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HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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VOLUME I.

The hues of bliss more brightly glow  
Chasten'd by fabler tints of woe,  
And blended form with artful strife  
The strength and harmony of life.

GRAY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATER-NOSTER-ROW,

M,DCC,LXXXIX.

HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

CHAP. I.

AS Mr. and Mrs. Fortescue were travelling from the North of Ireland to their own estate near Dublin, a violent storm of thunder and lightning frighten'd the Lady so much, she was unable to proceed; and not being near any town or capital village, they were obliged to stop at a miserable cottage 'till the tempest abated. Apprehensive of no danger but from the lightning, when the storm was over, Mr. Fortescue in vain persuaded his Lady to postpone their journey 'till the next morning: the hovel they were in was so very wretched, as almost to justify her obstinacy, though it was many miles to the inn at which they were to sleep, and great part of the road was over a dreary and unfrequented common. In compliance to her wishes, though against his own judgment, the indulgent husband ordered the carriage, and left the hamlet at eight o'clock. I will take the opportunity of the first part of their journey, which passed without misfortune or adventure, to introduce them to my readers in form, as they are to bear so considerable a part in the ensuing pages.

Mr. Fortescue was a man of rank and fortune, his disposition amiable and benevolent; but though his conversation was lively, and he did not want sense, yet his judgment was weak, and his opinion easily guided by those for whom he had a regard. Of a temper irresolute and apprehensive, he was fortunate in being united to a woman whose understanding and strength of mind superior to most of her sex, made her capable of directing him in all affairs of consequence; yet her sentiments were always given with such mildness, and she opposed him, when wrong, with such delicacy, that he could scarcely avoid supposing he followed the bent of his own inclinations.

Mrs. Fortescue was, indeed, in every sense of the word, a valuable woman: her natural understanding had been improved by the best books and the best company; nor had a constant course of prosperity rendered her unfeeling to the miseries of others; yet her sensibility was not of that kind, which could

*Weep o'er the withering leaf of a rose;*  
but her generosity was unbounded, and her charity universal: nor did the fear of wounding her feelings ever drive her from a scene of distress, as she regarded not a slight inconvenience to herself, if she could by any means contribute to the relief or comfort of others.

When they were half way over the wild common I mentioned before, a slight accident that happened to the harness obliged the postillion to dismount to repair it. The instant the carriage stopt, they were alarmed by loud and repeated groans, that seemed to proceed from some person in extreme agony very near them, and which the noise of the wheels had before prevented their hearing. Equally courageous and humane, neither the fears of the servants, nor Mr. Fortescue's half-owned apprehensions, could prevent Mrs. Fortescue from desiring the man to drive the carriage slowly to the place from whence the groans were heard. He unwillingly obeyed, and a few moments brought them to the spot. Their terror subsided on seeing a post-chaise which had been overturned down a small bank: fortunately the horses were so entangled in the harness that they could not go on, or the driver must have been instantaneously killed, but he was totally confined by one of the wheels, and miserably bruised. Whilst the servants were busily employed in releasing him, Mrs. Fortescue was eagerly enquiring if there was no one in the carriage? An answer in the affirmative, raised her apprehensions for the fate of the passenger, and her fears were soon confirmed by the doors being opened, and a woman meanly drest taken out, whom, as it was supposed, a violent blow on the temple had deprived of life. Wrapped carefully up in the woman's cloth cloak, they found in the bottom of the chaise asleep, a little infant, not more than three months old; apparently unhurt. Of her Mrs. Fortescue immediately took the charge, leaving the driver to the care of their footman, who placed him in the carriage, and mounting the horses, followed his master's, 'till they arrived at the town where they were to sleep.

Their first care was to send for a surgeon, who pronounced the woman irrecoverably gone; set the fellow's arm, which was broken, and declared him in no danger. Their attention was then bestowed on their little charge, whose extreme beauty made such an impression on Mrs. Fortescue, together with its helpless and forlorn situation, that she begged her husband to let her keep the child, as she doubted not the consent of its friends would be easily obtained, as she could not suppose from the appearance of the woman, or the dress of the child, which though clean was coarse, that they were of any very elevated rank in life. In this opinion they were confirmed by enquiring of the driver from what place he had brought them; as he said he was returning from a town some miles distant, at the edge of the heath he met the woman walking with the child in one arm, and a bundle in the other: she begged, as the chaise was empty, he would let her get in, as the storm was then coming on with great violence: he consented merely from a principle of humanity, as he could have no hopes of a reward:—he added, he did not know from what place she came, but supposed from her apparent fatigue she had walked many miles, and quite across the country, as it was in a very unfrequented road he first saw her.

To an infant thrown so peculiarly under her protection, Mrs. Fortescue considered herself bound by every tie, and determined never to forsake her; but fearing her husband's relations, many of whom were narrow-minded and illiberal, would condemn her for bringing into the family a child, who had no claims but on their benevolence, and who could never repay their services, but with affection and gratitude, she requested the infant might pass for her niece. Her sister, who had just embarked from England for the East-

Indies, had lost a little girl about the same age; it was therefore settled that she should be introduced to Mr. Fortescue's family as this child, whom her sister, Mrs. Sommerville, had sent over, fearing the length of the voyage and the heat of the climate might be fatal to her.

This point concluded, they next sent for the clergyman of the place, who baptized the infant by the name of Honoria Sommerville; and to him they gave an account of the accident that threw the child on their protection, and begged his assistance in endeavouring to find her father. He promised to take every possible method, and let them know privately the result of his enquiries. Mr. Fortescue gave a handsome present to the poor fellow who had broken his arm, desiring him, if ever he should discover who the woman was he had taken up, to inform Mr. Richardson. They then proceeded on their journey with that satisfaction of mind which ever flows from a consciousness of having acted right; and at the next stage took a nurse for little Honoria, and by this precaution evaded all possibility of a discovery, as they could confide in their servant, who had lived with Mr. Fortescue's father from a boy; and at the same time were well assured, Mr. Richardson would use every method to discover the relations of the unfortunate infant.

Mrs. Fortescue had examined the woman's bundle, but could find nothing to throw any light on the mysterious affair. It contained only some linen, and one coarse gown; but from her pocket they took a seal set in gold, with the cypher EB, a very remarkable crown piece, and a small silver cross. Of these Mrs. Fortescue thought it her duty to take particular care, as they might one day lead to a knowledge of the child's birth: though she was more than ever convinced that birth was low, yet it lessened not her affection for the infant; on the contrary, she rejoiced in the idea that if acknowledged, the child would scarcely be taken away, as her relations would probably be highly pleased at the prospect of her being so well provided for.

Respecting the infancy and childhood of our heroine, I have little more to add than that she was received by Mr. Fortescue's relations as his wife's niece; and Mr. and Mrs. Sommerville dying abroad, made a discovery of the imposture less probable. She was educated with the same care and attention that they bestowed on their daughter Henrietta, who was two years older than Honoria, and who inheriting all her mother's goodness, loved her fictitious cousin with the same affection.

In the course of sixteen years they had frequently heard from Mr. Richardson, who always informed them his enquiries had been unattended with success.

Long descriptions are in general tiresome and uninteresting; therefore I will only say that at the age of seventeen Honoria was the wonder of all who knew her; that her beauty was exquisite, her understanding elevated, and her wit refined; without enumerating those trivial graces and elegant accomplishments she possessed in an eminent degree, which though not essential to the character of a woman, often strike more forcibly than the most solid virtues without them. But in the amiable Honoria every

charm was united; for whilst the graces of her person attracted admiration, the qualities of her heart and mind ensured esteem.

Henrietta was handsome, elegant, spirited and accomplished; and her attachment to Honoria was like Celia's to Rosalind, she acknowledged, though she envied not her superiority.

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## CHAP. II.

MR. FORTESCUE lived about three miles from a small town, where there were no families of rank to visit at Wood-Park, consequently all the society they had was from the gentlemen's seats around them; and as in that part of the country these were but thinly scattered, the acquisition of a new acquaintance was considered by the younger part of the family as the most desirable event that could possibly happen. Early in the spring that completed Honoria's seventeenth year, the neighbourhood was enlivened by the arrival of a regiment at L——. Mr. Fortescue, as well as the rest of the gentlemen, gave the officers a general invitation to his house; a circumstance that could not but be pleasing to two girls, who had spent the winter in almost an entire solitude, the family in consequence of a severe fit of illness that attacked Mr. Fortescue, having given up their usual journey to Dublin.

Among all the ladies who graced the parties and assemblies, Miss Fortescue and Miss Sommerville were distinguished by the officers by a particular attention, and though these ladies found no attractions in the gentlemen that could either charm or captivate, yet being of a disposition to be pleased, they were amused with the follies in the young which they could not admire, and endeavoured to improve by the sense and knowledge of some of the elder, who had not the power to entertain.

One day at dinner, Major Stevens in a blunt manner addressed the young ladies thus: "I hope you intend to be at the assembly to-morrow, for Captain Effingham is just arrived, and makes his first appearance; and whatever you may think of our young men in general, he is well worth your notice, as he is really the prettiest fellow in the regiment." "Indeed, Major, (replied Honoria) that will be no recommendation to me; I do not like pretty fellows in any profession, but especially in the military." "Why, to be sure, (returned the Major, filling his glass) he is but young, and does not love his bottle so well as a soldier should, for a cheerful glass, you know, Mr. Fortescue, inspires one with courage, but when the young man has been a few months in the regiment, he will improve, no doubt." "If he follows your example, to be sure he will," (replied Henrietta smiling). Nothing more passed that day respecting the Captain, but enough had been said to excite some curiosity in the young ladies.

When Mrs. Fortescue came the next morning into the breakfast parlour, she told them with an air of concern, that she was sorry to disappoint them, but Mr. Fortescue was so ill, in consequence of having drunk too freely the day before in compliment to the Major, that it was impossible she could leave him, "and you know (added she) you cannot go without me." "But, dear madam," cried Henrietta, "surely we need not all stay at home; leave me with my father, and take Honoria." "Do you believe me so selfish? (answered Honoria, reproachfully) no, madam, I will attend my uncle, and Henrietta shall go with you." "Well, (said Mrs. Fortescue) settle the contest as you please; if one of you will stay at home, I will go with the other with all my heart." When they retired to their



apartment a generous argument took place, but after a great many entreaties from Henrietta, and excuses from Honoria, the latter was prevailed upon to go.

Honoria never looked so charming; her dress was white muslin, with sky-blue ribbands, yet she was dissatisfied with herself, and when seated in the coach, almost repented having accepted her cousin's obliging offer. Immediately on their entering the ball room, Major Stevens introduced Captain Effingham to her, and she could not but allow his encomiums were just. They stood up to dance very soon. Honoria was unusually cheerful, but her partner, though polite and sensible, was reserved; this checked her vivacity. She might however have had the satisfaction of being envied by almost every woman in the room, but her heart was too benevolent to receive pleasure from any circumstance that apparently gave pain to another.

Mr. Fortescue retired early, but his daughter was too impatient to hear some account of the evening, not to sit up for Honoria, who dismissed her maid sooner than usual, that she might gratify her friend's curiosity. When they were alone, "Well, my dear girl," (cried Henrietta,) "have you seen the irresistible stranger? did you dance with him? how do you like him? did he answer your expectations?" "When you will give me time, (answered Honoria, smiling,) I will reply to your questions. I danced with Captain Effingham, but I really cannot tell how I like him. He is undoubtedly greatly superior to his brother officers, both for sense and elegance of person." "But I want (returned Henrietta) a particular description." "Really I did not observe him enough to be a proper painter, (rejoined Honoria) but you may judge for yourself on Tuesday, for my aunt has asked him to dinner with the Colonel and Mr. Wilmington. Yet I will endeavour to give you a description, though ill qualified for it. He is very tall, and extremely well made; the contour of his face uncommonly striking; his eyes are dark, and expressive of good sense and benevolence; there is a dignity in his aspect and a gentleness in his manner, that are seldom seen in the same person: his teeth are very white, and his nose Grecian. He danced so much better than any man in the room, that a comparison would be ridiculous. He talked but little, yet, from what he said, it was easy to observe he had a very superior understanding, and had always been accustomed to the best company." "Upon my word, Honoria, (said Henrietta) considering you took so little notice of your partner, you have described him very accurately, and on Tuesday I shall judge of the likeness." Honoria coloured, and turned the conversation to the rest of the company; it lasted only a quarter of an hour longer, and they parted for the night.

Captain Effingham had lost his parents in his infancy, but Lord Bridgewater, his mother's brother, bred him up, and treated him with the affection of a father; the Captain was educated with his Lordship's son at Oxford; but when Mr. Bridgewater went on his travels, he bought his nephew a commission, as almost from his childhood he had manifested a preference for a military life. The family at Wood Park soon distinguished the Captain from the rest of the corps, nor was he insensible of their attention, or unworthy of it: he had too much discernment not to observe the striking superiority of these ladies, and too much goodness of heart not to be grateful for their kindness. Often weary of the boisterous mirth of his brother officers, he would fly for relief to the elegant

society at the Park, who on their side were always happy in such an addition to their little parties of reading, walking and riding. In a few months he became absolutely essential to their happiness; and the day in which he visited them not, was considered by the whole family as a blank. He paid such an equal attention to all, that none but the most delicate observer, and one well acquainted with all the fears and tender anxieties of love, could discern that Honoria was the object of his preference, though she was indeed the object of his most ardent affection. At their balls he danced alternately with the cousins, chatted to them equally, and maintained such an apparent indifference in his company, that Mrs. Fortescue was quite satisfied; for though she delighted in his company, she by no means wished that an attachment should take place between him and either her daughter or Honoria. But Honoria was not insensible to his merits, nor unacquainted with his partiality, though her delicacy scarcely permitted her to own, even to herself, that she regarded him with more than common friendship; and Effingham, from a point of honour, had never acquainted her with his passion by any method but his eyes, and these had disclosed the secret unknown to himself.

Several months passed away in perfect ease and tranquillity; not that insipid tranquillity, that unvarying calmness, which stagnates the soul; for every morning's dawn brought with it some animating hope, and every setting sun saw that hope realized. When one morning Captain Effingham entered the house with an appearance of uneasiness that surprised and alarmed the whole family, Mr. Fortescue advanced to meet him; Mrs. Fortescue let her book fall to the ground; Henrietta exclaimed, "Heavens! what's the matter?" but Honoria turned pale as death, sat still, and spoke not a word. The cause was too soon explained; the regiment was ordered to America, and they were to begin their march the next day for the place from whence they were to embark. The concern the whole family felt at this intelligence, prevented them from observing the effect it had on each other; and the expressions of regret were so warm and animated, that only an uninterested spectator could have noticed that Honoria joined not in them, though her countenance evidently expressed how deeply her heart was affected. In a short time, however, they all grew more composed, and Effingham, after promising to spend the day with them, walked out with Mr. Fortescue to view some improvements he had been making in the park. Henrietta then proposed to her mother a stroll into the garden, purposely to give her friend time to recover from the agitation into which this unwelcome surprise had thrown her. With a look expressive of gratitude and affection, she availed herself of this opportunity, and retired to her chamber. After relieving her heart by tears, she took it severely to task, for its weakness in feeling too high a degree of regard for a man, who, though amiable and deserving, had only paid her common attention, and to whom therefore common esteem was only due. Assisted by this recollection, and summoning her sex's pride to her aid, she soon fancied she had obtained a compleat conquest over her heart, and with a determination to think no more of the author of her uneasiness, she left her room, and went into the garden to meet Mrs. Fortescue. But fate had otherwise ordained it. Mr. Fortescue had been called to one of his tenants, and Captain Effingham was returning to seek the ladies, when he met Honoria at the end of a long walk. The confusion that appeared in both their countenances was a proof that this interview, though unexpected, was not displeasing to either party. Effingham addressed

Honorina with hesitation, and for some minutes they walked on in a total silence, which she was anxious to break, that almost without knowing what she said, she observed he would see nothing in America like the scene before him. "No, Madam, (he replied) nor shall I ever again see so perfect a model of human excellence as that I now behold," looking at her with a peculiar tenderness. Doubly distressed at a compliment she had so inadvertently brought upon herself, she blushed, but made no answer, and they again walked in silence, till they came to a terrace, which looked over a beautiful valley, at the bottom of which a river meandered, and the opposite hill was diversified with cornfields and meadows, and crowned with woods. Here they stopped, and Honorina fixed her eyes, apparently with admiration, on the prospect; but so differently were her thoughts engaged, that had the beautiful verdure of the fields been covered with snow, the change would by her have been unobserved. With a forced smile, which was intended to conceal the anguish he felt; "I shall, indeed, (said Captain Effingham) never again behold objects so interesting to me. Yet averse as I am to the voyage, it is not, believe me, the dangers of war that I dread; no: as I cannot be here, I know no situation preferable to a field of battle: despair has so completely filled my mind, that as I have no hope of happiness here, I have no fear of death, and if I am so fortunate as to render my country any service, it will not I hope be material whether I was actuated by a love of glory, or a carelessness of life; for the sensations with which I shall march to an engagement, will by no means be equal to what I shall this evening feel, when I quit Wood-Park, perhaps for ever." "Good Heavens, Sir, what do you mean?" (exclaimed Honorina). He proceeded: "I can no longer continue the cruel silence I have hitherto imposed on myself; and surely at this time, at this probably last interview, it will be no breach of honour to confess, loveliest of women! the passion I have ill endeavoured to conceal; yet conscious as I have ever been of the inferiority of my expectations, and of my dependant situation, how could I, consistently with my ideas of propriety, return Mr. Fortescue's hospitality by endeavouring to make an interest in the heart of his beloved niece? Yet the thoughts of leaving you unacquainted with the state of my mind, was an additional pang to the many I felt when the order arrived for our march; and I shall not repent, if you, Miss Sommerville, will forgive my audacity; I only ask your forgiveness and friendship—more I dare not hope for." Agitated as she was with this speech, she had enough command of herself to say with tolerable composure, "The friendship, Sir, of all this family is your's, and their best wishes for your safety and return, in all which I sincerely join them."—"And is this all?—at least tell me you pardon me: do not let me leave you with the insupportable idea of having incurred your displeasure." "Pardon you!—Oh! Captain Effingham!"— She could add no more; the tears were forcing their passage down her cheeks, and she feared to trust her voice, lest it should betray the sentiments of her soul. Love in a young mind is ever inclined to hope: he seized her hand in a transport of gratitude: "Let me, my beloved Miss Sommerville, let me thank you for the compassion I read in your countenance. May I once more trespass on your goodness; may I ask, if, contrary to my expectations, I should meet with some happy turn of fortune, that by raising me nearer to a level with yourself, might enable me to aspire to your hand,—whether if you are then disengaged, you would in pity to my constant love, to my long concealed and almost hopeless passion, permit me to solicit Mr. Fortescue for his interest with his charming niece?"

Honorina blushed, but replied not.

“As you do not absolutely forbid my hopes, I will (continued he) put that construction on your silence most favourable to them. And here (dropping on his knees) though I mean not even to hint a wish that you should follow my example, let me convince you of my sincerity, by voluntarily swearing never to address any other woman in the language of love, whilst you will condescend to listen to me; and my heart is too entirely devoted to you, ever to repent the solemn engagement by which I bind myself yours for ever.” He then rose from his humble attitude.

The variety of emotions in Honorina’s mind were too strong for expression; she was surprized, delighted, confused, and almost terrified; but a period was at once put to their conversation, by the approach of Mrs. Fortescue, and they had both time to recover from the agitation into which this unexpected declaration had thrown Honorina, and the fears of what reception that declaration would meet with from her lover, before she joined them; they then walked towards the house, and the remainder of the day was spent in mutual expressions of regret.

Henrietta, who knew nothing of what had passed in the garden, was somewhat surprized at the tranquillity which sat on her cousin’s brow, for not even the idea of parting, could at that time balance the satisfaction she felt from the assurance of his unalterable affection.

Captain Effingham had promised to correspond with Mr. Fitzosborne, a neighbouring gentleman, from whom he said he hoped to hear constantly of their welfare. At seven o’clock his horses were brought. He sat half an hour uneasy and irresolute, obliged to depart, yet not knowing how to take leave; he then suddenly started up, shook Mr. Fortescue hastily by the hand, bowed to the ladies, but spoke not, mounted his horse, and was out of sight in an instant. They all stood at the window for some time in silence, which Mrs. Fortescue broke as she pulled down the sash: “I think I love that young man as well as if he was my son; I wish he was not a soldier, God forbid he should be killed, but he must stand the chance of war, as well as the rest.” “Killed!” (repeated Henrietta). The word struck Honorina like a flash of lightning, and raised an idea in her breast she had not before thought on, and banished every pleasing reflection she had indulged. She took the first opportunity to tell her friend all the particulars of her interview with Captain Effingham, who soothed her fears, cherished her hopes, and shared with the truest sympathizing tenderness in all her joy and sorrow.

The silence that seemed to reign in the house the next day, was felt by all the family, though not in an equal degree, but time, that constant friend to the afflicted, at last softened their regret, though it lessened not their regard for the absent.

### CHAP. III.

IT was now the approach of winter, and several months passed without any material event occurring, except that Mrs. Fortescue caught a fever by walking too late; but though the violence of her disorder abated, it left her extremely weak; nevertheless, as she apparently recovered, though very slowly, her family were not alarmed. Captain Effingham's place by their fire-side, was filled by Sir James Eustace, a young Baronet of a good estate, not many miles from them, who was just returned from his travels. His father had been Mr. Fortescue's most intimate friend, but exclusive of that, his own merit would have insured him a welcome reception at the Park.

He soon paid Miss Fortescue that particular attention which no woman can mistake, and he was too pleasing to be slighted by a disengaged heart. She confest to her mother she had no objection to him, and her parents were both delighted at his choice and her approbation. Sir James had an ample fortune, but that was little regarded by them: their principal wish was to bestow her on a man of an amiable disposition, and who had an understanding to set a proper value on her merit. Sir James had no friends to consult; Miss Fortescue's were all anxious to see them united: Mrs. Fortescue joined Sir James in persuading their daughter to fix an early day: the mother felt herself daily declining, though she never complained, and feared, if her daughter's marriage was delayed, her illness would become visible, and prevent its completion.

Henrietta did no violence to her own inclinations in obeying her mother, and they were married the beginning of February. Mrs. Fortescue exerted herself so much on this occasion, and the festivities which followed it, that her health became a sacrifice: she fainted one day as they were sitting down to dinner, and was immediately carried to her chamber, which she left not for a week. The faculty who attended her, entertained very little hope of her recovery; she was in a rapid decay: it had been long coming on, but now increased so fast, that Honoria and her daughter were terrified to a degree at the daily alteration in her countenance, though they yet knew not the reason they had to be alarmed. It would be difficult to say which of them suffered most; but Lady Eustace had a tender friend to soothe her anxiety: Honoria wept alone.

Mrs. Fortescue grew every day weaker, and being sensible of her own danger, thought it a duty incumbent on her to acquaint her beloved ward with the circumstances that attended her first knowledge of her. It was a painful task, but she judged it improper to leave to her husband the revealing of a secret that required so much tenderness and delicacy in the disclosure. Yet it was absolutely necessary she should know it, she had long observed with pain her high spirit, and dreaded the effect so mortifying a discovery would have on her.

Finding herself one morning tolerably composed, she desired Sir James would drive his Lady out in the phaeton, as she feared so long a confinement would be prejudicial to her, and for the same reason begged Mr. Fortescue would accompany them

on horseback; Honoria, she said, would sit with her during their absence. They obeyed her, and for a little change of air she was carried in her easy chair into the drawing-room. Honoria followed with an aching heart, which was not a little increased by the recollection of the sad contrast of that day to the same in the year before; a trifling circumstance had brought to her mind, it was that on which she first saw Effingham at the ball. But she had not long leisure to indulge these melancholy reflections, before Mrs. Fortescue, laying her burning hand on her arm, and looking at her eyes which were red with weeping, said, "You must not, my love, permit your tenderness for me to afflict you thus deeply; indeed, Honoria, your distress adds to my sufferings; you should rather rejoice, that blest as I have ever been in all my relatives, I do not let the attachment I still have to this world draw back my heart too strongly; and though I have known more happiness than is the general lot of mortals, and my life has been embittered with fewer sorrows, I not only give up my life with resignation to the Divine Will, but look forward with ardent hope to that world, in which we are taught to expect our bliss will be complete; which those will ever do, who can at this awful period look back without remorse. And now, my beloved Honoria, while it is yet in my power, let me reveal to you a secret which must astonish, but suffer it not to grieve you. You have hitherto regarded yourself as my niece, but, though my affection for you is equal to that I bear my own child, you are not allied to me by any ties of blood." Honoria terrified, arose to ring the bell; she thought Mrs. Fortescue's senses wandered; but aware of the idea her speech had given rise to, she gently took hold of her hand and detained her. "I know what you think, my dear, but when you are more composed I will give you such convincing proofs of the truth of what I say, that you will no longer doubt me." Trembling and agitated she sat down, and Mrs. Fortescue continued: "In that box," pointing to one which stood by her, and giving her the key, "you will find in my own hand writing the particulars of the event which gave you to me. I wrote it many years since, thinking if I should be taken suddenly away, the knowledge of the time and place where I first met you, might perhaps lead to a discovery of your parents."

Honoria was extremely shocked at the hint this speech conveyed, but though her feelings were almost too strong for concealment, she endeavoured to suppress them, fearing the effect her agitation would have on the weak frame of her more than maternal friend, who thus continued: "In that box you will also find the cloaths of the woman who was in the chaise with you; that also which you had on, and a few trifling articles that were in her pocket. The paper too, was signed by the clergyman, who, except Mr. Fortescue, is the only person in the world who knows you are not my niece. My reasons for wishing you to pass for such are there set down. But do not, my love, as every endeavour both of Mr. Richardson and ourselves to discover your birth have hitherto failed, form any romantic hopes on that head or indulge ideas which the former part of my speech may perhaps have raised; the things in my possession, are of themselves by far too trifling to be of any service to you, but if any application should ever be made to Mr. Richardson, in consequence of the advertisements we at that time put in the papers, they may prove the identity of your person. Though, my dear Honoria, I must leave you, yet under the care of my husband, I feel no apprehensions for your future fate: my daughter too loves you as a sister; cultivate the friendship of Sir James, he is amiable and will

protect you; but God forbid you should ever want any other protection than this roof can afford you, 'till you are consigned to one who will cherish your merit as it deserves." She could add no more; faint and exhausted, she leaned back in her chair, and Honoria, who thought her dying, lost in her situation every recollection of her own. In a few minutes however she recovered, but wanting rest, she ordered her own woman to attend her to her chamber, where she lay down.

Honoria was left almost in a state of distraction; apprehensions for the life of that tender friend, who had in infancy supported her, and as she advanced in years had filled her mind with every virtuous sentiment, and both by precept and example formed her after herself, were only counteracted by the dreadful recollection of being allied to no human being. The death of Mrs. Fortescue was in the present wildness of her ideas, followed by expectation of distress and penury; unfriended, unsupported, and unallied, she beheld herself thrown on that world to which she was yet almost a stranger. A violent flood of tears succeeded these reflections, and restored her scattered senses. Ashamed and hurt at her ingratitude and despondency, she then fell on her knees in humble submission to the Divine Being, whose mercy and goodness she acknowledged, in having disposed Mrs. Fortescue to adopt and support her at that early period of her life, when without her assistance she might have perished; or, falling into the hands of the ignorant or licentious, have been brought up in vice and folly. She now grew more composed, and as Mrs. Fortescue still slept, and the rest of the family were yet absent, resolved to open the trunk; but the sight of the contents were ill-calculated to restore serenity to her mind. The coarse cloaths of the woman, as well as that she herself had worn, were too convincing proofs of the meanness of her origin, not sensibly to hurt her feelings: with mortified looks she surveyed the seal, silver cross, and crown piece, nor did the perusal of the paper afford her any satisfaction: it was worded in the following manner:

"As Mr. and Mrs. Fortescue were travelling over —— common on the 6th of June, 17— they saw an overturned chaise, in which was a woman, who had been killed by the fall, and a little infant, apparently about three months old; of these the driver could give no further account, than that he took them up some miles from the spot where they then were to shelter them from a storm. Mr. Fortescue took them on to the next town, where the woman was buried, and the child baptized Honoria Sommerville, by the Reverend James Richardson, curate of W——. The cloaths belonging to the woman and child, with the few things found in her pockets, are here carefully preserved, in the hope that they may possibly, at some future time, lead to a discovery of the parents of this unfortunate infant.

Signed, WILLIAM }  
FORTESCUE.  
HENRIETTA }

June 7th. JAMES RICHARDSON."

Over this paper Honoria again wept in an agony of grief, when she was found by Lady Eustace, who shocked and terrified at her situation, and whose mind turning only on one possible and constantly dreaded calamity, could only exclaim, "Oh my dear mother!" From this fear Honoria relieved her as soon as she could speak, and putting into her hand the cruel testimony of her birth, again covered her face to conceal the violence of her emotions.

The surprize of Lady Eustace was almost inexpressible; but ever attentive to the feelings of her friend, her first words were to assure her of her unalterable esteem and affection, which could never be lessened by any change of circumstances. Honoria then shewed her the contents of the box, and as they were examining them, they discovered another paper written in Mrs. Fortescue's own hand, and dated only a few months before, containing a most affecting and tender address to Honoria, with the reasons for letting her pass for her niece, and setting every event in a fuller point of view; concluding with a most earnest prayer for her future happiness. Her gratitude was so peculiarly excited by these repeated marks of affection, that she most impatiently waited for Mrs. Fortescue to awake, that she might pour out the effusions of her soul on her maternal bosom. But this satisfaction she was never to enjoy: her beloved benefactress, after a long and heavy sleep, awoke in convulsions, and in a few hours expired. Her death, though so long dreaded, was too sudden at last not to give an additional shock to the feelings of the whole family. It was many days before they could meet at that table she had so long graced, and many more ere they could recover even a tolerable degree of composure.

Sir James had, a very short time after his marriage, received intelligence that a considerable legacy which had been left him by a distant relation, who died in the East-Indies, had not been remitted according to his expectation; and the friend who wrote him the account, advised him by all means to go over himself and look into it; for the trustees had refused to pay it into the hands of the agent he had appointed. He resolved to follow this advice, but unwilling to leave his lady in Ireland, and it being then impossible even to mention the voyage to her, he waited 'till she had a little recovered the severe stroke of her mother's death, before he spoke of it. She objected not to the proposal, and preparations were immediately made for their departure. She earnestly wished for Honoria to accompany them, but would not even hint it to her father, he had suffered so severely from the loss of his amiable partner, and was so much hurt at the approaching separation from his child, though he acknowledged the propriety of her going, that the society of his niece, for she still passed for such, was absolutely essential to his comfort.

Sir James was obliged to go first to England, where they were to stay a fortnight or three weeks with an aunt of his in London, before their embarkation. The parting was on all sides very affecting, but Mr. Fortescue bore it better than they expected.

'Till within a few weeks, Honoria had never known a real trouble, but they had since crowded upon her so fast, that her cheerfulness was totally lost, and her constitution, naturally delicate, was materially hurt by these accumulated distresses. One circumstance indeed happened, that by giving her thoughts a different turn, contributed more to the



relief of her mind than any thing had yet done. I should first mention that, through Mr. Fitzosborne, they had frequently heard of Captain Effingham since his arrival in America; his most grateful and affectionate respects were ever sent to the family at Wood-Park, and the most tender remembrances to his beloved Miss Sommerville, which Mr. Fitzosborne never failed to deliver, if he could find an opportunity. These compliments were in general, though friendly terms, returned through him to America. But a few days after Lady Eustace had left Ireland, as Honoria was walking in the Park, mournfully reflecting on the happy hours she had passed there, on the dear companions of her former walks, and the impossibility of their ever being renewed; a countryman came up, and giving her a small box, which he said he was ordered to deliver into her own hand, directly left her, and was out of sight before she could sufficiently recover from her astonishment to enquire from whence he came. With no little degree of curiosity she opened it, and discovered a beautiful locket. On one side was the figure of Hope leaning on an anchor of pearls; and on the other the letter E in gold in the centre, and exactly over it in small gold letters, Souvenir; surrounded with pearls on both sides. She could not doubt from whom it originally came, and she suspected Mr. Fitzosborne was the confidant. For some time she indulged the pleasing ideas it gave rise to, and her heart felt a satisfaction to which it had been long a stranger, from the recollection she was still dear to him. But she was not long to enjoy happiness of any kind; the fatal mystery of her birth darted at once into her mind, and destroyed every pleasing illusion. From having been an object to which Effingham had looked up, she would perhaps sink beneath his notice, when he was acquainted with her real story; this stung her soul almost to madness, and in the first delirium of her grief she determined to return the locket, however painful it might be; but the impossibility of doing this, from not knowing where to direct it, fortunately struck her, and though unknown to herself, she was glad of an excuse. Giving it to Mr. Fitzosborne next occurred, but the awkwardness of this, if, which might be the case, he was really ignorant of it, gave her a second reprieve. By degrees she entirely reconciled herself to keeping it, and fastening it round her neck with a ribband, returned to the house, joined Mr. Fortescue at supper, and retired to rest with more serenity than she had experienced since the first day she apprehended Mrs. Fortescue's danger.

#### CHAP. IV.

AMONG the families who paid their visits of condolance at the Park, were Mr. and Mrs. Kilmorey; they lived only two miles from it, and as soon as Mr. Fortescue received company to dinner, they came accompanied by Mr. and Miss O'Carrol. The Kilmoreys were what is usually termed very worthy people, that is, they were good-humoured, affronted no one, and from a total dislike to solitude, were never so happy as when in company. Miss O'Carrol was a lady of eight and thirty; her father had a tolerable place under government, but living to the extent of his income, he had little to leave his children. His son was bred to the law, and the few hundreds his daughter found herself possess of at his death, were very insufficient to support the affluence to which she had been accustomed. Too proud to endeavour to gain a livelihood by any honest method, and neither young nor handsome enough to expect an advantageous settlement in marriage, she condescended to accept the offers made by some of her relations, to live with them alternately. To this, of all dependent situations the most irksome, she submitted with a good grace; but as they often took care to remind her of the obligations she owed them, she was ever ready to accept the invitations made by others of her friends, and these were not unfrequent, as her disposition, though naturally extremely bad, was always subservient to her interest; and she behaved with such an excess of civility, not only to the superiors but domestics of every family she visited, she was never an unwelcome guest: but to those who were the least in her power, she was tyrannical to an extreme, and her ill-nature could only be exceeded by her art.

It was in Mrs. Kilmorey's last excursion to Dublin she became acquainted with this lady; and as they returned into the country only a short time before Mrs. Fortescue's death, the two families had never met since Miss O'Carrol had been a guest at Kilmorey Hall, except at a morning visit, when the scheme first darted into her head that she now put in execution. Her friends were recalled to Dublin by a law-suit; she would of course be obliged to attend them, and be again resident under a roof, which was of late become particularly disagreeable, from the ridicule with which she was treated by three or four great girls who had just left school. She had nothing either in person or manner to excite respect, and they always found something in cousin Sukey's dress or behaviour to afford them amusement; and however terrible this was, she dared not resent it.

She began by paying great court to Miss Sommerville; but finding that did not answer her purpose, she changed her plan, and lamented to Mr. Fortescue how very dull it would be for him and his niece, when their neighbours had left the Hall, and expressed the deepest regret that she must accompany them, as, were she to stay in the country, she would do all in her power to make up to Miss Sommerville the absence of her friends. Honoria only bowed, she was above disguise, and could never command her tongue to express a direct falshood in a compliment; but Mr. Fortescue, who dreaded nothing so much as that she should find their solitude wearisome, directly asked Miss O'Carrol, if she could not leave Mrs. Kilmorey when she went to Dublin, and stay a few months with them? She thanked him, and waited for Honoria to join in the request; but finding her still

silent, she would not from a point of delicacy refuse an asylum, where at least she might promise herself peace and plenty; and after a little hesitation, consented. Our heroine was then obliged to throw some satisfaction into her voice and expressions, though she was in reality far from feeling any; for the extreme servility of Miss O'Carrol's manner, had from the first moment she saw her excited her disgust and aversion.

Mrs. Kilmorey declared it was a lucky thought of Mr. Fortescue, and said nothing would do them so much good as a little of her pleasant conversation, and though sorry to lose her, she should rejoice at the advantages they would derive. Alas, thought Honoria, with a deep sigh, how differently people think!

The same day in the following week that carried the Kilmoreys to the metropolis, brought Miss O'Carrol to Wood-Park; where she was received by its master with extreme pleasure, by Honoria with civility only. Her brother was also a constant, though as yet but a daily visitor. I said before he was bred to the law. He practised at L——, I should rather say lived there; practice he had little or none; as he wanted two very principal recommendations, namely, capacity and attention.

Miss O'Carrol soon perceived Mr. Fortescue was highly pleased with her, and determined to take an advantage of it; she thought if Patrick could marry Miss Sommerville, it would make him for ever: she communicated her plan to him; he doubted not gaining the lady's affections, and she promised to obtain the uncle's consent. Thus in their own minds it was finally settled, and they immediately began the attack. Honoria with pain observed the increasing influence she gained over Mr. Fortescue, but Patrick's assiduities only heightened her dislike into antipathy. The lady played back-gammon every afternoon with the old gentleman, whilst her brother attended our heroine at her harpsichord, or walked with her if she chose a ramble, or if she worked, would read. All this was so much against her inclinations, that to avoid him she frequently retired to her chamber, the only place free from his intrusion, and by this means, often for hours together, left Mr. Fortescue exposed to the artful conversation and deep-laid schemes of Miss O'Carrol, who failed not to improve his partiality by every method in her power.

Conscious that Honoria's aversion to her brother would prevent the success of her first plan, Miss O'Carrol now turned her whole thoughts towards attaching Mr. Fortescue to herself; and this was not only the most probable from the attention he paid her, but the most eligible scheme in every respect, as, if she could prevail on him to marry her, she should never want her brother's assistance, but have it in her power to provide for him, in case of a refusal from Miss Sommerville. In consequence of this, the next time they were at backgammon, she began by asking Mr. Fortescue what he would do when his niece was married? "and, indeed," continued she, "I have long observed an attachment between her and a young man, who shall be nameless." "Indeed! (replied he) I shall be very far from controuling her inclinations when they are made known to me; and as for myself, I must do as well as I can." "Why, (returned the lady) you must follow her example, I believe, and can you do better?" "What, marry, madam! why who in the name of fortune do you think would have me?" "Rather ask, Sir, (holding down her head and affecting to

blush) who would refuse you?" "Why surely, Miss O'Carrol, you cannot be serious; what, with all the infirmities of age coming fast upon me, do you think, that is, would you—" Here this interesting conversation was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of a young man, who had been for some time intimate in the family. His name was Cleveland; he had spent great part of a very good estate in a variety of fashionable follies, yet he had an excellent heart, and a fine understanding. He was gay, good-humoured, thoughtless and extravagant; in short, he was the counterpart of Charles Surface, yet in one point he would not resemble him; he was determined justice should take place of generosity, and before he was irretrievably ruined, he gave up his estate to his creditors for a certain number of years, and contrived himself to live on the very small allowance they made him, and this he never exceeded. To take himself out of the way of temptation, he left Dublin, and retired to cheap lodgings at L——, where he amused himself with reading, visiting the neighbouring families, and attending the gentlemen in all their country sports. In his travels, he had gone farther than the grand tour, as it is usually called, and the fund of knowledge he had laid up, made him a most agreeable companion, whence his society was universally coveted. He had often relieved Honoria from the weariness she felt from the insipid conversation of the O'Carrols, and she ever received him with a smile. Her friendship she gave him, it was all in her power to bestow, but that did not satisfy him. Drawn to her by an irresistible impulse, and by a general similarity of sentiments, he was never happy but in her company, and as she was unconscious of his attachment, she ever attended to him with ease and affability.

His present visit to the Park was occasioned by a message to her from a family with whom he had spent several days. Miss Meriton, daughter to the gentleman he had been visiting, requested Miss Sommerville would stay a week or two with her. Mr. Cleveland offered to be the messenger, and glad of any excuse to see and converse with Honoria, he pleaded for her friend with a peculiar earnestness.

Miss O'Carrol thought herself highly favoured by fortune, as Miss Sommerville's leaving the Park at this time would give her an opportunity to hasten the success of her plan; and though Mr. Cleveland had prevented the so much wished-for eclairsissement, she freely forgave him, in consideration of the intention of his visit. Our heroine at first refused; but Mr. Fortescue desiring her to comply, she at last consented. Miss O'Carrol and her brother, he said, would perhaps both stay with him during her absence, and though he never wished to be separated from her, she would return in better health and spirits. It was then settled that she should go the next day, attended by Mr. Cleveland.

Honoria left Wood-Park with a regret she could not then account for, but she afterwards fancied it was a pre-sentiment that every happy hour she was destined to spend there was past. She endeavoured however to banish every unpleasant reflection; anticipated the pleasure she should enjoy in the society of Sophia Meriton, who had been the companion of her youth, and was only just returned from a visit of eighteen months to a married sister in the North of Ireland; and attended to the entertaining remarks of her companion, not a few of which were excited by the ridiculous behaviour of Miss O'Carrol.

Their journey was short, and her reception at Castlewood affectionate and flattering. A large party was in the house, and the evenings were devoted to musick or dancing; the mornings to walking or riding. Amusement succeeded amusement; and in this manner a fortnight passed rapidly away. Nor were the kindest expressions of friendship wanting to sooth the mind of Honoria, who at times was unhappy and dejected. Sophia was tenderly attached to her, and lamented with her the death of her kind protectress, and the absence of her valued friend; but she knew not the various sources of uneasiness which preyed upon her soul, and rendered her at first almost insensible to the gaieties around her: yet these gaieties, by degrees, had their usual effect; her spirits in some measure returned; she joined in the dance, where Cleveland was her constant partner, and refused not to let her voice add to the concert. The restraints she had lived under ever since the arrival of her disagreeable guest, made the care which reigned here particularly pleasing to her, and she was both grieved and surprized when the day arrived on which she had promised Mr. Fortescue to return. Her friends were equally sorry to lose her, but a promise was to her sacred. Mr. Cleveland was again her escorte; and she was not a little astonished when on the road he made her a serious and earnest declaration of love. He attempted not to disguise the embarrassment of his fortune, but said he hoped a few years at least would restore him to affluence; that as he had been taught prudence by adversity, it was a lesson he should never forget; and he believed he might say, the errors of his youth would never be repeated; that if he was so fortunate as to be approved of by her, and she could condescend to live a little while in retirement, he would apply to her uncle, and leave him to make his own terms with respect to the settlements, and every thing of that kind. Honoria thanked him in a frank and easy manner for his preference, but in terms at once gentle and resolute, declined his offers; adding that her friendship and best wishes should ever attend him; and that if she had apparently given him encouragement, it was quite unintentionally, and proceeded merely from a total ignorance of the sentiments he entertained for her.

Convinced by her looks, as well as the tone of her voice, that she was really in earnest, he could not flatter himself he should ever prevail on her to change an opinion, which seemed unalterable. He was disappointed, but not angry. Taking her hand, which however she immediately withdrew, he again addressed her: "I fear, Miss Sommerville, you will think me impertinent, if I make one request; but if you will answer me truly and sincerely, I will promise you to endeavour to be contented with your friendship; at least I will never again solicit your attention to the subject which I have now dared to speak upon. Is your refusal founded wholly on dislike or indifference to me? or is there another person who has been so happy as to make an interest in your heart? She blushed at this question, and only replied, "Indeed, Mr. Cleveland, I have no dislike to you, nor are you wholly indifferent to me; yet I can never consider you in any other light than as a friend." "It is enough, madam, I am convinced, fatally convinced, I must not hope for more than your esteem; yet to deserve that shall be the future study of my life." He then turned the conversation, but the restraint which sat on both, made them equally pleased when the park gates appeared in view. But now let me acquaint my readers with what had passed within them since the departure of Honoria.

Her absence at this period was particularly favourable to the designs of Miss O'Carrol: she justly feared her influence, if exerted, might overturn all she had been so earnestly employed in bringing to effect; and she well knew the strongest exertions of that influence would be the consequence of a discovery of her plan before its completion; and whilst she remained under the roof, it could not be executed without her knowledge. Apprehensive therefore lest by any accident she should return before the appointed time, she resolved to begin immediately. That very afternoon Mr. O'Carrol received a pretended summons to attend a client: he promised his sister to be with her the next day at dinner, but in the morning he sent her a note, to say the business in which he was engaged obliged him to take a journey of near thirty miles, and would otherwise unavoidably detain him more than a week. At dinner she informed Mr. Fortescue of this circumstance, and when the servants were withdrawn, expressed her sorrow at being obliged to quit him before the arrival of his niece; but as her brother was prevented from fulfilling his promise, she could not stay alone with him without a manifest impropriety; and therefore requested he would permit his carriage to attend her to the next town, from whence she might meet with some conveyance to Dublin.

A natural love of society, and the fear, which her artifices had first raised, that if so probable an event as Honoria's marriage should take place, he would be left solitary and uncomfortable, at a period of life when not only a companion, but a nurse is almost necessary; had so strongly impressed on his mind an idea, on which he had dwelt ever since his last conversation with her, and which her present resolution hastened the disclosure of, that he replied to her request for the chariot, by an immediate offer of marriage. Thus was her wish exactly answered. After a few faint refusals and forced blushes, she consented, and with some difficulty concealed the innate satisfaction she felt at her success. But she had yet another point to gain; this was to hasten the conclusion within the fortnight; and to effect this, she told Mr. Fortescue it would be necessary for her to leave him to make the usual preparations. But he, who dreaded nothing so much as solitude, combated her resolution, which was no difficult task; and proposed a private and immediate solemnization, to which she acceded, though apparently with reluctance, only begging to wait her brother's return. Now as this event happened some days before the time fixed on, as my readers may easily guess, his absence had been wholly regulated by his sister's direction, the wedding was celebrated in little more than a week from the day Honoria went to Castle-wood, and in less than eight months from the death of the first Mrs. Fortescue.

Mr. Fortescue neither felt, nor pretended to feel, any ardent affection for his bride, but he was pleased with her society, happy he had secured it for ever, delighted at the preference he fancied she had for him, and grateful for her condescension in uniting herself for life, to a man so many years her senior. Thus a perfect satisfaction for some time reigned on both sides.

One day Mrs. Fortescue began lamenting to him how probable it was his niece's disapprobation would follow her knowledge of this event. That he said was impossible;

she would derive too many advantages from her society, ever to regret the cause; but even if she should, it was too much her interest to conceal, what if known would raise his highest displeasure, for her to express it: he then revealed the secret, so long, so faithfully kept, respecting her birth, and the obligations she owed him. Mrs. Fortescue's astonishment at this discovery was succeeded by an innate sensation of delight, though she could scarcely yet trace its source; but when she was alone, a new train of reflections brought with them new hopes of gratification of her two favourite passions, avarice and cruelty. Her brother loved Honoria as much as a man could love, without either soul or sentiment mixed with the passion: she doubted not but her influence would induce her husband to insist on Honoria's consent to the union, whose dependent situation, she imagined, would oblige her to comply, if strenuously urged. Thus, whatever Mr. Fortescue might be inclined to leave her, would not go out of her family. If on the contrary she should still continue the aversion she had hitherto shewn him, disobedience to the commands of one she had so long considered almost as a parent, would be an excellent excuse for deserting her, and she feared not gaining her husband over to any point she chose to exert herself on. This would be securing a double advantage. Honoria's ingratitude to her benefactor, would be a reason to the world for throwing her wholly on its protection; and the fortune which might be destined for her, would thus perhaps be added to what he intended for herself. She was by no means satisfied with the jointure settled on her, though a very handsome one; and she determined to add to it by every method in her power. Her resentment and malice towards Honoria would also be highly gratified, as either way she was certain of making her miserable. But the ways of Providence are just though inscrutable: the wicked intentions of this vile woman were instrumental to her greatest happiness; and the evil she designed for this innocent victim fell on her own head; for disappointed malice ever preys upon itself.

## CHAP. V.

THE astonishment of Honoria may be more easily conceived than expressed when on her return Mr. Fortescue presented his bride to her. Shocked almost to a degree of insensibility, at an event so wholly unexpected, so entirely unwished for, she could not for some moments frame an answer, and when she did, her regret was so visible, that perhaps it had been better if she had said nothing. That Lady, enraged at her coolness, determined to mortify her by letting her know she was well acquainted with her dependant situation; and having done this the first opportunity that occurred, she added with an affectation of kindness, she would ever be a friend to her, whilst she behaved in a manner deserving of that friendship; that her secret should be faithfully concealed, if she would not stand in her own light, by refusing an offer so highly to her advantage as that of her brother's hand, who, in consideration of his love, would generously overlook the meanness of her birth, and the uncertainty of her fortune.

Honoria had a high spirit, but a calm mind; had her temper been in the least passionate, the cruelty and insolence of this speech must have excited her warmest resentment; but she looked down with mingled contempt and pity on a woman, whose little soul could thus insult and tyrannize over the unfortunate. In a firm and collected manner she replied, "If, madam, you intended your speech should raise my gratitude, believe me, it has lost its effect, and I am as insensible to your promises, as I should be to your threats. I owe Mr. Fortescue the duty of a child, as I feel for him the affection of one, but not even his commands should oblige me to give up not only my happiness, but my principles, in vowing to love and honour a man, for whom I can feel nothing but contempt and aversion; and sooner than comply with your wishes, I would joyfully return to that poverty, from which the genuine and unaffected benevolence of the first Mrs. Fortescue rescued me." There was more of sarcasm in the latter words of Honoria, than Mrs. Fortescue could bear, for she ever pretended to the highest refinements of sensibility, and even to the practice of humanity; and she fell into so violent a passion, that her terrified opponent made a hasty retreat to her own room, where she locked the door, and throwing herself upon the bed, gave way to a bitter agony of tears; her spirits, which had kept up so well during the interview, were now wholly subdued by the excess of her sorrow. By degrees she became more tranquil, and prepared herself for supper, where she sat down with a heavy heart, and an aching head. Her appearance with swelled eyes, and pale dejected countenance, alarmed Mr. Fortescue so much, who not guessing the cause, imputed it to illness, that he wanted to send for some advice; but she so strenuously opposed it, declaring it was nothing but a cold and head-ach, that he at last gave it up. His earnestness alarmed his lady, and she affected the kindest concern, and even begged Honoria to let her sit up with her; this duplicity was so disgusting to her ingenuous mind, that she could no longer sit at table, but thanking her very coolly for her offer, hastily arose and retired immediately.

Mrs. Fortescue now began to apprehend she had been too hasty, and feared she had not yet gained ascendancy enough over her husband, to counteract the regard he had



so long felt for Honoria; and determined to alter her behaviour. But unfortunately the next day at breakfast, Mr. Fortescue reproved Honoria so severely for replying to an enquiry of his lady's with great indifference, that the latter resolved to adhere to her first plan.

It would be both tedious and painful to enumerate the various methods she took from this time to mortify and distress Honoria; and this the natural goodness of her disposition prevented her at first from disclosing to her benefactor, lest the discovery of the barbarity of the woman to whom he had united himself, should make his life as wretched as was her own. But in a few months all complaints would have been fruitless; Mrs. Fortescue had gained such an entire power over her husband, that he no longer moved or spoke but in obedience to her will: it was nevertheless in vain that she endeavoured to obtain Honoria's consent to marry her brother, and at last she gave up the point. She circulated the story of her birth over the whole neighbourhood so that she could no longer enjoy the pleasure of society, without hearing the whispers, and observing the malicious and curious glances of those, who having formerly envied her superiority, now rejoiced at her humiliation.

Mortified abroad, wretched at home, where she was exposed to the cruellest insults, the continual and impertinent sollicitations of Mr. O'Carrol, and deprived by degrees of every little indulgence she had always been accustomed to; her mind wholly dejected, and her constitution nearly worn out by constant anxiety; she at length formed a plan of leaving Wood-Park, and gaining some situation where she might remain till the return of Lady Eustace, who she doubted not would protect her till some eligible scheme could be fixed on for her future support. This Lady was totally unacquainted with her present misery, she had written only just before her visit to Castlewood, and she wished not to make known to her the distress she now laboured under, lest it should appear like an intention of throwing herself wholly on her for subsistence: against this her spirit revolted, and she determined not to write till she had gained some asylum.

Had Lady Eustace been only in England, her first application would have been made to her, but she was then at Bengal; and long before any answer could arrive, Honoria hoped to be far from that spot, which loved and honoured as it once was, had now been the scene of too much misery, not to be regarded with more horror than affection.

Mr. Cleveland still visited them, though not so frequently as before. The report of Honoria's birth, which Mr. Fortescue himself confirmed, and the evident dejection of her mind, which he plainly saw arose from the insolence of Mrs. Fortescue, encouraged him once more to make her an offer of his hand, for his regard was too sincere to be lessened by her misfortunes; indeed the calm resolution with which she bore them, rather heightened his opinion of her mind and principles, while it raised a hope that she might listen more favourably to his proposals. These were made in terms so delicate, that though she again absolutely rejected them, she was pleased with the idea that there was still some generosity left in the world, and that the cruel discovery had not robbed her of all her friends.

Her new scheme was still thought upon, though as yet she had not concerted any methods to bring it to effect: she falsely imagined Mrs. Fortescue would oppose it, and therefore endeavoured to think on some way of going to England, without exciting any suspicion in the family. The servants had been all changed so often since a new mistress had governed them, that to depend on them was impossible. At last it occurred to her, that the woman who had nursed her, and who had married the gardener, was the properest person to apply to; she at least could assist her to escape, but where to go, when she had left the Park, she knew not, nor had she a friend to direct her. The only person whose advice she could have asked was Mr. Cleveland, and this was so improper, for various reasons, that she could not bring herself to think of it.

Confused and bewildered with the uncertainty of her schemes, she could fix on nothing but to go the next morning to Mrs. Connor, and consult her. This good woman doated on our heroine, and it was a long time before she would believe that she was not Mr. Fortescue's niece, insisting the story was all a lie, invented by that wicked *creature*, the squire's new madam; but when it was confirmed by her own lips, she burst into tears, to think that her sweet child, as she always called her, should belong to nobody, when so many people, who had no children at all, would be glad to have her one of them. Honoria's present visit and relation filled this honest creature with the greatest affliction. The Irish women are remarkable for their attachment to the children they have suckled, and Mrs. Connor proved this, by swearing she would rather swim across the channel with Honoria on her back, than that she should stay another week under the roof with that wicked wretch, who she was sure must have bewitch'd her master, who was quite another sort of man when her old mistress was alive. She concluded this harangue by promising to see Honoria the next morning, and would then acquaint her with the result of the consultation she meant to hold with her husband, who would be equally ready with herself to assist and comfort her.

A little consoled with this promise, Honoria was preparing to return, when her nurse begged she would go into her garden, and see a pair of ring-doves, which her master had lately sent in addition to those he had before. The place where they were kept had formerly been built to resemble a little temple, as it terminated a view from one of the windows of the house, and a little rivulet ran by it.

Here, after looking at the doves, she sat down wholly lost in the reflections it inspired. In the happy years of her childhood, she had often, when visiting her nurse, played with Henrietta on this very spot; there was something in the recollection that excited in her bosom a momentary sensation of delight, that however soon gave way to the painful ideas raised by the sight of the library window, which though at a distance, was exactly opposite. It was there so many hours had been spent in those halcyon days, that were now past for ever, in the society of her maternal friend, her kind companion, and her beloved Effingham. That room was now quite forsaken; Mr. Fortescue was grown too inanimate to attend to literary pursuits, his lady read nothing but magazines and newspapers, and Honoria scarcely ever entered it of late; her mind had been too much

disturbed, and she would not add to her uneasiness, by voluntarily reviving the sad memory of the “days that were gone.” The shutter was partly open, the hinge of one half broken, and it hung as if falling to the ground, and discovered not only two panes of glass that were shattered by its fall, but the white curtain which had been fringed by Mrs. Fortescue’s own hands; the festoon on one side was unfastened, and it drooped as if in sympathy with her own heart. She fixed her eyes on this melancholy object, ’till the tears which rose in them hid it from her; but seeing the pain it gave her good nurse to witness her sorrow, she determined to conquer it, and for that purpose turned her thoughts as well as her eyes to the scene more immediately before her: they wandered a few minutes, but at last were attracted by eight lines written on the stucco in a well-known hand, and every sentiment of pleasure revived in her breast, as she read,

*Gentle zephyr, as you fly,  
If you kiss my fair one’s ear;  
Whisper soft that you’re a sigh,  
But from whose breast she must not hear.  
Limpid stream, if e’er my love  
Near thy gurgling runnel rove;  
Murmur, that from tears you rise,  
But tell her not from whose red eyes.*

In a tone of voice very different from that in which she last addressed her, she asked the good woman, who had been writing on the walls? she replied, “What to be sure, Miss, you do not know that the Captain used to come here, and sit for hours together, reading his book, and doing nothing at all; and arrah! now I think of it, I have a book of his here now, that is up stairs in my box, that was never out of his pocket, and I found it one day on the seat, and could not tell how to give it him, because I heard he had been gone a couple of weeks; so I thought no more of it ’till now.” Honoria begged to see it; it was a volume of translations from different Italian authors, from which the little elegant sonnet above mentioned was taken. Mrs. Connor desired she would keep it, as it was of no use to her or her husband. This was a request she very readily complied with, and giving her a handsome present in return, walked to the house in a much serener state of mind than when she quitted it; fully convinced of the truth of the assertion, that, “Some portion of the complacency and delight we receive, from the presence of those we love and admire, is annexed to their idea, or to our thoughts concerning them when they are absent.”

But in the course of the day every pleasing reflection was dissipated, by a speech of Mrs. Fortescue’s; it threw out a hint of all others the most terrifying to her, that if she was not more condescending to her brother, he would take some method to secure her person, and enforce her obedience to him. This was intended to alarm her, and drive her to quit the house; a circumstance she had long wished for; and it lost not the effect. It is so common in Ireland for young women to be carried away by violence, that it is no proof of a romantic disposition in our heroine, that she apprehended some scheme of this kind,

and resolved if possible to avoid it by an immediate flight, which she was now more than ever bent upon.

The following day before breakfast, Mrs. Connor arrived, and being admitted to her apartment, informed her, that her husband had contrived better than she expected; that if she could get out of the house when the family were at rest, he would wait with a post-chaise at the Park-gate, and attend her himself to a village about ten miles from Dublin, where a cousin of her's would receive and conceal her, till the search that would probably be made for her was over. That from thence she might go very safely to Dublin, and there embark for England. Now this was all she could do; but Paddy had a sister who married some years ago a butler in a gentleman's family that now resided in London, and this woman was settled as a clear-starcher, and lived both comfortably and creditably. "Now Miss, if you please, (continued she) Paddy will write to her to receive you, and though you do not chuse to be known, yet I suppose you would not like to be called by no name at all, so pray tell me who you intend to be?" Honoria smiled at this question, and the manner in which it was made, though she was sensibly hurt at the idea of entering the world under such patronage; but reflecting that she could not possibly escape by any other means, nor apply for a recommendation to any other person, she endeavoured to reconcile herself to her fate, and calmly desired to be mentioned as a Miss Wentworth, a young woman reduced from better prospects, who was under the necessity of leaving Ireland, and wished through her to be recommended to some genteel family as an upper servant.

Perhaps my readers will be surprised that, qualified as she was for any station, she did not rather wish to be a governess, or companion to an elderly lady; this was indeed the height of her ambition, but she was too well convinced a clear-starcher could never introduce her to any situation of that kind; and she could not sufficiently conquer her feelings to apply to any person who had known her in better days. In England she was quite a stranger, and from her change of name hoped to continue undiscovered, till the return of her friend should enable her to fix on some better plan. But she had another, a secret, a stronger motive; if her acquaintance would, which she was by no means certain of, interest themselves for her, and Captain Effingham should revisit Ireland, how could she bear, humiliated and mortified as she was, ever to see him; and still less how could she support his neglect or indifference; but in an inferior station, in a place where she was unknown, their meeting was all but impossible. Fortified by this idea, and the hope that he would perhaps regret her absence, she determined to meet with resignation whatever trials awaited her. It was therefore soon settled, that the next night but one, at twelve o'clock, the gardener should come with the chaise, and steal himself softly to her window to receive her cloaths, which were to be tied up in small bundles. The box which contained the proofs of her birth, the woman was then to take with her, and promised to see it safely deposited in the seat; she then took leave, and got safely out unobserved.

Honoria spent that day and the following in putting every thing in the properest manner, to have the least trouble at her departure. At dinner she was surprised by a letter which the servant told her came from Mr. Cleveland, and at the same time brought a card to Mr. Fortescue, expressing a grateful sense of his kindness, and his grief that it was not

in his power to return personal thanks, being obliged to leave the country on an affair of consequence. The letter to our heroine, contained only a tender farewell, an assurance that however hopeless, his affection for her would only die with him, and the most earnest wishes for her health and happiness; both which, he added, he plainly saw were injured by Mr. Fortescue's injudicious connection. The conclusion of this, by making it impossible to shew it, distressed her extremely; she justly feared it would be supposed they went off together, yet now to alter her plan was impossible; and she resolved no more to give way to reflections, that not only harrassed and tormented, but rendered her wholly incapable of the exertions that were become necessary even to her support.

She sat till after her usual time of retiring, not knowing how to leave Mr. Fortescue, who she still loved and revered, while she pitied the weakness that suffered him to be subservient to such a woman. The tears gushed from her eyes when she took the candle, and in a voice half unintelligible from her emotions, she wished her benefactor a good night, and hastily shut the door, lest their violence should excite a suspicion of the cause.

The house was all silent before twelve; and a few minutes after the clock struck, she heard the gardener cough; this was the expected signal; she opened the sash very softly, and threw out the different bundles; these he soon conveyed to the chaise, whilst she went quietly down stairs, and opening the window of the breakfast parlour, left that house, once her asylum, but now her prison, with too much agitation from the fear of a discovery, to feel that painful regret, that would otherwise have accompanied her departure. Almost breathless with terror, she flew to the chaise, at the door of which she found her good old friend, who impatiently expected her arrival; she took a most tender leave of Honoria, whose thanks for her kind assistance she could scarcely hear for the violence of her sobs. Her husband got up behind the carriage, which immediately drove off. The first stage was fifteen miles: they then discharged this chaise, and took another; by this means avoiding all possibility of being overtaken, as they then left the high road to Dublin, and struck across the country to the village where she was to remain a few days.

Her first sensations were those of gratitude for her escape; but as her fears of a pursuit gradually subsided, she again became a prey to the most melancholy reflections, till she stopped at a miserable hut, which she could not imagine, from its first appearance, was that destined for her reception; the gardener however assured her it was, and whilst they were waiting for the woman to get up and let them in, he indulged the pride of his heart, by telling her, how different it was where his sister lived; that her's was a nice house with sash-windows, and in a charming street where there were hardly any shops; "indeed," added he, "'tis no more like this, than a potatoe is like a horse-bean." I hope it is not, thought she as she entered, and beheld the bare walls and earthen floor of her new apartment. She was received with great respect, and the best the cottage afforded was immediately set before her, but her heart was too full to suffer her to eat. A very decent bed was prepared, and she lay down as soon as her attendant was gone, who promised her his wife should let her know how every thing went on at Wood-Park.

Here she spent all her time in packing her cloaths and valuables in the best and safest manner for so long a journey. The second evening a letter arrived from Mrs. Connor, informing her, "that she might set out when she pleased, without fear of pursuit, for she believed madam was too glad she was gone, to think of fetching her back again; that her old master, indeed, took on sadly, and wanted himself to go and look for her, but that she would not let him, and said, better be rid of such a vile, ungrateful wretch, who she did not doubt was gone off with that wicked young rake, Cleveland." "When I heard this," added the good woman, "I was for going up and telling her before master's face that you had no company at all but yourself, and that if it had not been for her doings, you would not have left all your *frinds* and relations in Ireland, when you have not any in the world: but Paddy said I should only make bad worse, and they would find out we were trusted with the secret, that you would not tell any body of. So my sweet crature, good bye: I hope you will have a safe journey to England, and meet with no storms nor robbers to overturn and frighten you; and I hope you will never meet a worse frind than your loving nurse,

MARGERY CONNOR."

This letter determined our heroine to write a short billet to Mr. Fortescue, and leave it for the post at Dublin; requesting him not to impute her quitting him to a wrong cause, though the real one she dared not reveal; but that she had been so very unhappy for some time past, it inspired her with a resolution to endeavour to support herself. For every act of kindness and attention, she begged he would accept her most sincere and grateful thanks; and wished it might ever be in her power to return any part of the numerous obligations she owed him; and in addition to these, intreated he would take the trouble of enquiring where Mr. Cleveland was, as that would convince him, however unfortunately it happened they should leave the country the same day, that he had no share in her escape.

And now, having satisfied her landlady for her trouble, she sent for a post-chaise, and arrived that night in Dublin; but dreading lest she should meet any old acquaintance, as there was fortunately a packet to sail the next day, she went on board early in the morning; and carefully observing the countenances of her fellow-passengers, rejoiced to find there were not among them any she had ever seen before.

## CHAP. VI.

OUR heroine was just turned of nineteen, and her person had acquired all the dignity of woman, without losing any of the bloom of extreme youth. At this time, indeed, the anxiety she had so long suffered had impaired the colour which usually glowed in her cheeks; but while it scarcely lessened her beauty, it gave an additional interest to her countenance. The universal observation she attracted, both confused and disgusted her, and the assiduities of a young officer, who was smart and handsome enough to flatter the vanity of most women to whom he chose to pay any attention, only pained and distressed her; she was happy therefore when the packet arrived at Parkgate. She desired to be informed from what inn the London coach set off, and to that she ordered her baggage.

The stage was to leave Parkgate the next morning: two of her fellow-passengers, the officer, and a young woman, who appeared very little above a common servant, had also taken places; and when she entered the coach, she found the others were filled by an old gentleman and a boy about ten years old, and that they were to stop at the end of five miles, to take up another lady.

It was not day-light when they set off, but when they could examine the countenances of each other, Honoria was particularly struck with that of the elderly gentleman; it bore the traces of a military life, and expressed equal sense, good-humour, and humanity. He had been conversing with the young officer on the occurrences of the last war; this, and the cockade in his hat, convinced her the idea she had formed was not an erroneous one. She learned from himself that he went to Parkgate to meet an only son, who had been with his regiment in the North of England, and was now just embarked for Ireland; that his wife and family were all gone with him, but the eldest boy, whose education he intended to take care of himself, as marching from place to place prevented all learning. The lad seemed very well pleased at the thoughts of going to London, and it was easy to see the grandfather was not a little delighted at the readiness with which he accompanied him.

Major Southmore, for that was his name, was surprized at the extreme beauty of our heroine; he at first supposed either the officer was her brother, or the woman her attendant; but when he found they were not only unconnected, but even unknown to each other, he was at a loss to guess who or what she was. The singularity of a woman so young, beautiful and elegant, being in a common stage, unprotected, unattended, were circumstances he could not reconcile; he heard she was going to London; and there was an air not only of dignity, but fashion about her, that ill suited her present situation. But unfavourable as were his first impressions, they soon vanished: the coldness with which she answered the gallant speeches of the young lieutenant; the modest pensiveness of her manner, that seemed rather to retire from, than court public notice, severely reproved him for forming so hasty a judgment. Yet his curiosity increased with his good opinion, but it arose from no impertinent motive; the interesting dejection of her countenance convinced him she was unhappy, and that conviction rendered him anxious if possible to assist her;

for benevolence was his most striking characteristic, and he flattered himself some opportunity would offer before the end of her journey, to permit him to offer his services.

These contemplations were interrupted by the entrance of the other lady, as the coachman called her, who immediately with a loud and shrill voice, addressed the other female with, "La! Miss Jones, why I should never have thought of finding you here; what, are you going to London? when did you leave Ireland? and who do you live with now?" Miss Jones, a little disconcerted at the discovery of her situation, which she intended to be a secret, replied somewhat peevishly, that her lady was coming to England, and that she set out before to stay a fortnight with a brother, who lived about thirty miles from London on that road. After a few more questions, Miss Wilson, for by that name the other young lady was called, enquired how her sister was, and the answer to this introduced a history, which amused all the company but our heroine; she was however so deeply interested in it, that I shall give it in the very words used by the voluble relater.

"Why my sister," said she, "came up to Dublin with her lady the day before I sailed, and there has been such a piece of work in their neighbourhood, that you never heard the like. You must know, that some time ago, a gentleman who had lost his wife, courted a young lady who had been visiting at their house, and one of the best-natured women in the world, and so he married her; and there his niece, who lived with him, took it into her head, forsooth, to be very angry, and gave herself violent airs, because she used to sit at the head of the table, and had her uncle, as it were, under her thumb: when lo! and behold after all, it came out she was not his niece, but his first wife picked her up in a ditch, tied at the back of a beggar, who was found froze to death; and till this old lady died, she never knew who she was, and thought she should have a great fortune; but her uncle, as she called him, was very kind to her, and did not turn her out of doors, as to be sure she might very well have expected; for you know, ladies and gentlemen, (turning to the other passengers) she had no right to his fortune. Well, so she behaved so pert and so insolent after his marriage, that nothing was never like it; and she wanted to draw Mrs. Fortescue's brother in to marry her, but she could not succeed, for Mrs. Fortescue took care of that, though she treated her like her own child. But this would not do for Miss; so egad a few days ago, she got out of a two pair of stairs window by a rope-ladder, and ran off with a sad wild young man, who has not got never a penny of fortune; so to be sure when he is tired of her, as nobody, you know, will take her, she must go upon the town."

Every body was attending too much to this story, to observe the effect it had upon Honoria, who would certainly have fainted, had she not been fortunately next to the window, and the air being strong and cool, with the assistance of some hartshorn that she had in her pocket, she revived before the comments this recital had excited were over. "Was she handsome?" asked the lieutenant. "I never saw her myself," she replied, "but my sister says there used to be a great fuss made about her by some people," though, for her part, she could not see a bit of beauty she had. The Major smiled, and begged to know her name, if it was not a secret. "Oh, Sir, not at all, returned Miss Jones, she was called Sommerville, but nobody can tell what name she had a right to, you know." "True," answered he; then after a pause, he said, "faulty as she appears, I cannot help pitying her.



Poor girl, what must she have suffered, when it was first discovered to her what she was! do you not agree with me, madam?" In a voice scarcely articulate, Honoria replied, "Yes, entirely, Sir." "Indeed, continued he, I think her protectors were wrong to breed her up in style, when they must be so sensible she could never support it: what a pity it was they did not put her out apprentice, or send her to service early in life!" As he again addressed himself to our heroine, wishing to draw her into conversation, she was obliged to reply a second time; and said, "To be sure it would have been much better." However painful this exertion was, and however shocked at a report which she doubted not was a general one, she was too well pleased with his defending in some measure a character quite unknown to him, and which could only proceed from a natural benevolence of disposition, not to prove her gratitude by a particular attention during the remainder of the journey. She endeavoured to amuse the boy, who grew fatigued and sleepy, and this, added to the sense and knowledge she could not avoid displaying in the course of conversation, so enchanted the Major, that he wished most earnestly to cultivate her acquaintance.

The ladies, Wilson and Jones, amused each other with anecdotes of the several families they had lived with: the lieutenant alternately yawned, and ogled our heroine, who was too agreeably entertained by the polite and intelligent conversation of Major Southmore, to attend to any of the party. But as their journey grew nearer a conclusion, her dejection evidently increased. The officer stopped at a town, where part of his regiment was recruiting. One of the two females was met by her brother on the road, who took her with him in a one horse chair; the other found her father waiting for her at the inn; and the joy they both expressed at meeting their relations, made Honoria more sensible of the sad contrast of her own situation. All but her had a home, were blessed with connections, with friends. She sighed deeply at the melancholy reflections which arose in her mind; and the old gentleman, who, excepting the boy, was now her only companion, was convinced she had some heavy, but hidden calamity that preyed on her spirits. He saw her encreasing distress, though he knew not the cause; and judging this was a proper time to offer his assistance, he resolved to lose not a moment, but immediately begin a conversation which might introduce what he had to say, lest the entrance of another passenger should prevent him.

After a few occasional remarks on the places through which they had passed, he asked if she had ever been in London? "No, sir." "Your friends, I suppose, madam, will meet you at the inn?" She believed not. "Permit me then, madam, to offer my servant to see you safe to your lodgings, and take care of your baggage, which, as you are a stranger in London, and must of course be ignorant of its ways, you may be in some danger of losing." She bowed and thanked him; the tears stood in her eyes, and while she strove to conceal them, he again addressed her: "Do not, young lady, think me impertinent or curious, if I say I cannot but see you are in some affliction, and I wish to serve you. Be not offended, if I form a wrong judgment of your situation, nor suppose I am actuated by any other motive than that of restoring the peace, I fear, you have lost." She listened to him in silent and grateful astonishment, and he went on: "I have seen much of the world, and must confess the surprise I felt at our first setting out, and still feel, from observing a young lady of your appearance alone in a vehicle of this kind, going to a city like London,

where, pardon me, I think you can have no friends, at least, who expect your arrival; for who would suffer such youth, beauty, and inexperience, to find her way through the intricacies of that great city, without a protector or even a guide? Now if, as I cannot help supposing from these circumstances, and from your dress and figure, you have eloped from your friends, and are at present without an asylum; and if, as I gather from your dejection, you repent of this rash step, and are willing to return to them, let me intreat you to collect fortitude enough to follow this inclination; and though, as I am a single man, I cannot without impropriety offer you a shelter in my house, yet if you will permit me to write to your friends, and inform them of your situation, and that you will joyfully once more put yourself under the protection you so inconsiderately left, I have no doubt but they will gladly receive you; and in the mean time I will recommend you to the care of a person, whose rank in life will prevent all suspicions of her honor, and of whose tenderness you may be assured.”

