an annuity of thirty pounds

to his housekeeper, he proposed to bequeath for religious and charitable uses, and made no mention whatever of his daughter.

Counterplea drew out the testamentary instrument in faithful accordance with the instructions he had received; and, having finished it, he read over and explained it to the sick man. He then, very deliberately, mended a pen, and placed it in the hand of his client, telling him that two witnesses were necessary to the execution of the document, who had been procured, and were waiting in an adjoining apartment.

The lawyer then uttered a short cough, when the door opened and admitted Benaiah Bender and Pounce, Caleb's clerk, the former supporting Mrs. Godfrey, and the latter leading her little daughter.

When Simon Stringer's eye met his daughter's, an expression rather of terror, than displeasure, was visible in his countenance. He had not seen her since she was married, and, attired as she was, as a matron, her resemblance to what he remembered her mother to have been, a few months before her death, was so striking, that he almost doubted the corporeality of the form on which he gazed. The delusion, it is true, was momentary

but the sudden pang of remorse which it occasioned did not pass so rapidly away.

Mary regarded her father with an anxious and doubtful look, but as she was unable to perceive, in his agitated countenance, aught that forbade her approach, she took her little darling by the hand, and, advancing to his chair, knelt down and craved his blessing. There was a powerful struggle in the heart of Simon Stringer: newly awakened conscience, and the returning feelings of parental affection, were fearfully opposed by the pride and stubbornness of his nature. The previous labours of Benaiah had not been fruitless; Simon was, at first, led to entertain doubts as to the conduct he had been pursuing towards his child, which doubts, in the course of time, grew into apprehension; the heart of stone had begun to approximate to the heart of flesh. For some time he continued to struggle with the feelings which the unexpected appearance of his daughter had excited; but, at last, the frost of his bosom gave way, and the torrent swept every thing before it. He raised his head from the chair, and, flinging himself upon the neck of his daughter, wept aloud.

It may here be explained that Counterplea had no sooner been relieved from the presence of Mrs.

Gibbins, on the occasion of her calling to summon him to her master, than he sent for Benaiah Bender, and despatched him to bring Mrs. Godfrey and her child to her father's door at a certain hour, before which, the wily lawyer had contrived to dispose of the housekeeper, whose violence of temper would have presented a serious, if not insurmountable barrier to his benevolent scheme.

Pounce, when he perceived the turn affairs were likely to take between the father and daughter, like a discreet personage as he was, quitted the apartment, leaving his master and the minister, for awhile, silent, though assuredly not unmoved spectators of the scene. At last, when the feelings of both parties had become in some measure calmed, Caleb, with a view of bringing the matter to issue, placed the will again before his client for his signature. Simon took the paper and flung it into the fire, thus virtually acknowledging his daughter as heiress of all he possessed.

By the time that matters had arrived at this crisis, Mrs. Gibbins, whose patience had become exhausted, and who had, rightly enough, supposed that Mr. Counterplea might have made the wills of half-a-dozen persons in the interval, returned home. No sooner did she discover that Mrs.

Godfrey was in the house, than she became perfectly furious, and expressed her intention of immediately expelling the intruder by force. Pounce, however, who stood six feet and an inch in his slippers, was not a man to be trifled with; he arrested her in her progress to the chamber of the sick man, and pinioned her to the wall, until she had completely exhausted herself in vituperations and threats.

When she was in a somewhat more reasonable mood, Caleb relieved his clerk of his charge, and, premising that affairs had taken a different turn from what they had mutually anticipated, returned her the ten pound note, with which she had complimented his integrity, and proposed, on behalf of Mr. Stringer, to allow her an annuity of thirty pounds for life, on condition of her quitting his house and presence for ever. Mrs. Gibbins, finding that her "occupation was gone," was, at last, prevailed upon to evacuate the garrison, and retire to a distant part of the county, to rail at the ingratitude of the world and the villany of attorneys.

Stringer lived to enjoy the society of his restored Mary and his little granddaughter for some months, during which, Benaiah was made the instrument of bringing the long deluded man to a sense of his

errors, and of the peril in which they had placed his soul. Among the evidences of his having "put on a better mind," may be cited the fact of his seeking, and through the intervention of Bender, obtaining a reconciliation with the rector of his parish, to whom he acknowledged that he had been altogether in the wrong, in the matter of their disagreement.

The parting moments of Simon Stringer, embittered as they were by the remorse which the retrospect of a life spent, for the most part, in practical forgetfulness of God, was calculated to inspire, were yet marked by a humble confidence in the merits and the mercy of his Redeemer, and a hope of that eternal rest which has been promised to the labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, even though they have entered it at the eleventh hour.

Mrs. Godfrey is still living in my neighbourhood, an object of general interest and respect, devoting her time to the education of her child, and proving herself a faithful steward of the wealth to which she so deservedly succeeded.

THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE.

THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE.

Domestic love! not in proud palace halls
Is often seen thy beauty to abide;
Thy dwelling is in lowly cottage walls,
That in the thickets of the woodbine hide.
* * * * *
O love of loves! to thy white hand is given
Of earthly happiness the golden key.

CROLY.

OF all the proprietors of estates in my vicinity, Colonel Tyrrell was a gentleman of whom less was known, and, consequently, more was said than of any other. His mansion was a spacious brick building, presenting, in front, three ranges of tall narrow windows, and was approached by a flight of steps and a stone terrace, ornamented by a somewhat heavy balustrade, being, in fact, one of those old manorial residences of which a few specimens are yet to be found in the borders of the metropolis, particularly on the Surrey side of the Thames. It was surrounded by a park of considerable extent, studded with magnificent forest trees, and varied

by a stream, which, expanding into a lake in one place, and dwindling into a rivulet in another, added much to the picturesque beauty of the scene, while the whole derived animation from the troops of spotted deer, which were grazing upon the green knolls, or chasing each other through the glades.

The Colonel acquired the property by a purchase which he made immediately on his retirement from the army, and, from the moment in which he took possession of it, he was never seen beyond the park walls. The manner in which he received the visits of those of the neighbouring gentry who paid him the compliment of calling on him, on his arrival in the country, was such as to offer little inducement to a further cultivation of his acquaintance; and, thus, the only company which he entertained, consisted of two or three persons who came from a distance, and whose visits, like those of angels, were "few and far between."

Although a widower, and without any family, his establishment, excepting the appendage of a carriage, for which he had no use, was suited to the size of the mansion. Of his domestics, however, numerous as they were, two only were admitted to his presence, namely a male and female. The former, who was a retired sergeant in the regiment

which the Colonel had commanded, acted in the joint capacity of valet and major domo, and was known to be high in the confidence of his master. The other was the sergeant's daughter, whose office it was to keep in order the few rooms which the Colonel inhabited, and to assist in attending upon him at meals.

The Colonel had a ward, who had been placed by him at school, under the superintendence of an officer's widow, in whose discretion and abilities he reposed confidence. At the age of seventeen, the young lady was removed from the care of her preceptress to the mansion of the Colonel, who, however, did not allow his retirement to be invaded even by so fair a visitant as Elizabeth Mowbray.

She had been bequeathed to his guardianship by an old companion in arms, with a considerable sum in the funds, which was to be transferred to her on her marriage, provided that her choice of a husband was approved by the Colonel, who, if she married without his consent, had the power of appropriating the money to such charitable purposes as he might deem proper.

Elizabeth did not exceed, perhaps had scarcely attained, the ordinary stature of women; she was

of an airy sylph-like form, with a profusion of light auburn hair, bright gray eyes, and a complexion beautifully clear and transparent, but adorned rather with the delicate tint with which Nature sometimes paints the shell, than the deeper blush which she sheds upon the rose. In her manners, simplicity and frankness were harmoniously blended with delicacy and grace. Her mind was such as might be expected from the cultivation of a preceptress, who, while she deemed religion the principal object of instruction, had not neglected to improve her pupil's taste for poetry, music, and painting, arts which, undervalued though they be by some rigid moralists, have the power to rob solitude of its loneliness, and give a charm to the face of Nature, which those who view her through the mere eye of sense perceive not. The disposition of Elizabeth was remarkable for openness and generosity, but was, perhaps, tinged with the concomitant fault of those qualities, enthusiasm. Her deportment towards her inferiors was such, that ere she had been six months an inhabitant of the mansion, it gained for her the love of all the domestics.

The Colonel she had never seen, and, from his confining himself to one wing of the building, and restricting his walks to an enclosed portion of the

park, on which no one was suffered to infringe, it was quite evident that he did not intend to gratify any curiosity she might entertain as to the person to whose guardianship she was intrusted. Her comforts, however, were not neglected; her table was well supplied; she had every attendance due to her station and expectations, and was amply, if not liberally, supplied with the means of replenishing her wardrobe. Nor were her walks restricted to the park, but frequently extended to the village; and she was a regular attendant at the parish church, on which occasions, she was usually accompanied by one of the female domestics.

It happened that, one fine autumnal morning, she had walked to the village, for the purpose of purchasing some trifling article, and was, on her return, passing through a meadow, when she heard a shout as of many voices behind her. On turning round, she perceived, to her infinite dismay, a body of the villagers, armed with staves and pitchforks, in pursuit of a large dog, which, with every indication of being in a rabid state, was about two hundred yards in advance of them, and within about fifty of Elizabeth. The animal was making directly towards her, with a speed probably increased by the shouts of the mob at his

heels. Elizabeth was an active young woman, and more than ordinarily swift of foot, but she was no match for her pursuer, who was rapidly gaining ground upon her. She turned her head, and, perceiving him within a yard of her, uttered a faint shriek, and gave herself up for lost, when the report of firearms rung in her ears, and she beheld the object of her terror dead at her feet; while a gentleman, in the habit of a sportsman, with a gun in his hand, advanced towards her, and was at her side just in time to save her from sinking on the grass, overcome by the excitement she had experienced.

