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The attribution to Mrs Martin comes from a Minerva Library catalogue of 1814 (Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press, 1790-1820* (Oxford, University Press, 1939), p.198). A clever novel concerning the efforts of Sir Philip Desomeaux's quest for a wife. Sir Philip takes an extraordinarily practical approach to his search. The novel opens with an advertisement that he has placed in the newspaper, stating simply: 'A man wants a wife.' His practicality quickly gives way to romantic passion, however, upon his meeting with his 'Enchantress', Miss Josepha Milward.

THE

ENCHANTRESS,

OR

WHERE SHALL I FIND HER?

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

MELBOURNE, DELORAINE, REGINALD, &c.

"You see me tossing on a sea of passions,
"An ebb and flow of contrarieties,
"Which now seem kindly wafting me to shore,
"And the next moment plunge me back again,
"Into the bosom of th' outrageous deep!"

MILLER.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE

Minerva-Press,

FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET

1801.

THE

ENCHANTRESS.

CHAP. I.

"How happy could I be with either,
"Were t'other dear charmer away."
Beggar's Opera.

IN the most fashionable newspapers in the month of March, 17, appeared, for several successive days, the following advertisement.

"A MAN wants a wife. If any woman of sense, virtue, and spirit, will venture to answer this notice to Q——, at the —— Coffee-house, —— street, she shall have no reason to repent her condescension."

Sir Philip Desormeaux, the writer of the foregoing paragraph, had fortune, knowledge of the world, and the manners of a gentleman. His first wish had been for domestic happiness; but his most earnest search among the females he met with in his line of life had been unsuccessful. At the age of thirty-five, despairing of meeting with a woman whose character would assimilate with his own, he adopted the above singular and rarely respectable mode of enquiry. That he was a sort of humorist, this conduct will sufficiently testify: what other traits marked his character, his future actions must develop; we mean only to be faithful historians.

The usual tenor of advertisements for partners for life is so very dissimilar to the style of Sir Philip's, that it caused a laugh at many a tea-table in all parts of the town. Addresses of this kind always catch the female eye, and Sir Philip's abruptness, conciseness, and energy, created a wish in many a female heart to reply to him. In many, no doubt, the wish was all; yet the number of billets addressed to Q——, at the —— Coffee-house, seemed to prove, that every one whose notice it had attracted, had seized the pen to answer it. Sir Philip snatched up the billets, and eagerly retired to his own house to peruse them. He read, and tore, and burnt, and exclaimed—

"Surely the whole female world is made up of sentiment and stuff, or levity and assurance! I must die a bachelor."

Many and many a pretty tender scrawl did he commit to the flames—many an elegant and pathetic description of person and character, drawn with ill-assumed modesty, did he destroy with a peevish oath; till, at length, he grew so out of humour with his project, that he meditated throwing the rest, in a lump, behind the fire. One more, however, he opened; and, in spite of his ill humour, laid it by for a second perusal. Another succeeded, and was burnt; and another, and another; but the single one, which had caught his attention, determined him to read them all.

While he was thus employed, the door of his room was thrown open, and Colonel Montford entered.

"What the devil are you about, Desormeaux?" exclaimed he: "burning and destroying papers enough to raise a conflagration! Whence come all these pretty billets?"

"To answer your questions by another," said Sir Philip—"pray, how did you get in? I gave orders to be at home to nobody."

"You gave your orders, I presume, to Bronze," replied the Colonel; "and William let me in: and now then answer my enquiry."

"Nay," said Sir Philip, "it was to avoid all enquiry that I chose to be out. But, come, I am tired of my employment; so I will lock up all together till to-morrow, and saunter away with you."

"No, no," replied Montford; "I have been lounging about the streets all the morning, and came on purpose to sit an hour with you; therefore continue your employment."

"And I have not breathed the fresh air to-day," answered Sir Philip; "so I positively must either walk or ride with you, if you please."

"You were always the essence of politeness," said Montford; "but I see the real drift of this earnestness for air and exercise: these notes are about some secret business, and you do not chuse—"

"No, faith," interrupted Sir Philip, smiling; "'tis a folly to make a secret of it to you:" and with these words he handed to him the written copy of the advertisement; and pushing half a score billets across the table, desired him to open and read them aloud. Montford laughed, applauded the idea, and, taking up one of the notes, said—

"A very emblematical seal this lady has chosen;—an arrow joining two hearts, but no sign of the hand that drew the bow." Then, bursting the wax, he began—'Daring as the design may appear, to venture to reply—' but Sir Philip cut him short with an oath, that he had already burnt a hundred of the most confident billets, that all sung the praises of modesty. This was accordingly condemned, and another opened. Colonel Montford read—

'The odd conciseness of your style pleases me. If I should like you as well as I like your advertisement, I think I could venture upon you.—Give some intimation in the same paper how it would be right to proceed.'

This note, without signature or date, both pleased and puzzled Sir Philip. Colonel Montford exclaimed:

"This will do, Desormeaux—this is a woman of some soul!"

Sir Philip handed the other billet to him. The Colonel read aloud—

'There is nothing I wish for more than the protection of a man of honour. I am strangely and sadly circumstanced; yet I dare venture to take to myself the character you have drawn. To communicate more at so early a period, would be imprudent; but if you wish for further information, address to M. M., at Mrs. Hunter's, No. 4, Globe Court, Long Acre.'

"Almost an equal balance, by Jove!" cried Montford. "These girls are both too good to be lost.—What say you, Desormeaux—shall we try for them both, and toss up for the choice?"

"The choice," said Sir Philip, smiling, "ought to be mine. But I am partly of your mind,—that both are worth the pursuit."

"And yet," resumed Montford, "ten to one but both are adventuresses, and would ill repay the trouble."

"How can one get at the little Gipsy that has given no address?" said Sir Philip. "What intimation can I give her?"

"Aha! she has caught you," said Montford, laughing. "Well, will you give up M.M. to me?"

"You are so giddy," replied the Baronet, "that you would not follow the chace."

"Giddy," exclaimed the other, "when a woman is the object! No, no!—No philosopher was ever more steady."

"Let me debate till to-morrow," said Sir Philip, "and then."

"Agreed," answered the Colonel; "for I am engaged to dine at Richmond, so have no time for any further debates at present. Farewel, Desormeaux! I shall not return till tomorrow; so consult with yourself at your leisure."

When the gay Colonel was gone, Sir Philip ruminated on the two billets: the fire and spirit of the nameless writer charmed him; and there was a pathos in the style of M.M., and a frankness, that interested him. He could not decide which pleased him best, and wished his volatile friend had not drawn the secret from him. He determined, however, to act as he would have acted had Montford known nothing of the affair; and accordingly, after much deliberation, he sent to the same paper the following lines:—

"It will be right to walk in the Bird-cage Walk, on Friday, at one o'clock."

And to M.M. he wrote in these terms:—

"I AM a man of honour.—Though I have adopted so strange a mode of proceeding, yet I mean to be cautious in my choice. Among many ladies who have done me the honour to answer my advertisement, yourself and one more alone have appeared to meet my ideas. I confess that I am undecided; but if you will honour me with any further communication, I will make no bad use of it; and my best services you may ever command. Again I assure you, you shall have no cause to repent your condescension."

Sir Philip wished to have walked himself to Long Acre with the note; but, as he felt the necessity of remaining unknown as long as possible, he put it into the Penny-post himself, and went to the Playhouse to finish his evening. He had deliberated so long on the best mode of acting, before he had quitted his own home, that the play was half over before he arrived there, and he slipped in at the back of a box, where sat two ladies and a gentleman. The gentleman was a plain elderly man, in a brown suit of clothes; and Sir Philip concluded the two ladies to be his daughters. Their attention was so rivetted to the stage, that he could not see their faces; but one of

them appeared well made, and fashionable: the other had a defect in her shape, yet was dressed in the extreme of the mode. When the act was over, the ladies stood up, and he had an opportunity of viewing the countenances of his companions.

The crooked lady had a physiognomy as crooked as her shape, and appeared considerably older than her dress had announced her to be: he soon discovered that she was the wife of the elderly gentleman. The younger lady had a face of the most perfect innocence, but not accompanied, as innocence ought to be, with cheerfulness and gaiety: though she had scarcely seen eighteen summers, her features were strongly impressed with melancholy. She was pretty, and had manners the most gentle, but extremely reserved; and Sir Philip could not but remark that her companion never spoke to her. He felt a degree of interest for this fair young creature, that made him wish to enter into conversation with her; but there appeared no possibility of bringing this about, for Sir Philip, though he had lived in the world, had not acquired that unblushing front that can overleap all barriers of decorum. Accident, however, concurred with his inclination. Between the play and the entertainment the box door was opened, and a party of young men, evidently flustered with wine, entered in a very riotous manner. The fair young creature looked alarmed, the cross-eyed matron seemed indignant, and the elderly gentleman astonished.—For a few minutes the young men behaved with tolerable decency, but by degrees they became riotous and noisy, and at length grew so outrageous, that the two females were panic-struck, and their protector almost as much alarmed as themselves.

Sir Philip, immediately requesting permission of the ladies to take upon himself the management of the affair, partly by persuasion, and partly by coercion, cleared the box of the unmannerly intruders, and received the voluble thanks of the crooked squinting lady, the sedate acknowledgments of the elderly gentleman, and a grateful blushing smile from the fair young creature.

His companions seemed now inclined to enter into conversation with him, and Mrs. Macfarlane began by enquiring to whom she was so much indebted; nor was her civility lessened, when she learned that her very obliging beau was Sir Philip Desormeaux. She was instantly assailed with ten thousand fears that Sir Philip was inconveniently seated, made room for him on the front row between herself and the fair young creature, whom she distinguished by the name of Jessy. Sir Philip willingly accepted the proffered accommodation; and, though he was assiduously attentive to Mrs. Macfarlane, yet contrived to address himself not unfrequently to the pretty Jessy. Her manner, timid and embarrassed, bespoke her at once unacquainted with the world, and ill at ease in herself. Her smile, though sweet, was serious and melancholy; and as Sir Philip turned from right to left, he read oppressed innocence in the countenance of the younger, and malicious oppression in that of the elder lady.

Mrs. Macfarlane, though her dress was younger than herself, was yet too young to be the mother of Jessy: she was the image of a spiteful stepmother.—Had not fairies been out of date, he could have thought her a wicked fairy. In determining that she was a stepmother, and spiteful, Sir Philip judged aright; but in concluding that the fair Jessy's melancholy was wholly owing to that malignity, he was wrong. Jessy had other woes. But though the Playhouse may be an

admirable place for bachelors, in want of wives, to read the countenances of fair young creatures, it is not so convenient a situation to detail their histories in. Sir Philip, therefore, may proceed, at intervals, in his guesses; and, like all mankind, seeing something, imagine the rest, and jump to a conclusion; at which we shall leave him, erroneous as it may be, till he discovers from Jessy's coral lips the truth of her history.

He attended but little to either play or farce. Mrs. Macfarlane had a very voluble utterance; and had not our Baronet been employed in studying the inexplicable about Jessy, he would have been well amused with the display of character in her mother-in-law. He had turn enough for ridicule to have enjoyed her would-be wit, her fanciful coquetry, her studied parade of learning, and her affectation of sentiment. She watched with earnest attention to discover in which character her charms had most effect on Sir Philip; for not one of the comedians were more dexterous at assuming the semblance of various qualifications than was Mrs. Macfarlane. Whether the good lady had not been much accustomed to the assiduities of handsome and fashionable Baronets, or whether it be a point on which crooked and squinting stepmothers are apt to deceive themselves, we cannot say; but certain it is that Mrs. Macfarlane was so well satisfied with the conduct of Sir Philip Desormeaux, that she not only gave him a general invitation to Harley Street, but a particular one for a dinner and evening party the very next day.

This little manœuvre was performed while Mr. Macfarlane was gone to see after the carriage; and on his return she told him, with evident exultation, that Sir Philip Desormeaux would honour her with his company on the morrow.

The elderly gentleman bowed with a grace peculiar to elderly gentlemen who wear tail-wigs and a suit of dittos, and professed himself vastly happy.

It was not difficult to perceive that Mr. Macfarlane had jumped from behind a counter to his present fashionable abode; and the snuff colour of his clothes led an accurate observer to guess that he had been a tobacconist. He had, indeed, long dealt in best Virginia, Scotch, and Rappée; and had removed from Bartholomew Close to Harley Street, in order to please his crooked rib, who had captivated him by her learning and accomplishments; having been, first, half-boarder, and then teacher, at a Ladies' Boarding School; and, therefore, he eagerly concluded she was the fittest person in the world to take charge of Jessy.

Jessy was but ten years old when her father married his second wife: but Mrs. Macfarlane had had enough of educating Misses; she had too much learning and genius herself, to chain down her talents any longer to the dull drudgery of A, B, C; and Jessy was suffered to run wild, and pick up instruction as she could; for the elderly gentleman [there are some men who never were young], having married a governess purposely to educate his daughter, would never hear of expending a sixpence on any further instruction; and Mrs. Macfarlane had such a prodigious command of words, could harangue with such fluency and effect concerning the beauty of unspoiled nature, the charms of inborn simplicity, and the admirable development of the young mind, that Mr. Macfarlane was silenced, if not absolutely convinced that Jessy would have plenty of learning.

Accomplished or not, there was, however, something about the gentle Jessy infinitely interesting to Sir Philip Desormeaux.

"And yet," said he, as he walked up and down his apartment, after the play, "it is not beauty; there are fifty women far handsomer: it is not wit; for she scarcely spoke three words: it is not sentiment, nor sense, nor talents; for what she said implied none of these: it must be her youth, her innocence, her evident melancholy. What can be done for this poor girl? I must endeavour to obtain her confidence, and release her from that toad of a mother-in-law! And what shall I do with my two correspondents? I shall be well off with three damsels at once upon my hands.—What a pity that I put forth this advertisement before I had seen this pretty Jessy!"

With her name on his lips, and her figure in his fancy, Sir Philip at length fell into a slumber, and dreamt of Jess Macfarlane.

What, then, after an unlimited search through the world of fashion and beauty, till the age of thirty-five, has Sir Philip fallen in love with a pretty face and a gentle manner, as precipitately as he could have done ten years earlier?

No, Madam, no; Sir Philip is not in love!

What, to go to sleep with a fair-one's name on his lips, and dream of her all night long—is not that being in love?

At twenty-five, dear Madam, it would be, decidedly; but at thirty-five it is quite a different thing.

He got up in the morning, and Jessy was the first idea that presented itself to his waking soul; but still he was not in love. As he recollected his two scribbling fair-ones, Colonel Montford's gay proposal recurred to him—"I will throw those affairs on him," said Sir Philip; "his levity and spirit will carry them through with ease."

He determined to walk to the Colonel's lodgings, and challenge the performance of his offer, at least towards M. M.; but when he knocked at the door, he was informed that his friend was not yet returned from Richmond; and while he yet lingered in the street, the Colonel's servant arrived, to fetch clothes for his master, who was going on a little tour, for a fortnight or three weeks, with the gentleman at whose house he was. Sir Philip hastily wrote to his friend, to reproach him gaily with his want of faith, and to recommend the profoundest secrecy to him; and then wandered along the streets, musing on the strange entanglement he had involved himself in. He did not, however, forget, in his musings, that he was to dine and spend the evening with the pretty Jessy, and he returned home to the duties of the toilet.

CHAP. II.

"Oh divine sentiment!"

"YOU have dressed my hair horridly unbecoming to-day, Bronze," said Sir Philip. "I cannot endure it!"

"Ma foi, Monsieur, mais I'en suis fort faché," replied Bronze: "I don't know, but I tink you look verr, extremely well."

"Yet, surely, Bronze," returned Sir Philip, "I look better in common."

"Pardi, Monsieur, mais vous etes beau comme Cupidon," answered Bronze: adding—"de litel God of Lofe!"

"C'est un estrange dieu, ou diable, que ce Cupidon-lá," said Sir Philip:—"when he gets about a man's head, he changes both the inside and outside of it."

"Ah, Monsieur," replied Bronze, "de head is not a de place for Cupidon—C'est ici, Monsieur (clapping his bosom); 'tis a de hearte, is belong to him."

"True, Bronze," said Sir Philip:—"but he unsettles the head too. Well, I fear, I am but a sorry Cupidon! What are these lines about my eye, Bronze?—Does your little God of Love wear crow's feet?"

"Aha, Monsieur est plaisant," answered Bronze, bowing very low: "but, pardonne me, Monsieur, you are so inquiet to-day about your physiognomie, ma foi, I tink you ave ad a de battel vid dis same Cupidon."

"No, no, Bronze," said Sir Philip, with something between a sigh and a cough.—"But go along, my good fellow—I shall want nothing further."

Bronze fidgetted about for a few minutes, in hopes that another word from his master would authorize his chattering a little longer; but the encouragement came not, and Bronze, though very reluctantly, left the room.

"To be sure," said Sir Philip, as he looked in the glass, "I am growing old—I never considered this matter so narrowly before. Let me see—Jessy cannot be above eighteen—I am thirty-five—Seventeen years—Pshaw!—'tis too much—too much difference!

——And is not Sir Philip in love now?

No, dear lady; not yet is he in love.

—Recollect; Sir Philip is seeking for a wife: but, though he wishes to marry, he is not therefore to fall in love at first sight. He will do it deliberately, and systematically—Yes, to be sure; that is always the way those affairs are brought about.

Sir Philip found that the more he looked in the glass, the less he was satisfied with his appearance; so he very wisely gave up the examination altogether, and lounged over a book till his chariot came to convey him to Harley Street.

The lady of the mansion received him very kindly. Her dress was still more fantastical

than it had been the night before, and he soon perceived that Sentiment was the order of the day. The elderly gentleman, in his snuff-coloured dittos and his tail-wig, shook him by the hand with more cordiality than grace; and, resuming his newspaper, left to his fair rib the task of entertaining the company, which was tolerably numerous. Jessy sat at a distance, by the side of an old lady, to whom she was very attentive; and though several of the beaux made some attempts to draw her into conversation, her very reserved manner rendered all endeavours ineffectual. Mrs. Macfarlane had seated Sir Philip next herself on a sofa; and it was easy to see that he needed to take but very little pains to obtain the best graces of his captivating hostess. The women of the party were not attractive. Some old maids and dowagers served as foils to Mrs. Macfarlane; who, though her countenance was not engaging, had fine eyes, and a very clear and animated complexion.

"What did you think of the play last night, Sir Philip?" said his fair neighbour.

"I cannot say I attended much to it," replied Sir Philip.

"What was the play?" enquired a young officer, who was lounging over the back of the sofa, talking with Mrs. Macfarlane, but staring at Jessy.

"One of the new translations from the German, I believe," replied the Baronet.

"Oh! they are all charming!" said the young officer: "such fire and spirit in every scene!—None of your cold, tame representations of still life."

"True, Captain Macleod," said Mrs. Macfarlane; "and such sentiment in every word!—Is not that your opinion, Sir Philip?"

"Certainly," answered Sir Philip:—"there is no want of either fire or sentiment; but in the eagerness to introduce them on every occasion, the German dramatists are apt to lose sight of Nature."

"Oh, Nature!" interposed Macleod—"Nature is the most insipid thing in the world. You may find mere unadorned Nature every where. Give me traits that elevate and surprise—incidents you are unprepared for—sentiments not obvious to the common herd!"

"Exactly so," said Mrs. Macfarlane, who knew that Macleod was echoing opinions of her's, whose elevation she thought her best passport to fame: "till some novelty was introduced upon the stage by the German authors, our play-writers did nothing but copy from one another, and the changes were rung on the same set of bells, till one was tired to death of the same characters over and over again."

"You think then," said Sir Philip, "that when Truth and Nature are exhausted, Painters of Character are at liberty to make excursions into the regions of Romance: for, certainly, it is from thence that the German writers draw their ideas."

"They paint mankind," said Mrs. Macfarlane, "not, perhaps, as we are accustomed to see them in this Bœotian island, but as they ought to be—impressed with sentiment and fancy—children of the Sun!"——

"And women too," said Sir Philip—"do they paint women as they ought to be?"

"Exactly," answered Macleod:—"they paint them charming, interesting, feeling beings, who do not wait the cold award of reason before they give vent to their emotions."

"Certainly," said Sir Philip, "if that is the description of what a woman ought to be, the Germans are very fortunate in portraying the proprieties."

"Oh! as for all the common-place cant against the moral of their pieces," interrupted

Macleod, “I despise all that. But if you seek for interest, pathos, spirit, where will you find it so well displayed as in their writings?”

The evident approbation bestowed by Mrs. Macfarlane on the arguments of the young officer made Sir Philip rejoice when this conversation was interrupted by dinner. He wished to have placed himself near the fair Jessy; but the abundant civility of his hostess kept him at her elbow, and Jessy sat, silent and unnoticed, next her father, at the bottom of the table.

The dinner was, as all dinners are, splendid, stately, and ostentatious. A young man, who sat next to Mrs. Macfarlane, on the other side, whose name was Bosvile, ate and commented on the dishes as if he had been educated at a tavern.—“That curry is infamous, Mrs. Macfarlane,” said he: “I do not think your cook has got the true curry-powder.”

“I rather apprehend it is,” replied Mrs. Macfarlane; “for it was presented to me by that gentleman, Captain Caulfield, who brought it himself from India; but you are so exquisite a judge, Mr. Bosvile—you have such a cook!”

“Why, yes, Madam,” replied Bosvile, “my fellow does a few things well enough: but then he is so cursed tiresome!”

Sir Philip looked at the consequential speaker, and saw, with surprise, a thin slim youth, apparently not three-and-twenty; dressed in the most slovenly extreme of the fashion, and, with the figure and face of a *petit-maitre*, assuming the tone and manners of a groom.

“If your cook failed in the curry, Mrs. Macfarlane,” resumed he, *en revanche*, “this *veau mitonné* is exquisite; only, perhaps, it would have borne a thought more acid. But palates differ.”

“I would be guided by your opinion,” replied Mrs. Macfarlane, with a bow and a smile, “if I could obtain it.”

“I am, indeed, allowed,” answered Bosvile, smiling, “to have a tolerably accurate taste. Do you know I won five hundred guineas the other day with the greatest ease in life, only by this one quality; which, after all, I owe to Nature—”

“Improved by Art, however,” interposed Mrs. Macfarlane. “But how was this history?”

“Why,” resumed Bosvile, “we were dining, a party of us, at Lord Fairland’s—you know Lord Fairland——the best jolly fellow and *bon vivant* now extant—well, there was some black game at the bottom of the table.—‘Now,’ says my Lord Fairland, ‘you shall taste these, Bosvile, for I have a notion they are excellent.’—I was helped immediately, and began with great expectation of a treat.”

“Mr. Bosvile, what say you to a glass of hock?” cried a middle-aged man, who sat at Mr. Macfarlane’s left hand.

While the hock was coming, other topics intervened, and Bosvile’s wager and grouse gave way to incidents equally interesting. At length the ladies went up stairs; and in a very short time the increasing concourse of company summoned the gentlemen from the bottle.—Mrs. Macfarlane made a point of filling her rooms; there was, therefore, an assemblage of all sorts; and Sir Philip found infinite diversion in sauntering from one group to another, and enjoying the

variety of personages that presented themselves to his view. At length Mrs. Macfarlane was completely engaged, and he thought it the best opportunity to endeavour to converse with the pretty Jessy. Her he perceived amid a group of young girls, talking with rather less restraint than usual. He made his way to the party, though several of the Misses were much discomposed, while others put forth all the little arts of coquetry to attract his attention.

He remarked, with approbation, that no change took place in Jessy, except that a slight blush crossed her delicate cheek as he addressed her. To the approach of Bosvile, however, she was less indifferent, and Sir Philip owed to it a great deal more of her conversation.—She turned from this young man with very evident disgust, and bestowed all her attention on the Baronet.

Sir Philip saw in Bosvile's manner an avowed and presuming lover; in Jessy, a reluctant and devoted victim. He felt a strong wish to rescue this innocent young creature from a supercilious epicure. He knew his pretensions more than equal to Bosvile's; and he fancied he saw in Jessy's gentle manner, and willing attention to him, an incipient preference, for which he felt extremely grateful.

He was just forming a resolution to discover whether he had, or could obtain, any influence in her bosom—and, if the event should be favourable, to demand her of her parents, who he doubted not would relinquish Mr. Bosvile for Sir Philip Desormeaux—when, happening to cast his eyes forward, he beheld in a mirror, that faced them, the youthful and almost childlike figure of the fair girl, beside his own formed, and not ungraceful, though no longer juvenile, person. The observation was depressing!—"Alas!" thought he, "Jessy talks to me as one who can form no pretensions to her. Perhaps my scheme of rescue would only involve her in a persecution as odious as that from which I wish to deliver her."

At that moment Mr. Macfarlane, approaching Sir Philip, touched him on the shoulder, and, with a face of importance, begged to speak to him.—Jessy saw him depart with apparent regret, and he accompanied the old gentleman to a vacant part of the room.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Philip," said he, "for calling you away; but I have a very particular reason for so doing. You must know, Sir, that that young man, that Bosvile, is the son of a particular old friend of mine, that made a great fortune in the shop next door to mine; and when Tom and Jessy were both infants in the cradle, we always determined it should be a match.—Now old Boswell, as he was always called, was determined to make Tom a gentleman; so he sends him to Westminster, and to College, and then over seas to see foreign parts; and so he has not seen my Jess for many a year: and so, just as the young man was got to a fine country in *Merica* (Italy's the name on't), where the Pope of Rome lives, what does old Boswell do, but pops off the perch, leaving neither kin nor kind but young Tom there. So he gets every shilling of his father's property; changes me his name to Bosvile, 'cause it's more genteel; goes about all over England; and at last comes and sees Jess.—So I told him how his father and I had settled it, and how I should give Jess very handsome at her marriage.—'Whereby,' says Tom, 'I'm your man, Mr. Macfarlane; I'll have your daughter.'—So now, Sir, I made bold to call you away, seeing as I've a mind the young folks should know one another a little afore they come together."

It required a strong effort of patience in Sir Philip to listen to this harangue; but his natural good-nature, and his acquired civility, enabled him to support it with such apparent ease, that Mr. Macfarlane, delighted to have met with so steady a listener, recounted, in as circumstantial a manner, many little family anecdotes, interspersed with various other information, not always perfectly relevant to the subject in question; till, at length, Sir Philip, his patience exhausted, and his ears worn out, looked at his watch, recollected a necessary engagement, and departed, notwithstanding Mrs. Macfarlane rose from her card-table to request his longer stay.

CHAP. III.

Vive la Bagatelle!