Honoria, who had silently wept during the whole of this speech, as soon as she could recover from the agitation it caused, gratefully thanked him for taking so kind an interest in her distress; and she probably would have made him acquainted with her sad story, could she have done it without letting him know she was the same young person whom he had already heard spoken of in so disgraceful a manner; and as it is natural in relating our own history, to suppress those events which appear to our disadvantage, she feared all she could say in her own favour would be counteracted by the opinion he must already have formed. Discouraged by this idea, she only replied, “that he was in some measure mistaken in his conjecture; that she had left what had hitherto been her home, but that to return to it was impossible, for reasons, which however strong, it was not in her power to explain. That probably she had but one friend in the world, and that friend was at too great a distance to assist her at present, though she had no doubt of her favour and protection, whenever she was acquainted with her distress. That she was recommended to a person in London, who though in an humble station, was of a respectable character, by whose means she hoped to obtain a creditable livelihood, till the lady she mentioned should arrive in England. She entreated he would form no unfavorable opinion of her reserve, owned her appearance might justify his suspicions;” but to convince him, as far as was in her power of the truth of her assertions, she gave him the direction she had from the gardener. He took it, and with great surprize, read “Mrs. Middleton, Clear-starcher, No.—, Poland street.”—But the air of candour and innocence with which she spoke, impressed so strongly on his mind a conviction of her worth, that he gave an immediate credit to all she had uttered, and though he silently lamented her fate, determined no more to distress her by useless enquiries and fruitless offers. She however thankfully accepted that of his servant, as she confessed herself entirely unacquainted with the ways of the town, which they were now within a few miles of.

A silence of many minutes followed this conversation, when a general one succeeded, till the coach arrived in London. Here he again renewed it, by telling her, as they were soon to part, he could not resist once more speaking on the subject, he had quitted from the idea it gave her pain; but that if in future, at any time, he could serve her,

either by advice or any other means, he begged she would apply to him, when he hoped to convince her, the esteem she had excited in him was not professional, but real; and giving her his address on a card, requested to know her name, if that was not a secret she might be unwilling to disclose. She evaded a direct answer to this question, by telling him an enquiry at Mrs. Middleton's for Miss Wentworth, would reach her. She added, she could have no doubt of his honor, after the paternal and excellent advice he had already given her, which she should most readily have followed, had his suspicions been true; and that she would gladly avail herself of his generous offer, by an application to him, if reduced to any unexpected distress. The stage then stopped in Oxford-street, and Major Southmore ordered his servant to call a hackney coach, into which handing our heroine, he took his leave, with many sincere good wishes for her health and welfare; and the child, with an affectionate earnestness, begged she would come to his grand-papa's house, as he was sure he would be very glad to see her.

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## CHAP. VII.

IN a few minutes the coach stopped at the door of a very shabby-looking house, which did not at all answer the description given by Mr. Connor, excepting that it was sashed. Here our heroine's enquiry for Mrs. Middleton brought a dirty girl down stairs, who said she was not at home, but asked her name. On her replying "Wentworth," the girl desired her to walk in, for her mistress expected her. After waiting in the passage, 'till the coachman and Major Southmore's servant had brought her trunks into the house, she followed her up two pair of stairs into the front room, where there was a fire indeed, but so surrounded with muslins and gauzes, which were hanging to dry, that she received very little benefit from it. Here she sat near an hour, when the arrival of Mrs. Middleton changed her situation for the better. She first scolded the maid for not shewing the lady into her parlour, for so she called a back-apartment on the same floor, ordered a fire to be made there directly, and then apologized for the litter she was in, but said, in her way of business it was impossible to be otherwise.

Mrs. Middleton was a woman of good principles, but a cold heart; she usually acted right, from a conviction it was proper to do so, but she had not an atom of feeling. She received our heroine with great respect and civility, but seemed totally unconcerned at the unhappiness which was so visible in her countenance. Indeed every thing here was so different from what she had been accustomed to, that it was not probable her dejection should soon subside. At this time the soothing of an affectionate heart, though from one so much her inferior, would have greatly contributed to alleviate her affliction, and expecting to find this in Mrs. Middleton, she was the more disappointed. She retired early, but not to rest; the small garret which was her bed-chamber, was so striking a contrast to the spacious and elegant apartments at Wood-Park, that every melancholy idea which could accompany the recollection of the happy hours those apartments once witnessed, pressed too forcibly on her mind to be overpowered by sleep. But had her heart been at ease, the various noises in the streets would have kept her awake; she rose therefore in the morning unrefreshed and ill.

Mr. Middleton, who was very curious to see their new lodger, came soon after breakfast: he was the very reverse of his wife; in Mr. Burnaby's hall he was regarded as a wit, and the pert familiarity of his manner disgusted our heroine even more than Mrs. Middleton's frigidity. He gave them an invitation in the name of the housekeeper and his lady's woman, to drink tea with them that afternoon: this Honoria would have declined immediately, had not Mrs. Middleton urged the propriety of her going, as she hoped through their means to recommend her to a service of the kind she wished for; and in this light it was a fortunate visit. Mrs. Smith said her lady had the day before asked her if she knew any young woman who was properly qualified to wait on Miss Mortimer, whose servant had left her from illness, and she was in distress for one to supply her place; and added, that if Miss Wentworth approved of it, she would mention her, or go with her to Lady Mortimer's, in Upper Brook-street, the next day. Honoria gladly accepted the proposal, as she was anxious to leave her landlady, whose character, though estimable,

was far from pleasing. In the morning, according to appointment, Mrs. Smyth attended her to Miss Mortimer's, who was so well pleased with her appearance and manner, that she instantly engaged her to come the following evening.

Perhaps in the whole circle of the fashionable world there were few families so amiable throughout as the Mortimers. Lady Mortimer was an excellent woman, and had bred up her children with a degree of propriety, that insured a continuation of those estimable qualities which made them, even in childhood, the wonders of their acquaintance. Sir Charles was fashionable without vice, and Caroline gay without folly; two very rare instances in this licentious and frivolous age.

Honorina was so much struck by the mildness and good-humour of Miss Mortimer's first address to her, that she entered on her new employment without those poignant and exquisite feelings of distress and mortification she expected, and her behaviour was ever the same. Miss Mortimer had a quick discernment, and soon discovered Honorina had not been educated for the station she now filled, and that her misfortunes had been of no common kind. Convinced of this, though she endeavoured not to penetrate into a secret, that she saw she was anxious to conceal, yet by every method in her power she lightened the burden of dependance.

Honorina was for three months as happy as in her situation she could be; excepting at meals she was constantly in her lady's apartment, and at her leisure hours had free access to a large and well-chosen library. One unpleasant circumstance, indeed, arose from the distinction with which she was treated; it excited the jealousy of the other servants, particularly Mrs. Wilkins, Lady Mortimer's woman; and the dislike she at first conceived from envy of her beauty and superior talents, at last, from her constant refusals to join in their parties either at home or abroad, grew into a settled hatred. But as Honorina always behaved with civility, and, except in this point, even studied to oblige them, she thought their resentment ill-judged, and determined in future, since it was impossible to please, to treat them with equal indifference.

She now wrote to Lady Eustace, acquainting her with all that had passed since she left Ireland; and assuring her, that however painful the thoughts of servitude had been, she had now, from the extreme kindness she experienced from Miss Mortimer, almost regained her usual serenity of mind. That she was supported by the hope of her return to England, and, 'till that event, should remain in her present situation; and therefore begged Lady Eustace not to be uneasy on her account.

It is a maxim that cannot be too early inculcated, that we must not place too great a dependance on the comforts of this life; and of the truth of this our heroine was again convinced the day after she had sent her letter. She was sitting at work with Miss Mortimer in her dressing-room when Sir Charles came up stairs, and entering with a smile on his countenance, said, "Mrs. Kitty, I beg you will exert your best endeavours to make my sister look as killing as possible to-day, for an old admirer and favourite of her's is just arrived in town, and has promised to dine with us." "Dear Sir Charles, tell me who

you mean?" "Why there are two officers, Caroline; one of them, indeed, is a stranger, but the other, your friend, is high in the army, and heir to a noble fortune." "Nay then, brother, I shall never guess, for I know but one red coat in the world who is agreeable, and I am sure he is too poor to be the person you mean." "Perhaps not, Miss Mortimer: what will you say, when I tell you his merit and valour have raised him to the rank of Colonel, and that the death of his cousin, who was thrown from his horse when hunting, has made him his uncle's only heir, whose illness, in consequence of his affliction, is the cause that has recalled him from America?" "Why, Charles, you cannot possibly mean Henry Effingham?" "Yes, Caroline, indeed I do," returned he; then wishing her a good morning, flew down stairs to meet, as he said, his two friends, whom he had promised to attend to the Park.

Miss Mortimer was too much engaged by the pleasing surprize her brother's intelligence had occasioned, to observe the effect it had on Honoria, who changed colour repeatedly, and endeavouring to suppress her tears, turned extremely sick, and at last fainted away. Miss Mortimer was greatly concerned at her illness, though she fortunately entertained no idea of the cause. After the usual applications she recovered, and, contrary to her lady's wish, persisted in her attendance, nor would accept of any assistance.

When the dinner bell rang she was left to her own meditations, which were more than usually afflicting. In all her distresses her first view had been to conceal herself from the possibility of Effingham's discovery, and she was now in a family where his intimacy was undoubted, and where she was in a situation the most humiliating. But at the same time that she anxiously hoped to escape his knowledge as Kitty Wentworth, she was ardently desirous of knowing whether he ever thought on that Honoria Sommerville, to whom he once offered such humble vows of eternal constancy. The wish of hearing his future intentions, which she supposed it probable she might, banished every idea of leaving Miss Mortimer, which had at first occurred to her on hearing of his arrival; and this she the rather fixed on, from the recollection that it would be easy to escape an interview, as she was constantly in her lady's room. A latent hope also arose in her heart, that he was now meditating a visit to Ireland, and cherishing the idea of the reception he would meet with from her; she then saw his despair at hearing her unfortunate fate; heard him disbelieve the tales invented by her enemies, and thus indulged the wildness of her fancy in a thousand visionary illusions: but too soon these all vanished, and she awoke at once to the painful reality. Miss Mortimer then appeared to her distracted imagination, with all the advantages she possessed of youth, beauty, rank and fortune, and evidently pleased with the renewal of the acquaintance she had formerly so much valued. Was it in man to retain his constancy, when an object so attractive endeavoured to engage him; and was it in woman not to use every art to attach such a heart as Effingham's? Thus she passed the remainder of the afternoon; in the evening she saw Miss Mortimer in high spirits, and charmed with the events of the day: she said nothing that could in any way satisfy Honoria's curiosity, but every smile was a dagger to her heart.

From this time she heard of his almost daily visits, and it began to be whispered in the family, that the Colonel and Miss Mortimer were to be married as soon as his uncle

was dead, whose declining health made it probable, that event would shortly take place. This alarmed our heroine so much, that she seriously thought of leaving Miss Mortimer; conscious she could never support even the approach of a ceremony, which would deprive her of every hope of happiness; and her presence would give her perjured lover the triumph of witnessing her afflicting humiliation. Thus was every fear verified; yet she would still sometimes hope all she had heard might not be true, and this was a little more probable from his absence; for she found he had quitted London with his uncle, who was ordered to Bristol Hot-wells; and she then determined to stay till the intelligence she so much dreaded was confirmed; but in less than a fortnight so many circumstances conspired to convince her of the truth of the report, that she could no longer doubt it.

One morning Sir Charles entering his sister's apartment, told her, Captain Fairfax was just come from Bristol, and would dine with them, and asked if she should be glad to see him? She coloured excessively, and said, any friend of Colonel Effingham's must ever be welcome to her. "Lord Bridgewater," continued Sir Charles, "is just at last," but here is a letter which will inform you of every thing, and satisfy you in every point, if woman is to be satisfied." "Where is it?" cried she eagerly; "how can you trifle so with my impatience?" Honoria sat scarcely breathing lest she should lose a word that might be of such importance to her peace; but she could draw no comfort from any part of the conversation. Miss Mortimer took the letter with a smile, and began reading it, now and then pronouncing a word or a sentence aloud. Of these Honoria distinctly heard, "unconscious beauty, unalterable love;" then she read on a long time in silence, but just at the end again repeated, "An attachment like mine, founded on esteem, and begun in friendship, absence cannot lessen, nor time destroy. I shall soon be with you; Lord Bridgewater cannot exist many hours, yet deeply as I shall regret his loss, I have one consolation which sometimes darts upon my mind, and enlivens the gloom around me. It is, that I shall have it in my power to return to the spot which contains almost all that is dear to your Henry Effingham." She then gave the letter to her brother, who immediately left the room, and she soon followed.

The wretched Honoria was now fatally confirmed in all her suspicions; and the certainty of the Colonel's attachment to her lady, was, she thought, indisputable. Determined to leave her present situation, the next time she saw Miss Mortimer she endeavoured to hint it to her; but her resolution was disarmed by her kind and anxious enquiries after her health; it was indeed every day visibly declining; she had lost in great measure her appetite and rest, and the anxiety which preyed on her mind, appeared too plainly on her countenance.

A fortnight thus passed insensibly away, without her having the courage to address Miss Mortimer on the subject of leaving her; when one morning as she was sitting alone in the dressing-room, her attention was suddenly called from her work by a noise in the street; she turned her head to the window, but the sight of two men fighting disgusted her, and she was going to retire; when an object in a moment not only attracted her eyes, but every faculty was lost in astonishment and despair while she gazed on it. It was really Colonel Effingham, who in crossing the street was stopped by the croud which

had gathered round the combatants. He was very little altered since the time he quitted Ireland, except that his countenance had less of the Adonis, and more of the hero in it; as the bloom on his cheeks was lost in the glow the heat of the climate had spread over his face. But though his deportment had acquired that easy dignity, which distinguishes a man of real fashion, it had not deprived him of the good-humoured vivacity which played over his "features when his heart was at ease." But at this time, the fixed melancholy that apparently hung on him, struck Honoria, who thought it ill suited to a favoured and happy lover. For a few minutes she endeavoured to guess the cause, and was more than half inclined to hope his thoughts might at that moment relate to herself; but a glance at his mourning, which had before escaped her notice, destroyed the pleasing illusion by informing her of the truth. Miss Mortimer stood at the drawing-room window; he looked up at her with an animated smile, and the instant he was at liberty, flew to the door, where he immediately gained admittance.

This was too much for the poor Honoria; she burst into a flood of tears, and leaning her head on the table, gave way to the violence of her emotions. "Is it (cried she, in an agony) that Effingham, who poured out such humble vows to the now forgotten and despised Honoria? Why did he seek to gain my affection by a declaration of his love, so unexpected, so almost unwished-for? It was to him the amusement of a moment to destroy my peace for ever. Why will not my pride support me, and teach me to forget the perjured wretch, who is unworthy of my regard? Yes, (continued she, her eyes still streaming) I will forget, and, if possible, despise him." Yet in spite of all her boasted firmness, her tears flowed without intermission till she was summoned to dinner. To conceal the redness of her eyes, she hastily drew her cap over her face, and went down stairs; her mind still so much occupied with the past scene, that when she opened the door, and saw a gentleman in black, sitting with his back towards her, scarcely sensible where she was, at the first view the wildness of her ideas suggested it was really the Colonel, and possessed with this imagination, she involuntarily screamed, which surprizing the whole party, the gentleman gallantly flew to her, and by enquiring what was the matter, convinced her at once of the folly of her supposition. He was in fact a stranger; she was distressed at his politeness, and saying she had only turned her foot stepping into the room, directly sat down to table, where his officious attention displeased her, as much as it mortified Mrs. Wilkins, who till her appearance had been the object of his devoirs. But how was her confusion and displeasure increased, when she found from the conversation, that he was in reality Colonel Effingham's attendant, and was, as well as his master, in mourning for Lord Bridgewater? From the instant she made this discovery, she could scarcely sit at table, and the freedom of his manners gave her additional disgust. After a thousand gallant speeches, which she answered with great coolness, he began speaking of his master's intended marriage with her lady; then taking her hand, which she withdrew with more haughtiness than was consistent with her present situation, he added, "Suppose, my dear madam, we were to have a double match in the family, and that you and I were to follow the example of the Colonel and Miss Mortimer?" She was unable to answer for some moments from astonishment, which mistaking for confusion, he again pressed her hand, with an air of satisfied importance.



The pride and resentment that swelled in her heart, now rose to her lips; but was immediately suppressed, though not subdued, by the recollection that an unguarded expression might expose her to suspicions that it was now more than ever necessary for her to avoid. She therefore made no reply, but with very visible displeasure, hastily arose and quitted the room, but not without hearing a spiteful observation of Mrs. Wilkins's, who was not only angry at the attention he paid her, but piqued at her indifference to an object she had thought so highly of, and taken such pains to attach to herself. "What, (cried she, as Honoria left the table) Madam is offended I suppose; I warrant she thinks herself meat for your Master, Mr. Peters." Mr. Peters was greatly hurt: he had in common with the rest of his tribe, long entertained an idea that his person and abilities were irresistible, and was mortified at a proof that he had set too high a value on himself. He therefore determined in his turn to pique her, as he vainly imagined a particular attention to Mrs. Wilkins would do, but this he had no opportunity of putting into execution.

The unintentional truth of her speech had the effect on Honoria that might be supposed: she retired to her own room, where the various and unfortunate events of the day so wholly overpowered her, that she could no longer support the conflict in her soul. A violent sick head-ach succeeded; and equally pained in body and mind, she passed the night in a situation, that with all her afflictions she had never before experienced.

When the next morning she waited on Miss Mortimer, her countenance unusually pale and dejected, surprised and alarmed her; and with a tender solicitude she asked how long she had been so ill, and begged her to have some advice, offering to send for the physician who attended the family. Honoria gratefully thanked her, but declined it, saying she believed nothing would restore her but the country air, which from having always been accustomed to, she thought essential to her health. Miss Mortimer then, after expressing her regret at parting with her, enquired if she meant to return to her friends, or whether if an eligible situation offered in the country she would accept of it? "Certainly, madam," she replied, "it is my earnest desire. I have received too much attention from you not to wish for a similar situation, though I can scarcely expect to be equally fortunate. The sorrow I feel at leaving you is such, that nothing could induce me to go, but the absolute necessity of a step of this kind for the restoration of my health, and even the preservation of my life." The energy with which she spoke, astonished Miss Mortimer, who said after a pause, she fancied she knew of a place which would suit her; that she was going out, and would endeavour to learn more particulars, and that if it met with her approbation, she should not want her best assistance in gaining it. Honoria curtsied, but her heart was too full to suffer her to speak.

In the evening Miss Mortimer sent for her into the drawing-room, where she was alone, and making her sit down, addressed her with a tenderness, which in the present weak state of her health and spirits was particularly soothing. "Do not imagine, Kitty, from what I am going to say, that I wish to discover a secret, which you perhaps have reasons for concealing; but I am now, and indeed have long been convinced, you were not educated for, nor born to the station you now fill; and probably I should not be wrong if I guessed your illness partly proceeded from the difference of your present way of life, to

that you have hitherto been accustomed to. Wilkins too is jealous of your superior qualities, and if it were only on that respect, cannot be a pleasant companion, were even her manners better suited to your own; but she is a useful servant to my mother, who would not I believe willingly part with her. However sorry I must be to lose you, I am not so selfish as to wish you to stay at the expence of your happiness, for I have often observed the dejection which has hung on you, and flatter myself the means I have taken may in time remove it. Prepossessed with the idea I mentioned before, I have recommended you to a lady, not as a servant, but companion: the principal thing she wishes you to do, is to write for her; she is an authoress, and is too deeply engaged in philosophical researches, to pay that attention to her writing, which must be done when it is intended for the press. Your employment therefore will be to transcribe fairly what she means to publish, a task neither difficult nor laborious; and as she is really an amiable woman, I hope you will find it an eligible and pleasant situation.

Honorina expressed her grateful sense of Miss Mortimer's kindness, and gladly accepted the offer: how earnestly at the same time did she wish that she had no other sources of uneasiness, than those Miss Mortimer had mentioned! "I forgot (added Miss Mortimer) to tell you that Mrs. Campbell does not live in the country, but at the city of C——, though perhaps you will not make that an objection, as it is an airy and healthy situation, if it suits you in every other respect.

"I am, madam, (returned Honorina) too sensible of the infinite obligations I owe you, not to make every return in my power; and though I dare not acquaint you with all the particulars of my sad story, yet I will so far confess, you have guessed truly that I was not educated for the line of life you now see me in. But disappointed in my expectations of an easy, if not an affluent fortune, by a stroke of adversity more cruel than you, madam, can possibly imagine, I had no resource but servitude; and believe me, Miss Mortimer, my attachment to you is too strong for any trivial cause to separate us: and I would submit to the undeserved ill-treatment I have experienced from Mrs. Wilkins, to remain in your service, had I not reasons for leaving London, too powerful for even your goodness to counteract."

Miss Mortimer's curiosity was the more excited by this speech, but suppressing it, she told her, she would accompany her to Mrs. Campbell's the next morning; when that lady approving highly of her appearance, agreed to give her a handsome salary, and engaged her to go down with her to C—— the following week. Honorina was much pleased with Mrs. Campbell, but distressed how to dispose of herself in the interim, as she could not without the utmost pain stay in Brook-street. She therefore begged Miss Mortimer's leave to quit her the next day; her request was complied with, though with great regret; and she became once more a lodger of Mrs. Middleton's. But in the morning before she left Lady Mortimer's, a message arrived from Mrs. Campbell, desiring she would send her trunks, as she meant all their principal luggage should go that day, as they were to travel post in her chariot. Honorina was very well pleased with this scheme, as it saved her the trouble of a second removal. Her cloaths were all packed, and she sent off almost every thing but the box and its contents, which Mrs. Fortescue had given her, with

the proofs of her birth, from which she never parted, and of course took it with her to Mrs. Middleton's.

Miss Mortimer had requested to see her before she left town; a request she could not refuse, but dreaded to comply with, from the fear of meeting the Colonel; but recollecting his visits were seldom early, two days before that fixed on for her journey, she set out at ten o'clock in the morning. This was the first time she had been out of the house since she left Brook-street; and as she thought it more possible to pass unnoticed among the multitude in Oxford Road, than through Hanover Square, she chose the former. She had not however gone far, before she was alarmed by somebody's pulling her gown, but turning round, was immediately relieved by recollecting Charles Southmore, her little fellow-traveller from Parkgate. He said his grand-papa was just behind, and wished to see her. The Major soon overtook them, and expressed his happiness at again meeting her; enquired with a friendly solicitude after her health, and shook his head at her answer to that question. "Will you permit me (said he, as he walked up the street with her) to ask whether you have succeeded in the plan of life you formed?" "In some respects better than I expected, (she replied) but I am now going to leave London, as I hope the country air will re-establish my health:" she then gave him a short account of what had passed since her arrival, except her real reason for leaving Miss Mortimer, and learned to her great surprize and satisfaction, that Mrs. Campbell was related to him. He said she was a very good woman, and had but one fault, that was vanity; which was so common in authors, that one who was perfectly free from it would be indeed a *rara avis*: he bade her remember Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Grenada, and then took his leave with repeated offers of service: There was a frankness and attention in his manner, that pleased and flattered her: he seemed the only being in Europe, Miss Mortimer excepted, from whom the intended connection must inevitably separate her for ever, who took an interest in her fate, and to whom she could apply for advice or assistance. With a heart a little lightened by the reflection that she had met a friend where she had no reason to expect it, she proceeded to Brook-street, where she arrived safely in Miss Mortimer's dressing-room, without encountering the interview she so much dreaded. Circumstanced as she now was, nothing was to her of equal importance, to remaining undiscovered by Colonel Effingham. It gratified her pride, and soothed her feelings, to reflect that he thought her ignorant of his inconstancy, and was himself unconscious of her humiliation.

Miss Mortimer received her with great tenderness, and told her that if her new situation did not prove so agreeable, as however she hoped it would, she begged her to consider their house as an asylum at any time. "Perhaps, (added she, blushing) I may not myself be a great while longer a resident here, but my mother's esteem for you almost equals my own, and wherever I am, no alteration in my way of life can make any change in the sentiments of regard I shall ever retain for you, and of which, I hope, I shall have it in my power to convince you." This hint of Miss Mortimer's did not contribute to Honoria's ease, yet she thanked her with tolerable composure for every instance of attention, and with every expression of gratitude took her leave.

Returned to her dismal home at Mrs. Middleton's, she passed the remainder of the day in gloomy reflections on the various occurrences of her life. Her landlady was too busily employed in her occupation, to interrupt the train of ideas that succeeded each other in her mind, which was at last wholly engrossed by a thought, that suddenly struck her, of the impropriety of keeping a locket, the gift of a person, whose heart was already, and whose hand was so soon to be devoted to another. Whilst tormented with the uncertainty she was in, and unable to decide whether she had best return or keep it; the lateness of the hour obliged her to retire; the same idea still followed her, and prevented her from rest. The pleasure she had received from wearing it, had long been lost; yet she could not think of parting with it without exquisite pain.

Her mind still continued in this unsettled and agitated state, when every recollection was lost in apprehensions for her personal safety, by a violent smell of fire, and a thick smoke that suddenly penetrating into her room, almost suffocated her; and her fears were immediately confirmed by a violent knocking at the door of the house, and a cry of fire, which was succeeded by loud screams from almost every one of the inhabitants. On the first impression of terror she had sustained, she began dressing, but on opening her chamber door, the sight of the flames terrified her so much, she thought of nothing but flight; and wrapping a cloak round her, was at the bottom of the stairs without being at all sensible how she came down. The croud that now pressed in, for some moments prevented her from getting into the street, but terror gave her unusual strength, and she soon made her way through every obstacle. A decent-looking man, who had been alarmed with the rest of the neighbourhood, met her at the door, and judging from her appearance she was one of the sufferers, humanely offered to conduct her to his house, which though only in Great Marlborough-street, was too far off to be in any present danger. This offer she joyfully accepted, and was received by his wife with great civility and attention; he then went back to Poland-street; and she continued a long time in the utmost anxiety for the fate of her landlady, and the other inhabitants of the house. At length she was a little relieved by the return of Mr. Gibbons, followed by a servant in livery, both of whom had been assisting to remove the goods and extinguish the fire; which they assured her was got under, and though the house was almost consumed, yet every thing of most value was saved from the flames.

In the confusion and alarm she had been in, till this moment her box never occurred to her, but now recollecting it she hastily exclaimed, "If my trunk is lost, I am undone for ever. Will you be so good as to enquire, that I may not be in suspense?" The servant, for Gibbons had left the room, offered to let her know immediately, if she would describe it to him. She said it was a small portmanteau, with the letters H.F. upon the lid in brass nails. He shook his head, and replied, he feared there was none saved which answered that description; but as the goods had all been carried into another house, he could inform her with certainty in a few minutes. In a quarter of an hour he returned, and assured her it was not to be found; and as they had made a very diligent search, but without success, there was no doubt but it had been burnt. Gibbons also giving the same account, she had no hope left of ever recovering it, and gave way to the grief this unfortunate loss excited. She was now totally deprived of all possibility of ever arriving at

the knowledge of her parents; Mrs. Fortescue dead, and the weakened state of Mr. Fortescue's mind, putting it almost out of his power to assist her, even if he should retain the inclination.

After a short time, however, she recovered, and considering how little probability there was of ever being called upon to produce these tokens of her birth, when every enquiry of Mr. Fortescue's, and Mr. Richardson's, had failed at the time she was found; resolved not to murmur, but return thanks to Providence for preserving her life, and rejoice that, excepting this, she had lost nothing of consequence. Her cloaths and valuables were all sent to C——, and the money she kept was in her pockets, which she had fortunately put on before the alarm was given.

Mrs. Gibbons supplied her with a gown for the present, and in the morning when she had in some measure rested from her fatigue, she called to see Mrs. Middleton, who was still in an agony of grief; she informed her the flames first burst out in the room in which she always worked, and was occasioned by her leaving some muslins too near the fire, which she had not quite put out. She added, the lodgers on the first and ground floors escaped easily, and had saved almost everything; but that not awaking herself till the alarm in the street, she ran down stairs with scarcely any thing on, and almost all she had left was consumed. Honoria attempted to comfort her, by saying she was not the only sufferer, and mentioned her own loss; but Mrs. Middleton said, "people could talk indeed very well when they did not feel, and she had no notion of Miss Wentworth's grumbling, when all her boxes were gone to C——, except one little trunk." "Indeed, Mrs. Middleton, (she replied) I do not murmur, though the loss of that little trunk may be of infinitely greater consequence to me than any thing else in my possession." She then handsomely paid her for the time she had been her boarder, and took leave. She sent a note to Mrs. Campbell, informing her of the unfortunate accident which had obliged her to remove, and requesting to be taken up in Great Marlborough-street; where the next morning at eight the carriage arrived, and at nine, accompanied only by Mrs. Campbell, she quitted London.

## CHAP. VIII.

MRS. CAMPBELL was a widow about the age of forty: fortune had blessed her with a handsome jointure, besides a large sum entirely at her own disposal; and nature had given her a fine person, upon which time had committed fewer depredations than usual at her years, and a very good, though common understanding. But all this did not content her; she sighed for literary fame, and without a spark of genius, or even animation, had actually attained some little degree from the few works which bore her name.

At nineteen she was of that class of women, who “have no characters at all,” and, at her father’s request, gave her hand without any reluctance to Mr. Campbell, who was forty years her senior, and a whimsical, though learned old gentleman. As he took her without a fortune, and settled a very good one on her, he thought himself intitled to her implicit obedience, and for the twelve years that he lived, she submitted, with a patient insensibility, to an almost total confinement and unwearied attendance on him. Her principal employment was reading to him; and though at first she had no pleasure in it, as his choice of books was not calculated to amuse a female mind, that ’till then had never been accustomed to literary pursuits, yet by degrees she took a pride in the idea, which he endeavoured strongly to inculcate, that her time was devoted to learning and philosophy, whilst so many of her sex were trifling their hours in frivolous dissipation and useless amusements.

After a few years she began to contemplate with scorn the gay world, and look forward with restless impatience to that period, when she hoped to shine herself a bright star in the hemisphere of literature. The rudiments of the French language she had learned at school, and with the most unwearied diligence attained a perfect knowledge of that and Italian. With Mr. Campbell’s assistance also she had made some little progress in Latin, when his death, though it interrupted that study, left her at liberty to pursue the bent of her inclinations by commencing Authoress. She was now two-and-thirty, and almost immediately left the retirement where she had been so long secluded, and settled at C——, her native place; but not, as she declared on her return, to mix in public amusements or card-parties, but to devote herself to philosophy, and the study of human nature.

It was well known that Mr. Campbell, though sensible and learned, was indolent to an extreme; and though he would not give himself the trouble of publishing, he had written a number of detached pieces, and left some very valuable, though unfinished, manuscripts: these, as his Lady was sole executrix, all fell into her hands, and the ill-natured world did not scruple to affirm that she made a good use of them. Certain it was, that among the works she had published as her own, there were some, in which was either a strength of argument female writers seldom attain, or a brilliancy of ideas which all who knew her thought her incapable of, and not unfrequently the conclusions were vague and unconnected, and couched in a style totally different from the beginning. These slanders, as she called them, had reached her ears, but raised no other emotions in her breast, as she

told an intimate friend, but contempt at the envy of the world. She was indeed so highly flattered by the applause of a few, whose interest it was to gain her friendship; and so lost in a delirium of vanity, that it was scarcely in the power of any one to destroy the pleasing illusions which floated in her mind.

During the first five or six miles of their journey, the conversation turned on general subjects:—then, after a long pause spent in preparing the speech, Mrs. Campbell addressed our heroine in the following manner:

“Prepossessed, Miss Wentworth, as I am, not only with your appearance, but manner and conversation, and regardful of Miss Mortimer’s high recommendation of you, a young lady of superior talents, and whose judgment may therefore be relied on more safely; I have no doubt but you will prove a companion equally agreeable and useful; and I likewise flatter myself you will not find my house an unpleasant situation. There is a large and genteel society at C——, but the inhabitants are mostly irrationally devoted to cards. I visit all the principal people, though I avoid as much as I possibly can, those parties where that bane to all refinement of ideas, and elegance of expression, is introduced. At home I always receive my acquaintance in select circles of fourteen or fifteen at a time; and at some of these meetings you will enjoy that true attic salt of conversation, “that feast of reason and that flow of soul,” so often spoken of, but so rarely experienced.

“But, alas, my dear Miss Wentworth, envy and jealousy are the weeds which grow with greatest luxuriance throughout the garden of the world; and as it may reasonably be supposed that a genius like mine has many enemies, in fact I have in the whole city but two real friends, to whom I can at any time unbosom myself, and upon whose faithful breasts I can repose with unlimited confidence. As you will probably see them both frequently, I will describe their characters to you. Mr. Hunter formerly practised the law, but the profession at length disgusted him, the tautology wearied his spirits, and the perplexities and quibbles hurt his feelings. He retired upon a handsome fortune to C——, where he now lives in scientific ease, and philosophical tranquillity. Convinced of the superiority of his understanding, I have frequently submitted my works to him to be revised and corrected; but after frequent perusals, he has always done me the honour to return them without alteration, and an assurance they wanted none. Indeed I never knew a man of such deep observation, and just discernment in my life.”

Honorina with the utmost difficulty restrained a smile at the modest conclusion of this elaborate speech; but her mirth was quickly lost in confusion, when Mrs. Campbell continued:

“Apropos, Miss Wentworth, have you never read the little volumes I have sent into the world?” Now unfortunately for our heroine, in the days of her prosperity several of them had accidentally fallen in her way; but little thinking she should ever become acquainted with the authoress, or be distressed by an enquiry of this kind, she had, after reading a few pages, thrown them aside, as neither interesting nor instructive. However,

perplexed at this question, from the difficulty of a reply, which would be consistent with her strict attention to veracity, and yet not offend Mrs. Campbell, with inimitable presence of mind she answered, "My situation of late, madam, left me little leisure to attend to my favourite amusement; but if on my arrival at C——, you will gratify me with a sight of them, I will endeavour to profit by your indulgence." Mrs. Campbell, with a visible satisfaction in her countenance, promised that they should all be carried to her own apartment, where she might peruse them when she pleased; and then continued:

"My other friend, Helena Winterton, is the only child of Dr. Winterton, a prebendary of C——. Though from the attachment we bear each other, we are undoubtedly kindred souls, yet there is not the least resemblance in our manners or conversation: she is devoted to the Muses, I to philosophy and history: whilst she is turning over sonnets and love elegies, I am deeply engaged in Plato or Plutarch. She is romantic to an excess, and animated to a degree of enthusiasm, whilst I, you see, my dear, am solid and steady. Perhaps the difference of our studies has contributed to increase the natural dispositions of our minds. The work in which I am now chiefly employed, and in which, Miss Wentworth, I shall want your principal assistance, is a translation from a Latin book, entitled, 'An enquiry into the influence of climate upon human nature, and how far the minds of men are affected by the different modes of living in different countries.' To which I mean to add, 'A dissertation on the North American savages, and a parallel between the natives of Otaheite and the New Zealanders, and the Goths and Vandals.' This I am sensible will be a work of much labour; but I am convinced, and indeed Mr. Hunter assures me, I shall be amply repaid by the reflection of having opened to the world a new source of information, for which it can never sufficiently reward me."

Here she ceased, and impatiently waited Honoria's reply, who could only say "she would omit no endeavour to be serviceable to her, in any way she should please to command." A long silence then succeeded: Mrs. Campbell was disappointed; she expected to be flattered, but this was a meanness Honoria could not condescend to; she therefore took out a book, which our heroine was not sorry for, as it gave her leisure to indulge her reflections. But she was really concerned at the visible mortification, and almost displeasure which sat on her countenance. Alas, thought she, how true was Major Southmore's observation, and how kind the hint he gave me? must I lose the advantages I hope to derive from her protection, or keep them at the expence of my candor and veracity? I shall never be able to submit to the expressions of admiration she will undoubtedly expect from me, yet will I by diligence and attention endeavour to please, and substitute activity for adulation.

Whilst she was thus trying to reconcile herself to the employment laid out for her, without giving up in the least degree those principles of integrity that had been so early instilled into her mind; a thought occurred to her, that she might regain Mrs. Campbell's smiles at an easy rate; and taking the first opportunity of putting it into execution, when her learned friend laid down her book to pay a turnpike, asked if she had not at that time any of those volumes with her, the perusal of which she had promised to honour her with? this question instantly restored her good humour: she replied in the affirmative, and



ordering the postillion not to drive on, alighted, and actually stood in the road, till the footman had taken a small box from the seat which she unlocked, and giving Honoria two pocket volumes, re-seated herself in the carriage, and they pursued their journey. Our heroine apologised for the trouble she had occasioned, but Mrs. Campbell declared it was a pleasure, and this truth her looks confirmed.

The remainder of the day was spent by them both in reading; and Honoria was so agreeably surprized to find a work of entertainment and information, when she expected something either frivolous or heavy, that she had no difficulty in complimenting her friend, who was so charmed with her observations, that they quite obliterated her former coolness from her memory, and late in the evening they arrived at C—— in the utmost harmony with each other.

This work was entitled “Observations made in a Tour to the South of France and German Spa,” and contained not only a variety of elegant and just descriptions, but some very brilliant remarks and general satire. Honoria was astonished at the difference of this and the former production she had met with in Ireland, and had not her name been in full length on the title page, she could scarcely have given her credit as the author. Yet as she drew near the conclusion, she could not reconcile some apparent inconsistencies and strange deviations from the natural beauty of the language; sometimes for several pages the style was laboured and diffuse; this puzzled her extremely; for observe, reader, she had not yet heard the opinions of the inhabitants of C——, and was wholly a stranger to the literary attainments of the late Mr. Campbell.

## CHAP. IX.

ON the instant of their arrival Mrs. Campbell dispatched a note to her beloved Helena to acquaint her of her return, and request to see her immediately, but to her inexpressible mortification, the messenger came back with Dr. Winterton's compliments, and was sorry to inform her, Miss Winterton was at Dover, where she would continue several weeks. Her regret, however, was soon forgot when Mr. Hunter arrived, who expressed his extreme happiness at once more beholding her, in terms of flattery so gross, that it did not please her more than it shocked Honoria, who was hurt that any woman of common understanding should be the dupe of such servile adulation and artful professions. It did not require all the penetration she possessed to see through the thin veil of Mr. Hunter's designs; in a very few days she discovered his intention of making an interest in her favour, to secure to himself the possession of her hand and fortune; for the latter he had a sincere and ardent affection, an affection not to be lessened by absence.

He was about her own age, and as she said had been bred to the study of the law; but quitted it for very different reasons from those she assigned. Licentious and extravagant in the early period of life, he neglected his profession, and spent all his time in the pursuit of every fashionable folly; the consequence of this was, he soon consumed a genteel, though not a large fortune, which, together with the advantages which might have arisen from his practice, would have supported him with comfort and elegance. Though sensible of his approaching ruin, he had not courage to retract till every thing was gone, but a small estate that was only his for life. He had so long avoided all business, that attention to it, now his spirits were dejected, and his health impaired, would have been irksome, if not impossible; and as he had formerly by mere negligence lost several causes, he justly feared he should meet with no employment, even if he attempted it: he therefore determined to retire on his small income to his native place, where he had not long been, when Mrs. Campbell's fortune inspired him with a wish to recommend himself to her favour; this he easily effected by an entire subservience to her opinions, and in a very short time he was regarded by her as a most esteemed and disinterested friend. By perseverance he hoped to gain more, but had art enough not to let her see his intentions too soon lest she should disapprove them, and forbid him her house before he had secured her heart. Honoria, whilst she regretted his designs, was too conscious of Mrs. Campbell's foible to attempt opening her eyes to them; she saw Mrs. Campbell was infatuated, and paid the utmost deference to his understanding, which was however rather superficial than deep.

Our heroine entered on her employment with an alacrity which charmed Mrs. Campbell, no less than the fineness of her hand, and the correctness with which she wrote. She first transcribed an essay on the lives and writings of the French authors of the last century. This was soon finished, and Mrs. Campbell was during this time shut up every day several hours in her study, busy at her translation; but one morning she received a note from Mr. Hunter, requesting she would for that day give up her pen, and condescend to join a party, which he was to conduct to a beautiful spot about ten miles

from C——, where they were to have a cold collation, and a band of music, and return late in the evening. She hesitated, though she ardently wished to accept it; but having determined to finish the first book of her work, which she had promised Mr. Hunter he should peruse the next day, she knew not how to comply. At last, from a conviction of the goodness and gentleness of Honoria's disposition, and a firm reliance on her honor, she resolved to trust her with a secret, which she had hitherto so carefully kept from her knowledge.

Sending for her into the library and locking the door, that their conference might not be interrupted, an action which startled, if it did not absolutely alarm our heroine, Mrs. Campbell then addressed her with the utmost earnestness.

“May I, Miss Wentworth, rely on your honor for not revealing the secret which I mean to entrust you with, and which it is of the utmost consequence to me to have for ever concealed, as the disclosure of it would inevitably ruin my fame, and destroy every hope of happiness I have ventured to indulge?” There was a solemnity in her manner, that almost terrified Honoria, who at first hesitated whether she ought to promise to conceal a circumstance, which from the earnestness of Mrs. Campbell, she doubted not was of high importance. It did not occur to her, that her fame could be injured, or her happiness destroyed, by any thing but the disclosure of some hidden act of imprudence, if not of guilt; and the first thought which struck her was, that she had somewhere a living instance of early frailty, whom she wished to introduce into the world under a feigned name. After a few minutes reflection, she replied. “If, madam, by concealing what you require of me, you can assure me I injure no one, I will faithfully promise whatever you wish.” “That (returned Mrs. Campbell, with a smile) I will immediately convince you of; and leading her to the writing table, took up a folio she had been transcribing from, and put it into her hands. Here, my dear girl, (she continued) you see in fact an old and forgotten translation of the Latin book of which mine is but an improved copy. I accidentally found it among some old books of Mr. Campbell's, which were thrown into a chest as mere lumber; it is, I doubt not, now out of print, and therefore my plagiarism will never be discovered, if you do not betray me.”

Honoria, whose natural vivacity when unclouded by present misfortune, was extreme, was highly diverted by Mrs. Campbell's secret, after all the frightful ideas she had conjured up in her mind; and at the same time distressed how to prevent her from observing the effect it had on her; but that lady was too much agitated to attend to any thing but the ready and willing promise she made, never to reveal the truth. Mrs. Campbell then confessed her knowledge of Latin was not sufficient to enable her to translate with the least degree of exactness; and that she was glad to make use of this old book, from which she had only to write it in modern and elegant language. “The world,” added she, “will not know the assistance I have met with, and the credit will be all my own. Now, my dear girl, as I have an engagement, which will detain me probably the whole day, I wish you to copy this, and, as I have done, modernize the language. I want to have the next chapter finished, as Mr. Hunter is to see it to-morrow, and give me his opinion; and I beg you to take particular care when you leave off, to let the original

remain on the table, but lock up the old translation carefully in my desk." Honoria assured her she would pay the strictest attention to her commands, and instantly sat about her task; whilst Mrs. Campbell went to dress, which she had scarcely concluded, when the carriage arrived at the door, and Mr. Hunter waited to hand her in.

Our heroine was not more astonished than amused at this ridiculous discovery; when she had written the chapter, she began reading the first part, and was surprized at the confusion and perplexity of the style, and the stiffness of expression which reigned throughout.

When Mrs. Campbell returned, she was charmed with Honoria's performance, which indeed far exceeded her own, and from that day determined it should be her whole employment. In a few weeks Honoria made a considerable progress; and though a little disconcerted at the idea of being instrumental to the deceit that was to be put upon the world, yet reflecting it was a harmless one, she pursued her work with diligence and activity.

Thus constantly and innocently, if not usefully employed, she by degrees regained that tranquillity she once feared was lost for ever. The rectitude of her resolutions to forget Colonel Effingham, was rewarded with unexpected success: she not only banished him from her thoughts, but carefully avoided every thing that could recall his image to her mind; considering it as not merely dangerous to her peace, but even criminal, as she had every reason to believe him the husband of another. She took her locket from her neck, and wrapping it in paper, laid it at the bottom of her portmanteau; and almost rejoiced that the volume of translations from Metastasio, had been burnt in her trunk, where she had put it for safety, though at first she regretted it with tears. Nothing could tempt her to look at a newspaper; she was even so determined on this point, that Mrs. Campbell one day asked her if she had any friends abroad; but being too much engaged in her own affairs to attend to those of another, she was satisfied merely with her replying in the negative, and enquired no farther.

Till her arrival in England, Honoria had seen no more of the world than an annual visit to Dublin of six weeks or two months could shew her; and as they lived wholly in the country for the rest of the year, this time was usually devoted to amusement. It is well known that in the gay world there is little discrimination of character; a thoughtless insipidity generally reigns, or if there are any striking traits, they are wholly absorbed in that rage for dissipation, which universally prevails in the metropolis of almost every kingdom. Excepting her own family, Colonel Effingham, Mr. Cleveland, and Miss Meriton, were the only persons of her acquaintance who had any claim to a superiority of understanding. Miss Mortimer had indeed a most excellent one but with her she lived in a state of such inferiority, that she could derive few advantages from it. Here the case was totally different; Mrs. Campbell, who was from the first highly prepossessed in her favour, introduced her to every body as her visitor, and treated her not like a dependant, but an equal; and her own elegance and good sense confirmed the happy impression her

appearance gave them at first sight, and ensured her a long continuance of the respect and admiration of all the inhabitants of C——.

Mrs. Campbell, though really not a sensible woman, had persuaded people to think her so, and it was now become the fashion to consider her as such; and consequently her house was the resort of all the literati: and though among them there were undoubtedly many strange and even absurd characters, yet Honoria gleaned something from every one; those who could not instruct, amused her; she could smile at a singularity which however she would never ridicule, nor did she ever suffer a folly or a foible to obliterate from her mind the amiable and respectable qualities of any one. Thus for some time glided away the hours of our heroine with tranquillity, if not with happiness.

Among the variety of acquaintance she had made here, there were but two for whom her heart felt any degree of attachment: these were Mrs. Markham and Miss Onslow; the former was an old lady of eighty-four, in whom piety without austerity was so blended with cheerfulness, that whilst the most rigid revered her character, and esteemed her an object of the highest respect; the gayest sought her society, and even delighted in it. Miss Onslow was heiress to a very large estate, and had been committed to this lady's care by her daughter, Mrs. Ashbourn, who with her whole family had attended her husband a few months before to the South of France, for the recovery of his health. She was extremely amiable and well disposed; but her vivacity was almost unbounded, and her giddiness often led her into errors that her reason condemned. Mrs. Markham, charmed with Honoria's manner and conversation, encouraged the intimacy which soon took place between them, in the hope that her thoughtless charge would copy so excellent an example; and in a short time she devoted all her leisure hours to this family.

One evening as she was sitting with them, and expressing her sentiments on a particular subject with a serious earnestness; Emily Onslow, after listening some time with a fixed attention, suddenly exclaimed; "My dear creature, where, in the name of fortune, did you learn philosophy? pray tell me, that I may have a lesson?" "I hope, my dear Miss Onslow, (replied she with a half smile, a tear at the same time instant starting to her eye) that you will never want it: my master was adversity, and a severe one he was, believe me. Heaven preserve you from the ills I have suffered." She spoke with a force that astonished them both, and pained Miss Onslow, who little thought her speech would recall any unpleasant remembrance, and severely chid herself for being, though innocently, the cause of her emotion. Mrs. Markham observed, "Miss Wentworth's philosophy did her honour; that to suffer was the lot of many; to bear the evils of life with fortitude and resignation in the power of few; at least (added she) there are few who exert the power that Providence has given us all." She then turned the conversation from a subject which she saw was distressing, and the rest of the evening was spent in a more cheerful manner.

## CHAP. X.

THE next day Mrs. Campbell received a message to acquaint her of Miss Winterton's return, but being at that time busily engaged with her pen, desired Honoria would write a note to say she would call on her in the evening, as particular business would detain her at home the whole day. In a few minutes the footman came back with an answer, which Honoria was desired to read; and it fully confirmed her in the opinion she had long formed of the writer: It was as follows:

“At seven o'clock then exactly will Helena expect her beloved friend; and till that time will impatiently exclaim with her poetical namesake,

*Haste, twilight, haste, to shroud the solar ray,  
And bring the hour my pensive spirit loves.”*

“This,” said Mrs. Campbell, observing Honoria smile, “is her usual style; yet believe me you will find her pleasant and entertaining, though somewhat singular in her manner and opinions.”

Our heroine from every thing her friend had told her, expected to see a sprightly young creature with all the animation of youth; how then was she astonished and disappointed on arriving at Dr. Winterton's, when Helena made her appearance, to find that her age exceeded Mrs. Campbell's by several years; a superiority however, that by her dress and manner she seemed wholly unconscious of; the latter affectedly gay, and the former a white muslin round gown tucked and flounced: a lilac sash, and a chip hat with ribbands of the same colour tied under her chin, which by no means adorned a countenance pale and sallow. A muslin handkerchief in the fashionable style open before, with a deep tucker, which yet concealed very little of a bosom, that neither in quality nor hue resembled snow. She was tall, slender, and had really a fine shape; and when first Honoria saw her she was talking to Mrs. Campbell with her back towards her, and from her person and dress, which almost appeared like a frock, she actually supposed her not more than sixteen; till turning round she instantly convinced our heroine, that she had guessed near thirty years too little. Miss Winterton behaved to her with great civility, and made strong professions of friendship, which Honoria received with politeness, but incredulity.

After an hour or two spent in conversation, in which Miss Winterton bore the chief part, and which the old Doctor, with the peevishness too incident to age, often interrupted with “Pshaw, Nelly, how can you be so silly? why you have talked of nothing else all the day!” After repeated remonstrances of this kind, which she paid little attention to for some time, but at last whispered to her friend that she would call on her the next morning, and give her a regular account of what had passed in her late excursion; of which, continued she, you have now a very imperfect idea; and soon after Mrs. Campbell took leave.

Miss Winterton was the next day punctual to her appointment; and not regarding Miss Wentworth, who she said was too amiable herself, not to pardon the effusions of a too sensible heart, began with a deep sigh:

“Oh, my dear Campbell! but for the hope of enjoying your society, with what regret should I have left Dover! I declare I think I was never in my whole life so happy as in those few fleeting weeks passed under the hospitable roof of Mr. Audley. All the family are agreeable, but George and Charlotte are my favourites; and of their merit you will judge next week, for my father requested they would return with me, but that being out of their power, they promised to follow in a few days. George blows the flute divinely; we had such evening concerts! and do you know I bought a new guittar for the purpose? and every morning he accompanied me for two or three hours, to make me perfect in my evening’s lesson. Then he had such a fine voice, and the best choice of songs imaginable: he scarcely ever sung any but Jackson’s, and ‘If in that breast so good, so pure;’ and ‘How oft, Louisa,’ and, ‘Ah cruel maid,’ but he only sang that once, when I had just finished, ‘Thy vain pursuit, rash youth, give o’er,” so I directly struck that out of my list. I remember the night before last, when he heard the carriage was ordered at six o’clock the next morning, he looked very melancholy indeed, and desiring Charlotte to sit down to her piano forte, began ‘The fatal hours,’ and with so much expression, I could scarcely stay in the room without tears: as soon as he had finished, to divert my chagrin I took my guittar, and played, ‘Gentle youth,’ from Love in a Village; when I had done, he opened the book, and from the same opera sang, ‘Oh how shall I in language weak!’ These little incidents, my dear Campbell, discover the secrets of the heart more plainly than a thousand gallant speeches. Have not you found it so, Miss Wentworth?” Honoria sighed and coloured, but made no answer. “Ah, (cried the fair Helen) I like that blush and that sigh; I hope you are in love, Miss Wentworth, then I shall make you my confidante; for really Mrs. Campbell is so wholly engrossed by her philosophy, that I dare say she does not know what the tender passion means.” “I hope I never shall, (replied she with much gravity and a little sarcasm) since in my opinion it is a knowledge which generally tends to make people ridiculous.” Wholly unconscious that this was directed at herself, she answered, “Oh fie, Mrs. Campbell, why you are a perfect barbarian; how rugged is the soul unharmonized by Cupid, and music is the food of love.” “Very true (returned Mrs. Campbell) but though food is necessary for a person in health, it often contributes to increase a fever; and in the state of your mind, Miss Winterton, a little less nourishment of that kind might have kept your delirium from its present height.” As she spoke with a half smile, she left her friend at liberty to take this speech in jest or earnest, and she wisely chose the latter. Yet a little disconcerted at her coolness, she soon took leave, with a particular address to Honoria, and a request to see her as often as possible.

This conversation convinced Honoria, that Mrs. Campbell had more judgment than might have been expected from her own conduct. She pitied the folly of Miss Winterton, and with as much bitterness as was consistent with her gentle spirit, abhorred the deceit that she had every reason to suppose was almost universal in the other sex: Colonel Effingham’s inconsistency had first impressed her mind with their caprice; Mr.

Hunter's officious attentions confirmed her opinion of their duplicity; and she had not a doubt but Mr. Audley was acting the same part with Miss Winterton.

Mrs. Campbell, though blinded by self-partiality, could easily discern that credulity in another which she was not aware of in her own conduct, and understand all this perfectly, said she to Honoria as her friend left the house: "Mr. Audley, though a man of fortune, has several children to provide for; George is intended for the church, and I dare affirm all this court to Helen, is to obtain her father's interest, who has many friends among the first people: and I suppose the flattery he so liberally bestows upon the daughter, is to be rewarded with a good living, and then she, poor creature, will be deserted. I am shocked absolutely at the ingratitude of the men, and hurt beyond measure at the vanity so prevalent in our sex, which really encourages young fellows to be impertinent. I am certain George Audley cannot be more than twenty, and Helen is my senior, by many years; is not that a terrible disparity, Miss Wentworth?" "Oh yes, madam, terrible indeed, (said our heroine)." "Now (continued Mrs. Campbell) if a man of sense, learning and accomplishments, is attached to a woman past the follies of childhood, and of an age suitable to his own; and if that attachment is founded on esteem and a knowledge of her superior abilities, why then you know, my dear Kitty, a choice so prudent on both sides, would make a connection equally advantageous to both; and that is quite a different thing; is it not?" "Yes, madam, (replied Honoria, who thought this was the best opportunity she might ever have to give her opinion on the subject); if their fortunes are equal, but if the gentleman has none and the lady a very large one, pardon me for saying I should be very fearful the greatest attraction was in the estate." "Pooh, idiot! that might be the case indeed, if the lady had not self-attractions; but when exclusive of fortune she possesses numerous advantages, she must be a suspicious wretch truly, to imagine a man independent of the world, a man of refinement and sensibility, was guided by such mercenary motives." And then with a look of more displeasure than she had worn since their journey, she quitted the room, and left Honoria, well convinced that her hint, even gentle as it was, had, by hurting her vanity and self-love, infinitely discomposed her. But a few hours reflection determined her not to let Honoria see she was disturbed, as she flattered herself she only spoke her sentiments casually, and without any reference to herself; and under this idea appeared at dinner as usual, placid and unconcerned.

The next visit to Dr. Winterton's, after the arrival of his guests, convinced them both their opinions had been erroneous. Mr. George Audley treated the fair Helena with a ludicrous familiarity, little calculated to gain the heart of a woman of delicacy, but which her excessive vanity imagined was the effusions of an ardent passion. In fact, far from having any design upon her, his behaviour was merely the effect of an ungoverned vivacity, that delighted in the ridiculous wherever it was to be met with; and as he had never before seen a character so strongly tinctured with it, he resolved to lose no entertainment it was in her power to afford him; and to this end took every opportunity of drawing her out, as he called it; and in this his sister joined with an eagerness, which immediately lost her the good opinion of Honoria, to whom even the foibles of a friend were sacred; and Miss Winterton's regard for Charlotte Audley was sincere and evident;



our heroine was even angry with herself for being tempted to smile, yet now and then she could not possibly avoid it.

They walked in the garden before supper: the moon shone very bright, and Mr. Audley taking Miss Winterton's hand drew it resolutely under his arm, and ran with her down a gravel walk, where he detained her a considerable time. When they returned, Charlotte exclaimed, "Upon my word, Helena, you are very polite to leave us in this manner to entertain ourselves, whilst you are flirting with my brother!" "Cruel, unkind Charlotte! to throw the blame on your friend, when you know it was entirely his fault." "Well then, George, if you plead guilty, at least make an apology to the company." "I will offer only this, (he replied, then taking the lady's hand, and pressing it to his lips, repeated,

*"Such Helen was, and who could blame  
the boy?"*

Miss Winterton smiled, and made a curtsy, which so completed Miss Audley's amusement, that she burst into a violent fit of laughter, and throwing herself upon a seat, asked our heroine, in a whisper, 'how it was possible for her to keep her countenance, when so ridiculous a scene was acting before her?' Honoria coldly answered, "that she received little pleasure from the mortification of others." "The mortification! why, my dear madam, do not you see how she enjoys it? why, I assure you, she fancies he is in love with her, and when she was with us, would sometimes try on two or three different caps in a morning, before she could decide which she should appear in; and has worn her hair in ringlets without powder, ever since my brother told her she looked like a divinity." "However happy she may believe herself now, madam, (replied Honoria) the disappointment will be proportionably great whenever she discovers the deception which has been put on her, and the ingratitude of those whom she at present esteems as her best friends." "La, you are so grave (said Miss Audley); why I was never so much entertained in my whole life, as whilst she was with us at Dover. I used to laugh from morning till night, and so would you too, could you have witnessed the droll scenes I have been present at; but after supper I will make him sing, and if you do not smile then, why you must have been educated in the cave of Trophonias." Honoria finding her incorrigible, gave up the point, and remained silent.

During this conversation, the two subjects of it had been walking at some distance from them on a grass plat. Mrs. Campbell had never joined their party, being engaged with the old Doctor in his study. A summons to supper then recalled them to the house; after which, Charlotte did not forget her request; it was immediately complied with, and Mr. Audley fixing his eyes steadily on Miss Winterton, began, "When absent from my soul's delight," she took a white handkerchief from her pocket, and leaning her head on her hand, continued in this pensive and elegant attitude till the conclusion, when she bowed to him, with a look which convinced them all, she considered it as peculiarly addressed to herself; and he received her thanks with such a mock gravity, that in spite of her determined firmness, completely triumphed over Honoria's muscles. Charlotte

nodded at her in a manner that seemed to say, "Was I not right?" and Honoria blushed at her weakness in having given an involuntary, though apparent, approbation of a conduct, which in reality excited nothing but disgust. The old gentleman was happily not a witness of his daughter's folly; he fell asleep almost as soon as the cloth was removed, and continued so till Mrs. Campbell's carriage was announced.

During their ride, these ladies expressed their mutual grief and astonishment at such an instance of weakness on one side, and impertinence on the other. Yet they both agreed Mr. Audley was most excusable of the two. He was very young, had been educated at Oxford, and was now only absent from it, whilst the vacation lasted. A thoughtless boy, little accustomed to the society of women, could not have an idea how deeply even Miss Winterton's heart might be wounded, by a knowledge of his real sentiments, which she must at last discover; his amusement was all he at present had in view, regardless of the consequences. With Charlotte it was far different; she was several years older than her brother, and though her friend's age rendered her less an object of pity, yet even the respect due to her own sex should have taught her the impropriety of her conduct. Mrs. Campbell confessed she was ashamed of the terms of regard in which she had mentioned Miss Winterton to our heroine, "but, indeed, Miss Wentworth, (added she) when I saw her last, she was a rational creature, a title which, I blush to acknowledge, she has now lost all claim to."

## CHAP. XI.

IN compliment to her guests, Miss Winterton made a number of parties and excursions round the country, to which Mrs. Campbell and Miss Wentworth were constantly invited; and though the former generally declined them, being still deeply engaged with her pen, yet she always insisted upon Honoria's accepting them, as she thought air, exercise, and amusement, contributed greatly to the recovery of her health and spirits, which she saw had been much injured, and was pleased and flattered that her residence with her had so good an effect on both. Her person was indeed considerably improved, she had regained the fine bloom which was natural to her complexion, and her eyes once more sparkled with their usual lustre. It was impossible to behold a more captivating or interesting object; an object indeed too attractive ever to escape unnoticed; and had Mr. Audley been inclined to keep up the farce with his fair Helen, as he called her, the continual presence of such animated beauty, and enchanting vivacity, must have conquered his resolution. But this was by no means the case; he was really extremely weary of her folly, and had not Honoria's irresistible attractions induced him to prolong his visit, he would soon have quitted the Doctor's hospitable roof: but he felt himself charmed with her conversation, and wholly unable to tear himself from her. In all their little parties she became the chief object of his attention, but the change, though visible to every one else, he continued to hide from Miss Winterton; and this he could easily do, as an extravagant compliment or a gentle pressure of her hand was at any time sufficient to put her in spirits for the whole evening; and she was fond of retiring from the company with her beloved Charlotte; and, chusing the most solitary walks, would talk of the charms of a rural life, and speak of her deep and delicate attachment to her brother; and this Charlotte constantly cherished, to heighten, as she said, their amusement.

Our heroine was a long time unconscious of his partiality; perfectly free from all kind of vanity, she suspected not the motive that induced him to be always at her side; 'till one evening a scheme was proposed to spend the next day at Margate. Mrs. Campbell promised to join them, and it was settled in the following manner. She offered to take any two of the ladies in her coach, as Mr. Hunter, who had lately had a slight touch of the gout, was to have the fourth seat: this Charlotte Audley instantly accepted, but Miss Winterton declined it, saying she should beg Mr. Audley to drive her in his phaeton. "My dear creature, (exclaimed he) do you think me a barbarian? why I would not for ten thousand pounds be accessory to your going in an open carriage; with such a cold as you complained of last night, it is madness to think of it." She thanked him in the most expressive manner for his solicitude for her health, and said, "she would most certainly be guided by him, if Miss Wentworth would give up her seat in the coach, and was not afraid of the phaeton." "I shall be very willing to resign my place to you, Miss Winterton, (replied Honoria) as, with Mrs. Campbell's leave, I shall stay at home to-morrow." "No, indeed, (they all exclaimed at once) that must not be; if you cannot go to-morrow, the party shall be deferred, for you positively shall not be excused." "If that is the case, (said Honoria, smiling) I will certainly accompany you then, and shall be obliged to Mr. Audley for a place in the phaeton." "I cannot have a higher pleasure, madam, (replied he)

than that I am now in expectation of; the happiness of your company:" this he spoke in a low tone of voice, not to be heard by the rest of the party.

Early the next morning the carriages arrived, and they set out in the manner proposed. Mr. Audley was determined not to lose so favourable an opportunity of expressing his sentiments, and began in a high strain of compliment, which Honoria receiving with a smile of incredulity, he said, "Cruel Miss Wentworth, you affect to disbelieve me." "No, really, Mr. Audley, I do not *affect* it." "Why surely, madam, when I speak in so serious a manner, you cannot suppose my words contradict my sentiments." "Pray, sir, what can I suppose, replied Honoria, when I have so often heard you address the same to another with equal earnestness?" "Miss Wentworth, (said he) why surely it is impossible you could ever imagine I was serious in any thing I ever said to Miss Winterton." "I should be sorry, Mr. Audley, to find you were not, (answered Honoria) for what dependance can be placed on a man who trifles with the feelings of a heart too probably attached to him, and who, unconscious of deceit, listens with an amiable, though perhaps simple credulity, to every thing he utters, and honours it with implicit belief?" "My dear madam, (said Audley) upon my soul you take this matter in too serious a light. Miss Winterton cannot really think I am in love with her, for though confoundedly silly, she cannot be so insensible as that. No no, she only likes a little flirtation, that is all." "I fear that is not all, sir, (rejoined Honoria) but can your conscience acquit you of taking pains to gain her good opinion?" "Oh yes, that it can, indeed, said he; when I began my attack, I thought she must be affronted, but she took it all in such good humour, that I was tempted to renew my fine speeches; and it afforded so much entertainment to my sisters to remark her ridiculous behaviour, that they encouraged me to go on; but I declare I believe you are right, and I do assure you I will be more careful in future; nay, if you chuse it, I will not speak a word to her all day, no nor the whole week, if you will repay me with your smiles." "I do not mean, sir, (replied Honoria with much gravity,) to bribe you to mortify her; I wish you to behave to her with all possible politeness, but not to make her, as usual, an object of ridicule; and believe me I speak from no motive but humanity, and have not the least wish of transferring your attentions to myself, nor the least idea of rewarding you, were it even in my power, for what I look on merely as your duty: forgive me, Mr. Audley, for speaking so plainly." He replied, he thought himself obliged to her, and promised a gradual reformation.

He then endeavoured to make her listen to the subject next his heart, but his endeavours were ineffectual. In a manner the most decided, she forbade his entering on a topic that she said would not be merely disagreeable, but would render his company so extremely unpleasant to her, that in future she should take every method to avoid it. The calm dignity with which she spoke, awed him into silence, and convinced him obedience to her commands was the only chance he had of obtaining her favour. But not being of the tribe of sighing and weeping lovers, though extremely charmed with the justness of her sentiments, no less than the beauty of her person, and quite of the opinion of the old poet, that

*"Sure if looking well can't move her,*

*“Looking ill will ne'er prevail,”*

he determined to rally his spirits, which were a little hurt at her absolute rejection of his devoirs, and try all in his power to entertain her; and in this he succeeded so well, that before they arrived at Margate, he once more flattered himself she would not always continue inexorable. In fact she was greatly pleased with his conversation; he possessed an uncommon share of wit and humour, which when directed at proper objects, was particularly amusing. But though her imagination was delighted with the brilliancy of his ideas, and the vivacity with which he expressed them, her heart was not interested; it was in the power of one only to light up the smile of true and unmixed satisfaction in her countenance.

When they alighted at the inn, they found some of the other party rather out of spirits. Mr. Hunter and Mrs. Campbell had been wholly engrossed by each other, and conversing upon subjects wearisome, if not unintelligible to the two ladies; one of whom was dull for want of the mirth her brother and friend usually afforded her, and Miss Winterton bitterly repented having given up the seat in the phaeton, as Mr. Hunter's presence prevented her from feeling the only consolation she could know, when separated from him she loved, that of expatiating on his virtues.

“Oh!” exclaimed Helen, as soon as they were seated, “how insupportably tedious has this journey been! did you not think so, Mr. Audley?” He affected to misunderstand her, and looking at his watch, answered coolly, “No really, we are, I see, some minutes within the time I thought it would take up:” he then looked at Honoria as if to claim her approbation, which however he did not meet with, for too solicitous to gain it, he over-acted his part, and intending only to behave with indifference, he often deviated into something very like contempt.

An alteration so strange and so sudden, surprized Charlotte, and almost petrified her poor friend, who declared to her she could no way in the world account for her brother's coldness; he could not be jealous, as to the best of her knowledge she had not even smiled on any man since his arrival. This was enough for Miss Audley; it gave her a long and hearty laugh, and amply repaid her for the stupid hours she had passed.

In all their walks, George still continued to pay his chief attention to our heroine, who, angry with him for not keeping his promise, and terrified to death lest his negligence should be imputed to her, was at the same time conscious she had acted from a right motive, and the rectitude of her intentions in some measure supported her spirits.

As they were walking in the rooms before dinner, Honoria, wishing to avoid him as much as possible, left her party standing at one of the windows, and going up to the subscription book, amused herself with reading the list of names: that of Burnthwaite in a few moments struck her eye as not wholly unknown to her, though she could not recollect where she had met the person who bore it; when turning hastily round, she was startled at the appearance of a gentleman in regimentals she was too well acquainted with, who on

seeing her, exclaimed in an accent of surprize and pleasure, "Miss Sommerville! Is it possible that I have the happiness of meeting you at Margate, when I little imagined you were in the kingdom?" The voice and manner of the officer, immediately brought to her remembrance the very Mr. Burnthwaite, whose name on the book had puzzled her. He belonged to the same regiment as Colonel Effingham, but arriving at L——, a few weeks before their embarkation, was less known to the family at Woodpark, than the rest of the corps. He was, however, no stranger to the character for hospitality Mr. Fortescue bore in the neighbourhood, and for which he had ever since retained the highest respect; it was with much concern he heard the account of Mrs. Fortescue's death, which Honoria could not inform him of without tears. Unwilling to dwell upon a subject that he plainly saw affected her, he turned the conversation to Miss Fortescue's marriage, of which also he was before ignorant. To his enquiry how long she had left Ireland, she only replied "a few Months, sir, and I am now staying with a lady at C——." "I hope, madam, if you remain at Margate, (said he) you will permit me the honour of paying my respects to you."—"I came only for the day, sir, (replied Honoria) and shall return this evening." "I suppose, Miss Sommerville, (answered Mr. Burnthwaite) you have seen Colonel Effingham since his arrival?" She coloured extremely at a question so mortifying and distressing, and which recalled so many painful ideas; but gathering courage she evaded a direct answer, and only said, "Has he been long in England?" "I have myself left London several weeks, and am now out of the way of meeting many of my old acquaintance. I landed myself not more than a fortnight since with the regiment," said Mr. Burnthwaite, "but the Colonel had leave of absence to attend a sick relation to whose fortune he was heir; I came but three days ago to Margate with a party of gentlemen, and esteem it a particular favour of fortune, thus unexpectedly to meet Miss Sommerville." Honoria then curtsied and wished him a good morning, being obliged, she said, to join her friends, who would wonder at her absence. Mr. Burnthwaite bowed and took his leave, not daring to follow her; as so far from offering to introduce him to them, she had evidently avoided it; and he had ever been accustomed to think of the Wood-Park family with too much respect, to obtrude himself uninvited on any part of it.

Our heroine was particularly rejoiced at her fortunate escape, as had he addressed her before any one of her party, a discovery of her change of name would have been unavoidable, and of course attended with the reasons that made her wish for concealment; and at this time the eclairsissement would have hurt her feelings and her delicacy more than at any other; for she feared Mr. Audley might suppose, if he knew her to be a poor dependant, that the advice to which he had paid too great attention, was dictated by the most interested motives.

How bitterly at this moment did she regret the false pride that induced her to alter the name by which she had so long been known! Situated as she then was, this meeting convinced her it might again happen with some other of her former acquaintance, and though it could never reduce her to the necessity of advancing a falshood, it might oblige her to make a confession both disagreeable and mortifying, and perhaps convince her friends that she had some deeper reasons than she dared acknowledge for the apparent duplicity of her conduct.

Harrassed by these ideas she pressed Mrs. Campbell with an impatience by no means natural to her to quit the rooms; but that lady, who was engaged in an argument with Mr. Hunter, paid her no attention, and they still continued walking up and down, when Mr. Burnthwaite entering, to the infinite distress of our heroine, advanced towards them with a paper in his hand, and addressed Miss Sommerville with a bow. "Encouraged, madam, by the known benevolence of your family, I venture through your means to recommend this petition to the notice of your party." It was in behalf of a poor widow, whose husband had been drowned, and who was left with a large family. She took the paper, and giving it to the rest, they all immediately drew out their purses, and gave half a crown each, the sum which they saw by the names already down had been usually subscribed. Mr. Burnthwaite bowed his thanks, and running to fetch the pen and ink, said, to the inexpressible consternation of Honoria, "Now, ladies, compleat the goodness of the act, by adding your names to the list of the generous contributors." They immediately assented, and Mrs. Campbell, Miss Winterton, and Miss Audley, having written theirs, gave the pen to Honoria, who pale and sick with apprehension, desired the gentlemen would write first: they complied: she then took the paper in her hand, which trembled so violently that they were all alarmed, and Mr. Burnthwaite said, "you are ill, madam: permit me the honour of setting down your name:" she bowed an assent, wholly unable to speak. Mr. Audley and the rest were too much concerned at her illness to observe that Mr. Burnthwaite wrote Miss Sommerville. He then folded up the petition, and putting it in his pocket, came up to enquire how she was? Her terror was now subsided, and having drank a glass of water, she declared herself perfectly recovered, but begged they might return to their inn: and no one making objection, they wished Mr. Burnthwaite a good morning, and left the rooms. Every step they took lessening our heroine's fears, abated her disorder, which she said was a sudden giddiness in her head, to which she was often subject. It also gave her an excuse for not going out the remainder of the day. Mr. Audley was extremely anxious to continue with her, whilst the others were finishing their walks, but with a degree of resentment in her countenance at the proposal, she not only absolutely forbad him, but said if any one offered to remain with her, it would oblige her to walk, though much against her inclination.

It must here be observed, that Mr. Burnthwaite's apparent charity arose from a strong desire to know who the party were, to whom she was so unwilling to introduce him, and he could think of no other method to gain his point: it succeeded very well, and fortunately, without his having the least idea that her illness arose from an embarrassment of any kind. When they left him, he meditated how he could contrive another interview, when a summons from a lady, to whom he paid his devoirs, put every thing else out of his head, and engaged him for several hours, happily for our heroine, as the next meeting might have discovered the secret she so earnestly wished to conceal.

The party soon returned, all but Mrs. Campbell, displeased and fatigued; Miss Winterton particularly so, for vain had been all her endeavours to recall Mr. Audley's attention. The carriages were ordered directly, and determined to make one more effort, Helen asked Honoria if she had any objection to change places with her, as she found the

closeness of the coach affect her in the morning, and thought the phaeton would revive her. Mr. Audley started, and Honoria, glad of an opportunity to convince her that she had no wish to attach him to herself, instantly replied, "I shall be much obliged by the exchange; I have many reasons for preferring the coach, and my poor head is, I think, yet scarcely well enough to be trusted in an open carriage." George, though extremely disconcerted at this proposal, could make no objection, and they set off.