The person who had so opportunely arrived to her rescue, supported her until they reached his cottage, the garden of which opened into the meadow, where he left her in the care of his domestic and her own maid, the latter having quitted the village some time after her mistress.

Edward Elmslie, the gentleman whom I have just introduced to the reader, obtained a pair of colours immediately on his quitting school, and joined the army in the peninsula, shortly after the Duke of Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, assumed the command. Where all were brave, it would be invidious to assume for my hero any ex-

traordinary share of gallantry; it will suffice to say that, by dint of hard fighting, he came home from the proudest field of England's military glory, a captain; and having, on the escape of Bonaparte from Elba, been again summoned to the field, it was his good fortune to distinguish himself at Waterloo, whence he returned with a major's commission. He had entered the army at so early an age, and his promotion had been so rapid, that he attained his majority before he was seven and twenty.

On the reduction of the army, at the peace, Major Elmslie was placed upon half pay, when finding that, from the numerous connexions he had formed, a continuance in the metropolis would hardly consist with the system of economy he felt it necessary to adopt, and having, moreover, a taste for rural sports, he laid out a small sum of money in the purchase of a little cottage and garden near my abode, to which he retired, and passed his time between the diversions afforded by his books, his pencil, and his pen.

As he could not vie, in the style of his living, with his wealthy neighbours, he did not go much into their society; but his mild, gentlemanly, and conciliatory manners had acquired for him such

unusual respect, that there was scarcely an acre of ground in the circumjacent country over which he was not welcome to sport.

My acquaintance with him originated in having, on one occasion, been called on to attend him in my professional capacity, and thence arose an intimacy from which I received the highest gratification, and which enabled me to form a just estimate of his manly and upright character. The consciousness of the peculiarly slight and uncertain tenure on which a soldier holds his life, while it damped not the courage with which he rushed to the battle, had the effect of keeping his mind in a constant state of preparation for that great change, to which he might be summoned without a moment's warning. Nor did those feelings pass away with the danger which had given them birth; they followed him into the calm of his retirement, and, while they abated not the natural cheerfulness of his temper, imparted a dignity to his character, and a consistency to his conduct, which are among the distinguishing marks of a Christian.

In person he was tall, with a cast of features rather manly and pleasing than handsome, on which the effects of severe military service were not so observable as they would have been in a

person whose constitution was less sound and robust. In manner, his natural grace was happily blended with the port of the soldier; and when on service, he was not less the favourite of the mess-table, than the idol of the men who were subjected to his command.

He had just returned from a sporting excursion when, on crossing the meadow, his attention was attracted, first, by the shouts of the villagers, and then by the danger of Elizabeth, which, however, he did not discover until the dog was within a few feet of her person. He was an excellent shot, and neither his skill nor his coolness deserted him on the occasion. He saw, at once, the necessity of promptness and a steady aim; and, placing the gun to his shoulder, fired,—with what success we have already related.

When he thought that sufficient time had elapsed for the recovery of the young lady, he returned to the room in which he had left her, and found her eager to pour forth her gratitude for her deliverance. The Major, in reply, assured her that she had greatly overrated the service, and added, what was probably correct enough, that if he had not shot the dog for her preservation, he should have done so for his own.

Elizabeth, however, who could not divest her mind of the idea of the horrible death from which the gallant young soldier had rescued her, measured his service by her own standard, and, after repeating her assurances that she should never cease to regard him as the preserver of her life, accepted the offer of his escort to Colonel Tyrrell's. They parted mutually pleased with each other, and not until a wish had been warmly expressed on his part, and, probably, as warmly felt on hers, that they might meet again.

Indeed, no sooner had the Major, after a thoughtful walk homewards, arrived at his cottage, than the propriety of subsequently calling on the young lady, to inquire if she had suffered from the fright, occurred to him with such force, that he resolved on acquitting himself of so obvious a duty on the following morning. He, accordingly, did so, and, having sent up his card, was admitted to her presence. Her manner of receiving him proved the pleasure she experienced in an opportunity of renewing her acknowledgments for the service he had rendered her.

Her maid, who was at work in a remote corner of the room, rose with the intention of quitting it, on the Major's entrance, but Elizabeth, with the

prudence becoming the peculiar circumstances in which she was placed, requested her to remain. After some conversation, of a common-place character of course, Edward made his bow, wonderfully taken by the grace and simplicity of his new acquaintance; while the young lady, on her part, thought that the Major was a very agreeable gentleman, and looked infinitely better in a frock coat than a shooting jacket.

I cannot pretend to say under what inspiration Elmslie made the discovery, but he began, suddenly, to find that there were more birds in the neighbourhood of Colonel Tyrrell, than in any other part of the country, and, when the shooting season was over, he found it equally productive in subjects for his pencil; so that not many days passed without his strolling in that direction, in search either of partridges or the picturesque; and if, in the pursuit of one or other of these objects, he happened to cross Elizabeth Mowbray in her walks, I do not know that the pleasure of his excursion was, in any way, diminished by the circumstance. Nor have I any better authority for asserting that these rencontres were particularly disagreeable to the young lady; but of one thing I am certified, that when Gratitude, a well-mean-

ing excellent kind of personage enough, in his way, enters a maiden's bosom, he is apt to leave the door ajar, and thus afford an opportunity to Love, a losel wight, who, among other felonious propensities, hath a habit of loitering about the apertures of the heart, to slip in unperceived.

There was one circumstance connected with these meetings, which is worthy of remark; namely, that the Colonel's confidential attendant, Sergeant Pike, almost invariably, as a sailor would say, "hove in sight," in the course of their interview; and, although his appearances were so contrived as to wear the semblance of accident, that is to say, he would be seen crossing the road, or an angle of the field, in which they were walking, and never stopped, and rarely approached them, they could not but feel that he was a spy upon their actions. To the Major, who, proud in the consciousness of honourable feelings, would have braved the scrutiny of an assembled universe, and who felt that a regard to the lady's reputation, as well as to his own, demanded that their interviews should not assume a clandestine character, the circumstance occasioned little uneasiness, and on one occasion only did he appear to experience any annoyance from it. It happened, towards the end of the

autumn, that he had been out on a shooting excursion, and having been more than ordinarily successful, had pursued his sport considerably beyond his usual limits and was wending homewards to a late dinner, when he met Elizabeth, who was just entering the park-gate on her return from the village. They fell, naturally enough, into conversation, which was insensibly prolonged until the shades of the evening began imperceptibly to steal upon them.

Their conference was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the sergeant, who stepped over a stile on the opposite side of the road, and passing close to them as he entered the park, said, "Does Miss Mowbray think it prudent to remain exposed to the chill damps of the evening which are falling around her?"

"Miss Mowbray," exclaimed the Major, hastily, "is the best judge upon that point, and should have been spared the impertinence of the remark."

The sergeant stopped, and, raising his hat respectfully to Edward, said, "Major Elmslie, if all I hear of him is true, will not be angry with an old soldier for doing his duty: the warning was given in kindness to you both."

"I believe you are right," rejoined Edward, with

a smile, "and I was too hasty;" and, after having taken leave of Elizabeth at the gate, he added, "Good night, sergeant, and thanks for your caution."

These interviews between two persons so circumstanced could have but one tendency, and they began to make the notable discovery that they were never so happy as when in the society of each other; in fact, that they were passionately and irretrievably in love! I know not when, where, or how, the "soft impeachment" was owned: I suspect, however, that formal declarations passed out of fashion with those other very formal appendages of a gentleman, bag wigs and swords, and that, in modern days, marvellously few words are used on such occasions.

As soon, however, as the Major had ascertained the state of his own feelings, and the corresponding regard entertained for him by Elizabeth, he addressed a letter to Colonel Tyrrell, wherein he avowed his sentiments for his ward, alluded modestly to the accident by which he had become introduced to her, and respectfully solicited his sanction of his views.

To this he received a civil, but cold reply, to the effect that, as the young lady appeared to have

made up her mind upon the subject, the Colonel felt that his intervention was unnecessary, but begged it to be expressly understood that the connexion had not his sanction.

The Major, who, while he felt it a duty to explain to Colonel Tyrrell the sentiments he entertained for his ward, had not anticipated a very favourable reply to his application, was neither indignant nor disappointed at the receipt of it. He could not but feel that a Major, with nothing but his half-pay, must, in the eyes of the sordid-minded, appear but a sorry match for a girl of Elizabeth's fortune, while, as a man of the world, he could not hope to gain credit among strangers for the disinterestedness of his affection.

Edward took the first opportunity of placing the Colonel's note in Miss Mowbray's hands. He regarded her attentively during the perusal of it, and when she had finished it, he said, "Elizabeth, the inuendo with which your guardian concludes his laconic communication, is not to be misunderstood. If you unite yourself to me, you will inevitably lose the fortune upon which you had a right to calculate, when deciding upon so important a step. If, therefore, that fortune have formed any part of the basis on which you have rested your expecta-

tions of happiness in a matrimonial union, it is my duty, at whatever personal sacrifice, to absolve you from every tie by which you may consider yourself bound to me. I have been rash and inconsiderate in suffering our intimacy to proceed thus far without having taken means of ascertaining the Colonel's sentiments on the subject; but I will not aggravate my fault by an act of selfishness which I hold to be as unpardonable as, I trust, it is foreign to my nature. I alone have been to blame, and I will endure the penalty. If you cannot forget that such a being has crossed your path, it may be that you will forgive the pain which I have thoughtlessly, but not wantonly, occasioned you."

