

**THE
HISTORY
OF
LORD CLAYTON
AND
MISS MEREDITH
VOL. I**

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ADVERTISEMENT.

UNCOMMON characters are very often too hastily pronounced by those who move in a narrow sphere, who have seen little of human life, and who have made few observations on human manners, to be unnatural ones. Readers of this class will, perhaps, charge the editor of the following sheets with having introduced to their acquaintance a collection of beings whom nobody ever knew: but he hopes that they will not carry their prejudices so far as to believe that such characters never existed, because they never happened to meet with others of a similar cast. To readers of an opposite complexion, no apology, he thinks, is necessary, as their knowledge of the world will sufficiently hinder them from accusing him of having gratified fancy at the expence of truth.

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NO man was ever a more mixed character than the old earl of Bromley: he had many virtues and many vices; of the latter, the principal one was a violent passion for money, which frequently made him appear in a disadvantageous, and sometimes in a detestable, light; he was not, however, universally condemned for the indulgence of his ruling passion, till it had prompted him to project the unhappiness of a very valuable son, by a marriage which was in the highest degree disgusting to him.

THE earl having fallen into company at Bath with Mr. Jarvis, a gentleman lately returned from the East-Indies with an immense fortune, and with his daughter, immediately conceived a design of forming an alliance with so much wealth, by bringing about a match between his son and Miss Jarvis.

MR. JARVIS, being extremely flattered with the hopes of seeing his daughter a countess, listened with great pleasure to the overtures proposed to him by a third person employed upon the occasion to negotiate the affair; and the preliminaries were in a short time signed by the two fathers, not only before the inclinations of their children were consulted, but before they had even seen each other, so eagerly did avarice and ambition hurry to be preposterously united.

MISS JARVIS, having disposed of her heart before her father had thought proper to dispose of her person, received his orders to prepare for the arrival of the right honourable lover with the deepest concern.

WITH equal concern lord Clayton, who was in Ireland on a visit to an uncle by the mother's side, received the letter which informed him of the measures which had been taken, during his absence from England, to render him completely wretched.

LORD CLAYTON, soon after his arrival at his uncle Merrick's, fell desperately in love with Miss Meredith, the daughter of a gentleman of fortune in the neighbourhood, and was soon happy to find himself agreeable in her eyes: so agreeable were they indeed to each other, that after a few allowed interviews, they felt themselves absolutely necessary to each other's happiness; and if mutual love, founded on mutual esteem justly merited, was sufficient to make us happy in this world, they never would have been otherwise: but the union between love and felicity is so rare, that we may rather wonder to see two lovers happy in the fruition of their wishes than unhappy from the frustration of them.

AS lord Clayton and Miss Meredith will very often make their appearance in the following sheets, a description of their persons, accomplishments, and attainments, may serve, perhaps, to interest the reader in their favour, and make them the more deeply participate of their sorrows or their satisfactions.

MISS MEREDITH, when his lordship first saw her at his uncle's, was just entered into her nineteenth year; he was struck with the beauty of her person, she was a little above the middle size, elegantly formed, and graceful in all her motions; her features were ranged in the most agreeable manner, and her complexion of a dazzling brightness, was animated with the highest glow of health; a large quantity of fine dark glossy hair was doubly ornamental by being opposed to nature's lively colouring in her cheeks; and a pair of spirited blue eyes rendered her completely irresistible in his lordship's.

SUCH were Miss Meredith's personal charms, but they were not her only ones; she had an exceeding good understanding, and having received all the advantages of a polished education, did not weaken the impression which her looks had made on her admirers by what she said to them. She was not indeed of a very talkative disposition, but she conversed with sufficient judgement and taste to make every body who heard her wish her conversable talents were more frequently exerted. With all these attractions, external and internal, she had a sweetness of temper inexpressibly bewitching, and a goodness of heart which rendered her as amiable as she was alluring.

AFTER what has been said, it is certainly needless to add that she was the darling of her parents. They were uncommonly happy in the possession of so exemplary a daughter, and like prudent, as well as affectionate parents, did all in their power to promote the felicity of her life: and with such exquisite propriety did each of them keep up the parental character, that the inclination of their Julia never urged her to revolt against her duty.

FEW people were more respected and beloved than Mr. and Mrs. Meredith, and few people ever more deserved the reverence and esteem which they generally attracted. As friends they were inestimable, and as an acquaintance always desirable! in every department of domestic life, they were patterns, and to all those who stood in need of their assistance blessings. The deserving, under the oppressive weight of any unexpected calamity, were sure of being relieved by them; nor were the unmeriting suffered to languish out their lives in misery insupportable. "Those who have not merited their misfortunes," said they, "are particularly intitled to our compassion; even those who have deserved their sufferings claim our pity, and may be brought by repentance to reformation."