He knew Miss Winterton was naturally fearful, and resolved to frighten her a little, to prevent her in future from honouring him with her company; and whipping his horses, they were soon a considerable way before the rest. In vain did Helen entreat him to drive gently; he assured her he was only impelled by fears for her, as the clouds were gathering fast, and he apprehended a heavy shower: she thought this a good reason and submitted in silence; but her terror prevented her from making those gentle reproaches for his negligence, which the hope of having an opportunity to introduce had induced her to leave the coach.

They were more than half way home when it began to rain with great violence, and she was almost wet through; afraid of catching cold, she entreated him with such earnestness either to wait a few minutes, or return and meet the coach, where she did not doubt but they would make room for her, that he could not refuse; but whilst debating the point, they heard it coming, and Mr. Audley, to save the trouble of turning his horses, determined to wait till it came up: but when it was within one hundred yards, as he was looking round, he saw it suddenly overturn, and heard loud screams from the ladies. Alarmed for all, but particularly anxious for Honoria, and not knowing what he did, he immediately jumped from the phaeton, without thinking of the condition in which he left Miss Winterton, or even putting the reins into her hand, and ran towards the coach, where, with the assistance of the servants, he soon released the ladies, who though extremely frightened, were not hurt. Mr. Hunter had, indeed, suffered severely from the pressure of his foot, which not entirely recovered from his gouty attack, had been inflamed by the exercise of the day, and was, of course, more susceptible of pain.

On examining the coach, they found one of the wheels had been so much injured by the fall, that it was impossible to proceed: the rain had fortunately lessened, but the evening was drawing to a close, and whilst they were uncertain on what to determine, the postillion said he believed there was a farm-house about a quarter of a mile off, if they crossed the fields, and he could shew them the way; in the mean time, Mr. Audley, he added, could go home in his phaeton, and send a carriage from C——, and, till that arrived, they might remain at the farm. They were all rejoiced to find there was an asylum so near, and agreed to follow the postillion, when they were astonished by Mr. Audley's servant, who returning from the spot, where his master had left the phaeton, informed them no trace of it was to be seen. Mr. Audley then, for the first time, recollecting the situation in which he had left Miss Winterton, felt ashamed of his carelessness, but not letting them observe his confusion, he gaily said, "Helena was in the right to make the best of her way home."



In a few minutes they arrived at the farm, where they were received by the mistress with great hospitality: she condoled with them on their misfortunes, and ordering a fire in her parlour, soon seated them all comfortably round it, and giving the servants some of her best ale, they set off for C—— to bring carriages, and learn some tidings of the fair fugitive, as her faithless swain humourously called her. Mrs. Hopkins apologised because she had no wine to offer them till her husband came home, but said she could make them some tea; this they thankfully accepted, and were drinking it, when she was called out of the room; but soon returned, begging they would permit her to bring in a poor lady, whom her husband had met with in his way from the fair, for whom there was no room by the kitchen fire: they immediately assented, and desired she might come in directly and partake of their refreshment; but what was the astonishment of the whole company, when, supported by the farmer, they beheld their friend, Helen, enter without a hat, and her muslin dress clung together by the rain, and almost covered with dirt! She expressed no less surprise than themselves, but intermixed with resentment towards Mr. Audley, for leaving her in so forlorn a state. He entreated her to pardon him, and said his carelessness was owing to the sudden impression of terror he received on seeing the coach overturn on account of his sister. Miss Winterton shook her head, as if she doubted his motive, and then at the request of the whole party, proceeded to inform them of what had befallen her since they parted.

“The moment George jumped out of the phaeton, (said she) the reins, which he neglected to give me, fell on the horses, and it was totally impossible for me to regain them; they set off the same pace they had been accustomed to, but my screams, I suppose, frightened them, and they began a gallop. I should certainly have been thrown out, had I not taken fast hold. They ran on in this way for some time, and I continued screaming, when fortunately I met this good farmer and his servant coming from C——, who stopped the horses, and enquired what was the matter. I begged he would take me out, and then I told him the story; he offered to let his man drive me to C——, but I positively refused to get into the phaeton, nor can I ever mount one again, I am sure; and then he said he would bring me behind him to his house, and his man should take the carriage to C——, and let my father know the accident I had met with, and that I should not return to-night. This offer I gladly accepted, but as he had no pillion, we had not gone half a mile before I slipped off, and in a very miry place, which made me in the condition you see.”

Here she concluded her relation, which afforded infinite amusement to some of them, and George whispered his sister, “he hoped the hard rain and the slough would cool the old maid’s courage.” Honoria, who saw him laugh, reproved him by a look that expressed so much dignified contempt at his conduct, that it awed him into good behaviour. Miss Winterton then declaring she had suffered so much from fatigue and terror, that she could not possibly return that night, they all agreed to stay, if Mrs. Hopkins could make up two beds for the ladies; this, she said, she could easily do, as she had several apartments neatly fitted up for lodgings, which had been let that summer to a family who only went a fortnight before. This was very agreeable intelligence, and they

all retired early, weary and harrassed with the occurrences of the day, though they had not equal reason to complain with Miss Winterton.

When they arose the next morning, they found an excellent fire in the parlour, they had quitted the evening before, (as though not far advanced in September, the weather was uncommonly cold) and a good breakfast, consisting of the best produce of the farm. Several children also came round them, and amused them with their innocent prattle. But Mrs. Campbell and Miss Winterton were shocked at the barbarous vulgarity of their names; and whilst they were consulting how they should reward Mrs. Hopkins for her trouble, it occurred to them, that exclusive of the present gratuity, it would please her highly if one of them was to offer to stand godmother to her next child, for she was then very near lying-in, and give it a name after their own fancy. Mrs. Campbell took it upon herself to stand, but insisted, that the ladies should each chuse a name for the child if it was a girl, and the gentlemen should it be a boy. Mrs. Hopkins being called in, received the proposal with the utmost gratitude, and made not the least objection to its having four names, if they would be so good as to set them down, for else, she said, she could never remember them. Mrs. Campbell then chose Cleopatra; Miss Winterton, Delia; Honoria, Henrietta; which she endeavoured to think was in compliment to her friend Lady Eustace, not daring to own even to herself that another person was in her thoughts; and Miss Audley, who loved no body so well as herself, Charlotte.

The gentlemen were then to fix. Mr. Hunter begged Mrs. Campbell to determine for him; she assented with a smile of pleasure at the compliment, and wrote Numa Pompilius. Mr. Audley requested Miss Wentworth would do the same for him; she objected for sometime, but at last being teized, with a deep sigh said, Henry. Miss Winterton pouted that he had not left it to her choice, which Mrs. Hopkins perceiving, said as the first gentleman had given two names, there was no reason why the other should not also, if Miss Winterton liked to fix on another, and George seconding the request, not to appear too obdurate, she chose Corydon. The names were then read over, and given to Mrs. Hopkins; they ran thus; Cleopatra, Delia, Henrietta, Charlotte; and Numa Pompilius, Henry, Corydon. She curtsied and thanked them for the honor they had done her, and was then handsomely paid for her trouble, and Mrs. Campbell desiring to hear when she was brought to bed, they prepared to set out, Mr. Audley observing to our heroine in a whisper, how the parson would stare when the child was carried to church. They arrived at C—— before dinner, and excepting slight colds, none suffered but Miss Winterton, who was confined for a week.

END OF VOLUME I.

HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

The hues of bliss more brightly glow  
Chasten'd by sabler tints of woe,  
And blended form with artful strife  
The strength and harmony of life.

GRAY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

M,DCC,LXXXIX.

HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

CHAP. XII.

THE first visit our heroine paid after her return, was to Mrs. Markham, who as well as Miss Onslow, gently chid her for her long absence. In excuse she told them how much she had been engaged with Mrs. Campbell's friends, and gave them a short account of their late expedition, though without mentioning those particulars, that would have rendered her narrative more amusing, and have been strictly consistent with truth, though not with friendship. She heard with great regret she should soon lose this amiable family. Mrs. Markham told her, her son Ashbourn's health being perfectly re-established, he proposed passing some time in Paris with his family, and had written to Miss Onslow's guardian to beg she might meet them there: though so long inexorable, he thought proper to grant this request, and Harry Ashbourn was come to fetch her; but as Mr. Bridges chose to see her before she went, Mrs. Markham was the following week to accompany her to London. They both requested our heroine to call on them as often as possible during their stay, which she readily promised. Before she left them, a card arrived from Mrs. Campbell, to invite them to a *converzatione*; this Mrs. Markham declined, but Miss Onslow accepted it.

Immediately on her return, Honoria was informed this party was made at Mr. Hunter's desire, who wished for some part of Mrs. Campbell's philosophical treatise, to be read to two gentlemen of his acquaintance; and in compliment to them, she had invited several of her friends to meet them, and then was to have the book introduced as it were by chance. This scheme pleased her highly; she had no fears of its reception, for in an author, modesty and vanity are incompatible qualities, and she had too much of the latter in her composition to admit one grain of the former. She entreated Honoria to attend for the next three days steadily to her pen; this she complied with so strictly, that Mrs. Campbell was greatly pleased.

By seven on the appointed evening the company were all assembled in Mrs. Campbell's drawing-room, consisting of the Wintertons and their guests; Emily Onslow, Mr. Hunter, and his two friends; Mr. Dixon, and Counsellor Milford; two other gentlemen and four ladies. If my readers expect in an account of this evening's entertainment, any thing similar to the conversations which may be heard between the members of the Blue-stocking society, they will be extremely disappointed. It has before been observed, that Honoria had sometimes here seen literary people, and those of real learning, taste and refinement; but they were generally among the accidental visitors of the city, and not any of the inhabitants, who were of that common cast of character usually met with in places remote from the metropolis. At first the conversation turned on the most trivial subjects; when an old gentleman in brown, who had hitherto observed a profound silence, thus addressed a young lady on the opposite side of the room. "Well, madam, I found you deep at your studies this morning; pray how do you like the Essay on old Maids? did

it answer your expectations?" "Yes, sir, perfectly: (replied the lady) I was extremely pleased with some part of it; the characters are extremely well drawn, and many of them interesting, and there is certainly a vast deal of wit in the performance, but so intermixed with ridicule, that I must say the author has done all in his power to prevent our sex from living in that solitary state he so ludicrously describes." "I am quite of your opinion," (said the old gentleman). "There is vast learning in the work," (observed Mrs. Campbell, either not hearing or not attending to this speech). "Well, (cried Miss Onslow) that ridicule would never influence me. I will never alter my situation, but remain the blasted tree on the wild common, if I cannot meet with a man from whose general character I may reasonably expect not to be treated with that indifference, and even contempt, I have so often observed among the husbands of my acquaintance." "Miss Onslow's perfections (said Mr. Audley) must ever secure her from both." "Really, Mr. Audley (she replied), I must be very vain indeed, if I could suppose the little merit I possess would exempt me from the fate of the rest of my sex, and alter the nature of yours." "You are very severe on us, madam, (said Mr. Milford), but this is the age for female triumph; the literary attainments of the ladies have given them so much advantage over us, that we scarcely dare make any defence, even when unjustly accused, which I hope is the case at present." This was addressed to no one in particular, but Mrs. Campbell by a bow, shewed she took it to herself.

"Yes, (added Mr. Dixon,) the authors of the Recess and Cecilia, not to mention many others, are a proof of what you assert." Mrs. Campbell, did not at all relish this speech, and coldly replied, "I know little of either; I never look at a novel, and was only tempted to read the Recess, from a hope that it would illustrate history, and was, you may believe, highly disappointed when I found it so strangely deviate from truth, and that instead of adding to my knowledge, it only bewildered my ideas." "Well, (cried Miss Mary Walton, who had not spoken before) I am surprized, Mrs. Campbell, you do not like it. I was never so charmed in my life; tis all in such high style, and about kings and queens, and lords and ladies; and then Leicester and Essex are such sweet fellows!" "Could the author hear you, madam, (said Mr. Milford) she would not be highly pleased by your approbation." "Pooh, pooh, counsellor, (returned Mr. Hedges, half aside) she is a woman of too much sense to regard the criticism of a silly girl, who can call Leicester and Essex pretty fellows." "Really, (said Mrs. Campbell) allow the work what other merit you please, yet will you not confess that the character of Elizabeth is too glorious to be treated with such disrespect?" "Her character, (replied Mr. Dixon) however glorious in other points, was so sullied by cruelty and envy, that she must become an object of disgust and aversion, if we consider the treatment the beautiful and unfortunate Mary received, when she claimed assistance and protection." "You are a partial advocate, (returned Mrs. Campbell, with a look of displeasure) therefore, if you please, we will drop the subject." "Certainly, madam, (said Mr. Dixon) I see it is a disagreeable one to you; permit me however to observe, that my opinion is the general one, for all the world places the two ladies we have mentioned, among the first female writers of the age.

Mrs. Campbell arose hastily, and ringing the bell, asked why the tea was not brought in. The servant then placing the tea table, Honoria offered to make it, and was followed to the other end of the room by Miss Onslow, who desired to sit by her.

Miss Mary Walton then again took the lead. "I always, when I read novels, (said she) love

high life; Lady France's, and Lady Caroline's, and Earls and Marquises. Why the very sound often enlivens a book that has no other merit in the world." "Then, I suppose, (cried Mr. Hedges) you do not like Fielding, or Smollet, or Le Sage?" "Oh no, (exclaimed she) I detest them. I once began Tom Jones, but could scarcely get through half a volume, it was so insupportably vulgar." "Why, indeed, (rejoined Mrs. Campbell) one cannot properly relish that book without understanding Latin; for my own part, the speeches of Partridge afford me more entertainment than any thing else through the whole." "You read Latin then, madam," (said Mr. Milford). "Oh, yes a little, Sir." (she replied, in an affected manner). "Why, Milford, (said Mr. Hunter) did I not tell you?" "I beg your pardon, Hunter, (answered he) I forgot it, but now I recollect perfectly; (and then in a lower voice, said) I flatter myself, madam, after tea we shall be favoured with your translation." She bowed, and the rest of the company joining in the request, the book was sent for and laid on the table. Mr. Hunter took it up, and looking over a few pages, closed it with an expression of admiration; and then thus addressed Mrs. Campbell— "What barbarians must that people be, who can believe women have no souls? you, madam, must have two, I am sure." This speech, absurd as it was, *she* received with a smile of approbation that arose from gratified vanity, but most of the company with a smile of contempt; and Mr. Hedges shaking his head said, "Fie, Mr. Hunter, were I a young man like you, I could have made a more gallant speech than that. I should have told the lady she had two hearts or more." Then going up to the tea table, he addressed our heroine and her friend Emily. "What do you say, young ladies, tell me, do you not care more for your hearts than your souls?" They both smiled, and replied, "I hope not, indeed, Mr. Hedges." "Well, (returned he) are your hearts in your own possessions? if not, I hope you have at least one or two more to supply the places of those you have lost." "Mine, said Miss Onslow, (colouring, but her eyes sparkling with animation and pleasure, the consequence of satisfied recollection) is well pleased with its abode, and wishes for no change." "Ah, that is right, (answered he) and your's, Miss Wentworth?" "Is at rest Sir, disturbed with neither hopes nor fears;" while the tear that stood in her eyes, contradicted the assertion of her tongue. Mr. Hedges could not but observe her emotion, though he appeared not to see it; but turning to Emily, continued to chat with her on indifferent subjects, till the tea table was removed. Mr. Audley then left Miss Winterton, who had been teizing him all the afternoon; and seated himself by our heroine, to whom he paid the most visible attention, to the no little mortification of the deserted Helen.

The book was soon introduced. Mr. Hunter offered to be the reader, and for some time it completely engaged the attention of the company. Mr. Dixon and the Counsellor, who had formed no high idea of it from Mrs. Campbell's conversation and manner, and who were determined to speak their sentiments freely, if they were required; were happy to find they could bestow real praise on it, without deviating from the truth. They were in fact extremely struck with the beauty of the language, though they still thought it a ridiculous undertaking for a woman, and that it was confused and unsatisfactory. Mrs. Campbell was highly gratified by the compliments they paid her, and quite forgot their former rudeness, as she termed it. Yet she was a little hurt on reflecting the praises were in reality due only to Honoria, and regretted that she was present to hear the encomiums bestowed on another, which she must be conscious wholly belonged to herself: she was however comforted by the strict reliance she had on her honour, and soon lost every other consideration, in the pleasure she felt at the applauses of her friends.

But though the language was elegant, the subject was not enough interesting to keep the attention of all the party alive for two hours. Charlotte Audley, and Miss Mary Walton in particular, appeared so weary, that Mr. Hunter, to relieve both them and Mrs. Campbell, who felt no little uneasiness at their indifference, at last closing the book, told the latter he must at that time give up the pleasing employment, though fully sensible he should draw the indignation of the whole company upon himself, but that he had so bad a cold in his head and eyes, that he could read no longer, to do the language the justice it deserved.

Mrs. Campbell bowed, and received the united thanks of the party, for the instruction and amusement she had afforded them; but no one offering to take Mr. Hunter's place, and it being near the time proper to take leave, they all departed, excepting the Wintertons and Audleys: Mr. Hunter, deeply against his inclinations, being obliged to attend his friends to sup with them at the inn. The rest of the evening was spent by them all in a most uncomfortable manner. Mrs. Campbell was disconcerted at that gentleman's leaving them; Helen at her lover's neglect; Honoria at his assiduity: George himself at her coldness, and Miss Winterton's tender resentment: Charlotte at the universal stupidity; and the old Doctor at his daughter's melancholy; though he could not guess the cause, yet it had been visible enough to every one else, as she scarcely spoke at all the whole evening, and kept her eyes, which sparkled with anger, constantly fixed on the cruel swain and the innocent Honoria. They parted earlier than usual, having so little inducement to remain together.

The next morning, before Honoria had quitted her chamber, she was informed Mr. Audley waited to speak with her in the parlour. She immediately hastened down stairs, but how great was her surprize when he thus addressed her?

"My charming Miss Wentworth, forgive this early visit, but I had no other possibility of seeing you, as I must leave C——— this moment with my sister, and could not go without taking leave of you, and wishing you health, and that happiness, which however you prevent all others from enjoying." "What do you mean, Mr. Audley, said Honoria, are you really going?" "I mean, Miss Wentworth, said he, you kill all our sex with hopeless love, and your own with envy. Heaven and earth! we had such a scene last night, but it was all your fault; Helen was in fits two hours; at intervals calling me all the ungrateful wretches and deceitful monsters in the world. By Jove 'twas the second part of Dido and Eneas; and there was the old gentleman swearing and vowing I should not stay another day in his house; that I had trampled on all the laws of hospitality, and seduced the affection of his girl. Yes, upon my soul, he called her his girl; and poor Charlotte stood by, looking like a fool, for Helen would not let her come near her, but raved and stamped like a fury, saying she laughed at her. So I told her to go and pack up her cloaths, and we would be off this morning before the family were up. When madam was a little recovered by the help of hartshorn and burnt feathers, and the deuce knows what, she was carried to her chamber, but not 'till she had told me, she hoped never to behold our ungrateful faces again: but, by all that's good, I believe if I had made the least concession, I should have been restored to favour; for at parting she addressed the two maids who supported her, and who had been present at the whole scene.

*"He is faithless, and I am undone;*



*Ye that witness the woes I endure,  
Let reason instruct you to shun,  
What it cannot instruct you to cure.”*

She spoke this in a most pathetic manner, and as they shut the door she waved her hand, and lifting up her eyes, said,

*“Make, oh make the maid he chuses,  
Treat his love as he does mine.”*

“I was so petrified with astonishment, that I stood for some moments in the place in which she left me, without knowing where I was. I have now been to order the phaeton, and stolen the present moment to tell you the particulars of this affair, as I doubt not but you will have it represented to you in a very different manner.”

“I am, indeed, (replied Honoria) truly concerned, but give me leave to say, though you accuse me, the fault was originally your own; and if I have been in the least accessory, it was wholly against my inclination: but I must now desire you to conclude your visit, for should Miss Winterton hear you spent the last minutes of your stay in this house, it will encrease her resentment, and I, though innocent, shall probably fall a sacrifice to it.” She then attempted to leave him, but he detained her to request she would permit him to write to her, and honour him with an answer; but this she absolutely denied, declaring that so far from answering them, if he sent any letters they should be returned unopened. He endeavoured to alter this cruel resolution, as he called it, saying, “Do not, dear Miss Wentworth, fulfil the cruel wish of that spiteful old maid:” but in vain; she again insisted on his going immediately, and at length, though unwillingly, he complied, intreating she would sometimes bestow a thought on one who should ever retain her image in his mind.

Honoria, after debating a few minutes on the best method of proceeding, determined to acquaint Mrs. Campbell with every thing that had passed, which she accordingly did at breakfast, and had the satisfaction of receiving her entire approbation of her conduct, at the same time she justly lamented the folly of her friend, and they both agreed Charlotte was very properly served for her thoughtless and ill judged ridicule. Honoria then retired to the study, and began her daily employment; when in half an hour Mrs. Campbell came hastily into the room, saying she had just received a message from Miss Winterton, requesting to see them both, and therefore desired Miss Wentworth to accompany her directly. This hasty summons fluttered her so much, she scarcely knew what she was about; but conscious of no ill, she feared her absence might be construed into a dread of Miss Winterton’s anger, and this determined her to go; closing her book therefore immediately, she prepared to attend Mrs. Campbell.

On their arrival at the Doctor’s, they were shewn into Miss Winterton’s bed-chamber: she was but just risen, and laid negligently on a sofa; she received them with a torrent of tears; but contrary to their expectations, without one reproach or expression of resentment. She told Honoria her heart had felt its death’s wound, but that she had no one to accuse but the faithless Audley. “Why, (cried she) did he ever mention the love he bore me, when he must be sensible of

the natural inconstancy of his heart? and why after beholding your charms, did I ever flatter myself with the hope of retaining his affections?"

In this manner she ran on for near an hour, giving Honoria very little opportunity to disclaim him as a lover; but this was a vain endeavour: Helen could not persuade herself but that George Audley was irresistible where he tried to fascinate; and fully convinced of this, it was impossible to undeceive her. They therefore took leave, promising to call the next day; and our heroine pleased that this affair ended without any of the consequences she expected, little thought another storm was hanging over her head, and ready to burst on her with all its violence.

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### CHAP. XIII.

WHEN Mrs. Campbell and Miss Wentworth returned home, finding the street-door open, they went up stairs without any notice; but just at the top, were stopped by hearing several voices laughing and talking very loud in the study. Mrs. Campbell soon distinguished Mr. Hunter's, and on entering the room found it was really that gentleman and his two friends, who were come to pay her a morning visit. Mr. Dixon hastily retreated from the writing table, and seated himself by the fire, with the air of a man who has pocketed a bank note. There was indeed a visible embarrassment in all their countenances; Mr. Milford appeared as if suppressing a laugh, and Mr. Hunter endeavoured to draw Mrs. Campbell's attention wholly on himself; but in vain; she saw there was something she could not comprehend, and her first idea was, that one of them had been writing a copy of verses on her, and to discover whether she had guessed right, she turned her eyes to the table, but nothing lying there that confirmed her suspicion, she would have given up the thought, when unfortunately her eyes were attracted by a large folio that was open on the desk; she grew alternately pale and red as she gazed on it with a fixed attention; when, unable any longer to bear the uncertainty, she rose, and going up to it, glanced her eye on the title page, and instantly fainted away.

Honorina, little knowing the cause of her disorder, flew to her assistance. Mr. Hunter ran for a physician, and after the usual methods had been taken she recovered her senses; by that time Mr. Hunter arrived with Dr. Golding, who after feeling her pulse, ordered her to be laid down on the bed, and said he would write a prescription which should be taken immediately. Honorina in the most affectionate manner went up to her, and begged to assist the maid in carrying her to her chamber, but she pushed her away with great violence, and replied, "she wanted no other assistance than what Susan could give." Surprized and mortified at a behaviour so different from what she had ever before experienced, and not conscious of having offended, she did not repeat her offer, but resumed her seat.

When she had left the room and the door was shut,—“So, Miss Wentworth, (exclaimed the Counsellor) you do not know the occasion of all this bustle?” “No, really, sir, (she replied) I have not the least idea, nor can I guess how I have offended Mrs. Campbell, though she certainly is angry with me.” “Then I'll tell you the cause,” answered he: then addressing the physician; “It is proper, Doctor, you should know too, that you may prescribe accordingly;” and leading them to the desk, to the utter dismay and astonishment of our heroine, she beheld the old folio translation from the Latin, out of which she had been that morning transcribing and which in her hurry to visit Miss Winterton, she had neglected to lock up as usual.

This was an enigma to Dr. Golding, but the Counsellor explained it, and then added; “If you, Miss Wentworth, left the book here, it accounts for Mrs. Campbell's apparent resentment; and forgive me if I say 'tis ten thousand to one if ever you are pardoned, for she certainly heard us laugh, which we all did most heartily at the discovery before she came in. But how happened it to be in your possession? pray does she put a double cheat upon us, and let your alterations pass for her own?” Honorina's silence convinced him this suspicion was just. “Well,” (continued he) “it puzzled me extremely last night, to find her present work so much superior to her conversation and all she had before published, but the mystery is now explained. Doctor Golding,

who had been to visit his patient, then returned, and said she wished to see Miss Wentworth, who immediately complied with her request. Mr. Hunter, who had only waited to hear how the lady was, then took leave, and was followed by his two friends, both of whom humourously wished our heroine well through the task of restoring an enraged and mortified authoress to tranquillity.

When she entered Mrs. Campbell's apartment, that lady ordered her servants to quit the room, and then with a bitterness and asperity in her manner, she had never before shewn on any occasion, she accused Honoria of having contrived this scheme purposely to mortify her, from the envy she supposed she had felt, when the praises bestowed on her the evening before, reminded her they were only due to herself. In vain Honoria endeavoured to convince her that it was merely the effect of accident; Mrs. Campbell either did not, or would not believe it, and told her with an air of contempt, she could not after this affair retain her in her service, and therefore begged she would the next day return to London, as she should never recover the effects of this accident, whilst her presence continually brought it to her mind; and added that she was at that time unequal to any longer conversation on the subject. She then gave her a banknote as a recompence for her past services, and ringing the bell, ordered Susan to assist Miss Wentworth in packing up her cloaths, as she was to leave her the next day.

Honoria then rose, and with that calm dignity which never forsook her, said, "Give me leave, madam, to thank you for the attentions I have received from you, and which are too deeply imprinted on my memory to suffer me to be guilty of such base ingratitude as that you impute to me. I shall ever retain a sense of your kindness, and I forgive, and will endeavour to forget, the unjust suspicions you entertain." She then left the room without waiting for a reply from Mrs. Campbell, who was so engaged with her own perplexities, that she took little notice of the speech.

Honoria with a heavy heart began her melancholy task: she particularly dreaded to return to London, but there was no alternative, as in all England besides she did not know a creature who could receive her. She determined, however, not to quit C——— without taking leave of her amiable friends, Mrs. Markham and Miss Onslow, and when every thing was ready for her departure, she called at the door, and fortunately found they were at home and without company. She told them she was going from C——— the next day, and therefore should not feel their absence from it; but should ever regard the hours passed in their company, as the happiest she had ever known since—here she paused, not knowing how to go on.— "Are you going to London, Miss Wentworth?" (said Mrs. Markham) "Yes, I believe I must go there, madam, but if in the country I could meet with an eligible situation, I should greatly prefer it." "What situation?" (interrupted Miss Onslow, with some surprize) "As companion to a lady or a governess, replied Honoria, embarrassed; perhaps you did not know it was in the former line I lived with Mrs. Campbell." "No, really, (returned Miss Onslow) I supposed you were a visitor." "Her kindness and attention to me, answered our heroine, made it a very probable supposition." "But why then, my dear girl, do you leave her?" Honoria hesitated, for though her own honour required some reason to be assigned, she could not bear to betray a person for whom she had still a strong regard, though she pitied her infatuation.

Whilst meditating a reply that might gratify herself, and yet not expose Mrs. Campbell;

the entrance of the counsellor and Mr. Dixon relieved her from her distress, as they immediately related the whole story, to the infinite amusement of the ladies, who then saw the reason of Honoria's embarrassment, and inwardly applauded her delicate generosity. Miss Onslow laughed heartily at the ridiculous discovery, and said, "I could almost pity any one but Mrs. Campbell, but she is so cold, so stiff and so rigid, that she scarcely deserves compassion; and then I have the strongest aversion to duplicity of every kind; perhaps I am wrong, but there are few faults I cannot more easily pardon." "*Indeed*, Miss Onslow! (said the counsellor) why you are as wicked as Sir Timothy Valerian; you confess your error, but do not mean to amend it." "I own I do love to serve my friends, that's my failing, but I cannot help it." Emily smiled and said, "Very well, Mr. Milford, but will you not allow some virtues become the contrary, by being overstrained?" "Yes, certainly, madam, but let me say in your justification, that duplicity cannot be held in too great detestation by a young mind." After some general conversation, the gentleman took leave; and Mrs. Markham and Emily both expressed the highest admiration at our heroine's forbearance, and hinting in the most delicate manner a wish to know more of her future plans and past life, she determined, as far as was in her power, to satisfy them.

She then told them, having lost her parents early in life, she was bred up by a kind and ever-lamented friend, whose death, as she had it not in her power to leave her any thing of consequence, threw her upon the world: that this lady's daughter was in the East Indies, on whose friendship she had the firmest reliance, but that she was unacquainted with her distress, and till her return she should endeavour to support herself in an honorable manner: that the lady who recommended her to Mrs. Campbell, was, she had every reason to believe, married, and probably not then in London; she had therefore no resource, but to board once more with the same person who had formerly accommodated her, and there wait till she could meet with a situation, where she might remain till the arrival of her friend; which she hoped would not be very distant, as her husband only went abroad on some business, which she did not imagine would detain them many months.

Mrs. Markham and Miss Onslow thanked her for the confidence she had reposed in them; and the latter said, she believed she knew a lady who would think herself happy in such an acquisition, if Honoria had no objection to living wholly in the country, and in a retired manner. Our heroine assuring her it was her most ardent wish to live in solitude, Emily was going to mention some farther particulars, but was interrupted by Mrs. Markham; "I suppose you mean Lady Egerton; then, perhaps, Miss Wentworth, if this proposal meets your approbation, you will not object to going up to Town with us, and then Emily can introduce you in person to her Ladyship. We shall set out the day after to-morrow; there is a vacant place in the coach, which you will make us very happy by accepting; and as it must be unpleasant to remain at Mrs. Campbell's, you had better stay with us the short time we shall continue here." Honoria consented, and with the liveliest expressions of gratitude, thanked them both for the interest they took in her happiness. She then returned to Mrs. Campbell's, with very different sensations from those she felt when she quitted the house before, and hearing she was rather better, but laid down on the bed, she left a message with Susan to inform her where she was, and why she had quitted her before the time appointed.

Once more under Mrs. Markham's hospitable roof, she felt happy and composed. Miss

Onslow then fulfilled her promise of relating to her, Lady Egerton's history, which she thought necessary for her to know, before she became an inhabitant of Elmsthorpe.

"Her mother (said Miss Onslow) died when she was an infant, and her father, Captain Hallifax, being in the army and continually moving from one place to another, intrusted her to the care of his sister, who lived in Devonshire, very near the place where I passed eight years of my life, and for those eight years we were inseparable. From this long intimacy you will allow me, my dear, to be some judge of her disposition; it is the most gentle and amiable one I ever met with, but she has too little spirit ever to be happy in this world. Mr. Lisburne, a Lieutenant in her father's regiment, and a young man of some paternal fortune, had with her father's approbation addressed her for several years, and she was sincerely attached to him; but her father thought her too young to marry, and desired them to wait till Mr. Lisburne was of age, which he was not to be till four and twenty. About fourteen months since, when he was unfortunately absent, she was seen at a ball by Sir William Egerton, who fell distractedly in love with her. I speak now literally, for surely love such as his is distraction only. He made proposals to her father, who disregarding his first engagement accepted them, and insisted on Maria's marrying Sir William with a violence; that not having me to advise, or Lisburne to support her, her gentle spirit knew not how to resist. In short, he terrified her into a compliance; and when her lover returned, and found her Lady Egerton, the shock, one should suppose, for a time deprived him of reason, for he upbraided Maria in the bitterest terms for her inconstancy, and challenged Sir William. They met, fought, and were both wounded, though not dangerously. It was in vain that at her request I represented to him the force her father had used to effect his purpose, and that her heart was his only: he would not credit me, but went to every house where she visited, and every public place where he thought he should meet her, with a design, as he said, to strike her barbarous heart with remorse. This conduct almost killed Lady Egerton, who had thus the object ever before her eyes, it was now become her duty to forget; and irritated Sir William, the natural jealousy and violence of whose temper, was increased by a consciousness that her affections were engaged to another when she married him; a circumstance, I know, he was well acquainted with, when he made his first proposals, but which the selfishness of his passion made him disregard. You may therefore believe he consented with great pleasure to a request she has lately made him of living wholly in the country; but as he is fond of rural amusements, and they engross great part of his time, he is probably fearful from the loneliness of the situation, she may repent her wish, and has desired her to look out for some agreeable female companion who may enliven her solitude. Of this she has informed me, in a letter from London, where she now is on her return from a visit to her aunt in Devonshire, and where she only waits to see me, and then goes into Lincolnshire for the winter. Now, my dear girl, as you object not to retirement, Lady Egerton is so very amiable, I think you may pass the short time you will have to dispose of, till the arrival of your friend, not uncomfortably in her society; and I dare say you will have but little of Sir William's, who is, I must own, a most disagreeable creature."

Honorina gratefully thanked Miss Onslow for her information, and gladly accepted the offer of so eligible a situation. The rest of the evening was spent in conversing on past occurrences, and future schemes; and when Mrs. Markham retired, Miss Onslow in the most delicate manner offered Honorina any pecuniary assistance which might at that time be serviceable to her; and with the timidity a considerate mind ever feels on such an occasion, begged her not to

be offended, nor construe her wishes to serve her into any ostentation or affected superiority. Honoria with a frankness, that ever marked her character, replied, "Indeed, my dear Miss Onslow, I do not think so meanly of you, and to convince you how sensible I am of your kindness, I would accept the offer if I were in the least distressed; but Mrs. Campbell's generosity has so far exceeded my wants, that I am comparatively rich; and in the comfortable prospect of Lady Egerton's protection, comparatively happy."

From the affluence in which she had passed the first eighteen years of her life, she knew not the value of money, and the natural liberality of her mind, and benevolence of her disposition, rendering her ever attentive to the distresses of others, and ever assiduous to relieve them; she had on her first arrival in England, been involved in some perplexities: but taught prudence by experience, she now regulated not merely her own expences but her charities, from a conviction that indiscriminate bounty often lessens the power of bestowing upon the worthy. Yet when extreme want solicited her benevolence, she waited not with cold propriety to enquire into their merits, but often denied herself many little articles of ornament to contribute to their relief. Thus drawing an exact line between extravagance and parsimony, she lived with comfort to herself and benefit to society; the lowest members of which, often deriving the necessaries of life from her just oeconomy, followed her steps with blessings, and addressed the earnest prayers of gratitude for her happiness to that heaven, whose commands she so exactly obeyed.

#### CHAP. XIV.

THE following day was spent in some preparations for their journey, when in the evening the footman brought in a letter directed for Miss Wentworth: she took it with that eager curiosity those feel whose bosoms are ever alive to hope, but on opening it coloured excessively, then grew pale as death, and when she had finished reading it, laid it down and burst into tears. Her kind friends, alarmed at this sudden agitation, hastily enquired the cause; she could not speak, but gave the letter to Miss Onslow, who to her great surprize read as follows:

“It was not, my charming Miss Wentworth, till after I left you yesterday at Mrs. Markham’s, that I learned your situation with Mrs. Campbell, and that by contributing to make you an object of envy, I have innocently done you a great injury, by robbing you of the asylum her house afforded, and reducing you to the necessity of seeking another. I entreat you, my lovely girl, to grant me your forgiveness, and suffer me to make all the reparation in my power, by offering you my protection, my fortune, my constant and invariable love; love which your perfections will render more lasting than those sordid ties, by which vulgar and insipid souls bind themselves; and you shall ever have the entire command of the heart and fortune of

“Your eternally devotet

*Oct. 6,*

“EDMUND DIXON.”

Mrs. Markham was extremely surprized and offended at the insolent freedom of this address, and when Honoria was a little recovered, advised her not to give way to her emotions, but treat the letter with the contempt it deserved, by taking no notice of it: but Miss Onslow thinking it would be more expressive of her just resentment, if she returned it in a blank cover, and Mrs. Markham recalling her first opinion, and joining with her, Honoria followed their advice; and whilst sealing it exclaimed in a voice broken by sobs, “Oh, it is surely the bitterest evil of poverty to be subject to the insults of the rich and powerful.” “And it is, my dear girl, (replied Mrs. Markham) the privilege of the unfortunate only to shew the meek spirit of Christian forbearance, by receiving the insolence of the world with quiet resignation, and by looking on it as one of the traits we must expect in this life, suffer it to purify our minds for a better state.” Thus did this excellent old lady draw from every event the purest precepts of religion and morality. Early the following morning they began their journey, which, from the vivacity and attention of her companions, was the pleasantest Honoria had ever known in England.

In a fairy tale of Count Hamilton’s there is an account of a palace, in one of the apartments of which four magpies are playing at quadrille, and a crow is knotting at the corner of the table. What a pity it is in these days of refinement, that the magpies and crows which infest card parties are not equally harmless! It was at a rout at Mrs. Walton’s, a few days after our heroine’s departure from C—— that her leaving Mrs. Campbell was mentioned in terms of surprize by some of the company. “Dear me, (said Miss Walton), it was very odd she did not call to take leave of us before she went.” “Take leave, indeed! (returned a lady who was just sitting down to whist), the girl I suppose, knew better than to put herself on such a footing with you; why she was only a young woman who Mrs. Campbell hired to write for her, and I think it was



very wrong to introduce her in the manner she did to all her acquaintances; but however she has smarted for it, and that will teach her better another time." "Oh, my dear Mrs. Stanton, (cried Miss Mary Walton) do tell us what you mean." "Why is it possible, Miss Mary, (returned the lady) that you have not heard the reason of her sudden departure? why it is all over the town. I know not the story perfectly myself, but as it was told me, you shall have it. But first let me remind you the other evening at Mrs. Campbell's, did you not see George Audley sitting by Miss Wentworth the whole time, and never speaking to a creature in the room but her?" "Yes, that we all did (returned Miss Mary) and if I am not mistaken, his conversation with her was something particular, for she often blushed." "Well, (continued Mrs. Stanton) this morning my mantua-maker came to try on my new chintz gown, that one you know which you admired so much, and said it was the most elegant thing you had ever seen. So I asked her, for these kind of people generally know all the news, if she had heard why Miss Wentworth left Mrs. Campbell? Now I would not have what I say repeated, because it might hurt the poor woman in her business; but she told me, that a few nights ago she went to Miss Winterton's by appointment, but found she was so ill that she could not see her; so she asked the maid what was the matter? and she told as a great secret that she believed her mistress was jealous of Miss Wentworth and Mr. Audley, for that the night before she came home from Mrs. Campbell's in fits, and told Mr. Audley he was the most barbarous man in the world; she did not know entirely what had passed, but added, that "Audley's folks were gone off that morning in the whiff of a hurry," that was the maid's expression. Well, upon this her curiosity was so excited, that she goes to Mrs. Campbell's to see Susan, who is her cousin; and she learned from her that her lady and Miss Wentworth had been to Miss Winterton's, and that she came home ill, fainted away, and sent off Miss Wentworth directly. Now Susan seemed to think that Mr. Audley waited somewhere on the road for her, for that he had been with her half an hour in the morning before her mistress was up; and I dare say it was so, for the girl would never have quarrelled with her bread and butter, unless she had secured herself another establishment.

All the company agreed in this idea; and another lady said she was sure it must be so, for that day she was riding eight miles from C——, and met Mr. Audley in his phaeton with a lady, who could not be his sister, for she always rode in a green great coat, and this had a brown one. Thus was this point determined to the general satisfaction of all the company, except Miss Walton, who though she dared not controvert the established opinion, said, she was very much concerned for Miss Wentworth, who had ever appeared to her as a most amiable woman. "I am surprized, Anne, you could think so, retorted Mary abruptly; to me she was always insipid and disagreeable." Here Mrs. Stanton's partner, who loved the four honors better than all the scandal in the world, and had most impatiently waited the end of her relation, interrupted the young lady, saying peevishly, "I wish, Miss Mary, you would not call off Mrs. Stanton's attention from her cards any longer; you may discuss this affair another time." This reproof put a stop to the conversation; but from this only arose the report that Miss Wentworth left C—— with Mr. Audley, which was afterwards currently believed by the whole city, excepting the few who knew better, but whose interest prevented them from relating the truth.

Miss Winterton was one of the first who credited the story; she was convinced of his attachment to her, and doubted not but she returned it, notwithstanding her asseverations to the contrary: she had seen her and Mrs. Campbell but the morning of her departure, in perfect

harmony with each other; and her friend, as she imagined from delicate attention to her feelings, evidently avoided the subject, nor ever gave her any reason for their parting. She was not in fact sorry for the report, nor would ever contradict it, lest the real reason should be discovered. Mr. Hunter, when his friends returned from Mrs. Markham's, and informed him they had rallied Miss Wentworth on the adventures of the day, requested them in the most earnest manner not to mention it again to any one; as, if it was made publick through his or their means, it would infallibly lose him the favor of Mrs. Campbell, and entirely ruin his hopes. They scrupled not promising him secrecy; and leaving the town a few days after, knew not how deeply their keeping that promise, wounded the reputation of our heroine. Mr. Dixon was highly mortified at receiving his own letter in a blank cover, but rejoiced that he had trusted no one with his scheme, as consequently no one could exult in his disappointment.

Mrs. Markham on her arrival in London, went to a relation's in Cavendish-square, where her grandson was; and left Honoria with Miss Onslow at her guardian's lodgings, in Bishopsgate-street. He received them civilly, but coldly; and when they had taken some refreshment, desired Emily to attend him into another apartment; she consented, but with visible reluctance, and during their absence, which lasted an hour, Honoria was tormented with continual and almost impertinent questions from Mrs. Bridges, a woman, whose curiosity was her predominant quality. These enquiries were often particularly distressing to her, as she was at a loss how to answer; and she was happy when the entrance of her friend put a stop to them, though concerned to see her eyes red and swelled, and a look of deep displeasure in her countenance. At supper, Mrs. Bridges, whose conversation was all interrogation, asked her how she liked C———? "Very much indeed," (returned Emily). "What, better than Devonshire, I suppose?" "Yes really, madam." "Well, what, did you ever see Captain Harcourt there?" "No," (cried Emily, with an indignation in her voice and manner that she could not suppress). "Hush, my dear, (exclaimed her husband) what signifies talking of that now?"

When they retired, Honoria took no other notice of what passed in the evening, than expressing her concern to see her out of spirits. "Yes, (cried Miss Onslow) my guardian has been reading me a fine lecture; a lecture which I hope my late conduct has not deserved, but which even if it had, was not given in a proper manner to make any impression on my mind." She then asked Honoria, if it would be agreeable to her to go to Lady Egerton's the next morning after breakfast: to which she immediately consented, glad of an opportunity to leave a family, whose manners were so ill suited to her own.

The next day at eleven, Mr. Bridges' carriage came to the door, and soon conveyed them to Sir William Egerton's, in Somerset street. Lady Egerton, whose pale countenance and dejected manner too plainly shewed the state of her mind, received her friend with animated satisfaction, and Honoria with a polite affability. Miss Onslow had by a note sent early in the morning, informed her of her intention, and had the happiness of seeing this interview complete her purpose; her friends were mutually pleased, and Lady Egerton entreating Emily to spare our heroine immediately, she consented, though unwilling, to part with her for the time she remained in town: but reflecting, if her own situation was disagreeable, how much more so her friend's was, gave up her own wishes in compliance with Lady Egerton's request. As she had promised to dine with them, it was not till late in the evening she left Honoria with her new patroness,

promising to see them as often as possible during their stay. But the next morning at breakfast, when Sir William first made his appearance, he told Lady Egerton, that now having a companion, there was no reason for her remaining any longer in town, and desired they would set out for Elmsthorpe the next day, and he would follow them in less than a week. Lady Egerton immediately assented; and with Honoria devoted that morning to take leave of Miss Onslow, who was the less disconcerted at this intelligence, as it had been just concluded upon by Mr. Henry Ashbourn, that they would quit London a week earlier than they had at first intended. Emily promised to write to them both frequently, and they parted with mutual expressions of friendship and regret. Honoria in their return to Somerset-street, called on Mrs. Markham, who was truly rejoiced at her happy establishment, and congratulated Lady Egerton on the acquisition Miss Wentworth would be to her. Lady Egerton replied, she was very sensible of it, and grateful to Miss Onslow for her introduction of Honoria.—It was with deep regret our heroine observed that Mrs. Markham appeared languid and weak, but hoping she might attribute it chiefly to the fatigue so long a journey must have naturally caused in a person at her advanced age, endeavoured with that hope to console herself.

During the short time Honoria had been in London, she had only been out in a carriage; but when in the streets, her eyes were ever directed to the passing objects, as if anxious, yet afraid to discover among them one who could interest her. In the afternoon, she recollected her old landlady, for whom though she had no affection, she thought it right to enquire; and sending for a Hackney coach, drove to Great Marlborough-street, and stopping at Mrs. Gibbon's, enquired if she knew where Mrs. Middleton then lived. Mrs. Gibbons did not at first recollect Honoria, till the enquiry brought her person to her remembrance. She received her with great civility, but said, she was sorry to inform her that Mrs. Middleton was dead. She had been so much hurt by the idea that the fire was occasioned by her own carelessness, that she never wholly recovered it, but fell into a rapid decline, which ended her life but a few days before; and added, that her husband still lived at Mr. Burnaby's, to whom she would faithfully deliver any message, as she often saw him. Honoria expressed her regret at the poor woman's unhappy fate, and thanking Mrs. Gibbons for her information and civil offer, took leave, not imagining it could be of the least consequence to acquaint Mr. Middleton of her change of situation, though she had intended to inform his wife.

Sir William, who ruled in his own house with the most absolute sway, ordered the carriage at six the next morning, and desired the ladies to be ready at that time. His lady assenting, Honoria had no right to object, though she regarded it as one proof among many others of his arbitrary disposition. They slept the first night at Huntingdon, and arrived the next day to dinner at Elmsthorpe, where, at the appointed time, they were joined by Sir William, whose presence, instead of adding to their comfort, laid them under a continual restraint, from the haughty austerity of his manner and conversation.

Honoria had formed a very different idea of the situation of the place from the reality; connecting that of a jealous husband, with an ancient castle, built in a remote and gloomy wood, and surrounded with high hills. Unacquainted with the nature of the country, she had pictured to herself a building of this kind, and was surprized at seeing a modern house in a small park, where a few trees were thinly scattered; the country flat for many miles, the corn-fields bounded by no hedges, and the meadows adorned by no trees. The desolate appearance of the place, for it was

now the latter end of October, and a very wet season, gave her mind an unpleasant impression, when she beheld it, an impression no favourable circumstance ever counteracted.

The few among the neighbouring families whom the approach of winter had not called to London, visited them sometimes, but always in a formal and unsocial manner; and at these meetings the conversation of the gentlemen turned wholly on sporting or politics, and that of the ladies on domestic events, or the little scandal the country affords; they could give no entertainment to Honoria's polished and cultivated mind; and she was soon convinced that a life of almost total inaction, is particularly unfit for those who have been depressed by any heavy affliction. Her thoughts, which at C——— were enlivened by a variety of objects, which if they failed to please, generally amused; were now wholly employed in re-tracing former scenes, the recollection of which always added to her dejection. Lady Egerton too, giving way to the languor which oppressed her, usually sat a picture of silent melancholy.

Even the relief of books was denied them; Sir William seldom read himself, and of course his library consisted of a very few, and those were either too trifling to engage attention, or such as Honoria was too well acquainted with to receive any entertainment from their perusal. Music was their only resource, and that was a dangerous one. Lady Egerton was extremely fond of it, and played well; but Honoria understood it scientifically, and was a most capital performer; but not having practised however since she left Ireland, she had lost in some degree her skill, but this by strict attention she soon recovered. There was a very fine organ, and whilst Sir William was engaged in the morning, Lady Egerton would listen for hours whilst Honoria played, whose disposition leading her to chuse the most plaintive tunes, this, instead of becoming an amusement, only nourished both in herself and her friend, that sorrow so destructive to her peace.

Scottish airs were particularly their favourites; and one day Honoria recollecting "Robin Gray" was often sung by Colonel Effingham in their hours of happiness at Wood Park, began to play it, and joining her voice without observing her friend was silent, went through it; the tears streaming down her cheeks from the painful regret which filled her mind, when shocked and surprized at seeing Lady Egerton, whose head rested on the back of her chair, in an agony of grief; she suddenly thought of the impropriety she had been guilty of, in fixing on a song, the story of which was so exactly similar to her case. She entreated Lady Egerton to forgive her folly; Lady Egerton made no answer, but pressing her hand in an affectionate manner, burst again into tears, and threw her head on Honoria's lap, who grieved at her emotion, and oppressed with her own ideas, wept silently over her. They had remained but a few minutes in this luxury of grief, when Sir William entered, and hastily demanded "what was the matter?" He soon learned the cause was melancholy music, and knowing Mr. Lisburne was a performer, became jealous of the organ, from supposing it recalled his image to his lady's mind. With an affected solicitude for their health and spirits, which, he said, so much crying would injure, he bade them follow him into the parlour, and locking up the music room and taking the key, declared they should play no more but in his presence, and then he would chuse their music. Lady Egerton as usual acquiesced without a word, but Honoria, whose indignation was raised by this unjust tyranny, retired to her chamber, and remained there the whole day, pleading a head-ach, which was in fact not merely an excuse, as the violence of her agitation had really extremely disordered her.

## CHAP. XVI.

THE letters which they both frequently had from Miss Onslow, were now all that enlivened their solitude, as her descriptions were animated and amusing: but after a long silence, they received one which was far from having the usual effect, as it informed them of the death of Mrs. Markham. Miss Onslow said, her health had been declining ever since her first arrival in London, where at the request of her friend Mrs. Draper, she had remained ever since: but that about three weeks before, that lady apprehending for the first time her danger, wrote to Mrs. Ashbourn at Paris, desiring her to return immediately to England. Mrs. Ashbourn was divided between her affection to her mother and husband, who had relapsed, and was then in a most alarming state, at last determined to leave him to the care of his children, as there was no appearance of an immediate termination of his life, and go to Mrs. Markham. On her arrival she found that excellent lady so much reduced, that she thought it impossible for her to exist many days. In fact, in less than a week she expired in her daughter's arms, and resigned her breath with that tranquillity, which a consciousness of having strictly fulfilled every duty both to God and man, will ever give to the last moments of a Christian. As soon as the last sad duties were performed, Mrs. Ashbourn hastened to Paris, where she had the satisfaction of finding her husband rather better, though yet too weak to undertake a journey to the South of France, which however the physicians declared was absolutely essential to his perfect recovery. Miss Onslow then begged them to pardon her long silence, as she had been constantly engaged in assisting her friends in their attendance on their father, and promised to write again before they left Paris.

Both Lady Egerton and Honoria were deeply afflicted at this intelligence; they not only regretted the death of Mrs. Markham, for whom the former had a high respect, and the latter a sincere affection, but they lamented the long absence of their friend, Emily; and meeting with no variety to relieve the melancholy impression it gave them, it for some time added to the dejection that was now in a manner become habitual.

Sir William still continued firm to his purpose, and they had no access to the music room but in his presence. The evenings were devoted to whist or cribbage, if they could get a fourth, which was seldom wanting, as Mr. Millar, the clergyman of the parish, was so fond of cards, he with pleasure attended them almost every afternoon, leaving his poor wife, who could neither ride nor walk two miles in the winter, at home to take care of her seven children, and attend to her domestic duties. Regularly however on a Sunday they both, and some of the children dined at Elmsthorp, and were always brought and sent home in the coach. This was literally a day of rest to Honoria, who had an extreme dislike to cards, and her natural fondness for children made it the most agreeable one in the week, as some of the little Millars were pretty and engaging. To Henry and Sophia she grew particularly attached, and grateful for her kindness, they returned it with equal affection.

It was now the beginning of February; and the weather which had been before almost a series of incessant rains, settled into a calm and clear frost; which gave Lady Egerton and our heroine, opportunities to indulge their partiality for walking. They frequently rambled into the village, and visited the cottagers, where, by relieving their necessities, they bestowed upon

others, that happiness, they were incapable of feeling themselves. One day as they were wandering through the village, they met a cart loaded in so strange a manner, that it excited their curiosity, and stopping at a farm house, they enquired of the mistress if she knew what it was, and learned from her, that it belonged to a company of strolling players, who were come to perform for a few weeks. This being something like an amusement, was pleasing intelligence to Lady Egerton, who gladly caught at any relief from her own thoughts; and communicating her intention of visiting the theatre to Sir William, he made no objection, but an engagement preventing them the first night of performance, on the second, not chusing to go himself, he consigned them to the care of his friend Millar.

The play was *Romeo and Juliet*, and the entertainment *Rofina*. The part of *Romeo*, as expressed in the written bills, by Mr. Meadows, and *Juliet* and *Rosina* by Mrs. Meadows. The accommodations were, as they expected, very indifferent, and the actors in general wretched and ill drest. *Romeo* was genteel and handsome, but ranted so violently, that it was highly amusing to the ladies; the farmers wives and daughters however who were present, cried almost throughout the whole play, and extolled the fine acting as they called it. The appearance of *Juliet* charmed and surprized them; she was exactly the age the poet has fixed; her person small and delicate, her face not beautiful, but extremely pretty, though pale. Her voice weak, but her manner of speaking just and energetic: and her dress compared with the rest, elegant: it was a fine muslin petticoat and train, a lutestring body, a sash and a chip hat, ornamented with a large plume of white feathers. There was an appearance of something superior to the station she was then in, that struck Lady Egerton and our heroine, and she gave the most pathetic parts of the play with great energy and feeling, even shedding tears, and seeming strongly agitated in the scene between *Juliet* and *Lady Capulet*. When the play was concluded, she fainted away, from the exertions she had used, and continued a long time so ill, that the entertainment was delayed above half an hour. The people at length grew so clamourous that she altered her dress, and appeared as *Rosina*; as there was no other young woman in the company, who could take her part. She went on tolerably, for two or three scenes, but just as she had concluded one of the songs again fainted, and was carried off the stage.

Mr. Millar then, at Lady Egerton's request, asked her husband how he could suffer her to appear again, after having been so ill. He replied with a low bow, that he was very sorry; but he believed the reason of her illness was, that she had not tasted any meat for three days; and that as she had not gone through the whole of her part, he doubted whether the manager would give them the promised stipend, with which they hoped that evening to procure a hot supper, the hope of which had induced her to endeavour to go through *Rosina*. Shocked at this speech, Mr. Millar called for the manager, and asking him if Meadows had any reason for his supposition, assured him if he did not immediately, in the presence of the whole audience, pay him the sum agreed on, the company should the next day be turned out of the village; and addressing Lady Egerton, said, he was sure she would use her whole interest with Sir William on the occasion, who had power, as Justice of the peace, to send them away directly. The manager, intimidated by this menace, complied at once, and Lady Egerton and Mr. Millar received the poor man's grateful thanks. The farce was then ordered to go on, that the people might not be disappointed, which it did; the girl who acted *Phoebe* reading the part of *Rosina*, and omitting all the songs. But even in this manner it pleased the rustics, who departed highly satisfied with their entertainment. Mr. Millar was

rejoiced that he had done a charitable action, and Lady Egerton and Honoria were secretly happy in the idea of enquiring further into the story, and contributing to the future relief of this apparently unfortunate young couple.

Sir William on their return seemed amused with their account, and promised to attend them himself another time. The next morning, followed by the servant carrying two bottles of wine, the ladies walked to the village, and stopping at the cottage where Mrs. Meadows lodged, enquired how she was; they were informed rather better than the evening before, but still very weak. Her husband came out, and respectfully asked them if they would walk in; they assented, and shewing them into a neat little room, where his wife was sitting, Mr. Meadows immediately withdrew. She attempted to stand up when they entered, but could not; Lady Egerton begged her not to make the attempt, and said she was sorry to witness her illness the preceding night, and still more sorry to learn the cause; that she had brought some wine which she desired her to accept, and hoped it would be of service to her. The poor young woman burst into tears at this unexpected kindness, and strove to express her gratitude, but could not for some moments articulate. When she began, Lady Egerton stopped the effusions of her heart, by saying, she wished to extend her relief beyond the present moment, if she would inform her in what manner she could serve her. She shook her head, and replied, nobody could serve her; that she had been guilty of the fault, and perhaps ought to suffer the punishment. "What fault (returned Lady Egerton) can you have been guilty of? You seem very young, are you married to Mr. Meadows?" "Oh yes, madam, indeed I am married; the fault I allude to is disobedience. I ran away with him to Scotland without my father's consent, and he has never seen me since, he is so angry; though, to be sure, if he did but know how often I have been almost starved, he would relent a little." "Why then, (said Lady Egerton) if your profession is so very unprofitable, do you still follow it? Cannot your husband gain a livelihood by any other means?" No, madam, (replied Mrs. Meadows) he never learned any trade; his father was a miller in Dorsetshire, but died when he was about twelve years old; his mother married again very soon, and his father-in-law used him so ill, that he ran away before he was fifteen. He lived two or three years I do not know how, and at last got into a company of strolling players." But where did you meet with him?" (interrupted Lady Egerton) "Why, if it will not intrude too much on your time, ladies, (said Mrs. Meadows) I will give you some farther account of myself, as, though it will not make me appear wholly excusable, yet I flatter myself you will view my conduct in a more favourable light, than you can do at present." Her Ladyship and Honoria both expressing a wish to hear her story, she began:

"My father is a farmer in Yorkshire. My mother died when I was about five years old, and not having any female relation to take care of me, he was advised by a person in the neighbourhood to send me to school; and thinking, as I should have a tolerable fortune being his only child, that if he was at the expence of sending me out, he had better give me a good education at once, determined to take me to London, to his sister, who was married there, and then look out for a proper situation with her assistance; and this he was the more induced to, as I could spend my holidays with my uncle and aunt, and in every other respect be under their care. This scheme was no sooner thought on than executed; my aunt fixed upon a proper place, and there I remained ten years, without ever returning to Yorkshire; as my father thought it would be too great an expence to have me up and down often; and as he came to town every year, and I staid almost every school recess at my uncle's, who was a haberdasher in King-street,

Bloomsbury, I had no wish to go home.

“The school where I was, though not a capital, was a very genteel one, and the number of scholars limited. As my father allowed me very handsomely for cloaths, I made as good an appearance as any of my companions, even those whose birth and fortune placed them in a much higher rank of life; and always having plenty of pocket money, and being naturally inclined to let them share with me the little comforts it afforded, I soon made myself many friends, and was frequently asked by their parents to accompany them home for several days at a time: by these means I often associated with my superiours; and even my aunt’s acquaintance, though only in her own line of life, by conversing with those above them, and mingling in the world, had acquired a kind of gentility in their manners, not to be met with among the rustics at a distance from the metropolis; and their conversation was generally amusing, as they knew all the common topics which engrossed the minds of the more fashionable circles.

“I had learned during my stay at school, French and English grammatically, dancing, needle-work of all kinds, writing and arithmetic. I was very anxious to add music to the list, but that my father prudently refused; however I devoted all my leisure to pick up what little knowledge of it I could gain from my school-fellows, or else to reading such books as I could borrow. They were always plays, novels, or poetry; dangerous studies, I am now convinced, for a young person who has no adviser to direct her to the best, perhaps I might say, the least injurious.—Extremely attached to my aunt, who had been a mother to me, and happy among my companions, it was with great regret I heard of my father’s intention of taking me home the next vacation. Convinced however that to object would be undutiful, I never expressed the concern I felt, except at parting with my aunt; surely my grief was a presentiment that I should never see her again, and of the evils I have since experienced.

“On my return to Yorkshire, I was shocked, and disgusted, at the coarseness of manners, and vulgarity of expression, of those with whom I was destined to converse; but perhaps this by degrees might have worn off, and I might have been reconciled to their society, if my father had not been so precipitate, but in less than a fortnight he told me without any ceremony, that he had promised farmer Rogers I should marry his son, and desired I would prepare myself to comply. Oh ladies! you cannot think how I was shocked at this command.” “Oh yes, (replied lady Egerton, with a deep sigh) I can, indeed, and sincerely pity you; but your heart was not then engaged to an amiable and deserving object?” “No, madam, returned Mrs. Meadows, but Thomas Rogers was a mere clown; he could talk of nothing but farming, hay and wheat, and such things; and then he was so rude and rough, I could not bear him. However I only told my father, I hoped he would not oblige me to marry against my inclinations, but he said, his word was given, and he could not retract, and that I had best say no more about it. From this time young Rogers came to us every evening, and I was obliged to be civil to him before my father; but when we were alone, I always told him I should not marry him, and he used to say, he hoped I would alter my mind. In the mean time a company of players came into the village; and by way of avoiding him, and amusing myself, I went to the play as often as possible. Meadows was then manager, and I could not forbear comparing him with my lover, to the infinite disadvantage of the latter. The parts he acted were such as to a young girl, fond of theatrical amusements, represented him in the most captivating light. In a short time we became acquainted, and knowing how disagreeable the



engagement my father had made was to me, he spared no pains to pervert my mind, by saying a father had no right to command the affections of his child, declaring his own passion for me, and assuring me he had some property in Dorsetshire, which would support us comfortably, if my father should remain inexorable. In short, ladies, for why should I expatiate on my folly? his entreaties prevailed: dreading an union with young Rogers, and weakly flattering myself, my father would forgive my disobedience, when the event was past recall, I consented to accompany him to Scotland. To raise money for this expedition, he sold the scenes, dresses, and every thing that in the character of manager belonged to him; not doubting any more than myself, but that we should be received on our return. But in this we were cruelly disappointed; my father shut his doors against us, and except sending my cloaths, absolutely refused us any assistance. Thus were we thrown on the world at once. Deprived of his stock in trade, my husband had no resource but becoming a subaltern actor in that or some other company, and I offered my abilities, though conscious of their inferiority. In this way of life we have continued several months, sometimes living tolerably well, at others experiencing the utmost penury and distress."

Here Mrs. Meadows concluded her little narrative, during the recital of which she had shed many tears. Lady Egerton assured her she would exert all her powers to relieve her from this uncomfortable situation, as though her quitting her father was not wholly to be defended, yet his conduct had made it more excusable. "Perhaps, added she, if Sir William was to write to him he might relent, finding a stranger could interest himself in your behalf." "I fear he would not, madam." "Supposing (interrupted Honoria) he should offer to receive you if you would leave your husband, could you consent?" "No, madam, indeed I would not. Before I married I owed no duty but to my father; that I dared violate, and heaven has punished me for it. But I will not be again guilty; I will not voluntarily break a voluntary engagement, and forget the vows I so lately swore to keep inviolable. Whatever misfortune we may meet with, whatever poverty we are involved in, it is my duty to share it. Yet I will not take more merit than I deserve; affection has equally with duty fixed my resolution, and nothing shall alter it: my husband has ever behaved to me with unremitted kindness, though deeply distressed at the mortification he met with on my father's refusing us admittance."

Lady Egerton and Honoria both applauded her resolution, and the latter said her question was only to try the steadiness of her attachment, and that her answer had proved its sincerity. Lady Egerton then giving her five guineas for her present support, and enquiring her father's name and address, left her hastily to avoid her expressions of gratitude.

She related the whole to Sir William on her return, and he appeared to take more than usual interest in it; and immediately wrote to the father, informing him, that under the complicated evils of distress of mind, sickness, and poverty, his daughter had been found by strangers who afforded her that relief she was denied by those, from whom she had a natural right to expect it. He then begged him to consider that though she had once materially offended him, she was still his child, and as such had still a claim to his protection; and that he had been in great measure accessory to the evil, the consequences of which he refused to pardon, by giving her an education equally improper and ridiculous, for the station of life in which he meant to fix her; and hoped this letter would set the affair in a light, which probably he had never before considered it in; and induce him to receive his daughter and her husband, and by taking them

from the misfortunes to which they were at present exposed, prevent himself from being answerable for their misconduct, as whatever errors they might be guilty of, would undoubtedly be caused by his unnatural behaviour.

This letter, though written in Sir William's usual style, had the desired effect. The farmer, ashamed that his rigid conduct should be known and condemned, answered in the most humble manner; thanking him and his lady for their goodness to his child, and accompanied it by a letter to her, expressing his forgiveness, and adding that if she and her husband would leave their vagrant profession, and return to him, he would endeavour to put them in some way of supporting themselves.

When this was carried to the poor creature, it almost overset her reason with joy. She threw herself at Lady Egerton's feet, and burst into tears; nor was Mr. Meadows much less affected; he gratefully acknowledged Sir William's and his Lady's kind interference, and said he would endeavour to deserve it by the strictest attention to his father. Sir William then gave them a handsome present to defray the expences of their journey, and sent another letter by them to the old man, expressing himself highly satisfied with his conduct, and recommending a mild and good-humoured treatment, as the best way of making an impression upon generous minds. They had then the pleasure of seeing them depart with chearful and contented countenances; and had themselves the innate happiness of reflecting, they had saved a young creature from inexpressible misery, and perhaps from guilt, for in a situation so public, yet so distressed, who can tell what poverty might have driven her to?—Then how, ye rigid censurers of fallen virtue, can ye condemn that conduct, which is often the result of despair in minds once pure and spotless; and who in the days of prosperity would have shuddered like yourselves, at that infamy, to which the most complicated evils have exposed them.

## CHAP. XVII.

THE active part Sir William had taken in this affair, pleased Lady Egerton, and in some measure reconciled Honoria to him: she began to think, could he divest himself of his jealousy and haughtiness, he would be a tolerable companion; and from the animation their anxiety for the Meadows's had raised in their minds, the time had of late passed more pleasantly than usual. Their conversations took a livelier turn, and Sir William, gratified by the tranquillity that appeared in his Lady's countenance, not only relaxed his severity, but even endeavoured to amuse them. He gave up the key of the music room, and strove to make parties that they would think agreeable.

This harmony continued till the latter end of March; when an accident happened that entirely destroyed it. At a town about three miles from Elmsthorpe, there was an annual ball at this time; as it was resorted to by every body of the first fashion for many miles round, it was advertized in all the newspapers for a fortnight before. Sir William had pleased himself with the idea that it would be an agreeable evening to his Lady and Honoria, and was extremely disappointed when in the morning at breakfast, the former mentioned her intention of staying at home, and gave as a reason that she had a cold and violent head ach, which she feared the heat of the ball room would increase. He remonstrated, but in vain; she continued firm to her purpose, and as she pleaded illness, he could not without an appearance of barbarity insist on her compliance. "What, and shall not you go, Miss Wentworth?" (said he) "No, Sir, (answered Honoria) I shall certainly attend Lady Egerton." "Tis very well," replied he, biting his lips with vexation and anger, for even in so trifling a circumstance, he could not brook the least disappointment. He spoke not again the whole time of breakfast; and when he retired, Lady Egerton bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Wentworth, how does my cruel fate pursue me! I see you are surprised at my declining an amusement I have for some time thought of with pleasure; but yesterday morning when we were airing with Mrs. Allen, did you not observe a gentleman in a blue coat, alighting from his horse at the George, at S———? Yes, my dear girl, that is the very man I have taken such pains to avoid, who is now I doubt not with his usual cruelty, come down on purpose to meet me at the ball; but I have fortunately discovered his intention; as I was not in our own carriage, he will not suspect I know of his arrival. I am sorry (added she) to keep you at home, but I dare not stay alone, lest he should attempt to see me." "Do not, dear Lady Egerton, (replied Honoria) let the idea of my losing an entertainment distress you; believe me, so far from wishing to join the party, nothing but the fear of appearing singular, prevented me from requesting to be left behind." Lady Egerton was satisfied by this assurance; but Sir William continued the whole day in his gloomy disposition, and set off in the evening for S———, without having once spoken to either of them.

The instant the carriage drove from the door, Lady Egerton went into her dressing room, rang the bell, and ordered the servant, if any one should call in the course of the evening, to say she was not at home; then telling Honoria she was too much out of spirits to converse, begged she would read to her; she instantly complied, and taking up a volume of Shakespeare, began *As you like it*; but had scarcely finished one act, before they were both alarmed by a loud ringing at the porter's lodge: Lady Egerton turned pale as death, but soon recovered, and nothing further

passing, Honoria went on 'till it grew too dark to see without candles, and was then going to ring for them; but Lady Egerton stopped her, saying she was just in the humour to enjoy the light of the moon, which then shone very bright through the windows, and would indulge her pensive inclination for some time. She then leaned her head back on the sofa, and gave way to the melancholy ideas that obtruded themselves in her mind.

Honoria imagining her presence was a restraint, left the room and walked for half an hour up and down a gravel walk in the garden, when she was recalled to the house by loud and repeated screams; she flew to the dressing-room, where she found Lady Egerton in strong fits, but wholly disregarded by Sir William, who was raving like a madman, and vainly endeavouring to make himself understood by two strange gentlemen, who with Mr. Millar, were present at this scene. Honoria waited not for an explanation, but flew to Lady Egerton's assistance, rubbed her temples with hartshorn, and at length restored her in some degree. From the haughty agitation which appeared in the countenance of one of the gentlemen, and knowing Lady Egerton's apprehensions, she immediately guessed it was Mr. Lisburne; the other she had never seen before, but from his assisting Mr. Millar to keep him and Sir William apart, she judged there had been some dreadful quarrel on his Lady's account; but how they came all in the dressing-room she could not learn, for they spoke so loud and with such extreme anger, she could not distinguish a syllable to give her the least information. However, justly supposing her afflicted friend would not recover whilst within hearing of the dispute, she rang for her woman, and with her help carried her to her own chamber and laid her on the bed. When a little recovered, Lady Egerton addressed Honoria, who was watching her in mournful silence. "Oh, my dear girl, shall I ever survive this dreadful night! Sir William will kill him, I know he will. Why did you leave me? perhaps your persuasions might have aided mine, and they would not have met." Honoria begged her to compose herself and endeavour to rest, but this was out of her power. However, after some time she lay silent for a few minutes, and our heroine stole softly out of the room, and went down stairs to learn if possible the occasion of the late confusion.

In the parlour she only found Sir William and Mr. Millar, the others were gone; and immediately on her entrance, the former thus addressed her with mingled rage and contempt. "Well, madam, you are a fine companion for a faithless wife, a kind, convenient friend, who can introduce a lover, and regard not the agonizing pangs of a husband: but by heaven this night is the last you spend under this roof; whether I live or die, my commands shall be obeyed. If I fall, my blood will rest on you, and if I execute my just vengeance on the guilty Lisburne, the crime will lie to your account, for but by your cursed contrivance we had never met." Honoria for a few moments stood speechless with astonishment at the strange and violent charge, accompanied with so terrible a denunciation: at length recovering her voice, she begged to know what he meant, and what crime it was he dared accuse her of? She spoke with a warmth that surprised him; but injured innocence and conscious integrity gave an unusual spirit to her words and manner. He then directly charged her with having introduced Lisburne to his Lady's dressing-room, and leaving them together. She then in the most solemn manner assured him, that half an hour before she was summoned to the apartment by Lady Egerton's screams, she left her by herself, and had been walking alone in the garden from that time, and had not seen a single creature, nor did she on entering the room know who either of the strangers were. He heard her finish her speech, and then with the utmost contempt said, he did not believe one word of it; that

it was her interest to say so, and his lady's to countenance her, but it would never make the least impression on him. "You may therefore (he continued) go back to your injured and innocent friend, as no doubt you think her, and console her with the intelligence, that before twelve hours are at an end, either her lover or her husband will be no more; fate only can determine which; but at all events she must prepare herself to leave this house to-morrow morning; if I escape a bullet, I must fly my country to avoid an halter, and I promise her she shall be the companion of my flight; and lest I should fall, I will spend this night in taking measures to prevent her from being that gainer by my death she doubtless hopes to be." He then quitted the room, followed by Mr. Millar, who stood aghast, yet dared not interpose. The barbarity of this speech absorbed Honoria's own resentment in the compassion she felt for her amiable and afflicted friend; she returned and passed the night by her bed side, endeavouring but in vain to comfort her.

I will now acquaint my readers with the particulars of this fatal adventure. Sir William when he entered the ball room was engaged by some gentlemen to make a party at whist: he directly sat down to the table, but before the cards were dealt, was accosted by Mrs. Allen and some other ladies, who enquired why Lady Egerton was not there? he replied she complained of a cold and head-ach, and he could not prevail on her to come. Just as he spoke this, he turned round to answer a gentleman who had addressed him, and saw Mr. Lisburne standing so near, that he must have heard all that passed; he made him a formal bow, and instantly left the card-room. Sir William played one game very uneasily, then calling Mr. Millar, desired he would go into the dancing room and inform him whether Mr. Lisburne was there? He presently returned saying the room was so full, a search would have been vain; but that he accidentally heard a lady say, he had left the assembly some minutes before.

Sir William was distracted at this intelligence, and intreated Mr. Millar by his friendship for him to take his carriage and go to Elmsthorpe and bring him word, whether there was any one with Lady Egerton. The poor man, though in the utmost surprize, not knowing how to account for this strange request, promised to obey, but begged to know what he could say to her Ladyship, as an excuse for his visit. "Oh! tell her (replied Sir William impatiently) I sent you to know how she was." It was Mr. Miller's ringing so loud at the gate, that gave the first alarm to Lady Egerton: on being told that she was not at home, he informed the porter he knew very well she was; but on his replying that she had given orders to refuse every body admittance, he could press no farther. When he brought this account to Sir William he was just cut out; he received it with the utmost agitation and requesting Mr. Barrington (a gentleman with whom he was intimately acquainted) to accompany him and Mr. Millar to Elmsthorpe, on the way informed them of his suspicions, and his reasons for them.