Major Elmslie had put a strong guard upon his feelings, and addressed Elizabeth in as equable a tone of voice as he could assume, lest, by any exhibition of passion on the occasion, he might excite the sympathy of his auditress, in opposition to her judgment.

"And has Edward Elmslie so read the heart of his Elizabeth," was her impassioned reply, "as to imagine that it would love him with less fervour in a cottage than in a palace, and that she, who had worshipped him in the sunshine, would not cling

to him in the storm? But he does not, he cannot doubt me: I can see the generosity of his purpose even through the coldness of his language. Oh, no! I will not be your bride until prudence warrant our union; but, although time may steal the bloom from the cheek, and the lustre from the eye which your praises have flattered, it cannot rob my heart of its affection for him whom I never loved so much as I do now!"

"Generous girl!" exclaimed Edward, pressing her hand, which he had taken, as she concluded, to his lips, "I can never hope to requite such love, but it shall be the study of my life to prove my sense of its value. For myself, I neither covet riches nor despise them; yet, for your sake, I could have wished that our union could have been accomplished at a less sacrifice on your part. A major's half-pay, although assuredly not a very splendid provision, will yet keep the wolf from the door, and I do not despair of being able to obtain a civil appointment, which, though trifling in itself, may add materially to our comforts."

With these words he bade adieu to the dear girl, whose generous sacrifice in his favour had bound her closer than ever to his heart, and on the following morning he took his place in the stage to

London, with the view of exerting his interest for the purpose which he had explained to Elizabeth.

The coach had, however, performed but half the journey, when the fore axle-tree snapped in two, and effectually put a stop to its progress for the present. The Major, who happened to be the only inside passenger, had leaped out of the carriage, and was gazing, somewhat perplexedly, at the unavailing attempts of the coachman to repair the mischief, when a postchaise drove up, the occupant of which, perceiving the nature of the accident, directed the driver to stop, and induced, perhaps, by the gentlemanly exterior of Elmslie, offered him a seat in his carriage to town. The Major acknowledged the stranger's politeness, but added that he could only consent to avail of it on condition of being allowed to bear his share in the expense. To this the other resisted, on the ground that he should incur no additional expense by the Major's sharing the chaise, while, on the other hand, he should be a gainer in the pleasure of his company. After some further discussion, the stranger gained his point, and Edward took his seat by his side. Before the chaise proceeded, the driver of the stage inquired of "Major Elmslie," to what address he would wish his luggage to be for-

warded, and, by the question, informed his new acquaintance of his name.

Edward's travelling companion was apparently between forty and fifty, and soon evinced, by his conversation, that he was a man of education, and had not only seen much of the world, but had moved in some of the first circles of society. The Major contributed his share to the dialogue, and, by the extent of his information, and his anecdotes of military life, seemed to have taken considerable hold upon the attention of the other. The conversation happening to turn on the country from which Edward was journeying, his companion inquired if he knew any thing of Colonel Tyrrell.

The Major replied that he had never seen the Colonel, who lived in entire seclusion, but what he did know of him was certainly in his favour, since he (the Major) was indebted to his liberality for many a good day's sport.

"Then," rejoined the stranger, "you had some communication with him on the subject, I presume."

"No," said the Major, "for his permission was rather implied than expressed. It happened that I had unwittingly trespassed upon his territory,

and, on discovering my error, conceived it necessary to make some explanation to his gamekeeper, who came up at the time, but who informed me, in reply, that his master had instructed him not to interfere with any 'fair sportsman' among the neighbouring gentry, and that, therefore, I was at liberty to pursue my game."

On their arrival in London, the stranger set the Major down at his hotel, and then proceeded to his own; but, although he was evidently pleased with his companion, he gave the latter no clue by which to ascertain his name, rank, or residence.

On the next morning Edward waited upon a distinguished member of the existing cabinet, to whom he was indebted for his ensigney, but on whose patronage he had not, subsequently, trespassed. The nobleman, for such he was, had little of official stiffness in his manner, and accordingly received the Major with a courtesy and frankness which invited his confidence, and emboldened him to state, at once, the purport of his call.

His Lordship, without, however, indicating aught of displeasure, expressed his surprise that a young man of the Major's moderate wishes, and so distinguished for his attachment to rural life, should be desirous of quitting his retirement for the bustle

of the metropolis and the monotonous occupation of a civil appointment.

The Major was proceeding to explain, with some hesitation, that "circumstances"—

"O!" exclaimed the minister, interrupting him, "I see it all, and will save you the trouble and embarrassment of an explanation. Your case is not singular. Many a young officer, like yourself, has betaken himself, at the close of the war, into the country, as the means of making his half-pay go as far as possible; but, credit me, it is a false economy in a single man, since he is almost certain to commit the extravagance of falling in love before he has been six months in his retreat, and, by a destiny peculiar to gentlemen in your condition, usually fixes upon a dowerless bride. Now confess to me, Major, is not this precisely your case?"

The other replied that, with some minor points of difference, he could not deny a general resemblance.

"Well, well," continued his patron, "a man who, without any assistance from his friends, besides the outfit of a pair of colours, has contrived to help himself to a majority in ten years, deserves encouragement; therefore get married with all convenient speed, for, when a person has once resolved

upon matrimony, the sooner he commits it the better for his friends, as well as himself, and when the honeymoon is over, come to me, and, if I have not any other vacancy, I will employ you in the secretarial department of my own office, until something better turns up."

The Major was detained in London a few days, for the purpose of adjusting some matters of business, and, during his sojourn, received an invitation to a party at the house of a lady of title, with whose husband, since deceased, he had served in the Peninsular war. The company was numerous, and it was not until an advanced period of the evening that Edward was enabled to get within a speaking distance of his hostess. She happened, at the time, to be in conversation with a gentleman whom, at a second glance, he recognised as his accommodating postchaise companion.

"It is unnecessary, Major," said the Countess, "to introduce you to my friend Sir John Beauchamp, since I find that you have met before: indeed, I was indebted to him for the information of your being in town. Pray, what have you been doing with yourself these last eighteen months?"

"Ruralizing, your ladyship," was the reply.

"What! enacting Damœtas, I suppose, and,

crook in hand, wandering in solitary musings over hill and dale, in the rear of a flock of sheep."

"Not necessarily solitary," observed the Baronet, "since, doubtless, the Major was so fortunate as to find a damsel to play Phyllis to his Damœtas."

"That remark, Sir John," rejoined the Countess, "proves how little you are acquainted with the character of my martial friend, who, I assure you, is quite invulnerable to the shafts of beauty. I am not a match-maker, as you know, but, taking pity on his supposed forlorn condition, I was accustomed to give him notice of all my agreeable parties, in the hope that he would find, among a host of dames both rich and fair, one who might not think scorn of a fieldofficer, with youth and a wreath of laurel upon his brow. It was, however, to no purpose; for, though he always obeyed my summons, as in duty bound, he demeaned himself as circumspectly as if he had been on the field of battle, instead of in the drawing room, and appeared resolved not to surrender upon any terms. Indeed, I think his heart is a lump of ice."

"Then," exclaimed a pedantic exquisite, who was lounging upon a sofa within ear-shot, "it must be the permanent ice, or crystal, of the ancients, since a heart composed of less obdurate

materials must inevitably have melted amid the galaxy of beauty which your Ladyship, by the law of affinity, necessarily attracts around you."

"And yet," said the Baronet, resuming his part in the conversation, "I should scarcely have suspected Major Elmslie of an indifference to the smiles of the fairer part of the creation. I saw him, but a few minutes since, doing the agreeable very successfully, or I am much mistaken, amongst a bevy of beauties at the other end of the room."

"Which was an infallible sign," rejoined her Ladyship, "that he did not care a straw for any one of them. Credit me, Sir John, your true lover is always an exclusive: you will find him a most loyal and devoted knight in the train of one, but never laying himself out for the entertainment of a party."

"Ah, well," said the Baronet, "nous verrons: I do not despair of seeing my new acquaintance, in spite of his philosophy, fairly entrapped at last."

In a day or two after, Elmslie having arranged the business which had detained him in town, returned to his cottage, and, in an interview which he had with Elizabeth on the following morning, acquainted her with the favourable result of his application to the nobleman, whose reception of

him we have already described. The Major then stated that he felt himself justified, upon the strength of the promise of his noble friend, to adopt a step which, under other circumstances, might not possibly be deemed strictly prudent, and, before he parted from Elizabeth, prevailed upon her to name the day on which she would make him happy by the ratification of her vows at the altar.

In adherence to the open and straightforward character which had hitherto distinguished his proceedings, the Major addressed a note to Colonel Tyrrell, simply informing him of the measure upon which they had resolved, to which he received the following reply.

"Colonel Tyrrell has received Major Elmslie's note, but does not feel it necessary to enter into an explanation of the grounds on which he withholds his sanction to the connexion contemplated by the Major.

"The Colonel, however, deems it proper, in fairness, both to Major Elmslie and Miss Mowbray, to intimate his resolution to exercise, to the full extent, the right which the young lady's marriage, without the Colonel's consent, will give him over

the property she would otherwise have inherited."