THE next day was Friday, and the recollection of his *incognita*, and the gentle Jessy, strove in Sir Philip's mind for the mastery. He awoke early: the sun was shining, and he arose, though what to do, or whither to go, he knew not. As soon as there appeared any symptoms of business in the streets, he sauntered to the —— Coffee-house, to enquire after his correspondence. He found a letter from M. M., and retired home to read it at his solitary breakfast. He opened it, and, with a double embarrassment on his mind, was not sorry to read the following words—

"I HAVE entered on a path I dare not follow. Excuse me, Sir, if I decline any further correspondence with you: it is not that I doubt your honour, but I am unequal to pursue so adventurous a track. You have nothing to regret in receiving the last farewel of

M. M."

The first emotion on reading this note was that of pleasure at being emancipated from one of his entanglements; the next was, a sort of perverse persuasion that this very M. M., whose energy prompted her to reply to the advertisement, and whose timidity obliged her to draw back, was the very woman to enslave him, if he could but find her.

Why is there this oblique propensity in human nature,—to believe that blessing most desirable which is withdrawn from our grasp? And why, if the pretty caprices of women authorize them to indulge this querulous obliquity, does not the superior sense of the stern lords of the creation correct so great an imbecility?

Most assuredly, by the time Bronze came to remove the breakfast things, Sir Philip had read and re-read the disappointing note, and had argued himself into the full persuasion, that Jessy was much too young for him, his *incognita* too flippant, and that M. M. was precisely the being he sought. It cannot, therefore, be doubted but that he was duly out of sorts; and as Bronze pushed the newspaper off the table by accident, the angry "Pshaw!" of the Baronet caused the quick-eyed Frenchman to examine his master's countenance. The page was very legible; a disorder was there sufficiently evident; for which the men of Bronze's nation are never in want of a remedy.

"Has Monsieur any commande for me?" cried the obsequious valet, bowing low.

"No, none," said Sir Philip—"Yes—place me the writing things."

"Aha, Monsieur va ecrire! Monsieur is verr busy of late. Eh bien ses bonnes fortunes!"

"I have no bonne fortune, Bronze," said Sir Philip: "every thing goes wrong."

"Pardi," said Bronze; "voila ce que l'appelle etre bien malheureux—but, is it not de faute of Monsieur?"

"How can that be?" said Sir Philip.

"Monsieur has all de world can give," replied Bronze—"health, richesse, figure, l'usage

du monde, and beauté—if Monsieur would but open his eyes."

"What wonders should I see then, Bronze?" said Sir Philip.

"Pardi, Monsieur, but you should see wonders: you should see a man verr hungry, and at a great feaste, yet not put out his hand to take de delicacees!"

"Meaning myself," said Sir Philip, half angrily.

"Mais, pardon, Monsieur," replied Bronze; "it is verr true. You have all at commande, and you let go all."

"Since you are so much of a philosopher, Bronze," said Sir Philip, "tell me how I ought to act."

"Ah! mais, Monsieur want no conseil, if he see himself."

"I should see a poor, forlorn, solitary being!" said Sir Philip.

"C'est bien vrai," replied Bronze;—"on ne doit pas etre seul."

"How can I help it?" asked the Baronet.

"You have but to put out de hand, Monsieur—You are at de great feaste."

"But if I don't like the dishes, Bronze?"

"Ah! c'est une autre chose. But are dey all bad, Monsieur?"

"Perhaps not," said Sir Philip; "but, some I don't like, and some don't like me."

"Ah, you mistake, assurément," replied Bronze. "Not one dish but would jump to be eaten."

"Eh bien, allez vous en, mon ami," said Sir Philip, smiling at the fellow's allegory—"I want to write."

"And when will Monsieur please to dress?" enquired the valet.

"Perhaps not at all till near dinner time," answered the master.

"Mais il ne faut pas que Monsieur se neglige!" ejaculated Bronze: "ce seroit si grand dommage."

"Well, stay; I had forgotten—I shall dress at twelve."

Bronze bowed, and left the room; and the unavowed influence of flattery and bagatelle had so soothed Sir Philip's ruffled feelings, that he sat down, and wrote the following farewel billet to M. M.:—

"YOU afflict and disappoint me. May your determination be for your own happiness! Yet if ever you should want the assistance of a friend, a line to the same address will, at all times, command my best services."

By half after twelve Sir Philip was in the Bird-cage Walk. He had yet half an hour to cool his heels before he could at all expect to see his *incognita*—this cruel *incognita*, who had given him no clue whereby to distinguish her. How was he to discover her? She certainly meant to take some method of announcing herself to him. In the meantime he continued sauntering up and down the walk, gazing eagerly at every female form that appeared, and wearying himself out in conjectures. At length the Horse Guards' clock struck one; and now Sir Philip eagerly looked on all sides, expecting to see his spirited *incognita* start, like a fabled Nymph, from the stem of a tree; or descend, like a Goddess, on a cloud. No female appeared; and he began to think the fair lady very unpunctual, when he perceived a petticoat at a distance. He advanced to meet it, but

turned away disappointed when he found it belonged to an old lame lady, whom he had often remarked sunning herself there in the middle of the day. Till half past two o'clock Sir Philip and the old lady had the Bird-cage Walk to themselves. Long had he been upon the fret, and his patience was now entirely exhausted. He began to doubt whether his advertisement had met the eye of his *incognita*; then he cursed her malice, which had determined to gratify her own curiosity without satisfying his. Then again his thoughts reverting to the gentle Jessy, he imagined his unknown correspondent restricted by some domestic tyrant from walking when and where she pleased; and at last betook himself to St. James's Street, where he joined a party of fashionable loungers, more out of humour than at the close of his solitary breakfast.

"Why, Desormeaux," cried Colonel Gorget, "you have lost all your vivacity! Whither are your spirits wandered?"

"That I cannot tell," replied Sir Philip: "they are so volatile, that when once evaporated, their traces are never to be seen."

"Pray, where did you hide yourself last night," resumed the Colonel, "that you were not at Lady Gas's party? I thought you were invited."

"So I was," answered Sir Philip; "but another engagement superseded it. Faith, I must call, and make my excuses."

"Come, I'll attend you," said the Colonel. "Her Ladyship will be so full of spirits, and her Lord so confoundedly hipped!"

"On what account?" enquired Sir Philip.

"Why, only that I and three or four more won a few thousands of his poor nervous Lordship, so I suppose to-day he will be wrapped up in factitious airs; while she is always boisterously delighted when any ill luck happens to reduce him to her level, and keep her in countenance for her everlasting losses."

"It will be a dreadful bore to be admitted!" said Sir Philip.

"Oh," replied Colonel Gorget, "you will be amply recompensed by hearing Lord Gas direct the admission of the Bristol, Spa, or Montpelier atmosphere."

"Does he really carry his enthusiasm so far as that?" asked the Baronet.

"In truth he does," answered Gorget; "while her masculine Ladyship ridicules his absurdities with more sarcasm than wit, and more vulgarity than good-nature."

They found Lady Gas's dressing-room full of morning visitors, but his Lordship was too completely unstrung to be visible. Lady Gas made his apologies, and Sir Philip made his own, which were graciously accepted, and he was obliged to give a strict promise to wait on her Ladyship that day five weeks, when she was to have the most brilliant party that had positively been ever seen. The promise was readily given; the performance was intended to be optional when the day arrived. Sir Philip's own affairs were in too uncertain a state to allow him to determine whether, at so distant a period, he should be at liberty to keep the appointment. Just as he was going to take his leave, Mrs. and Miss Macfarlane were announced; and he resumed his seat, in something like emotion at the sight of the pretty Jessy.

Mrs. Macfarlane had met Lady Gas at a third place; and as she played with as much readiness as unskilfulness, Lady Gas was willing enough to put her on her porter's list; and the

crooked lady was never deficient in her attentions to persons of title and fashion. While tokens of the warmest affection were passing between the Countess and Mrs. Macfarlane, Sir Philip contrived to place himself near Jessy, and to address some trifling conversation to her. She answered him without reluctance; but her fair face was unusually pensive. She complained of a head-ach. Sir Philip could not help fancying the seat of the disease was in the heart. The beauty of the day was mentioned among other interesting topics, and Mrs. Macfarlane said, with an angry glance at her daughter-in-law—

"It *was* very fine—so fine indeed, that Jessy had wished much for a walk in the Park, but she was determined to call on her dear Lady Gas."

"A walk in the Park!"—the very words operated on Sir Philip like an electrical stroke. Could it be possible—could Jessy be his *incognita*? Oh! if there was such a concealed fund of spirit and vivacity about her, she would be absolutely irresistible! Again he addressed her—

"You would then have preferred a saunter in the Park to a round of unmeaning visits?"

The most delicate blush suffused the fair face of Jessy as she glanced a timid eye at her mother-in-law, who was talking to Lady Gas; and she replied, "that driving about in the streets in general fatigued her."

Sir Philip again enquired which was her favourite walk in the Park. "She had no choice," she said; but once more the colour glowed over the whole of her face, and tinged even her white throat.

Sir Philip returned to his own house more than half convinced that Jessy was indeed his spirited *incognita*. He argued on the suppression of natural character induced by restraint. He saw in the malignant scowl of Mrs. Macfarlane's witchlike brow a sufficient cause for the timid bashfulness of her pretty daughter-in-law in her company; and in the furtive glances of Jessy's blue eyes he persuaded himself he could read repressed vivacity, and energy subdued.

The next morning, however, brought him a note from his nameless correspondent. He instantly recognized the hand, and hastily tore it open.

"*Friday evening.*

"YOU really bore your disappointment this morning with a sufficient degree of impatience to satisfy me. I do not love a cold-blooded apathist; but I delight in putting those who interest me to the severest tests. Farewel! If you ever hear of me more, we shall be better acquainted. If you abandon the chace, I shall forswear mankind."

This billet entirely unsettled all his persuasion with respect to his discovering his *incognita* in the person of "Jess Macfarlane:" and as every thing that is wrapped up in mystery most forcibly stimulates curiosity, Sir Philip, with an oath, determined to unearth the fox. He

ruminated for a long time, and at last sent the following notice to the same newspaper.

"FORSWEAR not man, lest thou be thyself forsworn. I will never abandon the chace; but vouchsafe me some clue whereby to pursue it."

For several days he impatiently waited for another billet from his *incognita*. None reached his hands, and he felt his heart and fancy even more disturbed by this saucy unknown invader of his peace, than by the blooming and inviting charms of Miss Macfarlane. At length he resolved to pay a morning visit in Harley Street; and when he was shewn into the drawing-room, found there, equally to his surprise and satisfaction, Jessy at work, and alone. She received him with visible embarrassment; and had not Sir Philip been the best bred of men, and had not Jessy looked remarkably pretty, he must have betrayed some symptoms of the weariness he felt: but he was resolved to try her on every subject, in order to discover whether she was or not his fascinating *unknown.*

Miss Macfarlane, though not deficient in common sense, betrayed no brilliancy of talent, no emanations of spirit; and yet when Sir Philip recollected her significant blushes, he could scarcely help expecting her to turn out his lively correspondent. At length seeing the newspaper, he took it up; and carelessly casting his eye over it, said while, unobserved, he watched his fair companion—

"This is the most amusing paper now published; it abounds so in curious advertisements."

The deepest crimson would have been pale, compared to Jessy's face and neck at that moment; and Sir Philip felt an undescribable sensation, while he internally exclaimed—"Guilty upon my honour." Not noticing her silence, he pursued the blow—a blow he meant to heal with all his heart.

"Do you ever condescend to notice them, Miss Macfarlane?"

"Sometimes—no—not often," stammered out the abashed girl.

"Those in quest of partners for life," pursued the cruel Sir Philip, "amuse me very much. I wonder whether they can ever be successful?"

Sir Philip, who was by nature a keen and quick observer, had acquired the art of looking from under his eyebrows without appearing to gaze. He saw Jessy's heart beat through her handkerchief, while her whole frame trembled with agony.

"Do you imagine they can ever obtain a reply, Miss Macfarlane?"

Jessy could support it no longer—tears started from her eyes, and she was rising; but again sat down, unable to move. Sir Philip rose also, and, approaching her, began in the tenderest accent—

"Forgive, dear Miss Macfarlane, an inhumanity prompted by the warmest solicitude—" when Mrs. Macfarlane's voice on the stairs cut short his discourse, and Jessy made a strong effort to conquer her confusion. Sir Philip eagerly whispered—"Compose yourself, Miss Macfarlane; you shall not be observed. I beseech you, rely on my discretion."

At that instant Mrs. Macfarlane entered the room, and, with her usual fluent eloquence, expressed her delight at seeing Sir Philip, who, with the most animated gaiety, drew her into immediate conversation, and entirely took off her attention from Jessy, who glided, unperceived, out of the room, and in a few minutes returned perfectly composed.

Mrs. Macfarlane gave the Baronet an invitation to stay dinner, which he willingly accepted, in hopes of finding another opportunity of speaking to Jessy without being observed; but none offered, and he could only contrive to say, in a low voice—"When can I again see you alone?"

Jessy, who felt overpowered with the most cruel consciousness, could not utter a word. She knew she ought not to make such an appointment, yet she had betrayed so much, that she wished to explain herself fully; and, being again urged, replied in the lowest whisper—"Perhaps on Saturday morning."

Never did any day appear so tedious to Sir Philip as this. He thought evening would never arrive, and at a very early hour, to avoid sitting down to a card-table with a family party, pretended an engagement, and made his bow.

CHAP. IV.

A Family Dialogue.

THE succeeding day, as the Baronet sauntered to the Coffee-house, he found there a billet from his nameless correspondent.

"IF this long interval has not damped your ardour, you will be in Kensington Gardens on Saturday morning."

"Saturday morning!" exclaimed Sir Philip; "why that is the very time when I am to meet my fair Jessy. Surely all the Fates conspire to overwhelm me with perplexity! It cannot surely be Jessy who makes with me a double appointment, of which I must break one. Jessy has the prior right, and I must decline my *incognita's* challenge. Perhaps, after all, it may be Miss Macfarlane, who endeavours by these means to discover whether she has any real hold of my heart, or whether I should be ready to relinquish her for a mere meteor."

This last idea decided him; and as he did not chuse to disappoint his *incognita* without an excuse, he put the following apology into the same paper:—

"WITHOUT the least diminution of my ardour, I must decline the proffered happiness for Saturday. I beseech you, let me not suffer for the ill humour of my stars!"

No other notice reached him, and, after a most tedious interval, Saturday morning at length arrived, and he went to pay his promised visit in Harley Street.

He was at once admitted, but not as before found he the pretty Jessy alone; he found with her Mrs. Macfarlane and Bosvile. Traces of sorrow were very evident on the fair young creature's countenance; and Mrs. Macfarlane seemed only interrupted by the entrance of Sir Philip in some acrimonious lecture, to the vehemence of which her fiery eye and glowing cheek bore unequivocal testimony.

Bosvile was sitting on the sofa beside Mrs. Macfarlane, indolently, and rather insolently gazing at Jessy. The scene disconcerted all parties. Sir Philip felt himself an intruder on a domestic disturbance, and, but for his appointment with Jessy, would have instantly withdrawn.

Mrs. Macfarlane's eyes flashed yet stronger fury; Bosvile's glance called his visit an impertinent one; and Jessy, covered with agonizing blushes, seemed ready to sink into the earth with confusion. Mrs. Macfarlane, however, recovered herself sufficiently to bid Sir Philip good morning with the smile of studied courtesy; and, inviting him to a chair near her, attempted something like conversation. This was, however, interrupted by Bosvile, who, rising and bowing to the ladies, said to Mrs. Macfarlane—

"I see, Madam, nothing is to be done this morning. I only distress Miss Jessy by my perseverance. Whenever, therefore, you find my return eligible, I shall obey your slightest signal:" and with a supercilious bow to Sir Philip, the indignant youth departed.

This circumstance rendered Mrs. Macfarlane's ire too vehement for controul.

"There, Miss!" said she, malignantly scowling at Jessy, "he is gone, never to return uncalled. Very pretty behaviour of your's, to thwart all your father's plans, and dismiss an offer, such as you will never have repeated! Where will you find such another young man as Mr. Bosvile? So well made, so handsome, so fashionable, and so rich? Upon my word I am quite ashamed of you. But I know what silly vagaries you have got in your mind; and I am very glad of this opportunity of telling you, before Sir Philip Desormeaux, that they are utterly vain and unfounded."

Jessy now burst into a violent flood of tears, and requested, but was refused, permission to retire. Sir Philip, who had been in vain watching an opportunity to depart, now rising, was going to quit a scene of confusion, that distressed him the more by hearing his own name mentioned, when Mrs. Macfarlane, catching him by the arm, besought him to be seated, telling him he was a party concerned.

Astonishment now rooted the Baronet to the spot. Jessy for a moment fixed eyes of the greatest agony upon him, while he, uncertain how to interpret their meaning, knew not whether to gratify his curiosity by staying, or to persist in taking leave. He thus, however, addressed Mrs. Macfarlane—

"It is impossible, Madam, that I can have any concern in your domestic disturbances; and it is surely ungenerous to distress the young lady by forcing a stranger to witness them."

"Ay," retorted Mrs. Macfarlane, "her affected gentleness imposes on every body. I tell you, Sir, she is a vain, conceited, obstinate girl, and will not listen to what her friends advise for her advantage, but throws away a substance to run after a shadow! Yes, Miss," continued she, turning to Jessy, but still holding Sir Philip, "I have my eyes about me; I have seen plainly enough, ever since the night we first met Sir Philip Desormeaux at the Theatre, that you have used that poor young man worse than ever. Vain hussy! to fancy, because a gentleman like Sir Philip behaved with the politeness of a gentleman, that he was in love with you! No, no; Sir Philip knew better. Your baby face and pretended mildness would not catch a man that knows the world. Sir Philip would prefer a woman with sense, spirit, and conversation; not a half-witted, blooming, silent Miss, as obstinate as a mule, and as perverse—"

The appealing eyes of Jessy dared no longer meet those of the Baronet, but, cast on the ground, seemed to seek an asylum in the bosom of the earth. Sir Philip knew not what to imagine. Was it possible that he could have inspired this fair creature with affection? The very idea rendered her doubly interesting. If he could believe this, he could instantly take her to his bosom, and console her for all her injuries by vows of tenderness. But either Sir Philip was destitute of the customary vanity of handsome and fashionable Baronets, or the sentiments he felt

for the fair Jessy were not sufficiently animated to prompt him to a deed of such magnitude. Certain it is, that though he was searching for a wife, though he felt interested for the blooming girl before him, and though he had sufficient reason to believe her equally interested for him, without incurring the charge of consummate self-conceit—certain it is, that, notwithstanding all, he resolved not to make an unreserved offer of himself till he had a private conversation with Jessy. Why was this? Was it because Sir Philip had determined to fall in love systematically and deliberately? or because he was thirty-five? or because—We will not bewilder ourselves any further with enquiries, but come at once to the answer—Sir Philip was not in love!

He ought to have been in love, you say.

Alas! Madam, how many cases are there, in which those perverse beings, the lords of the creation, do not do what they ought to do? And in this particular point of falling in love, I own myself, as far as my judgment and observation have gone, I think they are even more perverse than on any other subject. Ten to one but your own experience has shewn you more than one instance, in which a man, being bound by all imaginable ties to fall in love with one woman, when all the friends on both sides have long foreseen the event, and when every prophet has discovered twenty circumstances in which the parties were exactly suited to each other—ten to one, I say, but he has gone perversely and fallen in love with quite a different person; thus disappointing all the prophets and prophetesses, all the conjurers and fortune-tellers, who had taken so lively an interest in his affairs. And all this falls out because, as I once heard a young gentleman tell a lady (with whom, doubtless, he ought to have been in love, but was not), because love is not optional.

To return to Sir Philip Desormeaux.—He doubtless had every disposition to relieve, to assist, to console the pretty Jessy; but he felt not that intuitive conviction of the mutuality of their passion, nor even of its existence, that could induce him to explain himself so abruptly. He therefore listened in silence to Mrs. Macfarlane's violent harangue; and when it was ended, protested himself extremely sorry that a suspicion of so embarrassing a nature should have fallen on the young lady; that he was convinced it was wholly unfounded; that Miss Macfarlane appeared incapable of using any one ill, or of harbouring the errors Mrs. Macfarlane had enumerated. That—"

But Mrs. Macfarlane would listen to no more of his qualifying speeches. Turning to Jessy, she required her to confess the truth of her charge; and after a continued harangue, of sufficient volubility and irritation to have been denominated (had it issued from the lips of a less refined female) an absolute scold, she bade her leave the room till she knew better how to conduct herself.

Sir Philip would now have departed; but a sort of idea crossed the mind of the lady that she had displayed more of the virago than suited the tone of sentiment which pervaded the character she most loved to assume: bursting, therefore, into a flood of tears, she, unconsciously no doubt, grasped Sir Philip's arm, and in a tremulous voice exclaimed—

"How goading it is to feelings exquisitely alive as mine are to be condemned to live with a statue—a lump of marble—whom nothing can warm to any animation, any energy! For my part, I confess," continued she, still weeping, "my emotions are rapid and vehement; and there is nothing that more rouses the irritability of my naturally prompt temper than that cold apathy, which not the tenderest affection can melt.

"That young man who quitted the room, Mr. Bosvile, dotes on that insensible girl. He idolizes the very air she breathes, and she perversely refuses him the least encouragement, and coquets with every other man before his face. Nay, I firmly believe that all his vows of love have been unable to inspire her with the least tenderness."

"If that be the case," said Sir Philip, "it surely proves a very proper sincerity in Miss Macfarlane not to give any encouragement to a man whom she does not love."

This was by no means the sort of answer Mrs. Macfarlane wanted. She wished to be complimented on her excessive sensibility, her energy, her eloquence; and the cloud that overspread her brow convinced Sir Philip of the mistake he had committed. Willing to secure a free entrance into the house in future, he determined to gratify Mrs. Macfarlane's craving for adulation; and therefore, when she lamented that a passion so warm as Mr. Bosvile's should fail of success, he replied—"That undoubtedly there was nothing so captivating as a warm heart, and energy of character; that he loved those persons in whose eye you could read the emanations of soul, and whose feelings prompted the most eloquent expression."

This equivocal eulogium soothed and delighted his sentimental hostess, who, at length permitting him to depart, overwhelmed him with civilities, and invited him to renew his visit speedily. Of this invitation Sir Philip promised to avail himself, for he felt more and more eager for some explanation with Jessy.

He returned rather slowly to his own house, pondering as he went on the double disappointment of the morning, having missed his *incognita*, and obtained no explanation from Jessy. The scene he had witnessed made him, however, more warmly her friend than before; and he determined vigilantly to watch for an opportunity of speaking to her unperceived, by her harpy stepmother.

CHAP. V.

Sweet Echo!

FOR several days Sir Philip anxiously expected some further notice from his *incognita*; but so many elapsed without his hearing from her, that he began to fear she took his excuse for a final adieu. This idea disquieted him; yet what further steps to take in the affair he knew not: but his mind was far more occupied with this spirited charmer, whom he had not seen, than with the pretty Jessy; not that he was unmindful of the latter.

His visits in Harley Street were very frequent, but he obtained no opportunity of speaking to her unobserved; and when, in a low voice, he one day entreated her to tell him when he might be likely to meet with her alone, she could only answer—"that she wished much to be able to speak to him, but dared not appoint any time."

He found, however, that great as her domestic grievances might be, she was at least relieved from the importunities of Mr. Bosvile, for he saw him no more at the house; and the pointed reproaches of Mrs. Macfarlane convinced him that he had at least suspended his pretensions. At length, at the end of a week, during which he had ineffectually endeavoured to obtain an interview with Jessy, he received from her the following letter:

To Sir Philip Desormeaux.

"SIR,

"UNUSED to writing, and conscious of impropriety, nothing could have made me so bold but the remembrance of the very strange scene you were present at. My mother's insinuations covered me with confusion; and I think I am warranted, Sir, in taking the present step, to convince you they have no foundation at all.

"I am a very unhappy creature, Sir, and have not a friend in the world; though I hope I do not deserve to be deserted, as I have been, by one who was once my friend. I blush while I write, Sir: but what Mrs. Macfarlane chose to say of me obliges me to tell you, that my unhappy heart has long been fixed on one who does not now care for it, whatever he did once; and that, and nothing else, was the cause of my coldness to Mr. Bosvile.

"Oh! Sir, I was once guilty of a very great imprudence, which my foolish behaviour to you one day must have made you guess. Indeed, Sir, I was tired of my life, and thought any change must be for the better; but I soon repented of what I had done, and drew back again directly. If I did not quite betray myself to you that morning, what I now say you won't understand; if I did, I hope you will think I may be pardoned for my fault: and I hope, Sir, you won't think ill of me, nor think me a bold girl, for writing to you thus; for, indeed, it is only because I am very unhappy that Mrs. Macfarlane should have said what she did of me.

"I hope, Sir, when you come again to our house, I shall not see in your face that you despise me; for, indeed, I am miserable enough without being thought amiss of by such a

gentleman as you.

"I am, Sir,
"Your humble servant,
"JESSY MACFARLANE."

The artless and honest style of this letter very powerfully affected Sir Philip. He perceived, with an emotion that approached as nearly to joy as grief, that he was by no means the object of the fair Jessy's tenderness, however he might have obtained her esteem; and he felt some self-approbation that he had not, by a precipitate declaration, added to the troubles she had to encounter. He determined, however, to pay another visit very speedily in Harley Street, and to endeavour to assure the fair girl of his esteem, and of his earnest wish to be of service to her.—"Now," thought he, "if I were but married, I might indeed effectually serve her: I might take her to my own house; and the tender friendship of my *incognita* should sooth her sorrows, for I am certain my *incognita* is capable of friendship."

Though Sir Philip felt convinced, both by the conversation of the former morning, and by the oblique confession in the above letter, that Jessy had answered either his or some other advertisement, yet he felt equally assured, by the whole style of the note, that she was not his *incognita*. The language, the hand-writing, the traits of character were all essentially different; and he rather concluded her to be his first correspondent, M. M. He examined the notes, and compared the hand-writing: they were perfectly dissimilar; yet the circumstance of Jessy's having acknowledged the commission of some imprudence, with her immediate repentance, and drawing back from the pursuit of it, seemed to corroborate this idea. Far from thinking the worse of her for her short attempt (indeed it would not have been justifiable in Sir Philip to think ill of her for such an affair: but men are not always so candid; they have been known to despise a woman for the very failings into which their persuasions and insinuations had led her), he felt inclined to like her the better for the gleam of spirit which prompted the abortive endeavour to free herself from the odious tyranny of her detestable stepmother.—Perhaps, indeed, he attributed her with drawing note less to increased timidity and consciousness of impropriety, than to an emotion of tenderness, which spoke in favour of the first love.