Mr. Lisburne, who had been told of Lady Egerton's motive for quitting London, was so shocked at the reflection that he had banished her from society, that struck with a deep remorse, he resolved to go abroad for some years, if he could have one more interview with her to obtain her pardon, and inform her of his determination. The advertisement of the annual ball at S——, first gave him the idea of meeting her there, and he was consequently highly disappointed on hearing Sir William say, she was confined by indisposition: having no other inducement to stay, he then left the room, and returned to the George, intending to send her a letter; but after writing some time was dissatisfied with what he had said, and determined if possible to see her, which as

her husband was engaged at whist, he hoped he might accomplish without discovery. He took a post chaise as the swiftest method of conveyance, but arriving at the park gate, alighted, and ordered the post-boy to drive back to the village, and wait for him there. The porter at first denied his lady, but a golden key soon opened the gates, and he walked to the house without molestation: another bribe prevailed on the footman to admit him up stairs, where he surprized Lady Egerton not long after our heroine had left her, and at the very time Sir William was on the road attended by his friends. She started at his entrance, for there was no light in the room but what the moon and the fire afforded, which was insufficient for her to discover who he was; but the first sound of his voice declared it was Lisburne. She screamed, and rising from the sofa, insisted on his leaving her immediately, but in vain: he seized both her hands, and held them fast to prevent her from quitting the room; she struggled to disengage herself; but her strength was unequal to his: her tears however and entreaties affected him, and he assured her he would go, if she would listen to him a minute only; she unwillingly consented, and when he had informed her of his intended plan, for which he hoped to receive her thanks, he fell at her feet to solicit her forgiveness for the former injustice and cruelty of his behaviour.

Sir William in driving through the village, met the post-chaise which carried Mr. Lisburne; and suspecting something he stopped his own carriage, and called to the postillion to know from whence he came? "From Elmsthorpe, sir," (returned the man). "And who, pray, did you leave there?" "A gentleman, sir, I do not know his name, that came to master's yesterday." "And when are you to fetch him again?" "I can't tell indeed, sir; I am to wait for him here at the Red Lion." This little conversation redoubled Sir William's anger and anxiety; he ordered the coachman to whip his horses, and in a very few minutes arrived at his own gates. Here they all alighted, not to give any alarm, and walking through the park came to the house, and opened the dressing-room door, at the very instant Lisburne was on his knees to Lady Egerton, and kissing her hand. The darkness of the room added to Sir William's rage; he drew his sword and would have sacrificed the defenceless Lisburne instantly to his fury, had not Mr. Barrington and Mr. Millar forcibly withheld him. The lady fell into fits, and at this period Honoria entered from the garden.

Sir William, choaked with passion, was uttering the bitterest invectives; and with dreadful imprecations was calling all the powers of evil on his head, if he suffered Lisburne to exist another day; who, inattentive to his threats, was vainly endeavouring to clear Lady Egerton from the imputations he cast on her. After half an hour spent in mutual expressions of anger and revenge, the other gentlemen separated them, but not till they had agreed to meet the next morning at seven o'clock, in a close about half a mile from S——.

At six, Lady Egerton, who after a night spent in extreme agony of mind, had just fallen into a slumber, was awakened by a message from Sir William, desiring her to rise and dress herself immediately, and have every thing prepared for their journey, as he should return for her in an hour. She was obliged to comply, but her mind was in such a state from her apprehensions of the event of their meeting, of which this message informed her the exact time, that Honoria and her maid dressed her as they would an infant, not having the least power to assist herself. Sir William then called on Mr. Barrington, who had promised to be his second, and repaired to the appointed spot; where they were soon joined by the other gentlemen. When the distances were

measured, Mr. Lisburne turning calmly to his second, said, "Wilmot, remember if I fall, it is my last and most earnest request that you suffer Sir William to escape, and should my mother blame you for it, tell her it was my dying wish. I have provoked my own fate by the rashness I have been guilty of, and have perhaps deserved punishment for injuring the happiness, the fame, though not the honour, of the most unfortunate and most amiable of her sex. And now, Sir William, before we fire, listen to me one moment. I am perhaps on the verge of eternity, and would not for worlds utter a deliberate falsehood; believe me therefore when I assure you, Lady Egerton knew not of my visit till I entered her apartment: she insisted on my quitting her immediately, which I promised if she would hear my vindication, and receive my last farewell; for I intended going abroad directly on leaving Elmsthorpe; thus I compelled her attention, and before five minutes were elapsed, your arrival put an end to our conversation."

"Then pray, sir, (returned Sir William, with an air of insolent incredulity) where were you from the time you quitted the ball room, which if I recollect right was long before my presence interrupted you; and how came Lady Egerton, if unconscious of your intention, to admit you and be denied to every one else?" "After what I have so solemnly asserted, Sir William, (replied Mr. Lisburne, haughtily), I should scarcely deign an answer to your questions, did not the reputation of an innocent woman perhaps depend on it. Then know, sir, I went from the ball to the George, where I wrote a letter to her; but not expressing sufficiently in that the remorse of my soul, I determined if possible to see her. The porter and footman both refused me admittance, and they can testify the hour, nay the minute that I came. A bribe prevailed on them to permit me to pass, and I once more condescend to repeat, that I had not been five minutes in Lady Egerton's dressing-room when you returned."

"We are wasting the time, (said the Baronet, without appearing to hear his last speech); fire, sir." Mr. Lisburne complied, but his hand was so unsteady from the resentment he felt, and his agitation, that he only grazed Sir William's shoulder. Sir William took a surer aim; the ball entered Mr. Lisburne's temple, and he dropped instantly dead. Mr. Wilmot then resentfully addressed Sir William:—"You are free, sir, at present; the request of my departed friend obliges me not to detain you, but it does not bind his relations, and if justice pursues you, the unremitted cruelty with which you have sought his life, will make me an unfavourable witness on your trial, if your stay in England should permit your adversaries to bring you to one. He then had the corpse removed, whilst Sir William attended by Mr. Barrington returned to Elmsthorpe. There Mr. Millar waited for them, to whom he consigned the management of his affairs, and tearing Lady Egerton from Honoria, placed her in the chariot in a state of insensibility, into which she fell when she heard of his return, from the certainty of Lisburne's death, and the dread she felt of his treatment when absent from all her friends, and from her native country.

Honoria, whose sensibility had been deeply wounded by her distress, saw her depart with a flood of tears; but her grief was soon interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Millar, who apologizing for his intrusion, said he was ordered by Sir William to see her leave the house that very day, and therefore begged her to prepare for her journey, and pardon him for the liberty he took in mentioning it. She replied it was her intention, and she should certainly lose no time but hasten to quit a spot, where she had witnessed so much cruelty, and had been treated with so much injustice. Her preparations were soon made, and sending for a post-chaise from S——, she

left Elmsthorpe early in the afternoon, but went a little out of the way to give her two favourites, Henry and Sophia, a token of her affection. She staid an hour at the parsonage, and then drove to the George at S——, where she bespoke a bed and a place in the diligence, which was to set out for London the next morning.

It was some addition to her embarrassment that she knew not where to direct to Miss Onslow, as her last letter was from Paris, but it informed her that she was going to the South of France with the Ashbourns, and would write again when they were settled.

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## CHAP. XVIII.

AT three o'clock the next morning our fair heroine was informed the diligence was ready: she entered it agitated by the variety of emotions, that the events of the day before had raised in her bosom; but resentment to Sir William, and pity for Lady Egerton, were at length wholly absorbed in the painful idea of her own friendless and unprotected situation. Thrown once more on an un pitying world, without a friend to whom her welfare was dear, but Lady Eustace and Miss Onslow, and those friends too far distant to advise her respecting her future schemes, or stand forth in defence of her character, which she doubted not but Sir William would cruelly asperse. At length, after a variety of plans, she determined for the present to take an apartment at Mrs. Gibbons's, and there look out for some situation, or wait for letters from Lady Eustace.

There was no other passenger in the diligence, but an elderly gentleman, whose drowsiness and natural taciturnity, prevented him from interrupting the train of reflections into which she fell, as she lost sight of those scenes, where she had witnessed afflictions, which had for some time obliterated from her mind the painful recollection of her own.

They had travelled near sixty miles, in a silence only broken by an occasional remark on the weather or the dust, or an apology from the gentleman for deranging the lady's hat, when by the jolting of the carriage, or from his inclination to sleep, he struck his head against her's; when her reverie was suddenly put an end to by an accident, not only disagreeable but dangerous; one of the wheels going over a bank, the carriage immediately overturned. The old gentleman was bruised by the fall, but Honoria received so violent a blow on her arm, that she rightly conjectured it was broken. Some labourers in a field by the road came directly to their assistance, and conducted the passengers to a small public house not far distant, from whence after a short time, the diligence proceeded to London; but the pain in Honoria's arm increased so rapidly, she could not pursue her journey. The woman of the house put her to bed, and sent for a surgeon, who set her arm and declared her in no danger, if a fever did not ensue, to prevent which he begged her to keep as quiet as possible, and by no means think of travelling till she had his permission. With this injunction he left her, but not to repose; a thousand distracting thoughts kept her the whole night from sleeping. A few hours before, she had imagined her sorrows incapable of aggravation, but this accident fatally convinced her of the contrary, as she now experienced every misery that violent bodily pain and the deepest uneasiness of mind can inflict.

Mr. Williams, the Surgeon, was a man of some skill and great humanity; but from living entirely in the country, he had none of those finer feelings which often distinguish those, who mix in more general and higher circles. Unaccustomed to elegance, he regarded our heroine in no other light than he would have done a farmer's daughter in the same situation; he could not see that she was of a superior order of beings to those with whom he usually conversed; and in these terms mentioned her the next day, when he visited Southern Lodge, to the amiable mistress of the mansion, whose pity being excited by his account, she ordered her carriage, intending to call on the unfortunate passenger immediately, and as she thought her situation must be very uncomfortable, offer her all the assistance in her power.

Miss Melmoth was at this period considerably turned of thirty; she had been beautiful, and might still have been called angelic,

*Could poets or could painters fix,  
How angels look at thirty-six:*

Her understanding was elevated, yet truly feminine; her benevolence universal and her power to do good almost as unbounded as her will; as she possessed a very large estate, the annual produce of which she constantly spent, principally in deeds of charity; as she frequented no public places, and lived entirely at the lodge, where she kept an hospitable but not a profuse table, and dressed in a manner equally plain and elegant.

To a spirit like her's, active always in the relief of distress in whatever shape it appeared, Mr. Williams's tale gave an anxious emotion to visit his patient; though he only described her as a pretty young woman confined by an unlucky accident to a wretched habitation; and from having always been in high life, and accustomed to the first style of company, she fancied a passenger in a public conveyance of any kind, must be a person of inferior birth and unformed manners. Impressed with this idea, when her chariot stopped at the Swan, she ordered her servant to ask for the young woman who had been left by the stage coach the evening before. Honoria heard this enquiry, and wounded pride and momentary resentment dyed her cheeks with the deepest crimson; but an instant's recollection convinced her of her folly, and she desired Miss Melmoth might be admitted. But what words can express the astonishment of that lady, when instead of an awkward country girl she beheld a young creature who was beauty itself; whose voice was harmony, and whose native elegance could not be disguised by her dishabille! She hesitated, apologized for her intrusion,—“I was informed, madam, (said she) of your accident by Mr. Williams, and the certainty that your situation here must be as unpleasant, as a removal to any distance would be dangerous, prompted me to wait on you, and permit me to request you will accept an apartment at Southern Lodge, till you can safely continue your journey.”

The proud spirit of Honoria, which at Miss Melmoth's entrance gave her bosom such painful sensations, subsided by degrees during her whole speech; but at the conclusion, surprize and gratitude so entirely overcame her, she burst into tears, which her attentive visitor, who thought them only the effect of a lowness of spirits, not unnatural in her situation, would take no notice of, but added with a most benevolent smile, “Will you not think me too impertinent, madam, if I beg to supply the loss of your arm by writing to your friends, and relieving the uneasiness they are undoubtedly in for your safety?” Honoria started, and striking her hand on her forehead agonized almost to madness, exclaimed, “Oh, I have no friends, no relations, nor is there at this moment one person in England, to whom the life or death of the wretched Honoria is of the least consequence.”

Though these words, and the action which accompanied them, excited the greatest astonishment in Miss Melmoth, it abated not her kindness nor altered her intention. The prepossession she had at first sight felt for her, was rather increased than lessened by the knowledge of her misfortunes. She soothed the fair mourner with the most affectionate expressions, and promises of protection and assistance, and repeated her entreaties with so much

earnestness, that Honoria, who grew more composed, at last consented to return with her to the lodge.

During their little journey, Miss Melmoth with a delicate attention avoided every subject which might recall those painful ideas, that had so lately agitated her lovely guest; but as they passed a small cottage in a retired and romantic situation, Honoria wrung her hand, and exclaimed, "If I was but the mistress of that little hut, where I might pass my days in solitude, how comparatively happy should I be! In the silence of that retreat I should lose the sense of my misfortunes, and a total seclusion from the world would perhaps restore peace to my wounded mind." "Oh beware (said Miss Melmoth with a deep sigh) of indulging an idea that may be destructive to your reason. I have myself too fatally experienced, how inefficacious are solitude and reflection, to the restoration of content: they only augment those sorrows they appear to soothe. When you are better I will relate the short but melancholy history of my life, which will I hope convince you of the truth of my affection.

When they arrived at the lodge, Miss Melmoth ordered an apartment to be got ready, and whilst it was preparing, turned the conversation on the most indifferent topics, for anxious as she was to know more of her guest, she saw plainly her spirits were too much agitated, to begin that evening a recital of events, the mere recollection of which had given her such painful emotions.

During this interval, our heroine had leisure to contemplate the countenance of her amiable benefactress; it was strongly marked with sense and humanity, though early affliction had robbed it of those graces, time would have spared many years: it had destroyed her bloom, and faded a complexion once the finest in the world, but her cheeks would still glow with compassion for the injured, or resentment to the oppressor of innocence: her once polished brow was clouded, but not contracted with anxiety it was the seat of mild resignation. Grief had impaired but not extinguished the lustre of her eyes; they often sparkled when her bosom was animated with the only delight it was now capable of feeling, that of giving happiness to others.

After a few days residence with this charming woman, Honoria grew considerably better; she related to her every circumstance of her life, and gratefully received a promise of support and protection till the arrival of her friend, Lady Eustace. Her mind thus relieved from half its cares, became insensibly more tranquil; and she lived in a state of serenity she had not known since Mrs. Fortescue's death, but the idea of Colonel Effingham would still obtrude on her imagination, and embitter every comfort.

One day as they were walking in the park, Honoria was unusually pensive: when Miss Melmoth, who well knew the cause of her sorrow, said, "I will now, my dear Miss Wentworth, fulfil the promise I have long made you, and relate the unhappy events which have changed a disposition naturally lively, and disposed to give and receive pleasure, into a melancholy if not a gloomy one: and perhaps you may learn from my example, not to grieve too much for unavoidable evils, but submit with meek and pious resignation to the All-wise decrees of Providence. I lost my mother before I could be sensible of her worth, but her loss was rendered of less consequence to me, by the attention of an indulgent father, and the care of an excellent aunt, who instilled into my mind those principles which I hope will ever be the guide of my life. She

died when I was just eighteen, and I lamented her as a parent: had any one told me at that time how much heavier afflictions I was to suffer, I should have thought it impossible.

“Whilst we were in mourning for her, my father to amuse my mind took me to Brighthelmstone, hoping the change of scene would have the effect he wished. It was here I renewed an acquaintance begun in my earliest years, with a gentleman whose father lived near us, but being sent abroad in a public capacity, he took his whole family with him, when Orlando was only nine years old, and we had never seen each other since: we at first conversed with all the formality of strangers, and there was a reserve and even coldness in Mr. Brudenel’s manner, which I thought inconsistent with the intimacy that had subsisted between our families, and the affection with which in childhood we had regarded each other. This by degrees wore off, and before we left Brighthelmstone I esteemed him as a brother, but he, as I afterwards found, returned my friendship with more tenderness than I at that time had any idea of. I cannot dwell any longer on this period, the happiest of my life. The Brudenel family returned to our neighbourhood; Orlando was constantly with me, and for two years our affection increased every day. Our parents had projected an union, and with joy beheld our inclinations in unison with their own. Every thing was prepared for our marriage, which was to be solemnized in six weeks; when I fatally requested my father that the intermediate time might be spent at Brighthelmstone, for which place I had a strong partiality, from the recollection it was there I first made an impression on the heart of my beloved Orlando. My father, unaccustomed to deny, unfortunately assented to my wishes, and in an evil hour we set out.

“Every day was devoted to some amusement, but water parties principally engaged our time. The week before that fixed on for our return, the weather had obliged us to put off from day to day a scheme, from which we expected particular pleasure. Full of spirits and a stranger to calamity, I considered the rod of adversity as far from me, and scarcely thought there was a possibility that my hopes of happiness should be blasted.

“From the repeated disappointments I became more anxious that our plan so long projected should take place, and the morning before our intended journey, though the sky was still unfavorable, prevailed on my father and Orlando, who was ever solicitous to oblige and amuse me, to collect the party, many of whom refused from apprehensions of the weather, and only two ladies besides Mrs. Brudenel joined us. We sailed several miles from the shore in an open boat, and on our return, went on board a large vessel, where every refreshment was prepared for us. The conversation was particularly cheerful, and we were hardly sensible how the moments flew, ‘till the approach of evening warned us to leave the ship; which we were the more anxious to do, as the clouds gathered, the wind rose considerably, and there was every appearance of an approaching storm. Though we took a hasty leave of our hospitable entertainers, yet in that short time, the wind increased so much, that we were all a little alarmed; but the sailors and gentlemen assuring us there was no danger, if the sail was taken down, we prepared to descend. This occasioned a still farther delay, but some of the party were soon seated in the boat; Orlando stood at the edge to receive me, when just as I was stepping down, it tossed so violently, my foot slipped, and I fell into the sea.

“It was many, many days, before I was sensible of what had passed during that dreadful

period, and yet I awoke too soon to the knowledge of misery. I scarcely recovered from one fit of delirium, when the horror which the recollection of the truth brought on me, threw me into another. They grew indeed weaker and weaker, but the seat of reason was shaken, and will not I fear ever"—she stopped, looked wildly around her, and put her hand to her forehead.—Honorina was dreadfully frightened; they were at a great distance from the house, and she also looked round with the hope of seeing some person near them, but not a creature was within sight. Miss Melmoth walked unusually quick, and Honorina followed with trembling steps and a beating heart. They soon came to a seat where she threw herself down, and burst into a flood of tears, which equally relieved the agitation of the one, and the apprehensions of the other.

When a little recovered, she took her pale friend affectionately by the hand,—“Forgive me, my dear Miss Wentworth, for thus alarming you, but I could not at that moment command my emotions. I am now more composed, and will conclude my melancholy story; do not oppose me, (observing Honorina was going to request her to defer it till another time); I am much better, and believe me it will do me less injury to go on now, than to begin the subject again, and I will not dwell on those particulars which pain me the most. It is enough to say, Orlando plunged immediately into the water hoping to save my life, but his own fell a sacrifice. I ought to be thankful to those who preserved it, though I have a thousand times ungratefully wished I had resigned my breath at the same moment with my ever regretted and beloved Orlando. My father and Mrs. Brudenel watched my slow recovery with anxious care, and when I could bear the journey, removed me from a place where every scene renewed the memory of my loss. They took me first to London, and when my health was re-established, we set out for France and Italy; where they hoped the variety I must necessarily meet with, would by degrees remove the stupor that seemed wholly to absorb my faculties: but their designs were frustrated, and their expectations disappointed. I was entirely pensive, objected to none of their plans, but obstinately resolved to indulge my grief and refuse all consolation, and thus repaid with unkindness and ingratitude, Mrs. Brudenel’s attention, who left England with the hope of soothing that affliction in me, she too deeply felt herself.

“After some months stay in France, my father finding neither change of air or scene had any effect on my spirits, determined to return to England; and hoping to remove that insensibility which so particularly alarmed him, carried me to his seat in B—shire. This had all the effect he expected; my grief became frantic, when I viewed those scenes of early happiness: not a tree or cottage could I pass, without recalling to my mind all the misery I had experienced since I last beheld them. The violence of my emotions at length gave way to a more composed sorrow, and I spoke and acted more rationally than I had done since the fatal event. He now thought my cure completed, and we soon after left Westwood, and returned to London for the winter. There my friends injudiciously joined with him in persuading me to frequent the public amusements: I complied unwillingly with their solicitations, but company and diversions, far from affording me the relief they expected, only disgusted me, and confirmed my resolution of retiring from the world if ever I had it in my power.

“The spring following my dear father was also taken from me, and I not only endured the grief every dutiful and affectionate child must feel at such an event, but I had the additional misfortune of reflecting that I had probably shortened his days, by the unreasonable indulgence of

my melancholy, which neither time nor the kindest attentions I had received from my friends could subdue. Mrs. Brudenel was then gone abroad with her husband, where she still remains; and I was more firmly than ever resolved upon retirement; and in opposition to all entreaties, some weeks after my father's death, I left London with only two servants, and went into North Wales. I fixed on the most retired and romantic situation I could meet with, and took a small house very distant from any large town or high road: it was at the foot of a mountain, and almost enclosed by a thick wood; a narrow river ran by the garden, which at some distance falling down a rock, formed a natural cascade; a rugged seat was cut out of the rock, shaded by some lofty trees. It was here listening to the water fall, and the cawing of a distant rookery, I spent my melancholy hours, and sometimes climbed the mountain, which commanded a fine and extensive view of the ocean.

“In these solitary rambles I constantly devoted my thoughts to the recollection of my past happiness and present misery; indulged myself in ideal conversations with Orlando, till my wild and disordered imagination almost fancied him present at my side.

“In this manner I spent the remainder of the summer, nor did the autumnal storms prevent me from daily visiting the seat, or climbing the mountain; and the enthusiastic ideas that constantly accompanied me in these excursions were now succeeded by fits of stupor which were so violent, that my servants sometimes found me almost insensible, and wet with the heavy rains that often fell whilst I sat totally inanimate, and unconscious of my situation. Alarmed at the frequency of my reveries, and the wildness of my behaviour, my own maid, Fanny, who had lived with me many years, and was tenderly attached to me, wrote privately to my friend, Lady Pelham, and begged her to come, and if possible draw me from a spot, where the unlimited indulgence of my grief would, she feared, prove fatal to my reason.

“Lady Pelham flew to me with all the ardor of friendship upon receiving this account, and her judicious arguments at length convinced me of the danger as well as impropriety of what I called soothing my melancholy, which in reality only heightened my affliction. She prevailed on me to leave Wales for ever, and accompany her for a time to her house in Huntingdonshire, where she promised I should live as I pleased. Under her hospitable roof I became what you now see me; my unbounded grief by degrees gave way to her kind attentions; she spent the whole winter in the country to inure me to society, for at first I flew from every stranger as I would from a beast of prey. She indulged all my fancies, and humoured me like a child, till at length I exerted myself to return her kindness, and convinced that she secluded herself from company on my account, obliged myself to attend her on her visits, and see her company at home. This at first was extremely irksome to me, but I was soon convinced that even when most fatigued with the insipidity of common conversation, I was at least prevented from attending so entirely to my own distress, as I had been for some time accustomed to. During the time I staid with this kind, attentive friend, I became daily more and more tranquil; and after a variety of schemes for my future life, she persuaded me to purchase this house and park, assisted me with her advice in a few alterations, and remained with me till I was entirely reconciled to my new situation. She visits me every year, and I now expect her very soon. It will give me great pleasure, my dear girl, to introduce you to her, and she will, from mixing so much in the world, be a more agreeable companion, than from my recluse way of life I possibly can.”

Honoria thanked Miss Melmoth for the confidence she had placed in her, and owned the justness of her arguments, and promised to be guided by them; but reproved her for supposing Lady Pelham could add to the happiness she enjoyed in her company.

Several weeks glided away in this tranquil manner; Miss Melmoth's visitors were few, but generally agreeable, and the society she here met with, was more to our heroine's taste, than any she had been engaged in since her arrival in England.

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## CHAP. XIX.

SOUTHERN LODGE was five miles distant from Ware, and in a most beautiful situation: the variety of charming spots every way round it, often tempted Miss Melmoth and Honoria, who had now perfectly recovered from her accident, to ride on horseback, and as the spring was uncommonly fine, and they were both excellent horse-women, a day seldom passed without their taking this salutary and delightful exercise.

One morning as they were just setting out, a young lady rode up to the house to pay them a visit; who hearing their intention, would not detain them, but offered to join their party; they gladly accepted her proposal, and set out. Returning, they passed by a very good and elegant house, delightfully situated in a spacious park, and commanding a charming prospect, but the grounds appearing rude and uncultivated, as if its owner neglected them. "Who does this place belong to? (said Honoria) I have often observed and regretted its uncultivated and deserted state." "The family, (returned Miss Melmoth) are abroad, and not in a situation to bestow much money on repairs. I hear it is to be sold, and wish some agreeable person would buy it, as the distance from Southern Lodge is so trifling, I could here have an excellent neighbour." "Bless me, (cried Miss Wallace) how could I be so stupid as not to tell you the news? I know you will be glad to hear it, and you may depend upon its being true, for I had it from the very best authority. Mr. Williams called to see my grandmother yesterday; you know his brother is an attorney who transacts business for the Ashbury's, and he assured me Ashbury Park was bought by Sir Charles Mortimer, for the gentleman who is just going to be married to his sister, but whose name I have forgot. It was something of Ef---Ef, I cannot remember what though, I declare; and he added, Sir Charles had been, nay perhaps is still here, giving orders for alterations and repairs."

Honoria's distress and confusion at this speech can better be imagined than described; yet what she then felt was nothing to her sensations when Miss Wallace exclaimed, "Oh, I dare say that is Sir Charles coming from the house; look, Miss Wentworth!"—She did look, and saw not the Baronet, but Colonel Effingham himself; her heart beat violently and she turned pale; fortunately this was not observed by her companions, who were wholly though differently engrossed, one by the beau, the other by the house. She was immediately sensible he must pass them, and not feeling any degree of shame at her appearance, did not so much wish to avoid him, as when she was only Miss Mortimer's attendant; and her anxiety was accompanied by some curiosity to know in what manner he would address her, whether with any marks of his former attachment, or any consciousness of his own infidelity. Surprized she was certain he would be, and she passed the few minutes before they met, in preparing her mind for the interview, and exulted in the idea of receiving him with as much apparent indifference and unconcern, as he himself could possibly assume: But how was she shocked and astonished when he came near! he started on discovering her to be among the party, which at a distance had attracted his notice, coloured excessively, but passed them as an entire stranger, only making a slight bow as he walked by.

Honoria, who was prepared for any behaviour but neglect, could not support this; she vainly endeavoured to conquer it, but after a few minutes ineffectual struggle, fell from her horse



quite insensible. The creature she rode happening to be very gentle, stopped instantly, so that she received no other injury, than that the fall on the road could occasion. The screams of the other ladies recalled the Colonel, who could not consistently with common politeness refuse his assistance; he carried her in his arms to a neighbouring farm house, where hartshorn, burnt feathers, and various other remedies were tried without the least effect. Miss Melmoth was extremely alarmed, and he appeared to join in her uneasiness, but at last observing some symptoms of returning life, and Miss Melmoth expressing a wish for her carriage, he offered to send his servant for it, as her's was dispatched for Mr. Williams. She accepted his offer, and he immediately left the house; the carriage soon arrived, but the Colonel returned no more.

Honorina was lifted into it without having in the least recovered her reason or recollection; she once or twice opened her eyes, but closed them again instantly. Her kind friend was greatly terrified, and feared the fall had hurt her senses. Mr. Williams however arriving at the lodge soon after them, blooded her, and this gave her more relief; she knew Miss Melmoth, and gratefully pressed her hand, but could not yet speak. She was immediately put to bed, and Miss Wallace took leave; but before night the surgeon pronounced her in a high fever, and begged to have further advice. A physician was directly sent for, who greatly to Miss Melmoth's satisfaction, declared she was in no danger; that the fever proceeded not from the fall, but some inward agitation of mind: the event proved him right, she grew better in a few days, and Miss Melmoth had the infinite happiness of seeing her tender cares rewarded with success.

One morning she was sitting by her bed side, when Mr. Williams entered, and fancying Honorina asleep, sat down by her and began a conversation in a whisper: "What an unfortunate young creature is this, (said he) to meet with two such accidents in so short a time! But do you know, continued he, what an odd thing has happened? Twice every day since she has been ill, I have had a country fellow come to my house to know how the young lady was at Southern Lodge; he never enquired for her by name, nor could I make him tell me who he came from; and I find he has been once or twice at Dr. Corbett's to know his opinion."

"'Tis very strange, indeed, (replied Miss Melmoth) but whoever he is, he has been kinder than the gentleman we met at Ashbury Park, for though he saw our distress, and how alarmingly ill she was, he has never had the politeness to enquire for her since."

This latter speech Honorina heard; she was just awake, and by exciting the most painful sensations, it contributed to restore her: she burst into a flood of tears which relieved her extremely, and she recovered quicker from that time. As soon as her mind was enough composed to begin the subject, she informed Miss Melmoth of all that passed, and who the gentleman really was, whose neglect had surprized her; and added, that grateful as she was for her offered protection, it was at present impossible for her to remain at Southern Lodge, as Colonel Effingham's residence at the Park would constantly impress her mind with a terror of meeting him, and prevent her from regaining that tranquillity so essential to her health. Miss Melmoth endeavoured to persuade her at least to stay in Hertfordshire till the repairs at Ashbury were finished, as till then the family could not reside there. "Oh no, (cried Honorina hastily) but he will be often there to overlook the workmen, and indeed I shall be miserable if I stay. Do not, dear madam, accuse me of ingratitude, for believe me, could I by any action of my life convince you

of the sincerity of my regard, I would submit to any evil however painful, except this, which would be more than my heart or mind could sustain. No, I will, till Lady Eustace returns, continue the way of life from which I shall at least derive a support." Miss Melmoth then begged her not to rely on such a precarious method, but accept her purse, which she might at all times freely command, and board in some place which she might chuse, in a respectable and agreeable family, till the arrival of her friend. "No, dearest Miss Melmoth, (replied Honoria) that I cannot submit to; as your guest, had the cruelty of my situation permitted me to remain so, I would not have refused your kind assistance, when by any attention to you I could in the least return it. But compelled to leave you, I will again depend on that world which I have hitherto found better than it is pictured. Think, dear madam, of the unprotected state in which I left Ireland, and then consider how many friends Providence in this country has raised me; though the peculiarity of my situation has so often prevented me from receiving the benefits they would have bestowed on me. Of this you are the highest instance; and I shall not be the less deeply sensible of my obligations to you, though I am not suffered to prove the reality of my attachment, by devoting myself wholly to you, and regulating my conduct entirely by your will."

Miss Melmoth, greatly affected at this speech, and the energy of her manner, would no longer oppose her inclination; but finding her resolute and anxious to leave the Lodge the next day, ordered the carriage to attend her. At the same time wrote a letter to Lady Pelham, who had been prevented from visiting Hertfordshire, recommending her in the most earnest terms to her care and protection; but mentioning no more of her history than her present friendless state, and requesting Lady Pelham to detain her till she could meet with an eligible and pleasant situation, which she doubted not would soon offer among her Ladyship's numerous acquaintance; but delicately hinting, that as such a companion must in every family be a valuable acquisition, perhaps she might wish her to continue with herself; and in that case, Miss Melmoth, added, she should be particularly happy in the reflection of having contributed to the comfort of two so dear to her, by introducing them to each other.

This letter she brought down at tea, and giving it to Honoria, desired she would take it to Lady Pelham, to whose house in St. James's-street the coachman had orders to drive her. "And do not, dear Honoria, (continued this amiable woman) let an overstrained delicacy induce you to refuse the asylum she will for the present afford you, and with her I hope you will remain till it is your own wish to quit her; and surely if I do not judge too partially of her heart and manners, that will not be soon." Honoria thanked her fervently for the kind and tender interest she took in her happiness, and assured her she would in every respect be guided by her judgment. They both passed a melancholy evening, and parted in the morning with the utmost regret. Miss Melmoth requested Honoria to write as often as possible, and begged her to excuse her not attending her to town, but said she had not yet conquered the horror she felt at the idea of entering it. The chariot then drove off, leaving its charming mistress in a flood of tears, whilst Honoria was no less agitated.

During the few weeks she had resided at Southern Lodge, she had experienced every happiness in her power to feel, or Miss Melmoth's to bestow, in whose character all that was animated and tender united, and conspired to render her the most agreeable companion and the kindest friend. Honoria could not therefore but regret, though she did not repine at the

unfortunate concurrence of events, which drove her from so safe, so happy, and so honourable an asylum; but rejoiced in an assurance of her constant regard, which whilst she continued to possess and deserve, would insure her from many of the evils, usually attending on poverty and dependance.

These reflections filled her mind 'till the carriage stopped in St. James's street; but how great was her surprize and grief, when the footman knocked at Lord Phelham's door, and was informed by the servant, that his Lady was that morning gone to Richmond for a week or ten days, but that his Lord was still in town, though not then at home! This intelligence distressed and perplexed her, and she regretted her precipitation in leaving Southern Lodge, till Lady Pelham had received notice of her intended arrival. She was at last awakened from her reverie, by the footman's asking her if she would not go back into Hertfordshire? "Oh, no, (answered she) drive me to Great Marlborough-street." they obeyed her orders, and stopped at Mrs. Gibbons's, who immediately came out to the door. Honoria enquired if she had an apartment to let for a week, and was first answered in the negative. "I have (said she) let my first floor for these last three months to a gentleman and lady, but if one bed-chamber on the second will serve you, madam, you may have that, for I have not another to spare."

Honoria had no alternative, as she knew not where else to go; and ordering her trunks to be brought in, agreed to take the vacant apartment for a week, and board with Mrs. Gibbons. She then wrote a few lines to Miss Melmoth to acquaint her with her disappointment, and the steps she had taken in consequence of it; but assured her, as soon as Lady Pelham returned, she would wait on her with the letter. This she sent back by the servant, and then attended her landlady at dinner, who informed her the gentleman and lady on her first floor were very good-natured, agreeable people, that Mr. Wilton was in some public office and very little at home, so she had asked Mrs. Wilton to drink tea with them, as she thought she would be a pleasant companion. Honoria thanked her coolly for her good intention, but begged she would give herself no farther trouble, as she by no means wished for company; since the ill state of her health would induce her to spend the greatest part of her time in her own chamber.

However, not to appear too reserved, she came down to tea, and found Mrs. Wilton already arrived. Her appearance did not prepossess her in her favour; her manners were affectedly polite, yet rustic almost to a degree of vulgarity. She talked a vast deal about the public amusements, yet confessed till that winter she was an entire stranger to them, as she had till her marriage lived wholly in the country. She told our heroine she hoped she would spend a good deal of time with her, as Mr. Wilton was very little at home. Honoria bowed and was studying for some civil excuse, when a loud rap at the door interrupted her; this was followed by the entrance of a very elegant man, about three or four and forty, who from his address she immediately discovered to be Mr. Wilton. His lady, after expressing her surprize, as his return was quite unexpected, introduced Miss Wentworth as a young lady who was come to lodge in the house, and who she hoped would favor her with her company as often as possible. He joined in this hope, and coming up took her hand in a free manner, and added at present he should be benefited by it, as for the next week the holidays at his office would permit him to be more at home. This, thought Honoria, would be very little inducement, even had I any intention of accepting these civil offers. "Dear me, cried Mrs. Wilton, then let us go some where this evening, and Miss

Wentworth will go with us." He immediately assented, and ringing the bell ordered a hackney coach, before Honoria had time to declare against joining their party; her refusal, however, was not attended to; she pleaded ill health; they said it was a fine evening, she could not catch cold, and amusement would do her good. She still persisted in her refusal, when Mr. Wilton going to her and seizing both her hands, declared positively she should go. Finding from his freedom it was necessary for her to assume an air of greater consequence, than merely as Mrs. Gibbons's boarder she had any right to; she replied with extreme haughtiness,— "Indeed, sir, I shall not," and instantly, to avoid their importunities, left the room, and retired to her own chamber.

When a little recovered from the agitation into which this had thrown her, she resolved to be on her guard during her stay, and associate with them as little as possible: yet she almost blamed herself for forming an unfavourable opinion of them, fancying it might proceed merely from disgust at the rudeness of their behaviour; yet she could not entirely reconcile some apparent contradictions which struck her as singular. Mrs. Wilton was awkward and unformed, though extremely beautiful; her husband had in his appearance and manner an air of high fashion, distinguishable even in the few minutes she had spent with him; and their dress and the style in which they lived, was highly inconsistent with their going into public with a woman like Mrs. Gibbons, who, tho' decent and creditable, had nothing of the gentlewoman about her.

The next morning at breakfast she apologized to Honoria for their pressing her so much to attend them the evening before; but added, I am sorry you did not, for we were vastly entertained I assure you. "Where did you go?" said Honoria. "To Astley's, (returned she) and coming home Mr. Wilton declared he would not ask you to accompany us any more, though I am sure he would be very glad indeed if you would offer." "I endeavoured, replied Honoria coldly, to make them understand that my ill health will not permit me to attend public places."

Nothing further passed at that time, and she spent the whole day, excepting at meals, in her chamber, to avoid again meeting them: but the following, just as she had finished dinner, Mr. Wilton entered the room. She rose immediately to retire, but advancing with a respectful bow, he begged her to stay till she had heard his apology for the strangeness of his behaviour the first evening he had the honor of seeing her.— "Believe me, madam, (added he) I will no more attempt to alter your resolutions of retirement, and however happy Mrs. Wilton would be in your acquaintance, she shall not again solicit it, nor ever intrude on you uninvited." "I should be sorry, sir, (returned Honoria gravely) to offend Mrs. Wilton by a reserve which is not natural to me; but I am yet scarcely recovered from a violent fit of illness, and consequently unable to join in parties of any kind: besides, my stay here will be probably but a few days longer, as I only wait the return of a lady from the country. Mr. Wilton again bowed and withdrew. "Bless me, (cried Mrs. Gibbons) well to be sure he is affronted, for I never saw him so grave before." "I should rather say so reasonable or so polite, replied Honoria, for in my opinion he appears to a much greater advantage than the first time I saw him." During the remainder of the week they never met; she had only been out to enquire if Lady Pelham was returned, and was informed she was expected the following Thursday. The rest of her time she passed usually in her own apartment, reading, writing, or working.

At this period she had been in England rather more than a twelvemonth, but from her

frequent removals had heard only twice from her old nurse; her letters had contained nothing more than an account of Mr. Fortescue's encreasing infirmities, and his lady's growing influence and additional ill humour, and the most earnest wishes for her happiness. She began now to expect impatiently to hear from Lady Eustace; she had desired her letters might be addressed to her at Mrs. Middleton's, and since the fire and her death, imagining all with that direction would be carried to her husband at Mr. Burnaby's, she begged Mrs. Gibbons would speak to him, and have them sent to her, from whom she could receive them at any time. It was in vain to write to Miss Onslow, since she knew not where to find her, therefore contented herself with waiting her arrival in England, when she could easily hear of her by applying to Mrs. Draper, in Cavendish square.

On the following Friday morning she went to St. James's-street, and enquiring for Lady Pelham, was shewn into a dressing-room, where her Ladyship was sitting. The elegance of her appearance and manner always ensured her a polite reception, but her mentioning Miss Melmoth's name and delivering the letter, at present entitled her to something more: but the smiles with which her Ladyship took it, were wholly banished from her countenance by the perusal. She told Honoria with a cold civility, that she saw by the date that she ought to have received it near a fortnight before, and she feared her absence had been an inconvenience to her, by obliging her to take a lodging; "for, added she, Miss Melmoth here desires me to accommodate you with an apartment in my house, 'till I can among my acquaintance find an eligible situation for you as companion or governess, for either of which she observes you are well qualified: therefore I suppose, Miss Wentworth, you need not return any more."

This address was so ill calculated to soothe Honoria's melancholy, that her proud spirit once or twice during this speech impelled her to renounce and disclaim the protection so haughtily offered, but recollecting her promise to Miss Melmoth, she curbed her rising resentment, and thanking her Ladyship coolly, said she would wait on her the next morning, as that evening she was obliged to spend in Great Marlborough-street. Lady Pelham replied that was as she pleased, and a loud footman's rap announcing the arrival of more company, she took leave, impressed with the most unfavorable idea of her new protectress, and truly unwilling to become her guest, from an apprehension of meeting ten thousand mortifications, to which she had been hitherto a stranger.

## CHAP. XX.

HONORIA was at a loss to account for the coldness of Lady Pelham's behaviour; it was so entirely inconsistent with the character Miss Melmoth drew, and the opinion she had herself formed of her. But the fact was, though sincerely attached to Miss Melmoth, Lady Pelham had a little heart that would admit but one friend at a time; and as jealous in friendship as most women are in love, she could not bear her favorite should bestow any peculiar marks of regard on another, and the warmth of expression that lady had used in her recommendation of Honoria, had excited her jealousy and resentment, and caused that distant civility which so highly mortified our heroine. Yet fearful of offending her friend, Lady Pelham hesitated not to comply with her request, though highly disconcerted at it: she considered this sudden affection as merely the effusions of a romantic and enthusiastic mind, and probably bestowed on an object unworthy of it. Yet being a woman of principle, though not of sensibility, she would not endeavour to lessen the opinion she had formed of her merit, but determined literally to fulfil her wishes, by endeavouring to find her a proper situation, without appearing to understand the hint of keeping her in her own family.

With this view she received her the next morning with something of more cordiality, but it was so evidently constrained, that Honoria was not in the least better pleased, but silently regretted Miss Melmoth's ill-placed partiality, which consigned her to the protection of one so unwilling to undertake the charge.

Honoria spent the evening alone; her Ladyship being engaged to a party, to which she asked not our heroine to accompany her. Lord Pelham did not appear the whole day: but the following, just before dinner, he entered; his confusion at seeing her was equal to, but could not exceed, the astonishment Honoria felt, at beholding in him the very Mr. Wilton, whose behaviour at Mrs. Gibbons's had at first so much disgusted her. Fortunately his Lady did not observe it, but introduced her as a young person Miss Melmoth had recommended to her care, till she could meet with some situation that would suit her. Honoria, hurt at this expression, curtsied coolly to Lord Pelham, who addressed her as an entire stranger; but when her Ladyship a few minutes after left the room, he came up and said, "Let me now, Miss Wentworth, in my own person, again apologize for my conduct, as Mr. Wilton; for I can see you recollect me. My rudeness then arose merely from mistaking your character, from the company in which I found you; but the dignity of true virtue will ever repel the insults even of the greatest libertine, and I hope I may not consider myself as such, though you will suppose I did not change my name without some reason, not strictly consistent with the character in which I appear at present. The truth is, it was to prevent Mrs. Gibbons from raising unnecessary scruples about admitting Mrs. Wilton into her house, though not to deceive her; for I am greatly mistaken if she does not know my real situation in life, though she affects ignorance to avoid the censures of her neighbours, among whom she passes for a good kind of woman. Though as you know I am guilty of the folly of a connection with a girl who cannot pretend to virtue, yet I am not so depraved as to associate with one whose mind is wholly perverted, and who has lost all sense of delicacy: it was therefore to prevent her from becoming acquainted with those wretches in her line of life whose society is the destruction of every good principle, that I placed her with Mrs. Gibbons, where she is in no danger of

seeking amusement abroad, from the want of a companion at home. Now, Miss Wentworth, let me say when I found from your spirited behaviour and Mrs. Gibbons's account, that you were really a woman of virtue and delicacy, so far from endeavouring to intrude Mrs. Wilton's company on you, I would not have permitted your innocence to suffer by my deception, by her appearing with you in public or even in the streets, and of the truth of this assertion I hope you are convinced by my first apology."

Here he paused, and Honoria thanked him for his consideration, and confessed she was struck at the singular difference of their manners, and knew not how to account for it. He then continued, "Before Lady Pelham returns, let me intreat you not to mention this circumstance to her, as it would make her miserable, and not have any good effect; as her reproaches, instead of reforming me, would add disgust to what is now merely indifference." Honoria assured him she would not, for though concerned to be in a family where there was any thing to conceal, yet she would not, by revealing what required concealment, disturb the happiness of one unconscious of her husband's infidelity.

Lady Pelham soon after entered the room, and the conversation turned on the public amusements. "Have you been at the play since your arrival in town, Miss Wentworth?" (said Lord Pelham) "No, my Lord," (she replied, scarcely able to suppress a smile from the idea that he well knew how her time had been spent.) Why do you not make a party, Lady Pelham?" rejoined he. "Oh, answered the Lady visibly embarrassed, the theatres are just closing, and there is nothing to be seen worth going for." "But Ranelagh, madam, it is now the proper season for, and if Miss Wentworth has never been there, it is well worth her attention. Honoria, to relieve Lady Pelham's distress, coolly said; "I am obliged to your Lordship; but if my situation permitted, my health would not suffer me to attend public places of any kind; nor indeed have I spirits to undergo the fatigue they generally occasion." "Very true, (returned her Ladyship) you look extremely pale, but we go into the country soon after the Birth Day, and I hope the air will be of service to you."

To attempt giving a particular account of the life our heroine passed here would be impossible for its sameness and insipidity. Lady Pelham was constantly engaged in large circles either at home or abroad, but never asked her to attend her on her visits, or appear in her own company, except, which occurred once or twice during this time, it was a small conversation party: then she was suffered to sit in one corner of the room, make the tea and listen to what passed; but if she attempted to join, which from having been accustomed to she did at first, a freezing look from her Ladyship awed her into silence. A treatment so different from what she had ever before experienced, excited in her as great a dislike to Lady Pelham, as her gentle nature was capable of feeling. It sometimes hurt her conscience that she could not help preferring his Lordship, though sensible of his foibles; for, grateful for her compliance with his request, and respecting the innate purity of her mind, and the resolute propriety with which she maintained and avowed her principles, he ever behaved with a politeness and affability, which could not but raise her gratitude. She often thought with regret of Lady Egerton, and even Mrs. Campbell, whose character was pleasing, and would have been estimable, had not in one act her vanity got the better of her justice. If these shared her tender recollection, how much more did the amiable Miss Melmoth engross her ideas? but the memory of her kindness was so interwoven with her

reasons for leaving Southern Lodge, that it recalled to her mind all the melancholy and unfortunate events of her life, and added to the weight of afflictions that now pressed so heavily on her heart.

One evening as she was making tea for Lady Pelham and two ladies her visitors, a circumstance was mentioned that discovered more fully the illiberality of her sentiments, and heightened Honoria's dislike. Mrs. Egmont was speaking of a lady of her acquaintance, who had lost some very valuable laces and jewels, from the dishonesty of a servant in whom she had placed great confidence. "I am not in the least surprized, (replied Lady Pelham) nor can I even pity her; she took the girl from the Foundling Hospital, and what could she expect from one whose parents she could know nothing of, and who perhaps were thieves or murderers?" "Oh, Lady Pelham, (said Lady Clarendon) these cannot be your real sentiments; if all the children were to be forsaken whose parents were guilty or unknown, what would become of half the world? and is it not even criminal to judge so harshly? You may as well fancy every stranger you meet in company to be unworthy your notice, because you cannot possibly know whether his parents were people of honor and reputation."

"That (answered Lady Pelham) is a very different thing; we do not confide in every stranger we meet in company; but I again repeat, I would not for the world have a person in my house as a servant or dependent, who might belong to villains or banditti; and such possibly are half the children in the Foundling Hospital, who doubtless inherit their parents vices, though they do not bear their names." "Well, (cried Mrs. Egmont) I should never have entertained such an idea; why Lady Clarendon, do you think vice or virtue is hereditary? I once thought so, (she replied, with a repressed sigh) but I am now sadly convinced that virtue at least is not always. But Lady Pelham I am so far on your side, that I confess it would make me miserable for either of my children to marry into a family remarkable for licentiousness; but pardon me if I say it is uncharitable to suppose that those poor creatures, who from the peculiarity of their fate are deprived of the knowledge of their parents, even allowing it possible they were faulty, will derive from them evil inclinations sufficient to counteract the benefits of a good and virtuous education." "I dare say your Ladyship is perfectly right, (returned Lady Pelham) but your arguments cannot alter my sentiments."

Honoria had during this conversation been agitated with various emotions; the asperity with which Lady Pelham had declared an opinion so cruel and unjust, shocked and mortified her; she fancied other people might think the same, and lamented that she had acquainted even Miss Melmoth with the mystery of her birth, and secretly determined never to have another confidante.

Lady Clarendon's spirited opposition and delicate reproof, excited her utmost gratitude; she felt almost ready to thank her for the defence of that unhappy class of beings, to which she perhaps belonged. Her attention was seldom attracted by Lady Pelham's visitors, but this circumstance fixing it wholly on her, she was surprised that she had not before observed her interesting and elegant figure.

*Her form was mark'd with sorrow's traces,  
But time had left her many graces,*



*Nor dar'd to spoil a face so fair.*

She was between forty and fifty, had the most striking remains of early beauty in her countenance; her complexion was transparently fair, but extremely pale; her blue eyes had now more languor than fire in them, yet when she smiled they often sparkled, though their expression of vivacity was but momentary; her features were still fine, but there was an habitual pensiveness in her face, that seemed the result of deep affliction; yet a serenity in her voice and manner, which proved it was affliction submitted to with resignation, and lessened, if not wholly subdued by religion. Honoria gazed on her for some moments with a fixed admiration, and for the first time regretted the cruel restraint she was under, as she had never before so ardently longed to join in conversation as she now did, from an earnest and irresistible desire of attracting the notice of this amiable woman; nor were her wishes vain; before the tea was quite finished, Mrs. Egmont was recalled home by a message, to let her know a lady from the country was unexpectedly arrived at her house; and when the table was removed, Lady Clarendon with a peculiar sweetness in her address, begged our heroine to take the chair next to her; she joyfully complied, and as she frequently in the course of the evening asked her opinion on the different subjects that were started, she could not refuse to answer, or indeed to converse without an appearance of ingratitude or indifference; though Lady Pelham was visibly hurt at the respect with which Lady Clarendon treated her. Honoria was probably the more delighted with her kindness and condescension, as she had never before experienced the least from any of the visitors who frequented the house; having never been introduced to them, they of course regarded her merely as an humble companion, and behaved to her as such.

When her carriage was announced, Lady Clarendon addressed Lady Pelham: "You have not, dear Madam, mentioned this young lady's name to me." "I did not think it was of any consequence, (returned she) but if your Ladyship wishes to know, it is Wentworth: she was recommended to me by an intimate friend, who has desired me to endeavour to find her some situation, similar to those she has been in before, as companion or governess. I have not yet succeeded, but perhaps you can assist me." Lady Clarendon without attending to the latter part of this speech, turning to Honoria, who coloured violently from mortification and resentment, said, "permit me, Miss Wentworth, to hope for the pleasure of seeing you on Saturday with Lady Pelham, in Harley-street." Honoria curtsied, and thanked her; she then took leave, and the carriage drove from the door.

Our heroine, deeply impressed with the strongest sentiments of gratitude and affection, waited the arrival of Saturday with an impatience mixed with fear; for though she hoped Lady Pelham, would take her, she dreaded a disappointment: her apprehensions were too well founded, she went without giving the least hint she expected her company. For the first time in her life, on an occasion so apparently trifling, she sat down and gave a free vent to tears, that flowed not from wounded pride, but merely from sorrow. Many days elapsed, and Lady Clarendon's name was never mentioned, though she gathered from the conversations which passed at table, that Lady Pelham had been frequently at her house.

One morning as she was at work alone in the dressing room, Lady Clarendon was announced; Honoria immediately arose to meet her, and expressed her sorrow that Lady Pelham

was absent. "So the servant informed me, returned her ladyship; but I wished to come up, for as you will not let me see you in Harley street, I would not deny myself that happiness when it was in my power.

"Oh, madam, (cried Honoria earnestly) how little do I deserve your reproof! my heart can witness how much I wished to attend Lady Pelham, but I could not intrude myself unasked." "Why surely, Miss Wentworth, you could not mistake me when I requested to see you?"— "No, madam, said Honoria, I mean Lady Pelham; she heard your Ladyship's condescending invitation, but she never took any notice of it, and as I do not usually accompany her in her visits, I was unwilling to remind her of it; though when she left the house I accused my timidity, which had perhaps deprived me of the happiness of waiting on you; as at all events she could but have refused me."— "Refused you! (exclaimed Lady Clarendon, with much surprize) surely she could not." Then after a pause,— "Will you my dear young lady, (said Lady Clarendon) pardon me for requesting to know, if what she said the other evening of your situation with her, is an exact account?"—"Yes, madam, replied Honora."—"And you do not mean to remain with her?" said Lady Clarendon.— "Oh by no means, if I can be so fortunate as to meet with an eligible situation," said Honoria.— "Could you (continued Lady Clarendon hesitating) prefer the society of one like myself worn out with anxieties and deprest by misfortunes, to that of a Lady like her, young, sprightly, and animated?" "Ah, madam, replied Honoria, where shall I find one like you? tell me, and I shall joyfully accept the proposal."—"Seriously then, replied her Ladyship; my son when at home is constantly engaged, my daughter is very little with me, and if you could be happy under my roof, and Lady Pelham will part with you, I shall be most grateful to her and you for the comfort I shall derive from your society." Honoria was so elated at this speech, that she in vain endeavoured to express her satisfaction, but attempting to speak burst into tears; Lady Clarendon was extremely affected, but understanding the cause, was delighted with the readiness and even joy with which Honoria had declared her happiness at this unexpected offer.

Every thing was soon settled between them, and Lady Clarendon determined to wait Lady Pelham's return to mention it to her. That Lady heard it with a visible satisfaction, and replied, it might perhaps be a further recommendation to Miss Wentworth, if she read Miss Melmoth's letter, and directly gave it to her: Lady Clarendon said, she wanted no other proofs of her merit, yet notwithstanding the letter impressed her more fully with an idea of Honoria's amiable qualities, from the warmth with which Miss Melmoth enumerated them. She then left them, promising to send her carriage for Honoria the next day at twelve o'clock; who immediately sat down to acquaint Miss Melmoth of the change which was so soon to take place; thanking her for her partial friendship, through which Lady Pelham had recommended, and Lady Clarendon received her. She would not mention the coldness with which the former had behaved, but only said in the present state of her health and spirits, the house was too gay for her, and the mistress of it too much engaged, for her to derive that comfort from her society, she hoped for with Lady Clarendon, who mixed little with the world, and devoted her time to domestic amusements.

At dinner she endeavoured to learn some account of the family into which she was going. Lady Pelham was not very communicative, but his Lordship informed her, Lady Clarendon had only two children, a son and a daughter. Sir William, he said, was a very amiable and accomplished young man, who it was thought, was attached, if not absolutely engaged, to a

young lady of very large fortune. Miss Clarendon was totally unlike her brother both in person and manner; she was a fine woman, but had been guilty of some indiscretions that had given her Ladyship real uneasiness; that she was now very little at home, usually spending her time with a relation in Northamptonshire.

This intelligence was not unpleasant to Honoria; though she regretted the sorrow Lady Clarendon must have felt, yet she rejoiced that Miss Clarendon did not live with her; as she promised herself unmixed satisfaction in the society of this amiable and elegant woman, which the presence of a girl devoted to fashionable follies, and immersed in dissipation, must interrupt, if not utterly destroy. She spent the evening in preparing for her removal, and waited the arrival of the carriage the next day, with an impatience hitherto unknown to her.

Lord Pelham before her departure took an opportunity of repeating his acknowledgments for her secrecy respecting Mrs. Wilton; at the same time informing her from a discovery of her infidelity, that connection was wholly at an end; but assuring her he had settled sufficient on the unhappy woman for life, to enable her to subsist comfortably without continuing in that state, to which he blushed to confess he had reduced her. Honoria replied, it was an act of justice he owed her; "but what, my Lord, (added she) can compensate for that innocence which by your means she has lost, and for that peace of mind arising from conscious virtue, which she can never regain?" "It is too true, returned he; my own reflections are too poignant not to oblige me to acknowledge the truth of your assertion; but I have the satisfaction of knowing, that I have made every reparation in my power, by setting her above necessity." Lady Pelham's entrance put a stop to this conversation, and the carriage at the same moment driving to the door, Honoria coolly thanked Lady Pelham for the attention she had shown her, curtsied to his Lordship, and flew down stairs with an alacrity that sufficiently proved the lightness of her heart; and springing into the chariot, was in few minutes conveyed to Harley-street.

## CHAP. XXI.

LADY Clarendon's reception of Honoria was truly kind and flattering; she behaved to her with that mixture of affection and respect, so well calculated to gain a heart glowing with tenderness, yet proud and tremblingly sensible of insult and mortification. They quitted London in a few days, and went to her Ladyship's house upon Richmond hill. The extreme beauty of the situation, the variety of the landscape before her, and the liveliness of the place, contributed to restore her serenity of mind, and even in some degree her cheerfulness; as from the unvarying attention of her kind friend, and the pleasant society they had formed in the neighbourhood, her time flew with rapidity. When not engaged in company, she read to Lady Clarendon, or amused her with playing on the harpsichord. Sometimes she rambled about the fields, or rode on horseback, and often accompanied her Ladyship an airing, when they usually paid a visit to some distant friend to vary the scene.

The latter end of June, Sir William arrived from France, and took up his residence with them; he was lively and sensible, and of course a great addition to their parties. Honoria indeed thought him, except one, the most agreeable and elegant man she had ever seen; and fortune, which at present smiled on her, had another unexpected happiness in store. Sir William went to London for a few days, when one morning at breakfast a note was delivered to her Ladyship, who with her eyes sparkling with pleasure, gave it to Honoria and begged her to read it; it contained only these few words:

“To-morrow, my dear madam, I hope to have the inexpressible happiness of introducing to your knowledge, her whose virtues do no less honor to my choice, than her approbation bestows pleasure on my heart.”

It required no great penetration to discover Sir William meant the fair lady to whom he paid his devoirs. Honoria returned the note to Lady Clarendon, and began to congratulate her, and was just going to enquire the lady's name, when the entrance of a gentleman interrupted her; and finding he came on business, she left the room the instant the breakfast was over, and called on a young lady who lived near: she sat with her some time, and at last proposed a stroll in Richmond park, which as it was a cool pleasant morning the other readily assented to: they extended their walk beyond its usual limits, when Honoria looking at her watch, was surprized to find it so late, and feared she should scarcely reach Lady Clarendon's before dinner. They returned immediately, and Honoria walking up to the house saw two ladies in mourning sitting by the window. When she read Sir William's note, she did not observe it was dated the night before, and consequently did not expect company till the next day; but the appearance of these reminded her of the mistake she had made, and she regretted her long absence, fearing Lady Clarendon might impute it to neglect.

The moment she came in sight, Sir William flew out of the parlour to meet her, and taking her hand hastened to introduce her to the visitors; but the moment she entered the room, one of them, to the great surprize of all present, ran up and embraced her with a warmth that proved it was not their first meeting. Honoria was no less delighted to behold in Sir William's

favourite, her beloved and long absent friend Emily Onslow, and returned her expressions of joy with equal animation. Both Lady Clarendon and Sir William were pleased that they were so well known to each other, as it heightened their satisfaction in the opinions they had formed of each, by convincing them they were well founded.

When a little recovered from their mutual agitation, Emily apologized to Lady Clarendon for her strange behaviour, but confessed the joy she felt at so unexpectedly meeting Miss Wentworth had rendered her inattentive to the rules of politeness. Lady Clarendon declared she participated her happiness, and should be sorry if she had in any degree suppress it. Emily then introduced Miss Ashbourn, whose deep mourning informed Honoria of her father's death, and prevented those enquiries she was upon the point of making.

The conversation turned the whole day on past occurrences; they informed Lady Clarendon how their acquaintance commenced, amused her with an account of Mrs. Campbell's absurdities, and grieved her with a relation of Lady Egerton's misfortunes. Miss Onslow was herself ignorant of the particulars of the event which carried Sir William and his Lady abroad, and was shocked at the history Honoria gave of the interview and duel. Emily then acquainted her friend with what had occurred since she wrote last, but as Miss Ashbourn was present, passed slightly over great part of the time, and only said when their journey to Montpelier was fixed, she wrote both to her and Lady Egerton, but on her return to Paris her surprize at not hearing from either of them, was lost in apprehensions for the fate of the latter, from whom she found a note left for her at the hotel, acquainting her that in consequence of having killed Mr. Lisburne in a duel, Sir William was obliged to quit England, and had brought her with him, intending to leave her in a convent while he travelled, but in what part of France she was yet ignorant. "Had I been a man, continued Miss Onslow, I have so much the spirit of Knight errantry in me, that I should not have hesitated at travelling all over the kingdom, till I had found my unfortunate friend; but as it was, I could do nothing; Mrs. Ashbourn and all her family were just leaving Paris, and I could not stay alone; however on my arrival in England I wrote to her aunt in Devonshire, acquainting her with all I knew, and begging her to take some method of learning the fate of her injured niece. I have not yet heard from her, but expect a letter every day."

Lady Clarendon, Sir William, and Miss Ashbourn, joined in lamenting the ambition of captain Halifax, which had been of such fatal consequence to his daughter: and Honoria reflecting on her severer misfortunes, confessed her own fate comparatively an happy one, and thought perhaps had she known her parents, they might have rendered her equally miserable by an ill judged wish to contribute to her happiness; and rejoiced, though at present separated for ever from the man she loved, no creature on earth had the power to make her bestow her hand where she could never give her heart. The day was spent with mutual satisfaction by all parties: early in the evening Mrs. Ashbourn's carriage arrived, and Lady Clarendon promised to return the visit as soon as possible.

The remainder of the summer passed in this pleasant manner. Mrs. Ashbourn took a lodging at East Sheene, and the two families were constantly together. Honoria and Emily grew every day more attached to each other, and Lady Clarendon, whose partiality to the former was grown into a settled and warm affection, founded on an additional knowledge of her amiable

disposition, superior understanding, and excellent principles, and who regarded the latter as her future daughter; beheld their friendship with the sincerest pleasure, hoping that from Miss Wentworth's example, Emily would attain a steadiness which only seemed wanting to complete her character.

Dorothea and Fanny Ashbourn were both pleasant and agreeable; the eldest was pretty but rather affected, and the youngest had a satirical turn which often offended Lady Clarendon, whose disposition was too just and too benevolent, not to feel pain when the failings or even faults of others were made objects of derision. From the pensiveness which hung on Mrs. Ashbourn, in consequence of the recent loss of her husband, to whom she was sincerely attached, Lady Clarendon had a peculiar satisfaction in her society; there was a similarity in their feelings which endeared them to each other. Sir Edward had been dead nine years, yet his Lady with unusual constancy still lamented him, and could not mention his name without unaffected tears.

Thus situated, every one of this party enjoyed in a degree what they most wished for. Miss Onslow the attentions of a favoured lover, the approbation of his mother, and the company of her most valued friend. Sir William lived but in her smiles, and felt not a wish beyond. Dorothea and Fanny loved amusement, variety, and admiration, and in visiting among the neighbouring families they met with it all. Honoria, blessed with the society and secure of the friendship of her amiable protectress, endeavoured to bound her wishes, and let neither hope nor fear disturb the tranquillity of her situation; and she probably had succeeded, but a letter from Miss Melmoth, and some intelligence she heard, again perplexed her mind with doubts, and agitated it with ten thousand new tormenting ideas; which she had neither the resolution to banish, nor the power to relieve, by making those enquiries which, by satisfying her restless curiosity, might in some measure have restored peace to her bosom.

She was one morning informed a Gentleman wished to speak with her, and going into the drawing room, found it was Mr. Wallace, brother to the young lady who was with her when she fell from her horse. After the usual compliments had passed, he held out a letter which, he said, Miss Melmoth had made him promise not to deliver, till she had granted her forgiveness for not writing for so long a time; but that she had really been prevented by illness. "Indeed, sir, replied Honoria, Miss Melmoth's request was unnecessary; I have only regretted, not resented her silence; and that regret is now heightened by hearing illness was the cause." She then took the letter and began reading it; but having satisfied herself that the writer was recovered, and seeing the name of Effingham, a name she was sure her friend would not have mentioned without some particular reason, not willing to trust herself to go through it in the presence of Sir William, Lady Clarendon, and Mr. Wallace, she put it into her pocket till she had an opportunity of retiring to her own room; this she soon found, and then with an emotion which sadly proved she had not conquered the fatal passion, which had so long corroded her happiness, she read the paragraph, which was as follows:

"The rheumatic fever which has confined me so long to the house, and even to my chamber, by suffering me to see few people, prevented me till yesterday from hearing a circumstance that I delay not a moment acquainting you with. It is not, my dear Honoria, Colonel Effingham who has bought Ashbury Park, but Captain Fairfax, his friend, who was last week

actually married to Miss Mortimer. How you could be so mistaken I know not, but you may depend on my intelligence as a reality. Last night Mr. Williams, the attorney, came to me on some business, and I asked him when the repairs at Ashbury Park would be finished, and Colonel Effingham take possession?" "You mean Captain Fairfax, I suppose, madam?" (said he) "No, (I replied) I mean the Colonel, who is to marry Miss Mortimer." "How much you have been misinformed!" returned he, and then took a letter from his pocket and gave it me to read. It was from Sir Charles Mortimer himself, requesting he would hasten the workmen as much as possible, and informing him that his sister was three days before married to Captain Fairfax; that he was to accompany them for a few weeks to Southampton, but on their return they would wish to have the house ready for them. In the mean time his friend Colonel Effingham, who had declined being of their party, would be frequently at Ashbury to overlook the alterations, and observe that they went on according to Captain Fairfax's plan: a few directions to Mr. Williams concluded the letter. "This, my dear girl, you must allow is an incontrovertible proof of your mistake; and may it restore to your mind that peace, the erroneous opinion you have hitherto entertained has for so many months deprived you of!"

This intelligence was far from having the effect her amiable friend hoped for; in fact it only raised new disturbances, by exciting in her breast a painful struggle between hope and fear. She could now less than before account for the indifference almost amounting to scorn with which he passed her at Ashbury; though from the glow in his cheeks he evidently knew her: she had supposed that conscious of his approaching marriage, he would not by renewing the acquaintance re-excite in her breast any degree of that esteem, he too well knew she once bestowed on him; and thus endeavoured to make her reason applaud that conduct, her heart so severely censured. But now, deprived of a clue to unravel the mystery of his behaviour, she was wholly at a loss to determine the cause: sometimes she imagined the story of her leaving Wood Park with Mr. Cleveland had reached him, but then fondly fancied he would have endeavoured to learn the truth of this report, before he gave it such entire credit. Then the fatal mystery of her birth rushed wildly on her imagination, and bore down every opposing idea. "Alas, (cried she) he had heard it and despises me; yet I could not have believed that a mind apparently so noble, could harbour such illiberal sentiments. Oh Lady Pelham! your opinion is not singular; the world joins with you in reprobating that description of unfortunate beings who are deprived of the knowledge of those to whom they owe their existence; and that ignorance comprehends every other misfortune." A shower of tears a little relieved her, yet this idea took such fast hold upon her mind, that even the flattering hope which sometimes entered it, arising from the reflection, that he was however still disengaged, had no power to dissipate the gloom that hung on her; and which was so visible when she was summoned to dinner, that Lady Clarendon was alarmed, and anxiously enquired if she was ill. "I have a violent head ach, madam, (she answered) but I hope it will be better if I walk a little in the air, which I intend before tea. She was then surprised to see Sir William enter the room with Mr. Wallace, whom her Ladyship would not suffer to depart without an invitation to dinner, which he readily accepted, and had been walking with Sir William.

The conversation then turned on the neighbourhood of Southern Lodge; and in the course of it, Mr. Wallace mentioned Colonel Effingham's name. "Colonel Effingham! (repeated Lady Clarendon with a deep sigh and some apparent emotion) does he live near you?" "No, madam,

(he replied) but he is the intimate friend of a Captain Fairfax who has bought Ashbury Park, and has been there frequently." "He is a man of very amiable character, I have heard." (added Lady Clarendon) "I believe, Madam, that is the universal opinion." (returned Mr. Wallace) "He has a considerable fortune I am told." (said Sir William) "Yes, answered he, four or five thousand a year landed property, which he inherited from his uncle, Lord Bridgewater, whose son was killed by a fall; and no man deserves such a fortune better than Colonel Effingham. It is impossible to relate how many acts of unostentatious charity he has performed in his few visits to Hertfordshire." "Has he now fixed place of residence?" (said Sir William) "I believe not yet; (he continued) he has lately spent his time in rambling over the kingdom in the hope, I suppose, of removing the dejection of mind he labours under from a disappointment, for it was told me as a great secret by a gentleman, who had it in confidence from Sir Charles Mortimer, that he was violently in love with a young lady of birth, beauty, fortune and accomplishments, but she refused him." "Bravo, cried Sir William, who after this of our sex shall dare to say, they "wonder a woman keeps a secret," when here is an instance of three men following who revealed one? Let the satire be henceforth transferred to us." Mr. Wallace coloured, but attempted to laugh it off, and succeeded.

This conversation by no means contributed to lessen Honoria's head ach. Lady Clarendon's emotion had not escaped her, and she determined if possible to know the cause the first opportunity, by asking her if she was acquainted with the Colonel. The account Mr. Wallace gave of his fortune and attachment, excited her wonder, and raised her curiosity: she had heard of his uncle's death, and seen him in mourning, but knew not the value of the estate he had bequeathed to him. But who the young lady was, to whom he was so ardently attached, she could not guess, though very anxious to learn, for she was too well assured it could not be herself.

When they retired from table, Lady Clarendon who saw with pain the heaviness of her eyes and the paleness of her cheeks encrease instead of lessen, ordered the chariot; telling her walking would be too great a fatigue, and that she would herself accompany her an airing. During their ride, Honoria, whose thoughts turned constantly to one point, asked her, after introducing the subject not to appear too abrupt, if she knew Colonel Effingham? "I am not (replied she) personally acquainted with him, but to confess the truth, my daughter is the young person Mr. Wallace alluded to; he was distractedly in love with her, and wrote to me for my consent and interest with her; the first I readily gave, but the latter I exerted in vain. Louisa resolutely refused him, and earnestly as I wished for the alliance, I could not use the power of a parent to make her miserable. When we return I will shew you his letter to me." No words can give a tolerable idea of Honoria's astonishment at this intelligence; the account she had heard of Miss Clarendon, was so totally different from what she supposed could captivate a mind like his, that she could only imagine it was wholly perverted, or his reason hurt by the unexpected addition to his fortune. This idea she resolved if possible to cherish, and regard him in future as a man utterly unworthy of one tender remembrance. She observed with pleasure Lady Clarendon seemed as unwilling to pursue the object as herself, and her head ach giving her a good pretence for being silent, very little more conversation passed between them till they arrived at home. Mr. Wallace was gone, and Lady Clarendon went up stairs, and taking a letter from her bureau, gave it to Honoria, who immediately with a beating heart retired to her apartment, and read as follows:



“Madam,

“The constant, respectful, and invariable attachment I have so long felt for the amiable Miss Clarendon, and which I once flattered myself she was not wholly insensible to; emboldens me to solicit your Ladyship’s consent to my renewing those addresses, that were once not unfavourably received, and your interest with your charming daughter. I dare hope your enquiries respecting my character, fortune, and situation in life, will not be unsatisfactorily answered, or be found unworthy of your approbation. Nor the true and ardent passion which now glows in my breast, and which nothing can ever lessen or destroy, thought undeserving of a return from the dear and much loved object of that unalterable attachment.”

Honoria, who from the idea that he was grown ambitious or mercenary, thought the letter would confirm her opinion, was transfixed at a declaration of love so ardent, that she could no longer doubt its sincerity. In spite of her new-formed resolution to forget him, the cruel certainty that he really loved another, opened every wound afresh. She had no need to copy the letter, every word was engraved on her heart; yet she read it again and again, endeavouring but vainly, to find something on which to rest a hope; but every perusal convinced her more fully of his inconsistency. She observed it was dated at the time she was with Lady Egerton, and earnestly wished to know when and where their acquaintance commenced: but Lady Clarendon appeared so disinclined to speak on the subject, that she did not like to introduce it again, and was not a little perplexed what to say when she returned the letter; but this difficulty was removed by the arrival of Emily Onslow and Fanny Ashbourn, and being immediately summoned to attend the tea-table, she took it with her, and restoring it in their presence, nothing of course could be said.

They were both concerned to see her look so ill, and Lady Clarendon, who was ever anxious for her, desired they would both stay all night, as their company might contribute to amuse her. However grateful to her Ladyship for this kind mark of attention, it failed of the desired effect: she grew gradually worse for some days, her disorder at last terminated in a bilious fever, and she continued for some time in a dangerous state: but from a naturally good constitution, and the unremitting attentions she experienced from all around her, she at length recovered though slowly; and the physicians giving it as their opinion, that nothing but the Bath waters would wholly restore her to health, Lady Clarendon determined to take her to that place, as soon as the proper season for drinking them commenced.

END OF VOLUME II.

HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

The hues of bliss more brightly glow  
Chasten'd by sabler tints of woe,  
And blended form with artful strife  
The strength and harmony of life.

GRAY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G.G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

M,DCC,LXXXIX.

HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

CHAP. XXII.