Now, as the Colonel, if he had not been informed by his confidential domestic, the sergeant, of the connexion between Elmslie and Miss Mowbray, was fully apprised of it by the Major's first communication, no other conclusion could be drawn than that, in thus tacitly affording facilities to their intercourse, and then refusing his sanction to the step to which it naturally tended, he was, purposely, adopting the most effectual means of obtaining the control of the large fortune which would have devolved to Elizabeth under her father's will. The Major, therefore, rightly anticipating that the Colonel would not offer any practical opposition to a marriage which, while he formally refused his sanction to it, he was desirous to bring about, caused the banns to be published in the parish church, (the lady being under age,) which was done without interruption. On the morning appointed for their union, he proceeded in a post-chaise, to the mansion of Colonel Tyrrell, to bring away his bride, which he did without any impediment but what arose from the servants, among whom she was a general favourite, and who pressed

around her, in her way to the carriage, to bid her farewell, and to shower blessings upon her head.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, which was performed by my excellent friend Mr. Everton, the pair re-entered the carriage, and drove off on a short tour, which they proposed to make before they finally quitted the village for a residence in the metropolis.

In the course of their journey, they passed through a country town, in the market-place of which were assembled a large party of soldiers, when Elmslie, naturally attracted by the sight of a red coat, looked out of the window, and beheld the well known uniform of the regiment with which he had served in the Peninsula, and which, at the close of a sanguinary action, wherein his superior officers had been either killed or disabled, he had actually commanded.

The recognition was mutual; the officers who had noticed his marriage in the newspapers, crowded round the chaise to shake the hand of their comrade, and offer their congratulations, while the men testified their respect for their commander, and their joy at again meeting him, by three cheers, amid which the bridal pair drove off. Whatever might have been the Major's feelings on the occa-

sion, his gratification could not have surpassed that which Elizabeth experienced at the demonstrations of attachment and respect with which the elect of her heart had been received by those who, as his companions in arms, must necessarily have had an opportunity of appreciating his character.

As they passed through London, in their way home, it occurred to Elizabeth, more as a matter of curiosity, than from any hope of a satisfactory result, that it would be, at any rate, worth while to inquire, at the Bank of England, if the stock, constituting the fortune which her father had bequeathed to her, yet remained in the names of the trustees, who were the Colonel himself, and one of his intimate friends.

The answer given was, that it had been transferred on a particular date, which happened to be the third day after the marriage of the Major and Elizabeth. However deep might have been their regret on the occasion, their disappointment, after what had passed, could not have been very severe.

On their return to the village, they had scarcely recovered from the bustle of travelling, ere it became necessary for them to make preparations for

quitting it, in order that Elmslie might enter upon the duties of the temporary appointment which the minister had promised him until something more permanent should present itself. They had completed their arrangements, with the exception of obtaining a tenant for their cottage, which they, therefore, proposed to leave in the care of a person in the village, until it could be let, when, on the morning previous to that on which they proposed to set out for town, Major Elmslie read, in the newspapers, an account of a change of ministry, which had displaced his patron, and given a death-blow to his hopes of an additional income.

It was, indeed, to the Major, a bitter disappointment, which he could not disguise in making the communication to Elizabeth, who, however, when she had ascertained what had happened, looked up in his face, with the smile of an angel, and exclaimed: "Let it not grieve my Edward on his Elizabeth's account, for I know he does not feel the disappointment on his own. There is yet enough left to enable us to live with respectability and comfort, and we will not tempt Providence by murmuring at the absence of what, after all, are rather luxuries than requisites. Besides, to own the truth, I could never quite overcome my repug-

nance to exchange this sweet cottage, with its tasteful grounds, and delightful prospects, for the gloom and bustle of the metropolis. And see," she added, as she began to employ herself in replacing some of the lighter articles of furniture, which had been packed up for removal, "my old friend Ponto, your pointer, seems to hail the symptoms of our remaining with pleasure."

"Excellent girl!" exclaimed her husband, as he tenderly embraced her, "were our dwelling even more humble than it is, that sweet smile would make it a paradise."

It happened that Elizabeth, at the moment of quitting Colonel Tyrrell's, on the morning of her marriage, missed a casket, containing a necklace, which, though intrinsically of trifling value, she prized as having once belonged to her mother. The chaise being at the door, she had not time to continue her search, but mentioned her loss to the servants, and requested that, when found, as she doubted not it would be, it might be forwarded to her, at the cottage. One morning, shortly after the occurrence which had caused them to forego their intention of removing to London, the Major and his lady were at breakfast, when Sergeant Pike presented himself at the window, which,

communicating with the lawn, was thrown open. The veteran, after making the salute military, stated that, he had been sent to acquaint Mrs. Elmslie that the casket which was missing, had been found, and that if the Major would call, at any time when he was passing Colonel Tyrrell's, it should be delivered to him.

Elmslie, very naturally, inquired why so confidential a person as the sergeant, instead of being despatched merely with the information of the casket having been found, had not been made the bearer of it, and thus have rendered unnecessary a visit, which it would be any thing but pleasant for the Major to make at the Colonel's. Pike, however, who, it seemed, had not forgotten the military maxim, that it was a soldier's duty to obey orders, and not to reason upon them, had no explanation to give, and not caring to be farther questioned on the subject, he respectfully took his leave.

Elmslie, who knew the value which Elizabeth attached to the jewels, proceeded, on the following day, to Colonel Tyrrell's, for the purpose of obtaining them. The door was opened by the Sergeant, who ushered the Major into a library, in which was seated a gentleman, in whom, to his

inconceivable astonishment, he beheld his post-chaise companion, Sir John Beauchamp.

"Ah, Sir John!" exclaimed Elmslie, "this is a pleasure for which I was not prepared: my call happens to be on a matter of business, and when I was shewn into this room, I was in expectation of the honour, which, to say the truth, I coveted not, of being introduced to Colonel Tyrrell."

"Then, Major, you are in the situation of those whom your favourite poet describes as having honours 'thrust upon them.' Colonel Tyrrell stands before you."

"Pardon me," rejoined the Major, drawing himself up, "but after what has passed between us, I feel myself utterly at a loss to account for your seeking an interview, which, if it promise you no greater pleasure than I anticipate from it, might, for both our sakes, have been spared. But," he continued, in a tone of irony, "as my position in respect of Sir John Beauchamp, and that in which I stand with Colonel Tyrrell, are somewhat different, I should be glad to be informed which of those characters it may be your pleasure to represent on the present occasion."

"If Major Elmslie," replied the other, "can, for a short space, divest his mind of the impressions

which past events were calculated to produce, and bear with me while I put him in possession of some particulars of my history, it will furnish him with a solution of much which must have appeared mysterious, to use no harsher term, in my conduct towards himself, as well as to one who is dear to him."

The Major answered that, without assuming a right to such explanation, he should be most happy to receive any communication which might have a tendency to relieve his mind from feelings which, though certainly not those of hostility towards the Colonel, were such as he would gladly discard; and, taking a seat, to which the other invited him, he listened, with no ordinary degree of interest, to the following narrative.

"Reginald Mowbray, the father of Elizabeth," said the Colonel, "and myself were schoolfellows at Eton, where a succession of good offices laid the basis of a friendship which ripened with our years, and terminated only at his death. We, both of us, inherited large fortunes, and, happening to have imbibed a taste for the military life, we each obtained an ensigncy in the same regiment, in which we served during several campaigns.

"It chanced that, while we were quartered in one

of the western counties of England, we became acquainted with two sisters, who resembled each other in the amiability of their minds, while their similarity, in point of personal appearance, was such as to cause them to be frequently taken for twins: there was, however, the difference of a year between their ages. They were dowerless, but we deemed them rich in their virtues and their beauty, and desired no other treasure. Accordingly, after an intimacy of some months, we made an offer of our hands, which were accepted, and we were married.

"Never was a matrimonial connexion formed under more auspicious circumstances than ours; and in no instance has the instability of human happiness been more completely and bitterly exemplified. I dare not trust myself to dwell on the details of my own case. The melancholy story may be summed up in a few words;—the day which saw me a father, made me childless and a widower. You who are blessed with the richest treasure which Heaven can bestow on man, a virtuous and affectionate wife, may judge how I loved that best and purest of her sex, but you cannot conceive, and God grant you may never experience, the bitter pang of bereavement. My love for her approached

to adoration, and it pleased the Almighty to reprove my presumption, by convincing me that the idol I had set up was of perishing clay.

"I immediately retired from the army, and, having purchased this estate, secluded myself entirely from the world. I was, at length, roused from a lethargy produced by the long indulgence of my grief, by the intelligence that my friend Reginald had fallen a sacrifice to the Walcheren fever, and that his wife, who, on hearing of his being attacked, obtained permission to join him, had become a victim to the same fatal disease, and expired a few days afterwards. Their infant daughter, then about four years old, was left to my guardianship, under Reginald's will, which contained a clause, dictated, doubtless, by that implicit confidence that existed between us, making her inheritance of the property he left, dependent on my approbation of her marriage.

"I saw the infant but for a few moments: she was the very miniature of her mother, whose resemblance to my wife I have already mentioned; and the sweet smile with which the little Elizabeth looked up in my face, reminded me so forcibly of her whom I had lost, that I could not endure the presence of the child, but committed her to the

care of a widow lady, of whose talents and principles I had reason to be satisfied, and who took the entire charge of her education.

"Elizabeth remained with her excellent preceptress until the latter's death, when, not knowing of any other female, to whom I could, with confidence, commit my ward, I determined upon bringing her to reside here, but could not summon resolution to admit her to my society. I was, consequently, forced into still stricter seclusion, having, from that moment, confined myself to one wing of the mansion, and to an enclosed portion of the park, which none but two confidential domestics have been permitted to invade.