He sincerely regretted the absence of Colonel Montford, who, six years younger than himself, handsome, gay, fashionable, and insinuating, had, he thought, a better chance of consoling this poor girl, and would probably be more inclined to make the endeavour than the strong predilection he himself felt for his *incognita* allowed him to be. He had, however, visited Harley Street the preceding day, and propriety therefore forbade his returning thither immediately. He felt, it is true, very ill at ease in any other place, and he sauntered slowly through the streets and squares in its vicinity.

As he turned the corner of Wimpole Street, he was struck with the air and gait of one of two ladies that were before him: their backs were to him, but one of them had a very graceful walk, and a figure remarkable for its ease. By her air, as she walked, her conversation seemed to be lively and animated, and Sir Philip quickened his pace to make rather nearer observations on

her appearance. As he came closer, he observed that her voice was harmonious and expressive; and though she spoke so low to her companion that he could not catch any connected sentence, the passing words he did hear proved to him that the subject of her conversation was not utterly frivolous. Her face was obscured by a deep and thickish veil, so that Sir Philip could not, by any view of her features, gratify the curiosity he felt: but desirous to pass her once again, without the appearance of dodging and watching her, he knocked at the door of a gentleman he knew, left a card, and again sauntered past the ladies. As he approached, he heard the other young lady say—"And do you utterly despair?"

"Entirely," replied the veiled damsel; "and I fear I shall break my heart. I love the appearance of so much—"

The sounds grew fainter and fainter, and Sir Philip's most earnest endeavours could not enable his ear to catch the word that would have informed him what this lady loved. The sounds of her voice were, however, still vibrating on his auricular organs, when an elderly gentleman, in a snuff-coloured coat and a tailed wig, passed him without catching his optical ones in the least; and perhaps if the elderly gentleman had been also listening to an harmonious female voice, his eyes would not have been quicker than the Baronet's. This, however, did not happen to be the case, for he instantly recognized him, and, shaking him by the hand, greeted him with so much cordiality, that the fair friends, who seemed only sauntering up and down the street for exercise, could not fail of hearing the address to Sir Philip.

Sir Philip was not so totally overcome by the delight of meeting Mr. Macfarlane as not to observe that the veiled lady turned round her graceful form at the sound of his name; and that, from that moment, she uttered not a word to her companion while he remained near enough to catch the sounds of her voice. Mr. Macfarlane, however, so earnestly entreated him to go home with him and take pot-luck, as he elegantly phrased it, that Sir Philip, despairing of pursuing this street adventure any further, and eager to give some comfort to the pretty Jessy, determined, thus sanctioned, to enter the house, and hope for an opportunity of speaking to her. He observed, however, that the fair companions turned out of the street by the first opening.

He found, on his arrival in Harley Street, that the elderly gentleman had been well aware that "pot-luck" that day would be good luck, for company was expected to dinner; and angry as Mrs. Macfarlane always was at any intrenchment on her prerogative of arranging and selecting her company as she chose, as also of filling her table with peculiar exactitude, the rank in life, figure, and fashion of Sir Philip ensured her husband pardon for this trespass.

There was an assemblage of visages in the drawing-room which the Baronet had never seen before; and if we might judge from a certain expression that involuntarily stole over his features, he would not have died with despair had he been told he should never see any of them again. It seemed as if Mrs. Macfarlane had ransacked all the lanes and alleys of the city, to bring together a group of goodly personages: and if the lady felt an exulting pleasure in shewing to her former cronies how intimate she was with a Baronet, that pleasure received some alloy from the conviction that Sir Philip must despise her connexions. She contrived, however, after deranging three or four of her visitors, to accommodate Sir Philip with a seat next to herself, to assure him

that these were entirely business connexions of Mr. Macfarlane's.

"All strange beings, to be sure," whispered she; "but as my husband made most of his money through these channels, it would be ungrateful to entirely cast them off now we are out of the sphere of their attraction."

Sir Philip agreed to the truth and generosity of this sentiment; and Mrs. Macfarlane, assuming a tone of exquisite irony, asked the Baronet if he had a mind to see the humours of a city ball: "for," said she, "we are all, except Jessy and her father, to adjourn at nine o'clock to the Mansion-house."

Sir Philip's part was instantly concluded on:—"he should have enjoyed the thing extremely; he was in despair that it was impossible; but he had an evening engagement that could not be broken; and though it did not take place quite so early, he could hardly get back from the Mansion-house in time to keep it."

Mrs. Macfarlane proposed a thousand ingenious contrivances; but Sir Philip, with equal ingenuity, contrived to render them abortive, and he had the felicity of handing Mrs. Macfarlane to the head of her table in perfect good humour, from the conviction that the Baronet entered into the ridicule of the affair, and would have been most happy to have prolonged the joke in her company.

Sir Philip was seated at dinner next a short squab man, who was addressed by the whole male part of the company, and many of the females, by the name of *Honest John*. This man was the wit, the Momus of the party, and was eternally cutting jokes on all present, and on himself, often with severity, and not always without point.

Sir Philip, who had infinite accommodation in his manners, so gaily lent himself to the general tone of the party, that lie was thought the most agreeable as well as the finest of gentlemen; and Honest John, in particular, distinguished him as a very honest fellow himself: he addressed all his stories and anecdotes to him, and accompanied them with many strokes of manual wit, which surprised Sir Philip by their novelty, but charmed him by their elegance. Many coarse jokes against marriage proved Honest John a determined bachelor; and finding that his neighbour had hitherto kept his neck out of the collar, he clapped him on the back with much hearty good-will, and congratulating him on his having escaped the noose, charged him not to be such a fool now as to go and barter his liberty for a toy—a woman. "Why, there's pretty Jessy," said Honest John, "she has been trying to catch me ever since she could read her primer. I believe she's a good girl enough; and there is not a man on earth I'd sooner call father than my friend Mac. But I do not love marrying, that's the truth on't; and truth, like oil, as I told the judge once on a trial, when he found fault with me for repeating the same thing over and over again—'Why,' says I, 'my Lord, 'tis the truth; and truth you know, my Lord, like oil, will swim at the top.'—Why there's my friend Mac himself, I'll be sworn his head has never lain so easily on his pillow since he has been made the happiest man in the world. We all thought him a lucky dog when his first wife died; but Mac never knew his own interest; else, after having escaped one trial, who'd

ever have thought of his tying himself up again?”

Thus on every subject ran on this voluble man of mirth, who seemed to enjoy the privilege of Shakespeare’s licensed fools—of saying every thing without offending any one. Indeed, there was so much good humour in the whole of his manner, and so much good-will in his heart, that even Mrs. Macfarlane, from long habit, had learned to bear the jokes and satire, which she shared with all her neighbours.

Mrs. Macfarlane always made a point of staying very late with the gentlemen; it was not therefore long before they were summoned to tea—a summons which Sir Philip instantly obeyed: and Mrs. Macfarlane contrived to hope that he would soon indemnify her for a day of purgatory, by giving her his company to a rather superior party. She lamented the total want of refinement and intelligence in her present visitors; of all variety and interest in their conversation; and still more forcibly she lamented the unfortunate engagement which prevented her from having the advantage of Sir Philip’s attendance at the Mansion-house.

The Baronet, with unbounded civility, concurred in the lamentations of his gracious hostess, while he secretly congratulated himself on having so fortunately timed his visit; for though he knew Mr. Macfarlane would remain at home, he flattered himself some opportunity might occur, or some method be adopted, to bring about the wished-for explanation. The watchful stepmother so wholly engrossed his attentions, that he dared not, even by his eyes, express the benevolence he felt to the anxious Jessy; but when, at almost nine, three or four of the gentlemen reeled to the drawing-room, to accompany their spouses to the ball, he contrived to say to her, in a low voice—

“I beseech you to fear nothing, and to believe me your friend.”

At length the party set off. Mr. Macfarlane remained at table with Honest John and a few more old friends, who preferred a jovial glass to a ball at the Mansion-house; and Jessy and Sir Philip remained *tête-á-tête*.

CHAP. VI.

"Thou'rt gane awae frae me!"
Scottish Ballad.

OVERWHELMED with confusion, and covered with blushes, Jessy felt utterly unable to make any advantage of the opportunity thus afforded her. Her tremor was so great, that she even meditated quitting the room, when Sir Philip, determined to relieve her as instantly as possible, approached her, and seating himself beside her, said, in a tone of the truest feeling—

"Let me thank you, Miss Macfarlane, for the confidence you have reposed in me, and let me hasten to assure you I am incapable of abusing it. One question I trust you will answer me ingenuously, and then all painful explanations will be at an end—May I not in you recognize M. M.?"

The tears and agitation of the blushing girl alone spoke her answer; and Sir Philip, hastening to clear up every thing, said in a gay tone—

"It is not for the grateful Q. to express all he feels at your condescension, since he is now too well informed he may not profit by it; but if, instead of a lover, you will consider him as a friend, perhaps he may be able to render you some service."

Perceiving, however, that Jessy could not now enter on any subject of such high interest, he assured her, in more serious terms, of his real esteem and consideration for her; and then leading the conversation to more general topics, brought her by degrees to more composure of mind: and when he thought she appeared able to bear it, he, again recurring to circumstances that most nearly concerned her, said—

"You will pardon my seeming impertinence, but I have seen and observed too much not to be convinced that your present situation is a very pitiable one. Will you allow me to ask if there be no means of changing it?"

"I fear not," replied Jessy; "for how is a girl like me to leave the house of her father? Besides, I have made one attempt, and failed."

"Be frank with me, Miss Macfarlane, I entreat you," said Sir Philip.—"But is there no other resource?"

"None, indeed," answered Jessy, "but what would be worse than staying; and that is, marrying Mr. Bosvile."

"He does not, indeed," observed the Baronet, "appear to merit the partiality your parents shew him; and I fancy, by your note, you have a still stronger reason for discarding him than his own mere want of merit. Dear Miss Macfarlane, I wish you could consider me as an uncle, or near relation, empowered and desirous to assist you. I am an unattached man, and regret severely my not having a home where you might find a proper asylum. You have not, I am sure, merited the uneasiness you have experienced."

"I hope not," said Jessy; "for if I have deserved it all, I must have been very wicked. Oh! Sir, you, who are so kind-hearted and good to a stranger that can't appear worthy much attention from you, you can have no idea how sad it is to see always every body looking unkind, and thinking one guilty of such great faults, and saying so before every body."

"But your father, Mr. Macfarlane, is not unkind."

"No, Sir; but he does not see or know any thing of the matter, and he is very angry too that I will not marry Mr. Bosvile, though he knows very well why: he knows that I have good reason to refuse him."

"Reason from Bosvile's own character?" asked Sir Philip.

"Partly so, Sir," answered Jessy, whose tears began to flow very copiously, excited both by the friendliness of Sir Philip, and the recollection of her own sorrows.

"And can there be one, my fair friend," said the Baronet, "who can cease to care for a heart so simple and ingenuous?"

"Simple enough, indeed, I fear," said Jessy, whose full bosom, long unused to the soothings of friendship, was easily led to speak of her former lover.—"Indeed, I used to wonder at the time, that he, who was a great deal in the world, and saw all manner of fine ladies, should ever trouble his head about such a poor ignorant creature as I am; for I never was let to learn like other people, though now I am often told how ignorant I am. But he did take notice of me, and then I was very happy, for it is a great comfort to have a friend that one can speak openly to, and that don't always think one in the wrong; and my father and Mrs. Macfarlane both knew of his liking me; and young Bosvile was then abroad, and they said nothing to hinder it, and he kept coming very often, but he did not say at once—'Jessy, will you be my wife?' yet I thought every day it would come to that; for though he was out in the great world, and among all manner of Lords and Dukes, there was hardly a day but he came here. But at last my father heard of young Bosvile's coming over, and told him of it, and told him too of his agreement with the old man that was dead: and so, the next time we were alone, he said to me, that he was afraid his coming so often to see me now, would appear odd to my intended husband, and that he was obliged to go away from London; and I had not power to say a word, for he had struck me dumb; and when my father and mother came in, he told them that he was going into Scotland, and so we parted; and for a long time I heard of nothing else but my own vanity, in supposing he cared at all for me."

"My poor young friend," said Sir Philip, "you have indeed been most cruelly injured."

"You are very considerate, Sir," replied Jessy; "and I don't mind having told you thus much, because I am sure you won't say any thing about it: for, indeed, who would care for any history about poor Jessy Macfarlane?—But I thought I ought to let you know the whole, that you might not fancy I deserved all Mrs. Macfarlane said of me, and that you might not think me a fanciful creature that tried to make troubles out of nothing."

A loud din of voices from below let them know that the votaries of Bacchus were now rising. Sir Philip, however, found time to assure her that her simple tale had interested him extremely, and to entreat her to consider if there were any way in which he could serve her, for that he had not a more earnest wish on earth; and begged her to look on him as a privileged friend: adding—

"My age, fair Jessy, though not yet venerable, yet nearly double your own, may surely

give you confidence in the professions I make to you, and enable you to accept them without fear."

Jessy was, however, too much delighted with the warm kindness of Sir Philip, and too much unacquainted with the decorums of the world, to think of any impropriety in the affair: she only felt penetrated by his unreserved offers of friendship and assistance, and delighted to have some one to whom she could unload her oppressed heart; and Sir Philip, having hastily wished Mr. Macfarlane good night, quitted Harley Street, and ruminated, as he walked home, on the story of pretty Jessy, and on the sudden influence of harmony.

CHAP. VII.

An Essay on Historical Writing.

I BELIEVE there are many philosophers who employ much time, ink, paper, and speculation, in defining the mode by which the mind is influenced—by what slight concatenation of causes, operating on certain tubes and glandular vessels in certain parts of the human body, that determination to act is produced, which is called the will. I doubt not but these speculations are very useful; and that when the grandchildren of our grandchildren shall perfectly understand this concatenation of causes, and the disposition and effects of those tubes and glandular vessels, they will never suffer themselves to be affected with a wish to do what is not perfectly right. It must be with a view to contribute to the absolute perfectibility of the species, that these definitions and examinations are undertaken; and to these philosophers (who will doubtless gladly set about it) I leave the task of divining why Sir Philip, the next morning, sauntered for an hour up and down Wimpole Street—why he paused at certain spots on the pavement, as if he had been a second Bléton, or influenced by the *virga divina*. It is our business to record facts; it is that of the philosophers to account for them: and it has often appeared to me, that writers of all kinds of histories are apt to err too much on this accounting side. On reading their pages, one would suppose they had been absolutely inmates of the bosoms of Kings, Empresses, and Generals, whose bones have been for ages mouldered in the grave, so intimately acquainted are they with their motives for every action.

Now, till valets-de-chambre, ladies' maids, and favourite aids-de-camp, write histories, I am inclined to withhold my belief from these explanations of motives; because I rarely find any thing in the alledged ones that come home to my own breast. And I know not how it is, but I am perversely inclined to think that the illustrious personages who figure in the historic page, are composed of the same flesh, blood, veins, fibres, and nerves, as inferior people, and are therefore probably actuated by the same causes.

You are impatient, Madam: your expressive eyes exclaim—"But what's all this to Jessy?" You are right, Madam. I have indeed wandered from my subject; and when once a man ventures into the fields of digression, it requires some magnet as powerful as your eyes to call him back again.

Certain then it is that Sir Philip Desormeaux continued sauntering, with unequal step, up and down Wimpole Street, ruminating, no doubt, on Jessy and her unmerited sorrows, and looking eagerly at the figure and step of every female that entered the street: till at length he was accosted from behind with a tap on the shoulder, and the well-known voice of Colonel Montford enquiring the subject of his musings.

I must again have recourse to the philosophers, to tell me why this sudden interruption threw all Sir Philip's thoughts into disorder, and rendered him incapable, for a moment, of giving an answer to his friend. However he soon recovered enough to express his gladness that

Montford was returned, and to enter into something like reasonable conversation. He rallied the Colonel on his desertion of his engagements, and told him that both affairs were at an end; that M. M. had declined continuing the correspondence, and that he knew not what to make of *Incognita*, relating to him the circumstances that had occurred.

"I doubt not," said the Colonel, "but *Incognita* will appear again, and probably when you least expect her."

Sir Philip made no answer: he was busied at that moment in the invention of a musical instrument, which should imitate the modulations of the human voice in speaking. The excellence of its tones had never before struck so forcibly on his mind; and after a pause, recollecting that he was not alone, and that Colonel Montford had been speaking of his *incognita*, he said—"I hope she will have an harmonious voice."

"Moonstruck, by Jove!" exclaimed the Colonel. "Why, Desormeaux, is it possible thou canst be so entirely fascinated by a Gipsy, of whom thou knowest only that she writes a spirited billet?"

"Nay," replied Sir Philip, "but a melodious voice is surely a great advantage to a woman."

"Undoubtedly it is," answered the Colonel: "but how comes the melody of the voice so strongly to affect thy fancy just at present?"

Sir Philip felt himself rather embarrassed by his friend's close enquiries, and turned the conversation on other topics.

CHAP. VIII.

A pleasant Conjecture.

COLONEL Montford was a gay, thoughtless character, several years younger than Sir Philip, for whom he felt the sincerest friendship, and who loved him with that indulgent partiality which disposed him to forgive his failings. They had been schoolfellows; and Montford, being a very little boy, had been the peculiar *protegé* of the young Baronet, who was very early an orphan. As Montford grew up, he displayed the most fascinating beauty; and though his talents were not brilliant, yet as he was not deficient in understanding, and his temper was invariably sweet and lively, he obtained the most universal good-will.

Sir Philip, of a much more serious and reflecting turn, still loved him with the same protecting fondness. In all the perplexities and difficulties in which the easy temper and gay spirits of Montford involved him, Desormeaux was ever his resource; and by his friendly assistance freed him from his trouble, and gave him the best advice to avoid them in future. The advice was often forgotten, but the service never; and Montford returned the generous affection of Sir Philip with an esteem and veneration that exalted his own character. He had committed many errors from thoughtlessness, which had not robbed him of his friend's good opinion. He had a great deal of natural unreserve about him, so that he had not many secrets from the Baronet; yet he had some. When any thing occurred that he cared not to avow to Desormeaux, he was sure he was wrong; and therefore the reflection on those circumstances which were concealed, always distressed him. Lightly, however, over Montford's heart passed the shaft of sorrow: constitutional good spirits and encouraged levity soon healed the superficial wound, and rarely did the remembrance of his errors deter him from committing new ones; yet, as his disposition was good and affectionate, not many irreparable faults blotted the page of his past life. At the present period his chief delight was in the society of his friend; for his fortune would not enable him to marry, and maintain the same rank and appearance he did as a bachelor: besides, as he often said gaily to Sir Philip, "such a wild rattle as himself was ill calculated for the sober duties of matrimony."

Sir Philip—himself discreet, though not reserved—who knew how to be silent, though not disposed to be gloomy—finding food for observation in every circumstance that occurred, —determined to judge for himself, rather than to frame his opinions on those of others—was the most judicious friend imaginable for Montford: and, indeed, these two very dissimilar characters lived in the most perfect harmony, and the most complete confidence; except that, as we before said, Montford was silent with respect to some exploits not very honourable to himself, and Sir Philip did not always think it prudent to communicate every thing to Montford.

The Baronet now felt that he should expose himself to too much raillery were he to acknowledge the disturbance excited in his mind by the lively notes and spirited challenge of *Incognita*, or by the fascinating accents of the fair one in Wimpole Street. Of Jessy's affairs honour obliged him not to speak; and he felt daily more regret at finding no means of assisting

that lovely girl.

The season for the annual abandonment of town approached; and Sir Philip, anxiously regretting that he could learn nothing of either of the ladies who had made such singular impressions on his heart, determined to linger in London till all the birds of passage were flown, and then to accept the earnest invitation of a friend of his, who lived at a small distance from Cheltenham, and who had been married about a twelvemonth; one while hoping that his search after domestic happiness would be crowned with ultimate success,—at other times fearing that he should never be fortunate enough to meet with a woman who would unite in herself the art of writing pretty billets, and the power of modulating her voice with harmony.

He still continued his visits in Harley Street, where he still saw the pretty Jessy suffering under the most cruel oppression, and unable to devise any mode of relieving her from it.

One day, as he was sauntering thither, he was overtaken by Montford; and after chatting together till they reached the door, Sir Philip excused himself to his friend for dismissing him, saying—"he had a visit to pay at that house."

The Colonel read the name, and hastily exclaimed—"Macfarlane! Since when do you visit here?"

"Only this season," answered Sir Philip.

"And who are the inhabitants?" asked the Colonel.

"An unobserving old father," replied the Baronet, "a malicious stepmother, and a pretty innocent girl."

After a moment's pause Montford said—"Is it *Incognita*, Desormeaux?"

"No, indeed," answered Sir Philip.

"Well, farewel!" cried the Colonel, as he turned from the door, when Sir Philip entered.

He found Mrs. Macfarlane surrounded with a crowd of morning visitors, among whom he noticed Macleod, the echo of her literary sentimental effusions, who was indeed among her most favoured visitants.

This young officer, not admitted into the first circles, wished to make a name among his own society; and observing Mrs. Macfarlane to be the most prominent figure he usually met with, he attached himself to her, determined to make her his ladder, on which to rise to fame.

Mrs. Macfarlane, among other subjects of vanity, was particularly proud of her critical talents. Macleod adopted this fancy, and whenever he was of the party, the conversation was sure to take a literary turn. As, after all, eccentricity was the lady's polar star, the pair of critics judged of all productions by that standard; and when Sir Philip entered, they were deep in a discussion of some of the new philosophical tenets, which they were praising with vehemence as new, bold, original, and just.

Sir Philip smiled to observe the strenuous assertor of the rights of the whole human race

to individual and unbounded liberty, exercising the rod of tyranny over every being within the compass of her power; and the great patroniser of originality of thought and firmness of opinion, slavishly following the ideas of his patroness, and veering about with every breath of her's.

Not long, however, did Sir Philip amuse himself with the discourse or the character of Mrs. Macfarlane and her worthy pupil. The figure of Jessy, pale, trembling, and leaning as if for support against one of the window frames, as she anxiously looked along the street, drew his earnest attention.—He approached her, for the conversers (they cannot be termed disputants who in all points agree) were too much occupied with their subject, and with themselves (I beg pardon, I mean with each other; the word slipped out unawares) to notice them. In fact, it is worthy of remark, that when folks thus harangue in company, whether they differ or agree, their own selves will ever be their primary object of attention. The speakers are attended to, only that the hearers may speak in their turn; and every one is thinking more of what himself shall say next, than of the weight of his companion's argument.

After this little digression on argumentative conversation, which no doubt will put that business on a right footing in future, let us return to Sir Philip, who had just glided unperceived to Jessy, and was asking, with much interest in his voice and manner, "what had so visibly affected her?"

"He is just gone down the street!" whispered the trembling girl.

Sir Philip eagerly enquired if he were out of sight? and when he learned that he was, besought her to compose herself, and addressed to her some indifferent conversation, which quickly reanimated her spirits.

Macleod soon took leave; and Sir Philip, approaching Mrs. Macfarlane, announced his intention of soon leaving town, and, to the lady's earnest enquiries, mentioned his destination to be at a small distance from Cheltenham. This circumstance made Cheltenham the subject of conversation. A lady visitor who was present, declared it the most charming place she ever was at, and Mrs. Macfarlane was instantly fired with a desire to visit its salutary spring. To form a wish was with her to adopt a resolution. The party was speedily arranged, and Sir Philip saw a smile of complacent pleasure beam on the fair face of Jessy, at the thought that she should be in the neighbourhood of her new friend.

Jessy Macfarlane, innocent, unsuspicious, and uninstructed, was of a nature strongly to feel, and be attached by kindness. She felt no impropriety in calling Sir Philip her friend. Shut out as she was from all intercourse of affection, it was well for her security that she was guarded by the double fence of Sir Philip's integrity, and her own previous attachment: the poor girl, frank by nature, had not learned the art of dissimulation even in the school of tyranny. Every emotion of her mind painted itself on her fair and open countenance, and her unfriendly stepmother saw, as well as Sir Philip, the irradiating gleam of innocent delight shine in her eyes and dimples. There were too many persons present at this moment for Mrs. Macfarlane to give the reins to her tongue; besides, she was just engaged in a most elaborate disquisition on the delicacies of social conduct; for Mrs. Macfarlane possessed the art of digressing in perfection, and from the culture of a flower, or the structure of a head-dress, would deduce the most moral

and sentimental harangue on the various duties and proprieties of life: but the smile sunk deep in her memory, and she would have instantly resolved that Jessy should not go with her to Cheltenham, had she not been sorry to lose so admirable a vent for her malignity.

As Sir Philip was walking homeward, an idea struck him, which he determined to investigate further; and having thought about it during his walk, he applied himself, when in his own room, to the invention of a new scale of harmonious accents, formed on the foundation of the innumerable gradations by which the glottis, or valve of the voice, expands and contracts itself in speaking. The scale he found he could arrange well enough; but as the most correct music, if played on an ill-toned instrument, loses much of its beauty, and much of its expression, so he found that he could invent no method by which to mark that precise key-note, of which the harmony alone would give value to his scheme. In vain he recited the most melodious poetry, the most affecting lines from our best tragedies: his own voice never sounded in his ears with that rich, full, and clear melody, which was, above all other charms, so captivating.

He had agreed to dine with his friend Montford previously to their disposing of themselves for the summer. Sir Philip's destination we have already seen. The Colonel intended to make a tour to the Highlands of Scotland. He was much engaged by a curricle which had been built after his own peculiar directions, and which he assured his friend possessed every possible advantage for travelling; he had also picked up a pair of the prettiest and strongest curricle horses in the kingdom; and when he could detach his thoughts and his talk from this favourite subject, he asked, with some appearance of interest, some further account of the Macfarlanes. Sir Philip, though awake himself to the powers of ridicule, did not chuse to paint the family in its strongest colours to his friend, and therefore added but little to the account he had given of them in the morning; but as he mentioned Mrs. Macfarlane's literary turn, and her civilities to him (which indeed were so glaring, that Sir Philip could hardly mention her without letting them appear), Colonel Montford, bursting into a hearty laugh, exclaimed—

"My worthy Baronet, how happy will you be, if you ever obtain an interview with your *Incognita*, to find her turn out to be Mrs. Macfarlane!"

"Impossible," said Sir Philip: "I enquired for a wife!"

"No matter," replied the Colonel. "Do you think those advertisements are never answered for the sake of the joke? Besides, I cannot help being of opinion, that the whole conduct of the nameless writer of the billet is that of a woman who could not act up to the character she assumed. Did she not disappoint you in the Park? Did she not make another appointment for a day that she knew you were to be in Harley Street?"

"No," replied Sir Philip; "Mrs. Macfarlane did not know that I was engaged to be in Harley Street that morning."