IT was now only the middle of September, and the weather continued too warm to think of removing to Bath; and though Honoria had entirely lost her fever, she was still so weak and languid, that Lady Clarendon, who tenderly loved her, began to be seriously alarmed. When first this journey was talked of, she intended sending for her daughter to accompany them, but now altered her plan; and from the idea that change of air and scene would be of service to our heroine, determined to set out directly for Northampton, stay the races, and go from thence to Bath through Oxford, and remain there a few days to see the University, visit Bleinheim, Nuneham, and every thing else in the city or neighbourhood worthy their observation.

Lady Clarendon persuaded Mrs. Ashbourn to give them the meeting at Bath, which she readily promised; and at her request also permitted Emily to accompany them in their intended excursion. Miss Onslow was delighted at this for various reasons; always happy in the society of this amiable family, she had now the additional pleasure of expecting amusement and variety. She had often wished to see Oxford; that wish was now soon to be gratified, and in a way the most pleasing to her. Honoria, conscious that this scheme was fixed on principally on her account, would not mortify Lady Clarendon by expressing the indifference she felt; for though sensible her mind had wholly lost that spring so necessary for the enjoyment of life, yet she appeared pleased, and even anxious for it to take place. Sir William was little less interested in her recovery than his mother; for the esteem he at first felt for her, daily encreased with the knowledge of her heart and disposition, and he loved her for the affection with which she regarded Miss Onslow.

That young lady one morning as they were preparing for their journey, express the satisfaction she felt at the near prospect of the accomplishment of a wish she had so long formed; when Lady Clarendon, who often endeavoured to check her boundless vivacity, said, “you should not, my dear Emily, ever suffer your mind to be fixed wholly on one object, for in proportion to the ardour of our wishes, will be the severity of our disappointment: indeed heaven often permits us to be punished by the accomplishments of our most earnest hopes.”

“How is that possible, madam?” “Indeed, my dear, it is possible, for I have myself fatally experienced it. I formed one ardent wish for many years of my life;—Heaven

granted it, but was pleased to ordain it should be my bitterest punishment, and sadly convinced me of the truth of that assertion;

*“Fate wings with every wish th’  
afflictive dart.”*

“But, dear madam, how inanimate would that life be, unenlivened by hope?” “I do not forbid hope, Emily, it is the sole support of our existence; I only mean to express my disapprobation of those ungovernable and restless wishes, which we are all too apt to form, and if disappointed, accuse providence of injustice. Remember those inimitable lines of Dr. Johnson.

*Still raise for good the supplicating voice,  
But leave to heaven the measure and the choice;  
Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,  
Secure whate’er he gives, he gives the best.*

Miss Onslow confessed the propriety of Lady Clarendon’s sentiments, and promised in future to regulate her conduct by them. Honoria deeply felt their truth; she had formed many a wish, and had been many times disappointed in its accomplishment, and silently resolved to give way no more to those restless tormentors of the imagination.

A day or two after this conversation, Honoria being well enough to travel, they left Richmond, slept one night on the road, and arrived at Northampton the next morning: as Mrs. Wheeler, the lady with whom Lady Clarendon boarded, though in the first line of company, had not a large fortune, and but a small house, Lady Clarendon chose to be in lodgings for the time they should stay. Mrs. Wheeler had engaged them for her, and was with Miss Clarendon waiting her arrival. Our heroine had for some time anxiously wished to see Louisa, to judge of the Colonel’s taste, and thought in her beauty and elegance to justify his inconstancy: but she was surprized to observe nothing striking in her in any way: she was tall, but neither delicately made nor well proportioned; had a fine complexion, but too much colour: her eyes were black and sparkling, but expressed nothing but the most undaunted assurance; and her features, though regular, were large and masculine. She received her mother with much indifference, Emily with more complacency, from a hint she had heard of the connection which was likely to take place: her brother with a marked dislike; and to Honoria she behaved with a haughtiness bordering on contempt.

The time during their stay at Northampton passed so very unpleasantly, that Lady Clarendon wished to shorten it; but she had promised her daughter and Emily to be at the races, and knew not how to recede. The former was evidently jealous of her attentions to Honoria, but it was not in her power to lessen them; the amiable qualities Lady Clarendon loved in her, she saw with pain were not possessed by Louisa; but instead of noticing the latter’s rude and ill natured manner, she strove by every gentle and possible method to make her follow so bright an example. Miss Onslow, who from the first moment that she was introduced, with the violence natural to her character, conceived an insuperable

aversion to her, and which her behaviour to her mother, brother, and Honoria rendered more justifiable, declared she would not go to the balls, unless the latter would accompany her, and to this she unwillingly consented, not from expecting to receive any amusement, but merely to prevent her from staying at home.

The first evening when the country dances began, Emily stood up with Sir William, and Miss Clarendon with an Officer. Honoria was sitting quietly by Lady Clarendon and Mrs. Wheeler, when a gentleman approaching the latter, begged in a whisper she would introduce him to the lovely stranger as a partner; she immediately complied, but Honoria refusing, he sat down by her and directly entered into conversation, finding she declined dancing merely from ill-health; and being well acquainted with Mrs. Wheeler, he joined their party for the whole evening, would not dance, though gentlemen were very much wanted, but remained with her till they went into the supper room; he then followed, and continued to pay her such strict and visible attention, that the ladies all declared she had made a conquest, and the gentlemen envied him his fortunate situation, as she was without dispute universally allowed to be the most beautiful woman in the room.

The next morning at breakfast, Emily rallied her on the assiduities of her beau; and Mrs. Wheeler said he was no despicable captive, for he had by far the best estate in the county, and was a man of excellent understanding and of good character. "Ay," replied Miss Onslow, "and what is better than all, you were the universal object of envy; the ladies wished to take your place, and the gentlemen his, for every creature allowed you, Miss Wentworth, to be the brightest star that ever darted its beams on this northern hemisphere." Honoria smiled, but felt very little pleasure at these encomiums. Miss Onslow repeated them to pique Louisa, and it lost none of the intended effect; she replied spitefully, "where there were so many pretty women, it would be hard to decide who was the most beautiful." "Oh by no means," retorted Emily "it was given in her favour without dispute."

Honoria, who was fatigued from the last night's amusement, would not go upon the course that morning. Mr. Manwaring was there, and enquired particularly for her, and seemed much disappointed at her absence, as Emily told her at dinner. In the evening at the ball he again address her, and finding her persist in her resolutions not to dance, again gave up his favourite amusement for the superior pleasure of conversing with her. But his attentions were thrown away upon her; once severely disappointed, she determined her heart should never know a second favourite, and hoped for nothing but to regain that happy tranquillity and universal indifference she once possessed.

After one day's rest they left Northampton; Louisa taking Sir William's place in the coach, who followed them on horseback, and arrived at Oxford. None of the ladies but Lady Clarendon, had ever before seen this wonderful place, and in the surprize and pleasure it excited, even Honoria for a time forgot her affliction. They drove directly to the Star, where Sir William, who at this University received his education, left them, and flew to Merton College to revisit his friends, and collect a party for the following day to accompany them in their walks. Accordingly the next morning at breakfast, the ladies

were attended by three gentlemen of Sir William's particular acquaintance, and, when it was over, immediately began their rambles. After viewing what their Ciceroni thought most worthy their observation, returning to their inn, the gentlemen led them through Christ-church College, when in crossing Peckwater, a gownsman who had been for some moments attentively viewing the party, flew from the opposite side and address our heroine and Emily, neither of whom at first, from the alteration in his dress, recollected their old acquaintance, Mr. Audley; but his voice and manner soon recalled him to their remembrance. He express the most unaffected joy at this meeting, and desiring to be introduced to Sir William and Lady Clarendon, became one of their party; and was no little addition to it from the vivacity of his conversation, and the drollery of his remarks. Sir William invited him to dinner, and he complied without hesitation. The conversation then turned on their friends at C——, and the events which had lately occurred there: he informed them that Mrs. Campbell had been married two or three months to Mr. Hunter, and on Miss Onslow's enquiring for his friend, Miss Winterton, he replied "Alas, madam, I have not had the felicity of beholding the fair Helen's destructive charms; but I hear that still "withering on the Virgin thorn, she lives and grows in single blessedness." "And so I believe she will die," (added Miss Onslow) "But do you know, (continued Mr. Audley) what the report of the city was upon your leaving Mrs. Campbell's?" "No, really," returned Honoria. "Why when I was at home during the long vacation, I took it into my head to go and enquire how every body went on there, for since that fatal affair, Charlotte has had no correspondence with Miss Winterton; so not daring to shew my head at the old Doctor's, nor indeed at Mrs. Campbell's, as the bosom friend of Helena, I called at Mrs. Walton's and asked, if you were still with Mrs. Campbell? Miss Walton said no, you had left her several months; but on my enquiring where you were at present? Mary Walton replied, "I should rather ask you that question, Mr. Audley, for it is well known you and Miss Wentworth went away together." In short, madam, I found such a report had prevailed, and did my utmost to contradict it: but that I may do it more effectually when I go there next, which will be soon, be so good as to tell me why you left Mrs. Campbell, and with whom you went." Honoria, extremely shocked at this account, replied, "Though for some reasons it is not in my power to acquaint you with the event that obliged me to leave C——, this Lady," turning to Emily, "can assure you I was in very respectable company, for I had the pleasure of attending her and Mrs. Markham to London, two days after your departure; though from a trifling disagreement, I quitted Mrs. Campbell's house a few hours after you took leave; and as the town is, I believe, ignorant of the real reason of our parting, from this circumstance, I imagine, arose the report that we went away together."

"Well, my dear, (said Emily Onslow,) if from a point, you allow me to say of false honor, you will not tell, I will. I heard it publicly, and with this gentleman's assistance will make it publicly known all over the city, for I have no idea that your reputation should suffer in compliment to a woman, who deserves not such a sacrifice: besides now she has gained Mr. Hunter, it will not spoil her fortune." She then related every particular to Mr. Audley, who clapped his hands and received it with unbounded pleasure, vowing another day should not pass before he would write an account of this ridiculous circumstance to a friend he had now at C——, who should send it all over the city, and in less than three days it should be known at every tea and card-table in the

place; and he hoped to hear Mrs. Hunter was become an universal object of derision and ridicule.

Honoria in vain attempted to reason him into a less violent method of proceeding, but as her fame was at stake, she could not absolutely disapprove of his plan; and Emily declared she would write to Anne Walton, whose manners were gentle and good-humoured, and wholly different from her sister's, relating the whole to her, but desiring Mary might take Mrs. Hunter's part of the story, and that she herself would justify Miss Wentworth: "for," added she, "a little piece of fresh scandal, though of one of her dearest friends, is the most acceptable present any one can make to Mary Walton."

The afternoon and evening were spent in comments upon this, and remarks on what they had seen in the morning; and, at parting, Mr. Audley, who was a student of Christ-church, and as all the Oxonians are particularly partial to his own college, desired he might have the pleasure the next day of conducting them over it, and assuring them, upon the whole, they would find it more worthy their attention, than any other in the University. They promised to attend him; but Honoria, who, fatigued with the hurry of the day, and agitated by the intelligence she had heard, passed a sleepless night, was so languid, that nothing but the fear of keeping some of them at home, could have induced her to accompany them.

Lady Clarendon, who attentively watched every look of Honoria, was so alarmed by the alteration in her countenance, that after dinner she declared her resolution of setting off for Bath the next day, and give up for the present her intention of going to Blenheim, &c. as the weather was now colder, and she thought every moment's delay might be prejudicial to Honoria, and, as her own state of health was also very unequal to such repeated fatigues. Mr. Audley, though he expressed great concern at their early departure, confessed the reason to be so good, that he dared not make an objection. Emily was not selfish enough to be hurt, when the health of her friend depended on their removal. But Louisa said, she thought it very unjust indeed, for a whole party to go for the sake of one, but her mother was so partial to Miss Wentworth, that she could lead her as she pleased. Lady Clarendon only reproved her by a severe look. Honoria was not present at this conversation, she was gone to lie down on the bed, and when on her joining them at tea, she was acquainted with the change of their plan, the real reason was not assigned.

When the gentlemen and Mr. Audley took leave, the latter said, he hoped if they ever visited Oxford again, they would do him the honor of letting him know of their arrival, and this both Lady Clarendon and Sir William, who were highly pleased with his spirited conduct respecting their favorite, readily promised.



## CHAP. XXIII.

LADY Clarendon had secured a house in Gay-street, to which they went immediately on their arrival at Bath, where the Ashbourns, according to their promise, soon joined them. Emily quitted her friend with great regret, but could not avoid returning to Mrs. Ashbourn, to whom she confest herself under great obligations; and as they lodged only in Edgar-buildings, and the families met every day, their separation was of less consequence.

The place, though seldom at this season crowded, began to fill faster than usual, and they met among the strangers many with whom they had been long acquainted; a circumstance particularly pleasing to Lady Clarendon and Mrs. Ashbourn; as they consigned the young people to the care of their friends, since the former, from inclination, avoided all public places, and the latter, in her present situation, could not with propriety attend them. Louisa, Emily, and the Miss Ashbourns, escorted by their brother and Sir William, entered into all the amusements with spirit and vivacity. Honoria's ill health was the given reason for her recluse life, but her mind was not yet strong enough to bear the confusion of constantly attending Balls, Plays, and Concerts; though Lady Clarendon's anxious solicitude for her recovery, by giving her an additional wish for life, made her carefully pursue the methods prescribed, and she never failed going to the Pump-room at the proper hours.

Among the variety of objects which there met her eyes, she was particularly struck with a beautiful girl about seventeen years old, who came as regularly as herself, supporting a genteel old lady, who appeared infirm and emaciated; they were both drest in a style which, though far from vulgar, was yet by no means upon an equality with the rest of the gay world; and there was something in the old lady's manner which proved she had seen better days. When she had drank her glass of water, she used to sit down with her young companion, and they sometimes talked to each other; but Honoria never saw them speak to any one as an acquaintance, and often wished herself to have an opportunity of entering into conversation with them, as she was really interested on their account, and pitied the solitary life they seemed to lead, in the midst of so much variety and dissipation.

What contrivance could not, chance at last effected: as she was yet too weak to walk far, she went an airing every day, and either Lady Clarendon, or Emily, generally accompanied her; but one morning it happened they were both prevented. As the chariot was going slowly up the ascent leading to Lansdown, she observed, just above the Belvidere, the same beautiful young creature who had so often attracted her notice, walking by the side of a chair. She had ordered the coachman to drive to the Monument, but a violent shower of rain falling, though it was very clear when she sat out, she desired him to turn at the end of three miles. On her return, whilst waiting for the turnpike-gate to be opened, she saw the same young woman come out of the house, and look anxiously at the weather, but though the rain was lessened, it was by no means over, and Honoria guessing at her distress, immediately offered her the vacant place in the chariot, and

begged she might set her down. "I am much obliged to you, madam," she answered, "I do not regard myself, but I am afraid my grandmother will catch cold if she attempts to walk, and I wait till the shower is over, that I may go home and send her a chair." "What, is your grandmother here?" (said Honoria). "Yes Madam," replied the girl, "she took refuge here from the storm." "Was she not in a chair as I drove up, (said Honoria?)" "Yes, Madam," answered the young beauty, "but I could not persuade her to keep the chair the whole time, as she intended to walk here slowly a little while for the benefit of the air, and then go as far as Belmont, which, as it is all down hill, she thought she could do very well, and take a chair from thence home." "But," interrupted Honoria, "if you and your grandmother will both come into the chariot, there will be sufficient room, and I shall have great pleasure in setting you down." "You are very good indeed, Madam," said the girl, "but I cannot think of troubling you so much; and if you are so kind as to take my grandmother, I can walk very well." Honoria was however positive, and at length prevailed; the girl ran into the house to acquaint her grandmother, who with many apologies got into the carriage, and was followed by the young woman. According to their directions, Honoria ordered the coachman to stop at a Shoemaker's in Westgate-street, where they said they lodged.

During their ride, the elegant manner of the old lady, and the lively expressions of gratitude in the young, considerably increased the favorable impression she had received; but she could only learn that their names were Lambert. When they arrived at their lodgings, they thanked Miss Wentworth in very polite terms for her condescension and kindness, but said nothing that left her an opening to offer to continue the acquaintance; this however she justly imputed to timidity, as their appearance was so totally different from her own.

The next morning she went to the Pump-room earlier than usual, with the hope of having some conversation with her new friends; but to her great surprise saw nothing of them. Another and another day elapsed, and still they were not there; this determined her to make some personal enquiry, and, going to their lodgings, was told by the maid of the house, that Mrs. Lambert was ill, and Miss not at home; the maid begged her to walk up stairs, but this she would not do without sending up her name, and requesting to know how Mrs. Lambert was. The old lady answered the message by entreating to see her. This Honoria directly complied with, and entered a small dining room, neatly, but poorly furnished, which together with its situation, convinced our heroine that her idea of the narrowness of their circumstances was not an erroneous one. Mrs. Lambert, who was sitting in an easy chair very much wrapt up, thanked Honoria for the honor of her visit; an honor which she said she had earnestly wished for, but knew not how to request. Honoria assured her, that anxious as she was to see her again, she should not probably have intruded, had not her absence from the Pump-room for three days, not only made her desire to hear of her health, but afforded her an excuse for calling, which she gladly availed herself of. Mrs. Lambert thanked her, and said, ill as she then was, but for her kindness, she should probably have been much worse, for that the few minutes she was exposed to the rain, and the dampness of the floor of the room where she waited for its abatement, had brought on a return of the rheumatic complaint, for which she was sent to Bath. Honoria expressed her concern, and asked if she had any advice. Yes, she said, an

apothecary attended her. “But dear Madam, why not send for a physician?” Mrs. Lambert smiled, and hesitatingly replied, “to confess the truth, Madam, though if I were to grow worse, I should think it right to have farther advice, as what I have already taken has been of great service to me, it is an expence I would if possible avoid; for there are here many necessary ones, and my circumstances will not allow me to exceed the plan I have laid down.”

Honorina at this speech earnestly wished to offer her assistance, and in a manner that would be least likely to offend, but knew not how to begin; at last gathering courage, she said,—“I have, Madam, been very unfortunate myself, but Heaven has raised me friends, whose bounty enables me to request you to accept this, (laying her purse on her lap) and believe me, you will infinitely oblige me by not refusing me the satisfaction of having in some measure contributed to your comfort.” She then hastily arose and would have quitted the room, but Mrs. Lambert seizing her gown, detained her, and replied, “Grateful as I am, madam, for your kind and benevolent offer, yet you must permit me to decline it. I thank God, I have never been in want of the necessaries of life, and I have lately met with an unexpected friend, who has given me the means of obtaining its comforts. Permit me, madam, to tell you the circumstance; it will convince you I speak the truth, and it would be the height of ingratitude not to take every opportunity of declaring the disinterested generosity of the noblest of men, who must be your kindred soul, for sure there is not such another upon earth.” Honorina sighed, ah! thought she, I once fancied I had met with my kindred soul, but fate proved it cruelly the reverse. She then begged Mrs. Lambert to proceed, a request which she instantly complied with.

“I am, Madam, the widow of an officer, and lived on the small pension government allowed me, and a trifle that was my own property, with ease and comfort in a little village in Hertfordshire, my native country; when my only son, who had married a young woman, without any fortune, died in Gibraltar, and his widow, who was left with five children, embarked for England, and came with her little family whom she was utterly unable to support without my assistance, to live with me. Our joint incomes for some time afforded us a decent subsistence, but the death of her youngest child was soon followed by her own, and this reduced us to greater necessities, as of course her pension ceased, and the little which was only sufficient to enable me to live comfortably when alone, was very incompetent when four grand-children were added to my family; but I could not forsake them, as to my knowledge, they had not other relation in the world to whom they could apply; their mother had indeed a brother in the army, but from the wandering life they had both led for many years, it was long since she had heard any thing of him, and at the time of her return to England, knew not in what part of the world he was.

“Thus circumstanced, my only wish was to live long enough to place these poor infants in some situation, where they might in time gain their own livelihood; and to effect this, I debarred myself of every accustomed indulgence, and used the strictest œconomy to give them some education. I sent the two boys to a cheap day school, where, however, they could learn writing and arithmetic; and the girls, who were much older, and had been very well instructed by their mother, I kept at home with me till I could

save money enough to place them with a mantua-maker: but long before I had laid by half the sum necessary for my purpose, the alteration in my way of living had reduced me so much, that my constitution could make no resistance against a rheumatic fever, which entirely deprived me of the use of my limbs; and the expences it brought on, consumed the little sum I had intended for another purpose. Ellen, the girl you have seen, was, during this illness, my constant attendant; but fearing so strict a confinement would injure her health, I sometimes sent her out to walk in the fields, and kept Lucy with me. One day she returned earlier than usual, and so fluttered, that the moment she sat down, she burst into tears. Upon my asking her the reason of her agitation, she told me, she had been followed by a young Officer, who at last joined her, and insisted upon attending her home; she walked very fast to avoid him, and would not answer him, but he still persisted, and coming up a rather lonely lane, leading to the part of the village where I live, he put his arm round her neck, and attempted to kiss her, but she escaped, and, terrified to death, ran home. This account made me confine her to the house, except when I could spare her sister to go with her, and this I sometimes did, as I grew better, though still unable to walk; and the surgeon who attended me, assured me, nothing but the Bath waters would wholly restore me.

About a fortnight after poor Ellen had been so frightened by the Officer, I was informed a gentleman desired to see me, and on his entrance, observing the cockade in his hat, directly concluded it was the same. This opinion was confirmed by his speech: upon my requiring his business, with an hesitation, which I imagined was the effect of guilt, he said, after an apology, he had been told I was not so fortunate as I deserved to be, from the care I took of a family who had no other friend; that if I would permit, he would gladly undertake to provide wholly for one of them, whom he had seen, and in whose favor he was prejudiced; and in the mean time, begged me to peruse a paper he then gave into my hands. This speech was, you may believe, ill calculated to remove my suspicions, but how was my astonishment and indignation encreased, when on opening the paper, I found it contained not only a bank note of fifty pounds, but a draught on a Banker in London, empowering me to receive the same annually! Folding it up, I returned it to him saying, with a violence that my ideas justified, I wondered what he had heard of my character to induce him to suppose I could listen to so infamous a proposal, and meanly barter the virtue of my child for any advantage his offered gold could bestow. I cannot pretend to describe the surprise that appeared in his countenance, and I know not when we should have come to an explanation, had not Mr. Williams, who attended me, fortunately entered, and ended my resentment and Colonel Effingham's astonishment." "Just heaven, (exclaimed Honoria,) Colonel Effingham! could he endeavour to seduce your grand-daughter, and hope to gain your consent!" "No, my dear madam, (replied Mrs. Lambert) alarmed at her vehemence, you are in the same error that I was; but let me hasten to declare, for I see you are interested in it, that Colonel Effingham is the noblest, the most disinterested of men, and, exclusive of his benevolence to me, I have heard those who have long known him, say he possesses every virtue that ever adorned the human heart." Except constancy, sighed Honoria to herself; who, though she felt delighted at these praises, which seemed in some measure to justify the regard she often blushed at not having wholly conquered, yet unwilling to indulge so dangerous a pleasure, begged Mrs. Lambert to go on with her narrative, assuring her she was

mistaken; for though she had formerly known the Colonel, and often heard of him, she was quite uninterested in his conduct, and only expressed her surprize from the idea it was impossible he could be changed, as to be guilty of an action so deliberately base and unprincipled. Mrs. Lambert then pursued her story.

“From Mr. Williams I learned, that pitying my deplorable situation, he had mentioned it to the Colonel, whose universal liberality gave him hopes he would not be inattentive to misfortunes like mine, whose illness was almost incurable without the assistance of the Bath waters, a remedy, which he knew my little income would not allow me to try; and conscious of the fate of my poor children if I died, he let him understand a donation trifling to himself, which would enable me to undertake this journey, might be the means of saving a whole family from destruction. The Colonel promised to call on me, and Mr. Williams exulted in his success, but knew not how far this generous man had extended his liberality, till I informed him.

“I then found, so far from being the officer who insulted Ellen, he had never seen any of my grandchildren, but Edward at school, and it was him whom he offered to provide for. Penetrated with the deepest gratitude, I told him of my mistake, and entreated him to pardon the violence which arose merely from that error. He was pleased to say he honored and commended my spirited conduct, and that it convinced him I was worthy of every exertion it was in his power to make, and that he hoped now I was convinced he had no improper motives, I would not mortify him by refusing the little annuity he had before offered; and that it was to be due from that very day, as the bank note was only meant to defray the expences of my journey to Bath, which he desired I would not defer. I endeavoured to express what I felt, but he would not hear me; he left the house immediately, but in a few days sent for Edward, and placed him at an academy; he also pays for James’s board at the same school, where they had both been day scholars. Since that time I have never seen him, but often by Mr. Williams’s means, have sent my grateful acknowledgments. I placed Lucy to board with a person on whom I can depend, and came to Bath about a month since; and have received great benefit, but this cold has thrown me a little back: however I do not repine, but rejoice in the health I have gained, and hope in a few days again to pursue the waters, which I doubt not will compleat my recovery. Thus, madam, you see I am far from being in want, yet at the same time I must use œconomy, or I should be unworthy of the benevolence I have met with.”

Honorina thanked Mrs. Lambert for her history, and begged to know if the Mr. Williams she so often mentioned, was the surgeon who lived at S——, and being answered in the affirmative, joined her encomiums on his humanity and tenderness, which she said she had herself experienced. After sitting a little while longer, and listening with a painful satisfaction to the praises so liberally bestowed on her faithless lover, she took leave, convinced of the impropriety of her stay, as she was but too ready to join in the expressions of admiration, which the grateful heart of Mrs. Lambert could not restrain.

On her return home, she had an immediate opportunity of executing the plan which she had formed, upon Mrs. Lambert's refusing her offered assistance, by finding Dr. S—r, who attended her, sitting with Lady Clarendon. She mentioned to him her illness and misfortunes, and begged he would visit her, but receive from herself the recompence his attendance would demand: he assured he would call that very day, but with that benevolence which ever so peculiarly marked his character, intreated she would not think so meanly of him, as to suppose he could wish for, or would even accept, a pecuniary reward for the advice which he was happy in bestowing freely on those of his fellow creatures, who were not in a situation to repay him. He then took leave, and with a good-humoured smile, bade Honoria remember she must never mention the subject again.

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## CHAP. XXIV.

THE first time Honoria was alone, she could not help reflecting on the peculiar circumstances which had so often brought Colonel Effingham to her mind, when she had so resolutely determined to forget him. His conduct to the Lamberts placed him in a light so particularly amiable, that she felt an additional regret at his behaviour with respect to herself; but convinced of the impropriety of frequently visiting them, from the certainty that he would be their usual topic of conversation, she resolved the next time she called, to beg Emily to accompany her, whose presence as a stranger, would probably prevent them from entering on the subject.

Whilst thus deeply engaged in thought, Miss Onslow entered the room, and told her they were all going that evening to the Play, and hoped, as she was undoubtedly much better, she would not refuse to join them, as Lady Clarendon had promised them her company, if they could prevail on Miss Wentworth. Honoria directly consented, assuring her, that motive alone would be sufficiently strong; but she had another; she flattered herself variety and amusement might dissipate her ideas, which were too constantly fixed on one object. Emily pleased at having gained her point, left her to dress, and when that task was finished, she was summoned to the dining parlour, where, to her great surprize, she found Mr. Manwaring, who had been introduced by a letter from Mrs. Wheeler, and Lady Clarendon had desired him to stay. She was not a little shocked by an idea that took possession of her mind, the instant she saw him, and which the evident and particular attention he paid her, contributed greatly to increase: but as he had yet given her no opening to express her disapprobation of his addresses, she could only behave to him with a cool civility, which she thought might discourage his hopes, and prevent him from avowing them.

He attended them to the Play, and sat next to her the whole evening, endeavouring to engage her in conversation whenever it was possible. At the end of the third act, Miss Onslow, who was just behind, addrest her in a low voice, yet loud enough to be heard by most of the party, "Pray my dear, can you tell which of us all it is, who has had the honour of turning that gentleman opposite into stone? for I am very positive he has neither moved nor taken his eyes from this box since he entered, which was in the first scene." This speech immediately drew the attention of all who heard her upon the object that gave rise to it, and Honoria was extremely surprized to see it was really Colonel Effingham, who was leaning against the back of a box in a pensive attitude, and his eyes fixed upon her; but noticing the general observation he had excited, he started, and began looking upon the stage, with the air of one disturbed from a deep reverie. Honoria coloured violently, which not escaping Louisa Clarendon, she said in a sarcastic manner, "she believed Miss Wentworth took the honour upon herself:" the malice of this by awakening Honoria's resentment, suppress her other feelings, and she replied with spirit; "It would be strange if she did, knowing her power over that gentleman." At the moment she supposed he was looking at her, she had totally forgot Louisa was next to her, and this accounting for his embarrassment, her mistake inspired her with a resolution to behave with more firmness, than she had shewn when they last met; and summoning

every spark of female pride to her aid, she began conversing with Mr. Manwaring with an apparent vivacity and satisfaction, he had never before seen on her countenance: and he was so highly flattered by this change in her behaviour, which he regarded as an omen of success, that he could scarcely avoid acquainting her with his sentiments that evening: she listened to all his remarks with strict attention, nor even dared to glance her eyes on the opposite side of the house till just as the farce began, Miss Onslow, whose heart was sufficiently at ease to permit her to amuse herself with the objects around her, exclaimed, "Alas, poor man, he is gone at last. Well, I really thought it had been a puppet, who only moved his head by clock work; nor am I indeed now quite positive whether he went off by himself or was carried by his master." "I am sure (cried Fanny Ashbourn) he is very unfit for a puppet shew, unless you make him a foil to Punch, for never was a countenance so lamentably serious and dismally sad." "Perhaps, Miss Ashbourn, (returned Honoria, who was piqued at this remark) Punch is your favourite hero, and if so, I am not at all surprized that you do not admire his contrast." She spoke this with a half smile, and Fanny Ashbourn making some answer not worth repeating, the subject dropped.

The heat of the house gave Honoria a violent head ach, which served her as an excuse for retiring the moment they arrived at home: she could not help accusing fate for thus perpetually counteracting her determinations, and rendering every effort she made to forget Colonel Effingham, only contribute to fix his image more firmly on her heart. She however applauded her own conduct, and imagined it a proof of having acquired a little strength of mind.

Supported by this idea, she retired to rest with some composure; but the next morning she was again agitated, by Lady Clarendon's desiring her to come into her apartment; and then acquainted her with the generous proposals Mr. Manwaring had that day begged she would communicate to her: "now, my dear," continued she, "you best know your own heart; if you can approve, I will say love Mr. Manwaring, you cannot but be sensible of the advantages you must derive from an union with him: he is a man of excellent character, good understanding, and amiable disposition; his fortune is large, and I need not repeat you will not then be dependant on that friend whose return you have so much wished for; and though I do not doubt her tenderness, yet, my dear, she is married, may have a large family, and her heart thus divided, may have less to bestow on you, than your generous and disinterested mind can imagine."

Lady Clarendon was thus enumerating the reasons which she hoped would induce her to attend to Mr. Manwaring, when looking at her she saw she was as pale as death, and her face bathed in tears: alarmed and surprized at her emotion, she took her hand and tenderly asked if she had said any thing to hurt or offend her? "Oh no, madam, (returned Honoria with a voice scarcely audible) you have only convinced me of the error I have been in by supposing I might be happy without a sacrifice which I feel I never can consent to. You have taught me the dependance I place on distant friends may fail, but you cannot prevent me from hoping that the laudable exertions of industry may support me, without resigning my hand where I can never give my heart, and thus make myself miserable without ensuring the happiness of another.



Lady Clarendon was shocked at this construction of her words, and affectionately embracing Honoria, intreated her not to imagine she had any motive for what she said but her advantage; and assured her, that had she entertained any idea of her dislike to the proposal, she would never have mentioned it; and was so far from wishing her to accept it, but on her own account, that it would have been with the truest regret she should have parted with her, even to so worthy a man. Honoria thanked her, and a little recovered from her agitation, said, that poor and destitute as her situation was, Mr. Manwaring was too indifferent to her, though she allowed his merit, to permit her to accept his proposals without a violation of truth and sincerity; “for how, madam, added she, can I vow at the altar to love and honour one, who though he may deserve, can never obtain more than my esteem and gratitude?”

“Compose yourself, my love,” returned her Ladyship, “you shall hear nothing farther on the subject. I will myself from you give Mr. Manwaring a final answer; but do not, my dear, hurt me so much as ever again to mention supporting yourself by industry; surely you cannot doubt my affection, and believe me, I will never whilst you chuse to remain with me, part with you even to that friend, whose regard though it may equal cannot exceed mine, and whose claim to yours may be founded on a longer acquaintance, but not on a warmer or sincerer friendship.” Honoria, whose tears now flowed, not from grief, but sensations of tenderness she could not suppress, threw her arms round Lady Clarendon, and vainly endeavoured to speak her gratitude; but to a heart like hers, these silent expressions proved more forcible than words, the innate feelings of her mind.

When she grew more composed, Lady Clarendon entreated her not to give way to the dejection that opprest her, but for her sake exert her spirits and try to be chearful. Honoria promised to comply as far as it was in her power, and she then left her to acquaint Mr. Manwaring with the conversation which had just passed between them, and she assured him there was no probability that Honoria would ever alter her sentiments. So positive and so unexpected a refusal shocked and surprized him; he begged at least to be allowed to make an interest in her favour, but she replied it would, she was certain, be unsuccessful, and desired he would not mention the subject, as she had promised Miss Wentworth to give him her final determination, and that she should be teized with no more fruitless solicitations. At last, finding his hopes and entreaties were vain, he took leave, resolving to quit Bath and return to Northampton immediately.

When first our heroine came to Lady Clarendon, she informed her of those circumstances of her life which she had related to Mrs. Markham; but growing every hour more attached to her, she often wished she had told her every particular of her birth and misfortunes; yet felt unwilling to begin the subject, from a groundless fear, that the knowledge of the way in which she was found, her leaving the protection of Mr. Fortescue, and coming to England in so friendless a situation, might to one of her delicate and strict principles of virtue, shew her in a light unworthy her friendship and approbation; or at least lessen the confidence she at present had in her integrity. This apprehension still kept her silent. Miss Melmoth was the only person to whom she had entrusted the fatal mystery of her birth, her unfortunate attachment to Colonel Effingham,

and her well founded ideas of his infidelity; whose romantic and enthusiastic imagination applauded her constancy, pitied his infatuation, and obscure and mean as her origin apparently was, it lessened her not in her esteem; but she often said, her soul and mind were too noble and elevated, to spring from vulgar parents. This idea, though wild and illusive, were too consonant to Honoria's wishes not to excite her satisfaction, and she loved the kind and fanciful heart where it was first formed, the more warmly for this visionary hope.

Her attachment to Lady Clarendon, though, if possible, stronger, was mixed with a respect for her virtues, almost a reverence, that whilst it rendered her solicitous to preserve her affection, and merit her esteem, made her fearful of being thought unworthy of it; and from this consideration, she deeply regretted Mr. Manwaring's offer, lest her rejection of him should be thought ungrateful, and imprudent: however, from his leaving Bath directly, and the subject not being again entered upon by any of the family, she regained her usual tranquillity. When in a few days, her sensibility was again alarmed on the account of her friend, by an event which had its proper effect upon her mind, by convincing her, that however unfortunate she thought herself, the evils of this life are distributed with a more impartial hand, than short-sighted and erring mortals usually imagine.

As her health was now tolerably established, she could not refuse accompanying her friends to the Master of the Ceremonies Ball: she observed Louisa Clarendon had been for some days particularly attentive to the dress she was to wear on that evening, by consulting milliners and mantua-makers, whilst Emily and herself had very little concern upon the subject, and amused themselves with wondering who it was she hoped to charm. Lady Clarendon would not go herself, as she feared there would be a great croud, but committed them to the care of a chaperon. They entered the room at the usual time, but found it already so full, it was with some difficulty they could procure places, and at last, were obliged to divide. Honoria and Emily endeavoured to sit together, but were separated by two ladies belonging to their party. Louisa was with the Ashbourns, on the opposite side of the room, and the gentlemen walked about. Just as the last minuet was begun, Honoria observed a gentleman in regimentals, who had been for some time talking to Miss Clarendon, turn suddenly round, and the instant it was concluded, he crost the room and went to Miss Onslow. Their party at that instant rising, Honoria was surrounded by two or three of her acquaintance, who chatted to her some time, and prevented her from moving, but the moment they left her, she looked round for Emily, and saw her in earnest conversation with this Officer, changing colour, and apparently in great agitation. Sir William soon came up, and Honoria taking her arm, to walk up and down, the conversation ceased, and she grew more composed. In a few minutes the country dances began, and Miss Clarendon summoning her partner, and Sir William taking Emily's hand, and leading her to the set, Honoria had no opportunity of asking an explanation. The Master of the Ceremonies in vain solicited her to join the dancers, assuring her he had many commissions to request her hand, but she resolutely refused; nor had the various compliments he paid her the least effect, for she could not join in an amusement which required animation and spirit, whilst her heart was so ill at ease.

When they all met at tea, she observed with pain, an universal embarrassment seemed to reign among them. Miss Clarendon was angry and mortified, that her partner, Captain Harcourt, neglected her, and paid the most visible attention to Miss Onslow; who, however, treated him with a coldness almost bordering on contempt, yet appeared languid and dispirited: this behavior, so different from her usual vivacity, surprized and hurt Sir William, who knew not how to account for it; and though evidently displeas'd at Captain Harcourt's assiduity, yet her conduct left him no plea to resent it. In this disposition they continued the whole evening, and Emily, contrary to her usual practice, was the first who proposed returning; and to this the Miss Ashbourns, one of whom had a very insipid, the other no partner, readily consented.

After their departure, Captain Harcourt continuing his careless behavior, Louisa, who felt herself highly piqued at it, desired her brother to enquire for the carriage; as he had no farther wish to stay, and Honoria was extremely weary, they were all well agreed, and the coach being arriv'd, they went home immediately. During their little ride, not a word was spoken, but at supper, Lady Clarendon surprized to see them all so grave, enquired the reason, and said, "She feared something unpleasant must have happened." Sir William, who scarcely knew why he was uneasy, replied, "No, he was only fatigued." Louisa then added, "I believe I can explain it, madam. The gentleman I danced with, was so very particular to Miss Onslow, that I fancy my brother is jealous." "No, really Louisa, (returned he,) that I cannot possibly be, for Miss Onslow's behavior to him was so pointedly cool, he had very little cause for exultation." "That I allow, (said Miss Clarendon,) but it is my opinion they had once a better understanding with each other, and that her present reserve was only put on to conceal it from you." Sir William felt all the force of this ill-natur'd speech, though he would not confess it; for, from the first moment he had observ'd them, it struck him that they had formerly been acquainted, and that unexpectedly meeting him there, had occasion'd the embarrassment and uneasiness so visible in her countenance the whole evening. "Fie, Louisa, (said Lady Clarendon,) how can you give way to such unjust suspicions? I should rather guess from them, you were uneasy yourself, at your partner's preference of another. Pray who was he?"—"Captain Harcourt, madam."—"Did Mr. Tyson introduce him to you?"—"No, madam, I have known him for some time."—"Where did you first see him, Louisa?"—"At Northampton." Lady Clarendon said no more at this time, but justly imagin'd, from the glow on her daughter's cheek, that her idea was not ill-founded, and that Captain Harcourt was not wholly indifferent to her.

When they retir'd, as Honoria was meditating on the events of the evening, she recollected the enquiry Mrs. Bridges made to Emily, whether she had ever seen Captain Harcourt at C——, and the anger and confusion that question had rais'd in her countenance; and which, intimate as they were even then, she had never explain'd the cause of, but evidently avoid'd the subject. The peculiarity of the circumstance impress'd it on her memory, though as it was so long since, she would probably have forgott'n the name, had it not struck her at the time, as being the same as that of a Clergyman with whom she was well acquainted in Ireland. She fear'd there was some reason for Sir William's uneasiness, though she knew not what, and determin'd the next time she was

alone with Emily, to endeavor to learn the cause of her embarrassment; a liberty she thought their friendship would now justify.

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## CHAP. XXV.

WHOLLY engaged in reflecting on the occurrences of the evening, Honoria did not close her eyes for several hours, and consequently slept more heavily in the morning; and when she was drest, found it much later than usual, and that Sir William and Louisa had been both gone to the Pump-room some time: she immediately followed them, and turning into Bond-street, perceived the former at a little distance; she waited for him, and when he joined her, was shocked to see the most visible traces of uneasiness on his countenance: he prevented her enquiries, by saying, "Oh Miss Wentworth, you know not what a miserable night I have past, nor how much this morning has encreased my apprehensions: you heard Louisa's suspicions; to you I will confess, though I would not to her, that they agree too well with my own: you may suppose they prevented me from sleeping, and I rose early, but knowing I could then learn nothing to satisfy me, I took a solitary walk towards Weston, meditating whether I had better let it pass over in silence, as I had no reasonable plea for anger, or question Emily on the subject? At last I determined to beg you to speak to her; the strength of her regard for you is such, that I was certain, if there was any mystery, she would reveal it to you; and if not, I knew your decision would make me easy. I then returned hastily home, but found you had not yet left your chamber, and, too restless to wait for you, I went to the Pump-room. Miss Onslow was not there; I again came back, and calling at Mrs. Ashbourn's, learned she had been gone about five minutes: supposing I had missed her, I resolved to seek her there again; but crossing to Milsom-street, was stopped, by seeing Captain Harcourt rap at the door I had just quitted; impatient to know whether he was admitted, I waited at Marshall's Library, till I had the satisfaction to find he was also refused; he immediately came over, and passed me with a slight bow, and I was just going to follow him, when a gentleman, who had been sitting in the shop, absolutely by force detained me, till I would give my opinion on a political pamphlet he held in his hand: to avoid this I said, which was true, I had not read it; but this only involved me farther, for though I pleaded business, he would not let me go till he had read several pages aloud, not one syllable of which I heard, but I hastily declared my sentiments were exactly the same as his, though without knowing any thing of the matter, and then left him; and was going as fast as possible to the pump when I met you."

Honoria endeavoured to reason him out of his apprehensions, which she said were fallacious, and attempted to prove the folly of jealousy, arising merely from a combination of accidental circumstances; but on entering the room, Sir William's fears revived, and even her's were raised, by observing Captain Harcourt sitting by Miss Onslow, and earnestly engaged in conversation; the deep glow on her cheeks convinced them it was not an indifferent one, and the instant she looked up and beheld Sir William, she caught eagerly hold of the Captain who was rising, gave a loud scream, and fainted away.

Every body was alarmed, and Honoria ran to the assistance of her friend, who was soon surrounded by the company, but the crowd, instead of contributing to, retarded her recovery. She was still senseless, and the drops not having any effect, she was lifted into a carriage that waited in Stall-street, which a lady observing their distress, and that it was

impossible she could go in a chair, humanely offered, and accompanied by Honoria and Fanny Ashbourn, was carried home, and a surgeon sent for immediately.

In the mean time Sir William, tho' not unmoved at her illness, yet seeing she was in proper hands, went up directly to Captain Harcourt, informing him he wished to speak with him: he replied, he was ready to attend him, and they both left the pump room whilst their party were too busily employed in endeavouring to recover Miss Onslow, to regard their absence or even guess at the cause. Sir William led the way to the North Parade; Captain Harcourt followed; and when they arrived at the farther end, the former, who would not trust himself to speak till out of the hearing of the few people who were scattered there, hastily demanded the cause of Miss Onslow's illness, the subject of their conversation, and the reason why he so impertinently followed her, when he could not but discern his assiduities were not merely troublesome but disagreeable? "Before I answer your questions, Sir William, (returned the captain) I shall beg to know by what authority you think proper to ask them?" "By the authority of a lover, a favoured lover, who only waits till she is at her own disposal, to ratify the solemn engagements he is under, and by the most sacred ties bind himself her's for ever." "Then, Sir, behold in me the man who dares dispute your claim; and on the assurance of the grounds on which he builds his hopes of success, deigns to reply to your questions. The lady's illness arose from an apprehension, that if we met it might cost one of us our lives, and who could tell which should fall? The subject of our conversation, past events and hopes of future happiness; and this will sufficiently answer. The third; I followed her to explain some apparent mystery in my conduct, and her embarrassment was owing to her having encouraged your addresses when sensible of my prior claims." "From herself only," returned the Baronet haughtily, "will I believe this story." "As you please," replied the Captain with a contemptuous coldness, "I know she will not deny it; but your doubts, Sir William, must unavoidably render this meeting only a prelude to a future one; name your time and place." "There is no time like the present (said Sir William) the place is indifferent to me." They then walked back with a quick pace, and stopping at the house where he lodged, the Captain called his servant, and bade him in a whisper bring his pistols to him on the old bridge, and then followed Sir William, who had been silently meditating on the possible consequences of the rash action he was now engaged in: his mother and his beloved Emily, rushed upon his mind, and made him half a coward; but resolutely banishing them from his thoughts, he turned to the Captain, and with tolerable tranquillity asked if he had fixed on a proper spot? he replied in the affirmative, and said, he would lead the way.

Again they walked on in silence, and just as they crossed the bridge, the servant arrived with the pistols: he ordered him to follow at a distance, and going up Holloway, turned to the left, into a very retired field, and told the man to lay them down, and go home immediately. He then gave Sir William his choice, but before he fired, said, "Now we fight for the Lady, the conqueror shall have her."—"No," returned Sir William, resentfully, "if I thought Miss Onslow would hesitate in her decision, she would not be worth my regard. I have no doubt of her truth and honor, and fight, Sir, because *you* call them in question. If you take my life, and after that, her choice falls upon you, there would have been so little worth living for in this world, that even in another state, I

should bless the hand, which by depriving me of existence, kindly prevented me from lingering out a number of wretched years, a prey to anguish and disappointment; but, by Heaven, I do not think so meanly of her." "Well, Sir," (replied the Captain,) with an insolent smile, "if you are not blind to conviction, this paper will probably stagger your incredulity;" he then opened his pocketbook, and gave him a note. With a trembling hand, he unfolded it, and read the following words:

To Captain HARCOURT.

"Though so entirely against my own ideas of delicacy and propriety, yet the cruelty of my situation is such, it compels me to inform you I have at last consented to your request.—Be ready at the end of the garden wall at eight o'clock this evening with a post-chaise. D.T. who conveys this to you, will contrive to get the key of the gate, where you will receive

EMILY ONSLOW."

The horror, confusion, and astonishment of Sir William, at the sight of this, may be more easily conceived than described; he at first refused his belief, but Captain Harcourt insisted on his putting the letter into his pocket, and shewing it to Miss Onslow, who, he said, would not dare deny it. This confirmed his suspicions, and with a low, tremulous voice, he entreated him to say what followed. "I went," continued the Captain, "at the appointed time, and we were above an hundred miles on our way to Scotland, when a cursed accident intervened, or I should, at this moment, have been master of her person and fortune." Sir William had already heard too much; this idea transported him with resentment, and he called to the Captain to be in readiness, and then fired, but the agitation of his soul communicated itself to his hand, which was so unsteady, that he entirely missed his antagonist. Captain Harcourt took a better aim; the ball entered Sir William's side, and he fell instantly to the ground.

Whilst all this was passing, the unhappy cause of their duel recovered her senses by the assistance of the surgeon, and the moment she acquired a perfect recollection of what had passed, asked Honoria, where Sir William was? She replied, she did not know. "What!" exclaimed Emily, in an agony, "has he not been here? has he not enquired for me?" The silence of those around her confirmed her fears, and extended them beyond the truth: she looked at them, and saw an embarrassment she could only in one way account for. "Oh!" cried she, "he is dead, you know he is, though you will not tell me: Captain Harcourt has killed him." They endeavoured to convince her they were wholly ignorant of what had passed, but she would not be convinced: at last, falling on her knees to Mrs. Ashbourn, she said, nothing would satisfy her but seeking him herself, and entreated she might have the carriage. Mrs. Ashbourn, supposing, that her mind, whilst in action, might be amused, and that before her return, they would probably hear of Sir William, consented; and whilst it was getting ready, sent for her son, to desire him to make some enquiries, for, from what she had seen, she concluded, if the gentlemen met, there must undoubtedly be a rencontre.

Just before they set off, Louisa Clarendon, who paid no regard to the feelings of another, entered, followed by Harry and Miss Ashbourn, and immediately fell into an hysteric fit: they rang for the servants to bring drops, and crowded themselves round Harry, whose pale countenance prepared them for some dreadful intelligence: he however could only inform them, that his sister Dorothea and Miss Clarendon, who said they had been searching for him some time, at last came to Bull's, where he was reading the Papers, and entreated him to go after Sir William and Captain Harcourt, who had left the Pump-room together, and they feared, with some terrible design: that leaving them in the shop, he flew to the Captain's lodgings, on the North Parade, and found neither himself nor his servant were at home, and the people of the house could give him no information; but going out, he met a little errand-boy, who told him, that some time before, he saw the Captain's servant come down stairs with two pistols, and run very fast towards the Abbey-green. Alarmed at this account, but not knowing where to follow them, he returned to the library, and Miss Clarendon, extremely agitated, insisted on his going home directly, to consult his mother what was best to be done.

Miss Onslow, though before scarcely able to stand, now rose, her increasing terror giving her strength, and the carriage being at the door, she insisted upon going directly.—“Going where, dear Emily?” said Harry. “No matter, I will go,” (returned she,) and springing into the carriage, was followed by Honoria, who, though unequal to the task of consolation, yet would not forsake her friend, in this moment of affliction. Fanny, who intended to accompany them, was pushed aside by her brother, who thought he might be a more useful attendant. They were all seated, and the door shut, when the coachman asked where he was to drive? and this question embarrassing them not a little, they were for some moments unable to decide; till Harry, who at this time had the most recollection of the party, guessing from the boy's intelligence, the combatants were gone some where beyond the old bridge, ordered him to stop at the other side, hoping to gain there farther information; and he was right: an old woman who was selling apples, told him, in answer to his enquiry, that she had seen two gentlemen, one in red, and the other in blue, pass her some time before, and she believed they went up Holloway. According to her direction, they drove up, and were just at the top of the hill, when they perceived a crowd of people at a stile. Harry jumped out, guessing at the cause, and in an instant his fears were confirmed, by seeing, as he thought, the breathless body of his friend, supported by several men, who were slowly moving to a cottage just by. He endeavoured, but in vain, to keep this mournful sight from Emily; he ran back to the carriage, but it was too late; half frantic with horror and despair, she had broke the glasses in attempting to get out, and Honoria's strength was too insufficient to detain her: pretending to give way to her inclinations, he lifted her down, but opposed her going towards the field, and carried her by force to the cottage; here the violence of her agitation soon exhausted itself, and she sunk once more into that happy insensibility from which she had so lately recovered. Honoria followed her, and Harry flew to Sir William, and hearing he was not absolutely dead, but had only fainted from loss of blood, and seeing that his wound was properly bound up for the present, placed him in the carriage, got in himself, and ordered it to drive slowly to New King-street, where a gentleman, who had been his tutor, lodged, who he was sure would readily give up his apartments to Sir William, as it was utterly improper in the state he was then in, to carry him to Lady Clarendon's, or Mrs.



Ashbourn's, where his sister in all probability still was. There they soon arrived, and fortunately finding Mr. Heywood at home, he sent him back in the chariot to Miss Onslow and Honoria, begging he would tell them Sir William had only fainted, and was not as they apprehended, dead.

This intelligence he gave Honoria, who was rejoiced at it, but her unhappy friend was still incapable of hearing what would have given her such satisfaction. She was lifted into the carriage, and taken to Edgar buildings, where the family were all in the utmost terror, not having heard any thing since their departure. Mrs. Ashbourn seeing Emily brought in totally insensible, and not followed by her son, who had attended her, was on his account inexpressibly alarmed, till Mr. Heywood explained the circumstance, and then flew to his own lodging to assist his friend. Mrs. Ashbourn sent for the best physical assistance, and Honoria left Miss Onslow to their care, and went herself to Lady Clarendon, who had been surprized at the absence of her family, but accounted for it by Emily's illness, of which she had been told, but not the cause. Honoria's appearance, however, terrified her, from the extreme agitation in her countenance, who after properly preparing her for the melancholy intelligence she had to communicate, informed her of the duel and its consequences. Lady Clarendon, dreadfully shocked, and fearing the worst, would not remain in suspense, but ordering a chair, desired Honoria to accompany her immediately to new King-street. Arriving at Mr. Heywood's lodgings, they met Harry Ashbourn coming out, who gave them a better account than they expected: he said the surgeons had extracted the ball and dressed the wound, which of itself was not dangerous; all they had to apprehend was from a fever, and that Sir William's recovery depended greatly on being kept quiet and free from agitation, and that to remove his apprehensions for his Miss Onslow, he was going home to enquire for her.

Lady Clarendon, a little relieved, went up stairs to him, and Honoria left her to look for Louisa, who when she recovered from her hysteric fit, quitted Mrs. Ashbourn and was gone she knew not where. Calling at several houses where she was intimate and not finding her, she went to Edgar buildings: the family here were still in the utmost confusion; Emily was restored to life, but not to her senses; she awoke only to a strong delirium, and was in a high fever, and both the physician and surgeon who attended her, declared she was in great danger: the latter, who had seen her in the morning, blamed Mrs. Ashbourn for suffering her to go out in such a state of mind, and Harry more, for not seeking Sir William himself, and letting her take some other road by which means she would have escaped a sight, that had made so deep, so fatal an impression on her mind; yet they both thought if they could procure one interval of reason, to make her sensible Sir William still lived, it would have an happy effect: but this there was at present no prospect of from the violence of her disorder.

Whilst Honoria was listening to this account with tears, Miss Ashbourn entered the room, and informed her she had just left Louisa in Gay-street: and upon her desiring to know how she bore the news of her brother's danger, replied, "Oh! Miss Wentworth, she is, I believe, totally lost to all feeling, but for herself. When you drove off with Emily and my brother, you know she was in strong hysterics, but she soon recovered, and attempting to leave us, we entreated her not to go home, for fear of alarming Lady

Clarendon, and this she promised, but said she would call on Mrs. Betterton. When from your return, we knew the event of the duel, fearing she might hear it suddenly, I went to her myself, but how was I shocked to find her uneasiness arose more from apprehensions for Captain Harcourt, than her brother! I could scarcely restrain my indignation, when she exclaimed, "Oh! tell me, is Harcourt safe?" I replied, he was unhurt, but if Sir William died, his life would be endangered, if it was possible to secure him, but that at present he had escaped." The grief that appeared in her countenance, my information entirely dissipated: "then (said she) I am satisfied; my entreaties will, I doubt not, prevail on my mother not to prosecute him: did they not meet on an equal footing, and was it not an equal chance who fell? why then seek to deprive another of life, because he unfortunately and accidentally took too sure an aim?" then redoubling her tears, she added, "her mother could not be so unjust and cruel." Mrs. Betterton could with difficulty avoid expressing her resentment at her unnatural insensibility, but checking herself, she only replied, "I hope Sir William will recover, and then, Miss Clarendon, your favourite will escape punishment, though, in my opinion, he will not the less deserve it." Louisa was extremely angry at this speech, and rising, asked me to go home with her; when I left her in Gay-street, I found you had informed Lady Clarendon of this terrible event, and that she was gone to her son. If he should die, how much will that excellent Lady suffer, and how little consolation can she receive from the society of such a daughter!" Honoria joined with her in lamenting her unfeeling disposition, and then went up stairs to see the poor Emily, who was, however, wholly insensible of her presence, and raving in the wildest manner. A sight so dreadful, hurt Honoria extremely, and, unable to be of any service, she soon left her to attend Lady Clarendon, whose grief, though excessive, was reasonable, and refused not the kind efforts of friendship, for her consolation and relief.

## CHAP. XXVI.

AT the moment Sir William fell, the report of the pistol having reached the ears of Harcourt's servant, who contrary to his master's command had only gone into the road, he directly came up, and the captain, who thought he had killed his adversary, solicitous for his own safety, told Joseph he must escape to avoid falling into the hands of justice, but ordered him immediately to procure some assistance, and convey the body of Sir William to his friends: this command he directly executed, alarmed the neighbourhood, and was assisting to lift it to the next cottage, perceiving some signs of life, when they were met by Mr. Ashbourn. In the mean time Captain Harcourt had gained the Bristol road, and overtaking the stage coach got into it, and arrived at that city, where thinking there might exist a possibility of Sir William's life, and knowing he could hear every day from Bath, he determined to take a lodging in some obscure place, change his name, and wait till the certainty of his death should make his embarkation necessary.

For ten days the event was doubtful: a fever brought on by the agitation of his mind, from the apprehension of Emily's inconstancy, reduced him to the brink of the grave; and it was increased by the knowledge of her danger, which they were obliged to tell him as an excuse for her not appearing, as in the beginning of his illness he was constantly enquiring for her, and entreating that she would see him, if only for half an hour. Emily, in this time, was grown calmer, but had not had one moment's interval of reason. Honoria divided her days between a constant attendance in the chamber of her sick friend, and her endeavours to console the afflicted mother, whose grief had no little addition from observing the sullen behaviour of Louisa; who, instead of softening the universal distress, by her indifference and ill nature, increased the distaste every one of the party had for some time conceived to her.

The Ashbourns were as indefatigable in their attentions to Emily, as Harry and Mr. Heywood were to Sir William, and in a fortnight their cares began to be rewarded by an unexpected change in the former; she had been for some days more composed, and at last began to know those around her, but the first signs of recollection were attended with violent expressions of grief; but these soon subsided from their intelligence that Sir William was not only alive, but would probably recover, as he was in more danger from his apprehensions on her account, than from the consequences of his wound, and that the knowledge of her amendment would greatly contribute to his. In fact, it had even a better effect than they dared hope for: the suspicions which had tormented his soul from Captain Harcourt's relation, were entirely banished, by the certainty that her illness arose merely from her solicitude for him, and was so violently increased by seeing him, as she imagined, breathless and insensible; and now the hope of her recovery, by lessening the torments he had for some days experienced, daily added to his strength, and his constitution being naturally good, in less than a week he was pronounced out of danger; and this repeated to Miss Onslow, had an equally happy effect upon her, though she mended more slowly.

In a short time, however, comfort and peace once more dawned on this little party. Sir William was well enough to be removed to Gay-street, and finding no bad consequences from the motion of the chair, he insisted the following day upon being carried to see Emily, who had not yet left her chamber; he was so earnest in this request, that Lady Clarendon knew not how to deny it, but desired Honoria to ask Miss Onslow if she would consent. Emily, who had always enjoyed an excellent state of health, from the weakness, which is common when recovering from a violent fever, but which having never felt before, she thought was something extraordinary, had an idea that she should not live, was delighted at the prospect of seeing him. She told Honoria she had but one wish, that was to justify herself to him, and then she should die contented. Honoria attempted to rally her in a gentle manner out of this apprehension, but could not succeed. "Tell Sir William, (said she) if he comes, he must not refuse to hear me, for if he does, I shall never live to see him again." This, however, Honoria, on her return, did not repeat; she only said, Miss Onslow would be particularly happy to receive him, as she ardently wished for an opportunity to relate the circumstances which had probably misled him, and begged he would not refuse to hear her. This he promised, and was the next afternoon carried to Mrs. Ashbourn's, and admitted to Emily's apartment.

The sight of each other, pale, weak, and emaciated, had for some moments a violent effect on both, each accusing themselves as the cause of the other's illness; these emotions at last subsided, and they felt the truest satisfaction in again enjoying a happiness, they had a few days before imagined themselves deprived of for ever. Emily, at length, having acquired some degree of composure, desired Honoria to sit by and support her, and calling on Mrs. and Miss Ashbourn to attest the truth of what she said, began in the following manner.

"Surely, Sir William, the errors of my youth must have been expiated by the horror and distraction of mind I have suffered for some time past; the apprehensions I felt for your safety, were succeeded by the certainty of your death, and that aggravated by the heart-rending reflection that it was owing to my own folly and imprudence, and that I should not be the only sufferer, but your dear excellent mother be included in the distress and agony, of which I had been the sole cause. What Captain Harcourt said to you of me I am yet ignorant, and beg to remain so till you are made acquainted with the events of my past life, (not one of which I shall conceal or alter) lest you should think I meant to palliate my faults, and frame my story according to his accusations. That my errors were owing in great measure to the instructions I received, and the consequences of a wrong education, you will not I hope deny; yet do not think I mean to exculpate myself at the expence of those to whose care I was entrusted, for though they did not execute the charge with strict propriety, yet I am convinced it was an honest, though mistaken zeal for my welfare, which induced them to act in the manner they did—all but one, whose name I can never recollect without detestation and horror."

Two or three times in the course of this speech, Sir William attempted to interrupt her, but she prevented him: when she paused here a moment, he entreated her not to go on till she was better, and more capable of the exertion; assuring her he was satisfied, and wished for no justification of a conduct, the propriety of which he could not doubt.

“Hush, Sir William,” (said she) with a faint smile, “I fear you will alter your opinion before I have concluded my relation; yet even that apprehension shall not prevent me from informing you of every circumstance with the strictest veracity. You know I forfeit my estate if I marry without my guardian’s consent before I am of age, but you know not the reason of that restriction; a fortunate one however, it has been to me, for probably but for that, I had now been—no matter, my narrative will tell you what. To account for this, I must inform you, that my maternal grandfather possess an estate of above four thousand a year; he had only two children, both girls, to whom at his death, which happened when the eldest was nineteen years old, the other only sixteen, he left it equally divided. Emilia was amiable but serious: Caroline, the youngest, who was my mother, had a more volatile turn, and it often required the strictest care of her sister to prevent her from falling into those little errors incidental to youth and independence, and to which her giddy and thoughtless disposition made her more frequently liable.

“Their mother had been dead many years, and they both resided with a distant relation, when Mr. Onslow, who from being the younger branch of his family had a fortune very inadequate to his birth, saw Caroline, and too soon persuaded her to listen to his addresses; without consulting her sister, or indeed any one else, she consented to elope with him, and they were married in Scotland. Ah, Sir William, how do I blush at relating this, lest you should imagine imprudence was hereditary. They lived several years in a high, not to say an extravagant style, and the manner in which my father squandered her fortune, gave my poor mother but too much reason to believe, it was his principal if not his sole motive for chusing her. They had several children, none of whom lived a twelvemonth, and my mother was very near lying-in, when their creditors, no longer to be appeased by promises, seized upon every thing; my father went abroad, where he soon after died, and my kind aunt, whose memory I must ever revere, took her unfortunate sister under her protection, and gave her an asylum in her own house, where I was born; but my unhappy mother, opprest by calamities which were wholly unexpected, lived but a few weeks after my birth, and dying, recommended me to the care of her sister, after whom I had been named; who faithfully promised to provide for and never forsake me, and this promise she strictly fulfilled. When the estates were sold they were found almost insufficient to pay the creditors, but though nothing remained for me, my aunt, so far from lessening her affection to me, only strove more exactly to adhere to the assurance she had given her dying sister. She had no children, but had been married several years to Mr. Bridges, a most worthy and amiable man, who inherited a small paternal estate in Worcestershire, and who was nephew to Mr. Bridges who is now my guardian.

“My uncle lived only three years after my residence with them, and my aunt was so deeply afflicted at his death, that she secretly determined never to enter into a second marriage, but devote her whole time to me, who she loved as a daughter, and make my education and accomplishments her principal study. And to this end, having a natural aversion to boarding schools, and resolving herself to form my mind and manners after her own excellent model, when I was five years old sought for some person well skilled in the French and Italian languages, to assist her in the ornamental parts of my education;

and was recommended to Madam De Tournay as a very proper governess in every respect, and she accordingly entered on her new employment.

This woman really was not like many in her station, of low birth and manners: she was the widow of a French Officer, and reduced at his death to seek a livelihood in England; educated in a convent, she had none of that pert familiarity which so often disgust us in her countrywomen; she understood not only her own, but the Italian language grammatically, and was mistress of every kind of fine needle work. Her conversation was sensible, her manners were gentle and placid; my poor aunt therefore was rejoiced that she had not only met with in her a governess for me, but a companion for herself. In every other branch of education, I had the best masters the country afforded, and by the time I was seven years old, had made a rapid progress in all I applied to. But just at this period, my kind, my benevolent relation, was seized with a disorder which, from its first attack, left her no hope of recovery: how did the insidious, the artful De Tournay, avail herself of this illness, to make a still greater interest in her esteem! and she succeeded; but under the veil of benevolence and sincerity, which deceived my unsuspecting aunt, she concealed the vilest, the most interested of hearts.

“My kind and considerate friend, foreseeing the deserted state in which I should be left, and fearing I might fall a prey to some needy adventurer, to whom my fortune might be a temptation, resolved to secure me from this if possible, and yet leave me the liberty of choice: and knowing by experience that a mind well principled and well regulated, is generally at twenty-one, capable of making a proper decision, left me all her estate, when I arrived at that age if single, or if married with my guardian’s consent; but if married without it, the estate was to go to a distant branch of her own family, and I was only to possess an annuity of an hundred a year; a sum which at all events would keep me from want. Thus kindly receiving me from the unhappiness my mother had experienced from a too early independence, and yet not leaving it wholly in my guardian’s power to make me miserable for ever, by refusing his consent, when my heart might be properly attached. Soon after she had settled this in her mind, and made her will accordingly, thinking she could not exist many days longer, she sent for Mr. Bridges, who she begged would undertake the office of my guardian, and continue De Tournay as my governess, of whom she had the highest opinion, till my education was compleated. This he promised, and a very short time put a period to the existence of my beloved and maternal friend.

“Though not old enough to be sensible what an inseparable loss I had sustained, I yet felt it deeply; and can well remember the tears I shed when I accompanied Mr. Bridges into Devonshire. He had been a merchant in London, but having acquired a very good fortune, had quitted the business in favour of his son, and had been some years retired, and lived near a small town in that county. He is undoubtedly a most worthy character, as far as honesty and integrity can contribute to render a man so, who is narrow-minded, illiberal, and proud. Vain of their fortune, neither himself nor his wife would associate with any of the inhabitants of D——, except Mrs. Stapleton, Lady Egerton’s aunt, with whom Maria, then Miss Hallifax, resided; and few of the

gentlemen's families round the country visited them, so that we lived almost in entire solitude.

“Miss Hallifax was several years older than myself, but even at that early period of my life, she considered me as her companion; the gratitude I at first felt for this condescension, soon improved into a sincere and lasting friendship, for an obligation in childhood can never be forgotten. Maria was the only young person with whom I was permitted to associate, lest, as Mrs. Bridges used to tell me, I should learn vulgar manners; and as I grew older the pleasure of visiting her was denied me, from the fear of my there meeting any of the officers, who sometimes came with her father, sometimes with messages from him, and perhaps four or five times a year there might have been a possibility of my seeing them.

“My mind, naturally generous, and animated from the constraint in which I was kept, soon began to entertain a sincere dislike to my goalers, and this in time was heightened by the meanness of their principles, and the illiberality of their sentiments. How often have they told me I was greatly above all the paltry inhabitants of that place, and that I ought to look down on them with contempt, instead of wishing for their society? and when I express a different opinion, would lament that they could not make me set a just value on myself. Indeed if I did not, they were perfectly free from blame, as they exerted all their powers to teach me vanity and pride.

“When I was about fourteen, we had a visit from Mr. Digby, a first cousin of my mother and of the same name, to whom the estate would go if I were so imprudent as to marry before I came of age. He was at this time seven and thirty, most frightfully ugly, and extremely disagreeable in every other respect; but my good guardian, who thought it a pity the estate should go out of the family, and knowing he had a fancy to become master of Castle Digby, persuaded him to come into Devonshire and try his influence upon my heart; and a few days after his arrival, Mr. Bridges told me to look upon him as my future husband. This with the spirit natural to me I instantly refused, and replied “that I was by no means ignorant of the clause in my aunt's will, which impowered him to refuse his consent to my marrying till I was of age, but did not oblige me to marry any one whom he chose to propose to me, and that Mr. Digby might be certain I should never fix on him.” Mr. Bridges was surprized at the resolution with which I spoke, and in vain attempted to alter my determination: I was positive, and he at last gave up the point, too sensible of the truth of my assertion, and hoping that in time I might regard my cousin with more favour. But Mr. Digby himself, convinced by my behaviour, of the aversion which I really felt, entertained no hopes of a change in my sentiments; resolving therefore if possible to possess my fortune, which was in his eyes of infinitely the most consequence, he employed a stratagem so base, that had I not the most positive proofs of his artifice, I could never have believed it. Though it was long after this that it came to my knowledge, I had better mention it here, as my story will be clearer and more connected.

“Mr. Digby was a man of the world, and of course from frequently meeting with bad characters, he could more easily discern the specious veil which covers a deceitful

and interested heart: he had not been three weeks in the house, before he discovered, that gold was the idol of De Tournay's worship, and made no scruple of disclosing his scheme to her, and asking her assistance, which she readily promised for the sake of the reward he offered, which was considerable, and not merely sufficient to secure her an independence, but support her in her own country with ease and elegance. He saw the restraint in which I lived, and how little it was suited to the natural vivacity of my disposition: he saw how ardently my heart panted for liberty, and that it had yet seven long years of bondage to endure. Founding his hopes on all this, he required of De Tournay to endeavour to move my heart in his favour, but if this was unsuccessful, which he feared it would be, then she was to make my confinement even stricter than it then was, and taking advantage of my discontent, introduce some person to me as a lover, to whom my fortune might be an attraction, and who was ignorant of the terms on which I was to possess it. She was to favour my elopement with this lover, which it was easily in her power to contrive, without appearing to have any share in the scheme.

“Having given her these instructions, he left her to execute them and returned to London. But how can a person place any confidence in those, who can betray that already reposed in them? this artful woman, sensible that she might make a double advantage of me, ceased not to inform me of the ill qualities and bad disposition of the man proposed me by my guardian. I gave implicit belief to all she said, and for once, she certainly spoke truth; perhaps from well knowing that if she kept me from marrying him, and could sell me to another, she insured a double reward. But every other part of Mr. Digby's instructions she so faithfully fulfilled, that for a twelvemonth I past the most wretched life imaginable; debarred of my usual visits to Miss Hallifax, who was now eighteen, her unfortunate lover, Mr. Lisburne, being frequently with her, and sometimes accompanied by his brother officers, as the regiment was quartered not many miles distant, and Mr. Bridges thought there was contagion in a red coat; I seldom went out at all, but was then far from guessing the real reason of this additional restraint. My governess used to make frequent complaints to my guardian of the levity of my disposition, and beg I might not have so much liberty; then when we were alone, would weep over me like a crocodile at the unhappy life I led, and wish it was in her power to assist me. Thus situated, can you wonder that I erred, or that when liberty, and, as I thought, happiness was offered me, by one who had been the friend, and was to have been the guide of my youth, I refused not to accept it? But I am now coming to that part of my history which it is most painful to me to relate, and am already so much fatigued, it is not in my power to go on.

Sir William kissing her still burning hand, begged her not to think of proceeding at any time, for that what she had said was sufficient to convince him she had been unfortunate, but not guilty. “Ah,” cried she, “you have yet seen me in the best light, may you continue in the same opinion when you have heard all, and I shall be happy!” Mrs. Ashbourn then observing that she was extremely languid, desired Sir William to take his leave, and persuaded her to lie down, to which she consented.

The next morning early Lady Clarendon sent to enquire for her, and heard the agitation of her mind had prevented her from sleeping, but that she entreated Sir William would not fail of coming at the appointed hour, as she should have no peace till she had



concluded her story. With this request he complied, though unwillingly, from the fear of hurting her; and accompanied by Honoria, again attended the fair penitent, as Mrs. Ashbourn humorously called her.

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## CHAP. XXVII.

ON Sir William's entering the chamber, Miss Onslow begged to know if he still remained unprejudiced against her, and whether a night's mediation had not made her appear in a more unfavourable light than when they parted. He assured her it was quite the reverse, and this declaration giving her spirits, she continued.

"I was just turned of fifteen, when the —— regiment came into the town; and without any other idea than that of receiving amusement from the sight of the soldiers, when they marched by in form to go to exercise, and from hearing the drums and music, I always ran eagerly to the window; this was censured by my rigid guardians, who immediately removed me into a parlour that looked only into the garden, and determined to sit constantly there till the regiment left D——. Such ridiculous and strange precautions excited in me more resentment than regret, as though not particularly grieved at this circumstance, yet looking upon it as a forerunner of great acts of tyranny, it increased my dislike and aversion.

"I complained to De Tournay, who promised to make me amends by giving me more secret liberty. As Mrs. Bridges, from her constantly taking their side of the question, placed the most entire dependance on her, she easily persuaded them to let me walk sometimes beyond the limits of the garden which had lately been my bounds. They consented, not having an idea that she could deceive them. The first time we took the benefit of this indulgence, we passed several of the officers, all of whom regarded us in a very particular manner. De Tournay, I then thought accidentally, dropped her handkerchief; Captain Harcourt, who was looking after us, ran back to pick it up and restore it to her; this of course introduced some conversation: he joined us, and walked a little way, was extremely polite to her, and gallant to me: he paid me a thousand compliments, which I scarcely understood; I knew however he tried to please me, and was conscious his design was not unsuccessful. We were then returning home, and the sight of the house filled me with alarm I could not conceal. "O! Sir, (cried I) you must leave us, indeed you must, or we shall be both locked up." "What do you mean, my charming young lady?" (replied he). "Why (interrupted my governess) this poor child is kept like a prisoner in the Bastile by her guardian, who is afraid, as she has a vast fortune, that somebody will attempt her release." "Ah! (exclaimed he) was that happy enterprize but reserved for me!" "You must not now stay with us any longer (added she), but if you wish to know more, at seven o'clock this evening I shall be at the stationer's, but do not, I beseech you, mention to any one that you have met us;" he promised, and departed.