"Do not imagine, however, that, because my ward was not under my personal notice, she was less an object of my care: her comforts were studiously consulted, nor was any expense spared in making her residence here as agreeable as such a retirement could be rendered to a person of her years. On the other hand, the nature of her amusements, and the manner in which she disposed of herself, when she walked beyond the limits of the park, were faithfully reported to me. The circumstance of her being rescued, by your promptness and presence of mind, from the rabid

dog, was communicated to me on the day on which it took place, and, as it required no very profound knowledge of human nature to foresee the connexion to which the adventure would give rise, it became my duty to keep a watchful eye upon her deliverer.

"Your high personal character, as well as your military renown, had been previously well known to me, while I had great confidence in the principles which I knew it had been the study of her governess to instil into the mind of Elizabeth; or I should have taken effectual measures for preventing your acquaintance from extending beyond the first day on which you became known to each other.

"Still the reputation and happiness of my ward demanded the utmost circumspection, and therefore, while I permitted your interviews with her, I took care that they should not take place without my knowledge; and the honourable disdain of concealment which characterised your proceedings rendered this part of my duty easy.

"Your first letter, avowing your sentiments for Elizabeth, and requesting my sanction of your views, gratified me by its manly and open tenour, while my professional prejudices would have di-

rected my choice to a brother soldier as the future husband of the dear creature in whose happiness I was interested. It was, however, essential that I should put your constancy and disinterestedness to the test, and accordingly, in refusing my sanction to your addresses, I hinted at the penalty which would attach to her marrying without my consent.

"Shortly after the receipt of your communication, a death in a collateral branch of my family gave me a baronetcy, and the possession of very considerable property, but, at the same time, rendered it necessary that I should change my name. It was on my way to London, on business connected with my recent acquisitions, that I overtook you, at the time of the accident in the stage coach; but it was not until you had accepted of my offer of a seat in the postchaise, that I ascertained who you were. I was much interested by your manners and conversation, but it was not necessary that I should discover myself to you, and, therefore, gave you no clue by which to obtain my name. On calling, a few mornings after, on your friend the Countess, whose name you had dropped incidentally in your conversation in the postchaise, she invited me to a large party at her house, and,

on my mentioning that I had travelled with you to town, she inquired your address, and expressed her intention of sending you a card for her rout. My object in informing her Ladyship of your arrrival in London was twofold. I was desirous to elicit her opinion of your character; while, by causing you to be invited, I should obtain an opportunity of observing your deportment in fashionable society.

"The result, in both instances, was highly satisfactory: her Ladyship spoke of you in terms of unqualified eulogium, while the indifference which you exhibited for two or three fair and wealthy dames, who were evidently not insensible to your merits, proved that your heart was neither fickle nor sordid.

"In making these remarks, I was secured from the chance of your identifying me with Colonel Tyrrell, since, on the one hand, my person was unknown to you, while, on the other, I was introduced, and addressed throughout the evening, as Sir John Beauchamp. I had not long returned to the Park, when I received your second letter, announcing your intended marriage, and, in my reply, I determined on putting your disinterestedness to a final test, by informing you, in plain

terms, that I should exercise the right which Elizabeth's marriage without my consent would give me over her property. Nor was my threat a vain one, since I called upon my co-trustee to join me in the transfer of the stock into the joint names of Elizabeth and yourself: and now, all I have to ask of you is your forgiveness of the deception which, notwithstanding my motive, I fear you will accuse me of having practised towards you."

The Major replied by extending his hand to Sir John, and assuring him that, upon the explanation with which he had been favoured, so far from having cause of complaint, he fully appreciated the Baronet's motives; while he was bound to ask his excuse for the boldness, he might, he feared, say audacity, which had characterised his, the Major's, proceedings, and which nothing but the peculiar circumstances of the case could palliate.

Sir John observed, with a smile, that it appeared they had a common excuse for their mutual offences, namely, their affection for the fair cause of the contest between them, and that, therefore, there was nothing more to be said on the matter. "There is one task which remains, and, though it will cost me dear, it shall be performed: I must see Elizabeth; in the first place, because I feel that I

have too long yielded to a weakness which it is my duty, as a man and a Christian, to overcome; and, secondly, because I am convinced that, when I have once seen her, I shall receive an accession to my own happiness in being a witness of yours. I must, however, choose my own time for the meeting."

The Baronet, shortly after this explanation, presented himself unexpectedly at the residence of his ward, and although he had evidently prepared his mind for a great effort, so striking was her resemblance to his own wife at the same age, that his feelings were most painfully excited on the occasion. These sensations were, however, less acute on each succeeding interview; until, at last, as he anticipated, the intercourse, which he had been accustomed to avoid, became the source of his highest earthly gratification.

Years have passed away since the marriage of Elmslie and Elizabeth, who continue to reside in the cottage, although the additions which have been made to it have almost robbed it of its humble denomination. They have two children, a girl and a boy, who may frequently be seen, on a pair of gray ponies, in Beauchamp Park, riding on either side of Sir John, and it is diffi-

cult to say which is the most gratified of the three. The worthy Baronet is never happy out of their society, and has openly expressed his intention of bequeathing to them such of his extensive property as is not attached to the title.

THE MORTGAGEE.

THE MORTGAGEE.

"I lent you
A thousand pounds: put me in good security,
And suddenly, by mortgage or by statute,
Of some of your new possessions."

MASSINGER.

BETWEEN a double chain of hills, commencing within two miles of my residence, flowed a small river which turned the corn-mill of Stephen Hopper. The valley was of considerable extent, presenting a pleasing variety of wood, cultivated, and pasture land, with, here and there, a snug homestead, and a white spire shooting up above the trees.

Stephen Hopper was a straightforward, unsophisticated character, endowed with that kind of sense which wears better than any other, namely, common sense, and with just as much learning as enabled him to read his Bible and write a receipt. His reputation of being the most conscientious miller on the stream procured him a larger propor-

tion of business than fell to the lot of his rivals in the trade, and he was, consequently, a thriving man.

He had been many years a widower; but his household affairs were admirably conducted by his daughter Mabel, one of the fairest flowers which nature had planted in that lovely scene. She was a bright-eyed damsel, with a complexion almost colourless, yet exquisitely fair and clear; of a light airy form, as cheerful as a cricket, and as nimble as an antelope; possessed of sound sense and a quick perception, qualities which enabled her to turn the little education her father had had it in his power to bestow upon her to the best possible account. For the rest, she was good-natured, single-hearted, and generous, and had an ease and grace of manner, which, although usually sought for among the rich and the courtly, is sometimes found among the ornaments of the cottage.

I was led to take a more than ordinary interest in Mabel, from the circumstance of my having been called to attend her, in a short but severe and dangerous illness, during which she exhibited so much patience, resignation, and fortitude, and appeared to feel so little for herself, and so much for those who would have deemed her death as their heaviest

earthly calamity, that I have never ceased to entertain for her sentiments of high respect and esteem. Thus it happened that, even after my fair patient was restored to health, I rarely rode in the direction of the mill without stopping to inquire after her. On one of those subsequent visits I discovered another quality with which Nature, in her liberality, had endowed her, namely, a fine voice.

It was on a beautiful evening in the summer: I had tied my horse up at the gate, and was proceeding up the gravel walk, towards the door, when, passing under an open casement, my attention was arrested by a strain of melody as unexpected as it was captivating. Knowing that, by knocking at the door, I should interrupt the songstress, I paused beneath the window: the air was "Auld Robin Gray." As an Englishman, I could have had no national partiality for the ballad: it was, therefore, its own pathos, and the sweet, simple, and touching manner in which it was sung, which brought—I blush not to confess—the tear into my eye, and I envy not that man's feelings who could have refused the tribute. The enthusiast in music will perhaps smile, if he do not frown, while I add my belief that, however scientific performances may enchant the fancy, it

is the simple melody which touches the heart, and creates a delight which the most splendid combinations and brilliant execution would fail to inspire. This opinion may be a rash one: it is, however, founded not merely upon my own feelings, but on my observation of the effects of music upon others.

Mabel had been walking, one morning, on the banks of the stream which turned her father's mill, and was on her way home, when she observed a person, in the dress of a sportsman, approaching the river from a path which ran parallel with it, at the distance of about a hundred yards. She instantly recognised him as a Baronet, and the owner of a large estate in the neighbourhood; a man notorious for the shameless profligacy as well as the lavish extravagance of his habits. Hoping to reach the mill before he could intercept her, Mabel quickened her pace, which the other perceiving, handed his gun to a servant who was attending him in a dog-cart, and, advancing with more rapid steps, confronted her on the path within a short distance of her home.

"So, I have caught you at last;" exclaimed the libertine, as he seized her rudely by the arm, and attempted to draw her averted face towards him.

Mabel, struggling violently, uttered a loud shriek, when her assailant continued, "Nay, my pretty maid, you waste your breath upon the winds, for I met your father, an hour since, riding to market at a pace which has carried him some miles by this time, and nothing but a thunderclap would reach the ears of the deaf substitute whom he has left behind him in the mill. Come, come, it is useless to resist; you shall take a ride with me;" he added, as he dragged her towards the chaise.

"Hold, cowardly villain!" exclaimed a person who, having been angling beneath an alder tree, on the other side of the stream, had not been perceived either by the aggressor or his victim.

The person addressed, confiding in the depth of the river, on which there was neither a bridge near nor a boat within reach, cast a look of contemptuous defiance at the angler; while the latter, feeling the impotence of the threats he uttered, looked around him, for a moment, in apparent perplexity. There was no communication between the two banks, but the piles which formed the dam just behind the mill, and which presented a surface not broader than a man's foot; while, on one side, was a fall of some half a dozen yards, with a corresponding depth of water on the other.