"Why, how so?" asked the Colonel: "to whom then were you engaged? For you told me you were obliged to decline the Kensington Garden appointment, on account of a morning engagement in Harley Street."

"That is true," replied Sir Philip, a little confused; "but the engagement was unknown to Mrs. Macfarlane."

"Indeed!" said the Colonel, significantly. "Was it then with her intelligent spouse, or with

her pretty daughter-in-law, that it was made? Ah! Desormeaux, I suspect the known charms of the pretty Jessy have made more impression on your heart than you care to own!"

"In truth you are mistaken," answered Sir Philip, with a very serious air.

"Well, but," added the Colonel, "do you think the Argus eyes of Mrs. Macfarlane would not spy out every arrangement made in her family? Depend on it she knew of this Saturday's engagement, and planned the Kensington Garden scheme accordingly. Was she not at home at the time?"

Sir Philip could not deny that she was, and Montford pursued the idea he had started with so much humour, that the Baronet began to think it possible: at length he said to the Colonel—

"No, no, Harry; I have seen Mrs. Macfarlane's hand-writing, and it is a totally different character."

"That proves nothing," replied the Colonel, "but that she employed a friend to write the billet."

Sir Philip was not the more easy in his mind for the probability thus earnestly insisted on by Montford; it occupied his thoughts in a very unpleasant manner: he knew her sufficiently clever to have written those billets, and actress enough to assume any character with a tolerable degree of consistency; and the readiness with which she had arranged the journey to Cheltenham was another circumstance in proof, which he could well have spared. He rejoiced that his friend lived not immediately at Cheltenham, that he need not mingle more with the visitors to that place than he liked.—He had now another subject of rumination not at all agreeable to him; it disturbed his rest, and he would have been quite perplexed, had not some soft tones of superior melody glided over his memory, and calmed his troubled soul.

"And did Sir Philip really surrender his heart to a well-toned voice?"

No, dear lady, he did not; his heart had formed to itself an idea of feminine graces, among which this silver voice now made itself heard. I am sure you are not yourself insensible to the charm of melting accents, or the liquid melody of soothing sounds. Sir Philip's heart wanted a resting place, but it was rather particular in its choice: it was too fastidious to be satisfied with mere beauty, softness, or simplicity—it sought also the intellectual endowments, and the thousand varied graces that adorn the female character; it sought every indication of an elegant mind: and though you may object that the voice is a mere gift of nature, and has nothing to do with the qualities of the mind, yet you will always find that a graceful and well-modulated voice conveys the idea of that quick, intelligent sensibility, which is so captivating to a fancy like Sir Philip's.

"I thought Sir Philip was a philosopher?"

No, dear lady, he was only a humorist—a character often mistaken in these and former days for a philosopher; but they are in fact very dissimilar. The aim of true philosophy is to weaken the influence of fancy and enthusiasm; the humorist gives way to both. The philosopher

combats all prejudices; the humorist strengthens them. The philosopher judges coolly and dispassionately, comprehends the whole chain of arguments, circumstances, and events, before he ventures to form a decision; the humorist is guided by a single trait, and his reasoning is therefore often built on a very unsteady basis. The philosopher argues with mathematical precision and logical arrangement; the humorist from feeling, impulse, and imagination. The philosopher pauses, examines, weighs; the humorist takes a cursory glance.

"In short, then, there are more humorists in the world than philosophers; and many who pretend to the latter denomination, merit in fact only the former one."

Exactly so, Madam; and so it has been in all ages, and so I fear it will continue to be, notwithstanding even the new lights which have been thrown on all subjects in the present period. True philosophy was ever, and must ever be of difficult attainment, requiring patience, exertion, vigilance, and study. You can judge if the *soidisant* philosophers of the eighteenth century have any eminent share of these requisites.

CHAP. IX.

Cheltenham.

MR. TEMPLAR, the Gloucestershire friend of Sir Philip Desormeaux, was a sensible, well-informed, idle country gentleman, with a fortune barely competent to the refinements he loved: he rather chose to sit down in the unostentatious mansion of his fathers, and by prudent and rational economy to confine his expences within his income, than to take any active methods of improving it. He had married a prudent, good-humoured, domestic woman, with a good face and pleasant manners, who was contented to live as he liked; and had at once hospitality and humility enough to welcome higher people to her plain and frugal table, without blushing at the comparison they might draw.

Mr. Templar, with a cultivated mind, and elegant manners, felt ill at his ease with the Gloucestershire country squires: those of his own level in point of fortune were infinitely beneath him in mental attainments, and those who would have suited him as companions, were too thinly scattered about that remote country to enable him often to profit by their society. He had thus so accustomed himself to almost entire seclusion, that he lamented his vicinity to Cheltenham, whither he never went; and Mrs. Templar, who was of a Kentish family, was too far removed from any of her own connexions to care at all about mixing with the people around them.

Sir Philip was received by this pair of hermits with infinite kindness. Mr. Templar and himself had been very intimate companions at College, and Mrs. Templar always saw her husband's friends with pleasure. The Baronet was delighted with the romantic face of the country, nor did he so entirely dislike the near neighbourhood of Cheltenham. Mrs. Templar, a gay, easy woman, neither saw difficulties herself, nor suffered her friends to feel them. Ever ready for any proposed party,—or, if no amusement was proposed, ever cheerful and contented, the days and weeks flew rapidly and pleasantly; and Sir Philip had already been a fortnight at St. Mary's Oak, without having paid a single visit to Cheltenham. He determined, however, to go down to the Wells the next morning, and take a survey of the company, and also to discover whether his friends, the Macfarlanes, were yet arrived. The weather was fine, and Sir Philip was on the walks as early as any of the water-drinkers. He strolled about, amusing himself with the beautiful scenery, than which nothing can be more captivating; and, sauntering into the great room, looked over the subscription books for the name of Macfarlane. He at length perceived it among the latest arrivals, and determined, if he did not see them at the spring, to go to their lodgings, and pay his compliments to them. While he was thus employed, his ears were saluted with a sudden din, and, looking round to see the cause of it, he beheld a group enter, which rivetted all his attention. A short, fat, vulgar woman, almost in full dress, was leaning on the arm of a young man in the most fashionable *deshabille*. The youth, tall, thin, and pallid, formed the most striking contrast to the florid dame, whom Sir Philip instantly concluded to be his mother. They were both talking incessantly, and uncommonly loud, and evidently meant to proclaim by their manner that they were among the most considerable personages that honoured Cheltenham with their patronage. They were, however, strangers, and advanced with numberless enquiries to

the different tables in the room. The gaze they attracted had at first prevented Sir Philip from observing that they were followed by another lady, who seemed rather to shrink from the curiosity excited by her party, than to court notoriety for herself. At length the fat lady advanced to the table where Sir Philip was still lounging over the subscription books, exclaiming—

"Oh, law! we must put our names down here too, I durst to say: what's this book for, Mister? What are we to pay for putting ourselves into this here list?"

"Nay, you may see, if you've any eyes," cried her young supporter: "you may put down what money you like."

"Well, Milly," called out the lady, "won't you come too, and *sus*cribe? Come, I'll treat you; you know I promised to pay all expences. Come, come; law! don't be shy: never mind a trifle from your godmother and guardian. Come, come, at least write down my name and Mr. Joddrell's, and do as you like about your own."

Thus summoned, Milly advanced, and, without throwing up her veil, or uttering a single word, wrote the names of Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell, and placed in the opposite column the sum the pay-mistress had thrown down.

"Come, come, set your own name down as well; what I've paid will do for all, and then you'll be free of this room."

"Well," vociferated the youth of fashion, "if cousin Milly won't put her own name down, I'll set it down for her. Why, cousin, what have you been doing here? I should not know your writing; and I thought I could have sworn to any stroke of your pen."

Sir Philip was here prevented from paying any further attention to this party by the arrival of Mrs. and Miss Macfarlane, attended by three or four beaux, amongst whom he recognized Macleod; the others were unknown to him.

Mrs. Macfarlane greeted him with infinite joy, which she vainly endeavoured to conceal under the mask of pique; for she said, in a tone of reproach, that she had been ten days at the Wells, and that she concluded Sir Philip had altered his mind. It was not difficult for the Baronet to make his peace with this lady, in whose ears the little monosyllable that preceded his name, had infinite charms; and, promising to spend the next day with her, he paid his compliments in a passing way to Jessy, who looked even more melancholy than when he last saw her in London.

Just then a tall young man swaggered into the room, which now grew extremely crowded, for a sudden shower had driven all the company in for shelter, and, distinguishing Sir Philip, advanced to him with an air of great familiarity, and, with a thousand oaths, professed he was d—d glad to see him.

"You affirm it so vehemently, Bradnynch," returned Sir Philip, "that I cannot doubt it."

"A cursed dull place this!" said Bradnynch; "not a soul here one ever saw before: nothing but country quizzes and wild Irish! Pray where do you lodge?"

"I am not in Cheltenham," answered Sir Philip; "I am at a friend's house some miles

hence."

"Devilish pleasant!" resumed the man of energy; "then you need not be bored to death with the b——d generation that are here, and be d——d to you! Have you subscribed?"

"Not yet," returned Sir Philip.

"But you intend it, of course," said Bradnynch: "come, I'll follow your example."

They went together to the book, and Sir Philip examined with some curiosity the names of Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell, followed by that of Miss Milward.

"Do you know," said Bradnynch, "I am told there is the strangest couple here that ever were seen; the lady, a fat, fussocky dame, fresh from Spital Fields; the husband, a thin Harlequin's lath."

"Look before you," said Sir Philip.

"D——n!" exclaimed he; "if they heard my description of their charming selves, the room will be too hot to hold us."

Sir Philip, sick already of this very intimate friend, pleaded the necessity of returning to his friend's breakfast, and rode homeward, half afraid of repeating his visit to the Wells, lest Bradnynch should again fasten on him.

CHAP. X.

A Fragment of a Song.

SIR Philip was a great explorer, and the country round Cheltenham afforded sufficient scope for his researches. He quitted St. Mary's Oak as soon as breakfast was over the next morning, intending to lounge about the magnificent hills till it was time for him to wait on Mrs. Macfarlane. He left his horse at Cheltenham, and ascended Lockhampton Hill on foot; avoiding the common road, and thereby gaining every moment new and varying prospects. He saw with delight those stupendous works of Nature. He beheld with awe the sheep, mere white specks, browsing in the vallies below; and he turned his eyes with emotion to where Malvern Hills skirted the prospect, which made him feel his present elevated station as a very subordinate one. "And thus," said he, "it ever is with man; the more he exalts himself, the better he can discern those who still tower above him: and yet he labours in his little sphere, unconscious that he toils only to make him more intimately feel his real littleness."

Thus ruminating, Sir Philip went on, drawing a thousand comparisons between the elevations of the earth, and those of the earth's children—comparisons perhaps not so new as ingenious; for, as he was meditating to himself, he was less studious of novelty than of amusement. His reflections were, however, suddenly interrupted by the sound of a few wild notes, warbled by a sweet and interesting voice. He looked around him. He was now in so wild a spot, that he could only suppose it to be the voice of some female peasant; it had already ceased, so that he could not distinguish the air. Again it carolled a fragment of an air: it was, it must be enchantment, for it brought to his mind his various attempts at constructing a musical instrument. Guided, however, by the sound, he advanced, with light, inaudible step, round a projection of the mountain, and there saw, as he proceeded, first, the folds of a white garment; next, the outline of a female figure seated on the ground; and, at last, he could distinguish a white, small, lovely hand and arm, employed in tracing the majestic features of the country. Again she warbled, for Sir Philip's footsteps had not disturbed her; and, in one instant, though on the tops of those wild and rugged hills, all Wimpole Street was before the eyes of the Baronet. His memory, his judgment were less his guides on this occasion than his feelings; for the voice in Wimpole Street had spoken. This was singing; but, different as the tones must be, it most powerfully recalled that moment. Strange witchery of the imagination, which can thus transform a solitude into the semblance of a crowded city, and bring together ideas so little analogous as the uniform ranges of houses, and the wild and awful scenery of Nature! He advanced near enough to behold, traced by that ingenious and fair hand, the most striking objects in the prospect before them, with a truth and accuracy which bespoke superior skill. He ardently longed to approach the designer, to make her speak, to realize the visions of his fancy, to enter into conversation with her, perhaps to find in her the very woman who would captivate his heart; for already he felt inclined to think a pretty hand and arm, and a talent in drawing, indispensable requisites. His feet seemed rivetted to the spot; yet he was aware that the surprise of finding herself overlooked would not give the lady an idea of his politeness. He wandered gently away, determining to return to the spot in a direction which should give her a glimpse of his figure; but her sweet voice sounded again, and he

distinctly made out the following words:

> "Out on thee, Love! my heart abjures
> "Thy treachery; nor thy name endures!"

The air he had never before heard; it was simple and tasteful; and, had not the attraction of dulcet sounds ceased, he would still have remained rooted to the place: but at length he effected his escape, and came round again by an oblique way, so as to catch the eye of the lady. He partly expected to see in her manner symptoms of surprise; but she merely looked up, and, seeing it was a gentleman, resumed her work without embarrassment. Sir Philip had, however, his share of it; the view he had caught of her face shewed him a countenance not beautiful, but to which his fancy gave intelligence and expression. To remain where he was, was now impossible, unless he could find a reason for speaking to the lady; and this appeared absolutely more impossible.

Sir Philip, as we have before said, was not one of those hardened men of *ton* who dare hazard every thing: he felt the respect due to a female in those lonely hills, and he was cautious of alarming her; but enthusiasm makes a man bold and ingenious. He wandered a few steps backward and forward, and at last, with an air of politeness that marked him for a gentleman, he approached still nearer to her, and said,—"Shall I be thought impertinent if I look at your interesting employment?"

"I am not disposed to think impertinence intended," answered the lady; "but my work is not worth your examination."

Sir Philip was in an ecstacy of delight. That voice, whose exquisite modulations had sounded on his memory in the deep silence of the night, now really vibrated on his ear in no forbidding accents; and that fair hand, whose form and colour he had been gazing at, now held forth to him the sketch it had been tracing.

"A delightful art," said the Baronet, "which can thus render permanent impressions otherwise so fleeting; the truth of this sketch, the perspective, the effect, are wonderful!"

"You are at least skilled in the art of saying civil things," said the lady, as she received back her paper.

"This country, fair lady," observed Sir Philip, "must afford your pencil an extensive field."

"It is indeed a beautiful and romantic country," replied the lady, with a sweet and fascinating smile.

Sir Philip thought her perfectly beautiful. She rose, and her graceful figure was really what he thought her face; yet he chid himself for so suddenly submitting to such enthusiasm. She gathered her apparatus together, and tying all up between two light boards, prepared to return to the town, making a curtsy of civility to Sir Philip.

"Once more," said the Baronet, "I am going to put your goodness to the test. Will you allow me to carry your portfolio?"

Again a smile of indescribable expression illumined her lips, cheeks, and eyes.—She hesitated, and Sir Philip, advancing to receive it, added—"I am really going down the hill again: if you do not fear to be seen with a stranger—"

"It is my fate," said the lady, "to be reproached for my inattention to punctilio. Dare I, in this instance, venture to merit the reproach?"

"If you will hazard it," said Sir Philip, "it shall be my care to give you no reason to repent your temerity."

He put the portfolio under one arm, and offered the other to his companion to assist her in descending the hill, for, having deviated far from the accustomed road, they were on a very steep part of it. He endeavoured, as well as he could, to examine the lady's face; but though it certainly was not beautiful, not half so pretty as Jessy's, he thought it uncommonly enchanting. She appeared to be about five or six-and-twenty; her manners, we have already seen, were easy, and her air and conversation bespoke a cultivated mind, that had profited by the habits of good company. Yet the whole figure put him in mind of the cousin Milly at the Wells, the day before.

They talked of the company, the walks, the amusements, and from thence fell to the variety of characters such a scene as Cheltenham presented to the observing mind. The observations of his fair companion appeared to Sir Philip full of just reflection, unadulterated feeling, and animating vivacity. As they approached the town, he said, in a tone of the most serious interest—

"And is this, fair lady, to be the period of our acquaintance; or may I be permitted to claim, when I meet with you again, the privilege of not being considered as a stranger?"

"If Sir Philip Desormeaux wishes, when next he sees me, to reclaim me as an acquaintance, I can have no objection," replied the lady.

"You know me then?" said Sir Philip. "How may Miss Milward have learned my name?"

"Probably," answered she, "in the same manner you learned mine—The subscription books, and common report in such places as these, do not leave folks long in ignorance on such interesting topics."

"But why should Miss Milward imagine that those who have once been so fortunate as to enjoy her conversation, can ever cease to wish for a renewal of the pleasure?"

"I am very willing," said Miss Milward, "to suppose myself possessed of every attraction you are inclined to ascribe to me; but recollect, I am not alone."

"A knight-errant," answered the Baronet, "was indifferent to the monsters that guarded the object of his pursuit."

"Our walk this morning," replied the lady, "has indeed been of a very chivalric description; the precipices, crags, and rocks we have encountered, would afford some very poetical difficulties."

"Happy," exclaimed Sir Philip, "happy is the man, who in his commerce with you, has no further difficulties to encounter than rocks, crags, and precipices!" And with this gallant speech, having reached the door of Mr. Joddrell's lodgings, Sir Philip quitted his agreeable companion.

He felt relieved when, on examining his watch, he found he had a full hour before it would be necessary for him to make his appearance at Mrs. Macfarlane's. He had already explained to that lady the distance of his present residence from Cheltenham, as an apology for waiting on her in a riding-dress: and, therefore, turning into one of the least frequented paths, he resigned himself to the contemplation of his new friend's fascinations.

We have already said that Sir Philip was an enthusiast: in judging of character he was peculiarly so; and Miss Milward had displayed so much in her's that was congenial to the fond picture his fancy had drawn of the woman best calculated to make him happy, that he almost began to hope his important search drew very near to a successful conclusion. Taste, fancy, judgment, vivacity, and feeling she had discovered without any ostentation. Her conversation was precisely of that kind he most preferred—lively, without being petulant; easy, without being forward; her manners facile, gay, and accommodating. He had only to wish that she might be as perfect in essentials as in all that appeared on the surface; and then—Alas! Sir Philip found that the gratification of this wish would draw after it various others. He must wish to find her free from any other attachment; he must wish to be himself to her taste; he must wish—but, in short, when a man gets into the region of wishes, there is no following him. We shall, therefore, leave him to pursue his reverie by himself, till he thinks fit to rap at Mrs. Macfarlane's door.

CHAP. XI.

Motives for loving.

WHEN a man suffers Fancy to run away with him, it is impossible to say whether the mettlesome jade will permit him to observe any appointment with punctuality. Sir Philip Desormeaux was not one of those fashionable *aligers* who think it adds to their celebrity to keep a whole party on the "tenterhooks of expectation," or to spoil every meal they are invited to partake of, while the hapless mistress of the feast frets herself into a fever because she knows her fish must fall to pieces, and her venison be roasted to a chip.

Sir Philip, gay himself, and disposed to social mirth and good-humour, loved to be received with smiles, and therefore never hazarded the encounter with nerves irritated by his own unpunctuality. Yet, in spite of general habit, it did so happen, this unfortunate day, that he was nearly an hour later than the appointed time, and that he actually met in the hall the mutilated fragments of the first course retiring from the scene where they had played their parts with applause. Sir Philip felt a momentary self-reproach, but his spirits were too finely harmonized to be so easily ruffled; and with an air of whimsical contrition, and exhilarating gaiety, he entered the dining-room, uttered his hasty, but conciliating, apologies to Mrs. Macfarlane, and thought himself fortunate that all the party, taking advantage of his non-arrival, had each pushed one step nearer the summit of honour, and that the only place where he could find a vacancy was at the bottom of the table, close beside his little friend Jessy.

The tone of reproach with which Mrs. Macfarlane uttered "Why, Sir Philip, we thought you had deserted us!"—the beginning altercation between the head and tail of the table—whether or not the substantials of the first course should be recalled—and the consequent confusion and blunders of the servants, the cheerful Baronet almost instantly put an end to, by sending to Mrs. Macfarlane for some of the dish before her, which he professed was the best thing in the world; and began to Jessy a whimsical account of his morning's adventures, during which he professed he had been utterly lost in an exploring journey to the seven springs, after a ramble on Leckhampton. His boots and riding coat gave credibility to the story, and the anger of the lady of the house subsided as she listened to the pleasant tale.

His friend Bradnynch was of the party. Mrs. Macfarlane, seduced by his imposing and peremptory manner, believed him a man of fashion, and had formed an acquaintance with him. Since the defection of Bosvile, she had been eagerly looking out for some eligible person to supply his place in ridding her of her pretty daughter-in-law, whom she found rather an inconvenient companion. It would sometimes happen that the beaux would turn aside from expression, energy, and understanding, in the person of a crooked stepmother, to contemplate innocence, beauty, and gentleness, in that of a fair young creature; and Mrs. Macfarlane was anxious to establish within her own circle, at least, the influence, the absolute sovereignty of intellectual qualifications: yet she wished to obtain in Jessy's future husband an agreeable beau for herself, since he would be, she doubted not, always at her command, as the passion inspired

by a pretty baby-face must give way to her more captivating attractions. In chusing for Jessy, therefore, she chose for herself; and how could a stepmother act more honourably towards the daughter of her husband? On this principle, she had now cast an eye of favour on Bradnynch. He was young enough, well-made, and well-looking. If his talents would not have entitled him to celebrity, his exploits had; and provided it was acquired, Mrs. Macfarlane cared not by what means—whether by preeminence in merit, or by appearing masked at the theatre—whether by learning and virtue, or by expensive and indiscriminate treats.

Bradnynch, only son of a gentleman who had died in the East Indies, had also the reputation of fortune: whether he deserved it or not, he certainly merited that of boundless profusion; and he was sufficiently docile. He had willingly danced the two first dances with the pretty Jessy, at the Master of the Ceremonies' ball, and had been tolerably profuse of his attentions and compliments.

All Cheltenham had remarked that Bradnynch was particularly attentive to Miss Macfarlane; and the kind mother-in-law, who considered Jessy's own will as nothing in the affair, looked on it as half concluded.

In fact, Bradnynch, who had never possessed the splendid fortune given to him by the good-natured world, had almost entirely dissipated his Eastern rupees; and the fortune which Miss Macfarlane would undoubtedly possess, was by no means contemptible in his eyes. The girl was also pretty; and, what was still better, she was tame: she would put up with occasional want of attention, and those little mortifications which men of mode are so apt to subject their wives to, with a view, no doubt, of correcting their tempers, and accustoming them to deny their wishes. Bradnynch, therefore, visited frequently at Mrs. Macfarlane's; was always invited when any party was formed, and was always welcome when there was none; was civil to Jessy when he was in the humour; swore at her with uncommon energy, and paid his humblest *baisemains* to *Madame la Belle mere*!

"And Jessy———?"

Why Jessy disliked him as much as Bosvile—*Mais n'importe*!—Jessy is a mere child, and knows not what is best for her; and, not knowing, must be taught—nay, made to do what is right.

"But Jessy, tame as she is, found means to dismiss Mr. Bosvile?"

True; but the case is different here. Bosvile, already wealthy, and incapable of preference, had no objection to Miss Macfarlane's fortune; but did not doubt finding another wife as wealthy, and that would like him: he was indeed a little surprised that Jessy did not; but he was also piqued; so he turned on his heel, and left her. But Bradnynch, as poor as a rat, had already tried to attract the partiality of several wealthy ladies, and had failed, either with the Misses themselves, or, if he had been well received by them, he had been sure to be thrown out by the parents. Every month diminished the possibility of his going on, without some new resource, to

keep his horses, hounds, and mistress in the usual style. He, therefore, was determined to stick fast to the point, and try whether perseverance and his celebrity would not thaw the coldness of this icy girl.

"Return, return, my good Sir! Your hobby-horse has served you the same trick that Sir Philip's played him in the morning, and absolutely run away with you."

No, dear Madam, no; I have only taken the opportunity to amuse you with a little private history while the important business of dinner was going on; and, I assure you, it was far more diverting than the table-chat, which, except the necessary requests for bread, wine, &c. &c. &c. was chiefly composed of Brandynch's expletives; with the help of which he contrived to engross two thirds of the talk to himself, without the expence of a single idea—a commodity in which he was still more a bankrupt than in cash. However, dear lady, as you are tired of this *tête-à-tête* with me, we will return to the company. They are just preparing to join the evening paraders on the dusty flagstones of Cheltenham: so, as they are disposed in tolerable order, we will leave Mrs. Macfarlane to be amused by Bradnynch and two other gentlemen, and join Sir Philip and Jessy, who are quietly following the others.

It is singular enough that these two friends (I hope, Madam, you are convinced now they are no more) should pitch upon the crowded pavement of Cheltenham, from the Plough to the Colonnade, as the most private place for confidential communication: and yet, I know not but they were right. The crowds of well-dressed people that every evening jostle one another on that spot, are less occupied in listening than in talking—in observing their neighbours than in trying to be observed themselves. Be that as it will, it is certain that Jessy found means to tell her artless tale more at length to Sir Philip, who was so irritated against the unnamed rascal that had dared to trifle with the pure affections of a fair young creature, and then "to throw away a pearl richer than all his tribe," that he swore—yes, Sir Philip swore—the villain was unworthy of her; and felt an acute regret that he could no longer endeavour to drive his image from her tender bosom. In every circumstance too of the story, he saw more reason to detest the malignity of Mrs. Macfarlane, who, taking advantage of her husband's blindness, had suffered the poor girl to give away her heart, as if on purpose to make her feel the disappointment of a first ingenuous passion.

CHAP. XII.

A Rencontre.

To Colonel Montford.

Cheltenham,——.

"NOT one line have you yet condescended to write to me, Harry! Is this the way you keep all your agreements? or is there something in the keen air of those mountainous regions you are now traversing, that disperses the recollection of those engagements made in our lower world? However, I send this memento to remind you that your friend still exists, and still cares for you. My stay with Templar, which, at first, I intended to be but short, turns out so extremely pleasant, that I shall probably remain here several weeks longer. Mrs. Templar is an agreeable conversable woman, and not ashamed of not being the richest woman in the world. Templar is the same we ever knew him; and the arrangement of the family is such, that every one feels himself at liberty.

"Of the company at the Wells I shall not say much; it is composed, as such company usually is, of many common pebbles and a few brilliants. There is scarcely any one I know here, except the Macfarlanes, whom you recollect I was visiting just before I left town. They would be insufferable but for the interest inspired by the pretty Jessy, whose melancholy I think daily increases. I wonder her simple and attractive charms do not remove her from a situation where she is evidently ill treated. I would have rescued her myself, but I had reason to suppose my knight-errantry would not have made the girl happy: yet she tells me, in so pretty a manner, that my friendship greatly conduces to her comfort, that, were I not well assured there exists somewhere a rover for whom her heart still sighs, I could almost be coxcomb enough, at times, to fancy she could love the friend she is pleased to acknowledge.