LORD CLAYTON was every way an object to be esteemed by so amiable a girl as Miss Meredith. His figure was striking, he was near six feet high, agreeably featured, and finely proportioned. He was handsome, but his beauty was not of the Adonis kind; he had a clear brown complexion, lively black eyes, and extremely white teeth; so that altogether he was of no small consequence in every female circle.

JULIA was by no means insensible to his lordship's exterior accomplishments; but if his attractions had been confined to his shape or his make, to his features or complexion, to his look or his air, her heart would have lain very quietly in her bosom, without being agitated by the employment of her eyes. His cultivated understanding, his refined sense, his delicate taste, his gentle disposition, his winning manners, and (what many of her sex will think of no sort of importance) his unblemished morals; these were the charms which

strongly recommended him to her as a companion, and which powerfully prejudiced her in his favour as a lover.

HAPPY to find himself esteemed, as he wished to be esteemed, by the woman in the world on whom he had fixed his affections, and thrice happy to meet with no opposition from her amiable parents, he gave himself up to all the flatteries of imagination, and sat down, in a transported condition, to acquaint his father with the steps he had taken to settle himself in the marriage-state — a state into which the earl had frequently urged him to enter — not doubting but that he would readily consent to the choice he had made, especially when he was informed that the lady whom he had selected for a wife, would be possessed of as large a fortune as he had a right to expect.

WHILE he was waiting, full of pleasing hopes for his father's answer, he received a letter which threw him into a situation perplexing and uneasy beyond expression; for the earl desired him to leave Ireland directly, as he had settled every thing for his marriage with a lady agreeable and accomplished, and with a very large fortune.

LORD CLAYTON, when he read his father's letter, with the most disquieting emotions, carried it to his uncle, who having perused it, told him that he was sincerely concerned at the contents of it. "What do you intend to do, my lord?"

"TO obey the summons, disagreeable as it is, most certainly, Sir; obedience is my duty, but you may be assured that I shall leave nothing undone to divert my father from the design which he has, unknowingly, formed against my peace."

"HOW will you be able to leave Miss Meredith?"

"THERE, Sir, you have, indeed, touched upon a tender string — By that question you have probed me to the quick; raised a commotion in my thoughts, which will not soon, I fear, be allayed, and put my sensibility to the severest trial. To leave my Julia, my soul's supreme joy, will be to feel anguish unutterable — Oh! my good Sir, fancy yourself in *my* situation, and then image my distress."

MR. MERRICK, though an old batchelor, had not a heart dead to the tenderest sensations; he, therefore, was sensibly affected by his nephew's pathetic effusions, and after having endeavoured for some time, in vain, to make him a little composed, thus proceeded:

"MY dear Harry, you have, I confess, great reason to be shocked at the contents of your father's letter, and no less reason to lament in such forcible terms the necessity for your return to England! I call it *necessity*, because I am far from being desirous of encouraging the least undutifulness in you — I was a dutiful son myself, and am therefore, as you see me at this instant, an unmarried man. I will explain myself, my situation about five and twenty years ago was something similar to yours at present; my father very much wanted me to marry a young lady whom he had pitched upon for my wife; but as my affections were pre-engaged I could not bring myself to make my addresses to her; no, Harry, I could not indeed: however, when I found that my father was more hurt by the attachment which I discovered to the lady of my own choice, than by the objections which I framed to the lady of *his* choosing, I told him with a great deal of frankness, that if he would not insist upon my marrying Miss Burton, I would consent to relinquish all my pretensions to Miss Kelly. My frankness pleased him so much that he closed at once with the compromise, and we never once mentioned the word matrimony to each other afterwards. I punished myself severely, I must

own, by giving up a girl of whom I was excessively fond, to be sure; but as my union with her would have made the old gentleman miserable for the remainder of his days, I could not think of it; for I loved my father, he had never thwarted me before, and I am certain that he thwarted me then with the best intentions in the world: he was a good man; a very good man, Harry, and I should have proved an ungrateful dog, if I had sent his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, for the sake of gratifying a passion which might, perhaps, when all's said and done, have played the devil with me by this time."

MR. MERRICK was here interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Meredith, on whose entrance into the room, lord Clayton, after a few compliments were exchanged, left it in a manner which made the father of his dear Julia, as soon as the door was shut, ask Mr. Merrick what had happened to his nephew, to occasion such an unusual dejection in his countenance.