Preearious, however, as was the footing, and serious as the eonsequenees of a false step might prove, the angler's eye no sooner perceived the narrow bridge, than he determined on attempting it; and aeeordingly, steadying himself with the lower part of his fishing rod against the beam whieh was placed, horizontally, a few inehes below the top of the piles, he traversed the perilous path in safety, and reaehed the seene of the struggle between Mabel and her assailant before the latter eould suceeed in dragging her from the bank of the river.

In a moment the angler's hand was upon the throat of the libertine, who found himself compelled to abandon his prey, and act on the defensive. A furious eneounter followed, but the fisherman, although inferior in point of size, was more compactly knit together, and finally succeeded in forcing his antagonist to the brink of the river, over which he held him suspended, as it were, until the attendant, to whom I have already alluded, approaehed, with the gun in his hand, to the relief of his master.

"Drop the muzzle of your piece, this instant," exelaimed the victor to the servant, "or I loose my hold, and your master falls into the stream,

where, with his shooting gear about him, he will sink like a plummet." Then, perceiving that the man obeyed, with a sweep of his arm he flung the libertine upon his back on the greensward, and adding, "Unmanly ruffian! learn in future to respect the helplessness of woman," was quitting the spot, when the other, starting on his feet, replied, "Villanous hind, I will be revenged on you for this." Then turning to Mabel, who, standing aloof from the contest, had watched its issue with the most intense anxiety, the aggressor said, "Remember, the renewal of your father's lease, though prepared, is not signed: let him look to it!"

The angler, whose name was Smith, then escorted Mabel to the door of the cottage attached to the mill, where he parted from her, after receiving her warm expressions of gratitude for the service he had rendered her; but, at the same time, giving his pledge that he would not mention the incident to her father, who would resent the insult in a manner which could not but prove ruinous to his interests, and, perhaps, betray him into an act which might put him more completely in the power of the man on whose enmity they might, for the future, calculate.

Her deliverer then crossed the river, by means

of a boat which the miller's man unmoored for him, and resumed his sport with as much composure as if nothing had occurred to ruffle his temper.

Smith had lately arrived in the neighbourhood. He had taken a furnished cottage of the miller, stipulating, at the same time, for permission to fish in the mill stream: the dwelling was a very humble one, and the furniture of the commonest description, but he appeared well content with both. He rather avoided than courted communication with the surrounding inhabitants, but, when addressed by them, was civil and obliging. His usual dress was a fustian jacket, which, on Sundays, he exchanged for a green frock coat, not remarkable either for the fineness of its texture or the modernness of its fashion. He paid his rent punctually on every Saturday, and was evidently not in distressed circumstances; but the fact of his every week despatching a basket of the fish he caught, addressed to a fishmonger in London, furnished tolerably conclusive evidence that profit, not less than pleasure, was a motive for his almost unremitting exercise of the art, of which, judging from his success, he was no mean professor.

His age might have been about five and twenty, while, in person, he was rather above the ordinary

height of men; his complexion, naturally clear and fair, had been tinged by frequent exposure to the sun; and his features, without any pretensions to beauty, were manly and intelligent.

The only house at which he was known to visit was the miller's, who would sometimes throw temptation in his way, in the shape of a tankard of October; which, however, it was reported, was not the only attraction which drew the angler from the solitude of his cottage, to the sanded parlour of his landlord.

The miller was a philosopher in his way, somewhat of a humourist, and a brother of the angle into the bargain; but, although his guest appeared, and very probably felt, interested in his conversation, it is thought that the remarks of Mabel, though, of course, less distinguished by experience, engrossed nearly an equal portion of his attention.

After the rencontre in which Smith had rescued Mabel from the hands of the baronet, the communications of the two former, although not more frequent than before, were marked by greater cordiality on both sides. The feeling, on her part, might, reasonably enough, be ascribed to gratitude; while, in his case, the converse of the maxim

that a man usually hates those he has injured was established, and he felt a growing regard for one to whom he had accidentally rendered an essential service, but who, except for that occurrence, might not have excited so strong an interest in his mind.

The miller was pleased with the conversation and manners of his occasional guest, yet he would frequently remark to his daughter, that there was something about the stranger which he was unable to fathom; that he hoped all was "as it should be,"—but he hated mystery, and confessed that there were times when he had misgivings as to the character and quality of their new acquaintance.

Smith had taken up his residence at the cottage, a few days after the occurrence of a popular tumult, in the metropolis, which will be fresh in the recollection of many of my readers, and in which a person, in one of the houses attacked by the mob, was shot. The perpetrator of the deed, who was supposed, and, I rather think, proved to have been the son of a notorious political character of the day, effected his escape, and a diligent search was instituted, and large rewards were offered, in order to bring the delinquent to justice. A degree of suspicion would naturally attach to every person,

who, like Smith, suddenly appeared in a place in which he was entirely a stranger, living in retirement, and apparently without any adequate means of support.

Thus it happened that, before he had been many weeks an occupant of the cottage, reports to his prejudice began to be circulated; and, although he followed his sport with an eagerness and assiduity which argued an ignorance or disregard of the rumours respecting him, he could not but gather from the distrust with which he was looked upon, that something was amiss.

Smith was, one morning, which chanced to be unfavourable for angling, busied in his cottage in the manufacture of some artificial flies, when the door was unexpectedly opened, and Mabel Hopper burst into the apartment, evidently in a state of no ordinary perturbation.

"Sir," she inquired, in a voice almost inarticulate from agitation, "is Smith your real name?"

"Why," rejoined the other, as soon as he recovered from the surprise occasioned by the nature of the question, and the abruptness with which it was put, "I suppose I may confess to you, who, after what has passed, are incapable of using the avowal to my prejudice, that I have passed by

another name than that by which you have hitherto known me."

"You are not what you seem, then?" pursued the querist.

"Few of us are, Mabel," was the reply.

"Pardon me," said the agitated girl, "but the occasion admits not of ceremony; have you, ever, I ask, done any act for which you have reason to apprehend punishment?"

"I fear I cannot but acknowledge that I have," said the other.

"Then," said Mabel, putting into his hand a copy of the proclamation, offering a reward for the capture of the perpetrator of the murder I have referred to, "are you the person named on that paper?"

"Without admitting or denying it," replied Smith, "I would know the motive of your inquiry."

"What other motive can I have," exclaimed Mabel, "but the preservation of one, who, guilty or innocent, has a claim to my assistance at every hazard. If you are the party there named, fly, I implore you, as you would escape a death of shame. There is a meeting of magistrates at the inn just below the mill, who are about issuing a warrant for your apprehension, and the constables are

waiting to receive it. There is no time to be lost; you will find, beneath the shed at the end of the meadow, a horse ready saddled for you,—mount him and escape, while escape is yet in your power."

"And by flight," replied Smith, "confirm the worst suspicions that are entertained of me."

"This is madness," cried Mabel, wringing her hands in agony; "Sir Benjamin is one of the magistrates, and has been searching for evidence against you in every quarter; he has already wreaked his revenge on me by refusing to sign the renewal of my father's lease, as he had promised, and can you think that he will leave a stone unturned to accomplish your destruction?"

"But, Mabel," inquired Smith, "do you not know that in aiding in my escape you will yourself become amenable to the laws?"

"I know not, I care not, so that you are safe," continued the maiden; "you have braved more for my sake than I can possibly endure for yours, and He who sees my motive will protect me. O, be guided by my counsel, and fly!"

"Yes, Mabel," said the other, "I will go, but it shall be into the presence of the Magistrates; it will be the safer course, since they cannot have

collected any conclusive evidence against me at this distance from the scene in which the melancholy affair took place. And yet," he added, after a momentary pause, "you may still serve me in this matter."

He then wrote a few lines on a scrap of paper, and, having folded and addressed it, said, "Let this be delivered, with all speed, to the person whose name it bears; fare you well, Mabel, and believe me, I do not value your friendship the less, though I may not feel it expedient to obey its dictates." As he said these words, he left her, and, with a quick step and resolute air, walked towards the inn.

In his way to the apartment appropriated to the magistrates, Smith encountered several of the neighbouring farmers and peasants, whom the rumour of a warrant being out against him had collected about the inn. Many who had been in the habit of exchanging the passing civilities with him, shrunk from his approach as from one infected by the plague. The honest miller alone stood forward from the crowd, and, taking his quondam guest by the hand, he said, "Master Smith, I always said there was something about you that I could not make out, but I will never

believe that you are guilty of the crime they have laid to your charge. However, if you obtain justice from Sir Benjamin, by the same measure that he has dealt it to me this morning, he will send you to prison, at all events, and then," added the miller, slipping a canvass bag into the other's hand, "this may be useful."

Smith took the money, and, wringing Hopper's hand in token of his gratitude, advanced to the door of the room, but, before he could lift the latch, one of the crowd, more officious than the rest, laid his hand upon his collar, with the view of claiming the merit of conducting the accused into the presence of the magistrates. Smith, however, disengaged himself in an instant, and, flinging the fellow back into the circle whence he had advanced, immediately entered the apartment, where he found Sir Benjamin, the only justice present, his colleague having been called away, for a short time, on other magisterial business.

The Baronet was attended by an attorney of a neighbouring market-town, who acted in the capacity of his steward and legal factotum, as well as his clerk and counsellor in the administration of his judicial office.

Sir Benjamin, on the entrance of Smith, com-

manded the constables in attendance to secure him.

"It will not need," said the accused, with great composure; "I heard that you were about to issue your warrant for my capture, and so, to save you time and these honest gentlemen trouble, I have done myself the honour of waiting upon you of my own free will.