"The interest this girl inspires has led me unawares to say more than is strictly correct; but I know, Montford, your heart is the seat of honour, and you will hold for ever sacred the tale I have thus hinted. Farewel! I was never famous, you know, for very long letters; I need not apologize, therefore, for adding no more than that I am

"Ever faithfully your's
"PHILIP DESORMEAUX."

"Out of the abundance of the heart," saith the proverb, "the mouth speaketh;"—yet did not Sir Philip verify its truth, for not one word of Miss Milward did he mention in this letter; though, as soon as it was finished, he threw himself into bed, where he retraced every particular of his walk with her, ruminated on every turn of her countenance, every inflection of her voice, and finished by going to sleep, and dreaming of her all night. So engaging were these his dreams, that the Baronet was later than common at his friend's breakfast table the next morning; yet his visions had so harmonized his spirits, that he complained not of his tea, though it was nearly cold, nor did he hear three words of Mrs. Templar's apologies for having begun, who was taking unusual pains to assure him that some important business called Mr. Templar away the moment he had done breakfast. Sir Philip, not having heard, answered with complacency, that he was very

sorry he had made her wait, and entreated that, if another morning he should be so lazy, she would make the breakfast without him. Mrs. Templar laughed, and asked him which of his mistresses he was thinking of? At that moment, lifting up his eyes, to consider how he should answer this appeal to his attention, he beheld a female figure advancing through the shady walk that led to the house; and, not a little pleased with this mode of turning the conversation, directed Mrs. Templar's eyes to the spot, by his enquiries who it could be. Mrs. Templar gazed, but for some time was unable to imagine. Sir Philip had made the discovery more rapidly: the very outline of Miss Milward's garments had made too forcible an impression on his fancy for him to remain long in doubt. Why did not he instantly proclaim his conviction? I must again have recourse to my friends the philosophers to answer this question.

Nay, gentlemen, if I have been too familiar, I beg your pardon; but, really, you need not disclaim with so much *hauteur* the friendship of a novel-writer. No, indeed, gentlemen, a novel-writer, now-a-days, is by no means one of the lowest retainers of the Muses; and, were I not engaged in more important business at present, I would fight you on this ground for a whole hour by Shrewsbury clock! but, as Mrs. Templar has just recognized her cousin, Josepha Milward, as she has just opened the parlour door to her, shaken her by the hand, and given her the cordial welcome of animated friendship, I will not intrude my petty debates with you gentlemen philosophers on those readers who may feel interested in the simple events I am recording. Mrs. Templar, then, had drawn a chair for Josepha between herself and Sir Philip, and was just going to introduce them to each other, when she perceived that this was not the first time they had met.

"Why, Sir Philip," said Mrs. Templar, in a tone of reproach, "why did you not tell me Josepha was at the Wells?"

"Had I known you were acquainted," replied the Baronet, "I should, most certainly, not have omitted to give you such pleasant intelligence."

"Is it possible," resumed Mrs. Templar, "that you can have been so long in the house without my speaking to you of Miss Milward?—And you, Josepha, why did not you commission Sir Philip to inform me of your arrival?"

"Because," said Miss Milward, "I did not know Sir Philip was your guest."

"And why then, dear girl, not announce yourself by letter?"

"Because I wished to be my own herald," replied Josepha. "We have been at Cheltenham only three days, and, on the fourth, behold me already your visitor!"

"Three days!—three ages!" exclaimed Mrs. Templar.

"However, you will give me some breakfast, I trust," said the lively guest.

Mrs. Templar rallied her own forgetfulness, and repaired it immediately. Mr. Templar would have exacted a promise from Miss Milward to wait his return, which was not to be till late in the evening, but she declared herself absolutely engaged to dine at Cheltenham, promising, however, to repeat her visit very soon.

Sir Philip was delighted at the manner in which this pleasing woman was received by his friends. He judged very favourably of her from this circumstance; and while he watched every turn of her countenance and every action, however trivial, he wished that such might be at all

times his employment: yet, when Mr. Templar departed, he thought politeness required that he should not intrude on the first meeting between two friends so evidently attached to each other; and therefore, however reluctantly, he strolled out of the house, determined, at all events, not to be out of the way, that he might humbly offer himself to Miss Milward as an escort back to Cheltenham.

Into the shady walk so lately graced by her light figure, he now wandered. The sweet inflections of her voice still vibrated on his ear; and, while he wished that she might be destined to bless his future days, he stopped so strangely opposite to the windows of the house, that the ladies could not but perceive the singularity of his conduct; nor was he roused from this reverie till he heard the gay voice of Mrs. Templar carolling beside him—

"Comely swain, why stand'st thou so?"

with evident application to his musing attitude, and Miss Milward joining in the chorus. He then started; and, in contradiction to the first wish of his heart, was absolutely stealing away; but Mrs. Templar said gaily, "Nay, nay, Sir Philip, you must not so escape; this is the second time to-day I have caught you in a brown study, and I must positively be told the subject of it."

"Can a man of common politeness," said the Baronet, "assign any cause for his musing to a fair lady, but herself?"

"Absolute evasion!" said Mrs. Templar; "but, come, I am going to walk with Josepha part of the way to Cheltenham—will you be of the party?"

Sir Philip needed not a second invitation, nor was he displeased to find that Mrs. Templar meant to stop at the house of an invalid friend of her's, a very little way from her own: when, finding himself at liberty to offer his attendance to Miss Milward for the rest of her walk, he had the satisfaction to hear her say, "I have already told you, Sir Philip, that it is my fate to be blamed for want of punctilio, and that I am now determined not to be blamed for nothing."

An interesting debate then arose on the propriety of the dissimulation practised in the world, from an attention to what it calls decorum; and the preferable nature of truth and sincerity was just beginning to be discussed, when Mrs. Templar turned in at her friend's gate, and left Sir Philip and Miss Milward to pursue their walk together.

CHAP. XIII.

A Colloquy.

"JUDGING by your countenance, fair lady," said Sir Philip, as he drew his companion's arm through his, "you can bear to hear the language of sincerity?"

"You believe then in the evidence of physiognomy?" said Miss Milward.

"I confess I have always been partial to the study," replied the Baronet; "nor can I help fancying that I speak to one who sets some value on it."

"I acknowledge myself a believer in its truth," returned Miss Milward, "though I do not pretend to have discovered its principles; but, although not a scientific, I am, what most people are, an intuitive physiognomist."

"Most people, indeed," observed Sir Philip, "are led by appearances; yet we know that their fallacy is even proverbial."

"I must yield to the truth and politeness of that remark," said Miss Milward, smiling, "otherwise I would appeal to Sir Philip's own experience, whether there are not some criterions in countenance which cannot be mistaken."

"I should be extremely sorry," replied the Baronet, "to disbelieve that assertion. I confess myself an enthusiast in the science, though an untaught one. May I not ask, if your early conjectures at character are not generally established by your further acquaintance?"

"Generally speaking," said Miss Milward, "they are; but I do not venture into the depths of the science, nor often attempt to judge of the moral character."

"How far then do you venture to decide?" asked Sir Philip.

"Just as far as common observation and natural feeling enable me to do in the first half hour," answered she; "and that observation usually establishes my approbation or dislike."

"If you merely judge from the exterior," replied the Baronet, "half an hour is, indeed, sufficient to form your opinion."

"I comprehend your inference," said Miss Milward, laughing: "to judge of character by beauty and fashion would, indeed, be a very lady-like mode of deciding, and very liable to error; but though features and habits may add something to the superstructure, they are far from being a sufficient foundation."

"How then do you decide?" asked Sir Philip.

"I generally see, or fancy I see," replied Miss Milward, "a warmth, an ease, a frankness of character, that decide in my mind whether or not that person will be agreeable to me on further acquaintance. There are numberless people with whose exterior and manners I can find no fault, who yet do not assimilate with my feelings; who may be possessed of many estimable qualities, yet whose atmospheres do not cohere with mine."

"A whimsical definition!" observed Sir Philip.

"Is it not, however, tolerably just?" asked Miss Milward. "Have you never met with characters that demanded your esteem, yet could not obtain your preference?"

"It cannot be denied," answered the Baronet.

"Oh! trust me, Sir Philip," resumed the enthusiastic Miss Milward, "those persons whose

countenance and manners do not give you, in the first half hour, a favourable prepossession, will never become the objects of a warm, decided partiality, however their good qualities may command the approbation of reason."

"Is not this doctrine," asked Sir Philip, "more specious than true, and more dangerous than just?"

"From my own experience, I am inclined to think not," answered Miss Milward, "since there are some congenial and valuable qualities that imprint themselves so strongly on the countenance, as not to be counterfeited or misunderstood."

"And these qualities are—"

"Precisely those which give a grace to the cold austerity of mere reasonable virtue—warmth of heart, sensibility to all that is praiseworthy, frankness and openness of temper; and surely you will allow that these qualities, if not in themselves pre-eminently estimable, are at least an admirable groundwork for those that are."

"That I will not controvert," said the Baronet; "but has Miss Milward never found these captivating qualities merely external? and has she not thence learned to distrust mere exterior character?"

"Has Sir Philip, I would enquire," returned Miss Milward, "never met with a counterfeit guinea, or forged bank note; and does he, therefore, distrust the sterling value of all coin, or the real goodness of all paper currency?"

"But is there not more danger," asked Sir Philip, "to be feared from a mistake in our estimate of characters than of coin?"

"Granted," replied the lady; "but, though without these embellishments I should find it difficult to love the strictest virtue, yet I never said that it was needless to look beyond them: on the contrary, I began by asserting that I never attempted to form a judgment further than merely whether the person I was observing would or would not be agreeable to me in future; not whether they would be deserving of my decided esteem. I have, however, found in general, that those in whose favour my fancy received the earliest impression, have deserved and retained my real regard."

"And have you never found," said Sir Philip, "that a person whose first appearance has prejudiced you against him, has, on further acquaintance, won your favour?"

"I will not say I never have," answered Miss Milward, "because one of my most favourite friends was announced to me with the warmest encomiums, and when I first saw her, I fancied I could perceive only affectation and self conceit; but this idea soon, very soon, wore off, and the day passed not without my discovering her merit. If such prejudice is to be worn slowly away by the gradual operation of reason, cold esteem will be all the heart can bestow."

"Have you studied Lavater?" asked the Baronet.

"Not studied him," replied Miss Milward, "but read him with ardour, with conviction. I never dared to avow my faith in physiognomy before, because I esteemed it an ill-natured science; but the benevolence of Lavater's heart has taught him to see goodness and understanding in the plainest features; and his philanthropy has convinced me that there is more good than evil in the generality of countenances."

"And are you expert at finding out the good, and shutting your eyes to the evil?" enquired Sir Philip.

"I flatter myself I am," said the lady; "at least, where I see good, I always strictly believe

it; and where I see evil, I always doubt my own skill."

"That is at least a candid mode of judging," said Sir Philip.

"A pupil of Lavater's, at however humble a distance," answered Miss Milward, "cannot be uncandid: but I have already said, it is merely the minor morals that I attempt to discover—those that float upon the surface, and are easily discernible to the most casual observer: I concern myself not the least in the "how d'ye" commerce of acquaintance, whether people are essentially good or not; I am only interested in their superficial qualities—their agreeable foibles."

"You have contrived to give your skill a very agreeable turn," observed Sir Philip, "to render yourself less formidable."

"Indeed," returned the lady, "I do not deserve to be reckoned formidable. Is it not a very allowable amusement to speculate on the failings no one tries to conceal, and that some people even endeavour to adorn? Is it not permitted to peep under the gossamer veil of affectation, and spy out self-conceit in the garb of modesty—absolute vacancy, taught to pass for fashionable apathy—and, indeed, to discover all the well-imagined subterfuge of vanity?"

"Amusing enough!" said Sir Philip; "but what is become of the candid disciple of Lavater?"

"Indeed, Sir Philip," answered Miss Milward, "there is no need of candour, when one is merely judging of those foibles folks are even proud to display."

"Vanity," observed Sir Philip, "will meet with a formidable opponent in you."

"Believe me, you are mistaken," answered Miss Milward; "I am, and ever have been, an avowed champion for vanity."

"Ah! Miss Milward, you are like the rest of the world; every one can patronize the failing they are free from."

"Free from vanity!" exclaimed the lady; "I beseech you do not imagine it; I differ from the rest of the world, not in being without vanity, but in not being ashamed of it. Most people take infinite trouble to disguise and conceal that ever-busy principle; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, and perhaps even the more for them, it *will*, dear vanity *will* betray itself. For my part, I let it act; I am convinced that it does, on the whole, more good than harm: and why, therefore, should I blush to possess a principle which is not only common, but, generally speaking, beneficial to the whole species?"

"If I could have doubted Miss Milward's singular benevolence," said Sir Philip, "this conversation would have convinced me of it: how warmly she espouses the cause of the stigmatized and calumniated!"

"In truth," replied Miss Milward, "mankind are very ungrateful to one of their greatest benefactors, when they abuse that admirable quality we are speaking of. Is it not the most powerful stimulus to all kinds of exertion? And tell me now, sincerely, should either you or I be so agreeable to each other, if we were not prompted by this same active principle?"

"Thou art a most whimsical being!" said Sir Philip.

"So it is ever with the world," observed the lady: "those who dare to be frank are always thought whimsical."

"This," replied Sir Philip, "is not in future to be the case. The philosophers, who are labouring to enlighten the present as well as all future generations, mean to bring sincerity into general practice."

"They will then," answered Miss Milward, "do a more essential service to mankind than I

had supposed them capable of."

"And do you then discredit the power of a set of studious and enlightened men to use their talents for the service of society?"

"By no means," said Miss Milward; "but there seems to me too much declamation, and too little fact, in the arguments of these gentlemen. They remind me of the curious play-bills in different coloured letters, distributed by petty theatres, promising the greatest wonders, and performing none."

"But your ideas are too rapid," rejoined Sir Philip: "philosophy does not perform its operations in a moment—it does not work by magic."

"It seems to promise something like it, however," observed Miss Milward, "when it talks of asserting the omnipotence of mind over matter, and enabling a man, by mere volition, to avoid death. However, I am satisfied with the effects it has already produced in an underhand way: I should by no means wish to see the disciples of the New School, or even the New Philosophy itself, live for ever."

"Can Miss Milward," asked the Baronet, "be so much the slave of prejudice as to wish to annihilate the spirit of free enquiry, especially where it avowedly tends to general improvement?"

"No doubt," returned Miss Milward, "the world is yet in its infancy, and the absolute perfectibility of man is a truism reserved for the intuitive philosophers of the present day to discover. Farewel all the ancient dreams of man's depraved and reprobate state! He needs but to exert his innate powers to shake off for ever the opprobrious stigma; and, in truth, I must confess, the *Illuminati* shew a noble confidence in their own assertions, and trust wholly to their own innate powers."

"The patroness of vanity cannot disapprove of that doctrine at least," retorted Sir Philip.

"Indeed," returned Miss Milward, "the vanity for which I plead is far more humble than the vanity of philosophy: mine is the vanity of daily life, and only stimulates to minute attentions and trivial exertions."

"But you cannot object to a similar stimulus calling forth more active energies?—a stimulus, which should enable an attentive parent to conduct his offspring from infancy to maturity without the commission of a single fault: nay, to use poetic language,

"From every eye to wipe off every tear;"

for I understand even the first cries of opening life are, by proper management, to be prevented."

"No doubt," answered Miss Milward, "*à la mode de Zeluco.*"

The pair of conversers had by this time nearly approached the entrance of Cheltenham. Sir Philip expressed his concern with as much warmth as sincerity; as the lady also professed frankness, and did not join in his lamentations, we conclude she did not feel the same regret. The Baronet, however, willing not only to prolong his present enjoyment, but to open to himself another door for the future repetition of it, entreated his fair friend to introduce him to Mrs. Joddrell and her son.

"Her son!" repeated Miss Milward. "My dear Sir, Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell are man and wife."

"*Tant mieux,*" replied Sir Philip: "will you introduce me?"

"On one condition," answered the lady. "Hazardous as it may be to me, I will introduce you on one condition—"

"And that is—?" enquired Sir Philip.

"That you tell me why it is so much the better."

"Because—because," said the Baronet, "it heightens the flavour of the amusement."

Sir Philip certainly pronounced this answer with some hesitation and embarrassment; but that embarrassment did not arise from the consciousness that he was ridiculing the relations, and perhaps the friends, of Miss Milward:—no; it arose from the consciousness that he was not speaking the truth. The "*tant mieux*" was an involuntary exclamation; and I will leave you, dear Madam, to find out the real meaning of it:—you will do it more readily than the philosophers.

CHAP. XIV.

French Ease.

MR. and Mrs. Joddrell were both at home, and received our Baronet with different degrees of civility:—the lady looked pleased, and uttered, with great volubility, her satisfaction—the youth assumed a glum air, to behold himself eclipsed in his own house; for completely as Mr. Joddrell thought himself a man of fashion, he could not deny that Sir Philip possessed still stronger claims to the title. Mrs. Joddrell read her spouse's displeasure in his countenance, and made some awkward attempts to soften it; and, indeed, the young man himself reflected that an intimacy with the Baronet would throw a lustre on himself; and, therefore, suddenly laying aside his cold countenance, he advanced to Sir Philip, shook him cordially by the hand, complained of his own bad habit of absence, and concluded by giving him a general invitation. Sir Philip, with equal ease, accommodated himself to the cool or the warm style of his new acquaintance; and they proceeded to discuss the usual public-place topics—the weather, the roads, the company, and the Rooms. Of the latter Sir Philip could say nothing; he had not yet visited them. This acknowledgment was followed by so pressing a request to stay and accompany them there that evening, that the Baronet, whose wishes too powerfully accorded with the invitation, had not the force to say *no*, but dispatched an envoy to St. Mary's Oak, to apologize for his not returning, and to summon Bronze to perform the duties of the toilet.

"There doesn't seem to be many persons of fashion in this here place," said Mrs. Joddrell, as she seated her plump person on a sofa in the upper rooms in the evening. "They seems to me to be all rather queerish sort of folks; don't you think so, Sir Philip?"

"Exactly so, Madam," replied Sir Philip.

"I was sure as you'd think so," replied the lady; "but Mr. Joddrell won't at all agree with me."

"No, faith!" said Joddrell; "I think there are some very good-looking folks here, particularly among the women. There, now, is a tall elegant figure, in white, with lilac ornaments."

"Lord-a-mercy!" interrupted Mrs. Joddrell; "she! why she looks for all the world like the skeleton of the Irish giant: but you always think them tall gawky things elegant, Mr. Joddrell, so you do."

"Well then," said he, "what do you think of that languishing fair-one on the sofa opposite to us, who is moving her fan with so much grace?"

"Think!" exclaimed the lady, "that she's an affected minx: isn't she so, Sir Philip?"

"Which is the lady in question?" enquired the Baronet; but Mr. Joddrell did not allow time for him to learn, before he singled out Mrs. Macfarlane as possessing a sensible, intelligent countenance.

"She good-looking!" cried Mrs. Joddrell; "why, she's as crooked as a ram's horn, and as tawdry as the fore-horse—"

"Well," interrupted the gallant husband, "but you must allow beauty to the pretty young thing that sits beside her."

"Ay," answered the wife, in a fidget, "as much beauty as one sees in a painted doll for a child to play with; but you are always for praising up every body's beauty, I think, Mr. Joddrell."

"True," said he, "my dear; it gives me pleasure to see these lovely works of Nature displaying themselves to the best advantage: I must go and see if I can enter into conversation with that very pretty girl."

"Now pray don't go and make yourself ridiculous," cried Mrs. Joddrell, fidgetting about on her seat in a manner that sufficiently expressed the uneasiness of her mind.

"No, my dear," said Joddrell carelessly, "I leave that to you; you generally succeed well enough for both of us;" and, rising, he was going to approach the Macfarlanes, when the crooked stepmother, recognizing Sir Philip, gave him a beckon of invitation: Sir Philip was conversing with Miss Milward, and, therefore, answered the summons only by a bow; but the action had not been lost on Joddrell, who was really pleased with Jessy's innocent countenance, and he earnestly entreated Sir Philip to introduce him. The too visible reluctance of Mrs. Joddrell would have induced Sir Philip to decline it, could he have done so without entirely offending him. Securing, therefore, Miss Milward's hand for the first two dances, he walked with Mr. Joddrell across the room to Mrs. Macfarlane; and, having paid his own compliments in rather a concise manner, introduced his friend.

This young man, who on a nearer approach liked Mrs. Macfarlane much less than he had done at a distance, instantly availed himself of the introduction to seat himself by the side of Jessy, and, addressing to her a profusion of complimental nonsense, to request her hand. Jessy was happy to announce herself engaged, even though it was to Mr. Bradnynch; for she knew that Mr. Joddrell was married, and the strictness of her principles made her hear with infinite disapprobation the ardent gallantry he entertained her with. For the second set she had not the same excuse, for Sir Philip's request was not in time to enable her to plead it: she could not, therefore, refuse Mr. Joddrell, and the Baronet held her engaged for the two succeeding dances.

The music now playing, Sir Philip hastened to claim his lively partner, and found, with less wonder than pleasure, that

"With a step and a bound,
"And a frisk from the ground,
"She danc'd like any fairy!"

Her form all symmetry, her movements all grace and lightness, her spirits gay and volatile, and her disposition easy and cheerful, Sir Philip saw, with delight, character even in country dances; and in every attitude read the very soul he best could love. In point of personal beauty, Jessy was undoubtedly far more attractive; she was become even more handsome than when he first knew her in London. In disposition, too, Jessy was amiable and engaging, and in intellect not at all deficient; but the cultivated mind, the refinement of talent, the combining grace that give a new charm to every female accomplishment, shone most resplendent in Miss Milward; and to that grace, that exquisite propriety of genius, manner, and vivacity, that place every advantage in its fairest, yet most unobtrusive light, Sir Philip paid most ardent homage. Other women were graceful—Miss Milward was grace; other women were sprightly—Miss Milward was

sprightliness; other women were tender—Miss Milward was sensibility; and all her qualities were so much a part of herself, so unostentatious, so unassuming, that to the most perfect freedom of manner she added the most unconscious modesty.

The dances over, Sir Philip led his charming partner to a seat, and placed himself beside her; but the heat of the room grew intolerable, and they sauntered into the vestibule. Here, while they were enjoying a cooler atmosphere, a lady entered from the street, who, instantly recognizing Miss Milward, advanced to her with an air of kindness, and, shaking her by the hand, took a seat beside her. Miss Milward hesitated not to make Mrs. Brudenell and Sir Philip known to each other; and they recollected, with many greetings on both sides, that the introduction ought to have been unnecessary, having been formerly acquainted.

Mrs. Brudenell was a veteran woman of fashion, who had flourished for thirty years in immortal, unfading roses; who still led the gayest and the newest *ton*, often mixed with some singular whimsies of her own; who had been often talked of, often blamed, but who defied the clack of the world, and lived her own way. She did as she pleased, and was at length so well known, that her name pleaded her excuse for her singularities. She had, in early youth, been separated from her husband, not for any misconduct, but on a plea, allowed by the new jurisprudence of France to be amply sufficient—that of incompatibility of temper; and though young, handsome, and rich, the tongue of calumny had never blackened her character: yet was she so much of an oddity, that Sir Philip felt a singular, and not an approving sensation at his heart, as he witnessed the intimacy subsisting between her and Miss Milward. The period spent in her company, however, was never, after the first five minutes, given to any unpleasant recollections: the ease and drollery of her manner, the readiness of her conversation, and the general good humour of her character, set all disagreeable reflections at defiance. Her expressions of kindness towards Miss Milward did her much credit in the eyes of Sir Philip; and he felt a sort of affection towards the woman that could appretiate Josepha's real worth.

Mrs. Brudenell was but just arrived at Cheltenham, and desired to be made acquainted with all the scandal, and all the characters of the place. Miss Milward, with a smile, referred her to Sir Philip, as being herself a stranger to the circumstances enquired after.

"Nay," said Mrs. Brudenell, "you are not, I think, so soft as to scruple a little harmless scandal and raillery, or to deny one the luxury of being merry at the expence of some of the precious animals that infest these places?"

"Perhaps," replied Miss Milward, "I may fear, if I sketch all the originals here, that the portraits may approach too near home."

"And so you positively won't indulge me?" said Mrs. Brudenell. "Well, then, Sir Philip, let us hear how well you can play the female, and retail a little calumny. What are the whispers that every body knows?"

"The most striking character I have met with here," said Sir Philip, "is a sort of female adventuress, who scrambles up and down rocks and precipices, and warbles to the wild woodlands—a kind of land Syren, that draws in the unwary passenger."

"Oh! your romantic Misses, that seek solitude," answered Mrs. Brudenell, "are to be

found every where."

"I assure you," added the Baronet, "the fair adventuress I allude to is by no means of a kind to be found every where."

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Brudenell, "don't I see Colonel Woodley in the room? I can't stay a moment longer here; and I protest, I beg your pardon, I ought to have been sooner aware that I was interrupting a very interesting *tête-à-tête*."

The general movement in the dancing room, however, at this moment, indicated that the set was ended; and Sir Philip was obliged to quit the side of Miss Milward to fulfil his engagements with Jessy. Her pretty features brightened with pleasure as he approached her; and she assured him, in the most artless manner, of her joy that her other two engagements were over, though she feared she should be obliged to dance again with Bradnynch. Bradnynch, indeed, persecuted her incessantly; and disagreeable as his manner ever was, Jessy thought it more peculiarly so at present, as he interrupted her conversation with Sir Philip. Sir Philip thought every thing disagreeable that kept him from Miss Milward, to whom he flew again the moment he was at liberty. He could not but remark that Mr. Joddrell was at her elbow all the time he was dancing with Miss Macfarlane; and, when the tea assembled the individuals of each party, he was struck with the odd manner of Mrs. Joddrell—a marked coldness towards Miss Milward, a snappish fondness towards her husband, and a forced attention to himself, shewed the mind of that amiable and elegant fair-one ill at ease. Sir Philip, in general, felt the most spontaneous compassion for the distresses of the ladies, but, at present, a something in his own heart made him inattentive to others; and, besides, there was a ludicrous effect in the countenance and manners of Mrs. Joddrell that entirely destroyed any sympathy her perturbation might otherwise have occasioned. The lady exerted her utmost skill in arranging the company at table, so as to separate Mr. Joddrell and Miss Milward; but the effort was too apparent, and betrayed, what every prudent wife should strive to conceal, a jealousy of her husband. It was, indeed, sufficiently evident that Mr. Joddrell preferred every woman to the lady who honoured him by bearing his name; but even the watchful eyes of Sir Philip could discover no cause for alarm in the unembarrassed manner of Miss Milward. It was curious to observe, even through Mrs. Joddrell's embarrassment, that she was both proud and fond of her cousin Milly, as she familiarly called her: at the very moment that she was most solicitous to withdraw her husband's attention from her, she could not forbear expatiating largely and warmly on her different accomplishments and good qualities, nor remarking how much she was noticed by people in the very first line of life.