"We arrived at home. I had never seen before so handsome, so polite, so elegant a man as this young officer; these were my sentiments at least then—the sentiments of fifteen. To confess the truth he was constantly in my thoughts, and this De Tournay easily perceived, for I was a novice in deceit. We walked frequently, and generally met him; I fancied myself attached to him, and he undoubtedly appeared so to me. My governess had informed him of the peculiarity of my situation, mentioned her grief at the total seclusion in which I lived, but said not a word of the clause in my aunt's will. This

encouraged him to declare a passion for me, which he solicited her to interest herself in; she promised to favour his pretences if he would strictly conceal them from all his friends, fearing, as she said, a discovery which would inevitably ruin her: she did fear a discovery, but it was that he would hear on what terms only I inherited my estate. In short, for let me not dwell on a subject so peculiarly painful to me; in a few weeks De Tournay, by working on my mind in the most artful manner, by alternately painting the pleasures I should find in the world, and assuring me if I did not contrive some way to avoid it, I should certainly be sacrificed to Mr. Digby, who she declared was coming shortly to D—— for that purpose, persuaded me to elope with Captain Harcourt. More terrified at her information, than induced by the expectation of receiving any pleasure from an intercourse with the world, I at last gave an unwilling consent, hoping at least for liberty, and fancying in that every happiness was included; at the same time prepossessed in the favor of the man to whom I was on the point of resigning myself, yet, shocked at the step I was going to take, I hesitated several hours, till De Tournay, telling me I must decide immediately, I hastily seized a pen, and wrote a few lines to say “I would be ready at the appointed hour.” When this was dispatched, she allowed me no time for reflection, but hastened me to pack up the few things necessary for me to take; but to avoid herself incurring any suspicion of being an accomplice, she pretended at dinner to have a violent head-ach and cold chills, and immediately went to bed. As soon as it grew dark, according to the proposed plan, I begged leave to go and sit with her, till I went to bed myself; this was directly granted, and as I said, that she might be no more disturbed, I desired I might take up her whey. When I entered her chamber, I trembled so violently, that she feared I should not have spirit to execute the plan; however she did all in her power to encourage me, and as my flight would not be known till the morning, she ensured me from being overtaken, even if a pursuit was begun: I must here observe, I slept alone in a room within her’s, so that it was easy for her to say the next day, “that when I brought up the whey, I told her I could not be spared immediately, but that I would come to bed very softly for fear of disturbing her, and that not awaking herself till the middle of the night, she concluded I was safe in my chamber.” Taking an affectionate leave of this vile woman, I stole down stairs, and opening the door to the garden, ran breathless with terror down the gravel walk, leading to the gate, which Captain Harcourt had opened, and was waiting with a post chaise and four, into which he lifted me, and we drove off with the utmost expedition. He saw the agitation of my mind, and soothed it with tenderness; at length my terror subsided, and the joy I felt at my escape, overcame every other sensation.

We travelled many hours without stopping to change horses, when thinking we were in no danger of a pursuit, I consented to stay at the inn at —— to breakfast. Whilst I was pouring out the tea, I saw a man on horseback ride furiously into the inn-yard and enquire for Captain Harcourt: dreadfully frightened, I had scarcely strength to desire him to let me know the meaning of this message directly: he left the room, and when he returned, vexation and embarrassment were so visible in his countenance, that my heart again sunk with apprehension; but with a forced smile he assured me it was nothing but an express from one of his brother officers respecting regimental business, and to convince me of this, folded it down, and shewed me the name, Edward Johnston, and then went to order, as he said, the carriage that moment.

“I sat some time very quietly; at last wondering I had no summons to attend him, I rang the bell, and asked if the chaise was ready, and where the gentleman was? the waiter promised to enquire, but not returning, I grew seriously uneasy, and went out myself to demand the reason, when I met the landlady entering. Upon my repeating the question, she replied with extreme surprize, that the gentleman was gone, and she thought I knew it. “Gone! where?” cried I in an agony. “Indeed, Miss, (said she) I do not know: he ordered the chaise to drive a little way from the house, and then following, stepped in, after paying the bill, and I supposed you were going another way.” I scarcely heard the latter part of this speech, but burst into tears, and said, if they would tell me which way he was gone, I would pursue him; and actually ran out of the parlour: but the landlady catching hold of my gown, prevented me from executing this mad scheme. At this moment the ostler came up with a letter in his hand, which he gave his mistress, and said, it was dropped by the gentleman when he ordered the chaise. Instantly knowing it to be the same he had shewn me the signature of, I snatched it from her, hoping it would develop the reason of his leaving me in this barbarous and unaccountable manner. It did give me reason indeed, but how was my agony and horror increased, by knowing the truth!” Emily then took out a copy of this letter and read,

“To Captain HARCOURT.

“HAD you sooner informed me of your intentions, I might have saved you a useless and expensive journey. I received your letter but this moment. I am just returned from Mrs. Stapleton’s, where I was assured, and you may believe from the best authority, that Miss Onslow will not have a single shilling of her fortune if she marries without her guardian’s consent, and that you can never hope to obtain, as it is promised to Mr. Digby. You have been deceived and betrayed, and must therefore deceive in your turn. I cannot suppose you feel any thing like a passion for such a mere silly child, and therefore can have no regret at leaving her. If this reaches you before it is too late, take the first opportunity of convincing her and all the world, that you are a man of too much sense to be the dupe of such a specious artifice.

“EDWARD JOHNSTON.”

“When I had finished reading it, rage, mortification, shame and disappointment, choked my utterance and suspended my tears. I fell breathless into the good woman’s arms, who pitied my agitation, though insensible of the cause. When speech and recollection were again lent me, I told her the situation I was left in, and my reasons for quitting my home; and she persuaded me either to pursue the vile wretch who had thus inhumanly abandoned me, or return to my friends. The latter step would undoubtedly have been the properest, but my shame prevented me from following it, and against the other, my pride revolted. I could resolve on nothing, though to induce me she promised I should have a post chaise of her’s to convey me entirely to D——, and might pay for it another time, or just when it suited me. This offer, kind as it was, I could not accept, and felt at that moment as if I would rather die than go back into Devonshire, where, if I had experienced unkind treatment when I did not deserve it, what could I expect when my

conduct had proved the restraint they imposed was necessary, though it had been ineffectual?

“Whilst wavering in this manner, a coach and four with three ladies and a gentleman in it, drove into the inn yard, and the landlady left me to attend them. In a few minutes she re-entered the room followed by Mrs. Ashbourn, for it was her, to whom on her alighting she had repeated my sad story, and begged she would add her advice to strengthen that which she had already given me. I was sitting with my head on my folded arms on a table drowned in tears, when the noise of opening the door made me look up: the benevolence of Mrs. Ashbourn’s countenance, [pardon me, madam, for reciting your praises in your presence, but without them my narrative would be incomplete] immediately engaged my attention, and I looked up to her as the guardian angel who was to save me from the deep distress into which my imprudence had plunged me, and point out a way for my escape from the evils which surrounded me. She approached me, and taking my hand, tenderly begged me not to afflict myself thus deeply, but rather rejoice at the fortunate accident, which by shewing me the real character of the man I had chosen, should convince me of the happiness of being released from him. I made no answer, my heart was too much oppressed to suffer me to speak, but I held out the letter which had informed me of the truth. She read it, and when she had concluded, exclaimed, “Miss Onslow, why, are you Emily Onslow, the little girl I have so often seen at Castle Digby?” I looked up, but could not after so long an absence have the slightest recollection of her person, but convinced by her manner she had known me, I instantly assured her I was Mrs. Bridges’ niece, and had been, till seven years old, an inhabitant of the place she mentioned. When she told me her name it seemed familiar to me, and when she introduced her daughters as my former companions and playfellows, I would have flown to embrace them, but was restrained by a consciousness that I was wholly unworthy of their notice.

“To dwell no longer on this conversation, and shorten my narrative as much as possible, I will only inform you, that my dear Mrs. Ashbourn, after offering to take me back to my guardian herself, but finding me extremely averse, desired I would accompany her to London, from whence Mr. Ashbourn should write to Mr. Bridges and let him know the particulars of my elopement, and intercede with him for his pardon of a step, which his severities and De Tournay’s persuasions, had rendered more excusable. To this I joyfully consented; and on our arrival in town Mr. Ashbourn wrote to the above purpose, and added, at Mrs. Ashbourn’s request, that as it was my earnest desire not to return into Devonshire if he would permit me to remain with them during my minority, they would take every care of my education and morals, that Mr. Bridges could wish. In answer to this, my guardian thanked Mr. Ashbourn for his kind offer, which he gladly accepted, saying it would release him from a troublesome and disagreeable charge; he added that suspecting from his letter some duplicity in De Tournay’s conduct, he had charged her with it, and that after hesitating some time she at last, terrified at his threats, confessed what I before mentioned respecting Mr. Digby; and that Captain Harcourt had already given her two hundred pounds, and had promised her a farther recompence, but hearing that her schemes had proved ineffectual, and fearing he would return and demand his money, she, unknown to the family, departed early in the morning, a day or two after

she had received this intelligence; leaving a letter behind to explain her reasons. Mr. Bridges acknowledged that her conduct lessened the atrocity of mine, but that nothing could wholly excuse it; and concluded with hoping that I should not repay Mrs. Ashbourn's attention, as I had done theirs.

"Mrs. Ashbourn's behaviour was indeed so different from what I had experienced since the death of my aunt, that my heart and mind seemed wholly altered. Indulgent to my foibles, I never wished to conceal them from her, nor had I an idea that I would not freely have exposed to her, during the time I have been her grateful ward. If I have any merit, to her precepts and example I am indebted; she has fixed my principles, formed my mind, and every good sentiment I possess is owing to her". "Hush, my dear girl, (cried Mrs. Ashbourn) or I must leave the room." "Pardon, dear madam, (continued Emily) the involuntary effusions of my heart, but I will take care. Indeed I have now almost concluded; I must however add, Sir William, that I have often thought of mentioning this to you, but considering the period which would make it necessary, yet at a great distance, I always put off the evil day, little thinking how dearly I should repent my concealment. Since my leaving Devonshire I have never revisited it, but have frequently seen my guardian in London. You, my dear Miss Wentworth, was present at one of our interviews, and heard Mrs. Bridges question me respecting the Captain. I have often regretted that I did not then confess to you every particular, but I was fearful of losing your good opinion. I answered her truly that I had not seen him since, nor did I ever till we met at the ball. What passed then between us, is all I have now to recite.

"When he first saw me from the opposite side of the room, he directly crossed over, and addressed me with evident marks of surprize, but with an undaunted assurance expressed his happiness at again meeting me, after so long a separation. I was, as you may believe, extremely confused, and almost struck dumb at his confidence in daring to speak to me after what had passed; but endeavouring to recollect myself, I replied with the most frigid coldness, and attempted to leave him; but he seized my hand, and in the universal confusion the room was then in, he could, without being observed, endeavour to apologize for his former behaviour: he made some of the most ridiculous excuses possible, framed only at the moment, for I believe he had not the least idea I was at Bath; said he was sent for express to a dying relation, and on his returning to inform me of it, was taken by some bailiffs who lay in wait for him; that when he was released, he found I had wholly left Devonshire, and knew not where to enquire for me; that his regiment was then ordered abroad, and he had not been now in England above two months, all which time he had spent in seeking me. "I am so far, Captain Harcourt, (I replied), from requiring an apology for your conduct, that I think myself highly obliged to you for preserving me from misery and ruin; both which must have been the consequence of our marriage." At that moment, Sir William, you came up with Miss Wentworth, and prevented my saying more, and during the remainder of the evening he only found an opportunity to tell me, he should wait on me the next day to give me a farther explanation, and I begged he would not take the trouble, as he most certainly would not be admitted. I was uneasy and restless the whole evening, though I scarcely knew why, for I did not then imagine he would persecute me again. I told Mrs. Ashbourn on our return: she promised me if he dared call, to see him herself; but this I fancy he was afraid

of, for the next morning when he rapped at the door, he refused to walk in, hearing I was not at home. He then followed me to the pump room, and seating himself by my side, began the same subject, till I informed him I had possession of Mr. Johnston's letter, and was not unacquainted with his treaty with De Tournay. This intelligence at first disconcerted him, but recovering himself, he told me with the utmost insolence, if I did not listen to his proposals, he would apply to Sir William, whose attachment to me he was not ignorant of, and make him sensible of the priority of his claim, and that he would maintain his cause with his last breath. Dreadfully terrified at this menace, and being certain if he met you, a duel must ensue, I was endeavouring to reply in such a manner, as to put him for some time into a better humour, yet without encouraging hopes I never meant to fulfil; this was so difficult that I was still silent when you entered, and he rose directly to put, as I thought, his purpose in execution. The idea deprived me at once of reason, and as Fanny has since told me, I seized his arm: what followed you know. If, Sir William, your suspicions are not yet lessened, I forgive you; undoubtedly appearances were strongly against me; yet believe me the idea of dying unjustified in your opinion, will add many pangs to those I shall perhaps shortly suffer. But if by this full confession of all my faults, follies and misfortunes, your doubts are removed; conscious of the rectitude of my heart, glorying in its attachment to you, and satisfied with your approbation, I shall die in peace."

The length of her narrative, but particularly the energy with which she spoke her last address, had so exhausted her, that she leaned back in her chair and almost fainted: but long before she had concluded, Sir William threw himself at her feet, and with all his rhetoric endeavoured to convince her he was perfectly satisfied, and had not a wish left but for the perfect restoration of her health. When she recovered, this repeated assertion appeared to give her uncommon pleasure, but Mrs. Ashbourn, perceiving that she was faint and languid, would not permit her to speak, but declared the first word she uttered, Sir William should leave her. This resolution she heard with a smile, and put her hand on her mouth in token of obedience, nor did she once break through the restraint imposed on her. He sat about half an hour conversing with the rest of the party on the subject which had so long engrossed their attention, and often, though hopeless of an answer, addressed her; till Honoria, whose prudence was not lost in her affection, told him it was time to retire: he took the hint, tho' very unwillingly, left Emily, and returned to his mother, who was extremely anxious to hear the conclusion of the story, actuated not merely by curiosity, but by an earnest desire to know how far Captain Harcourt's report had its foundation in truth, well knowing her son's future happiness depended on Emily's justification. She was perfectly satisfied with the recital, convinced her errors proceeded more from the conduct of those around her, than from any fault in her own disposition: and thinking it in fact a fortunate circumstance, from its throwing her on the protection of so amiable a woman as Mrs. Ashbourn, from whom she had undoubtedly acquired those excellent qualities, which notwithstanding the natural goodness of her heart, might have never appeared under the tuition of a woman like De Tournay, and the inspection of minds so illiberal as Mr. and Mrs. Bridges evidently possessed.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

FROM this time both Sir William and Miss Onslow daily regained strength, and Emily could no longer fancy herself in a decline, an idea which had for some time taken possession of her mind, but which the alteration in her countenance had now rendered ridiculous.

During their illness, Honoria, though her time had been fully engrossed, had not forgotten the Lamberts, for though not in her power to visit, she had often sent to enquire for them, and received the most satisfactory answers: but the first morning she had leisure, she called in Westgate-street, and found they were to leave Bath in a few days. Mrs. Lambert was entirely recovered, and returned her the most grateful thanks for her kind attentions. Honoria was sorry that it was not in her power to do more for them, but determined to write by them to Miss Melmoth, whose liberal heart and large fortune enabled her to assist them. Full of her purpose, she returned home, and directly began her letter, giving her friend an account of all that had passed respecting Miss Onslow, and mentioning the Lamberts with peculiar regard, informing her of the part Colonel Effingham had in their history, but dwelling as slightly as possible on his liberality; and added that she had herself once seen him at a distance. This letter, with a very polite and affectionate note she sent to Mrs. Lambert, requesting she would if possible let one of her grand-daughters deliver into Miss Melmoth's own hands, which the old lady faithfully promised.

Honoria's mind now relieved from the anxieties which had lately wholly taken it up, had leisure to think of herself, and began to grow extremely uneasy at not hearing from Lady Eustace; as several months had by this time elapsed since there had been a possibility of receiving letters. Tormented by a thousand reflections, which embittered the happiness she would otherwise have experienced from the friendship and attention of those around her, she sometimes imagined Lady Eustace was dead, at others, ill and incapable of writing, and once, but only once, that surrounded by the pleasures and magnificence of the East, she had forgotten her humble but sincere friend in England; when her thoughts were again called from her own situation, by a new and unexpected misfortune that befell her kind protectress, Lady Clarendon, and involved her in the deepest affliction.

One morning when Honoria was going to the Pump room earlier than usual, she was surprized on passing by Miss Clarendon's chamber, to see the door open, as Louisa was seldom drest at that hour. Finding that she was not at home, she expected to meet her, but was disappointed: she appeared not at breakfast, and when it was over, at Lady Clarendon's desire Honoria enquired for her at Mrs. Ashbourn's, Mrs. Betterton's, and at several other houses where she was intimate, but could hear nothing of her. The whole day passed without any news, and they then could not but imagine she was eloped with some person, but *who* they could form no idea, as they had not observed any gentleman pay her attention enough, to authorize them to suppose he was the companion of her flight. To send after her was vain, as they could not even guess which way she was gone.



Her drawers were strictly searched, but no letter or memorandum was found to throw any light upon this strange affair; when the following afternoon the mystery was at once developed by the mistress of the house where Mrs. Ashbourn lodged. She had been two or three days at Bristol, having been sent for by a sister who was ill: on her return, after apologizing to Mrs. Ashbourn for the liberty, she begged to know if Miss Clarendon was still at Bath. The affair was then so well known, that Mrs. Ashbourn scrupled not saying she left Bath the morning before, but that no one knew or could guess where or with whom she was gone. Mrs. Woodward then replied she was sorry to be able to give her that information, which she was sure it would concern all the family to hear. Mrs. Ashbourn alarmed, begged her to be explicit, and she continued.

“My brother-in-law, madam, lives in a narrow and rather retired street in Bristol, where he sometimes lets lodgings. A few weeks ago a gentleman came to take them, who appeared to be afraid of something, but they could not tell what; he had a servant with him who was very close indeed, and so they thought at first he was afraid of the bailiffs, as he never went out at all for a fortnight, and afterwards only when ’twas dark; but then they thought if that had been the case, he would not have kept so snug on Sundays: however, as he paid them well, to be sure ’twas none of their business who or what he was. So when I went over, and my sister tells me this; thinks I, I will have a peep at him; so I watched him out, and when I saw him I thought, though I could not be certain, that it was that very gentleman who came here one morning after Miss Onslow, and afterwards fought with Sir William; and upon talking to my sister I was more sure, for I found he began to go abroad about the time Sir William was declared out of danger.”

Mrs. Ashbourn had hitherto waited the end of this long harangue with a great deal of patience, well knowing an attempt to hasten her to the point, would only lengthen it, but hearing that Captain Harcourt was the person she was speaking of, her astonishment compelled her to break silence, and she exclaimed, “Surely it is impossible! that abandoned girl could not go off with a man who had so nearly taken her brother’s life?” “I’ll tell you all I know, madam, (returned Mrs. Woodward) Yesterday morning as I was getting up, I saw a chaise stand at the door, and calling one of my nieces, a girl about fourteen, I asked her who it was waiting for, and she told me, Mr. Harding, for that was the name the gentleman went by, who was going away. Why (says I) I never heard he was going last night.” “No, (says she) aunt, ’tis all a sudden thing, but there’s a fine young lady come to fetch him, so he is paying my father as fast as he can, for he did not expect her so soon.” “So, ma’am, upon this, you must needs think my curiosity was raised, and I went down into the shop, and looking through the window into the chaise, I could almost have sworn it was Miss Clarendon, though I did not see her face, because she had a crape veil over her hat; but she had on a dark blue great coat, and a white beaver hat, with purple ribbons, and a canary muff; and that you know, madam, was just as she used to dress in the morning at the Pump room. I did not say any thing to my sister that I knew the lady, and presently Captain Harcourt got in, and they drove off as fast as possible.”

This intelligence extremely afflicted Mrs. Ashbourn, as she knew it would deeply wound Lady Clarendon to hear that her daughter was gone off with one, who might almost have been considered as her brother's murderer. Neither Dorothea or Fanny were surprized, and only grieved on her ladyship's account, as they had long seen and detested Louisa's character, and doubted not but her union with Captain Harcourt would in time be her punishment. His motive was evident; she had thirty thousands pounds independent of her mother, a fortune that was left her by an uncle; and disappointed in his designs upon Emily, whose two thousand a year would have still better pleased him, it was not to be wondered at, that he renewed those addresses to Miss Clarendon, which commenced at Northampton. They immediately sent to Sir William, and informed him, begged he would break it to Lady Clarendon, but his rage was so violent, that he was wholly unfit for the task, which at last Honoria undertook.

Lady Clarendon received this account with an agony of tears, at this additional instance of the depravity of her child; she fell on Honoria's neck, and fondly embracing her, intreated her to supply the place of her lost and undone Louisa, whom she ardently hoped never again to see: this wish, though exprest in the first bitterness of grief and resentment, struck Honoria as inconsistent with the general mildness of her character; but truly sympathizing in her grief, she dropped on her knees, and in the most affectionate manner declared whilst her Ladyship would afford her protection, she would never quit her. Lady Clarendon, soothed by her attentions, at length grew calm, and when Sir William entered the room, charged him by his duty and affection to her, never to seek revenge on the man who had so much injured them. "You have once met him, (added she) though on a different occasion; your life had nearly been the sacrifice; risque it not again, I beseech you; the unworthy girl deserves not your attention, and believe me, the moment you attempt to meet him, will be the last of my existence, for I could not survive even the apprehension of your danger." Sir William, greatly affected at this solemn adjuration, promised faithfully his compliance with every thing she requested, and said he would endeavour to forget his lost and unhappy sister.

This affair and its being extremely canvassed at all the public and private parties, determined them to leave Bath as soon as Emily's health would permit her to undertake the journey; and in less than a fortnight from Miss Clarendon's elopement, the whole party arrived in London; Lady Clarendon and her family in Harley-street, and Mrs. Ashbourn in Portman Square.

The morning after their arrival, Miss Onslow came to Honoria to communicate to her the contents of two letters which she found had been some time laying for her. The first which claimed her attention was a foreign one, the direction in Lady Egerton's hand, and the seal black: it informed her of the death of Sir William, which was caused by the following circumstance. On their first coming to Paris, whilst Sir William waited there some time on business, before he put his scheme in execution of placing his Lady in a convent, he was introduced to a French Officer of distinction, who with the gallantry peculiar to his nation, paid Lady Egerton a thousand compliments, which in the state Sir William's mind was then in, gave him unusual pain, and he hastened the time of their departure as much as possible, not chusing by confining her more strictly during their

stay, to give any suspicion of the natural turn of his disposition. He took her to a convent in one of the southern provinces, where he left her, and taking a short tour, returned to see her once more before he quitted the kingdom. Going towards the place of her retreat, he was alarmed and surprized to meet the Officer whose assiduities had so tormented him, just coming from it, and with his usual insolence of manner asked him whom he had been visiting there? The Officer told him it was a question he had no right to make, and to which he certainly should not reply; but irritated at his impertinence, demanded instant satisfaction. They were both armed, and they fought immediately, and Sir William was deeply, though not dangerously, wounded. He was removed to a private house, where Lady Egerton, whom he sent for out of the convent, attended him. The wound would quickly have been healed but for the agitation of his mind, which threw him into a fever. He had however the satisfaction of knowing his suspicions were wholly without foundation. The Officer who was entirely ignorant where Lady Egerton was, had been to visit a sister, the irregularity of whose conduct had induced her parents to confine her, her brother sometimes came to see her, and pay the Lady Abbess for her board. It was returning from her, he unfortunately met Sir William, and supposing his question to arise from having heard the history of his sister, was more easily offended, and resented it with a warmth inconsistent with his general character. But when he learned it was jealousy; to clear the lady's honor from the slightest imputation, he generously declared the whole circumstance, chusing rather to expose the misfortunes of his family, than suffer an innocent woman to lie under condemnation.

The consequence of this was, that Sir William, weakened by his fever, and tormented by the recollection that from the natural impetuosity of his temper he had drawn every evil of his past life upon himself, grew daily worse, and after languishing some time, expired in Lady Egerton's arms, who, though she still lamented, had long truly forgiven the death of her unfortunate lover. He died a sincere penitent, and made her every atonement in his power, by leaving her in addition to her jointure, which was considerable, all the ready money he possess; the estate, as he had no children, being entailed upon a distant branch of his family.

Of all these circumstances Lady Egerton informed her friend, and added it was her intention to quit France as soon as possible, and spend the first year of her widowhood with her aunt Stapleton, in Devonshire; after which she would fix her residence near whatever spot Emily was settled on; for no stranger to her engagement to Sir William, she imagined by that time it would be concluded. She also mentioned an event which happened on her return from ——. Being detained by an accident which the carriage met with at a small town about thirty leagues from Paris, she was obliged to wait at a little inn till it could be repaired: The mistress was ill and confined to her room, with a disorder which it was thought would shortly put a period to her existence; but seeing Lady Egerton alight, she sent her a message to beg to have the honor of speaking with her, a request she humanely complied with. The woman's face and body were so swoln with the dropsy, that even if so many years had not elapsed since they met, she could not have recollected her; but how was she astonished when she said her name had been De Tournay! and that conscious of Lady Egerton's benevolent disposition, she wished to see her, anxious to hear of Miss Onslow; as to know if she was well and happy, would give

her some comfort in her last moments: she confessed the guilt of her past conduct, but hoped the sufferings she had since experienced would in some degree atone for it. She appeared so near her end, and so sensible of her errors, that Lady Egerton would not add to her remorse by reproaches; but by giving her an account of Miss Onslow's situation, she removed some of the weight which lay so heavy on her heart. She then asked how she came in that miserable situation? to which the poor wretch replied, that when she left England with Captain Harcourt's two hundred pounds, she unfortunately fell into company with a man, who discovering what she possessed, and assuming the character of a gentleman, persuaded her to marry him; and soon spent not only that money, but all that she had saved during her residence in England in the quality of governess: that after this was gone, they met with innumerable distresses, and at last her husband settled in that place; they had lived there two years, and for almost the whole time her health had been declining. She added, that "she hoped Heaven would accept her unfeigned repentance, and that she looked upon every calamity she had since suffered, as a judgment for her unprincipled behaviour to Miss Onslow." Lady Egerton finding she was in no pecuniary distress, could only console her with an assurance that Miss Onslow would freely pardon her, and wishing her better health, she left the room, as her carriage at that moment drove to the door.—When she had finished this little story, she concluded her letter with earnestly hoping they should soon meet, and requesting to know where Miss Wentworth was, for whom she said she had a sincere affection, and would endeavour to make her every reparation in her power for the unjust aspersions Sir William had thrown on her character.

Honorina was pleasingly affected at Lady Egerton's kind remembrance, and joined with Miss Onslow in rejoicing at her release, and the consideration Sir William had shewn in the disposal of his effects. De Tournay's repentance also gave great satisfaction to Emily, and afforded her an ample subject for meditation upon the justice of Providence, in decreeing that the money which had been the price of her integrity, should be the means of her punishment.

The other letter was from Miss Walton; it informed her that she had strictly fulfilled her injunctions in vindicating Miss Wentworth's character every where; that the story gained universal credit, and excited universal mirth; that at first Mrs. Hunter was extremely angry, and accused Miss Wentworth of a breach of confidence, but that she went herself, and cleared her from the imputation, by telling her the story came from Mr. Dixon and Counsellor Milford. This intelligence raised a violent quarrel between Mr. Hunter and his lady, the result of which was, that the gentleman, who ruled with an absolute sway, insisted upon it that she should never more make herself ridiculous by writing, and from that time debarred her the use of pen and ink, locked up the library, and insisted upon her looking into her family, learning whist, and attending him to card parties. The poor lady having given up every thing to him, was compelled to obey, though she did it at first with a very ill grace; but that Mr. Hunter persisting in his resolution, she tried to accommodate herself to his will, and was at present much altered for the better, but that Miss Wentworth's vindication had made an irreparable breach between Miss Winterton and her friend, the former declaring it was an unparalleled instance of barbarity to suffer her to languish for so many months under the idea of her

lover's inconstancy, when by confessing the truth, she had it in her power to restore peace to her afflicted bosom. Miss Walton added, it gave her sincere pleasure to have had it in her power to be of any service to Miss Wentworth, for whom she had a high respect and esteem; and concluded with begging both her and Miss Onslow would accept her compliments and best wishes.

Lady Clarendon was rejoiced this explanation had taken place, as she could not endure the idea of her innocent and beloved young friend lying under any imputation of so much consequence to her character; and sincerely joined her in thanking Emily for her spirited interference.

A few days after this, Honoria received a most affectionate letter from Miss Melmoth, requesting her to come to Southern Lodge, if only for a few days, and promising to send her carriage. Honoria, from knowing the uneasiness which still preyed on Lady Clarendon's mind on her daughter's account, would have declined this invitation for the present, but her Ladyship insisted on her going, and at length she unwillingly complied.

Miss Melmoth received her with that warmth and enthusiasm of friendship which ever marked her character, and rejoiced in the amendment of her health, which was, as she said, visible in her countenance. Honoria then gave her a minute relation of every occurrence she had met with since they parted, which it was impossible to do wholly by letter, only softening Lady Pelham's behaviour. Miss Melmoth listened with an attention that proved how deeply she interested herself in the recital. She sympathised in Honoria's joy at meeting Emily Onslow, and though personally unknown, adored Lady Clarendon for her attachment to her. Our heroine then enquired for the Fairfaxes and Lamberts; the former, Miss Melmoth said, had yet been very little at Ashbury, but that when they were settled, she hoped they would be good neighbours, as she thought Mrs. Fairfax a most pleasing and amiable woman. The Lamberts, she added, were gone to London with a very happy prospect. Mrs. Lambert seeing in the papers the death of a distant relation of her daughter in law, who left no children, wrote through a friend, to make some enquiry into the right her grand-children might have from their mother to claim some share in the estate; and that in consequence of this she had discovered their uncle, Major Southmore, who had long been endeavouring, though without success, to find his sister and her children. He happened to be at the chambers of the lawyer, who had the management of the estate which now devolved to him, when Mrs. Lambert's friend mentioned the children's claim: the name instantly struck him, and finding he was not mistaken, he took a post-chaise and went immediately into Hertfordshire, from whence he brought the whole family to his house in London; expressing the most grateful thanks to the old lady for the care she had taken of his nephews and nieces, but lamenting the death of his sister, which was before unknown to him. Miss Melmoth added, that before their departure Lucy came to her to give her this account, which she received with great pleasure. Honoria was delighted to find they were related to her old friend Major Southmore, and taking the direction which Lucy had given Miss Melmoth, determined to take the first opportunity of calling on them, when she returned to London.

Happy in the society of her beloved friend, a week passed rapidly away, and Honoria having resolved not to exceed that time, on the eighth morning left Southern Lodge with Miss Melmoth, who accompanied her to Cheshunt, where they parted; and Lady Clarendon's chariot meeting her, she arrived to dinner in Harley street.

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## CHAP. XXIX.

LADY Clarendon received Honoria with the most visible satisfaction; this little absence had endeared her to her heart, and the *ennui* and languor which had the whole possession of her mind, whilst deprived of her lively and animated conversation, convinced her how essential her presence was to her happiness. Grateful for her reception, and affected by its kindness, Honoria determined to put off for some days her intended visit to the Lamberts, and devote her whole time to her amiable and respected friend.

One day Lady Clarendon was sitting in her dressing room, and Honoria reading to her, when she was called down stairs to some person on business. During her absence, she sent up her keys to Honoria, and begged she would open a large closet in the room where she was, and send her a bundle of papers she would find there. Honoria obeyed her, gave the parcel to the servant, and was going to shut the door, when she was startled at seeing a trunk that very much resembled the one she had so long lost, and supposed had been burnt: she immediately examined it more closely, and found it was absolutely the same. Struck with an inconceivable surprize at discovering the treasure she had so often lamented, in Lady Clarendon's possession, and locked so carefully in a closet where she knew nothing was kept but writings and things of value, she remained motionless with astonishment; ten thousand vague and wild ideas rushing on her mind, when the door opening recalled her attention. She turned round, but the feelings of her heart were so strongly painted in her countenance, that Lady Clarendon who was entering, begged if any thing had alarmed her? "No, madam, (she replied with tolerable composure) I am only surprized at seeing a trunk which once belonged to me, and which I fancied was long since consumed, in your Ladyship's closet." "What trunk?" (cried Lady Clarendon with emotion) "that with the letters H F on the lid," (returned Honoria). "Prove then your right to it," exclaimed Lady Clarendon, "and relieve me from the agonizing suspense I am in." She spoke with an extreme agitation, that terrified Honoria, who ignorant of the real cause, thought it arose from anger. "I know not how to prove my right, madam, (but perhaps it is of little consequence) as undoubtedly its contents have been often changed before it came to your Ladyship." "What were the contents when you lost it?" (interrupted Lady Clarendon with an assumed calmness). "They were (said Honoria, colouring) of no intrinsic worth, but to me inestimable, as proofs of my birth, which, if ever I am so happy as to discover the authors of my being, could only authenticate my person; but as of that, I have long since lost all hopes, they can be of little value to me." "You have not yet told me what they were, (replied Lady Clarendon) perhaps I can restore them." Honoria astonished at the eagerness with which she spoke, said, "a bundle of coarse cloaths, a silver cross, a seal, and a crown piece were all the tokens by which I might arrive at the knowledge of my parents; but there was also a paper ascertaining the day, and describing the manner in which I was found, drawn up by my earliest and ever lamented friend, and signed by herself and the clergyman who baptized me Honoria Sommerville." She was going on, but the instant she had pronounced these words, Lady Clarendon screamed and fell back in her chair, apparently senseless. Honoria ran to her assistance, though wholly unable to guess the reason of her illness, and attempted to ring the bell, but she prevented her; a violent burst of tears came

to her relief, and lessened the oppression of her heart. Honoria had sunk at her feet, and Lady Clarendon had thrown her arms round her neck, embracing her in the tenderest manner, and the instant it was in her power to articulate, reduced Honoria to the same condition as herself, by exclaiming "Oh! if you are really Honoria Sommerville, you are my much loved, my long lost child; but do not let me be again deceived, convince me of the truth of your assertion; yet surely I can want no other proof than that my heart now gives; every tender, every maternal emotion, assures me you are my own Honoria." The sudden impression of delight this speech gave our heroine, was too violent for her to support, and she fell totally insensible into her mother's arms. Lady Clarendon, terrified at the effect of this discovery, severely reproached herself for not in some degree restraining her feelings, and informing her of it with some precaution. She hastily rang for assistance, and in a few minutes Honoria regained her sense and recollection. "Merciful Heaven! (exclaimed Lady Clarendon) thus on my knees I humbly thank thee for restoring her to my prayers: for restoring her blest with every virtue, and worthy of my fondest affection." "Did I dream, (cried Honoria the moment she could speak) or did your Ladyship bestow on me a title I never before had a right to? did you not call me your child? or was it only the illusion of a fanciful mind, too ready to believe what it so ardently desires?" "No, (replied Lady Clarendon) it is a blest truth; you are indeed my beloved daughter, and your place has been too long usurped by one who disgraced the title. How often and how severely have I reproached my heart for its coldness towards her? a coldness however that her conduct in some measure justified; but from the first moment I was told she was my child, that heart refused to acknowledge her, whilst to you it sprang with all the ardor of maternal fondness at our first interview; that affection so well placed and now so truly accounted for, has since been daily encreasing, and you have daily proved yourself more worthy of it." "My beloved, my adored mother, (returned Honoria) with what transport do I repeat a word to which my lips have hitherto been a stranger! surely it was the irresistible impulse of nature which drew me so strongly towards you, and the earnest desire I even then felt to obtain your notice, made me so bitterly regret the cruel restraint I was under before Lady Pelham; but your attention gratified my wishes, and the gratitude it inspired seemed even to myself incomprehensible; alas, I then little guessed it was prompted by filial affection." "But why, dear Honoria, (interrupted Lady Clarendon,) did you never reveal to me your situation? the knowledge of your name would have hastened the present discovery, and saved us both many hours of uneasiness and sorrow." "It was shame," said Honoria, "though I own a false one, of confessing to you my ignorance of my parents, but Lady Pelham's harsh censure of that unhappy class of beings to which I belonged, frightened me, nor could even your defence, generous as it was, entirely conquer my apprehensions that if you knew the sad circumstances of my earliest years, it might perhaps lessen your esteem." "How little you knew my heart! (said Lady Clarendon) it never refused its approbation to merit in any form or under any misfortune. But now, my dear Honoria, let me open the trunk; let me shew you the invaluable proofs by which I know you to be my child; and let us together weep over the memory of that kind friend, who by preserving you from the unhappy fate which awaited you, by educating you in those strict principles of virtue which have regulated your life, and by sowing the seed of those pure sentiments of religion and morality, your own excellent heart has since so well cultivated, has left me a support for my declining age, a reward for every past affliction of my life.



Honorina was already weeping, her tears flowed silently, but constantly, but they were the tears of mingled pleasure and regret; of softened regret for the loss of her earliest friend, who had been the first cause of the happiness she now felt, and which, but for this relief, would have oppressed her sensible and grateful heart too severely. She had the key of the trunk still in her pocket, but it would not then open it; the lock had been changed, but the original one had been preserved by accident, and Honorina's key fitting it, would have been an additional proof of the truth of her assertion, but Lady Clarendon required no other. Every thing was in her trunk in the state she left it, except the volume of *Metastasio*, and a copy of her letter to Lady Eustace, written whilst in the service of Miss Mortimer, and containing a short account of every circumstance that had happened since her embarkation for the East Indies. The former she would not enquire for, the latter Lady Clarendon had never seen, and supposed the vile impostor who had so long passed for her daughter, had concealed it for some purpose of her own.

Impatient as Honorina was to learn by what miraculous event the box was preserved, and the discovery made, yet she yielded to Lady Clarendon's desire to hear her own history, and related every circumstance of her past life in the fullest manner. The former part of it was so exactly consonant to what Louisa had told her, that she might have been puzzled, had she not accounted for it by the loss of the copy of Honorina's letter, which for very obvious reasons she had suppressed. Not a circumstance in this relation was omitted, except what concerned her attachment, and this she determined to conceal, till she knew whether a ray of hope, which dawned upon her soul, had the least probability of being realized; as if only a phantom of the imagination, she would not by revealing it damp Lady Clarendon's present enjoyment, and she was certain even a suspicion that she was not entirely happy, would have that effect: besides, should her fears, and not her hopes, prove true, she resolved wholly to forget him, and had indeed already, in some degree, conquered a passion, that had so long embittered her life.

Lady Clarendon listened with the utmost attention to her history, and sympathized in all her afflictions; she was before acquainted with all that had past, since her leaving Miss Mortimer; had smiled at Mrs. Campbell's foibles, and pitied Lady Egerton's distress: but the first part of her narrative particularly interested her; she wished to know the man who even in her disgrace and misfortunes had offered her his hand; she adored Major Southmore for his excellent advice and friendly offer, and approved of Honorina's determination to visit him, and the rest of his amiable family. It was not till the conclusion of her story, so deeply was she engaged by the various events, that Lady Clarendon recollected she ought to inform her, that Sir James Eustace was her own nephew. Honorina received the intelligence with transport, particularly as it was accompanied with an account of her friend's health. Lady Clarendon had a very few months before heard from Sir James, who said his lady was well, and that they hoped to embark very soon. Honorina could in no way account for her silence, but flattered herself her return to England would explain it, and in a satisfactory manner. The whole day was thus happily spent in mutual enquiries, but Lady Clarendon declared her mind was yet too unsettled, to give her all the particulars of the sad event by which she first lost her; she promised, however, that she would amply satisfy her curiosity the following morning.

In the evening Sir William returned, and their pleasure was again revived by a minute recital of the wonderful and happy discovery the day had produced: he embraced Honoria with the most affectionate ardour, congratulating his mother on the charming exchange, and declaring, she would not find him so averse to acknowledge her, as he had been when Louisa was introduced as his sister, whose illiberal mind and uncongenial soul, excited in him a disgust he had vainly attempted to conquer.

He flew the next morning early to Portman-square with the delightful news; it was received as he expected; he brought the whole family back with him to breakfast, and they all express the most real satisfaction. Emily's joy was at first unbounded, but when it was a little tranquillized, she said to Honoria, "I hope, my dear, you will not think it more than a secondary cause of my present happiness, if I confess that I am delighted with the idea of Harcourt's being punished as he deserves; when he finds, instead of having married a woman of family and fortune, his wife is no one can tell who, and has not a shilling in the world." They all smiled at her remark; and Lady Clarendon then consulted her friends, what step was the most proper to be taken in this affair; it was at last agreed, that the whole discovery should be kept a profound secret, till Captain Harcourt (which they doubted not would be soon) came to demand his lady's fortune; that Lady Clarendon should desire he would bring her to her house, and when there, oblige her to confess what means she used to impose on them all, and how she became possessess of the trunks, certificate, &c. If she should positively refuse, and the Captain insist upon proving the identity by law, it only remained for them both to go to Ireland, and have it determined by Mr. Fortescue, Mr. Richardson, and the rest of Honoria's friends there; a measure they thought Mrs. Harcourt would scarcely chuse should be taken, whilst the real Miss Clarendon, with all the readiness of conscious innocence, gladly consented to it. If, on the contrary, Mrs. Harcourt would confess at once, and save them all the trouble of such a journey and voyage, Lady Clarendon resolved to pardon her; but, if she persisted in her imposture, to prosecute her with the utmost rigour.

When this was settled, Emily said, "Dear madam, let me be present at the lady's cross-examination, I shall enjoy it of all things." "No, my dear Emily, (replied Lady Clarendon,) your presence would confuse her, and perhaps prevent us from hearing the truth; besides, the Captain would scarcely admit you as an evidence; our triumph would be his mortification, and it might enrage him almost to madness, for you to be a spectator of it. We must, however, take care to have proper witnesses:—You, Mr. Ashbourn, I shall depend on as one, and any part of your family, except Emily." The ladies, with one voice, declared, how much they should like to be present, as both the Captain and his wife had behaved so ill, they should not feel the least degree of pity at their shame. Honoria was for some days longer to be called as usual, Miss Wentworth; she, however, obtained permission to write Miss Melmoth some little account of what had passed; but lest the letter should miscarry, only mentioned, that she had at last been so happy as to discover her only surviving parent, but that from some particular circumstances, as yet she was not yet at liberty to reveal more, than that she had a claim to another name, besides that of Honoria Sommerville.

## CHAP. XXX.

SIR William, at Lady Clarendon's desire, accompanied the Ashbourns home, and staid with them the remainder of the day, as Lady Clarendon wished to be alone with Honoria to fulfil her promise; the instant dinner was over, they went into the dressing-room, and having ordered themselves to be denied, Lady Clarendon began as follows:

"I must, dear Honoria, to account for the strange events I am going to relate, begin at a very early period, and inform you, that my father, Sir Edmund Bellenden, was of a very ancient Roman Catholic family in Cheshire; he married a Protestant heiress, and, as usual in such cases, by the articles of marriage, it was agreed, that the boys were to be educated in my father's religion, the girls in my mother's. Lady Bellenden was a woman of strict piety, and Sir Edmund, not willing to have the whole charge of my brother upon himself, and fearing that she might endeavour to influence his mind, in favour of her own principles, sent him abroad, at a very early age, to reside with a family in France, of his own persuasion, and be under the care of an Abbe of his acquaintance. Edmund was the eldest by some years, and consequently Jemima and myself, who only survived several other children my mother had, were too young to feel any regret at the separation.

"We had the misfortune to lose this most excellent parent when I was only seventeen, and my sister nineteen; our mother had taken the most indefatigable pains to fix our principles, and, on her death-bed, earnestly conjured us, never to let threats or intreaties induce us to alter our tenets, or deviate from the path she had pointed out for our eternal happiness; this we faithfully promised, and as faithfully fulfilled. Indeed, from my father we had nothing on this point to dread; he was no bigot, and satisfied that we acted up to what we profest he required no farther. In three months after this sad event, Jemima became acquainted with Sir Thomas Eustace, father to Sir James; he paid her his addresses immediately, and they were married as soon as the term for our mourning was expired. I must here observe, Edmund had been frequently in England for a few weeks, but as at the time of my mother's death he was on his travels, he was not then recalled.

"I was staying with Sir Thomas and Lady Eustace in London, when I first saw Sir William Clarendon; he accompanied us on our return to Bellenden Castle, and, with my consent, made proposals to my father, which were instantly, and with pleasure, accepted; but, in the mean time, whilst he was gone to inspect some alterations he designed at Clarendon Place, in Buckinghamshire, my brother returned to us. When we had seen him last, he was a mere lad; his principles scarcely fixed, and his education incomplete; but five years had so totally altered him, that we could scarcely believe it was the same good humoured and lively Edmund we had before known. The tutor who attended him on his travels, was a crafty papist, who hoping to derive an advantage from it, had inspired him with the most bigoted principles, and the strongest aversion to the protestant faith. In consequence of these ideas, he came hastily back to England, on hearing of my sister's marriage with a man of her own religion, in hopes, he said, to save one of us from perdition. In the most violent terms as he reproached my father for giving his permission, till Sir Edmund was actually alarmed at having acted as he thought so inconsistently with

his duty, and immediately forbad my thinking any more of Sir William Clarendon. Irritated at my brother's conduct, and hurt at my father's commands, it cannot be supposed that I felt any degree of fraternal affection, and we behaved to each other with great coldness, and, indeed, seldom spoke, except when my brother endeavoured to convert me; this he did with an earnestness which, though it failed to convince, yet often made me uneasy. At last, to avoid it, I determined to follow my sister's advice, which, added to Sir William's persuasions, induced me to leave Bellenden Castle, and marry him; being assured, that my father's refusal proceeded merely from Edmund's bigotry.

“In this I was right; I wrote immediately after my marriage, informing him of my reasons, and that I was the more fixed on it, as I had positively determined never to change my religion, and that I thought the best way to secure it, was to unite myself with one of my own persuasion. A letter I soon received in answer, convinced me my ideas were just. Sir Edmund assured me of his forgiveness, and hoped I should be happy; but said, his son was so extremely violent, that he could not then desire us to come to Bellenden Castle; if my brother returned to France, he should intreat to see us. This gave us both the highest pleasure, and was far beyond our most sanguine expectations; but, alas! the hopes it gave rise to were never fulfilled; Edmund was so enraged at my father's mildness, that he determined not to leave him, as he doubted not, in his absence, we should regain our wonted influence.

“Uneasy at the divisions which this unhappy enthusiasm of his had made in several branches of our family, we determined to quit England, and reside a few years in the South of France, thinking, that probably, on our return, the resentment he felt would be lessened. In pursuance of this plan we set out for Avignon, where your brother was born. When he was about two years old, I was extremely afflicted at the account of my sister's death, in consequence of which Sir Thomas came over to us, intending to make the tour of Europe, in the hope of dissipating his grief. A very few months after he left us my father died; in defiance of all Edmund's artifices, his will was made with the most exact justice; the family estate of course came to him, but James Eustace and myself equally shared the remainder of his fortune. To my infinite surprize, the letter which informed us of this event, was followed by another from Edmund, expressing the deepest regret at his past conduct, and entreating us to forgive him, and prove that forgiveness by returning to England, and spending the remainder of the winter and spring with him in Cheshire. With this request I was extremely unwilling to comply, but on Sir William's urging the propriety of accepting an invitation made apparently with the best motives, and the hope of an entire reconciliation, induced me at last to consent. My principal reason for objecting to it, was the impossibility of taking our little William with us, as he was a very delicate child, and I feared the sudden change from so mild a climate at such an unfavourable season of the year, would be fatal to him. Indeed I could not have left him, had I not been certain of the care of the person to whom I entrusted him; but satisfied of her attention, though bitterly regretting the separation, we quitted Avignon, and arrived safe at Bellenden Castle.

“My first entrance was marked with many tears, which flowed from unfeigned sorrow and melancholy recollection; but the very kind reception we met with from my

brother, then Sir Edmund, contributed greatly to sooth my mind and soften my afflictions; perhaps I was the more sensible of his attachment, from the contrast it afforded to his former behaviour. I had however reason to believe the rigour of his principles was not abated, and that he was not less ardently attached to his own religion than before, as I found he had offered to take the charge of Sir James Eustace during his father's absence, an offer that Sir Thomas had properly refused, and in consequence of it had placed the child at a school a great distance from Cheshire, no one knew where. This had deeply excited Sir Edmund's resentment, and he could not speak of it with calmness. To me, however, he behaved with an unvaried kindness, and even insisted, as I was then very near my time, that I should stay and lay in at Bellenden Castle. Alas! how far was I then from guessing his barbarous motive? I consented, and in a few weeks, you, my beloved Honoria, were born. Though a very healthy infant, I was anxious to have you baptized by my own name, Louisa, and for that purpose, sent for the clergyman of the adjoining village, but he was then absent, and of course the ceremony was deferred till the following day; but in the evening I grew so ill, that the whole attention of the people was bestowed on me; and a physician was called in, who declared me in imminent danger. I lay above a fortnight, whilst my life was despaired of, and Sir William was almost distracted with the fear of losing me; often, when unable to speak to him, I have seen him at the bed-side in tears, of which, I then believed myself the sole cause. When my fever so far lessened as to leave me the powers of recollection, maternal anxiety prevailed, and I enquired for my child; the attendants told me, that as my fever was of an infectious kind, it was not thought safe for her to remain in the house, and she had been put to nurse in the village, and for the same reason it was not yet proper I should see her. I submitted patiently to these reasons, which were too just to be controverted, though I ardently longed to clasp her in my arms. As my health returned, this wish strengthened, and when I was able to sit up, as the weather was fine, and the spring mild, I asked if her nurse could not walk with her in the garden, that I might only look at her through the windows. I observed, that Sir William, to whom I made this request, hesitated; at last, he said he would walk down the next day to the village, and mention my proposal. The next day, however, it rained, and the following; this put a stop to my scheme, but I was so miserable, at being thus kept from my infant, that the first fine morning, I said I was quite well, and would go out in the carriage, and stop at the house where they told me you were. Sir William was alarmed at the resolute manner in which I spoke, and laying his hand on my arm, as if to detain me, he said, 'you must not, dear Louisa, indeed, you must not:' the peculiar solemnity, of his voice and looks, terrified me, and a dreadful idea rushing on my mind, I exclaimed, "Then the dear infant is dead, I know she is, or you would not prevent my seeing her." He endeavoured to calm my mind by assurances, that we had still a chance of recovering our lost treasure, and by degrees informed me that she had been taken from the cradle at the cottage where she was placed for the time of my illness, and though the strictest search had been made through the neighbourhood, no satisfactory intelligence had yet been received. The possibility of her being restored to me, at first soothed my distress, as her loss, though deeply afflicting, was yet a less irretrievable evil than her death. As my horror at the impression Sir William's first speech had made, lessened, my hopes encreased, and I instantly begged he would himself go in search of her; send advertisements to every news-paper in the kingdom, and offer the highest rewards: this he promised to comply with, and added, nothing but my extreme

danger had kept him so long at Bellenden Castle. He set out that very day, and left me to the care of my brother, who with the utmost apparent tenderness sympathized in my affliction. The hope which I still felt, in some degree kept up my spirits, and prevented them from wholly sinking under so heavy a misfortune, but when continual letters from Sir William assured me, how ineffectual all his endeavours had been, I again relapsed into the most bitter agonies of grief, and losing the hope which had hitherto supported me, I only thought of the sufferings she might experience, and most earnestly wished I could hear of her death, thinking it of the two a less dreadful calamity, than that she should in infancy be not only inured to hardships, but familiar with vices, that education would teach her were customary, and which she might in maturity practise, from ignorance of a better way, and the depravity and example of those, with whom she was condemned to associate: for I had not a doubt but that she was taken away by some of those wretched creatures who travel the country, and make so many parents miserable, by depriving them of their children. How erroneous my judgment was, you will presently discover. Sir Edmund was really shocked at my sufferings, and absolutely fearing that my life would at last be a sacrifice, determined, though at the risque, of for ever forfeiting my good opinion, to confess his villainy, for what else can I term it? He told me one day, to restrain my grief, and he would restore my child. I asked him what he meant, with an air of incredulity, intended rather as a reproach, for thus, as I thought, trifling with my feelings; but he assured me he was in earnest, and said, if I would promise to forgive him, he would not only inform me where she was, but that Sir William on his return should actually bring her to me. I instantly promised all he required, and declared, I would not even make him one reproach: he then confessed, that instigated by the hope of training her up in his own religion, and persuaded, that such an act would atone for a thousand transgressions, he had caused her to be secretly taken from her nurse, who was entirely innocent, and given in charge to a woman on whom he could depend, whose husband lived on an estate of his in Ireland, to which place she was conveyed, and there he intended she should remain till old enough to be sent to France, where he meant she should be under the care of a lady he was well acquainted with, who was Abbess of a convent in Normandy, whose kindness and indulgence he did not doubt, but who would see her brought up faithfully in the religion he was so seriously persuaded was the only right and proper one. My astonishment at this declaration may be more easily conceived than described; I knew bigotry had carried people very great lengths, but I had no idea, it could induce a brother thus to sacrifice the health, and almost the life of a sister, to whom also he pretended to be attached.

“I punctually kept my word in making him no reproaches, for my anger and indignation would not suffer me to speak. I instantly quitted the room, and wrote a few lines to Sir William, requesting he would return directly, but without assigning the reason; this I sent off by an express, and remained the whole day in my apartment, for I could not sufficiently command myself, to sit down to table with my brother, and assume a serenity I was so far from feeling. My mind, it is true, relieved from the apprehensions which had so heavily oppressed it, grew calm, and by degrees chearful. I anticipated the pleasure of again embracing my little darling, and this idea, which I indulged all the night, and which deprived me of sleep, at length softened my resentment, and I met Sir

Edmund the next day with tolerable composure: he entreated me to forgive him, and I consented.

“The very moment Sir William returned, in consequence of my letter, I informed him of the whole affair, and urged him to set off instantly for Ireland. Though fatigued with the haste in which he had executed his journey from London, he hesitated not to comply, and taking the direction from me, without seeing my brother, went immediately to Parkgate, and the wind being fair, and the packet ready to sail, he embarked directly. I desired he would not stay in Ireland long enough to write, but return with the child as soon as possible; and certain he would not deceive me, I anxiously watched the wind when he had been gone a few days, and saw it was favourable to my wishes; how earnestly did I hope it would yet for some time continue in the west, little expecting it would bring me only disappointment and sorrow! I walked every day in the turnpike road leading to Parkgate, and whenever I saw a chaise, how did my heart bound with hope and anxiety! One morning, I observed a man on horseback at a distance, and though I knew not why, my mind sickened with apprehension; but how was that increased, when, on a nearer approach, I perceived it was Joseph who accompanied Sir William to Ireland! The instant he saw me he alighted, and whilst I was leaning on the arm of my maid, wholly unable to enquire for his master, he gave me a slip of paper, on which, in Sir William’s hand, were written these words.

“Do not, my love, be too much alarmed, if you see me return alone.”

“I no longer doubted the fate of my poor child: I saw in an instant, this was meant to prepare me for some terrible intelligence. Joseph, who saw the effect it had on me, rode back to his master, who only waited at the end of the village till he had delivered the note, and the carriage instantly drove up. Sir William alighted, and lifted me in, and we soon arrived at the Castle, where he informed me, for I wanted no farther preparation, that the child was actually dead. He said, that arriving at the cabin, he found the woman in great trouble; she told him, the infant had been about a week before seized with convulsions, one of which had in a few minutes put a period to its existence. On his asking if any methods had been taken for its recovery, she replied, an old woman had put on a blister, which, however, had been of no service: he added, that at first doubting the truth of the story, he insisted on seeing where it was buried, and they shewed him the spot. In despair at this unfortunate event, and fearing the effect it would have on me, he scarcely knew what to resolve on, except his immediate return; and at last thought of sending me that note, hoping it would lessen the shock.

“In spite of my declaration some time before, that if I knew it was dead I should be comparatively happy, I felt more severely the disappointment, from having indulged the hope of regaining my little darling; but as soon as the first emotions of grief were over, I intreated Sir William to let us quit the Castle, as I could no longer bear the sight of one whom I could not consider in future as a brother, but as the author of all my misfortunes; as there was every reason to imagine if the dear child had had proper assistance, she might have recovered. Full of indignation we quitted Cheshire, without my having seen Sir Edmund since I had received the afflicting intelligence. On our

journey my mind turning wholly on one subject, I asked Sir William by what name the dear infant had been baptized? he answered with some hesitation, "that he did not know." "What," said I, "did you not enquire?" His silence then informed me of a terrible truth, that she had not been baptized at all; he confessed that my danger had so totally engrossed his attention, he could think of nothing else, till the loss of her had put it out of his power; and that when he questioned the woman on this head, she said her husband had mislaid the letter which had given orders for it, and they had forgot the name, and were waiting in expectation of another from Sir Edmund, when the child died. I was inexpressibly shocked at this, the consequences of my brother's mistaken piety, and again most bitterly lamented the sad event and the unshaken bigotry of his principles; for before our departure he told Sir William with a cold indifference, "that though he lamented, he did not accuse himself as the cause of the child's death; that he was actuated by a noble motive, which he doubted not Heaven would reward."

"My husband perceiving my health and spirits both declining from the anxiety and uneasiness I had suffered, proposed our returning to Avignon, where the company of our little William would no less contribute to the recovery of the one, than the air would to the other. To this I joyfully consented; we arrived there safely, and had the satisfaction of finding our dear boy in perfect health.



## CHAP. XXXI.

“WE remained at Avignon eight years, and lived tranquilly and happily; hearing no intelligence from my brother, but accidentally learning that he was married, and to a very amiable woman. By degrees the regret I had felt for my lost child wore away, and left only a slight impression of grief, which was often checked by the reflection that she was taken to a better world, from the miseries she might have experienced in this. Sir Thomas Eustace had brought his son from England and left him with us; he was a fine amiable lad, and the exact resemblance of my sister, both in person and mind. His company added the more to my satisfaction, as there was soon a perfect affection between him and William; they were nearly of the same age, pursued the same studies, followed the same amusements, and this regard begun in infancy, manhood has heightened into the truest friendship. At the end of this period a letter arrived from England which destroyed my happiness by renewing my anxiety; it was from Sir Edmund. I took it this morning from my bureau, and you shall, my dear Honoria, read it yourself. Lady Clarendon then gave her the letter; it was as follows:

To Lady Clarendon.

“Torn with the deepest remorse a guilty bosom can feel, wholly unable to conceal my crimes, yet dreading to confess them, from the fear of again tearing open those wounds time must now have long healed; how my injured Louisa, how shall your wretched brother dare address you? yet conscious as I am that I cannot hope for your pardon, I must inform you of every transaction that now hangs so heavy on my mind. Can I expect the forgiveness of heaven, if I die with such a load of guilt, unconfest and unrepented of? Yet that heaven is my witness, however ill-judged the action, it was well meant; and I have now laboured above seven years under the heaviest oppression from the fatal consequences of my mistaken zeal, undetermined whether it would be best to reveal it to you or not. I am at length resolved, and entreat by that mercy we are all taught to expect, that you will not refuse me the pardon I so earnestly solicit. At present I will no longer detain you from the events I am about to relate.—Just before my father’s death, the Abbe, to whom I owe my education and the strictness of those tenets that you call rigour, and which I fear you will now more than ever execrate, wrote me word that he had seen you at Avignon, and mentioned your little William in terms of pity, as being with parents who, from erroneous principles, would educate him in heresy, and lead him onward in the path to destruction. This first gave me the hint of what I afterwards fully resolved to execute. My father’s death for a while prevented this, but when I wrote to you to come to Ballenden-Castle, it was solely with the hope of getting him in my power: your leaving him in France, frustrated my plan in part, but the situation you were then in, gave me a new object for my thoughts and wishes. Your fever and its infectious tendency, by causing your child to be removed, left me an opportunity of practising the scheme I had so long formed. What then followed you know, but you know no more; and I shudder to think how you must, upon fuller information, detest me. Yet I will go on. — The instant I had confessed the truth to you, my heart reproached me, and I secretly determined to counteract your messenger. I was prompted the more strongly to this, by

having heard you say that if the child were dead you would be comparatively happy, as your greatest dread was the chance of its falling into the hands of improper persons. Taking this speech as a screen for my villainy, for even then I wanted an excuse to myself, I wrote to a person of opulence at Belfast with whom I had some connection respecting my estate in Ireland, desiring if a woman and child applied to him, that he would see they were properly lodged, and give them sufficient money for necessaries, and place it to my account till he heard from me again; but added, as I knew not for a certainty when they would arrive, to prevent him from having any suspicions of an imposition, the woman should have a seal, with which before I sent it to her, I would make the impression on the wax that closed my letter, so that he might know it. I did this, because I did not chuse to let the woman have any paper written by me, lest if she should be met with, I might be suspected to be the contriver of this base plan; and I could think of no other method to convince my correspondent, yet secure myself against the apparent possibility of detection. When I had finished and sent this by the post, I entrusted a man in whom I had the strictest confidence, to go over to Ireland, and deliver to Mrs. O'Neale, the woman to whose care the child was entrusted, the seal I had mentioned to Mr. Kelly, a direction to him, and orders for her to go immediately to Belfast, and take the child with her, and that he would provide her all necessaries till she heard again from me. Above all things, I charged the man to bid her to leave word with whomever of her family staid in the cabin, that if any enquiry was made for the infant, they should say that she died a week before in convulsions. All this was too punctually executed; my agent returned several days before Sir William, and assured me they would instantly obey my orders, and that he doubted not they were already far on the way to the North. From my certainty of her life, arose that indifference of manner which apparently so highly disgusted Sir William when you departed from the Castle. Though I rejoiced at your removal to France, from the idea that it would leave me more at liberty to act as I wished and thought proper, yet I would not for some time take any steps, lest you should have left spies on my conduct in the neighbourhood, which I imagined not impossible, my conscience telling me that I deserved suspicion. But when some months were elapsed, I ventured to write to Mr. Kelly to enquire for my niece; but how great was my astonishment, when in answer he informed me he had seen neither the woman nor child, and supposed, as he had not again heard from me, they had not yet left their home! I staid not a moment in England after this intelligence, but hastening to Ireland flew to the cabin, and asked with the utmost eagerness where the child was, and why O'Neale had not, as I ordered, taken her to Belfast? The woman, who was sitting at the door with her husband, terrified at the violence of my manner, replied, indeed she believed the child had been there several months. This was far from abating my rage; I knew to the contrary, and demanded why she had left her? The woman fell on her knees, and begged me to hear her with patience. She then said, at the time she received my orders, her own child was so ill, that she believed it dying; that she could not leave it, and it was wholly impossible to take it with her, but knowing that it was necessary for Miss to be gone directly, she had prevailed on her husband's sister to take the charge of her, and had given her the seal to deliver to the gentleman at Belfast, and had not till that moment any doubt of her safe arrival, as she knew the woman could not write, and therefore had not expected to hear from her. My grief and anger were unbounded at this account, but useless. I hastily left them, and travelling the direct road to Belfast, made the strictest enquiries at every town

and village, but without success. Every other method I have taken have been equally ineffectual; and I too late perceive, with the deepest regret and remorse, that I should have strictly followed the rule of never doing evil to accomplish even a good purpose, but have left it to the Providence, which never fails to effect the purposes he intends, by the best and wisest means.

‘I have now nothing to add but to assure you of my penitence, and again entreat your forgiveness. I know I have forfeited your esteem, but do not refuse it to one who has never offended you. Lady Bellenden is the gentlest of her sex; she solicits your friendship, and believe me she deserves it. It is only of late she has been made acquainted with my unnatural and cruel behaviour, and she condemns my conduct, even whilst she weeps over my afflictions, which will soon terminate themselves. Adieu, beloved and injured Louisa! pity at least the ceaseless sufferings of

‘Your miserable but penitent

‘E. BELLENDEN.’

Honoria shed tears over this epistle, but unwilling to interrupt Lady Clarendon, returned it to her without speaking, except to entreat her to continue her narrative, which she instantly complied with.

“This letter was accompanied by one from Lady Bellenden, requesting me in the most persuasive terms, to forgive her husband, and consider, though the consequences were so fatal, the motives were founded on a well meant, though ill placed zeal; and added, that his health was so rapidly declining, she scarcely thought he would live to see me. Affected by her letter and entreaties, and shocked, at the idea of adding deeper regret to that which already filled his bosom, I endeavoured to conquer my resentment and horror, and desired Sir William to write, and beg of him to come over to us, for the benefit of the air, and assure him, he should have no reason to complain of our obduracy. He complied immediately, and our meeting was painful on both sides; I saw he was a true penitent, and as such I pitied, and attempted to console him, and concealed as much as possible the regret I felt from the uncertainty of the fate of my child. Lady Bellenden was indeed truly amiable, and I soon loved her with a sincere affection. Sir Edmund was much softened by his affliction, and his illness, and melancholy by degrees obliterated the remembrance of his conduct, and in time, I regarded him more like a brother than I had ever done before since we were mere children. The attention he met with, and the air of Montpelier, whither we all accompanied him, at length in some measure restored his health, and as we had no longer any reason to absent ourselves from our native country, we returned all together to England, and lived from that time on the most amicable terms. Soon after our arrival, Sir William went himself to Ireland, but his search was a fruitless one; and from that period, we never mentioned to any person the unhappy circumstance, that we might no longer keep the memory of it alive in our minds, when we had lost all hopes of ever being so fortunate as to recover our long regretted child: but this method, though strictly adhered to, was vain; I spoke not of it to Sir William, or my sister, but I

could not forget it; and the constant agitation I endured for so long a time, impaired my health and weakened my constitution.

“Do you not recollect, my dear Honoria, my telling Emily never to wish too earnestly for any thing, and said how much I had suffered from the fulfilling of one, the forming of which had employed my imagination so many years? It was at this time when I was anxiously sighing for my lost child to be restored; and how often and how bitterly did I regret its accomplishment, when the unworthy Louisa usurped your rights!

“Four years after my reconciliation with my brother, I unhappily lost Sir William: his illness was lingering and painful, and I was often reduced almost to pray for a termination of that life, to preserve which I would cheerfully have resigned my own. After his death, my son going to Oxford, and afterwards upon his travels, I lived in the most retired manner, having lost all inclination to mix with the world. Part of every year I spent at Bellenden Castle, as I grew daily more attached to my amiable sister; the patience and good humour with which she bore her husband’s petulance, whose increasing infirmities in time soured his temper, and increased the natural violence of his disposition, endeared her still more to me.

“Since, nothing material occurred till the summer before last, when I was as usual at the Castle. Lady Bellenden had been in London, where she parted with a servant who had attended her many years, and brought down a young woman to supply her place. My brother was then ill and confined to his room. One day he sent for me to him, and when I entered I observed he was in a violent and uncommon agitation, and hastily enquired the cause. “Oh! Louisa, (cried he) your prayers and mine are at length heard; your daughter is restored.” “Impossible, Sir Edmund, returned I, what do you mean?” “I mean, (replied he) and I have no doubt of her identity, that Marianne Hervey, Lady Bellenden’s woman, is your long lost child, and I hope soon to prove it beyond a possibility of doubt. My astonishment at these words prevented me from answering, and he rang the bell; the girl entered, and fell upon her knees to embrace and receive the blessing of her new-found mother. I may now frankly confess my feelings at that moment; my heart was sensible of no emotion, no transport, and whilst I clasped her in my arms, I severely reproached myself for the indifference, which I could only imagine proceeded from pride and mortification, at finding her so different from my wishes. I had often remarked her as a bold and insolent girl, whose imperious behaviour to the servants, had already incurred their dislike.

“This part of the story I can by no means make clear, as I am myself yet ignorant of many particulars. I can only tell you that she produced the trunk, said she was the Honoria Sommerville mentioned in the paper, and related the circumstance of her being found on the common, with many others, with equal clearness and precision; we had no reason to doubt the truth of her assertion, and it only remained to prove that Honoria Sommerville was really my daughter, and this my brother undertook. The seal which was found in the woman’s pocket he said he could swear to, as well as to the crown piece, which he had given O’Neale when first she left Bellenden with the child: the time agreed exactly to that when she was first taken from her nurse’s cabin, and her age, and the road

they were in, were no less proofs of her identity. From all these circumstances I could not refuse my belief, and from that moment looked upon her as my child. Sir Edmund, however, desirous there should be no doubts upon my mind, begged I would write to my son, who was then only in Paris, and mention a wish for his return for a short time. He instantly obeyed my summons, and came to us at the Castle where I introduced his sister to him; he received her without much apparent pleasure, and his uncle, who already doated on her, imagined his coldness arose from mercenary motives, but I knew the nobleness of his mind, and was positive it was never swayed by interest. Furnished with the proper credentials, at our request he set off for Ireland to enquire farther. I wanted Louisa (for so she desired to be called from a pretended compliment to me) to accompany him, but she refused with anger and contempt, and said she hoped never again to behold that horrid country. I did not then know what excellent reasons she had for this wish.

“Sir William’s enquiries were attended with every possible success: O’Neale, to whom he first went, not only acknowledged the seal and the crown piece, which she said she had given to her sister, but added, the cloaths were actually what she had on when she left her, and that the child’s dress was what she had herself made for her own infant, and in which, to prevent any suspicion if it had been met on the road, she had dressed the little Clarendon.—These were undoubtedly incontrovertible proofs; it next remained to ascertain the truth of Louisa’s own story. Mr. Richardson, who was still alive, acknowledged signing the certificate, and assured your brother of the reality of every circumstance: he added, he had heard, and was sorry to hear, of Mr. Fortescue’s second marriage, and its consequences to the unhappy orphan, of whom every unprejudiced person spoke in the highest terms; and that Mrs. Fortescue’s character was so well known, that nobody wondered at the young lady’s escape: and desired he would tell her how sincerely he rejoiced at this fortunate discovery.—From thence he went to Wood Park. Mr. Fortescue was visibly declining; he shed tears when Sir William explained the reason of his visit, and begged him for Heaven’s sake to entreat his dear Honoria to come over and see him once before his death; as she had now so happily found protectors, she need not fear Mrs. Fortescue’s resentment. That lady’s entrance prevented Sir William from answering this speech, as the poor man put his finger on his lip, as if to silence him. She received the intelligence in a very different manner; rage and mortification struggled in her heart, and she replied “she should be sorry to make any breach in a family, therefore would say nothing, but that Honoria had met with better fortune than she deserved; and hoped she would not return their kindness, as she had done her’s, with the blackest ingratitude.” Finding there was no probability of any farther conversation with Mr. Fortescue but in the presence of his lady, and having learned all it was essential for him to know, Sir William took leave, but the news his servants had spread in the kitchen soon ran through the family, and at the park-gate he was stopped by an old woman whose joy had almost deprived her of utterance: she expressed the liveliest sensations of pleasure to hear of her dear child’s health and welfare, and that she had at last found her relations; she cried and laughed so alternately, and her expressions were so incoherent, he could scarcely understand any thing she said, except that his sister was the best young lady in the world, and she hoped in her prosperity would not forget her old nurse, who was grown very poor indeed, as madam Fortescue had turned her husband out of his place as gardener, and he had been prevented from getting other work by a long and

severe illness. He gave her a handsome present in the name of Louisa, and quitted Ireland with a very different opinion of her merit, from that he had entertained when he left Bellenden; as exclusive of what I have mentioned, he had heard in fact your praises, my love, from a variety of people, who all spoke of you in the highest terms of admiration and respect.

“He returned fully convinced Louisa was indeed his sister, and prepared to love and esteem her as such; but her conduct obliged him to change his sentiments. She received the account of Mr. Fortescue’s illness and kind message with the most perfect indifference, and scarcely attended to what he said of Mrs. Connor: this first excited in him a disgust that every day increased, but he soon quitted us, and went back to France. I could no longer in the least doubt her being my child, and tried every method in my power, but without effect, to regard her with maternal affection. Sir Edmund not only owned, but sincerely loved her, and rejoiced at being able in some measure to make reparation for his former behaviour. The agitation however that it threw him into, was too much for his weak frame long to support, and in a few weeks after this discovery, he died, and left her thirty thousand pounds, to be paid on her marriage. Lady Bellenden’s jointure was considerable, but to her he bequeathed the English estate for her life, and afterwards to my son; and the Irish estate which was of less value, to Sir James Eustace directly. I forgot to mention, that on reading the paper signed by Mrs. Fortescue, I knew it must be the mother of the young lady my nephew had married, and with whom I was highly pleased, when she staid a few days with me in their way to Portsmouth, from whence they embarked. I told Louisa of this, and observed it struck her, and that she did not express the satisfaction I expected it would afford her, but seemed embarrassed; this, however, at the time, I attributed to surprize, for how could I guess at the real cause?

“We staid with Lady Bellenden some time after this event, to console and amuse her, and then went to London, where Louisa was extremely anxious to be, that she might mingle with the gay world: here we remained great part of the winter, and she entered into every amusement with an avidity that hurt, and behaved with a levity that shocked me. Early in the last spring, I discovered a plan she had laid to elope with a young Templar, who I thought not merely her inferior in birth and fortune, but who was a man of the most dissolute character. To keep her out of his way, which I found it was impossible to do here, I sent her to Mrs. Wheeler’s, at Northampton, who, I was sure, would have a strict watch over her conduct; and who, by accompanying her to every public place she frequented, and constantly visiting with her, which my ill state of health would not permit, might at least prevent her from forming any improper connection. I felt a relief in her absence that seemed to restore me to some degree of comfort; her intrigue, however, was so publickly known, that I did not wish to remain in London, but was detained by Lady Bellenden, who came up from Cheshire, and staid some time with me in her way to Dover, from whence she meant to go to France to spend a few months with a particular friend, and where she still is.