"What is your name?" inquired Sir Benjamin, who, having dismissed the constables, proceeded at once with the examination.

"John Smith," was the reply.

"Ay, that is your travelling name, we know very well, but have you never gone by any other?" pursued the Baronet.

"Perhaps I have," said the prisoner.

"I thought as much," rejoined the Baronet; "where do you live?"

"Sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; I have no fixed residence," responded Smith.

"You answer very flippantly, young man," said the magistrate; "I suppose you know that I have power to commit?"

"Perfectly well," replied the other, "for when I last had the pleasure of seeing you, you committed yourself."

Sir Benjamin felt the sarcasm, and, for a moment, losing his command of temper, started from his seat and vociferated, "Who and what are you, I should be glad to know, that dare bandy words with me in this fashion?"

"The mortgagee of your estate, Sir Benjamin," was Smith's reply.

The magistrate appeared to be, as a sailor would say, taken aback, by this unexpected piece of information; but, soon recovering himself, he said, "And, doubtless, you expect that I shall take this very probable story upon your authority?"

"I am not so unreasonable," rejoined the accused, drawing from his pocketbook, and handing to Sir Benjamin, a letter in which the latter, expressing his present inability to pay the last half-year's interest on the mortgage, requested the lender to forego his right of proceeding to a foreclosure and sale for a few weeks, when the arrear was promised to be paid.

The magistrate, after glancing at the letter, said "Supposing this letter to be genuine, you must be aware that the mere possession of it does not establish the fact of your being the party to whom it was addressed."

Mr. Smith, or rather Merton, for such was his

real appellation, taking up a pen, and writing, on the back of his card, his name in the usual form of his signature, handed it up to the justice, and said, "Although my person may be unknown to you, my signature must have been rendered familiar to you by the frequent correspondence to which the affair of the mortgage has given rise."

Sir Benjamin appeared to hesitate, and conferred, for a few moments, with his clerk. There was, clearly, no pretext for detaining Mr. Merton, after the proof he had adduced of his identity, and it was as manifestly to the personal interest of the Baronet to conciliate his creditor; while, on the other hand, he dreaded the exposure to which an explanation to his brother magistrate, of the grounds whereon he conceived the prisoner entitled to his discharge, would subject him.

He was relieved from his embarrassment, however, by the entrance of the gentleman, a man of large landed estate in the neighbourhood, to whom Merton had despatched the note by Mabel, and who, by immediately shaking the prisoner heartily by the hand, and addressing him by his proper name, at once established his identity.

Merton, in reply to his friend's inquiries, stated that he had, under the influence of his old

mania for angling, visited that part of the country for the purpose of proving the excellence of the celebrated trout stream which turned the mill, and that, having succeeded in obtaining a cottage, with permission to fish, he had preserved his incognito, lest the hospitalities of his acquaintance in the vicinity should interfere with his sport. He added, that circumstances of a private nature had induced him to prolong his stay, and explained the fact of his despatching baskets of fish to London, by saying, that the dealer, to whom they were sent, had been an old servant of his father, and he had availed of the opportunity to promote his success in his newly adopted trade.

Before the Baronet quitted the inn, Mr. Merton took him apart, and said, "Sir Benjamin, with reference to your letter, which I received so lately as yesterday, I can only say, that I have no objection to grant you the time you desire, but forbearance on my part must be conditional on an act of courtesy on yours. If I am not misinformed, you promised Stephen Hopper a renewal of his lease, and he has, to my knowledge, incurred considerable expense in the way of repairs, on the strength of your engagement, which, doubtless, in the multiplicity of your avocations, has escaped your me-

mory. However, if you will send your agent to my cottage, this evening, with the lease, I will give him, under my own hand, an extension of time for the payment of the arrear of interest."

The Baronet took the hint, and the lease, which had been prepared for some weeks previously, was sent; the bearer receiving, in exchange, the promised letter of indulgence.

On the following morning, Mr. Merton called at the miller's, and found his daughter alone: she had heard of the discovery of his real rank, and her reception of him was of a very different character from that which he was accustomed to experience. She rose at his entrance, and continued standing while he addressed her. The reflections from which his visit had roused her, had, moreover, imparted an unusual air of seriousness to her countenance, for she had been reproaching herself for having allowed him, in his assumed character, to gain an interest in her heart, of which, until she imagined him to be in peril, she was scarcely aware.

After some conversation, which gradually assumed a graver tone, Mr. Merton declared his sentiments towards her; and concluded by requesting to be permitted to place her in a rank of life which

her beauty and her virtues so well qualified her to grace.

Mabel was, for some moments, utterly overcome by surprise and the conflicting emotions which so unexpected a declaration was calculated to excite. At length, she summoned firmness enough to say, "Do not think, sir, that I am ungrateful for the honour which your proposal confers on a simple village maiden, but the vast difference between our ranks, while it makes me feel your generosity the more, renders it my duty to decline taking advantage of it. Think of my father, sir; and that, by lifting me into your walk of life, you would take me from his, and place a barrier between us, which it would be wicked and unnatural in me to permit to be raised."

"But, Mabel,—" continued Merton.

"Nay," exclaimed the noble-minded girl, interrupting him, "I know what your kindness would say; but, do not, I beseech you, seek to win me from the path, which a sacred duty has marked out for me, and in which, I implore of God to keep my feet. I will honour and cherish your memory, I will pray for you as my preserver and my friend, but I must not, can not, will not, be your wife."

"Merton, if he did not perceive the force of her objection, saw that it would be cruel, as well as

vain, to attempt to overcome it, in the present state of her feelings. "Farewell, then, Mabel," he said, in a melancholy tone, "farewell, and yet, ere we part, give me the consolation of your assurance that if, at any time, distress should overtake you, you will not forget you have a friend, nor fail to apprise him of your trouble."

Mabel gave him her promise that she would not, and they parted: the maiden to endeavour to calm her emotions in the retirement of her chamber, and Merton to seek her father, whom he found busily engaged in the mill. "Mr. Hopper," said he, "I come to thank you for the sum of money which you were so generous as to place at my disposal, when you deemed I was in trouble, and in returning it, to present to you the lease of your mill, respecting which, I have been so fortunate as to refresh your landlord's memory. Farewell."

While he was speaking, a carriage drew up in the road, opposite the miller's house; Merton stepped into it, and, as it drove off, he caught a glance of poor Mabel, who was in tears, at her window, whence she watched the vehicle, with a melancholy interest, as it wound along the road into the distance, and finally disappeared behind the hill by which the prospect was bounded.

The departure of Mr. Merton, notwithstanding she felt that she had no part or lot with him, flung a gloom over Mabel's spirit, and, although the sense of duty which led her to choose the seclusion of her native valley to rank and affluence, rendered her scrupulous in her attention to her household concerns, and to the general comfort of her father, it was sometime before she regained the cheerfulness of demeanour, by which she had previously been distinguished.

In about a year after this occurrence, she happened to take up a newspaper, which her father had brought home with him from market, when her eye glanced on a paragraph containing an account of Mr. Merton's marriage with the daughter of a nobleman of ancient family, and unbounded wealth. A pang shot through Mabel's bosom, as she read the tidings, a dizziness came over her vision, and she sank into a chair, under the influence of feelings, which, although powerful, she was scarcely able to define. Whatever might have been the character of them, she did not lay her head upon her pillow that night, before she had breathed a fervent prayer to the "Giver of every good and perfect gift," invoking His richest blessings on Merton and his bride.

Although the excitement produced on Mabel's feelings by the intelligence of Merton's nuptials was considerable, and did not immediately pass away, it is probable that the circumstance tended, eventually, to tranquillize her mind, and to restore it to its former tone. Months glided on, and the miller and his daughter kept "the noiseless tenour of their way:" industry continued to fill their home with abundance, and affection to make it happy. The old man, when his toil was done, would sit in his vine-covered porch in summer, and in his chimney nook, in the winter, with his jug of home-brewed before him, the very personification of comfort; while his daughter would sit beside him, singing the favourite airs of his youth, or amusing him with the novelties, true and false, of the county newspaper.

Alas for man! although affection may consecrate his dwelling, and friendship gladden his heart, and prosperity fling its sunshine across his path, death will come at last, and shed its blight upon the fairest of earth's paradises. The miller was returning, one dark night, from market, when his horse fell, and threw his rider with such violence to the ground, that he was taken up senseless, by two of his neighbours, who happened to be in his

company, and conveyed home. The accident was not immediately fatal, but the internal injuries it occasioned, confined him, for many weeks, to his bed, in great suffering, from which he was only released by death.

Stephen Hopper was a man of exemplary piety, and the God, whom he had served in his lifetime, did not desert him in the hour of his departure. The only thought that troubled him on his death-bed, was on the unprotected situation of his daughter, who would not have a friend to stand up for her when he was gone ; that she would be left alone in a world, where innocence has many foes, and where the path of beauty is beset by snares.

In other respects, however, she was not left destitute; the cottage, which was contiguous to the mill, had been the miller's own, and devolved to Mabel, with certain securities, which, although not immediately convertible into money, promised, ultimately, to ensure her a comfortable provision.

The lease of the mill had terminated with the life of its late occupant, but there was certain property about it, for which his landlord had agreed to make a pecuniary allowance, at the end of the lease, and as Stephen Hopper, who had laid out large sums in improving his machinery, did not

leave much ready money behind him, Mabel found herself eompelled to call on Sir Benjamin to perform his promise, and thus put her in a situation to arrange her late father's affairs.

The Baronet, although defeated, as has been already related, in his libertine views, had not entirely abandoned them, and, therefore, gladly seized the opportunity, to whieh her application gave rise, of renewing his aequaintance, while he resorted to every expedient for multiplying and protracting their interviews on the subject.