Mrs. Brudenell now approached the table, and, after speaking to Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell, desired to be admitted of their party, and took a seat between Mr. Joddrell and Sir Philip. Mrs. Joddrell, though embarrassed to such a degree that she knew not what to do with any limb she had, yet felt and looked highly flattered by this mark of friendship; and Mrs. Brudenell contrived to delight her extremely, by saying, with a smile, "Those who have travelled, Mrs. Joddrell, know well how to dispense with the tiresome formalities of English manners."

"Oh dear, yes, to be sure, Mame!" replied Mrs. Joddrell: "I always will say that it's a great pity we doesn't learn some of the easiness of the French: there's no people, to be sure, like the French for politeness."

"We have not been backward," said Sir Philip, "in adopting many of the French

characteristics: I hope we shall not fail to select those which best adorn them."

"Oh Lord, Sir!" observed Joddrell, "it is not in the nature of a clumsy Englishman, at least not of one in a thousand, to catch the air, the grace of a Parisian. For my part, I wish I had never crossed the Channel, or that I had never come back again; for a little acquaintance with France has taught me to think this country utterly detestable."

"Has it had the same effect on you?" said Sir Philip in a low voice to Miss Milward.

"Not precisely," answered she in the same tone.

"Well, I can't go so far as that, neither," said Mrs. Joddrell; "I do think there's many things in which Old England has the advantage."

"Name one!" exclaimed her husband—"name one, except your cursed vulgar roast beef."

"Nay, Mr. Joddrell, you can't dispute but our English dinners, not only our roast beef, are more comfortable, and cleanly, and wholesome than their soups and fricassees, and kickshaws."

"Pardon me," observed Mrs. Brudenell; "but the endeavours of all our cooks to attain the French style prove the estimation in which we hold their table."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Joddrell, "they do manage all them sort of things with more genteelness, as one may call it, abroad, than they does here."

"I am sure," said Joddrell, "you have good reason to prefer France to England."

"What may that be?" asked the lady.

"That they don't understand your cursed *patois*," answered the husband.

The conversation at the tea-table now settled in two distinct parties: a sort of squabble going on between Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell, on the comparative merits of the two countries; and Mrs. Brudenell, Miss Milward, and Sir Philip, chatting on indifferent subjects, till the renewal of the dancing broke up the conference.

CHAP. XV.

The Rover.

SIR PHILIP was one day sauntering along the streets of Cheltenham, when a smart curricle appeared at some distance, which seemed not wholly unknown to him. As it approached, he recognized the equipage of Colonel Montford. No sooner did Montford perceive and know his friend, than he consigned the reins to his servant; and, joining him, scarcely allowed himself time to express his pleasure at the meeting, before he desired Sir Philip to take him to some place where he might speak freely. Sir Philip instantly turned towards the fields, and, chusing a path but little frequented, enquired the reason of the Colonel's evident perturbation, and the cause of his sudden journey to Cheltenham, when he imagined him traversing the Highlands of Scotland.

"How can you ask what you must know so well?" replied the Colonel: "let me rather ask, how you came to discover what I thought an inviolable secret to you?"

"I have discovered nothing," said the Baronet:—"tell me what you mean."

"Discovered nothing!" repeated Montford. "Why then did you write such a letter to me so full of reproaches—reproaches, too, so fully deserved?"

"Reproaches!—deserved reproaches!" exclaimed Sir Philip:—"what can you mean? Explain yourself, dear Montford: what letter have I written?"

"The account of Jessy Macfarlane," replied Montford: "her regret for the ungrateful rover who deserted her—her melancholy——Oh Desormeaux! is it possible you are ignorant—that—I am—"

"That rover?" interposed Sir Philip.

"If I have any chance now of restoring to the dear girl the happiness I have robbed her of, Oh take me instantly to her lodgings!" cried the Colonel.

"Tell me, first, what passed?" said Sir Philip.

"I blush to tell you how ill I behaved," answered Montford: "I always have blushed at the thought of explaining it to you; and this, more than any thing, has convinced me that I have indeed been very culpable. I liked the girl, and paid her attention; I saw she did not receive it with dislike; and, my vanity being flattered, I redoubled my assiduity; but hardly rich enough to marry, and understanding that a lucrative establishment was planned for her, I left her to guess what had been the motives of my conduct, and consoled myself with the idea that her sensibility was not so exquisite as to endanger her peace:—your letter has undeceived me; and now, tell me, am I too late—is her marriage absolutely concluded on?"

"I trust it is not," answered Sir Philip; "but how will you proceed?"

"Nay, advise me, my friend," said Montford; "I will be guided wholly by you; yet I am very impatient."

"You must, however, be a little quiet," answered the Baronet; "for I think the first step to be taken is to inform Jessy herself of your arrival and intentions: she honours me with much of her confidence and friendship.—Will you depute me as your messenger?"

"With full powers, dearest Sir Philip," replied Montford: "where shall I await your return?"

"We are not now far from Mrs. Macfarlane's lodgings," said the Baronet; "if you will remain in this walk, I will rejoin you here."

Montford readily agreed; and Sir Philip, hastening to Mrs. Macfarlane's abode, found, beyond his hopes, his fair young friend at home, and alone. Her face beamed with pleasure as she beheld Sir Philip, who met her smiles with a countenance of encouragement; and, after some general chat, said in a tone of kindness—"You do not, I hope, forget, Miss Macfarlane, that you allowed me to assume the title of your friend: is it permitted to your friend to speak to you openly?"

"I shall be most thankful to you," she replied.

"Do not think me impertinent, then," said Sir Philip, "if I venture to enquire whether Bradnynch has at all superseded your former favourite in your heart?"

"Oh, no!—Oh, no!" exclaimed she; then, hastily checking her warmth, she said, "You must have a very bad opinion of my choice, Sir Philip, to imagine I could prefer such a wretch as Bradnynch to him."

"Not a bad opinion of your choice, either, my fair friend," answered Sir Philip, "as you will allow, when I tell you he has for many years been the most intimate friend of my own heart."

"Oh Heaven!" exclaimed Jessy: "do you know—" the name hung on her lips, but would not pass them.

Sir Philip supplied the sentence, adding—"Yes, Miss Macfarlane, I do know and very much esteem your penitent Montford! How stand your nerves, fair lady? If you are thus agitated at merely hearing his name, how will you bear to see him?"

"See him!" repeated Jessy.

"Do you think you could gain resolution to see him," said the Baronet, "and pronounce his sentence, either of condemnation or pardon, with your own lips?"

"Oh Sir Philip!" exclaimed the blushing girl, "do not, I beseech you—but you are incapable of jeering at my unfortunate situation. Indeed, Sir, I feel how unbecoming it is for a young woman to have thus exposed her heart and unhappiness to a gentleman; but—"

"Dear Miss Macfarlane," said Sir Philip, rising, and respectfully taking her hand, "I do assure you, you wrong me, if you can suspect me of any want of esteem for you: I am speaking in earnest to you; but I feared over-powering your spirits if I explained myself too abruptly.—I may now venture to tell you that Montford is in Cheltenham."

A ray of joy passed over Jessy's countenance as Sir Philip uttered these words; but it was quickly succeeded by a downcast look, as she said, "I thank you, Sir, for the warning; I will endeavour to meet him without discomposure:" but the struggling tear that almost forced its way down her cheek, proved how difficult would be the exertion.

"You will meet him, I hope," said the Baronet, "with the smile of pardon?"

"It would ill become me," answered Jessy, "to shew any displeasure against Colonel Montford, if he should speak to me; but, most probably, he will not notice me."

"Not notice you!" exclaimed Sir Philip. "Is it possible you can misunderstand me? Have I not said that he comes to seek you, to sue for pardon at your feet?"

"He—Colonel Montford—pardon from me!" said Jessy, incoherently. "Oh Sir Philip!

what a weak foolish girl I am!—Pray do not quite despise me!”

Sir Philip kissed the fair hand he still retained, and whispered, “When may I bring my friend to plead his own cause?”

Jessy, trembling, blushing, and smiling, said—“You know, Sir, I cannot receive any visitor to myself: he will see Mrs. Macfarlane in public, and, if she pleases, she will invite him.”

“But may he not receive his pardon from yourself?” said the earnest Baronet.

“You, Sir,” said Jessy, “who see my weakness, are convinced that I cannot refuse it him. I believe I ought not to have granted it so easily:—you will tell him what you think right.”

“But,” resumed Sir Philip, “where is Mrs. Macfarlane now? Could he not (he is waiting just by), could he not come now, to confess to his fair priestess, and receive absolution?”

“Oh, no—no—no!” said the apprehensive girl: “I know not where Mrs. Macfarlane is, and I should die with terror should she come home and find him here.”

“Then, at least, I may carry your forgiveness to him?” said he: “indeed his penitence deserves it. He only regrets that he has not affluence equal to your merits to offer you: it was the report of your being destined for that rich Bosvile that deprived him of hope.”

“I fear,” said Jessy, “he will regret that want of affluence in future: as for me, I am not ambitious; peace and good-will in a cottage, are better than splendour and heartburnings.”

“You judge very justly, my fair friend,” said Sir Philip; “and Montford will love you the better for the disinterested sweetness of your character. Adieu! I am in haste to carry him tidings of such comfort.”

“Oh Sir!” cried Jessy, “I have been too unguarded; you must not tell him quite how glad I have shewn myself.”

“You may trust my discretion,” said Sir Philip, as he relinquished her hand, and quitted the room, leaving this fair young creature in a most enviable state of happiness.

CHAP. XVI.

More Fragments.

SIR PHILIP found Colonel Montford waiting for him with the greatest impatience. It was observable that though Montford was at least two inches taller than his friend, yet, on this occasion, Sir Philip appeared to have very much the advantage in height: so much difference is there between the naturally erect mien of honest and virtuous exertion, and the depressed air of concious misconduct. Montford, to be sure, while he remained undetected by his friend, had shewn no abatement of his usual figure; but though he could bear his head erect while his faults were undiscovered, he was too ingenuous not to confess them when circumstances pressed upon his feelings, particularly when there appeared to offer a chance of atoning for them. There are many men who resemble the Colonel in that particular of not being depressed by undiscovered faults, or, indeed, by faults, which, though they are painfully conscious of them themselves, they yet trust are unknown to the world. I doubt not but every reader could point out at least one or two individuals who now walk upright, and blush not to display the "human face divine" in all its effrontery, who, if they knew what all the world thinks of them, would be glad to shrink from every eye. Taken in this point of view, good name resembles the treasure Othello so pathetically lamented having learned the loss of—

"He that is robb'd, not knowing what is stol'n,
"He is not robb'd at all."—

I quote from memory, therefore, possibly, incorrectly; but I beg pardon, Madam;—you reproach me for prosing. I had certainly again mounted my ambling nag, and had almost lost sight of Colonel Montford and Sir Philip.

The humility of the Colonel's deportment affected his friend, and prevented him from lengthening the period of his uneasiness. He could not withhold from a countenance so truly penitent the cheering pardon he was authorized to bestow; and he saw the light-hearted Colonel pass instantly from the painful sense of self-condemnation to the eccentric gaieties and extravagant raptures of unqualified joy.

Sir Philip, who, as we have seen, had nothing of extravagance or enthusiasm in his own composition, who was not seduced by the harmony of a sweet voice, or the spirit of a chance conversation—Sir Philip, the philosophical Sir Philip, could not help giving his friend a lecture on the versatility, the warmth, and the violence of his feelings. Montford listened attentively, promised reformation, and sung the "Wandering Darling" with infinite glee.

Sir Philip groaned in spirit, to see his exhortation had taken so little effect: he never looked inward, to trace the consequence far less important incidents had had on his own feelings; he only looked on the ground, where a scrap of torn paper caught his eye.—The Colonel and he had wandered towards Leckhampton Hill.—Stooping in the vacancy of philosophic

disappointment, he picked up the paper, and saw—

"Oh Heavens! what saw he there?"

Ancyent Marinere.

He saw a few lines in verse, and, sedulously examining them, uttered a loud exclamation.—Montford expressed his surprise, and enquired into the cause of this perturbation.

"Look about—look about, good Colonel!" cried Sir Philip; "find me the rest of this paper—there's more of it, and it may be hereabouts:—look carefully, I beseech you!"

"Shew me first what I am to look for," said Montford:—"you seem to have nothing but a scrap of an old song."

"Find the rest, I tell you," said the Baronet, "or rather let me find it; for I should envy you the felicity of first setting your eyes on such a precious fragment."

"Heyday, Desormeaux!" said Montford, reproving in his turn; "why, you are as flighty now as I was when you took me to task so severely.—What mystery is there in all this?"

"The very mystery, dear Montford," said Sir Philip, laughing, "that just now made you so eccentric—woman, dear delightful woman! and, I must own, we all forget our dignity and our philosophy when we get but a glimpse of her attractions. Here, look at this paper, Harry, and tell me if you ever saw the writing before?"

"Not that I know of," replied the Colonel.—"Have you?"

"Yes," answered Sir Philip, "and so have you too, though with unworthy eyes, that did not engrave the characters on your memory: it is the writing of my *Incognita*; and I am the luckiest man in the world."

"The writing then must have power to act as a talisman, and convey you to her," said Montford, "otherwise your joy is ill-founded. You are not so boyish as to conclude she must be here, and drop into your arms, merely because you have found a scrap of her writing!"

"The presumption would be in favour of her being here, even were that all," replied the Baronet; "but I have proof, Montford—proof delightfully decisive: there is here a charming, a most fascinating woman, with whom I have made acquaintance, and whom I have heard singing those very words."

"And pray let me see these famous words," said Montford.

The paper was now produced, and examined:—there were marks of sixteen lines having been written; but, of the first six, scarcely the rhymes could be made out:—afterwards they ran as follows:

deceives
and believes—
n, when the storm
can breast deform,
wind that o'er it blows,
bing its serene repose,

Can rage more terrible, more wild,

Than can that simple-seeming child:
Out on thee, Love! my heart abjures
Thy treachery, nor thy name endures!

"I see no cause for exultation," observed the Colonel, "if these be really the sentiments of thy dulcinea:—she seems to abjure love with all her heart."

"A woman is never so violent when she is in earnest," said Sir Philip; "but hunt, Montford, hunt for the rest of it!—There must be more, and I must find it."

Whether the necessity appeared quite as urgent to Colonel Montford as it did to his friend, I cannot decide, nor is this precisely the place to enquire: I am conscious some of my readers will settle it one way, and some another; but I shall leave these seekers after truth, and attend only to the seekers after papers, of whom Montford was the first successful; for, after groping about among brambles and nettles for some time, he exclaimed, with true sportsman-like glee, "Yoïcs, yoïcs! hark forward——I've found!"

Sir Philip instantly quitted the furzebush he was searching, and received the treasure from the hands of his friend. Eagerly he gazed on the cabalistical paper, evidently the beginnings of poetical lines, arranged in the following order, and in the same hand-writing.

Sweet as
  That
Soft as
  O'er
And gay as
  In ori
So bright, so soft
  His blooming cheek

But, ah! how soon
  Sweet month!
What sudden storms
  What driving rain
And eastern breezes
  The fell destructive b
Nip the fair promis
  And blast its
So, unexpected cl
Thy opening b

In vain, however, were the two fragments held together in every direction;—they would by no means fit. Sir Philip could scarcely support this disappointment with any appearance of philosophy—so tantalizing, so excessively provoking. The search was renewed, and pursued with abundant vigour and perseverance; but at length Montford declared his opinion of its inutility,

and the friends, now much on a par with respect to their calm endurance of the vicissitudes of affairs, turned their steps towards Cheltenham; the Baronet carefully depositing the poetical remnants in his pocket-book, and determining to renew his search some convenient opportunity.

As they entered Cheltenham, they overtook Mrs. Macfarlane with a party. She recognized Colonel Montford with great civility, and gave him an immediate invitation:—she even took some pains to prove to the Colonel that she did not esteem herself aggrieved by his desertion of her daughter-in-law; and the Colonel, who was delighted to regain his footing in the family, willingly accepted the olive-branch; well convinced that Mr. Macfarlane would receive him with the same degree of civility he experienced from the lady, that elderly gentleman always regulating his conduct by that of his dearly beloved wife—a rule it is to be devoutly wished that not only elderly, but all, gentlemen would follow, who are fortunate enough to possess that delectable desideratum—a wife of talents and address. Colonel Montford had always been a favourite with Mrs. Macfarlane; he had lost none of her partiality; and she was such an advocate for firmness of character and strength of mind under trials of feeling, that she felt she was preparing a very wholesome and improving discipline for the delicate and susceptible character of her daughter-in-law, in abruptly presenting Colonel Montford to her sight. She was not quite sure that Jessy had actually given up all thoughts of his returning to her chains; and therefore fancied she was acting the part of a true friend towards her, in letting her see at once that such an idea was wholly without foundation.

Dear Madam! do not call this canting—it is language that imposes on half the world; and when Mrs. Macfarlane argued thus with her own heart, I am not quite sure she did not, in a degree, impose on herself too.

Sir Philip, who knew—for by some means or other he always was informed of those things—that Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell dined at some distance from the village that day, and that Miss Milward accompanied them, therefore, that he should gain nothing by going to Mrs. Macfarlane's, and attending her to the Rooms at night, refused Mrs. Macfarlane's invitation; and, leaving Montford at her lodgings, returned to his friend Templar's. It was not much out of his way to stroll once more up Leckhampton: he had time, or if he should be late, he would make up for it by galloping very fast; and, accordingly, he followed the eager wishes of his heart, and up Leckhampton he went.

Reader, hast thou ever seen a stately Newfoundland dog retracing with sagacious nose his master's footsteps, and carefully searching every bush and briar, every hedge and ditch, for the lost glove he has been commanded to restore by the expressive device of shewing the remaining glove, and saying, "Go, fetch!"—If thou hast, then mayst thou form some idea of the diligence and skill exerted by Sir Philip on this far more important search; then mayst thou imagine how he mistook a plot of daisies for a scrap of paper—how he submitted to the rude claspings of the briars, and the thorny defiance of the furze-bushes, in his eager endeavour to recover the lost treasure; and I am sure, gentle reader, thou wouldst shed the tear of sympathy, were so much diligence and skill to be exerted in vain: but not more joy does the erect tail and stately mien of the aforesaid dog display when trotting homeward with the important pledge of his sagacity, than

did the sparkling eyes and eager mien of our Baronet discover, when round a handful of withered field-flowers he espied a torn fragment of writing paper, which, carefully unfolded, opened to his view, through many injuries and creases, two small poems, in the hand-writing of his *Incognita*, which appeared exactly to fit the two fragments in his pocket-book. Late as it was, he drew forth the two former scraps; and every inequality coincided, and he felt richer than Croesus. Proudly he threw himself across his horse, which was fastened by the bridle to a tree at some distance, and, with a happier countenance than ever La Fleur could boast, he cantered to his friend's beautiful little cottage. Ceremony was banished from that happy abode, and, therefore, though dinner was half over, no apologies were made on either side. Sir Philip had soon eaten enough to satisfy a man who had a banquet in his pocket; and Templar could not forbear enquiring what had illumined his countenance with such evident traits of joy. Recalled by this question to consciousness and sobriety, he replied, that he had been concerned in an adventure which promised a very pleasing termination; and if it ended as he trusted it would, he should with pleasure communicate it to them.

Perhaps, Madam, you are already aware that Sir Philip is of rather an impatient temper; you will not, therefore, wonder that he quitted the parlour without pouring down his throat any very profuse libations to Bacchus, in order that he might, in solitude, and at liberty, arrange and study his beloved fragments. He looked at them with inexpressible delight: any one would have thought they were some of those thin and delicate papers, which by a magical stamp are made equivalent to any portion of the most valuable of metals recovered from some of those "perilous and hair-breadth scapes" which they are very liable to. Not one of the noted misers of our days could have contemplated with more glee the mutilated, but efficient fragments of three valuable (perhaps thousand pound) Bank notes, just saved from the devouring flames, or rescued from the suds of the laundress invading the waistcoat-pocket, than felt Sir Philip while he proudly surveyed three torn, slit, dirty scraps of paper, which he had rescued from ditches, brambles, and vegetable juice. They were original compositions; for here and there a word was blotted out, and a more appropriate one inserted at top. They were nearly on the same subject: they had—Well, Madam, be not impatient; you shall read the poems themselves:—I was only going to add, they had no titles.

Bright as the glowing clouds that sail
  O'er April's evening skies;
Sweet as her soft Favonian gale
  That, fraught with fragrance, flies;
Soft as her tender-tinted green
  O'er vale and upland spread;
And gay as shines her fairy scene,
  In orient sunbeams clad;
So bright, so soft, so sweet young Love appears,
His blooming cheek unwet, his eye undimm'd with
      tears.

But, ah! how soon the envious cloud,

Sweet month! thy charms obscures;
What sudden storms thy sunbeams shroud,
What driving rain endures;
And eastern breezes keenly fling
The fell destructive blight,
Nip the fair promise of the spring,
And blast its young delight:—
So unexpected clouds, fond Love, destroy
Thy op'ning bud of hope, and blast thy promis'd
joy.

Calm as the ocean's level breast,
When the blue halcyon leaves her nest,
And dares her flutt'ring pinions lave,
Delighted, in the silver wave;
Soft as the breeze that o'er it flies,
And radiant as the noon-tide skies,
The traitor Love that heart deceives
That hears his witch'ries, and believes.

For not that ocean, when the storm
Dares its cerulean breast deform,
Nor that rude wind that o'er it blows,
Disturbing its serene repose,
Can rage more terrible, more wild,
Than can that simple-seeming child:
Out on thee, Love!—my heart abjures
Thy treach'ry, nor thy name endures!

The verses were not good, and, probably, their authoress had been of that opinion, as they were thus torn and scattered to the winds; but the "scattered leaves of Herder" were far less valuable in the eyes of Sir Philip. He saw genius, taste, elegance, fancy—every thing in them that could adorn a poetical trifle: the pique against Love he hoped to sooth—to turn it into friendship and good-will. He flattered himself that Miss Milward would endure the name of the little blind deity from his lips, when she found his influence wholly unconnected with any treachery. As again he viewed his prize, he regretted that such charming words should be so nearly obliterated, as some of them were, by damp:—he mended his pen, and sat down to copy out fairly the composition of her whom he delighted to think of as his *Incognita*. He took out the small nameless billets he had received, and, comparing them, could not doubt of their having been traced by the same hand that transcribed the verses: he knew, indeed, too well that the names of Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell, in the subscription book, were written in a very different character; but so readily does the human mind find reasons to satisfy itself on any subject where its wishes are concerned, that even this circumstance gave him the fullest satisfaction. He well recollected that Mr. Joddrell had remarked on that morning that his "Cousin Milly" had not written like herself,

that he should not have known her hand. What a train of thoughts now rushed on his mind!—she was certainly his *Incognita*; she had, unseen by him, observed him at the first appointment in the Park; she had thus obtained a knowledge of his person; she had in a moment caught his name when uttered by Mr. Macfarlane in Wimpole Street; she had purposely avoided letting him hear the sound of her voice again; she had intentionally disguised her writing in the subscription book, that he might not recognise his nameless correspondent! All this was clear, most indisputably clear; and he determined to see her, if possible, the next day, and obtain a positive avowal of these circumstances—an avowal which he thought must lead to a confession of some kind of partiality for him. The idea so greatly animated him, that he attended Mrs. Templar's tea-table in most unusual spirits; was uncommonly gallant to two young ladies who happened to call in; and, by the whimsicality of his manners, greatly diverted the party.

"What a pity," said Mrs. Templar, "that Josepha is not here! her absurdities would very well match Sir Philip's."

"By the way," said Mr. Templar, "that cousin of your's is a very naughty girl: she does not mind a walk, and yet she has paid us but one visit."

"Are not we still more naughty?" asked Mrs. Templar; "for we have not even paid her one. As for her, you know Mrs. Joddrell is so oddly fond of her, that she never suffers her to enjoy any liberty, but insists on dragging her with her to all the places she is herself so fond of; and, as Josepha is here for her health, she cannot often play truant in a morning, which is the only time she has it in her power."

"She is a very charming woman," said Mr. Reynolds (the father of Mrs. Templar's fair visitors); "it is a pity some gallant knight does not rescue her from such durance vile."

"I have often wondered," said Mr. Templar, "at Josepha's remaining so long unmarried; but she is right to be scrupulous.—It is not every man that is capable of appretiating worth like her's."

The Miss Reynolds's, pretty, smart-looking girls, were surprised to find that this descant, which they thought very dull, had drawn their gallant beau from their sides, and seemed to absorb all his senses: the elder young lady said—

"There is another fair damsel, too, at Cheltenham, papa, that wants a knight to set her at liberty,—and that's Miss Macfarlane."

"By the bye," said Miss Patty, "I am told she has positively refused young Mr. Bradnynch—I can't think why."

"I suppose she did not like him," answered the father.

"But that's so wonderful," said Miss Patty, "not to like Mr. Bradnynch; I can't think what she could dislike in him:—I'm sure he's the handsomest, smartest, and cleverest man in all Cheltenham."

"You would not refuse him then, Patty," said her father, "if he were to make you an offer?"

"Law, papa! such luck will never be mine," replied Patty.

"I hope not," answered Mr. Reynolds, in a tone that convinced his daughter she must

pursue the laugh no further.

"Did you say," said Sir Philip, addressing Mrs. Templar, "that Miss Milward is here for her health?"

Mrs. Templar replied in the affirmative; and, while the Baronet was enquiring into the particulars of her complaints with a truly medical anxiety, the young ladies were amusing themselves with remarks that she did not shew any signs of want of health in her appearance.

At length, however, Mr. and Mrs. Templar and Sir Philip accompanied their visitors part of their way homeward; and, as the family did not keep very late hours, the Baronet was soon at liberty to review his treasure.

"Aha! Je suis bien aise—vraiment je suis charmé!" said Bronze, as he attended his master at night.

"What is it that so delights thee?" questioned Sir Philip.

"Mais! c'est que Monsieur est poëte!" answered the fellow, whose quick eye had caught the arrangement of the lines on the paper so earnestly perused.

"You are mistaken," said Sir Philip; "but, suppose I had been writing verses, why should that delight you?"