“There was no part of Louisa’s character that hurt me more than the ingratitude she testified; not a single friend from whom I imagined she had received such marks of attention, ever engaged her thoughts; nor did she ever express a wish to see any one of

them again. This conduct I then believed unnatural, and proceeding from a bad heart. When first I met with you, I often wished she was but half as amiable, and then as often reproached myself for an indifference towards her which yet I could not conquer; and fancied, if I had shewn her more affection, it might have softened her heart. It was this motive alone which induced me to take her to Bath, for I was very sensible, that happy in your society, I could wish for no other, little imagining the claim from nature you had upon my tenderness. Your attention to me during the sad time of William's illness, the kind methods you took to console me for Louisa's elopement, which hurt my pride more than it wounded my feelings, all made an impression on my heart which no time can ever efface."

Lady Clarendon here ended her narrative; during many parts of it Honoria had been deeply affected, and now fell on her mother's bosom, which she bathed with her tears. Lady Clarendon pressed her with the maternal tenderness with which her soul overflowed, and they remained some minutes incapable of expressing their feelings. When a little recovered, Honoria said every thing a grateful heart could dictate and Lady Clarendon re-assured her of her fondest and most lasting affection. After a long conversation on the events her Ladyship had related, in which Honoria regretted the opinion her friends in Ireland must entertain of her, from her apparent neglect and ingratitude, a mistake which however she resolved the next day to rectify, by writing and explaining every circumstance that had happened, they both retired, though not to rest; Honoria was too elated to close her eyes; after returning the humblest thanks to that Providence that had preserved her from so many evils, had supported her in so many distresses, and had now restored her to the arms of a tender and excellent parent, she spent the whole night in reflecting upon the various events of her past life, and anticipating the scenes of happiness she hoped in future to experience.

END OF VOLUME III.

HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

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VOLUME IV.

The hues of bliss more brightly glow  
Chasten'd by sabler tints of woe,  
And blended form with artful strife  
The strength and harmony of life.

GRAY.

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HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

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NOVEL.

CHAP. XXXII.

I Will now inform my readers, though perhaps a little prematurely, of those circumstances which are necessary to connect Lady Clarendon's relation, and by what means the imposture was carried on with such success. Marianne Hervey was the daughter of a shoemaker in one of the most capital towns in Cornwall: he was a man of opulence in his way, and had only two children; the boy he bred to his own business, and sent Marianne as an half boarder to one of the principal schools in Exeter. She did not by any means want a good natural capacity, and had an uncommon stock of art and contrivance, which her several years residence there had greatly improved, as in the line she was in, she often had it in her power to assist the young ladies, and always paid her court to those who either had some friends in the town where she could accompany them, or had the best allowance for pocket money, which she hoped to share. Though her learning was but little attended to, yet she made a very tolerable figure; she could speak French rapidly, if not correctly; read and wrote well, and excelled in needlework; and as her turn lay chiefly this way, she was often employed in millenary for the scholars, and frequently drest their hair. Thus at the age of seventeen she was completely qualified for the station in life she was destined to fill, namely, waiting upon a lady; as her father had been some time declining both in health and circumstances, owing to the ill behaviour and extravagance of his son, who at last ran away and got into a service.

When Marianne left school, she hoped to return to her native place, and display her talents and accomplishments among her companions, but this expectation was not fulfilled; her father became a bankrupt, and not long after died of vexation. She was of course obliged immediately to go out in the world, and lived for a year and a half with an old lady in Cornwall; this lady then died, and her daughter, who was settled in Scotland, coming to take possession of her fortune, offered Marianne to return with her to London, where she promised to get her a place; she was delighted with this proposal and joyfully accepted it. Romantic in her ideas to almost ridiculous height, and having really a good face and tolerable person, on which however she set too great a value, she imagined nothing more was necessary to her making her fortune, than her being seen, and this journey to London filled her head with a thousand strange fancies. On her arrival, her first plan was to seek out her brother, who was then footman to a gentleman in Argyle street; he provided her a lodging in Oxford road, as the lady she came up with was on a visit, and could not take her to her friend's house. Not hearing of a place likely to suit Marianne

during her stay, she left it to the care of her friend, who very soon after her departure for Scotland, recommended her to Lady Bellenden, where it was settled she was to go in a fortnight.

It was in the interim that the fire happened at Mrs. Middleton's, and all the neighbourhood being alarmed, Thomas Hervey among the rest ran to the place and assisted the sufferers; here he met Mr. Gibbons, who telling him a very beautiful young woman, who had escaped at the first cry of fire, was then at his house, he attended him home merely for curiosity, and as the reader may remember, assured Honoria the flames were got under. Her wild expressions of regret for the loss of her trunk, made him suppose its contents were extremely valuable, and her desiring him to enquire for it, was an opportunity of gain his unprincipled mind knew not how to withstand. Totally a stranger to the lady whom he might never see again, he at once determined to secure the trunk in his own power, and running back to the place, where he well recollected it was deposited among the other things that were saved, he hastily seized it, and conveyed it unobserved to his sister's lodgings, which being at the corner of Poland-street, the people had been all alarmed, and were of course sitting up. He gave it to Marianne, charging her to keep it safely till he called the next day, but unwilling to confess even to her his guilt, he only said he found it by accident. He then ran back directly to Mrs. Gibbons's, and assured Honoria it was consumed, which it was not in her power to controvert.

The next morning he went to his sister's, and breaking open the box, promised whatever the contents were she should share with him; but how were they both disappointed, when they discovered nothing but a bundle of old cloaths, and a few other things of little value! Thomas, after swearing heartily, told Marianne, as he left her, she might burn them all if she pleased, for he did not see any use they could be of. But women have more patience than men; her curiosity was, at least, excited, and she looked over every thing carefully, in the hope of finding some concealed treasure; she soon came to the certificate, the letter to lady Eustace, and the paper written by Mrs. Fortescue, a few months before her death; these she perused, and guessing from them of how much consequence the trunk must be to the owner, though of so little to her, and not doubting but it would soon be advertised, and a large reward offered, she determined not to let her brother know any thing of the matter, that he might not expect to divide whatever she might receive. For this purpose she preserved every thing together with equal care, and at the same time resolved to tell Thomas, that she had carefully examined the box, and that there was nothing in it but what he had seen. This she put in practice the next morning, when he came to acquaint her his master was going abroad the following day, and that he was to accompany him. Marianne heard this with pleasure, as it would, at all events, prevent him from interfering in her plan, and in a week after his departure, she attended lady Bellenden into Cheshire.

Avarice, next to vanity, was her ruling passion; and her interest the first thing she ever considered. Having gained a small legacy from the lady she last lived with, and seeing, on her arrival at the Castle, that Sir Edmund was in a very declining state of health, she resolved to pay him the strictest attention, in the hope of being again equally

fortunate. She daily searched the newspapers for the expected advertisement, but had been hitherto disappointed, for believing it had been lost by an accident, she did not yet give up all hope; and willing to make all possible advantage, she took the gold seal and crown piece, both of which had escaped her brother's observation, into her pocket, thinking the seal would give her consequence among her fellow servants.

Her attentions to Sir Edmund were not thrown away; he grew really fond of her, and would often say, when she was waiting upon him, "certainly this girl was born to better expectations;" a hint which she never failed to confirm by a deep sigh; and would reply, "we must submit to the decrees of Fate." Sometimes he would ask her of her past life; this she usually evaded giving a direct answer to, but would say, her father had been unfortunate, and that the extravagance of a brother had reduced her to servitude. At this time she had no other meaning in these speeches, than to induce Sir Edmund, and indeed the whole family, to believe she had been formerly in a higher station, and it had its effect; her knowledge of French too was often affectedly displayed; and these circumstances combined, impressed lady Bellenden with the same idea, and she always treated her with the most considerate tenderness.

One day when she had made Sir Edmund some negus, he complained there was no nutmeg in it; she immediately searched her pockets for one, but not finding it readily, she took some of the things out, and laid them on the table, to discover if the nutmeg was among them. Here the seal and crown piece, which were by far the most conspicuous, attracted Sir Edmund's notice; he instantly knew them, and trembling with an agitation he could not conceal, he demanded, in a loud voice, how she came by them? Conscious guilt instantly flew into her cheeks, and dyed them with the deepest crimson; determined, however, not to accuse herself, she replied, they were her own. "Tell me," continued he, "tell me this moment, how you came by them? if they are really your own, you must be my niece, and lady Clarendon's daughter." Marianne, tho' struck at this declaration, had yet presence of mind not to deny it; she fell at his feet in a pretended confusion and surprize; for instantly guessing that the Honoria Sommerville, mentioned in the paper, was, though she knew not how, indeed lady Clarendon's child, she resolved to confess herself to be Honoria, and having obtained time from her feigned astonishment to meditate an answer, at last replied, "I know not alas, Sir, to whom I belong; but only that I was found on a common in Ireland, and these things you see, with several others in the possession of the woman who was dead by my side." "Let me see them immediately, my dear girl," returned Sir Edmund. She waited not to be asked twice, but flying to her chamber, brought down the trunk and all its contents, except the copy of Honoria's letter, which she suppressed for two reasons; one that the hand disagreeing with her own might raise suspicions; the other, that she could relate the circumstances there mentioned, without its being known she had such a guide to direct her; which, if they made any enquiries into the truth of, the coincidence of her story would prove her identity. This resolved on, she returned to Sir Edmund with the proofs, which he instantly acknowledged, as has been before related, as well as what passed in Ireland.

Thus was she to all appearance the daughter of Lady Clarendon; no one contested, no one doubted her right to that title; and she had but one fear to disturb her; this was the return of Lady Eustace, when she discovered her to be Lady Clarendon's niece; till she heard this she little dreaded her, as she supposed it would be easy to avoid her; but, however, she did not suffer this to prey long on her spirits; the East Indies were at a vast distance, the climate unhealthy, the voyage tedious; a thousand circumstances might prevent their meeting; at all events, it was very possible she might be married and provided for, before Lady Eustace could appear to discover the fraud. This determined her to accept the first offer she might meet with, which she did not doubt would be as soon as she appeared in the gay world; for who could resist her beauty, particularly when aided by birth and fortune?

Anxious, however, to secure, at least for the present, the rights she had thus basely acquired, she wrote to her brother, who was still in France, an account of all that had passed, and begged he would acquaint her more particularly from whence he had the trunk, that she might take her measures accordingly. In his answer, after congratulating her on her conduct and success, he assures her, she need not apprehend a discovery, as the lady from whom he had taken the trunk imagined it was burnt, and consequently would make no enquiry for it. This was very pleasant information to Marianne, who looked upon it as a perfect security; she had now only to conceal this wonderful history from the world, that it might not reach the ears of the real Honoria; and, as that name was a singular one, she entreated Lady Clarendon that she might be called by her own name, Louisa, who, pleased at this request, which she supposed proceeded from affection, readily complied; and she also begged all that had passed might be kept a profound secret, as if the story was circulated, it would make her a constant object of curiosity; to this her Ladyship also consented, promising only to acquaint those of her intimate friends, who knew she had lost a daughter, that she had been happily restored to her, but without telling them the means; for this secret she meant to keep as much from delicacy and regard to her brother's memory, as in compliance with Louisa's entreaties.

Thus was almost every possibility of a discovery of this unparalleled treachery prevented. Louisa, perfectly happy in her new situation, lost the remembrance of what she had been, and fancied herself born to riches and titles: her uncle's legacy completed her intoxication, and she forgot that any circumstance would possibly deprive her of it. Delighted with the gay world and the pleasures it afforded, she entered into them with a spirit which she imagined would give an idea of her taste for high life, and assumed an air of insolence and levity, which she thought would appear like dignity and fashion.

Let me here acquaint my readers with the contents of that letter which so greatly assisted Marianne in her schemes. When first Honoria was settled at Miss Mortimer's, she began writing to Lady Eustace an account of all that had passed since her departure, till her own arrival in England; on reading it over, before she had finished, it struck her as expressing too freely the sentiments of her father, and she resolved to begin another and write with more caution: the unfinished one she locked up in the trunk which contained all her treasure, and by this means it fell into Marianne's power. She had brought her

story no farther than her landing at Parkgate, and had not mentioned what name she had assumed, but only said she had resolved to change her own. Thus when the fictitious Miss Clarendon was introduced to Miss Catherine Wentworth, she had not the most distant idea of her being the very Honoria Sommerville whom she so much dreaded. It was perfectly easy for a girl who possessed such a degree of cunning, to connect her story with Honoria's; she said she came from Parkgate with a lady, who, pitying her misfortunes, took her into her service, but that lady dying, a friend of her's recommended her to Lady Bellenden. She carefully avoided meeting any one who could possibly reveal the deception she had practised; and her indifference to all her supposed friends in Ireland, was the first trait in her character which gave Lady Clarendon that dislike which daily increased. Ever attentive to the grand object she had in view, she encouraged the addresses of the young Templar; but this was discovered, and she was sent into banishment, as she termed it. There, however, her acquaintance with Captain Harcourt, who was quartered at Northampton, consoled her for her absence from London, and it was on his account she so much rejoiced at the journey to Bath, where by a letter he promised to meet her, being called from Northampton.

The reader will not want to be informed he was a mere fortune-hunter, his conduct has so evidently proved it; but the sight of Emily Onslow, and her two thousand a year, made him endeavour to convince her of his constancy, and obtain her pardon; failing in this, as we have already seen, his next scheme was to reconcile himself to Miss Clarendon, who had been extremely enraged at his attentions to Miss Onslow, but this was no difficult task, and he soon accomplished it. He corresponded privately with her from the time of his leaving Bath after the duel, and when Sir William was out of danger, and Captain Harcourt consequently in no apprehension of a pursuit, Louisa, that he might evade the law against stealing an heiress, went herself in a post-chaise, and took him up at Bristol, from whence they went into Wales, where, in a retired village, they were properly asked in church, and then married. Louisa, who fearing if she was married entirely by a feigned name, it would not stand good if the deception was ever discovered, told the Captain she was not christened Louisa, but was only called so in compliment to her mother, but that her name was Marianne Hervey; by that, therefore, she was asked and married, and when the ceremony was performed, they took lodgings at Carmarthen, till they could resolve on what measures to pursue.—And here for a while let us leave them, and return to the more respectable personages of our history.

### CHAP. XXXIII.

HONORIA rose early the next morning, to write to Ireland, that she might no longer lie under the imputation of such deep ingratitude. She sent one letter to her old nurse, another to Miss Meriton, fearing, if she wrote to Mr. Fortescue, it might be intercepted by his lady; in this she requested Sophia, that her father would if possible ride over to Wood Park, and explain to her dear benefactor, the reasons which had so long kept her silent, and relate to him the imposture, and by what means it had been discovered. When she had finished, her mind was relieved from a load of anxiety, and she came down to breakfast, which was that day later than usual, with a smiling countenance, which was a true picture of the serenity of her heart. When the tea-things were removed, she informed Lady Clarendon, that if it was agreeable to her, she would go that morning to Major Southmore's, in Abingdon-street, to enquire for Mrs. Lambert and her grand-daughters. Lady Clarendon approved her resolution, and begged she would desire the favor of seeing them in Harley-street, as she particularly wished to be introduced to the Major, whose kindness to her child, she said, she should never forget. Sir William, then asked, if it was Major Southmore of the —— Regiment, and finding it was, added, he had heard a great deal of him from a brother-officer, who spoke in the highest terms of his understanding and character. This pleased Lady Clarendon, and she replied, she did not know, but she should apply to him for his advice and assistance with respect to the Harcourts. The chariot was then ordered, and Honoria drove to Westminster.

The whole family were at home, and received her with the utmost demonstrations of pleasure. Major Southmore thanked her for her kindness to his niece and her grandmother, and on her replying it was not then in her power to be of any service to them, he answered— “Yes, my dear madam, you gave them your countenance, your advice, and your society; you treated them with politeness, affability, and even affection, and believe me, these are favors, which to those, whose minds are delicate, though their fortunes are reduced, are the highest and most flattering a superior can confer.” Honoria bowed, and said, she had received more pleasure from Mrs. and Miss Lambert's company, than it was possible for her to bestow, and that she now came to solicit a continuance of their acquaintance, not only in her own name, but in that of Lady Clarendon, to whom she was impatient to introduce them. The Major replied, he should be happy to pay his respects to her, and the ladies appeared not a little pleased at the request. The former then acquainted Honoria with the several particulars of his finding his nieces, which Miss Melmoth had before informed her of; but she did not, till this moment, know what estate it was which had just fallen to him, and heard, with some surprize, it was Sir William Egerton's; to whose father he was first cousin. She then related to him her acquaintance with Lady Egerton, the reason why she quitted Mrs. Campbell's, and what had since befallen her, reserving only the late happy discovery, which she did not think herself authorized as yet to reveal. After spending two hours with them, she took leave; the Major promised to wait on her and Lady Clarendon the next day, but Mrs. Lambert and the young ladies regretted that they must for some time be deprived of that pleasure, as they were in the morning to return into Hertfordshire for a few days.

Honorina was not so well pleased with her visit as she expected; this she could scarcely herself account for, but, in fact, she was disappointed at hearing nothing of Colonel Effingham, which she had flattered herself with, and Mrs. Lambert's visit to Hertfordshire would put it out of her power to make any enquiry for some time. She told Lady Clarendon of the Major's promised visit, which he delayed not, but the next day, exactly at twelve, rapped at the door. After the common compliments had past, Lady Clarendon address him with an earnestness which surprized him. "Perhaps, Major Southmore, you do not know the extent of my obligations to you; permit me, however, to return my sincere thanks for your attentions to that dear girl, whom as yet you consider only as Miss Wentworth, let me now introduce her to you as my daughter." "As your daughter, Lady Clarendon! (replied the Major, in the utmost astonishment,) how, by what means has it been so long concealed from the world?" "Because, (said her Ladyship) unfortunately it has been, till within these few days, unknown even to myself." "Indeed, returned he, I am truly rejoiced at a discovery, which I am sure must at least make two people as happy as such an event can render them; but may I ask how it became known to you?" "Do you not remember, Major, (answered Honorina,) when we were travelling from Park-gate, a pretty little amusing anecdote a young woman gave us, of a Miss Sommerville, a beggar's child, who had eloped from very good friends in Ireland, with a young man of bad character?" "Yes, perfectly, (returned he,) and I also remember, that in spite of all we were told to her disadvantage, I thought in some respects she was much to be pitied, and you agreed with me." "Ah, that I did, indeed, (continued Miss Clarendon,) and you will not wonder that I did, when I tell you I was the very Honorina Sommerville she spoke of, though I really was not guilty of all she laid to my charge." "Is it possible! (interrupted he, then after a pause,)—but why, Miss Clarendon, when we had parted with her and her companion, did you not intrust me with the truth?" "What, Sir, after I had heard myself accused of crimes so black, and which I had no means to convince you were false? We were equally strangers to you, and it was more probable I should tell my story in the most favorable manner for myself, than that she should, without any cause, accuse a person whom she knew not, of such base and unprincipled actions: besides, I saw you were inclined to pity me, and I had then too few friends in the world, to risque losing your good opinion." "Indeed, (returned he) you might have trusted me; I was so prepossessed in your favor, by the ingenuous artlessness of your manner, that I should have believed whatever you had been pleased to tell me. But pray oblige me, by reconciling these strange things, and inform me how Miss Wentworth, Miss Sommerville, and Miss Clarendon, are all the same persons?"—Lady Clarendon and her daughter then gave him a short account of the circumstances that brought about the happy discovery, each relating the part which more particularly concerned herself; and the former asked him if he would be present at the interview, which she hoped would now soon take place between their family and the Harcourts. "Yes, Madam," he replied, "with pleasure, and will take any part in it that you wish me." She then mentioned her plan, which he approved of extremely, and offered to bring with him a Counsellor of his intimate acquaintance, and advised, that there should be some person qualified to take Mrs. Harcourt's confession, in short hand, if she should design to make one, lest at any future time she might chuse to deny it.



A long conversation then succeeded, on the variety of strange events which Honoria had experienced. "Let it, my dear Miss Clarendon, (said the Major,) be a lesson to you in future, to place an entire dependance on Providence; since through your whole life, those circumstances, apparently the most distressing, have been productive of the greatest good. Had not Mrs. Fortescue died, and Mr. Fortescue married again, you would not have left Ireland, and consequently could never have been known to Lady Clarendon; for, had you even been introduced to her, as Miss Sommerville, by Lady Eustace, she would never have guessed Miss Sommerville to be her daughter. Had you not by the fire, lost the trunk, as you thought, beyond a possibility of regaining it, you would have advertised, and Marianne restored it; thus Sir Edmund had never seen the gold seal. Had you not left Lady Egerton, and broke your arm, Miss Melmoth could not have been, as she now must be considered, the first cause, through Lady Pelham, of your becoming Lady Clarendon's guest, and of course of this fortunate discovery. Thus, my dear young Lady, (forgive my preaching to you, I confess it is perhaps better adapted to a clerical, than a military habit) if every body would reflect, when opprest by the hand of misfortune, how much would it contribute to lighten the evil they complain of, by lessening its effect on their minds! One word more and I have done. Is it not a wonderful and striking proof of the intervention of Heaven, that the very means Sir Edmund took to accomplish his purpose, should thus counteract his design? and now, Lady Clarendon, you have the happiness of seeing your child properly and strictly educated in the religion you have been taught to prefer." Honoria shed tears of gratitude to heaven for the blessings she had received, which she readily acknowledged, and thanked the Major for his kind paternal advice, which she assured him she would follow. Lady Clarendon, though extremely affected, was yet highly pleased with his serious and judicious remarks. He soon after took leave, promising to visit them frequently, and to hold himself in readiness for the expected summons.

The remainder of the day they passed again alone; Sir William was gone to Kensington with Emily Onslow and the Ashbourns; and Honoria thought this too good an opportunity to be lost, and determined to make some enquiries respecting Colonel Effingham's attachment to Mrs. Harcourt. From the first moment she had known herself to be really Lady Clarendon's daughter, it had struck her as a possibility that the Colonel's letter might be addressed to herself, and in consequence of indulging this idea, had taken her beloved locket from its long confinement, and kept it in her pocket, not daring to wear it tied round her neck as before, lest it should excite a curiosity she as yet knew not how to gratify. But this hope was damped by Lady Clarendon's silence on the subject, a silence which mortified and disconcerted her, since she was from that induced to suppose that the Colonel had some-where seen Louisa in her mother's absence, and was really attached to her; if that was not the case, she could not account for Lady Clarendon's not mentioning it when she cleared up every thing besides. Again she thought over his letter, but it gave her no light, it afforded no consolation, as it agreed equally with her hopes and fears. At length, after tormenting herself to no purpose, she determined if possible to think no more of it till Mrs. Harcourt's confession should discover the truth. But this resolution she had not the power to adhere to. During this *tete-*

*a-tete* with her mother, she thought a gentle enquiry for the volume of Metastasio would lead to the subject, and by determining her fate at once, in one way or another put an end to her suspense. After a number of hesitations and a thousand tremors, she at last gathered courage, and said to Lady Clarendon, "Pray, madam, when you opened the trunk, did you not see a book, I believe I left one there, a volume of poems?" "Yes, my dear girl, there was a volume of translations from the Italian, but I restored it as I thought to its right owner; Colonel Effingham's name was in it, and when Louisa rejected his addresses, I thought it proper to return it. "To Colonel Effingham, madam! Heaven and earth! did you send it to him?" The agitation with which she spoke, and the deep blush that crimson'd her cheek, gave Lady Clarendon an idea which had never before struck her imagination. But for this emotion I must account, by informing my readers, that when Honoria had first possession of this book, it being long before she had any reason to suspect his constancy, she had pleased herself by writing under his name, (little suspecting he would ever see it) four lines from a song which suited her feelings, and soothed her melancholy.

*Where'er thy wearied footsteps rove,  
Where'er thy gentle spirit be,  
My heart the favour'd spot shall love,  
And bless the clime that blesses thee.*

This was signed Honoria Sommerville, and it was the recollection of this which now confused her, from fearing he was acquainted with the tenderness of her sentiments; a tenderness he had not returned, and so little deserved. "Honoriam," said Lady Clarendon earnestly, "your blushes, your agitation, lead me to suspect"— "Suspect what, dear madam? (interrupted Honoria, endeavouring to recompose her features,) I hope I have never acted in any way unworthy of your daughter." "No, my dear girl, (returned her Ladyship smiling,) I mean not to accuse you of any thing; but I wished to tell you, I fear I have been in an error; if I have, you can rectify it: answer me sincerely, do you know Colonel Effingham?" "Yes, madam," said Honoria, blushing and hesitating. "Where did you first see him, and was he merely a common acquaintance?" "I knew him when he was quartered in Ireland, at a little town within three miles of Wood Park, where he was a constant visitor." Her confusion was a sufficient answer to the latter part of Lady Clarendon's question, who continued: "You need say no more, my love, your countenance explains all I wish to know; I will now in my turn inform you of what you are yet a stranger to; but my mind has of late been so wholly engaged, that I forgot, among her other deceits, Louisa might pretend an acquaintance with the Colonel, and that in fact his letter might be addressed to you: this, I doubt not, was the case, but it had escaped my memory till you mentioned the book; that is a convincing proof it was found in the trunk, with his name written in the first page, and your's underneath. When Louisa so positively refused him, I judged it proper to return it to him, and have since never thought of it, and regarded the Colonel as a lover of her's, without recollecting at what time it was she considered him as such; her confession, however, will, I hope, disclose every apparent mystery. And now, my dear, as I have been thus explicit, you will not, I think, refuse me your confidence on this subject." "Certainly, madam, I will not (replied Honoria;) she then related every circumstance, from the first moment she saw him, not

concealing the locket, nor her reason for leaving Miss Mortimer; but concluded by saying, she dared not hope Lady Clarendon's suggestions were true, as his behaviour had been twice so pointedly neglectful." "You do not recollect, my love," returned her Ladyship, "he undoubtedly supposed you to be Miss Clarendon; though how he attained that knowledge, I own, I am puzzled to guess; but with that idea, was not his behaviour perfectly natural; for must he not feel a great degree of resentment, at the haughty contempt with which he imagined you had treated him?" Honoria allowed the possibility of this, but would not allow herself to hope, lest she should again experience a bitter disappointment: besides, unless she herself revealed it to him, which she could never condescend to do, how would he ever know the fatal mistake; since, in that case it was plain, even at Bath, she had fancied her to be Miss Clarendon, and her now being really so, would confirm his error, if at any future period they should meet? at all events, however, she felt happy in having disclosed to her mother the only secret she had concealed, and rejoiced that she could now at any time speak openly upon the subject.

Whilst they were conversing, a servant brought in a note, which he said a man waited for an answer to; Lady Clarendon opened it, and read:

"Captain and Mrs. Harcourt's respectful duty attends Lady Clarendon; the latter hopes she will not refuse her forgiveness of a step, to which she was compelled, by the fear that she should not obtain consent to unite herself to the man of her heart; and she only waits Lady Clarendon's permission, to throw herself at her feet, and solicit that forgiveness in person. But the Captain will wait on her Ladyship any day she will do him the honour to appoint, to settle respecting his Lady's fortune."

*Edward Street.*

Both her Ladyship and Honoria were much diverted at the style of this note, particularly at Mrs. Harcourt's dutiful reason for marrying the Captain; and the former taking her pen, wrote an answer as follows:

"Lady Clarendon desires to see Captain and Mrs. Harcourt to-morrow at twelve in Harley-street."

Cool as it was, this note highly pleased the fugitives; Mrs. Harcourt not doubting a favourable reception, rejoiced in the success of her scheme, and had now no apprehensions of a discovery.

Lady Clarendon, the moment she had concluded this, wrote others to the Ashbourns, and Major Southmore, claiming their respective promises; and by eleven o'clock all but the Harcourts were arrived. The Major brought his friend the Counsellor, to whom he had before given a short account of this strange affair, but only mentioned the name of Sommerville; how great then was his astonishment, when, on entering the room, he found in the fair plaintiff the very Miss Wentworth whom he had seen at C——! nor was she less surprized at discovering him to be the Mr. Milford, who had been one cause of her leaving Mrs. Campbell, by the ridiculous disclosure of her long

concealed plagiarism. He addressed her with that politeness which was natural to him, and congratulated her on this happy turn of fortune, at the same time paying her so many compliments, that she was totally at a loss how to answer him; but this distress was soon relieved, by a thundering rap at the door, which announced the arrival of the Harcourts, and the company all seated themselves. When the Captain and his Lady entered, neither his courage, nor her effrontery, could stand against the formidable appearance of such a circle, which so wholly precluded the hopes they had formed of a favourable and affectionate reception. The latter, however, never off her guard, ran up to Lady Clarendon, and fell on her knees, as if to entreat in the humblest posture, that pardon which she was conscious she had not merited; but before she could begin a speech framed for the occasion, her Ladyship disengaged herself, and with a look of extreme contempt, said, "I will not hear your protestations, Mrs. Harcourt, till I know whether you are really accountable to me for your conduct, or whether my forgiveness can any way be essential to your peace of mind, which at present I very much doubt."

Mrs. Harcourt rose, extremely astonished at this address, yet not guessing the cause: the poor Captain had still less an idea of its meaning, but willing to secure as many friends as he could, he went to Sir William, and said, "I now, Sir, entreat your pardon for what has passed between us, I confess my error, and hope in future we shall live like brothers." "When I acknowledge you as my brother (returned Sir William, haughtily,) depend on it, Sir, I shall behave to you as one, but what claim you have to that title is yet to be known." Captain Harcourt, piqued at this answer, resentfully withdrew his offered hand, and turning to Lady Clarendon, said, "I hoped, Madam, to find you alone, as the business which I came upon does not require so many witnesses." "I beg your pardon, Sir," returned her Ladyship, "it does require many witnesses; you came to demand your wife's fortune; I must now acquaint you she has no claim to any." "That, Madam, (said he scornfully) can easily be proved by the late Sir Edmund Bellenden's will, a copy of which I have this moment received, and brought with me, to settle any disputes upon the subject." "Produce the will if you please, Sir, (said Lady Clarendon); it gives thirty-thousand pounds to my daughter, Honoria Sommerville Clarendon; it is now to be proved who is my daughter, and I here declare your wife is not; she has deceived you, as she has deceived me before. My daughter sits in that window;" pointing to Honoria, who was pale and anxious for the event of this scene, but not from any fear that she should lose that title, which she was well assured she herself only had a claim to.

The guilty Marianne was alarmed at this speech, but resolving to lose nothing from want of spirit, she rose, and, in the madness of her rage, stamped on the floor, and attempted to fly to Honoria, but Harry Ashbourn forcibly withheld her; but he could not restrain her tongue, which lavished the bitterest invectives, accusing her of having, by the meanest arts, stolen her mother's affection, and said she had now prevailed on her to disclaim her child, that she might assume her place. Captain Harcourt in vain for some time attempted to stop this torrent, by telling her milder methods would be more effectual, and the moment she ceased, he addressed Lady Clarendon, and told her he could easily see through this pitiful artifice, which was contrived that she might avoid paying his wife the fortune which her uncle had left her; but that in a court of justice, if

she obliged him to have recourse to such means, he would assert his rights, and doubted not his success. "That trouble I will save you, Sir," replied her Ladyship, "by convincing you of the truth. Mrs. Harcourt, you well know you are not my daughter, though by what means you have so long passed for such, I am yet to learn." "Let me question her, Madam," cried Mr. Milford, "you are too much agitated:" then turning to Mrs. Harcourt, "Hear what Lady Clarendon offers; if you will at once confess who you are, and how you became possesser of the trunk and other things belonging to the real Miss Sommerville, she will immediately forgive you what is past, and suffer you to depart unmolested; but if you refuse, you shall be instantly consigned to proper officers, who shall take care of you till you are tried in court as an impostor; how you will then come off, your own conscience can at this moment inform you."

Mrs. Harcourt trembled, but endeavoring to conceal her apprehensions, answered with her usual assurance— "Pray, Sir, who can prove I was not Miss Sommerville, and of course the only person who has a right to those things you mention?" "Miss Sommerville's friends in Ireland, Madam, (replied Mr. Milford); Mr. Fortescue who bred her up; the woman who nursed her; the Clergyman who baptized her; the families who visited at Wood Park during her residence there, shall all be subpoenaed, and they can at once decide whether you or that lady, (meaning Miss Clarendon) are the real Honoria, and their decision nothing can contradict."

The authority with which the Counsellor spoke, terrified the guilty wretch, who was just going to fall on her knees and beg mercy, but Captain Harcourt again speaking, she had time to recover. "This (said he) is a mean subterfuge, intended by the family as a method of revenge for my past conduct; but by Heaven it shall not go unpunished, I demand justice, and justice I will have." "Captain Harcourt," returned Sir William, "perhaps the greatest favor we could possibly confer on you, would be to let the law take its course, as it might relieve you from a tie you will I fancy repent of, but we are not so merciful, and only wish to bring your wife to a true confession; and will then let you both depart, whether in harmony or not, time only can determine." The Captain turned round to answer this speech with a visible resentment, but was stopped by observing an extreme agitation in Mrs. Harcourt's countenance, which confounded and dismayed him. The hint conveyed in Sir William's last words, had so increased her terror, that though she determined to speak, she could not as yet articulate: the Counsellor observed, and resolved to take advantage of it: turning to Lady Clarendon, "You will not, Madam," said he, "regard the expence of a trial, and indeed it will be the best course you can take, as there cannot be the least doubt of the court's deciding in your Ladyship's favor; therefore if you please, we will immediately send for the officers of justice, and commit this guilty and obstinate wretch on your oath as an impostor, and on Miss Clarendon's for the robbery, which of itself would be sufficient to hang her." The resolution of his manner began to affright the Captain, but the conclusion of his speech completed the horror of Marianne; she fell on her knees in an agony, and begged for mercy; saying, that if they would not commit her, she would confess every thing. The Captain turned to her, "Confess what," exclaimed he, fiercely, "is it then true, that you are not Lady Clarendon's daughter?" "Oh, no, (cried she) indeed I am not; she is no more my mother, than she is

your's."— "Damnation! how then did you dare thus impose on me?" saying this, he advanced, and seizing her roughly by the arm, her fright, which his violence added to, deprived her of her sense: she screamed, and fell into a fit; and whilst they were endeavouring to recover her, he attempted to leave the house, but Harry Ashbourn detained him; and the Counsellor desired he would stay to take his lady with him, as her company would by no means be any longer acceptable, than while she was informing them of her story. Confused, mortified, and angry at this unexpected termination of his hopes, and provoked by the remarks which were whispered round the room, he threw himself sullenly into a chair, and silently waited the moment when he should be permitted to depart.

When Mrs. Harcourt grew better, she tried to speak, but could not; at last, a violent shower of tears relieved her; and, after thanking Honoria for the assistance she had afforded her, a kindness she had so little merited, she began relating those events the reader is already acquainted with. When she came to that part of her story of her attending Lady Clarendon to London, for the first time, in the character of her daughter, she addressed herself particularly to Honoria. "When I looked upon you as my inferior, Miss Clarendon, I often behaved with an insolence in every respect unjustifiable; but your mind is too noble, your sentiments, both from birth and education, too liberal, to resent it now I am fallen, and in every sense of the word, humbled: but was this the only offence I have been guilty of towards you, I should think myself happy; but, at a time when I was a stranger to your person, I traduced your character, by my conduct in your name; nor is this all, I have deceived one who is perhaps dear to you, and led him into an opinion, that you are the most ungrateful and unworthy of human beings." The whole company was astonished, not only at this address, but at its effect on Honoria; who, pale and trembling, assured her of forgiveness, but entreated her to go on, and she obeyed.

"Soon after our arrival in London, Lady Clarendon received a letter, the contents of which she did not at that time shew me, but it appeared to interest and animate her; there was one enclosed, directed to Miss Clarendon, which she gave me; but, what was my terror and dismay, when I found it was from a former admirer of the real Miss Sommerville's? who had, in spite of all my precautions, though by what means I could not guess, heard of the circumstances of the discovery, and in consequence of it, wrote, to beg permission to renew his addresses, in the most respectful and affectionate terms. He spoke of many people, and adverted to many past scenes, of which no mention was made in the letter from which I derived all my information, and of course I was wholly ignorant of them. Terrified to death lest his passion should induce him to come to the house, which must inevitably have detected me, I determined, if possible, to prevent him, by sending him such a scornful message, that if he had one spark of pride, must destroy his love; but this message I had no means to deliver; I dared not write, lest my hand should discover what it was so much my interest to conceal; and Lady Clarendon positively refused to say what I wished, and declined his offers in a polite, but peremptory manner; at the same time, she grieved at my obstinacy, as she called it, in not accepting so eligible a match. But chance effected what contrivance could not: the day after this letter was sent away, at a lady's house where I was intimate, I was introduced to a gentleman, who soon entered

into earnest conversation with me; at first, I flattered myself I had made a conquest, but too soon found he only wished to speak of Colonel Effingham; he began, by asking me, if I did not know him? Fearful of making some mistake, I only answered his question by another, and his reply convinced me his conjecture was right. The confusion in my countenance, which arose from apprehension, when I discovered he was a particular friend of the Colonel's, he imagined originated in affection, and began to rally me on the subject. I then demanded, in a serious manner, if he was commissioned to speak to me on this head? "Yes," replied he, "Colonel Effingham informed me of his attachment, and entreated I would, if possible, discover whether you are the same Honoria to whom he gave his heart so long since?" This speech cruelly alarmed me, but the continuation of it dissipated my fears. "Whether, (added he) you are as unchanged in mind as in person, and will you not, as Miss Clarendon, despise that heart which, as Miss Sommerville, you condescended to accept?" This was an opportunity of effecting my purpose not to be resisted; and, assuming the utmost haughtiness, I replied, "Your friend, sir, is mistaken; tell him, if you please, from me, that Mr. Fortescue's niece, and Sir William Clarendon's daughter, are not the same; but that the latter wishes to forget every acquaintance of the former, and Colonel Effingham in particular, whose addresses, however they might once gratify my vanity, I should now consider as an insult, and hope in future not to be troubled with them.

"Captain Fairfax regarded me for some moments with a fixed astonishment that seemed to deprive him of utterance; and then in the most contemptuous manner, he answered, "Depend on it, Miss Clarendon, your wishes will be gratified, and you will not be troubled with addresses you so haughtily disclaim, and pardon me, if I say, so ill deserve. If his attachment to you were more violent and uncontrollable than the heart of man ever knew before, your message, which I shall carefully repeat, would obliterate every trace of it from his memory, and only leave a sense of shame and just indignation, at his having ever bestowed it so unworthily. However, Madam, you may possibly regard him as a poor officer, and perhaps have not heard of the advancement of his fortune; give me leave therefore, to tell you, he has lately inherited the whole estate of his uncle, Lord Bridgewater, and is of course, now, no less in fortune, than he ever was in rank, talents and accomplishments, a match for the first families in the kingdom, and I have not a doubt but he will soon convince you of the spirit with which he has conquered so inglorious an attachment, by making both a nobler and worthier choice."

"The fire which sparkled in his eyes, and the resentment which flushed his cheek, as he spoke, were proofs of the reality of his friendship for the Colonel, and the instant he had concluded, without waiting for an answer, he rose hastily, and bowing to the rest of the company, without taking the least notice of me, he quitted the room, apologizing for his abrupt departure, by pleading the sudden recollection of an appointment, which till that moment had escaped his memory. I once or twice afterwards met him at public places, but by constantly avoiding me, he shewed the profound contempt he had for my conduct: yet as it perfectly answered my purpose I was satisfied, and lamented not the loss of his good opinion."

Here Honoria, whose attention had till now supported her spirits, sunk under the terrible idea of appearing so base and ungrateful to the only man in the world whose affection she was solicitous to preserve. The agitation which was evident in her countenance, and the tremor which shook her whole frame, thus discovered to all present the attachment she had so long laboured to conceal. Major Southmore manifested an extreme astonishment, yet mixed with pleasure; and Sir William, who imagined the mistake might be easily cleared up, rejoiced at this intelligence, from having long entertained the highest respect for the character of Colonel Effingham. He went up to his sister, and in a low voice, bade her recollect how perfectly every apparent mystery might be resolved, and declared he would himself undertake the task: she blushed at his address, and her delicacy catching the alarm, she entreated him, with revived emotion, to take no steps in this affair without letting her know, which, seeing her earnestness, he at length, though unwillingly, promised. By this time Honoria had so far recovered, that she desired Mrs. Harcourt to conclude her story, which she did in a very few minutes, and then giving her keys to Miss Clarendon, told her in what place she would find the letter which was originally meant for her.

Captain Harcourt had remained in the utmost consternation and horror during the recital of her various arts and machinations; but when she confessed it was her desire of obtaining a settlement which first induced her to listen to his proposals, he flew into a most unbounded passion, declaring, nothing should ever prevail on him to consider that woman as a wife, who had married him only with a view of securing herself an establishment. Mrs. Harcourt then resuming some of her wonted spirits, replied, "I might, Captain Harcourt, have pretended, that affection was the motive which induced me to accept your offer, had I not been well convinced such a pretence would have had no effect upon your mind; for, did you not marry me for my fortune? though, worse luck for us both, you are disappointed; could you else, after declaring a passion for me, have quitted me for Miss Onslow, whose superior fortune made her an object of greater attraction? Or if I had not been swayed by interest, do you think, after such a proof of inconstancy, I could so easily have forgiven you? no, surely. Thus you must own we meet upon pretty equal terms; you have now married, and you must support me: let me therefore add one word of advice. I promise you the future comfort of our lives, for happiness is out of the question, will depend wholly on yourself; if you will make a tolerable husband, I will be a good and obedient wife."

Captain Harcourt made no reply, but turning sullenly from her, rang the bell, and desired the servant to call a hackney coach. Major Southmore then begged him to consider that all his wife had advanced was strictly true, that a mutual disappointment would ever be the consequence of a mutual deception; he then gave him a little more good advice, to which he paid not the least attention, but hearing the coach was at the door, prepared to depart, without taking any notice of his wife, who however determined to follow; and, asking Lady Clarendon if she had leave to retire, which was instantly granted, she flew down stairs, and sprang into the coach, before the door was shut, and, though much against his will, accompanied him to their lodgings in Edward-street; where



we will leave them to torment each other by perpetual quarrels and useless revilings, and return to the happy society at Lady Clarendon's.

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#### CHAP. XXXIV.

THE whole party immediately congratulated Honoria, and saluted her as Miss Clarendon, a name by which she was now to be presented to the world. Miss Ashbourn, after expressing her heart-felt joy that this affair was settled to their universal satisfaction, said she had nothing to regret, but that the vile author of all this deception should remain unpunished. "No, Miss Ashbourn, (replied Lady Clarendon) not unpunished. I dare engage that she and the Captain will prove mutual plagues to each other, and amply revenge us for the injuries and mischiefs they have intended. I wish neither of them heavier evils, than their union in all probability will inflict." She then begged the present company would dine with her, and all assenting, Sir William, Harry and Fanny Ashbourn, set out to bring Miss Onslow to join their party, whose long absence the former had bitterly lamented, though he acknowledged the propriety of it. When they were gone, Honoria, who had with difficulty so long restrained her impatience, went up stairs to read Colonel Effingham's letter; and during her absence Major Southmore asked and received Lady Clarendon's permission to inform the Colonel of all that had passed: he then declared it should not be a moment longer deferred, for he well knew what he must suffer from the erroneous opinion he had so long entertained, and determined to relieve him from this anxiety in person. He took leave of the company, entreating they would not mention to Honoria or any one else the reason of his absence. He then sent for a postchaise, and began his journey to the place of Colonel Effingham's residence, which he had learned from the Lamberts, for he was yet an utter stranger to him, though so deeply indebted for the kind assistance he had afforded the younger branches of his family. Mrs. and Miss Ashbourn and the Counsellor, who were only privy to his scheme, promised inviolable secrecy.

When he was gone, their conversation turned wholly on the events of the morning; and Mrs. Ashbourn expressed her astonishment that after such violent agitation, Mrs. Harcourt could so far recover her usual spirit, as to address her husband in the manner she did, and depart in such perfect composure. "That," returned Mr. Milford, "was solely the effect of her terror; relieved from the dread of imprisonment and perhaps death, she forgot the hope with which she entered the house, in the joy she felt at being permitted to leave it, at liberty and uncontrouled; the poor man's disappointment was more bitter; as he could not gain her fortune, I fancy he would have approved of any means which might restore that freedom he bartered for gold; but, in every way mortified, his anger and indignation cannot be wondered at.

Whilst they were debating the point of which of the two would be the most miserable from this connection, Fanny Ashbourn and the gentleman returned with Miss Onslow, who had been informed of all that passed; and instead of entering the drawing room, she ran to Honoria's chamber to chide her for her want of confidence, in not disclosing the secret of her attachment: rapping at the door she was instantly admitted, but the sight of Honoria weeping over the letter in her hand, changed her feigned resentment into real sympathy, and though guessing her tears flowed partly from joy, yet with the

kindest attention she soothed her feelings, till they gave way to the tenderness of friendship, and were restored tranquillity. She then gave Emily the letter, and asked if it was possible to read it unmoved and consider the insolent ungrateful answer its writer had received? It contained the most ardent expressions of a deep, unalterable attachment, mingled with fears that his long absence had erased the impression he once flattered himself he had made on her heart: he said he had spent many months in fruitless enquiries for her, till an accident, the particulars of which she should know when they met, had informed him of the change in her situation, but hoped she would not imagine Miss Clarendon was dearer to him, than Miss Sommerville had been, for that was impossible: he then asked if she had ever received the locket, which through Mr. Fitzosborne's means he had sent her; mentioned several other past circumstances, and concluded with the most earnest hopes that she would not be less favourable to them than before; and that she would grant him an interview, when he flattered himself he could explain to her satisfaction whatever part of his past conduct might appear mysterious.

The respect, the tenderness, the ardour of this letter, all convinced Honoria not only of the strength of his attachment, but how worthy he was of a return: yet she had one fear which nothing could counteract; this was, that the unparalleled insolence of Marianne's behaviour might entirely have obliterated her from his heart. Emily tried all in her power to dissipate this fear, and in some measure succeeded. Honoria's bosom never rejected hope, and deriving a degree of comfort from Miss Onslow's arguments, she took out her locket, and with a satisfaction that she had on this account been long a stranger to, tied it round her neck, and joined the party that were assembled to dinner.

Miss Onslow was not a little surprized to meet in the Counsellor her old acquaintance, Mr. Milford. After they had chatted some time on various subjects, she enquired, smiling at Miss Clarendon, after his friend, Mr. Dixon, and whether he was married? "No, madam," replied he, "nor do I think he ever will; the poor man has been very unsuccessful in several applications." "Yes, (cried Emily aside to Honoria) that we know very well." "And I think," continued he, "he now seems to have given up all thoughts of matrimony." "Really!" said Miss Onslow. "Yes, madam, at least so it appears to me, but I may be mistaken, for he is the most reserved man in the world in this respect; and if I learn his disappointments in any way, it is entirely by chance, and not from himself. I remember when we quitted C——, he had met with a rejection, though I never knew from whom, nor could I guess from any particularity in his behaviour to any lady during our stay there." "So much the better; is it not, Honoria?" (cried Emily again, in a whisper).—"Hush! my dear girl, (returned she, colouring) you will betray me." Emily then promised silence, and kept her word.

The whole day was spent in the most cheerful manner; but Honoria, Sir William, Emily, and Fanny, wondered at the Major's absence, and asked whither he was gone? Lady Clarendon said, particular business had obliged him to leave town suddenly; this satisfied them, and they enquired no farther. But Miss Ashbourn could not resist the pleasure of informing Honoria of the truth; she took her aside in the evening, and making her promise secrecy, declared the reason of the Major's departure. Honoria was extremely

surprized, and a little disconcerted at this intelligence; but after some reflection, being satisfied that the Colonel would be assured this scheme was executed without her knowledge, she gave way to the hopes which involuntarily arose in her mind, and in this interval employed herself in writing a full and true account of every thing that had passed, to Miss Melmoth; who returned her sincere and ardent congratulations, and requested to see Lady Clarendon and the whole family at Southern Lodge, when the Spring was sufficiently advanced to render the country pleasant. This invitation Lady Clarendon determined to accept, as she was anxious to see the kind friend, who with such unusual liberality and benevolence had taken in her Honoria, a stranger, unprotected, and unhappy, and had given her so many instances of disinterested attachment; but at present she wished to visit Clarendon Place, and there celebrate the day on which her daughter would be of age, which was now approaching. And whilst they were all impatiently expecting Major Southmore's return, let me entreat my readers to pardon me, if I carry them back to the first part of the history, to trace Colonel Effingham's conduct from that time.

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## CHAP. XXXV.

WHEN the Colonel left Ireland, he was, as has been already shewn, deeply attached to Miss Sommerville; and conscious of the mediocrity of his fortune and expectations, he had almost, without design, made her acquainted with a passion, which however scarcely dared hope a return; but flattered by the reception his declaration had met with, he departed, indulging a thousand fanciful ideas which amused his mind, while they strengthened his attachment; and forgetting his resolution of sighing in secret, he sent the locket to Mr. Fitzosborne, his friend, desiring he would find an opportunity of delivering it, without discovering himself to be the agent. This opportunity, Mrs. Fortescue's illness and death prevented him from meeting with for many months, as though he often went to Wood Park, and saw the family, and sometimes Honoria alone, when he could deliver the messages which he was constantly charged with, yet as Miss Fortescue and Honoria seldom left the house, he could find no method of sending the locket in the way his friend wished, till the time Honoria received it. He wrote constantly to America, giving the Colonel the most flattering account of Miss Sommerville's behaviour, of the expression in her eyes when she enquired for him, and added a thousand circumstances that kept alive a passion which was in its own nature too ardent to require any addition. Unfortunately, Mr. Fitzosborne was called to England just before Mr. Fortescue's marriage, and was ignorant of that event, and its consequences, till his return to Ireland, which was not till after Honoria's escape.

In the mean time, Captain Effingham performed wonders in America; actuated by love, and stimulated by glory, his bravery was so evident, that it soon procured him the highest respect and esteem, and was in time the cause of his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; soon after which, the death of his cousin, Mr. Bridgewater, and the illness of his uncle, recalled him to England. Here he met his friend, Fitzosborne, and of him he anxiously enquired for Honoria, but could receive no kind of information. Lord Bridgewater was then so extremely ill, and every day growing worse, that it was impossible to leave him, but distracted for some account of the object of his affections, he pressed Fitzosborne's departure in the most strenuous manner, and after a variety of accidental delays, he at length set out. But what was the grief, disappointment and agony, he endured at the contents of his friend's first letter! it was literally this: After expressing his concern at the effect he knew his intelligence would have upon him, he said, that Mr. Fortescue was married again, and it had been discovered, that Miss Sommerville was not his niece, but a child whom the first Mrs. Fortescue had taken up on the road, and bred up out of charity, till she grew so fond of her, that she insisted on her passing for her own niece; but that the present lady had revealed the secret, at which Miss Sommerville was so highly enraged, she resolved to stay no longer at Wood Park, and had actually eloped a few weeks before it was universally believed, with a young man of the most dissolute character, who had carried her no one knew whither.

This letter almost drove the Colonel to despair, which was heightened by the impossibility of his then quitting his uncle, whom he was with at Bristol, to discover how

far this story was true; for though he thought there might be some foundation for the report, yet his soul refused to believe any thing inconsistent with the purity of that mind, which he knew was unsullied as an angel's. His uncle's death soon released him; but a law-suit, which threatened his whole property, obliged him to wait its decision in London; as the loss of his fortune would have put it out of his power to maintain his beloved Honoria in the manner he wished.

It was during this interval, and before he went to Bristol, that his visits at Lady Mortimer's gave rise to such cruel suspicions in the breast of our heroine, which the reader has already seen were wholly without foundation. Miss Mortimer, in fact, regarded Captain Fairfax with the same sentiments of affection, that the Colonel felt for Honoria, and he returned them with equal tenderness. It was of him only she spoke in those conversations which alarmed Honoria, and excited in her, for the first time, the bitter emotions of jealousy.

The law-suit was not concluded till she had been some time at Mrs. Campbell's, and the instant he found himself at liberty to leave London, he went to Ireland, where Mr. Fitzosborne confirmed every thing he had said in his letter; but this not satisfying his mind, he rode the day after his arrival to Wood Park, and found Mr. Fortescue alone. The alteration in his countenance and manner struck him forcibly; instead of the cheerful and hospitable freedom of his air and conversation, he received him with a restraint that shocked and mortified him; but this soon wore off; he pressed his hand with affection, and said, those were happy days when he was last in Ireland, but he had since met with so many afflictions, that he had sunk under them. "I wish, Colonel," added he, "I could ask you to stay at my house, but Mrs. Fortescue is a little particular, and does not love strangers." As soon as he paused, Colonel Effingham lost not a moment to enquire for his niece. "Ah," cried he, "that was a sad business, it almost broke my heart; and yet I dared not complain. Poor, dear girl, I wonder what part of the wide world now holds her? Hush," said he, placing his fingers on his lips, on Mrs. Fortescue's entrance, which put an end to his volubility, greatly to the Colonel's disappointment, as he flattered himself with gaining some essential intelligence with respect to the reason of her leaving Ireland; but his Lady amply made it up, though not in the way he wished. She seldom left her husband so long alone with strangers, but the business of the toilet took place of all other, and even at the risk of the disclosure of some of her artifices, induced her to remain in her dressing-room some time after the Colonel's arrival. She conversed with him fluently on common subjects, but his heart was too deeply interested in one to attend to her, and he prepared to depart, when Mr. Fortescue's leaving the room, gave him an opportunity of asking the lady for Miss Sommerville: "Oh, that vile wretch," cried she, "name her not, sir, I beseech you; it is horror to my ears." "Madam, (said the Colonel) what can you mean?" "I mean, sir, (replied Mrs. Fortescue) that the blackness of her ingratitude so far exceeds belief, that, perhaps, if I tell you the history of her behaviour, you will scarcely believe me." Probably not, thought he, and remained silent that he would not seem to request it; but she chose to go on; and accordingly, with every aggravation malice could invent, she related her supposed birth, actions, and elopement, and with those motives which she always added, and which were so different from the real ones. But in the

violence of her rage, she overwrought her story so far, that it wholly lost its intended effect. The Colonel disbelieved every syllable she had uttered, and doubted not but some secret reason, which he could not develop, had prompted her to this revenge. From the haste in which she spoke, she had so often contradicted herself, that in a court of justice she would have been condemned by her own evidence. This conduct excited in him so much horror and disgust, that he refused all her earnest solicitations to stay dinner, and took an hasty and abrupt leave. In the hall he met Mr. Fortescue, who, with tears in his eyes, again shook and pressed his hand; and, in a weak and flattering voice, wished him health and happiness; and then added, in a whisper, "Shall I not see you once more before you quit Ireland?" "No, sir, I thank you, (returned the Colonel, scarcely able to speak, from the variety of emotions that overpowered his mind) I shall go as soon as possible." The servant then opened the door, and he departed.

As he went through the park, a thousand tender recollections crowded on his memory, of the happiness he had once enjoyed on this very spot, which contrasted with the dreadful uncertainty he was at present informed such a gloomy combination of ideas, that he could not resist their force, but gave way to the deepest impression of melancholy. In this situation he returned to his friend, who endeavoured, but in vain, to restore him to cheerfulness: he sedulously avoided all society, and found no comfort but in retracing those paths, where he had once wandered with his beloved Honoria. One day as he was pursuing his solitary walk, he met an old woman whose countenance struck him as one he had often seen before; she made him a curtsy, and he stopped and asked her name? her voice and reply instantly convinced him he was not mistaken, but that she was the very woman at whose house he had frequently been, to gaze unobserved on the mansion which contained all he held dear. A few minutes conversation introduced the name of Sommerville; this was Mrs. Connor's forte: she began relating to him the true reason of her leaving Wood Park, to which he listened with unbounded satisfaction, as it confirmed every prepossession of her innocence that he had entertained. "But my good Mrs. Connor, (interrupted he, when she had declared herself an assistant in her escape) tell me I beseech you where she now is, that I may instantly fly to her, and relieve her perhaps from that distress, which so young, so beautiful, and so unprotected, she may in the cruel world have to encounter." "Arrah," cried Mrs. Connor, "the dear crature made me promise to tell nobody at all, but sure I may tell you without breaking it; and so, Sir, I cannot say myself where she is, though if you will enquire for her at Paddy's sister's in London, to be sure she knows." "That I will, you may depend on it, (replied the Colonel smiling) if you will inform me where Paddy's sister lives, and what is her name?" "Ay to be sure, I had forgot that, for else you might have asked at forty places before you came to the right house, and then ten to one but you had been wrong." She then gave him a full direction, and added, "You must remember, Sir, to ask Mrs. Middleton, for one Miss Sommerville, who goes by the name of Wentworth, because why, the dear child would not be called by her own name, as she had no right to any at all, so she took Wentworth, that nobody might know who she was."

The Colonel then departed perfectly satisfied with the intelligence he had gained, and left Mrs. Connor as perfectly satisfied with the present he had given her for this long

wished for information. He determined to quit Ireland instantly, nor could all his friends' entreaties prevail on him to stay another day, so impatient was he to profit by the kindness of Mrs. Connor. But he was unavoidably detained some time by contrary winds; however the moment he landed, he took post horses, and arrived at London in as short a time as it was possible to perform the journey. He would not go to Sir Charles Mortimer's lest they should detain him, but took a hackney-coach to Poland street; there he was told that Mrs. Middleton had been burnt out of her house, and was removed to Red Lyon street; thither he drove according to the direction he had received, and learned that she had been dead some time, but the woman of the house where she had lodged, said if he had any business he might apply to her husband, who lived still at Mr. Burnaby's in Park-street. With this gentleman he was intimately acquainted, but resolving not to be seen, he ordered his servant to enquire for Middleton; and here to his great disappointment, heard he was gone with his master into Berkshire. It now seemed to strike him like a presentiment that he might never know, and fearing, if he delayed an instant, some accident might happen to Middleton, which would for ever conceal the place of Honoria's abode: he sent immediately for a post-chaise, which conveyed him to the village near which Mr. Burnaby's country-house was situated. Stopping at a little ale-house, he sent for Middleton, and learned from him, that Miss Wentworth was, when his wife died, companion to a lady at C——, of the name of Campbell. Being now a little relieved from the extreme agitation he had suffered through his whole journey, he determined to take some rest; but early the next morning he set off for C——. Here also his enquiries were vain; the mistress of the inn where he alighted, on his asking for Mrs. Campbell, and Miss Wentworth, replied, she knew the former very well, but that Miss Wentworth had left her some days, and that she herself was gone into Sussex. The report of Honoria's leaving C—— with Mr. Audley, was yet only canvassed in the higher circles, and of course this good woman could give no farther information. The Colonel then begged to know if Mrs. Campbell had no particular friend, to whom he could apply for intelligence, and was directed to Miss Winterton.

The day was then too far advanced to admit of his paying a visit to an entire stranger, but as early the next morning as propriety would allow, he rapped at the prebendary's door, and was ushered into the dressing room; where unfortunately for our heroine, Helena was sitting with Miss Mary Walton discussing the point of Honoria's elopement. The entrance of a young man, so handsome, so elegant, so fashionable and whose cockade spoke him of that profession so generally captivating to the fair sex, alarmed them both, though not with unpleasing sensations. Mary Walton, who was really pretty, was conscious she should appear to no disadvantage by the side of her withering friend, and in the idea of conquest, called forth all her artillery of smiles and graces; but these had no effect on the insensible Colonel, who after apologizing for his intrusion, said, as Mrs. Campbell was absent, he had no means of learning whither Miss Wentworth was gone, except by applying to Miss Winterton, who he hoped would be so good as to give him all the information in her power.

Helena was so inexpressibly shocked at this address, which revived every terrible idea in her bosom, that she burst into tears, and covering her face with her handkerchief,



begged Miss Mary to explain the cause of her extreme agitation, which would at the same time answer his question. This was a task by no means unpleasant to the malevolent girl; in a few words she told him that the young lady for whom he enquired, had seduced a lover of Miss Winterton's by the basest arts from the honourable and ardent passion he had before entertained for her; and had not long since left the city with the same gentleman; but whether he intended to marry her, was a point yet undetermined, but the majority imagined his only view was to make her his mistress.

Colonel Effingham was at first struck with the deepest horror, but a moment's recollection, and a second glance at that face, (for the handkerchief was now withdrawn) which the young lady said had so ardently attached this pretended lover, by convincing him of the improbability of the first part of the story, strongly induced him to disbelieve the latter, and he instantly saw through the whole, judging that the superior attractions of the irresistible Honoria had charmed some young man, whom Helena had regarded as her devoted captive, and that in revenge for his infidelity, she had maliciously circulated this report: but here, as the reader knows, he was greatly mistaken. Enraged as he was, yet he commanded his temper, and only replied, "Pardon me, madam, for contradicting you, but you are certainly in an error: I have long known Miss Wentworth, and know her to be incapable of a dishonourable action; but her beauty and talents will often create envy in her own sex, though if ladies ever meant to charm, they would not so readily credit, and with such avidity relate any circumstance so disadvantageous to themselves; for if Miss Wentworth could possibly err, where can we hope for perfection?" Saying this, he arose and hastily quitted the room, leaving the two ladies in extreme astonishment at the earnestness of his manner, and both mortified and disconcerted at the intention and event of his visit. The Colonel left the city with the bitterest regret and disappointment, not knowing where next to apply; at last he resolved to consult Sir Charles Mortimer, and for this purpose on his arrival in London desired to be set down in Upper Brook-street.

## CHAP. XXXVI.

SIR Charles was extremely concerned at the agitation in his friend's countenance, which so plainly proved the situation of his mind. This family returned to London earlier than usual, on Lady Mortimer's account, who had been extremely ill, and wished for the best advice. Whilst the Colonel was relating his misfortunes, Miss Mortimer was attending her mother, but when she joined them at supper, Sir Charles mentioned the principal circumstances to her. The name of Wentworth struck her with infinite surprize, but when he said she had lived with Mrs. Campbell, as a companion, she no longer doubted but it was the same Kitty Wentworth who had attended her. She then gave the Colonel every particular of her behavior during her stay with her, and said, that extreme melancholy which had often puzzled her, was now accounted for, and that she believed despair, and not pride, was the reason of her leaving her; as she found a report had prevailed in the family, that Colonel Effingham was her lover, instead of Captain Fairfax.

When the Colonel knew how near he had been to happiness, and how fatally it had escaped him; how often he had been under the same roof with his beloved Honoria, and yet, from ignorance, deprived of the power of availing himself of such unexpected felicity; his despair was almost heightened to frenzy: he rose, walked about the room, and declared he would immediately go in search of her, for he should have no peace till he had entreated her pardon for his unintentional offence. "Stay, Colonel, (said Caroline) gently detaining him, "believe me, your Knight-errantry will be useless, unless you have some guide to direct your wandering footsteps. Remain with us a few days, and I will write to Mrs. Campbell, who, probably, can tell us where this fair fugitive may be found; as to the propriety of her conduct, I have, myself, no doubts, (though even that mystery she can clear up) for, during the whole time she was with me, she behaved with the utmost prudence, scarcely ever left the house, and associated with none of the family, but spent every leisure hour in her own apartment, reading or working." The Colonel acknowledged the excellence of her scheme, promised to be guided by her, and expressed the highest satisfaction at the terms in which she spoke of Honoria, who was the dearest object of his heart. Miss Mortimer, always indefatigable in whatever she undertook, wrote the next day to Mrs. Campbell, and called on a friend, in town, for a proper direction to her in Sussex; and in a very few days received the following answer.

"Dear Madam,

"I am extremely concerned that it is not in my power to give you a more satisfactory account of Miss Wentworth: her departure from me was sudden, and the reason of it such as I cannot by any means reveal, but where she now is, I am utterly ignorant. I am sorry to add, that the inhabitants of C—— are unitedly of opinion, that she left the city with a young man, of the name of Audley, who, it was very evident, had been some time deeply attached to her; but what foundation there may be for this conjecture, I shall not take upon me to decide.

"I am, Madam,

"Your obliged

“Humble Servant,  
“ELIZA CAMPBELL.”

This letter was brought to Miss Mortimer in the presence of Colonel Effingham, who remarking its effect on her countenance, entreated he might see it, that his suspense at least might be ended at once. She reluctantly consented, and with a well meant, though a mistaken zeal, for his happiness, when he had read it, she begged him to grieve no longer for one, who, apparently from the variety of circumstances in her disfavour, was unworthy his attachment; and as it was now undoubtedly out of his power to discover where she was, advised him to forget her. “Ah, Miss Mortimer,” returned the Colonel, with a deep sigh, “you know not how impossible it is for me to forget one whose idea is interwoven with my existence; besides, I know the innate rectitude of her heart, and am fully convinced there is no reason for these malicious innuendo’s, but what originates in envy; no,” continued he, with vehemence, “only from her own lips will I believe her false, and I will not stay another day here, but again visit Ireland, and endeavor to obtain farther intelligence.”

To this resolution he strictly adhered, and, contrary to all the persuasions of his friends, left them the next morning. Being obliged to take Oxford in his way, to transact some particular business, which could not be delayed till his return, he there unexpectedly met with an old and intimate acquaintance, who insisted upon his supping with him that evening. Though extremely unfit to join the large and cheerful party which were to assemble at his apartments, yet he knew not how to resist his solicitations, and accordingly promised. When he was called upon for his toast, after supper, he gave Miss Sommerville, and preferred a silent, but ardent wish, that his enquiries might be attended with success. Some minutes after, the toast-master called to a gentleman, who sat almost opposite to him, “Now, Audley, it is your turn;” who, immediately lifting the glass to his lips, exclaimed in the most animated manner, “I give you the irresistible Miss Wentworth.” Colonel Effingham was struck with the name of Audley, as that which Mrs. Campbell had mentioned in her letter, but how was his confusion increased, when this toast convinced him it was the same gentleman! Resolving however to conceal his emotions, from an idea that he might learn the truth of the report, if he asked any question, without appearing so deeply interested in the reply; he assumed a calmness he was in reality far from feeling, and begged to know, in a careless manner, if it was Miss Wentworth, of Yorkshire, whose health they had just been drinking? “Upon my word, Sir,” replied Mr. Audley, “I do not know; I saw the lady at C——, where she was on a visit. I only know she is the most beautiful, angelic creature in the world, and her mind is as perfect as her form.” “Very well,” said a gentleman at the other end of the table, “you are a violent lover indeed, Audley.” “No,” cried he, “but I could have been if she had permitted it.” “Was the lady cruel?” interrupted the Colonel, affecting to smile. “Yes, Sir, she was, she would not even listen to me upon the subject of love; she was not half so kind as the world, who gave her to me, for I declare it was reported she eloped from C—— under my protection; and one lady went so far as to say, she had seen her in my phaeton, when I was driving my sister to Dover, who happened to be drest that day in a great coat of the same colour Miss Wentworth usually wore. Thus this story arose from

female vanity, and was confirmed by female malevolence; for Charlotte observing Miss Wentworth looked like a divinity in brown, thought nothing but a change of dress was necessary to make her equally charming; and the rest of the ladies at C——, envious of her superiority, circulated the story to the utmost of their power. Unfortunately for me, however, there is not a word of truth in it, for I have not seen her since the morning I left C——, and despair of again enjoying that felicity.” “Then, (replied the Colonel) you do not know where she now is?” “No, really I do not,” returned Mr. Audley. The extreme frankness of his manner, was a convincing proof of the truth of all he had asserted, and it relieved Colonel Effingham’s mind from a heavy load of distress; as though he did not himself suspect her virtue, he could not bear that others should: and to remove all suspicion from Miss Mortimer, he made an apology for quitting the company early, and wrote an account of all that had passed to Sir Charles; and having dispatched his letter, pursued his journey, with a peaceful tranquillity he had not for a long time experienced.

On his arrival at Parkgate, he found the packet ready to sail, with a fair, but so rough a wind, that several people who were waiting to go would not venture, but this could not deter him; he had often encountered a storm on a less interesting and pressing occasion, though he would not rashly run himself into danger; but the master of the vessel assuring him there was none, and that it was only a smart gale, he embarked immediately; but they had not been long at sea before this gale encreased almost to a hurricane; it drove the ship very far north, and they were in the utmost danger many hours. The storm at length abated, and the Captain endeavoured to bring the vessel again into its right course, though the wind was unfavourable; and Colonel Effingham perceiving this would not be soon accomplished, thought it would be the quickest method for him to be set on shore, and pursue his journey to Dublin. The Captain complied with his request, and he landed at a little place south of Belfast, and from thence proceeded some miles without any interruption; but, on his asking for horses at a small town, which was in his way to the direct road from Belfast to Dublin, he was told he must wait a day, or perhaps two, before he could go on, as the late rains had swelled the waters so much, it was not merely dangerous, but impossible to pass. He was, therefore, obliged to submit, and though extremely anxious to pursue his journey, he did it with a good grace.

It was a wretched place, and he was without books, or any thing to amuse him; but the clergyman, who was the only reasonable inhabitant, with that hospitality peculiar to the nation, hearing the circumstance of his detention, waited on, and invited him to his house; an invitation which the Colonel gladly accepted. This gentleman was, in fact, the very Mr. Richardson who baptized Honoria, and who had but a short time before confirmed to Sir William Clarendon the identity of his supposed sister’s person. The circumstance was yet fresh in his memory, and imagining, from the singularity of the discovery, it might amuse his guest, he gave him a minute recital of Miss Sommerville’s life, little suspecting how deeply he was interested in it. This was the first time he had ever heard a true account of the manner in which she was found, and was delighted that she was not a beggar’s brat, as had been represented to him. Mr. Richardson was too much engaged with his story to regard its effects on the Colonel, till he begged him to say at once where she then was, and relieve him from the suspense he had so long endured?

The good man was surprized at his earnestness, and instantly complied with his request; and when he learned that she was indisputably Lady Clarendon's daughter, and, at that time, under her protection, his joy exceeded all bounds, and was, indeed, little short of distraction. Mr. Richardson related, with the most minute exactness, the particulars of his interview with Sir William, which put the matter past a doubt; as he had kept an inventory of the contents of the trunk, which agreed in every point with that Sir William brought over. The Colonel then, in his turn, after thanking him for his happy information, mentioned his acquaintance with Honoria, the various and unfortunate disappointments he had met with, and concluded, by saying, he imagined, as the time agreed perfectly, that it was soon after her leaving Mrs. Campbell's that this discovery took place, and was the reason why he could not trace her. Mr. Richardson rejoiced at having been, in some degree, the happy instrument of Honoria's present situation, and hoped the Colonel's unexpected meeting with him, would be the fortunate means of his future happiness, in a union with the most amiable of her sex.

As soon as the fords were become passable, they parted, with mutual expressions of friendship; the Colonel proceeded to Dublin, without staying a moment on the road longer than was unavoidable, and from thence embarked for England, where he arrived in safety.

It seemed as if every thing conspired to clear Honoria's character, and place her conduct in the most amiable point of view, in order to make his disappointment the more terrible; for when he was about half way to London, on stopping at a little inn to change horses, he found they had but one carriage at home, which was already engaged to a gentleman who was then in the house; this extremely disconcerted him, but the gentleman hearing his enquiries, immediately came out, and finding they were both going the same road, offered him a place, which the Colonel gladly accepted. It happened to be Counsellor Milford; and though they were not acquainted, they knew each other personally, and were so mutually pleased with each other's conversation, that they would not part at the end of the stage, but agreed to continue their journey in one carriage. Colonel Effingham, restored to his natural cheerfulness, and at this time particularly animated, was a most agreeable companion; and the Counsellor rejoiced at the event which had been the means of their travelling together. The conversation turned on various subjects; at last the vanity incident to authors became the topic. "I once," said Mr. Milford, "was present at a most ridiculous scene, which I believe nothing will ever efface from my memory. I was visiting a friend at C——, who was paying his addresses to a rich and learned widow, who lived in the same city; he confessed to me he thought her understanding not so brilliant as she herself considered it, and as he always told it was, for flattery was his forte, and vanity her weak side. He carried me there one evening to hear some part of a work she was then engaged in translating; he told me it was highly ridiculous, but entreated me to commend it; this I could not promise, but declared I would behave as handsomely as I could, and Mr. Dixon, who was of our party, said the same. There was a large company assembled, and after tea, Hunter asked for the book and read us several chapters, on which we could, as far as the most elegant language could deserve, bestow the highest praises with great justice, which not a little pleased the lady, and her

swain felt the effect of her good humour. The next morning we all went to pay her a visit; she was not at home, but the servant saying he expected her in a few minutes, Hunter led the way to the library; where he said we might wait her return. A large old folio here attracted our notice, which on opening we found to be an old English translation of her very work: on the table lay her book, which was merely a copy of the folio, with the language modernized and refined. Whilst we were all enjoying the ridiculous discovery, the lady unexpectedly returned, and we had only time to shut the book before she came into the room, attended by a young lady who lived with her in the quality of a companion: we had not composed our countenances to a proper degree of gravity; she saw something had diverted us, without knowing what, till observing the fatal folio, the terrible mystery was revealed, and she fainted away. On her recovery, she darted the most furious looks at Miss Wentworth, who could not guess the reason of her anger till she was carried to her chamber, and then we disclosed it, and immediately discovered from her embarrassment, another secret that we had not before suspected, and this was, that the lady herself had really no merit in the work at all, for that her young friend copied, and of course the elegance of the style and language was all her own. "Pray, (replied the Colonel, extremely anxious to hear the answer,) what was the consequence of this?" "Why," added the Counsellor, "the young lady was dismissed, as too careless in such an important charge." "And know you what became of her?" "From C—— she went to London, with a very respectable old lady, whom I was well acquainted with, but how long she remained there I am ignorant. There was one trait in her character, which indisputably proved the goodness of her heart. I saw her the morning after this business at Mrs. Markham's, and I found by the conversation, both that lady and Miss Onslow were, till I mentioned it, entirely a stranger to the reason of her leaving Mrs. Campbell; indeed, she then said, she had promised never to reveal the circumstance of the old translation, and was therefore of opinion, that even Mrs. Campbell's unkind behaviour could not justify her relating it to any one. From that day to this, I have never spoke of it myself, for Hunter was afraid of his Minerva's resentment, if the affair was made public."