Finding that the advances upon whieh he presumed on those oecasions, were uniformly repelled with indignation and disdain; that maidenly virtue, eonfirmed and strengthened by religious prineiple, opposed an obstaele to his designs, whieh he eould not hope to overcome, he resolved on adopting the only, but, as he imagined, certain means of silencing her objeetions, by offering her his hand.

The eold indifferenee with whieh Mabel rejected a proposal that he deemed it impossible that any woman in her rank of life eould refuse, was infinitely more galling to his feelings than the angry scorn with which she had treated his former advances, and his wounded pride supplied him with an additional incentive to the aeeomplishment of

his object. He, accordingly, shifted the mode of his attack, and while, on the one hand, he endeavoured to allure her, by the prospect of rank, riches, and a title, he essayed, on the other, to frighten her into his toils, by menacing her with a claim for dilapidations to an amount far exceeding the compensation which she had demanded of him.

With such energy did this heartless profligate follow up his threat, and so numerous and vexatious were his persecutions, that poor Mabel soon found herself beset by lawyers, and their retainers, and, being without money and without friends, was, as the scriptures have it, even at her "wits' end."

In this distressing dilemma, her thoughts reverted to him who had exacted from her a promise, that if ever trouble should overtake her, she would apprise him of her situation, and claim his aid. Had he remained single, she would, probably, have rather submitted to any infliction of the tyrant, to whose malice she was subjected, than hazard a misconstruction of her motives by an application to Mr. Merton. "But he is married," she said to herself, "and if his bride loves him as she ought to love him, she will not honour him the less for hastening to the succour of a helpless

maiden, who cries to him in her trouble." She, accordingly, addressed to him, at his seat in an adjoining county, the following note:

"I am an orphan, sorely beset by enemies, and have not a friend in the world but my God and yourself."

"MABEL."

She waited, day after day, in the utmost anxiety, for an answer; but a week passed on, while her circumstances were, every hour, becoming more desperate. Her poorer neighbours consoled her as well as they could, and assisted her to the extent of their means, while, to her richer ones, she had not the courage to appeal against a man of the Baronet's rank and influence.

Her persecutor, at last, carried his measures to the extremity of putting an execution into the cottage, and, accordingly, sent a man on the premises, who made, or affected to make, a seizure of the furniture, and proceeded to put it in order, either for removal or sale. Sir Benjamin, in the mean time, sought an interview with Mabel, to whom he again represented the ruin which awaited her if she persisted in her rejection of his addresses, and,

on the other hand, the rank and affluence which he would place at her disposal, in the event of her compliance.

The poor girl was almost reduced to despair, but her abhorrence of Sir Benjamin had been augmented by his aggravated persecutions, and, passionately reiterating her often repeated rejection of his suit, she burst into tears, and turned away from him, towards the window, whence she perceived a cloud of dust in the distance, which excited her attention. Shortly afterwards a carriage, proceeding at a rapid rate, became visible, and, on its approaching nearer, she was able to distinguish the liveries of the servants. "Thank God!" she exclaimed, as an expression of hope and thankfulness illumined her countenance, "thank God, my deliverer is at hand!"

Before Sir Benjamin had time to discover the cause of her exclamation, Mr. Merton, for it was really he, had alighted, and, gathering, by a few hasty questions of the man whom he encountered at his entrance, the posture of affairs, he suddenly burst into the apartment to which Mabel had retreated, and, seizing the Baronet by the arm with the grasp of a giant, said, "Thou disgrace to manhood, upon whom forbearance is thrown away, free

this house from the pollution of your presence, or I will not leave you a brick or a rood of land that you can call your own."

After ejecting the Baronet, he turned to Mabel, and accounted for his seeming inattention to her letter, by explaining to her that, having been from home when it arrived, he did not receive it until the preceding evening. He then elicited from her the nature of the difficulties in which she was placed, and, after expressing his indignation at the baseness of her oppressor, and his regret at her not having sent him an earlier intimation of her circumstances, he left her, for a few minutes, with the intention of dislodging the retainer of the law from the house.

On entering the apartment where the man had been stationed, he found him in high altercation with our old acquaintance Caleb Counterplea, who, having accidentally become acquainted with the dilemma in which Mabel had been plunged, had mounted his sorrel pony, and ridden over, ostensibly in quest of a job, but, in reality, to offer his gratuitous assistance to the friendless orphan.

While Caleb was laying down the law, and denouncing its vengeance against the unlucky wight "in possession," Cornelius Cruickshank, Sir

Benjamin's attorney, having been attracted to the spot by the voices of the disputants, arrived to support his follower.

"Ha! Mr. Cruickshank," exclaimed Caleb, "at your old tricks again, I see! Upon my word, here are materials for as pretty an action of trespass as a lawyer could desire."

"But my old friend Counterplea," said the other, "is too prudent a man, I judge, to undertake a cause with a beggar for his client."

"Why, as to that matter, Master Cruickshank," rejoined Caleb, "I should only find a client in the situation in which you generally leave one; but, in this case, the pretty plaintiff shall have law for nothing, and, if she cannot find money for stamps and counsel's fees, I will; for Caleb Counterplea is not so badly off, but that he can afford to pay for the pleasure of trouncing a rogue."

"I hope, sir," exclaimed Cruickshank, bristling up, "you do not mean to apply that epithet to me or my client."

"Really, neighbour," rejoined the other, with the most provoking coolness, "in a case where the claims are so nearly equal, it would not become me to decide who has the greater right to the title; while it would be a manifest injustice to both to

divide the honour between you, seeing that each is more than half a one."

"Sir," vociferated Cruickshank, "I would have you to know—"

"Nay, Corney," said Caleb, interrupting him, "don't bluster, for you know it wont do with me." He then whispered a few cabalistic words in the ears of his brother lawyer, which had the effect of clearing the house of him and his follower."

"Mr. Counterplea," said Merton, when they were left alone, "I am much indebted to you for saving me the trouble of thrusting that pettifogger out of the house by the shoulders; and shall be further obliged by your undertaking the cause of this persecuted girl, and considering yourself as employed by me to do so."

"You do me much honour," responded Caleb; "but, to own the truth, I had resolved on taking up her case on my own account and responsibility, and shall, perhaps, not serve her with more zeal or honesty for being paid for it; nevertheless, be it even as you will: for though we sometimes decline a fee from a poor man, it would be extremely unprofessional to refuse the money of a wealthy one."

Having settled this affair to his satisfaction, Mr. Merton returned to Mabel, and explained to her

the measures which he had taken to defeat and punish the malice of her enemies. "But," he added, "why will you not accept of the protection I once offered you under circumstances in which a sense of duty forbade you to accept it; a protection which it would still be my pride and my happiness to afford you?"

"What!" exclaimed Mabel, "do I hear aright? are you not married?"

"Married!" said Merton, echoing the word, in a tone of equal surprise, "what induced you to imagine that?"

"I read of it in the newspapers, a twelvemonth since," was the reply.

"It was the marriage of my cousin," said Merton, "whose name is like my own. No, Mabel, believe me, I am not so fickle-minded: since I saw you, I have been much among the rich, and the lovely, and the high-born of your sex; but neither wealth, nor beauty, nor rank could make me forget the fair and innocent being whom I left behind me in the valley."

"But your friends,—" said the maiden, hesitatingly.

"Will be yours, Mabel," rejoined Merton, "or they will cease to be mine. Those who really love

me will not seek my board less often when it is graeed by loveliness and virtue; and, for the rest, I am above their frown."

Merton departed on the same evening, but it was only to return, after an interval of a few days, to bring away his bride, who realized the pieture of a wife given by a eontemporary writer, not less distinguished for the splendor of his genius than for the pure morality whieh pervades his pages: "the pleasant sharer of the heart of heart, the being to whom man returns after the tumult of the day, like the worshipper to a seeret shrine, to revive his nobler tastes and virtues at a souree pure from the evil of the external world, and glowing with a perpetual light of sanetity and love."*

Mabel, while the natural delicaey of her mind, and the grace of her manner, fitted her for the station to which she was elevated, carried into it the humility of spirit whieh had distinguished her as a village maiden; and there were few who did not rejoiee at the revolution in her fortunes, whieh, while it impaired none of her virtues, extended the sphere of her usefulness.

Counterplea, whose natural shrewdness was

* Salathiel.

equalled only by his legal acumen and experience, applied himself with such energy and good will to the business which he had undertaken, at Mr. Merton's request, that he not only obtained ample justice for his client, but exposed a conspiracy of so nefarious a character against her honour and happiness, that Sir Benjamin was ejected from the magistracy which he had disgraced, and the name of his hopeful attorney, Cruickshank, was struck off the roll. The Baronet was compelled to resign his estates into the hands of his creditors, and is now living on the continent, upon a small annuity which he had preserved amid the wreck of his fortunes.

The zeal, integrity, and talent displayed by Caleb, on several occasions on which he had been professionally employed by Mr. Merton, not only obtained for him the whole of that gentleman's business, but introduced him to a practice among persons in a rank of life very superior to that to which his clients had previously belonged. He is, consequently, in very prosperous circumstances; has resigned his short-legged pony to his long-legged clerk, Pounce, and has purveyed himself a chaise, a livery servant, and, to the astonishment of his neighbours, a new pair of leathern unutter-

ables and top boots. It is, however, remarked of him that, with his accession of wealthy clients, he has not relaxed in his attention to his poorer ones, and continues to be distinguished by the same eccentricity of manner and real benevolence of heart.

THE END.

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