"Parcequ on fait rarement des poëmes sans être amoureux," replied the valet: "however, if Monsieur not have make those verse, c'est encore mieux."

"Mieux! comment diable!" exclaimed the Baronet; "charming that I should write verses, and encore mieux that I do not!—Explain this paradox, Bronze."

"Mais, Monsieur, it all plain—verr plain! If Monsieur wrote verse, Monsieur in love;—if une autre wrote them, she love Monsieur!"

"Be not too sure of that, Bronze," answered the master: "whoever wrote these verses, does not know that I have got them."

"But Monsieur knows who wrote them, n'est-ce pas?" said Bronze.

"How should I know?" said Sir Philip: "I picked them up, thus torn and dirty, in the open road."

"Une aventure vraiment comique!" replied the valet. "Aha! Monsieur den ave someting to keep him awake."

"Have I then only slept hitherto?" returned the Baronet; "but why should this *aventure* keep me awake?"

"It will give curiosité to Monsieur—c'est un charmant talent que d'écrire la poësie! Ah! je vois bien que Monsieur suspecte who ave written dese verse!"

"You see strange sights, Bronze.—What magic glass has taught you to discover such miracles?"

"Ah, mais! Monsieur has been more eveillé for some time past: dere is a *brillance* in de eyes of Monsieur, dat prove dere is litel quick *sensation* in de heart."

"Do you know any thing of any of the people at Cheltenham?" said Sir Philip, abruptly, to stop the remarks of his servant.

"Ah!" replied Bronze, shrugging up his shoulders, "dere be always in dese places people who love to give demselves *ridicules*:—for exemple; il ya la belle Madame Macfarlane, vid one

epaule a half foot higher dan de odre, and who tink all men vill like her better dan her pretty belle fille. Den dere is milor Brad—Brad—que diable s'appelle-t-il—c'est un hom barbare, who swear, and cry Got tam à tous momens. Den dere les deux demoiselles Thorntons avec leur bourses bien remplies, who fancy all de vorld bow down to deir beaux yeux. Et le vieux Garçon O'Brien qui fait ses baisemains à ces deux demoiselles, et puis s'en va faire les doux yeux to every pretty girl. Et pour la bonne bouche, dat old Madame Joddrelle, who vante partout, de beauté and belle figure of her young spouse."

"A truce with your satire," interposed Sir Philip; "I see the people, and draw their characters for myself.—Do you know any thing of their histories?"

"On dit, Monsieur," replied the valet, with a look of importance, "dat dis Monsieur Joddrelle ave von great estate in de Vest Indies, and dat he marrie Madame en bonne amitié—voilà ce que l'appelle merveille."

"Madame was rich, too?" enquired the Baronet.

"Oh, qu'oui—mais riche en excès.—She ave live in de contrée, all alone, except Mademoiselle—Mad—mais—diable emporte ces noms Anglois—ils me cassent les dents—cette demoiselle who came here one morning."

"Milward!" said Sir Philip.

"Ah, oui, Milvard, Milvard!—c'est le nom. He bien! dis Miss Milvard live vid Madame Joddrelle: den Mademoiselle Jones, ah pour la fois, je me souviens de ça, and at first Miss Jones not riche; but von die, un odre die, and she gain great fortune, and Mr. Joddrelle."

"And Miss Milward," said Sir Philip; "is she rich, or a relation, or what, that she lives with Mrs. Joddrell?"

"Riche! oh, non—elle n'a pas un sous! She no niece, no relation at all; but she depende sur Madame Joddrelle, who love her modes, and now love her."

"Voilà un trait de bonté!" remarked Sir Philip.

"Oh, qu'oui," replied the complaisant valet: "Madame a ses bontés, sans doute."

"You may go, Bronze," said Sir Philip.

CHAP. XVII.

Reasons for not loving.

THE next morning Mrs. Templar proposed going to call on the Joddrells, and asked if Sir Philip would be of her party. He accepted the proposal with infinite delight, and found Miss Milward alone in the drawing-room: Mr. Joddrell was out, and Mrs. Joddrell engaged, but would soon appear. Mrs. Templar and Miss Milward were not merely relations; they were, and had been for a long time, partial friends: the sensible manners of Mr. Templar were a ready passport to Josepha's esteem; and, as we have already seen that Sir Philip was one of the distinguished few who are allowed in half an hour the privileges of intimacy, we need not doubt but that the conversation became at once amusing and interesting. The wit of Miss Milward, ever ready and playful, enlivened every topic it glanced upon; and Sir Philip's heart warmly concurred in the testimony that Templar bore to Josepha's pleasantness, when he said,—"I think, Miss Milward, you are the gayest person I ever saw."

"Gay!" replied Josepha; "I am the veriest domestic cabbage-stalk that ever grew in an huswife's homely garden. I never go to any public place I can avoid; though my avoidance of them greatly disturbs Mrs. Joddrell."

"I do not mean public-place gaiety," said Templar; "but private domestic cheerfulness."

"Which, after all, is the best kind," interposed Sir Philip, "or, rather, the only kind that is worth any thing: mere artificial gaiety, that requires the hotbed of amusements to draw it forth, would never endure the trial of a winter in the country."

"Do not imagine," said Miss Milward, "that I misanthropically dislike, or superciliously despise amusements: on the contrary, I receive great pleasure from them; but there are reasons why I do not frequent them."

Mrs. Joddrell now entered, and received Mr. and Mrs. Templar, with some stiffness, which they attributed to the tardiness of their visit. As she was really good-humoured, however, her stiffness soon wore off, and she grew very sociable with them, and importuned them to spend the day with her with so much earnestness, they could not decently refuse her, as they had no excuse ready that could assume any shew of validity. It was still very far from the dinner hour, and it was proposed that the party should saunter to the Library, to fill up that interval that is generally reckoned the most tedious part of the day.

"Men are but children of a larger growth;"

and, as we see children anxiously impatient for every promised pleasure, so the still puerile mind inclosed in a larger body, the "children of six feet high," ardently long for the enjoyment of the first felicity human life affords—a good dinner; and, while waiting in trembling eagerness for its appearance, find it impossible to bend their agitated minds to any calm and rational employment.

This love of a dinner—surely it is a very natural love—has been sometimes stigmatized by the opprobrious name of gluttony: modern Englishmen have softened the odium, and have

classed the professors of good eating among the followers of a famous Grecian sage, Epicurus; whence their title, Epicures. The French, indeed, who dress every subject in the most flattering style, give them an appellation which will not bear translation, and which we have therefore adopted (wisely endeavouring to adorn our homely native tongue with as many elegant exotics as possible), and the term of *bon vivant* is now familiar to every English ear. The literal sense of this term does, indeed, contradict a maxim which I can well recollect to have heard repeated with much dignity, and enforced with much majesty in the days of my childhood:—"You must eat to live," said the awful voice of authority; "not live to eat!"—But, alas! this is not the only instance in which the experience of riper years contradicts the wise sayings so sagely detailed by our once reverenced instructors: we not only learn that eating is the great end for which we live, but also to despise many other magnanimous feelings, which we valued, in the season of youth and inexperience, as liberal and heroic.

The great room of the Library resounded with the most harmonious sounds;—the soft notes of the piano-forte were accompanied by the voice of a female: the place was full of company, and the party we are attending was anxious to join the crowd. Mrs. Brudenell caught the eye of Miss Milward; she beckoned her; and, with some difficulty, our friends elbowed, and pushed, and jostled through, till they were close beside that lady.

"I hope the exhibition is not over!" said Mrs. Brudenell:—"a lady has been favouring the company in a most extraordinary manner.—She is a woman of fashion: I have seen her face in all parties; but her name I cannot recollect."

Sir Philip caught a glance of the songstress's face, and immediately recognised Lady Juliana Macnamara, the aunt, or perhaps the great aunt, of a Scotch Peer; for she looked as ancient as if she had been contemporary with Noah.

Sir Philip announced her name to Mrs. Brudenell, who perfectly recollected her, saying,—"She was once young and pretty, as it is recorded of her; and, if any body has a grandmother living, she may perhaps recollect that she had once a sweet and interesting voice; but poor Lady Juliana does not reflect that there is a time for all things, and that to affect to be young, when age has shed its wintry honours on the head, to aim at singing through such a weak and tremulous pipe, is totally neglecting the caution of the Wise Man."

Sir Philip and Miss Milward interchanged smiles:—it was not the wit of Mrs. Brudenell's remark that caused the smile—I do not know whether it was not a fanciful wreath of roses twisted gaily round her hat, and a certain juvenile style of dress and manner, by which that lady hoped to make her auditors forget that her sage observation in any way applied to herself.

Colonel Woodley, a handsome, tall officer, approached the party, and, after speaking with much civility to all of his acquaintance, placed himself at Miss Milward's elbow, and endeavoured to engross all her conversation. Sir Philip appeared not to admire this proceeding; and, as Josepha listened and chatted with her usual complacency and good-breeding, he felt a sharp kind of anxiety in his heart, that convinced him the arrival of this handsome Colonel was a

very disagreeable circumstance to him. He was even meditating how to escape from the party, and call on Mrs. Macfarlane, or find out Montford, and not return till the Colonel should be otherwise disposed of when Mrs. Macfarlane, attended by Jessy, Bradnynch, Macleod, and Montford, entered the room.

Lady Juliana having ended her musical display, numbers, who had only come in to hear the lady sing, dispersed, and it was now possible to see those who were present. Sir Philip, who could not bear to see Miss Milward so completely engrossed by another, would have glided out of the room with the rest, but for the fear of such a proceeding being noticed by his party; he, therefore, sauntered round the room, displaced some of the books, replaced them again without knowing what they were; and, at length, opening a volume of Lavater, strove to absorb himself in his favourite study: but the figure of the gay Colonel intercepted every word, every sketch:—not a page in the book but treated of the insinuating and dangerous charms of a handsome Colonel, or of the torments of jealousy; when, suddenly forming the wise resolution of rejoining the party, and attending to the conversation, in order to judge of the extent of its danger, he lifted his eyes from the unread enthusiast, and perceived the room nearly empty; all the party except Mrs. Brudenell and Miss Milward having quitted it to go to the Camera Obscura. They were chatting so gaily, that he felt inclined to join them, and, starting from his unperceived corner, approached the ladies.

"My worthy friend," cried Mrs. Brudenell, "in what huge folio have you been so long immersed? We concluded you were gone with the crowd."

"I have been studying your favourite, Miss Milward," replied Sir Philip, bowing to Josepha.

"And have you thought the study worth your attention, Sir Philip?" resumed Mrs. Brudenell.

"Highly so, indeed," replied the Baronet.

"For my part," said Mrs. Brudenell, "I see nothing in him; but Josepha here swears he is charming."

"What are you talking about?" said Miss Milward.

"What, my dear creature!" answered Mrs. Brudenell; "who but Colonel Woodley?"

"Colonel Woodley!" exclaimed Miss Milward

"Yes; you know he is your favourite. I only wonder how Sir Philip came to make the discovery."

"Upon my honour," replied Sir Philip, "I had not presumed so far:—I was speaking of Lavater."

"Oh, if you have been studying Lavater," said Mrs. Brudenell, "do give us your opinion of Colonel Woodley, for Josepha and I have been quarrelling about him."

"I am utterly incapable," began the Baronet.

But the lively Miss Milward, colouring rather highly, said,—"You have a very fertile invention, my friend."

"Ah Josepha!" replied Mrs. Brudenell, gaily, "all the world knows the poor Colonel's long devotion to you.—What can induce you to use the man so ill?"

"I do not use him ill," said Miss Milward; "but is it possible I can like a man that won't

let me see his faults?"

"That is the oddest complaint I ever heard in my life," said Mrs. Brudenell.—"Would you dislike him, were you convinced he had no faults to be seen?"

"Very much, as a monster," answered Josepha; "but as I do not consider Colonel Woodley in that light, I confess I would rather know the extent and nature of his failings, than see him always through a thick veil."

"Is it then a path to Miss Milward's favour," asked Sir Philip, "to make a display of those weaknesses and errors that belong to a man's nature?"

"Most assuredly! I could never like a person," answered Miss Milward, "whose failings were totally concealed from me."

"Your reason, my fair friend,—your reason?—for in truth your paradox demands one," exclaimed Mrs. Brudenell.

"And my reason you shall have," returned Josepha, "and a very sufficient one, I am sure, you will allow it to be.—When one has a mind to like a person seriously, and in earnest, as you, and many more of my good friends, would advise me to do by Colonel Woodley, it is not enough to take his good qualities into calculation; it is also necessary to find out whether his faults be of a supportable kind, or not, since a woman has as much to do with the errors, as with the virtues of her husband."

"And a little more sometimes, I believe," said Sir Philip.

"But should not you esteem that man in whom you could perceive no fault at all?" asked Mrs. Brudenell.

"On the contrary," replied Josepha, "I should feel more inclined to be afraid there were worse faults behind, than those that others dared to shew, or he would not put such a perpetual constraint on his nature. Now, I need not tell you, my good friend, that there are some errors and failings that some tempers could better support than others; and as I am firmly convinced that my husband, if ever I have one, will have failings, I am resolved to know them beforehand, and know that they are such as I can put up with. I should suspect Colonel Woodley's were not of that kind."

"Pray be so good as to explain to me," said Mrs. Brudenell, "what kind of failings you could bear with best, and what you think, my friend, the Colonel's?"

"To judge from that reserve which so completely hides the natural man," replied Miss Milward, "Colonel Woodley would, when fully known, be supercilious, cold, and immoveable. These are, of all traits of character, what I should most dislike; more particularly as, joined to these traits, you generally find hard-heartedness, want of generosity and liberality of mind and conduct. However, I am judging now in that rapid half-hour style that Sir Philip Desormeaux very justly condemns."

"If your judgments are always thus accurate," interposed Sir Philip, "there can be no reason to condemn them, if formed in half a minute."

The entrance of the rest of the company interrupted any further conversation; and, after a little general chat with the Macfarlanes, Sir Philip and the Templars accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell to their home.

CHAP. XVIII.

Dreams.

"I SHALL go over to Cheltenham tomorrow in the forenoon, Bronze," said Sir Philip, as his valet was assisting him to pull off his boots; "so get every thing ready for dressing quite early."

"Oui, oui, Monsieur—de bien bonne heure, je vous en reponds," said Bronze; "I not forgitte—I too vell lofe to see Monsieur so eveillé."

"You are mistaken, Bronze," said Sir Philip, "for I am extremement endormi just now."

"Oh mille pardons!" replied Bronze; "but I see verr vell dat Monsieur much more eveillé qu' à l'ordinaire."

It is one of the peculiarities of human nature, that though the lie direct is one of the greatest affronts that can possibly be offered to a free-born Briton, yet there are moments and modes of giving it that render it far from offensive. It should seem that Bronze had discovered the very time and manner most appropriate for the purpose, for Sir Philip, instead of kicking his valet down stairs for daring to say he was awake when he professed himself sleepy, only answered with a good-humoured smile—

"I must be very stupid in common, then, Bronze; for I am strangely sleepy at this moment."

"Monsieur shall sleep like a Prince en deux moments," said Bronze, fidgetting about the room, "and I vish him verr agréable dreams:—à-propos,—de dette demoiselle Milvar; Monsieur—l'on dit dat she is verr charmante."

Now nothing, to a common observer, could be less à-propos than Bronze's foregoing speech was to Miss *Milvar*; but the name chimed in so pleasantly with the agreeable dreams, that Sir Philip thought the *l'on dit* quite à-propos also.

"And who says this, Bronze?" asked the Baronet.

"Mais!—Tout le monde, Monsieur," replied the valet.

"Comment diable!—Tout le monde!" exclaimed Sir Philip:—"All the world!"

"Ah mais, Monsieur!" interposed Bronze; "I vould say, Monsieur and Madame Templar, and all deir famille, and mille pauvres gens dereabouts, who remember her some time ago; and de people at Cheltenham, dey say she so gaie, so aimable, so vivace—Dit-on mal, Monsieur?"

"Mal, mais non!" said Sir Philip;—"it is not speaking ill of a lady to say she is "*gaie*, *aimable*, and *vivace.*"

"Oh que non, et elle est bien-faite aussi," remarked Bronze—"Ecrite-elle joliment, Monsieur?"

"How should I know how she writes Bronze?" asked Sir Philip, with a brow which said, "You are going too far." Bronze read the indication; and, dispatching his attendance, made his bow, and departed."

How is it that a fellow with such a turn for flattering the foibles, and soothing the wishes of his master, could be so egregiously blind as to overstep the limits prudence would set to his trifling? and how was it that Sir Philip, for a few moments after his servant had shut the door, remained on the spot where he had left him, uttering a few exclamations, almost amounting to execrations, on French forwardness and impertinence, and gradually softening down into—But, after all, *Gaie, aimable*, and *vivace?*

The repetition of these words soothed his half-ruffled passions, and he retired to bed "to sleep—perchance to dream;" but for some hours he could do neither one nor the other: he could only meditate a visit to Miss Milward in the morning, plan speeches to inform her of his love, imagine her answers, and lose himself in an agreeable delirium. At length, however, he ceased to meditate, to plan, and to imagine, and really lost himself in the arms of sleep.

His dreams succeeded; and, if I had the powers of a poet, I would depict dreams darkly prophetic—visions obscurely emblematic of his future fate; and I would give my reader an opportunity of exercising a considerable portion of ingenuity, in discovering the particular allusion of every part of his dreams to the events of futurity; but, as I am deficient in those powers, I shall simply say, that Sir Philip dreamt of Miss Milward, and awoke, and almost cried to dream again. He turned round on his pillow—he tried to renew the pleasing imagination, and succeeded. Engaged in a reverie so delicious, I shall leave it to the fancy of such of my readers as have been in love (and I hope never to fall into the hands of any one who has not) to delineate, according to their own particular choice, the fairy forms that flitted round the pillow of Sir Philip Desormeaux.

CHAP. XIX.

An Accident.

YES, I devoutly hope never to fall into the hands of any person who has never been in love! There is no sensation that fills the whole frame with such a delightful series of harmonizing sensations, which never can be recollected without inspiring a similar pleasure. I appeal to any one who has experienced the tender passion, though at ever so remote a period, if they do not feel, whenever love is the subject of discourse or of perusal, a certain indescribable amenity steal over their soul? if their cheeks be not dimpled by a gentle sympathizing smile? if their hearts be not expanded and enlarged by a benevolence and philanthropy far more glowing, far more animated, than can ever be produced by the emphatical preaching of the New Philosophy?—The least renewal of so favourite a topic renews all those delicious emotions, causes the blood to flow in a more animated current, and produces a sudden ebullition of good-humour and liberality; while those who have never been in love—Heavens! how black are their looks! how uncandid their judgments! What must those hearts be made of that never beat at the delightful call of love! May Fate preserve this little book from ever meeting the eyes of such cold-hearted, unnatural beings! No Novel-writer, except the ingenious author of Caleb Williams, could hope for approbation from such cynical mortals. He, indeed, daringly disclaims the assistance of that powerful auxiliary, the tender passion! He prefers revenge, malice, hatred, and oppression, and then calls his book a picture of "Things as they are." But I appeal to the numerous class of Novel-readers, from the tall slim girl of fifteen, who slily conceals the bewitching volume from the prying eyes of some maiden aunt, or severe governess, to the languishing lady, who lolls on sofas all the morning, and flirts in parties all night,—from the man of fashion, who reads while his valet dresses his hair, to the venerable Reviewers in their "cobwebb'd closets," whether more hearts do not beat in unison to the tale of love, than to the workings of those gloomy passions. Were I to collect the voices, they would amount to an incalculable number.

At an early hour the following morning Sir Philip awoke. The last idea in his head, before he went to sleep, was the first that visited him when he opened his eyes—his projected visit to Miss Milward. He arose—cursed Bronze for a sluggard—went down into the favourite walk in his dressing-gown and slippers—wandered backwards and forwards, ruminating on Miss Milward's figure, the graceful folds of her garments, and the airy lightness of her step, as she tripped along that walk: he then reconsidered the chain of evidence which proved his *Incognita* and Josepha to be one and the same person: nay, however difficult philosophers may find it to prove the identity of any one human being, even of themselves, from the cradle to any future period of life, yet, so able a master is Inclination, Sir Philip found not the slightest impediment oppose his full conviction of the individuality of Josepha and the fair unknown.

In reflections like these, time wore away;—he feared he should now be too late. He returned to the dressing-room: Bronze was not yet there. Sir Philip rung; and, in about ten minutes, with a face unusually pallid, and evidently full of alarm, the valet entered, scarcely awake.

"Monsieur se trouve-t-il malade?" asked the fellow, as he opened the door.
"Malade!" answered Sir Philip; "yes; sick with waiting for you."
"Mais pardon—it is but seffen o'clocke, just now."

Sir Philip gazed in astonishment—disputed the truth of Bronze's assertions—disputed even the truth of his own sight—questioned the accuracy of the great hall clock, whose brazen tongue corroborated Bronze's account; and, at last, was forced to believe that his anxious spirit had driven him out of bed at a very unusual hour.

At length Sir Philip was dressed, and determined to go and breakfast at Mr. Joddrell's.—His mare was saddled, and the groom was leading her round to the front door: the sun shone bright, the birds were carolling their most cheerful lays, and every object tended to harmonize the feelings, and invigorate the hopes of the alert Baronet; when, just as he was going to put his foot in the stirrup, he heard the voice of Mrs. Templar calling him in a tone of much agitation. The summons was irresistible:—he flew to the place whence the voice proceeded, and found that Templar had been to the pond to bathe, and had been seized with the cramp; but the servant who was with him, instead of giving him any assistance, had flown to inform his mistress. Sir Philip needed no more;—he hastened to the water, plunged in, dressed as he was; and, being guided by the agitation of the pool to the spot where his friend had sunk, he courageously dived, and dragged the senseless body to the shore. When Mrs. Templar beheld the apparently lifeless body of her husband, her grief almost overpowered her reason; but Sir Philip coolly directed the proper means to be used, and, in less than an hour, had the reward of observing the prognostics of returning life. In another half hour Mr. Templar spoke; and being now put to bed, and declaring he felt tolerably comfortable, the raptures of his wife were as great as her previous distress; and she threw herself, in a transport of gratitude and praise, into Sir Philip's arms. The state of his clothes now instantly struck her, and she exclaimed—"Good Heaven! you will catch your death!" and, instantly suspending her expressions of thanks, she flew, with greater composure, to give the necessary orders on the Baronet's account. She besought him to go to bed, and drink something hot; but he would by no means do more than change his clothes, and take some warm wine. He could not be prevailed on to leave the chamber of his friend; and he has since declared that Miss Milward never once came into his head. Towards evening, however, Mr. Templar and Sir Philip were obliged to change situations:—the wet clothes of the morning, not sufficiently attended to, had produced a considerable degree of fever, and he consented to go to bed. The fever increased so rapidly, that before midnight he was delirious; and Mr. Templar could not now quit the bedside of that friend who had saved his life, perhaps at the expence of his own.

For two days the unfortunate Baronet was in the delirium of a high fever; and when at length his senses returned, his strength was gone. He knew not how to introduce the enquiries he was most desirous of making, respecting Miss Milward; for Sir Philip was not exempt from the common foible of man—that vanity which cares not to reveal an attachment, of which the success is yet uncertain. It is true, he did not think it probable that Miss Milward would reject him:—he was well aware that he had pretensions to entitle him to the favour of any woman; and, before he had conversed with Josepha, he would not have imagined for a moment that any

woman could refuse him. Since that time, however, he felt convinced that a woman did exist who judged, in many instances, differently from the received prejudices of her sex, and, in all, for herself. He saw too clearly the generous and noble texture of her mind, to fancy her capable of being influenced by his rank or fortune; and, when he came to consider his personal merits, all his vanity, all his self-esteem could not preserve him from despondency: and, after all, be his merits ever so great, his pretensions ever so undeniable, Josepha might have a prior attachment. It was not probable that all the men of her acquaintance should have overlooked so valuable a prize; nor could he venture to hope that she had hitherto been addressed by lovers so very much her inferiors, as to have left her heart at liberty. The conversation between herself and Mrs. Brudenell, indeed, seemed to imply that she was yet disengaged; but he knew there was no trusting to the open chat of ladies on such a subject. With these lover-like doubts, then, in his mind, Sir Philip was cautious not to lead Mr. and Mrs. Templar to form any suspicions of the real state of his heart, by too abruptly leading to the subject he wished to start; and, as he was peremptorily ordered not yet to mount his horse (indeed he was wholly unequal to the attempt), he knew not how to obtain any intelligence concerning her.

Sir Philip, in addition to the common foible already stated, possessed another, in common with the ostrich and many other animals, and human beings not possessed of the greatest sagacity—namely, that of believing those circumstances concealed which he wished to be so, and of imagining that his precautions on that score were effectual; but, as another instance, among many, of the facility of self-deception, be it known to all who may read these authentic memoirs, that both Mr. and Mrs. Templar had perceived indisputable symptoms of the Baronet's affection for their agreeable cousin, and had more than once, in their private conversations, rejoiced that so fair a prospect was now opening before her. It may, therefore, appear strange that day after day passed on, and Miss Milward's name never once was mentioned in the family; yet so it was, and Sir Philip every night, when he laid his head upon his pillow, regretted his own want of resolution or of contrivance, which had suffered another day to elapse without obtaining any information respecting her.

At length, finding all his attempts ineffectual, he determined, at all hazards, to ride over to Cheltenham the following morning; and, while Bronze was assisting him at night, the master made known his intentions to the valet.

The last we saw of Bronze was a little disgrace, but his assiduities during his master's illness had fully replaced him on his former footing; and when Sir Philip announced his plan, Bronze, with a very arch air, replied,—"Verr vell, Monsieur—mais—mille excuses.—Scavey vous, Monsieur, que dat *delectable* Monsieur and Madame Joddrelle ave gone from Cheltenham."

"Comment diable!" exclaimed Sir Philip.—"Gone!—why—how?"

"I not know vy, Monsieur; but dey vent vith four horse de seconde day of your illness."

Sir Philip repressed the English oath that hovered on his lips, but said, with visible discomposure,—"Do you know whether Joddrell has taken all his saddle-horses with him?—I was to have bought one of them."

"I can't tell dat, Monsieur," replied Bronze; "but I know verr vell, dat de vole famille is gone, and Mademoiselle Milvar aussi."

"Did they call here before they went, Bronze?" enquired the anxious Baronet.

"Mais non, Monsieur," answered the sagacious valet; "deir journée vas verr sudden.—Mademoiselle Milvar ave wrote à de Madame Templar."

"You may go, Bronze," said Sir Philip; "but, harkye; I don't think I shall ride over to Cheltenham to-morrow, except it is very fine indeed."

"La nuit est extremement belle," observed Bronze.