Colonel Effingham endeavoured to conceal the transport this intelligence gave him, which so entirely cleared up every doubt; and replied, with a smile, "I once knew the lady you speak of, but never till this moment heard this little anecdote; but do you know what has been the consequence of the concealment?" "No," (replied the Counsellor). "It was reported every where and believed, that she left C—— with a Mr. Audley, who had been very attentive to her; a report I imagine Mrs. Campbell did not chuse to contradict, lest the truth should be investigated." Mr. Milford expressed his concern that he had been in any way accessory to such a story being raised, and declared he would in future be very cautious what he promised. This engaged their attention to the end of their journey; the Counsellor was set down in Norfolk-street, and the Colonel proceeded to Windsor, where the Mortimers family then were, to consult them upon what plan he had best pursue, and take his measures accordingly.

Miss Mortimer was not a little delighted that her favourite Miss Wentworth was so happily acknowledged, and that she still so highly merited the esteem she had once bestowed on her; and joined with her brother in persuading the Colonel to stay with them

at Windsor, and from thence write both to Lady and Miss Clarendon. This he complied with, and Captain Fairfax promised if possible to see the latter in town, as he knew a lady who was intimately acquainted with the family, and tell her his friend's distress, and enumerate the fruitless pains he had so frequently taken to discover her. The reader is already informed of the contents of these epistles and her Ladyship's answer, as well as the particulars of the interview between Captain Fairfax and the fictitious Honoria; I shall therefore only mention the Colonel's extreme horror and astonishment at receiving so polite yet so peremptory a refusal from Lady Clarendon, who at the same time expressed her sorrow that her daughter should so positively decline his proposals, which she herself considered as highly honourable and advantageous. Still however he flattered himself with the hope of a kind message by his friend, but his return completed his despair, and absolutely for a time deprived him of sense and recollection. In vain he called resolution to his aid, the stroke was too severe for his fortitude to support, and he sunk under it. In vain his friends used every argument in their power to compose his mind; he would tell them, any thing but contempt and scorn he would have borne patiently, and submitted to the disappointment however galling; but the cruelty of her behaviour on whom he had so long doated, by convincing him of her pride and ingratitude, convinced him that all dependance on human happiness was fallacious, and left him in this world without a wish to animate, or a hope to support him. In this languid and inactive state he passed the winter in the country, inattentive to every thing but the report of Miss Clarendon's intended elopement, which was too public not to reach him; this, if any event could, would have added to his grief, but his mind was in a state of torpor, and was almost incapable of superior anguish, to that which already oppressed it. This his friends mentioned as an inducement for him to join them in town, as they said in consequence of this affair the object he so much wished to avoid, was sent to stay some time with a lady who lived in the country. Their entreaties at length prevailed: the variety he met with in London amused him insensibly, his spirits and activity were in some degree restored, and the spring of his mind, which had appeared broken, once more renewed its action; not that he had lost the prevailing idea of his soul; Honoria's inconstancy and scorn still haunted him, and pervaded every recess of his heart; but he was soothed by the attentions of those around him, and not insensible of their kindness, gratitude induced him to appear pleased, till in some measure he became so in reality. The book which Lady Clarendon had sent him with her daughter's refusal, had been through the whole winter his constant companion, and contributed to keep alive the passion, reason and pride ought to have conquered, as it was a convincing proof to him, that though Miss Clarendon despised, Honoria Sommerville had once loved him; and in this idea he would perpetually lament that prosperity should have perverted such a mind. This book, Sir Charles contrived to steal, when he found its baneful effect, and determined never to restore it.

Early in the Spring, Lady Mortimer's health being greatly amended, preparations were making for Caroline's marriage, and Captain Fairfax having purchased Ashbury Park, desired Colonel Effingham would accompany him and Sir Charles to fix on the necessary alterations and repairs; this he complied with, and was so pleased with the situation, and finding in the country a relief from the noise and bustle of London, which though a remedy, was a painful one, that he took a lodging at a farm-house, not far from

Ashbury, and offered his friend, as he was still very unfit for the gay scenes which of course he would be engaged in on his marriage, to stay in Hertfordshire, and overlook the workmen; an offer which Captain Fairfax the more joyfully accepted, as he hoped it would amuse and interest him. It was at this period he saw Honoria; no one except himself could tell how painful the interview was, but though shocked and surprized, he resolved not to gratify her vanity, by letting her see it, but determined, she at least should think, he "bore his sorrows like a man." Yet her fainting, and following illness, almost conquered his resolution; however he avoided going to the house to enquire, and contented himself with sending to the apothecary's, to know how the lady did at Southern Lodge, for he never mentioned her name; and the instant he learned she was out of danger, he flew from the spot. It was then he first became acquainted with the Lamberts, and in the exercise of benevolence, he lost in some degree the anguish of his soul. He doubted not but Miss Melmoth was the lady, where Miss Clarendon had been sent to conceal the impropriety of her conduct; and imagined, remorse had in some measure occasioned her illness: yet would he make no advances; he supposed her too well acquainted with his sentiments, not to let him know if there was any alteration in her own. Yet this he now scarcely hoped for; the disgrace which had been affixed to her name, would have hurt his feelings; for, like Caesar, he would not have his wife suspected.

Fearful of remaining in Hertfordshire, and disgusted with London, he spent his Summer in Scotland, till wearied with rambling, he fancied he should be happier in some sequestered spot, and at last fixed on Wales, as the variety of romantic situations would suit the despondence of his mind. He returned to London, staid there a few days only, as the Mortimers and Fairfaxes were in France, and then went to Bath, intending to cross the New Passage, and travel till he could find a place corresponding with his feelings. Here, more from listlessness, than any expectation of amusement, he went into the theatre; where the first, and indeed, only object that struck his eyes, was Honoria. He saw her, apparently, the same Honoria whom he had loved; her person, indeed, unchanged, but her mind, how different! He saw her, gay, animated and engaging, directing those smiles he had once the power of lighting up in her countenance, to another, and he sat the picture of fixed and silent melancholy, till Miss Onslow's ridiculous observation drew on him the attention of their whole box: this alarmed him, he turned his eyes to the stage for some little time, though he saw nothing that passed there, and then precipitately left the house, went to the Bear, ordered a post-chaise, and, in less than two hours, reached Bristol, from whence, the next morning, he set off for Wales.



## CHAP. XXXVII.

HERE, after wandering for some time, he at last met with a situation, romantic to a degree, where he resolved to pass the winter, indulging his melancholy; and to this resolution he would have adhered, had not the report of Miss Clarendon's elopement with Captain Harcourt reached him, and at the same time he learned that they were somewhere in Wales. This was quite sufficient to drive him from his retirement, and he again returned to England, uncertain where to direct his steps: at last he determined to go to Westmoreland and Cumberland, as those parts of the kingdom he was least acquainted with, and there remain till his friends were settled at Ashbury, and then join them there, as his reasons for avoiding Hertfordshire were now at an end.

It was during this northern expedition, that Major Southmore arrived at his house, where he found only an old woman, who had been left to take care of it, and from her he could gain no other intelligence, than that the Colonel had been gone a little time, but where, she knew not, nor could at all guess when he would come back. Dispirited at the ill success of his embassy, he returned to London, and went immediately to Harley-street, where the whole family were assembled. Honoria anxiously watched his countenance, and saw vexation and disappointment so deeply impressed on it, that she doubted not but the Colonel had either refused to hear her justification, or heard it with indifference. This idea was confirmed by his desiring to speak with Lady Clarendon alone, and, on her re-entering the room, the same traces were visible on her's. She could not so far subdue her pride as to ask for an explanation from either of them, when she had every reason to believe it would be disgraceful; and she had no other means of enquiring, as Miss Ashbourn, who alone was in the secret, was gone with her mother into Kent; and Lady Clarendon, little suspecting she knew any thing of it, would not inform her of their disappointment, lest she should condemn their conduct, and require them to promise to take no farther steps without her knowledge.

In this state, therefore, they all continued for some time. Honoria fixed on a plan for herself, which however could not yet be executed. She wrote constantly to Miss Melmoth, and learned from her that the Fairfaxes were not yet returned, and she determined to wait their arrival before she paid her promised visit at Southern Lodge, hoping then to have an opportunity of justifying herself to Mrs. Fairfax, a step in which she thought there could be no impropriety, if the Colonel was not at Ashbury, and the kindness she had formerly received from that lady, made her the more anxious to be restored to her good opinion.

In the mean time, the story of her discovery was made public, and she was introduced publicly as the real Miss Clarendon, and as such presented at Court; a ceremony which her predecessor had obstinately refused to go through, conscious, no doubt, of her inability to behave with propriety, as well as knowing it was a distinction she had no right to. Among the rest of Lady Clarendon's friends who paid their congratulatory visits, Lady Pelham paid her compliments, but in so cool and constrained a

manner, that her countenance contradicted her expressions, which were those of joy, at having been, in some degree, the means of this fortunate event. The fact was, Lady Pelham, though proud and haughty, was not so much swayed by situation as jealousy, and in the affections of her friend, Miss Melmoth, Miss Clarendon was perhaps a more dangerous rival than Kitty Wentworth, and such was equally an object of dislike and fear.

When these visits were returned, they went to Clarendon Place, and there celebrated Honoria's twenty first birth day; it was her mother's particular wish, but as there were very few of the neighbouring families at that time in the country, they had no inducement to stay long, but returned to London, very much to the satisfaction of Emily Onslow, who was of their party, and indeed now almost lived with Lady Clarendon, a circumstance no less pleasant to Honoria than herself.

They had not been more than a week in town, when the arrival of the Fairfaxes at Ashbury, determined our heroine to lose no time, but pay Miss Melmoth the long-promised visit, for which she had an excellent plea, not having seen her since the happy discovery. Lady Clarendon herself did not wish to go till later in the Spring, and though grieved to part with Honoria even for so short a time, could deny nothing she wished; and Emily saying she would as far as it was in her power supply her place, Miss Clarendon again quitted London, and was received by her friends with every possible testimony of the sincerest joy and truest affection. She triumphed in the idea of her own penetration, in believing her to be of high birth, when every apparent circumstance contradicted such a supposition. The whole evening was spent in reciting past events, in every one of which Miss Melmoth took the most affectionate interest. She said she could not understand Colonel Effingham's conduct, but if he had either refused to hear her vindication, or heard it unappeased, there must be a deeper motive than was visible to them; and this she would undertake to settle with Mrs. Fairfax herself, as soon as a slight indisposition which had confined her several days, would permit her to visit Ashbury: but for this Honoria's impatience would not suffer her to wait; she mentioned the next morning an inclination to ramble, and Miss Melmoth's cold being a sufficient apology for not accompanying her, she set out attended only by her servant, and directed her steps to Ashbury Park, not designing to inform her friend of her intention, till she saw whether the event justified her expectations.

With a heart alternately swayed by hope and fear, she walked up to the house; the fatal interview that occurred the last time she beheld it, was not one instant absent from her imagination. She was sensible of no fatigue, though little accustomed to walk so far; her mind only was affected. On enquiring if Mrs. Fairfax was at home, the servant answered in the affirmative, and on her footman's repeating her name, he ran up stairs, and announced Miss Clarendon, to the great astonishment of his lady, who, after all that had passed, expected not such a visitor; and received her with so marked a coldness, that it wholly disconcerted her. Conscious herself of the secret motive which induced her to wish for an explanation with Mrs. Fairfax, she feared all the world might penetrate her reasons, and from this fear had been half tempted, even when at the Park-gate, to return, lest there should be an impropriety in taking so much pains to acquit herself to the

Colonel, to whom apparently her conduct was totally indifferent. Yet reflecting, that no one could possibly blame her for endeavouring to regain Mrs. Fairfax's approbation, she resolved to leave every thing to its fate, and pursue her first intention. Yet even these doubts gave her, when she entered the room, an embarrassment which was mistaken for guilt and shame; and which was so much increased by the reception she met with, that answering Mrs. Fairfax's distant curtesy with another, she sat down, the tears almost starting from her eyes, and without the power of utterance.

After a few minutes silence, Mrs. Fairfax, whose natural good humour could not, even guilty as she thought her, stand against the visible distress in Honoria's countenance, broke it, by asking if she would not chuse to sit nearer the fire? Our heroine replied in the negative, and then summoning all her courage to her assistance, said, "From the kindness you once, madam, bestowed on Kitty Wentworth, I dared flatter myself with the hope of a less reserved reception; but I cannot blame your behaviour, it is founded on the best motives, and my sole reason for troubling you with this visit, is to restore myself to that place in your esteem I once possessed, by" — Here, Mrs. Fairfax, her eyes sparkling with resentment, interrupted her. "Had you, madam, as Miss Clarendon, pursued the same line of conduct you did when Kitty Wentworth, believe me, you could have had no friend who would more sincerely have rejoiced at your elevation than myself. At present, I must confess, my strongest contempt is excited by the insolence of your message to Mr. Fairfax's friend, which no apology can now justify, nor any motive excuse. Yet, I hope, neither the one, nor the other, can now be of any consequence to him, as I dare affirm, his heart is, at least towards you, in a perfect state of indifference, and that you will soon be convinced of it, by his publickly avowing a nobler and worthier choice." These words were merely spoken in the height of anger, and expressed only her wishes, not her belief; but Honoria took them in a literal sense, and judging from them, when added to the other circumstances, that he was on the point of marriage, it so deeply affected her spirits, that she was utterly unable to give the intended explanation; and thought, indeed, that at present it could avail nothing, since every long-cherished hope was destroyed by Mrs. Fairfax's intelligence. She turned pale as death, and grew so extremely sick, that it was with the utmost difficulty she could rise from her chair; but, after sitting a few minutes in total silence, she took leave, requesting Mrs. Fairfax to pardon the trouble she had given, and ringing for her servant, was just quitting the room, when the Captain entered. Honoria was to him a perfect stranger; but, addressing her, in the politest manner, he desired she would sit down, unless she had a carriage waiting for her, as it would certainly rain in a very few minutes: she thanked him, but said, she could not possibly wait, and added, she should not regard the rain: nothing, at that time, was so terrible to her, as the undeserved contempt she had experienced from Mrs. Fairfax, and the dread of a conversation's being pursued, so painful to her to hear; and she therefore refused, in so decided a manner, that he could not press it any farther; and, looking at Mrs. Fairfax, he saw a vexation imprinted on her countenance, which convinced him there was some reason why she did not join in the request. He then attended our heroine down stairs, and offering her his carriage, which she declined, he insisted on her servant's taking an umbrella, which the man, who was not so inattentive as his lady, gladly, for her sake, accepted.

With very different emotions from those she felt when she entered it, she hastily walked through the Park, deeply regretting her ill success, and alternately blaming herself, and rejoicing, that she had not staid to explain her conduct; but satisfied, at last, in this respect, from the certainty that when Captain Fairfax knew she was Miss Clarendon, he must judge there was some mistake, and would himself seek to clear it up. Before she had lost sight of the house it began to rain, and it soon encreased with such violence, that the umbrella, which was only of slight green silk, was wet through, and became an incumbrance, instead of a shelter; she, therefore, gave it wholly to the servant, and proceeded, as fast as possible, to the road, where she hoped to find a cottage where she might gain admittance; and, in this hope, was not disappointed, for the moment she quitted the Park, she perceived one, though at some distance, and ran towards it with such speed, that, on her arrival, her strength was totally exhausted, and her breath nearly gone. A decent-looking woman received her with much civility, and begged her to sit down, at the same time desired she would excuse her waiting on her, as she had a sick husband up stairs, who required her constant attendance. Honoria ordered her servant to go to Southern Lodge, and request Miss Melmoth to send her the chariot, and remained in the cottage with a little girl of about six years old, whom the woman had left with her, but whose presence interrupted not the train of reflection into which she fell, on the intelligence she had that morning heard. The exertions she had made to escape the rain, had, in some degree, rallied her scattered spirits, before so truly depressed, and rendered her more capable of going through the scene that followed.

Colonel Effingham, who had lately been informed of the arrival of his friends from France, was on his road to Ashbury, when the same storm obliged him to seek the same shelter; as he was then passing by the cottage, the woman's eldest son, a lad about fourteen, took his horse, for his servant was not with him, led it to a shed they called a stable, and shewed him into the room where Honoria was sitting. She started at his entrance, and an universal tremor seized her; but he regarded her with a fixed attention, which she considered as a fatal proof that indifference and not resentment was the reigning sentiment of his soul. He bowed, she returned his salutation, and for some moments they both continued in silence; Honoria afraid to speak, and the Colonel not knowing what to say, till the embarrassment on each side becoming more visible, the latter determined to break it, and exclaimed in an inward tone, "What unfortunate weather this is!" "Unfortunate indeed!" (rejoined Honoria.) The ice once broken, he thought as the shower continued with encreasing violence, and that it was probable they might be some time longer prisoners, it would be less distressing to converse upon common subjects, than to preserve a silence that must so forcibly remind them of what it was now become their duty, as well as interest to forget. To this end he spoke again of the weather, and then enquired by what accident she became exposed to it? Having by this time recovered some degree of composure, she replied, hoping from his answer to discover how far her suspicions were real: "I was tempted by the beauty of the morning to walk to Ashbury Park, as I earnestly wished to relate to Mrs. Fairfax an event in my life, of which I believe she is yet ignorant; but this her unjust and ill-grounded resentment prevented me from doing." "Then you did not mention it to her, madam?" "No, Sir," said Honoria, "she did not appear inclined to listen to me, and I was less anxious to reveal it, from some

intelligence she gave me, which made her knowledge of it perfectly immaterial to me. Perhaps I have acted inconsistently with the dignity of the female character, but——” “Indeed I fear you have,” interrupted he with emotion. “Just Heaven! this from you, Colonel Effingham!” her cheeks glowed, and the tears started involuntarily to her eyes, but suddenly recollecting herself, she added with calmness, “This event then has been related to you?” “Oh yes, madam, I learned it in Wales, just before I quitted my house.”— He paused a moment, and then continued, “Will you permit me to disclose it to Mrs. Fairfax?” “Yes, certainly, Sir.” “In the mean time, madam, give me leave to congratulate and wish you all possible happiness.” “I thank you, sir,” returned she indignantly, “and let me add for my own justification, it was without my knowledge and wholly against my inclination, that you ever did learn it.” “That, madam, I should imagine, but I thought myself obliged to the friend who revealed it to me; he did it with a view for my tranquillity, which though it failed in its effect, was not the less kindly intended. However, let what will become of me, I must again repeat I wish you happy, madam.” “I once flattered myself,” said Honoria, “it was the only event which could make me so; that it was the leading step to perfect felicity, but I find I am cruelly mistaken; my affections have been thrown away, I meet contempt and ingratitude where I, at least, deserve pity; and every step I have taken, however meant as a proof of sincere attachment, has been misconstrued, and every attempt to justify myself has had a contrary effect. Perhaps, had I acted otherwise, I might have been happier, at least, I should not have incurred my own censure, for now I am truly miserable.” “Oh, (cried he) for Heaven’s sake, do not, now it is too late, tell me this, do not torture my soul with vain reproaches;” then hastily rising, and walking to the window to conceal his agitation, he added, “Let us, madam, drop this conversation, I cannot, I ought not to listen to it; all explanations, all recriminations, are now useless at least, perhaps dangerous.” “I feel your reproof, sir, it is just, I thank you for it; but it might have been given with more delicacy; however, in future, you shall not be shocked in this manner:” then going to the door, “Will the carriage never arrive?” said she, impatiently; then added softly, in a voice broken by her emotions, “To what indignity have I exposed myself!” Colonel Effingham caught these words imperfectly, and addressing her once more, “Do not, madam,” said he, “reproach yourself because your former, perhaps your native character broke forth, unconcealed by ambition, unblinded by prosperity; yet in pity to my feelings again veil it, nor when I am sensible it is too late for my happiness, suffer me to see the value of what I have for ever lost. Preserve your own dignity, and fear not that I shall act inconsistently with my honour, or my situation.”

During this whole conversation, Colonel Effingham had addressed her as Mrs. Harcourt, though he ventured not to pronounce a name, it gave him such pain to know she had a right to. Honoria, on the contrary, thought his congratulations alluded to the late happy discovery, which she doubted not but he was acquainted with, and had not therefore the most distant idea, that he supposed her married; and every reference he made to her situation, she imagined, was only intended to hint to her his own engagement. Thus mutually deceived, it was not probable this interview would contribute to lessen the deep anguish they both felt from the same cause; and whilst the Colonel condemned the tenderness of her manner, as wholly improper in Mrs. Harcourt, she misconstrued his speeches into insolence and contempt, and replied, to the last, with more

spirit than she had before exerted. "To convince you, sir, how entirely I accede to your opinion, and that I am not so wholly inattentive to my dignity, or my honour, as you seem to imagine, I will, this instant, restore to you what has been too long the object of my regard, but which, in future, would only remind me of my own folly, and your ingratitude, and inspire me with resentment. Take it," continued she, (hastily cutting the blue ribband which fastened the locket to her neck, and laying it on a table) "and with it my most perfect indifference; and, believe me, in parting with that, I at once lose every trace of friendship and esteem; and every sentiment of regard I was once simple enough to feel, and vain enough to believe was returned with equal force."

Colonel Effingham beheld the locket with a fixed attention, and judging from the resolute calmness of her countenance and manner, which though free from passion, expressed the most unchangeable determination, thought he might venture to solicit her pardon, without renewing her affection. Taking, therefore, the locket in his hand, he replied, "Perhaps, madam, I ought to request your forgiveness for my temerity in first sending this to you, but now I dare only entreat you not to resent my present conduct. Believe me, I do not scorn your friendship, but I fear it; since fate has placed an insurmountable bar between us, I dread a renewal of those sentiments it has cost me so much time in any degree to conquer; sentiments, it would now be criminal in me to entertain. We meet, I hope, for the last time, for I could not sustain such another interview. Farewell, Honoria, once revered, still too well beloved, farewell! may you be happy, and forget there exists such a being, as the miserable Effingham!" At these words, disregarding the weather, he hastily quitted the cottage, and ran towards Ashbury, leaving Honoria almost distracted with the variety of emotions which tore her soul: convinced he still loved her, but at the same time more than ever convinced, some insuperable obstacle opposed his wishes. The carriage soon after arrived, and in a state of mind none can imagine who have not experienced, she threw herself into it, and it drove to Southern Lodge.

## CHAP. XXXVIII.

WHEN the Colonel arrived at Ashbury, he found Mrs. Fairfax alone, scarcely yet recovered from her surprize: she saw, and begged to know the cause of his extreme agitation, and he instantly related the particulars of the late interview, which added to her astonishment, as she had not before heard of Miss Clarendon's marriage. She then told him of her visit, and lamented she had not detained her, or sent her home in the carriage. At this part of the conversation, Captain Fairfax entered the room. From the time of Honoria's departure he had been engaged with his steward, and of course had not since seen his lady, but the instant he had expressed his happiness at the arrival of his friend, she addressed him, "How could you, Mr. Fairfax, forget your resentment so far, as to pay such civility to that worthless girl?" "Do you mean Caroline," (returned he) "the lady I met going out?" — "Yes, certainly." "Then, my dear, I do not understand you, she was an entire stranger to me, and how could I judge of her worth? I paid her no more attention than her situation required, and such as even a stranger has a right to claim any where, particularly in our own house." "Then her beauty (said Mrs. Fairfax) certainly dazzled your eyes, or bewildered your senses, since you could not see it was Miss Clarendon, or rather Mrs. Harcourt, for the Colonel tells me she is married." "What is the meaning of all this, (said he) that lady was not Miss Clarendon, I am very positive, you must be strangely mistaken." "I think, Sir, (answered Mrs. Fairfax, gravely) it is more probable you should be in an error, than both your friend and myself. I cannot possibly have forgotten Kitty Wentworth, nor the Colonel Miss Sommerville, and when she left me, she was driven by the shower into a cottage, where he unfortunately met her, and they had a long conversation; she even confessed her marriage to him, and said she came here on purpose to reveal it to me, but that I was not inclined to listen to her, which is true; and she declared herself miserable in her choice, and in pretty strong terms lamented her past folly." "I beg your pardon, Caroline, (returned the Captain) for having contradicted you, you must be right; but here is some strange mystery, which I must endeavour to discover, for I am still certain this is not the lady I was introduced to at Mrs. Betterton's, who sent you, Colonel, that message, whom I afterwards saw so frequently in public, and who was universally acknowledged as Lady Clarendon's daughter." "If," said the Colonel, trembling, "there is any mistake, the disclosure may be in my favor; yet no, that is now impossible, for she is married, and of course, for ever lost to me." "No matter (cried Captain Fairfax) this business shall be cleared up. Where did this lady, whom you say is the real Miss Clarendon, come from?" "I know not, (replied his lady) but the servant can perhaps inform you." On ringing the bell, the man said, Miss Clarendon's footman had told him, she had walked that morning all the way from Southern Lodge. "Then to Southern Lodge I will instantly go, (exclaimed he) and happy be the intelligence I shall bring from thence!" The Colonel shook his head in despair, and his friend mounting his horse, in a few minutes lost sight of his own house, and soon arrived at the Lodge.

Honoria was weeping over the occurrences of the morning, with her tenderly sympathizing friend, when she was told Captain Fairfax desired to speak with her, on very particular business. She instantly guessed what it was, and consented to go down,

though hopeless of any other satisfaction, than that of acquitting herself of the heavy charges of pride and ingratitude. When she entered the room, Captain Fairfax, after making a respectful bow, said, "May I, Madam, take the liberty of enquiring if you are really Miss Clarendon?" "Yes, Sir, (replied Honoria) I really am." "Pardon, continued he, "the singularity and abruptness of my question, but I was more deeply interested in your answer than you could possibly imagine; but how am I to interpret this strange mystery, for surely, Madam, you are not the same lady I saw at Mrs. Betterton's, and who gave me so cruel a message for my unhappy friend?" "No, Sir, it was one who usurped my name and place; the circumstances are too various to relate at present; it will be sufficient now to tell you, the imposture for several months so successfully carried on, was at length, fortunately for me, discovered. My mother lost me in my infancy, and the credentials I possessed, fell into the hands of one, who disgraced the name of Clarendon, and it was her fear of being detected in her imposture, which induced her to refuse Colonel Effingham so rudely, lest by his attempting to see her, the secret should be disclosed, which it was so much her interest to conceal." "Is it possible, Madam! (said Captain Fairfax) what delight would this intelligence give my friend but for—" "Pardon me, Sir, (said Honoria) the Colonel already knows it, yet he forgives not the affront, though acquainted with the mistake. This morning he paid his congratulations to me, with the utmost coldness." "Alas, Madam, (replied the Captain) those congratulations were addressed to you on a different occasion, for believe me he knows not of this discovery; on your marriage, which he had heard of in Wales, and though his heart bled, he commanded himself enough to wish you happy." "I am not married, Captain Fairfax," said Honoria. "Not married! are you not Mrs. Harcourt?" returned the Captain. "That error, Sir, said she, was founded on the first; my predecessor changed her name to Harcourt, before it was known that she had never any right to that of Clarendon." "Then, dear Effingham," added he with rapture, "your unshaken constancy may be at last rewarded." "His constancy, Sir!" said Honoria with some surprize, "your lady this morning informed me the Colonel was on the point of marriage." "Oh no, Miss Clarendon, you must have misunderstood her," returned Captain Fairfax; "he has never ceased to regret you, nor ever, even in thought swerved from the truest attachment, the most inviolable fidelity." Honoria trembled and attempted to speak, but could not; the sudden turn of joy this speech gave her, was almost too much for her to support. "Will you then, Miss Clarendon," continued the Captain, "prove your forgiveness by permitting him to plead his own cause? will you suffer me to bring him here? for every moment I delay acquainting him with this happy change, my heart accuses me of cruelty." Honoria was still silent, but the deep glow on her cheeks assured him of all he wished to know. "Then, (cried he) as you do not forbid me, I will fly instantly to Ashbury to make the best of his sex the happiest." He then left her; she had no power to oppose him, perhaps no inclination, and a violent burst of tears at length relieved the oppression at her heart, and enabled her to inform Miss Melmoth of all that had passed, who rejoiced at the delightful prospect which now awaited her.

She had scarcely composed her agitated spirits, before the Colonel himself appeared: he was in an instant at her feet, entreating her forgiveness in a voice almost inarticulate, from the various emotions of his soul. Hope, fear, joy, remorse, alternately



moved him, and it was long ere he could with any degree of calmness inform her of the numberless and cruel mistakes which had occasioned his misery, and prompted him to behave in so strange a manner. Honoria accepted his apology in consideration of his sufferings, and without that parade so often accompanying female condescension, granted him at once, with that frankness which ever marked her character, her pardon and renewed esteem.

During the interval of Captain Fairfax's absence she had recalled the morning's conversation at the cottage to her memory, and found it so exactly consistent with his account, that in a moment she saw through Colonel Effingham's error, and instead of resenting, applauded his conduct. When they were a little tranquillized, he began a minute recital of the events which had passed since they parted in Ireland. Honoria followed his example, and concealed not her distress at his supposed attachment to Miss Mortimer, the reason of her illness at Southern Lodge, nor her grief when she heard of his offer to Miss Clarendon. He was enchanted with her candour, revered her spirit, and adored her tenderness; her relation of the time she had passed with Mrs. Campbell, so entirely agreed with what he had heard both from Counsellor Milford and Mr. Audley, that had he before doubted her veracity, this would have convinced him: but he was now so entirely certain of the constant propriety of her behaviour, and so struck with the various new and amiable points of view in which she appeared as she related to him the numerous events which had occurred in the last three years, that his affection was heightened into the most perfect esteem and the sincerest admiration. The sentiments of regard and passion which inspired him when he considered her in Ireland merely as a beautiful and amiable girl, were unavoidably increased into the purest friendship, by the knowledge of the steadiness, fortitude, and resignation, with which she had borne every reverse of fortune; and the gratitude she expressed for all who had in her adversity so kindly supported and protected her. The Colonel felt this with equal warmth; he revered Miss Melmoth with a degree of enthusiasm equal to her own, for her friendship to his beloved Honoria; and he would have spent half his fortune to repay those who in a lower sphere of life had contributed to her ease and comfort. Before they parted the locket was restored; Honoria again fastened it to her neck, but the book he insisted on keeping, as he set the highest value on it, from the four lines she had written under his name, which so tenderly expressed her regard and affection.

The next day, Mrs. Fairfax paid her compliments at Southern Lodge; she advanced to Honoria with a consciousness, which her ease and affability instantly dispelled. "Do not, my dear Madam, (said she) reproach yourself for the behaviour which has, in fact, endeared you to me. As I appeared to you, I deserved all the contempt you could shew me; and, as Colonel Effingham's friend, you acted consistently, for you must have been my enemy; and, believe me, your kind attention to Kitty Wentworth, can never be effaced from the memory of Honoria Clarendon." Mrs. Fairfax, delighted at a reception so different from what she expected, soon lost all restraint, regained her usual cheerfulness, and the day was spent by the whole party with the utmost satisfaction.

The following evening brought Lady Clarendon, Miss Onslow and Sir William, to join this happy circle, in consequence of the letters they had received from them. In one of these, Miss Melmoth entreated her ladyship to hasten her visit, relating the particulars of the eclaireissement, and requesting her not to delay favouring them with her presence. Colonel Effingham addressed her in the same terms, mentioned the real delight he experienced in the smiles of her daughter, and begged her permission to pay to her those devoirs, once so fatally misplaced. Honoria's letter was short, the extreme agitation of her spirits would not permit her to say a great deal, but a very few words expressed her feelings. All these, Lady Clarendon answered in person, and granted every request. Colonel Effingham, in her, found a favourable advocate with Honoria; she said, that in justice, the two years he had been seeking, or lamenting her, should be taken into the account; but this she only told the Colonel, nor would venture to mention it to Miss Clarendon, lest she should infer from it, she thought of parting with her with indifference.

A letter also to Major Southmore, soon brought him to Mrs. Lambert's, who had left her cottage, and taken a house in the same neighbourhood, more adapted to her present circumstances; for, exclusive of the fortune that devolved on his nephews and nieces, he had settled a comfortable annuity on her for life, as a recompence for her care and attention to them. He came instantly to Miss Melmoth's, and after congratulating Honoria, he paid his sincerest thanks to the Colonel, for the numerous obligations he had conferred on his family. "Mention them not, dear Sir, (replied the Colonel): had they really been of value, your kind attention to my beloved Honoria would have repaid them a thousand times, as well as your friendly journey into Wales, to relieve my mind from the tortures it then endured." Honoria then chid the Major for concealing his intention, telling him the strange idea she had formed from his silence on his return. "Yes, dear Miss Clarendon, (said he) but remember, had it not been for a vile tell-tale, you would never have guessed where I was gone, and how could I possibly suppose you knew half the story?" "Ah," cried Emily, "you would not trust me, though I should have been a better confidante; should I not, Honoria?" Then turning to the Colonel, she continued; "Perhaps, Sir, you may entertain some doubts of Honoria's conduct since your separation?" "Madam!" (replied he) with the utmost astonishment— "I mean only with respect to her gaiety, Sir, for you may be like Faulkland, and not chuse to have your mistress even smile in your absence; but if you are, I do assure you, you may be perfectly easy; she has not danced I am certain, and I never heard her sing but once, and that was Shenstone's Pastoral of Disappointment; and, as Captain Absolute says of his whimsical friend, 'I can acquit her of having been entertaining or sprightly;' and as for laughing, I am very sure she is also of his opinion, that, — "The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers, is a compact that no smile shall live there, till they meet again." "Fye, fye, Emily," said Honoria, blushing. The Colonel took her hand, "Thank you, dear Miss Onslow, for your intention; but believe me, I am not at all like Faulkland: I have no doubts, no apprehensions, but should be much better pleased to hear Miss Clarendon had smiled, rather than sighed; but as I have now the pleasure of seeing her in good health and spirits, I will not quarrel with her for a former pensiveness, so highly flattering to me."— "Oh," replied Emily, unmoved by all Honoria's entreaties that she would be silent, "I forgot to tell you of two or three fits of sickness; here was a disorder without a name, proceeding

from a fright at Southern Lodge; and a bilious fever at Richmond, which terminated almost in a consumption; besides head-achs and faintings innumerable!" Here she stopped for a moment, and Captain Fairfax observing Miss Clarendon's embarrassment, determined, if possible, to relieve her, by turning the laugh on the Colonel. "I beg your pardon, Effingham, (said he) for contradicting you, but indeed in one respect you very much resemble Faulkland, for I am certain, like him, you "Regarded every mirthful moment in the absence of your Honoria, as a treason to constancy." Colonel Effingham acknowledged the truth of this charge, but said he gloried in it.

Thus several weeks glided insensibly away, unalloyed by misfortune, and unstained by regret. Honoria felt not a wish, except to hear from, or see Lady Eustace, to whom she had again written, but there was yet no possibility of receiving answers to her last letters: for though blest with the society and affection of all else who were dearest to her on earth, she had not forgotten the friend of her earliest infancy.

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## CHAP. XXXIX.

IT is, I believe, universally allowed, that nothing is so insipid to an uninterested person, as conversations in which love bears the greatest part. Under this idea, therefore, I shall pass over some time, without enumerating the walks, rides, visits, and parties of pleasure, enjoyed by this happy society, in which I now include the Lamberts and Ashbourns, who not having fixed on a summer residence, Mrs. Ashbourn not chusing to go to the family seat, they took a house only a mile from the Lodge, and came into Hertfordshire immediately on their return from Kent. Lady Mortimer and her son were also visiting at Ashbury, and the constant amusements the whole party engaged in, insensibly drew Miss Melmoth from the retirement in which she had so long lived, that solitude was become habitual to her.

Colonel Effingham now thought, since his pretensions were avowedly favored by all parties, he might hint a wish to Miss Clarendon that she would fix on a day, which by uniting them for ever, would put it out of the power of fate again to separate them. Honoria replied, "she had long given Emily a promise to resign her hand to him, at the same time her brother should receive her's, and could by no means break it;" but added, "that if any unforeseen event should delay their marriage beyond the appointed period, she should no longer consider herself bound to keep it." As this was intended as a proof of regard and condescension, the poor Colonel was obliged to receive it as such, though he at the moment thought of nothing but the length of the time; as seven full months were then wanting before Miss Onslow's minority concluded. He mentioned his distress to Sir William, who with a smile bade him follow his advice, and he would ensure them both happiness, much sooner than he had then any idea of, and accordingly gave him instructions.

The next morning at breakfast, when merely their own family were assembled, Colonel Effingham reproached Miss Onslow for having unfairly obtained a promise from Miss Clarendon, so much to his disadvantage. "Nay, Colonel, (replied Emily,) do not blame me, it is my guardian's fault, he will not consent, and Honoria has kindly agreed to wait till I am at my own disposal." "Well, Miss Onslow, it will be some comfort to me, if you will say, that if Mr. Bridges would permit, you would marry Sir William directly." "Ah Colonel, (replied Emily) I may very safely promise that; and here, Sir William, I declare if you can produce a written agreement from my guardian, I will marry you to-morrow, or when you please, and then Honoria must follow my example." "Thank you, dear Emily," (cried both the gentlemen in a breath) and Sir William held up a letter, the direction of which was in Mr. Bridges' hand. Emily coloured violently. "Surely," exclaimed she, "you cannot have deceived me. No, it is impossible; nothing could tempt him to break his word with Mr. Digby, though he has long been convinced of his unworthiness. Sir William smiled, and gave the letter to Lady Clarendon, who read aloud as follows:

“SIR,

“Have just received a letter from Mr. Digby, which informs me he is married; am therefore released from my engagement to him, and having no objection to you, here give you my free consent, with my name underwritten, to marry my ward, Emily Onslow, whenever she and you can agree. Should have consented before, had not been under promise to him. Will see your lawyers respecting her fortune, and the proper settlements whenever you please, and am,

“Sir,  
Your humble servant,  
*Thomas Bridges.*”

“My wife desires her compliments.”

Miss Onslow was absolutely petrified with amazement; she exclaimed, “I am sure it is a forgery, Sir William, you shall be prosecuted;” but when convinced it was really from her guardian, she said, her promise would not stand good in law, for it was made under an idea of the impossibility of the event which had happened; and she then accused Sir William of having bribed the Colonel to betray her. “No, Miss Onslow,” replied he, “I wanted no other temptation to assist my friend, than the promise Miss Clarendon yesterday gave me, of blessing me with her hand, the same day you should bestow your’s on her brother.” “Well,” cried Sir William, “let it be decided by vote.” To this Emily, having no alternative, was obliged to agree, and all gave it against her but Miss Clarendon, who said, she was drawn in unfairly, and, being equally concerned, she thought herself bound to defend her friend’s cause. But Miss Melmoth answered this objection, by saying, it had long been observed as a rule, that in love, as in war, all stratagems were honourable; and Lady Clarendon joining in this opinion, Honoria and Emily were obliged to give up the point.

Accordingly every necessary preparation was made with all possible expedition; the lawyers performed their parts with unusual speed; and, in a few weeks, Sir William and Emily, Colonel Effingham and Honoria, were united, in the presence of the Mortimers, Fairfaxes, Ashbourns, Lamberts, and Major Southmore, who, at his own earnest request, gave the ladies away. Miss Melmoth alone declined being present at the ceremony; and Honoria would not express a wish it would give her equal pain to comply with or refuse.

After a few weeks spent in all the festivities the country would admit of, and of which all the neighbourhood partook in a degree, Colonel and Mrs. Effingham began to think of executing a scheme they had long had in agitation, of revisiting the scenes of her infancy, and the friends who had so long protected and supported Honoria, and whose present unhappy situation, gave him a claim to every comfort it was in her power to

afford him. In answer to the letters she had sent to Ireland, immediately on her being known as Lady Clarendon's daughter, Miss Meriton had, after congratulating her on the happy event, assured her of the utmost impossibility of acquainting Mr. Fortescue of it, as his lady chose not to let him be seen by any of his old friends; but added, if it was in his power to find an opportunity, her father would certainly avail himself of it, and comply with her request. Mrs. Connor's letter expressed still more joy, though it was less elegantly written. She said, she was sure all was not right, though she could not guess what was wrong.

Lady Clarendon, though she sighed at the idea of parting with her beloved Honoria, yet opposed not a plan she thought it her duty to pursue; and perceiving in Emily's countenance an earnest desire to accompany them, (tho' she never hinted it, even to Sir William, from a delicate fear that her Ladyship would be unhappy to lose them all at once) she herself made the proposal, which Emily instantly declined; but Lady Clarendon strongly urging it, by saying, if she had no objection, Sir William could certainly have none; that Honoria would be extremely gratified by her company, and that she herself would remain with Miss Melmoth till their return; she gladly consented, and the following week they began their journey.

On their arrival at Parkgate, the wind was so entirely against them, that they had reason to fear they should be detained there some days; but in the society of those we love, the time can never appear tedious. The second morning, while they were at breakfast, a post-chaise drove into the gate, and Sir William catching a slight glimpse of a gentleman who was in it, hastily ran out of the room, saying, he believed it was an old friend of his, but not mentioning his name. It was in fact, Sir James Eustace, and his lady, who were that instant arrived at Parkgate, in their way to Ireland. They mutually expressed the utmost joy and surprize at this unexpected meeting; and Sir James, after introducing him to Lady Eustace, demanded by what strange accident they all met at that place? "Suffer me first (replied Sir William) to enquire why you came through England without staying to see my mother?" "It was our fixed intention, (replied he) and for that purpose we landed at Portsmouth, but there meeting a gentleman who gave us the most unpleasant accounts of Lady Eustace's connections in Ireland, from whom it is very long since she heard, in compliance with her wishes, I determined to set out immediately for Wood Park." "And I (said Sir William) came here with the same view, and therefore we may go on together: but now let me introduce you to my wife, my sister, and her husband." "What, are you married?" "Yes, and to a most charming woman." "But what sister do you mean? your lady's sister, I suppose." "No, my own; but this mystery will explain itself when you see them." Saying this, he led the way, and opening the door of the room where they were sitting, Lady Eustace and Honoria flew into each other's arms, but joy and astonishment so wholly overpowered the latter, that she fainted away.

Sir William severely blamed his rashness in not preparing his sister for this interview, and the Colonel was half distracted with terror: He well recollected Henrietta Fortescue in the strange lady, and therefore guessed the reason of Honoria's alarm. Emily was the only one of the party ignorant of the cause of this confusion, and every one was

too much engaged to inform her, but the names of Fortescue and Eustace pronounced by some of them, instantly resolved the mystery. Mrs. Effingham after proper applications recovered, every apprehension subsided, and they all sat down to the breakfast table; and then Lady Eustace, whose curiosity was strongly excited by hearing Sir William call Honoria his sister, had a short account of the strange discovery which had taken place. She truly sympathised in her friend's unexpected happiness, and then turning to the Colonel, enquired in what way he was concerned? and hearing he was actually married to her, replied, smiling at Honoria, "That, I confess, does not surprize me so much; I always had an idea she was so partial to the name of Effingham, that in its favour she would at some time resign her own." Honoria then introduced Lady Clarendon, not merely as her sister, but her friend. "As such (answered Lady Eustace) I shall ever love and esteem her; but you must not, dear Honoria, let new friends and new connections banish from your heart those who, if they unhappily from absence wanted the power, have never lost the wish to serve you, and whose sincere affection nothing can ever extinguish." "Do not, my dear Henrietta, (replied our heroine) entertain such an idea; believe me it did not a little add to my happiness, that in gaining a right to the name of Clarendon, I should at the same time be related to you in the same degree that we really thought we were from infancy, but which the death of your excellent and ever lamented mother, discovered was merely a generous deception to secure me attention and respect." The tears started to Lady Eustace's eyes at the recollection of her mother, and she replied, "My poor father! Ah, Honoria, you know not what I have suffered since my arrival in England. At Portsmouth we accidentally met a gentleman from Dublin, who spoke of my mother-in-law in such terms, that I fear for his tranquillity; the letters I have received from him have been written in the highest style of praise of her, but I now doubt not they were of her dictating. The second packet I had from Ireland mentioned your having left Wood Park, and prevented my writing to you again, from not knowing where to direct." "Dear Henrietta, (returned Mrs. Effingham) your speech implies a reproof I deserve not. I wrote to you on my arrival in England, and have since dispatched two packets, the last of which however can scarcely be arrived in India; and have long, as Lady Clarendon can witness for me, been anxiously expecting an answer. You have now accounted for your silence, but in a manner that it gives me pain to reflect on, for surely you must often have accused me of neglect and ingratitude." "No, I knew there must be a good reason, for indeed I never suspected you would forget me." "Then, (returned Honoria) we had a mutual confidence in each other: Emily knows in my heaviest distresses I ever looked forward to your arrival, with a certainty of support and protection, that calmed my mind under all the misfortunes I endured." "And surely, Honoria, (said Lady Eustace) you only did me justice, in believing that had I been in England, you would not have experienced any misery, that my earnest endeavours could have relieved you from."

Whilst this conversation was passing between the ladies, Sir William Clarendon and the Colonel were explaining to Sir James some of the various circumstances which had occurred since their departure: this caught his lady's attention, and her curiosity was so strongly raised, that she was happy to be a silent listener to a relation, in which she was so deeply interested, from her warm attachment to her friend. This silence she only broke by some passionate exclamations, whilst Honoria, who took her part of the story, was

relating the treatment she had received from Mrs. Fortescue, of barbarous—inexcusable—dreadful—insufferable—but when she came to that part of her narrative, when she left Lady Egerton, and broke her arm, she sat as if in an agony of suspense and anxiety, to hear what followed; and when Miss Melmoth's kind and generous behaviour was mentioned, she burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Where is that charming woman, whose disinterested benevolence, and unsuspecting mind, prompted her to an act so amiable and so uncommon?" Honoria smiled at her transport, and after answering her question, continued her relation, during the recital of which, Lady Eustace was variously affected, but her agitation subsided into the most perfect and tranquil joy at the conclusion. She said, "Lady Clarendon might be certain of her unalterable friendship, and constant gratitude, for the many proofs of affection she had shewn Honoria, at a time she could little suspect that they should ever be sisters." Emily replied, "Mrs. Effingham's excellent example, and kind precepts, had reformed so many errors in her character, that the obligation was reversed, exclusive of the extreme happiness she always enjoyed in her society."

This conversation lasted till dinner, and in the evening they were summoned on board, the wind being fair, and they sailed for Ireland. Lady Eustace and our heroine had in the course of the day only a few moments to themselves, but in these they found time to say a great deal; they were convinced of the sincerity of each other's friendship, rejoiced in each other's happiness, and both joined in the hope, that in this visit to Ireland, they should find means to release Mr. Fortescue from his cruel and long endured bondage. It had before been settled, that Sir William, the Colonel, and their ladies, should take up their abode at Mr. Fizesborne's, and Sir James and Lady Eustace to go directly to Wood Park; but it was now agreed it would be better for one of the gentlemen to go on first, and break to Mr. Fortescue the arrival of his daughter and Honoria, lest in the present weak state of his spirits, the sudden appearance of either should be fatal to him. Under this idea they alighted at North Hall, and Sir James went on.

The sad change so visible both in the park and house, struck him with horror as he entered; he rang the bell several times before any one appeared; at last an old man came out, who, on his enquiring for Mr. Fortescue, replied his lady was at home, and asked him to walk in. That hospitality so evident once, even in the countenance of his domestics, was now no longer to be observed: the alacrity of the dependants, ever reflects the disposition of the governor, and it was so here; the parsimony of the mistress appeared even in the servants. Slowly the old man pushed open the hall door, which had lately never admitted a guest, and shewed Sir James into the parlour that was once graced by the benevolent Mrs. Fortescue, whose cheerfulness diffused universal pleasure among her friends. Here sat her contrast alone; she rose at his entrance, and being a perfect stranger to his person, could not of course, as he had not told his name to the servant, by any means guess who he was. She received him with that kind of civility she could at any time assume, but on his desiring to see Mr. Fortescue, replied, her dear husband was in a very bad state of health, and never saw strangers. "Then, Madam, if you will tell him, his son, Sir James Eustace, is here, that objection will be obviated." "Sir James Eustace!" cried Mrs. Fortescue, colouring violently from apprehension and dismay, "is it possible?"



“Yes, Madam, we are just arrived from India, and I left Lady Eustace at North Hall, to prepare her father for her reception, lest her sudden arrival should affect him too much; and with her, a lady, whom I believe you must recollect by the name of Sommerville, now Mrs. Effingham.” “Yes, Sir,” replied Mrs. Fortescue, rising in a fury, “I have so much cause to remember her, that I am determined if she enters this house I will that moment leave it.”— “That, Madam, shall be as you please,” returned Sir James, calmly; “it is a resolution, I fancy, no one will oppose, but Mrs. Effingham certainly will come here with Lady Eustace, and I beg I may this instant see my father, to prepare him against their arrival.” “Sir, I say, you shall not see him, but you shall know who governs here.” “I know too well who has governed here, Madam, but who shall in future, is another thing, therefore lead me directly to him, or I shall find the way myself.” Mrs. Fortescue re-seated herself, and Sir James observing her obstinacy, rang the bell with unusual violence. The servants, ever accustomed to obey with the utmost expedition the orders of their imperious mistress, ran hastily at her supposed summons, but were struck dumb with surprize, when Sir James, in a commanding and resolute tone, demanded where Mr. Fortescue was, and bade them shew him immediately. The servants looked at their lady and hesitated, but finding she contradicted them not, though her countenance displayed the most violent rage, and Sir James repeating his desire, at the same time informing them who he was, and by what right he insisted on an interview, they obeyed, and going before him to a distant part of the house, opened the door of an apartment where their master was sitting, and after respectfully bowing, withdrew. They had sagacity enough to perceive there would soon be a revolution in the household, and consequently paid their court to the rising party.

Mr. Fortescue started at the entrance of Sir James, but did not know him, till he told his name, and he then, after affectionately embracing him, burst into tears. Sir James, to soothe his spirits, said “his daughter was at North Hall, with her friend, Honoria, who both impatiently waited to pay their duty to him.” “Alas, (replied he) what shall I do, my wife will never let them come here?” “Not let them, Sir! are not you the master, and shall she dare contradict you?” “Yes, my dear son, (said he) she will, and I cannot help it. I have had nobody to support me, and she has had her own way so long, that opposing her is a task too great for my spirits to undergo.”— “Leave then the task of opposition to me, Sir; only tell me you are weary of the restraint in which you have hitherto lived, and willing to quit this vile woman, and return with your daughter and myself to England, where you can live happily and at ease, and I will instantly and effectually release you from this horrible bondage.” “Hush,” (cried he) in a low voice, and looking towards the door; “but can you take me away this moment, without my seeing her again, can we go out a back way?” “Yes, Sir, (said Sir James) to be sure we can if you wish it, but what can you fear with me at your side? if any one dare to controul you, I will assert your rights and defend you.” “Why, that’s true,” (said Mr. Fortescue) gathering courage as he spoke, “then we will go out at the great door, and I’ll never return again.” Sir James then rang the bell, and ordered the carriage to draw up. Mrs. Fortescue hearing this, and not having an idea her husband was to accompany him, imagined he was going to bring the ladies, and therefore to avoid another dispute, she retired to her own chamber, bidding the servants shut and lock all the doors when the carriage was driven off. It was no small

pleasure to Mr. Fortescue, that he thus escaped meeting her, and with more joy than he had known since his last marriage he got into the carriage, which then proceeded as fast as possible to North Hall.

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## CHAP. XL.

MR. Fitzosborne lived with that hospitable regularity which must ever constitute comfort if not happiness; he received this whole party with the sincerest demonstrations of joy, congratulated his friend in the warmest terms, and as Honoria's relations, paid Sir William and Lady Clarendon every attention in his power. He would not hear of Lady Eustace's going to her father's, but insisted that both Sir James and herself should take up their residence with him during their stay in Ireland, as he said he was well convinced it must be pleasanter for her to be with her friends, than under the roof with her vile mother, and that she could see her father every day. Her heart readily assented to this proposal, but referred him to Sir James for an answer.

Whilst this point was in debate another carriage stopped, and a gentleman and lady alighted whom Mr. Fitzosborne ran to receive, and in an instant returned, introducing Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland. When the former first saw Honoria he coloured violently, but soon recovering, he presented to her his Lady, in whom she saw her long esteemed friend, Sophia Meriton. She expressed the utmost joy at this unexpected an interview, and felt all that she expressed. The happiness was mutual; Mrs. Cleveland had always loved both Miss Fortescue and Miss Sommerville with the truest friendship, and had never given credit to the various cruel reports raised of the latter, even before Mr. Cleveland's return had convinced her of their falshood. They had been married about three months, and were now come to fulfil a long made promise to Mr. Fitzosborne, of spending some time with him whilst they were looking out for a house somewhere in that neighbourhood, as Mr. Cleveland's estate was in a distant part of the kingdom, and Sophia wished to fix on a spot not very far from Castlewood. But finding Mr. Fitzosborne's house at present so full, they would have deferred their visit, but he declared they must stay to help him to entertain his new guests, and give Sir William and Lady Clarendon a favourable impression of a country to which they were strangers: they knew not how to resist so strong an inducement as the pleasure of passing their time in such society, and at once consented.

Mr. Cleveland, after the first surprize, behaved to Mrs. Effingham with such unembarrassed vivacity, that she was soon convinced he had wholly conquered the attachment he had formerly borne her; and certain of this, she scrupled not to ask him by what accident it happened they should both leave the country the same day, and thus give the people a reason for saying they went off together? "Sophy can answer for me, madam," replied he, calling his lady to them, "that the instant I heard the report, I not only contradicted it, but even gave the true cause of my sudden departure. The fact was this: I had an uncle, a rich merchant at Cork, who from my former extravagance had wholly disclaimed me, but hearing that I was really reformed, resolved to alter his will in my favour; this he did, and soon after falling ill, he sent an express to desire me to go to him immediately. I wrote the note to you directly on receiving this, but would not mention the reason of my journey, lest I should be disappointed, little supposing you would leave Ireland before my return. On my arrival at Cork, I found my uncle in a dangerous but

lingering disorder; I continued with him till he died, and had the satisfaction of perceiving my presence greatly contributed to his ease and tranquillity. At his death I came into the possession of his whole fortune, excepting a few legacies, as I was his nearest and almost only relation: with part of this I paid all my creditors, who gladly restored my estate, which I then earnestly set about improving with the remainder; it had been so long neglected, that it wanted a large sum of money laid out upon it, to put it in the condition it was when I first inherited it. When all this was compleated, I went to Castlewood, and there solicited, and obtained the hand of my beloved Sophia, which has made me as happy as I doubt not but you are, madam; for give me leave to suspect your attachment to the Colonel is not of a late date." "You are perfectly right, Mr. Cleveland," replied Honoria; "it began long before I knew you."

Here their conversation was interrupted by Mr. Fitzosborne, who informed Mr. Effingham Mr. Fortescue was arrived with Sir James, and begged she would go with Lady Eustace into another room, where he impatiently waited to see them, and she instantly complied. Colonel Effingham followed his lady, and during their absence Sir William and Lady Clarendon informed Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland of some of the strange events they so much wished for a recital of. Sir William was never tired of speaking of his sister, nor Emily of her friend, and they were of course as anxious to relate as the Clevelands were to hear, and this conversation lasted as long as the rest of the company were with Mr. Fortescue.

The interview between him and his daughter was extremely tender and affecting; nor was Honoria excluded from his caresses, for he loved her with a fondness almost equal to that he felt for Lady Eustace. During their little journey, he had been calm and composed, and every step the horses took from Wood Park, seemed to restore his serenity and chearfulness; but the sight of his children, as he called them both, was almost too much for his weak frame to support. The idea of being so unexpectedly relieved from all he dreaded, and restored to all he loved, filled his mind with a joy it was not capable of bearing; which growing every moment stronger, might have upset his reason, had he not happily fallen into a state of insensibility; and when he recovered, a burst of tears gave vent to the feelings of his heart, and again settled his mind in a state of tranquillity.

The first use he made of his speech was to apologize to Mrs. Effingham for the cruel treatment she had received from his wife, which he acknowledged he had latterly observed, but without the power to resent. He entreated her pardon in expressions the most affectionate; and Honoria, falling on her knees, besought him not to recall circumstances that so evidently gave him pain, which she had long forgotten, and regretted only on his account. He tenderly embraced her, and called down the choicest blessings of Heaven upon her head: he then told the Colonel, her happiness was in his possession, and adjured him in the most solemn manner, to value the treasure he had in her as it deserved to be valued, and bade him never permit her to repent a choice which reflected so much honour on himself. The Colonel seized his hand, and with an emotion he could not suppress, replied, "When I lose the ardent affection, the gratitude, the respect, the tender friendship for her, which now glows in my bosom, may every good

forsake me, and may I be deprived of every hope of happiness." The whole party were in tears, but Henrietta's flowed with violence, from a joyful surprize to find her father's intellects in so perfect a state, his recollection so good, his understanding so unshaken. He had been represented to her as in a second childhood, and thus from apprehensions during the reign of his tyrant wife, he appeared to those strangers who accidentally saw him: but these happy events seemed to renovate his faculties, and restore them to their full vigour. He then enquired who the rest of the company were, and hearing there were only the Clevelands, whom he was perfectly acquainted with, Honoria's brother, whom he had before seen, and his lady, he desired to go into the drawing-room, and consult them all upon what measures were the properest to be taken with respect to Mrs. Fortescue: but, on his joining them, they all agreed in persuading him to devote that day to festivity, and think of business to-morrow. He willingly consented, and his spirits reviving with his happiness, Colonel Effingham once more beheld in him the same Mr. Fortescue whose convivial hospitality had so often been celebrated by his whole regiment. He congratulated Sir William on the acquisition of such a sister, and expressed a strong desire to see her amiable mother, which he doubted not would be gratified on his arrival in England. In the mirth and harmony of this day he forgot his cares, and he was the only one present who had any to forget.

The next morning Mr. Fortescue, refreshed by a quiet and undisturbed sleep, desired his friends would consult on what methods he had best pursue; and it was soon determined the gentlemen should ride over to Wood Park, and endeavour to bring Mrs. Fortescue calmly to comply with their wishes; which were, that she should retire wherever she pleased, with a decent annuity that Mr. Fortescue should allow her, and which was to be sufficient for necessaries, but not superfluities. On these terms she was to quit the Park instantly, which should be either lett or sold. Here Mr. Cleveland interrupted them, by saying, it was exactly the situation he wished for, and begged he might be permitted to treat for it. This offer Mr. Fortescue gladly accepted; and the gentlemen then set off, Sir James as the principal, Sir William, the Colonel, and Mr. Fitzosborne, as auxiliaries.

When Mrs. Fortescue learned the departure of her husband, she raved like a distracted woman, and accused all the servants of being in a plot to betray her; but a night's recollection calmed her passion, and suggested to her the mode of conduct it was best for her to pursue: she sent instantly for her brother, who attended her summons, and they waited together the expected visit from Sir James. On his arrival, he gave her in the civilest manner Mr. Fortescue's proposal; and desired from him that she would as soon as possible quit Wood Park, and retire to her brother's; but this she positively refused, saying, Wood Park was her own property, and nothing should ever induce her to leave it. "Your own, madam! by what right do you claim it?" said Sir James. "By virtue of a deed of gift, which Mr. Fortescue will not dare deny, and which my brother, at his request, drew up, making over to me the greatest part of his fortune." "We shall see whether my father will acknowledge it," returned Sir James. "That, sir," said Mr. O'Carrol, "can be of no consequence in law; Mr. Fortescue's intellects are too much impaired, for his assertions to stand good in a court of justice." "And, pray sir, (demanded Colonel

Effingham, with a look of affected pity) how long has he been in this unhappy way?" "Oh, for these six months," cried the brother and sister in a breath. Sir James saw through the meaning of this question, and still pretending to disbelieve the deed of gift, instantly demanded to see it, and it was produced. The four gentlemen were all witnesses, that it was dated only three months back; they were aware of some deception, and therefore chose to see it immediately, lest when they discovered their mistake, they should make some alteration in it. "This is a strange oversight, indeed, Mr. O'Carrol," cried Sir James, "if, as you say, my father's intellects have failed him above six months, a paper signed by him since that period cannot stand good in law; and that you both asserted it, here are three witnesses besides myself, all men of probity and unquestioned honour." The guilty wretches coloured at this fatal mistake, and Sir James went on: "But if we can prove my father is still in his senses, and if he denies the execution of this deed, it must be as I very much suspect it is, a complete forgery, and you may both depend on standing a trial in a court of justice." Hardened in guilt even this threat they both sustained, and insisted upon Mr. Fortescue's being applied to with an effrontery, which led the gentlemen almost to believe he had really consented to and signed it, though they doubted not but every improper means had been used to induce him to comply.

The fact was, that during the gentlemen's return to enquire of Mr. Fortescue, they both intended to make their escape, with all the valuables of plate, &c. they could secure; which added to what she had long hoarded from starving the servants, and denying her husband those indulgences to which he had ever been accustomed, would insure them a comfortable subsistence for his life, and at his death her settlement would afford them a certain affluence. For this end they affected so deep a resentment at the charge of forgery, that it partly imposed upon the gentlemen who saw not through their design, but proposed going to North Hall, and by Mr. Fortescue's answer be determined what further measures to pursue. But just as they were setting out, it occurred to Mr. Fitzosborne, who from living in the neighbourhood, knew the character this woman bore for art and duplicity, that it would be highly improper to leave them without a guard, and mentioning it to his friends, they became of his opinion, and Sir William Clarendon offered to stay with him for that purpose, with three servants who attended them, whilst Sir James and the Colonel went on. This was instantly acceded to, they set off, the others remained in the parlour, and the servants armed stood at the door, strengthened by several of Mr. Fortescue's, who gladly joined their master's party. This was a stroke of politics equally unexpected and unwelcome to O'Carrol and his vile associate, who uncertain in what manner to act, at last thought it would be best to continue the undaunted assurance they had hitherto preserved, hoping it might throw the gentlemen off their guard, and leave them at liberty to escape, but in this they were mistaken.

In the mean time Sir James and the Colonel arrived at North Hall, and mentioned their proceedings to Mr. Fortescue, who appeared greatly shocked at this intelligence, not as he declared from any consciousness of having signed the deed of gift, but from a knowledge of their complete villainy, which he said he doubted not would induce his wife and her brother to take any measures to obtain their ends. He repeatedly assured them in the clearest and most resolute manner, that he had never signed any paper since his

marriage, having been particularly cautioned on that head by a friend, who suspected his wife of unjustifiable intentions. He added, that once they brought him a parchment they called a lease of some house on his estate, but that he absolutely refused to sign it, as they would not permit him to read it; and that this refusal had afterwards caused him many miserable hours.

The proposals were then settled which were to be made to Mrs. Fortescue, and lest she should decline accepting them, Sir James and the Colonel took with them proper officers to terrify her into compliance, and again directed their course to Wood Park. Here they found every thing in the same state in which they left it, and they ordered the officers to walk up and down before the windows, whilst they entered the room. Mrs. Fortescue and her brother started at the sight of the men, but restrained both their terror and anger, till they heard Sir James speak, who with the most perfect calmness thus addressed them. "You must both be too sensible of your own guilt, not to anticipate the intelligence I bring. Mr. Fortescue utterly denies having signed any paper since his unhappy connection with you; the officers are therefore waiting without to commit you on the charge of forgery, and to confine you till you can be brought to a public trial: but he thirsts not for your blood, therefore listen to me. With that humanity which ever marks his character, he has consented you shall be this instant released, if you will give up your settlement, and confess the forgery; neither does he recede from his former proposal of allowing you a comfortable annuity, though this additional proof of your base ingratitude might well authorize such a step; but liberty and life upon these terms shall still be yours."

O'Carrol shook with apprehension; and saw himself in idea in the hands of justice, and the fatal cord round his neck; and fear, not penitence, induced him to fall on his knees, entreat for mercy, and make a full confession of his guilt; then going to a bureau, he took out his sister's settlement and the false deed, and gave them both to Sir James. Mrs. Fortescue saw the whole transaction with silent astonishment: more hardened than her brother, she still hoped a more favourable turn of fortune; and better acquainted with the extreme mildness of Mr. Fortescue's disposition, doubted not, but with some expostulation, she should, at least, obtain leave to keep the settlement; but his precipitate conduct depriving her of this hope, the instant she saw Sir James put the parchment in his pocket, she became furious with passion, which she vented in the bitterest invectives. When her rage had exhausted itself, she became calm, from the mere impossibility of continuing her violent expressions; and O'Carrol, taking advantage of this cessation, endeavoured to convince her of the propriety as well as necessity of listening to her husband's proposal; as he saw too well in the countenance of Sir James, a resolute determination, which left no hope of a revocation of a sentence pronounced in so decisive a manner. He begged the gentlemen to withdraw for a moment; and when they were alone, he painted so forcibly the consequences of a refusal, that she was at last obliged to comply, but desired she might remain a day or two longer in the house to pack up her cloaths. This request Sir James thought proper to deny, as he declared he should stay till she was gone, and then proceeded to fix his seal upon every place of consequence; whilst disappointed in her hopes of plunder, she soon made every preparation, and Sir James ordering the carriage, with a mortified heart, though an unsubdued spirit, she attended her

brother to his habitation at L——, which had long been merely a nominal one. Here they waited till Mr. Fortescue sent the paper which empowered his wife to receive the annuity, and then left a country where the characters of Mrs. Fortescue and her brother were both known and detested, and flew for an asylum to a distant part of the kingdom, in which we will leave them to the punishment they so well deserve, the terrors of an evil conscience, and the reflection that their own guilt and folly have deprived them of those comforts they would have otherwise have enjoyed.

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## CHAP. XLI.

WHEN Sir James returned to Mr. Fortescue with the account of his success, the old gentleman burst into tears, and seizing his hand, thanked him in the most earnest manner for his spirited conduct, that had released him from a tie, which had so long rendered his life a burden; and from that moment regained his usual cheerfulness and tranquillity. Mr. Cleveland purchased, and took immediate possession of Wood Park, and at the earnest request of Honoria, he reinstated Connor as head gardener. I would not have my readers suppose our heroine had forgotten her old nurse. The day after her arrival, whilst the gentlemen were transacting the business at Wood Park, attended by the other ladies, she drove near the well-known cottage, when they alighted, and walked up to the house. Mrs. Connor saw them at a distance, without knowing who they were, and advanced to meet them, but the instant she perceived Honoria, she ran, and clasping her in her arms, exclaimed in a transport of joy, "Oh, my dear child! are you come at last to see me? why, they told me, that a wicked creature pretended to be you, and had got your name and your fortune, and all the while she was you. I was crying to think you had forgotten your poor old nurse: but now you are your own self again, you are as good as when you sat upon my knee, or when in first madam's time, you came here every day with Miss Henny, and ran about the garden, and plucked flowers." Honoria, with equal affection, returned the good woman's embraces, who was so overpowered, she saw not Lady Eustace, till Mrs. Effingham, pointing to her, enquired if she did not know that lady? Mrs. Connor, when a little recovered, made a handsome apology, and said, Miss Henny always loved Miss Honoria so well, she was sure she would not be angry with her for the preference. Emily was delighted with her affection and gratitude: Mrs. Cleveland had often seen her, when in former days she visited at the Park, and had ever loved her honest and tender solicitude for her little darling, as she always called our heroine. They then explained to her some of the circumstances which she was yet ignorant of, and when she heard of Honoria's marriage with Colonel Effingham, she was almost out of her senses with joy. "Ay! (cried she) I have told Paddy a thousand and a thousand times, that there was not a man in the world good enough for her but the Captain, and that if she would not have nobody at all, she might have him, because he was so good, and so charitable, and so gentle, and so much like herself." Honoria smiled at her encomiums, and desired that she and her husband would dine the next day at North Hall, and then they should see both the Colonel and her brother; but even the hope of seeing her again so soon, could scarcely prevail on Mrs. Connor to part with her then; she walked by the carriage, which drove slowly, above a mile, talking to her all the way, and at last very unwillingly returned to her own house.

The following day they were punctual to their appointment, and exclusive of the satisfaction they derived from the attention with which they were treated by the whole party, their future comfort was secured by a handsome annuity which Colonel Effingham settled on them for both their lives, as a reward for their kindness to his beloved Honoria, in providing her an asylum in England, and releasing her from the cruelty of Mrs. Fortescue. Sir William Clarendon, who had in vain attempted to prevail on the Colonel to let him have the pleasure of paying half, saying he was equally obliged to them, after

expressing his thanks, forced on them a noble present in the name of himself and his lady, whose affection to Honoria he declared could not be exceeded, and only equalled by that which her mother and husband bore her. The good old couple knew not how to express their delight and gratitude for these numerous obligations; and Mr. Cleveland added to the happiness of Paddy, by giving him the charge of overlooking his garden; the Colonel's bounty had set him above labour, but employment was so natural to his active spirit, that in a life of total quietness he would have wanted amusement, and was so fond of his former occupation, that the continuance of it was a real pleasure to him.

Every thing thus happily settled, they all returned to England, accompanied by Mr. Fortescue. Lady Clarendon, though easy, had not been happy in the absence of her children, and was truly rejoiced to see them once more. During this little period, Sir Charles Mortimer had attached himself to Fanny Ashbourn, and Harry to Ellen Lambert, and all parties appeared to approve of these connections. In the winter, all but Miss Melmoth went to London: Sir William Clarendon and the Colonel took a house not very distant from each other, and as nearly Lady Clarendon as possible; and the latter began to seek for a summer residence in Hertfordshire, in compliance both with his own and Honoria's wishes to fix near the Fairfaxes and Miss Melmoth, and not very far from Sir William, to whom his mother had given up Clarendon place, intending herself to keep only the house in Harley-street, and pass the summer with her children.

The Colonel succeeded beyond his expectations; he purchased an elegant house and park within the proposed distance of Ware, and Sir James Eustace followed his example, to the infinite satisfaction of Honoria. Mr. Fortescue was to live wholly with his daughter, except when he chose to visit his beloved niece, as he still called our heroine, who was ever gratefully attached to him. Lady Egerton at the expiration of the year of solitude she had spent in Devonshire, returned once more to her friend, and again in some degree mixed with the world, though with a firm resolution she still adheres to the determination she made at the death of Sir William, never to enter into a second engagement. The memory of her unfortunate lover is still engraved on a heart, that never did, that never can know another attachment. A similarity of disposition, and a similarity of fate, have endeared her and Miss Melmoth to each other; both considering themselves, in some measure, the cause of the death of the person they best loved in the world.

The humanity which induced Miss Melmoth first to protect Honoria, has been its own reward; for in the strong and sincere affection she has long borne her, she has in a degree lost the recollection of those misfortunes, which before pressed so heavy on her soul. Honoria's happiness is become her own, and every blessing she enjoys, reflects a beam of true satisfaction on the breast of her attached and benevolent friend.

Lady Clarendon and Lady Mortimer, in the excellent conduct of their children, experience the happy effects of having in their youth instilled into their minds those principles of virtue, which have since regulated their lives.

Emily, from having copied the example of Honoria, whose pure and steady mind had been unshaken by adversity, unsullied by prosperity, has reformed the few errors which arose merely from a volatile imagination, and is become herself a bright pattern of every virtue. Fond of her to excess, Sir William would have loved even her faults; yet he rejoiced to think she was equally worthy of his esteem, admiration, and affection.

Major Southmore having with Sir William Egerton's estate acquired the power, as he before possessed the will, of doing good in the most extensive sense of the word, was truly happy, and had not a wish ungratified. He would not recall his son from the service of his country, but he gave him such an allowance, that, added to his pay, enabled him and his family to live in a style of comfort and elegance, which their limited income would not before permit. He now devotes his time to the education of his grandson and nephews; alternately visiting his friends, and often spending several months with old Mrs. Lambert, to enjoy the company of his nieces, whom he will not, though extremely fond of them, remove from under her protection. Ellen, it is believed, will soon have a protector in Mr. Ashbourn, but Lucy will still remain with her grandmother, whose declining health requires her attendance, only staying with her sister now and then a few weeks at a time.

Captain Harcourt, though he thoroughly detests his wife for the duplicity of her conduct, yet not being able to afford her a separate maintenance, is obliged to take her with him wherever he goes; and, as ever must be the consequence of mutual dislike and ill opinion, they live in a continual state of opposition and discontent. Marianne often bitterly regrets the ambition which induced her to personate Honoria, and marry Captain Harcourt; convinced, from observation and experience, she should have been much happier in an humble situation.

Sir James and Lady Eustace, Captain and Mrs. Fairfax, live in that perfect harmony with each other, which is ever the result of a choice, built on a well-grounded opinion, and secured by increasing affection and confirmed esteem.

Colonel Effingham and Honoria, after the various misfortunes they have both experienced, enjoy with more gratitude to Heaven, the state of tranquil felicity in which they are now placed. Happy in the esteem of their friends, and the approbation of the world; assured of each other's disinterested affection, and convinced it will never lessen: surrounded by those dear connections whose increasing regard and delightful society, could of themselves give pleasure, their wishes are all fulfilled. From the doubts which formerly tormented their minds having proved fallacious, they have now the most perfect confidence in each other; and from the truest attachment, grounded on the sincerest friendship, they possess that real happiness so seldom experienced by humanity.

Yet it will often, though not always, fall to the lot of those who placing a firm dependence on Providence, support the evils of life without repining, and enjoy the blessings of it, by diffusing them to all around them; and let us remember, if the virtuous lose an earthly reward, they are sure of possessing perfect felicity, in a state where happiness can meet with no alloy.

THE END.

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