"Perhaps so," said the Baronet; "but a fine night does not always ensure a fine day."

Bronze made his bow, and departed. Sir Philip strode about his room with unequal paces:—one while muttering curses, another time ejaculating lamentations; racking his brain for the reasons that could have prompted this sudden flight, and drawing from it a thousand bad auguries for his own concerns. His bed-room joined to Mr. Templar's; and, as his perambulations continued very far into the night, and even trenched upon the morning, that attentive friend was fearful the Baronet was ill; and, gently tapping at the door, enquired if any thing was the matter.

Recalled to his senses by this enquiry, Sir Philip made a hasty apology for the disturbance he had occasioned; and, throwing himself into bed, continued quiet for the remainder of the night.

CHAP. XX.

An Essay on Language, Physiognomy, &c .&c. &c.

QUIET and repose are not always synonymous terms, let book-makers say what they will; and it is these shades of difference in the meaning of English words, apparently similar, that occasion foreigners so much difficulty in the study of our language. An ingenious lady has endeavoured to smooth this difficulty, by the publication of her British Synonymy; but there still remain many equally puzzling and perplexing, which can only be explained by an intimate acquaintance with the manners and characters of the people, as well as of the tongue.

An Englishman will very often remain perfectly quiet while his bosom is throbbing with the most tumultuous passions. Many instances of this conduct may be seen daily and nightly at those schools of fortitude—the gaming-tables. Our hero, Sir Philip, was another instance, more immediately within our reach. He lay for the remainder of the night so perfectly peaceable, that the most watchful friend could not have discovered that he was awake. He affected extreme drowsiness when Bronze came to announce a remarkably fine morning, and therefore relinquished his ride to Cheltenham. He met Mr. and Mrs. Templar at the breakfast-table with a countenance serene and unruffled; though he felt many fluttering sensations in his heart that often impelled a correspondent expression on his features: but he had fortitude to withstand it; and I have often wondered whether it would be possible, even for the great Lavater himself, to form an accurate judgment of the actual state of a man's mind from a survey of his countenance, provided that man possessed as much self-command as Sir Philip Desormeaux.—Certain it is that neither Mr. Templar nor his wife perceived the agitation of his mind through the index of his countenance; though, in general, the Baronet was reckoned to possess a very intelligible and expressive set of features.

The breakfast passed in common and uninteresting chat; and, after loitering about for half an hour between the two windows of the parlour, and examining the different appearance of the garden when he stood four or five feet to the right, or four or five feet to the left of the centre of the room, Sir Philip was meditating a retreat to some lonely spot, where he might ruminate uninterruptedly on the disappointment of purchasing Joddrell's horse; when Mrs. Templar caught his attention by saying,—"I wonder I have no further intelligence of Josepha."

"Further!" exclaimed the Baronet, rather unawares.

"Yes," returned Mrs. Templar, while a faint smile betrayed itself at the corner of her eye.—Have I omitted to tell you she has quitted Cheltenham?"

"I think I had heard something about it," answered Sir Philip, assuming an air of *nonchalance*.

What is it, dear ladies, that enables a man to put on an appearance and countenance totally foreign to the real workings of his heart? You, lovely impostors, who are brought up from infancy in the laudable endeavour of concealing your natural feelings under an exterior of unconcern, or of displaying artificial ones where Nature has refused the reality, can best explain

the mode in which the operation is performed. I confess myself ignorant of the business——Sir Philip was almost an adept in it, for he nearly deceived Mrs. Templar.

"Yes," continued that lady, "Mr. Joddrell was suddenly called to town about some very particular business, and Miss Milward had not even time to come and bid me adieu."

"She would have found time," thought Sir Philip, "had she really cared for any of the party. I fear she conceals a cold, indifferent heart under that shew of quickness and sensibility.—Did Joddrell leave any message for me about his horse?" enquired the Baronet, aloud.

"Not that I heard of," answered Mrs. Templar; and then, in a mental soliloquy, continued—"He does not care for her: he would have flirted with her to amuse himself; but Josepha is superior to such intentions."

I confess it is wonderful that Mrs. Templar did not wholly comprehend the feelings in Sir Philip's heart which prompted this conduct: perhaps she is the only woman in England who would not have discovered the workings in his mind, which by a singular rotation threw Joddrell's mare uppermost at that moment. I can only account for it in one way:—Mrs. Templar was no great reader, and was almost unacquainted with those great systems of feelings and emotions which are now in the hands of all boarding-school Misses; so that it is morally certain, that if there should be a stray female or two remaining in the present race that would be as liable to be deceived as Mrs. Templar, yet, from the laudable attention paid to the improvement of the rising generation, there will not be one in the next ten years who will not be able to interpret with exactness all affectation of ease and carelessness, to discover the oppressed heart athwart the vacant smile, to distinguish between a man's earnestness after a new horse, and his anxiety after an absent mistress,—in short, to laugh Mrs. Templar's knowledge to scorn, with all her advantages of seniority and experience.

The next two days passed rather heavily with the Baronet and his friends. He complained that the languor of his illness had not yet entirely left him, and lounged under the shade of the high trees, or, like another Narcissus, contemplated his shadow in the stream. At length, on the third day, Templar proposed a ride to Cheltenham, to see the company, and fetch the letters. Sir Philip, ashamed of refusing, agreed to go; and determined, should there be any letters for him, to have business in London; and then, by a very natural politeness, he would offer to take any letter or message to Miss Milward, by which means he should discover her abode. He would, therefore, call on the Macfarlanes, bid them adieu, shake hands with Montford, and prepare every thing for his departure.

As he rode along, the very face of the country seemed changed. He saw no beauty in the mountains, the roads, the trees; and, after a long silence, abruptly exclaimed,—"What a very ugly-shaped hill is that Cleave Cloud! It is like a huge barn-roof, and chequered with cultivation till it resembles patch-work."

"Does Leckhampton afford no greater beauty?" said Templar.

"Leckhampton—no," cried Sir Philip:—"a great overgrown barren mass of stone.—Who could ever suspect Leckhampton of offering any beauty?"

"Once could Sir Philip Desormeaux," answered Templar.—"Pray, my friend, are you or

the hills altered?"

"I suppose I was caught with the novelty of the scene," replied the Baronet, "when I first came down; for, i'faith! I do not see much in the country."

"It is always esteemed beautiful," resumed Templar.

The Baronet relapsed into silence. Templar did not interrupt him, and they proceeded to Cheltenham. Yet even the gloomy Sir Philip relaxed his features to a smile, when he perceived, about half a mile from the town, Colonel Montford and the fair Jessy arm-in-arm. The Colonel kissed his hand to him with an air which said,—"I am a happy man, my friend;" and Sir Philip returned his congratulations in the same language.

They found a huge accumulation of letters at the Post Office, but, unfortunately, none for Sir Philip; for this time, therefore, he was disappointed of fulfilling his ingenious intention, and felt no possible reason for hastening his departure, which had been already fixed for the end of the next week. It was now Wednesday, and he looked forward to eight or nine days more of insupportable tedium. He called, however, as politeness required, on Mrs. Macfarlane: Templar had other business, and the Baronet found her alone. The lady chid him for his long absence with an air of friendly reproach, which he scarcely knew how to parry. He replied by giving a mournful detail of Templar's accident and his consequent illness: then followed extravagant commendations of heroic friendship, contempt of death, and sublime exertion; after which, a few sighs, and some attempts at tears, prefaced the history of Jessy's imprudence, and Colonel Montford's want of taste and judgment; with some severe sarcasms on Mr. Macfarlane's too great easiness of temper, which had absolutely induced him to give his consent, after the hussy had jilted poor Mr. Bosvile and the charming Mr. Bradnynch. For her part, she thought she deserved to live single all her life.

Sir Philip temporized, soothed, coaxed, and succeeded in bringing once more the sunshine of a smile on the speaking countenance of the crooked mother-in-law; and, after a sufficient quantity of time and incense had been sacrificed at her shrine, he made his bow, and joined Templar, according to his appointment.

"I am loaded like a penny-postman," exclaimed Templar; "but the heaviest of all my load is this long letter from Josepha."

Sir Philip examined the letter all round; he even conjectured he traced his own name through the thin paper:—he might be mistaken; but his eyes were rivetted to the marks. Templar, smiling, asked him what he was examining so curiously?

Some of those indefinable sensations, so beautiful in theory, impelled the blood into Sir Philip's cheeks, as he answered, with apparent carelessness,—"I was gazing without thinking;" and, with a bow, returned the letter.

Contrary to the common rules of politeness, and still more contrary to his own established practice, the Baronet left not the room while Mrs. Templar read her letter;—nay, he watched her

countenance with an eagerness that increased in proportion to the emotion she betrayed, which at length grew so powerful as to impel her to shed tears.

"'Tis as I feared," said she to Mr. Templar; "they are going, almost immediately, to the West Indies!"

"By your distress," replied Mr. Templar, "Josepha accompanies them."

"Most assuredly," said she. "I have already told you how vain were my endeavours to persuade her to remain with me, in case of such an event."

"Excellent girl!" answered Mr. Templar: "she obeys the will of her father to the greatest possible extent."

Sir Philip's enquiring eyes wandered from one to the other:—Josepha going to the West Indies, almost forced him to weep also.—He would have retired to give vent to the fulness of his heart, but that he was eager for some further explanation of so mysterious a history; and when, after a few minutes, Mrs. Templar retired to write to her friend, the Baronet took the arm of Mr. Templar, and, beseeching him to walk, expressed his curiosity in terms that left no doubt of the ardent interest he took in the affair. Templar, with a look half unhappy, and half delighted, gave him, in a few words, the outline of Josepha's history.

"She was the daughter," said he, "of a man of small fortune, but great expectations; and of a woman of great beauty, but very little prudence. Mrs. Milward, when her little girl was about five years old, quitted the protection of her husband for that of a gay officer; and Mr. Milward, in the bitterness of his heart, swore that his daughter should be so brought up as to avoid the same fate.

"Mrs. Joddrell, then Miss Jones, was Mr. Milward's half-sister, by his mother's first marriage. She had some fortune; but had neither manners, fashion, nor education: her brother, however, believed her well-principled, and, having been caught by his faithless wife's elegance and polish, thought he could not remove his daughter too far from either, and consigned her to the care of this half-aunt; retiring himself in disgust, to a little cottage in a remote country, where he soon closed a life, imbittered by so sensible a disappointment. With him died the pecuniary hopes of Josepha:—he had lived proportionably rather to his expectations than to his possessions; and nothing remained for the support of his daughter. The expectations of the brother devolved on the sister, from a prejudice conceived by the relations against the child of a vicious mother; and, by successive deaths, Miss Jones became rich enough to allure young Joddrell.

"It was a strict clause in the father's will, that Josepha should never quit her aunt while she remained single; and he recommended to her, in the most pathetic terms, not to marry till she was five and-twenty, and was sure she knew her own mind; leaving her, after that age, her own absolute mistress in the article of marriage, but not of previous residence. There can be no doubt but that Mr. Milward depended on Miss Jones's always continuing unmarried; and many of Josepha's friends have earnestly represented this to her, since the alteration in the mode of life has rendered it a less eligible home for her: but she remembers enough of her father to retain the tenderest affection and the profoundest veneration for him, and nothing can persuade her to break through or elude his will.

"Evident symptoms of poverty have for some time shewn themselves in Joddrell's conduct; and, it seems, he is now obliged to go to the West Indies to see after his property, if he has any. Such an event was to be apprehended; and my wife endeavoured very much to prevail on Josepha to remain in England, and make our house her home: but she is attached to Mrs. Joddrell from habit, and, indeed, from gratitude; for the good lady has treated her with uniform kindness, and never, in any one instance, allowed her to feel her want of property; and she still continues obedient to the will of her parent, which destined her to live with her aunt, until she took to herself a more efficient protector."

"Josepha, then," exclaimed Sir Philip, "is the niece of Mrs. Joddrell:—I understood she was no relation."

"She is," replied Templar.

"And how," enquired the Baronet, "has it been possible, in such a residence, for Miss Milward to acquire those graces, those talents, and that polish, which so eminently distinguish her?"

"There are some characters," replied Templar, "which no art can refine; and others which will shine, notwithstanding all exterior disadvantages."

"Templar," said Sir Philip, after a pause, "I am thinking—" and again he hesitated.—"Where will a letter reach Joddrell in town?" resumed he—"I want to enquire about this horse of his."

"You must be quick, then," answered Templar, "for the family are on the wing;—they will leave town in three or four days."

Again the Baronet fell into a brown study;—at length—"And what," said he, "is become of Mrs. Milward?"

"She has been dead many years," said Mr. Templar; "and died, I believe, a true penitent:—indeed, by all accounts, Mr. Milward had been a most superior man."

"I doubt it not," said Sir Philip; "and his daughter resembles him."

Again Sir Philip fell into a reverie; and his friend, finding that the domestic deity was gone on a flight into the seventh heavens, slipped away, unperceived, to detail the conversation to his wife.—The Baronet remained sitting under a spreading sycamore till he was summoned in to tea.

It has been often said of wine, that it unlocks the heart of man, and forces him to throw off all disguise; nor has it seldom been reported of tea, that it sets female tongues in motion. Whether it be the natural property of liquids in general to relax the organs of speech, or whether it be a peculiar characteristic of tea and wine, I am not philosopher enough to decide; and I fear the fraternity of deep-heads are too much offended with me, or too regardless of me, to condescend to explain this mystery for me: but, in this philosophizing age, I doubt not, but out of my numerous readers, at least a third part, and perhaps a far greater proportion, will be equal to solve this enigma; and all the remainder will have so far involved themselves in habits of laborious thinking, that at least the hint I have now thrown out, will afford them matter abundant for cogitation; for it is one of the principal merits of the modern system of reflection, that it need not wait for any great occasion to set it at work. It is like a steam-engine, moved by a very small impetus, and producing wonderful effects; and, as all effects are to be produced by the power of

mind alone, we need not be apprehensive, with my aunt Margery, that we shall be turned into a generation of thinkers, and have no workers, or rather actors, left. That such an apprehension should be realized is devoutly to be wished, since then we may sit at leisure under the canopy of heaven, and, by the mere force of thought, be covered with the most superb raiment, lodged in the most magnificent palaces, fed with the most exquisite delicacies, and supplied with every convenience and every luxury under heaven.

I beg ten thousand pardons, Madam;——I have digressed too far to resume the thread of my story in this chapter; I will, therefore, close it abruptly, and begin a new one; for, fond as I am of ease and liberty, I do not wish the one to degenerate into rudeness, or the other into licence.

CHAP. XXI.

Short, but explicit.

"DO you think, my dear Madam," said Sir Philip, as he took the fifth cup of tea from Mrs. Templar, "do you think Miss Milward has set her heart upon this expedition?"

"Very much the contrary," answered the lady: "she dislikes the thought of it extremely."

"And tell me," resumed the Baronet with a brightened countenance, "for why should I conceal my wishes from you—Do you think I have any chance of persuading her to relinquish it?"

"*I* could not," answered Mrs. Templar, drily.

"Do not let that discourage you, Desormeaux, if you have any thought of making the attempt," said Mr. Templar:—"you are a Baronet, you know;—my wife is only a female cousin."

"Curse the title!" said Sir Philip, as he rung the bell furiously; "but it's nothing to Josepha."

When Bronze appeared, according to Sir Philip's order, he directed him to send the groom instantly to Cheltenham for a chaise, and to pack up his clothes directly:—he meant to be on the road to London in an hour. Bronze stared—saw a smile on the faces of Mr. and Mrs. Templar—and, no longer apprehending any quarrel, made his bow, and went to obey his master's commands.

"This is sudden, Desormeaux," said Templar, as the valet shut the door.

"So is Josepha's departure," replied the Baronet.

"And pray now, tell me honestly," said Templar, "art thou going after her, or the mare?"

Sir Philip laughed, and Mrs. Templar wished him success.

CHAP. XXII.

Longer, but less clear.

IT was a fine moonlight night, and travelling is conducted on so expeditious a plan in this country, that the journey Sir Philip was now taking would have satisfied any impatience but his own.—He thought the horses lingered—that he hills were unusually steep—that the postboys checked their speed on purpose to vex him.

Yes, dear lady, it is all very true;—Sir Philip Desormeaux was indeed arrived at years of discretion, but he was now in love for the first time; and that passion, come when it will, makes a man as impetuous as a raw lad of two-and-twenty, particularly when it does really come for the first time; for I cannot reckon as any thing those little evanescent passions which "strut their hour upon the stage, and die." Our Baronet had, indeed, frequently thought himself a victim to love before this period; and once, in particular, at the age of seventeen and a half, had been wonderfully smitten with the charms of a grocer's fair daughter, about his own age. It was even whispered that he had more than once pressed the soft hand, and even the coral lips of his dulcinea; till, at length, her wise father, noticing the tender looks of the young Baronet, and some symptoms of responsive tenderness in the blue eyes of his fair daughter, married her out of hand to a young farmer at some distance, and gave her a pound of tea and a whole loaf of sugar to take home with her. Whether the husband or the present caused the revolution in the young lady's ideas, is a point I never heard decided; but it is certain that she thought no more of Sir Philip, while Sir Philip thought of her for a week, wept for her nearly a day, and spent an hour in composing half a sonnet on her inconstancy; but, finding it would not do, he contented himself with singing Ally Croaker.

Again and again he has felt the dart of Cupid, shot from the bright eyes of Miss A.—Eliza B.—Matilda C.—Lucretia D., and so on, through half the alphabet; but true and genuine love had never become the inmate of his bosom until this present period, and he felt it with all the turbulency, all the impetuosity which a first passion usually occasions.

By degrees, as he proceeded on his road, he recollected Montford and Jessy, and thought he ought to have sent them some farewel.—Well, he would write from town; or, if he did not succeed with Josepha, he would whirl back to Cheltenham, relate his ill success to his friends, and bury himself in the mountains of Wales.

"Happy fellow!" exclaimed Sir Philip, as Bronze gave a loud snore by his side in the chaise,—"thou hast no perplexing torment in thy bosom to keep thee awake: yet," added he, recollecting himself, "I would not lose the sweet idea of Josepha for all the sleep that was ever slept by man. She may be mine; Heaven knows, she cannot make the same complaint of me that she does of Colonel Woodley, for my faults are easy enough to be seen.—She may—Oh, rapture!—she may smile consent.—Josepha has too much real sense and dignity to wish to trifle with a serious passion."

Perhaps Sir Philip had a still better reason to depend on Miss Milward's not trifling with him than even her sense and dignity.—She had, if I may so express it, one foot in the vessel that was to carry her to the West Indies. I know not how I have imbibed the idea (whether from having ever been the slave of a fair lady's caprice in my younger days, or from what painful experience I cannot now determine), that there is no security in character against a woman's trying at least to trifle with a man in love with her. You say there is, Madam: so be it; and pray what may it be?

"Reciprocal affection and good judgment?"

These are mighty pretty sounding words, Madam; what a pity it is they should exist only in speculation! I beg your pardon;—do not be angry with me—they may exist in reality both in your own instance and in Josepha's. I am well aware that I am subject to fits of misanthropy:—I may be in one this morning. When this spleen directs itself against the male part of the creation, their numerous failings so well merit its severity, that I do not attempt to check it; but that it should vent its malice in obloquy upon the fair sex, that faultless lovely half of humankind, upon my word, I would rather risk the character of a philosopher than suffer it to do so. Pray, therefore, your hand in peace and friendship, Madam; I acknowledge my error, and will offend no more.

CHAP. XXIII.

Explains nothing at all.

To Miss Milward.

"BEFORE I dare intrude myself into your presence, fair lady, I have an hundred enquiries to make; and I am too well acquainted with your love of sincerity to make one stipulation that you will not deviate from it.—Did not you condescend to send a nameless billet in answer to a certain enquiry after a wife in the month of March last?—Did not you cause me to cool my heels for an hour in the Bird-cage Walk, a short time after the above-mentioned adventure?—Were not you walking in Wimpole Street, and conversing with a lady, so that I then heard the sound of your voice? and are not my nameless correspondent, my unknown Syren, and Josepha Milward one and the same person? To sum up all in one grand important question—Can you love me? The demand is, I own, rather abrupt, but so is your situation; and though I have divided my questions into five different heads, a very short word may, perchance, answer them all. I shall soon follow my letter into your presence; and, from the intelligible index on your brow, shall in a moment obtain my answer:—believe me, I pass the interval in no small perturbation of mind.—Does not the happiness of my life depend upon the event?—for am not I

"Miss Milward's truly devoted
"PHILIP DESORMEAUX."

I presume by this time, Madam, you know Sir Philip Desormeaux well enough to believe that he was not long before he followed his letter, as he had promised, to the house where Miss Milward resided. His heart beat, however, as he enquired of the servant whether she were at home;—it beat still more violently when he heard that she was alone also.

His letter had been the sudden thought of the moment, and had been dispatched the instant of his arrival in town; he had merely delayed to follow it while Bronze brushed his coat and hat, and found him a clean handkerchief: he had, therefore, had no time to fancy to himself the scene that would ensue, as I understand all Lady Heroines do on these occasions. But I never yet found the practice answer in any one instance; I never remarked that the fair projectors were at all better prepared for the reality, by the ideal drama formed in their fertile fancy. Whenever the anticipated scene arrived in reality, they have been as much at a loss, as totally at a fault, as if they had never wasted one conjecture on the subject;—the same incoherent words, the same external marks of surprise and astonishment, the same blushes, tears, and faintings, as if the event had really never entered their imaginations.

Sir Philip then, ardent and impetuous as he was, trembled when the servant flung open the drawing-room door, and announced him. He advanced, with an unassured air, to Miss Milward; and did not seat himself on the sofa beside her, though there was plenty of room for him; nor can I give any reason for this backwardness, but that he did not see the inviting

movement of Josepha's hand. At length she said—"Will you not be seated?"—These words recalled his scattered senses; he ventured to direct his eyes to her face:—he saw there no implacable anger, no stern inflexibility;—he was even emboldened, by a half smile and a half blush that stole over her features, to place himself on the sofa, and to seize the lovely hand that invited him to be seated.

I have already said Miss Milward was no prude; she did not, therefore, withdraw her hand in a rage, nor did she express inexorable anger when Sir Philip ventured to press it to his lips. Any man but Sir Philip, particularly any rich and fashionable Baronet but Sir Philip, would have construed this indulgence into a fair omen of success; but he still felt his doubts.—Poor man!—he was wonderfully attached to those doubts, otherwise the complacency of Josepha's countenance would have banished them for ever. At length he found courage to utter—"And how may my questions be answered? Have I expounded the enigma rightly?"

"You certainly are a very Œdipus at guessing," replied Miss Milward; "for assuredly I was saucy enough to answer your advertisement, though I had the prudence to keep myself concealed. Had it not been so, Sir Philip—had I been really a stranger to you when we met on Leckhampton, nothing could have excused my conduct."

"Ah, Josepha!" exclaimed Sir Philip—(his advances were now very great: Josepha!—what familiarity!)—"may I then dare to hope you hear me without reluctance—that you will be mine?"

Josepha was some moments silent, but she made no violent efforts to recover the liberty of her captive hand. He continued—"You are not a slave to punctilio—dearest Josepha, can you love me?"

Again silence was Josepha's only answer; till, at length, assuming her own arch smile, she said,—"Am I most inclined to oblige you, Sir Philip, from regard for you, or to avoid this odious West India voyage?"

"I will trust your motives, dearest lady," resumed Sir Philip; "only be inclined—be mine!"

"And yet," observed Miss Milward, "my motives are very suspicious.—You, Sir Philip, have rank, fortune, and fashion;—I am neither young nor beautiful, and have not a sixpence."

"You would not, I know you would not," said the Baronet, as he once more pressed his lovely prize to his lips, "resign this dear hand from motives so unworthy;—it must be from preference alone."

"Believe me," replied Josepha, "I had long expected to lead a single life, because I did not apprehend I should ever find a man who could induce me to wave my fears of being suspected of such interested feelings."

"That you will wave those fears in my favour, beloved Josepha," said Sir Philip, "is an additional obligation."

Pray, Madam, are you one of those readers who love to follow a conversation step by step—to trace every half sigh, whole sigh, blush, simper, and smile, with mathematical accuracy? If you are, I must beseech you to lay aside this little volume, and take up some more bulky performance. I profess to take only sketches—in Mortimer's style indeed, free, spirited, and striking;—but the filling up I must leave to the fancy of connoisseurs. How Mr. and Mrs. Joddrell

looked, when, on their return, Josepha told them she relinquished the voyage to the West Indies for a journey that would last her life, I leave to that fancy to determine. It is my business to accompany Sir Philip to his hotel, where Bronze instantly attended him.

"Is the curricle finished that I ordered before our journey to Cheltenham, Bronze?"

"Not quite, Monsieur," replied the valet.

"Then I must give some new directions about the arms," said Sir Philip.

"Aha!" said the Frenchman, with a simper, "den Monsieur ave bought Mr. Joddrelle's horse."

Bronze left the room; and Sir Philip—But no—even I am unequal to follow a madman in his eccentricities.

CHAP. XXIV.

Last, and best.

IN less than a fortnight Sir Philip introduced Lady Desormeaux to Mrs. Montford; and the two amiable brides vowed to each other a friendship as lasting as that which already subsisted between their husbands. Mr. and Mrs. Templar received their most favourite friends with a joy better imagined than described; and, as the crooked stepmother and the elderly gentleman betook themselves in a huff to London, the three pair of happy beings consolidated themselves into one party, and set out on a ramble into the most romantic parts of Wales. They did not propose to travel post through that beautiful principality, but to carefully explore its most enchanting recesses; and all the hours of rest were to be dedicated by Lady Desormeaux to immortalizing its beauties. They are not yet returned from a ramble so interesting; but, as Mrs. Watson, Sir Philip's housekeeper in Grosvenor Square, tells me house is nearly ready for the reception of her new Lady, I presume they intend to be in town for the gaieties of the ensuing season; and Sir Philip means to introduce his amiable Josepha, nothing doubting, into those circles she is calculated at once to enjoy and to adorn; convinced that her admirable understanding, her tempered gaiety, and her excellent heart, will enable her to mingle in the pleasures of life without danger, while the amusement of a few weeks will but more incline her affectionate disposition to enjoy the sensible retirement and selected society he best loves.

Having now gone through four-and-twenty chapters of this true History, equal alike in number and merit to the books of the Iliad, I must bid adieu to my readers; and if they are dissatisfied at hearing nothing further of the various personages that have fluttered in the various scenes I have delineated, I must remind them that it is no unimportant task to conduct a man, with all his eyes open, to the harbour of Matrimony; and that, having disposed of my principal dancers, I leave them to provide for the *figuranté* as they please.

FINIS.

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