"WHY, to tell you the truth, my worthy friend, the alteration which you have observed arises from his attachment to your amiable daughter."

"HOW, how, Sir!" said Mr. Meredith, briskly, — "No riddle if you please; what do you mean? He left us, seemingly, very happy last night; you, therefore, surprize me by attributing the change in his looks to his love for Julia."

"HE was indeed extremely happy last night, but the letter which he received this morning made him much otherwise."

"YOU grow still more obscure by attributing his unhappiness to such opposite causes."

"OPPOSITE as they are, Sir, they both co-operate against his peace. The letter in question comes from England, from his father the earl of Bromley, to hasten his departure, in order to be united to a lady whom he has chosen for his daughter in-law: and as my nephew is too strongly attached to Miss Meredith to bear the thought of being connected, as his father wishes him to be, with any other woman, the separation from her will be painful beyond expression: Harry will, I know, feel the most cutting anguish upon the occasion, for he has a prodigious deal of sensibility, and I wish his disappointment may not injure his health by throwing him into a melancholy state."

MR. MEREDITH, being then informed that his company was desired home, took leave of Mr. Merrick, expressing no small concern at the intelligence which he had heard, and discovered the more uneasiness as he knew that he should, by the communication of it at home, render his daughter very tenderly distressed.

WHEN Mr. Merrick found himself alone, he sat ruminating for sometime on lord Clayton's embarrassed situation, and after having started and rejected a number of expedients for the warding off a blow, which threatened to deprive him of the highest felicity he had promised himself in this world, at last determined to accompany his nephew to England, and to make use of every cogent, every persuasive, argument he could think of not only to turn the earl from his purpose with regard to his prepossession in Miss Jarvis's favour, but to facilitate the admission of Miss Meredith into the family, as a relation instead of her.

HAVING formed this benevolent resolution, he went in search of his lordship. He found him sitting in the library, with his father's letter in his hand, absorbed in thought; so

absorbed was he, indeed, that he was not sensible of his uncle's being in the room till he heard his voice.

"I HAVE hit upon a scheme, Harry," said Mr. Merrick, rather abruptly, but he was too eager to be serviceable to his nephew to deal in preparatory speeches, "I have hit upon a scheme, to make myself useful to you in this affair."

LORD CLAYTON, raising his eyes slowly from the paper on which they had been riveted, said with a sigh, "I am afraid, Sir, it is not in your power to be so," and then quitting his chair, walked up and down with looks, in which were strongly painted the disturbance of his mind.

"DON'T give way to desponding reflections, I am a mortal enemy to despair. Besides, you are, in short, frightening yourself with meer shadows at present; you could not appear with a more deplorable face if you was actually married to Miss Jarvis."

"OH! name her not, name her not, for my heart is fixed on my dear Julia."

"SHE well deserves all your affection and esteem, and I will leave nothing undone to forward your happiness with her."

"I AM thoroughly assured, Sir, of the goodness of your intentions on my account, but am greatly at a loss, I must own, to comprehend in what manner you can avert the storm which is ready to burst on my head."

"THAT storm is at a distance, though, think of that, Harry; you talk like a passionate lover, but not altogether, in my humble opinion, like a sensible man — But I make allowances for the agitation of your mind upon this occasion; the struggles between love and duty pulling different ways, stir up, I know, full well, a confounded deal of disquiet. However, to come to the point, and to tell you my scheme, I intend to take a trip to England with you."

"TO England, Sir! I little expected to hear of such an intention after the encomiums you have bestowed on this agreeable spot. How often have you said that nothing should draw you from so comfortable a retreat?"

"TRUE, nephew, very true, I have often said so; but I shall quit it, nevertheless, for some time, with a great deal of pleasure, in order to lend *you* a helping hand, if my assistance should be wanted. You take me, Harry?"

"I DO, my dear Sir, and with the deepest gratitude."

"I AM satisfied, you need not say any more about that — Make the necessary preparations for your voyage as soon as you please, I will be ready to attend you, and when I get within reach of the earl, you may depend on my exerting my best abilities to prevent his lordship from insisting on your marrying Miss Jarvis, and to induce him to approve of your attachment to Miss Meredith. He is not an ill-natured man nor a weak man, and therefore I hope I shall make something of him in your favour. He had always, I know, amidst his many good qualities, too great a fondness for money, and it is that fondness which has prompted him to strike up an alliance with old Jarvis, in hopes of getting all his riches into his family, as Miss Jarvis is an only child; but by convincing him that Miss Meredith will have a very

handsome fortune, that she is extremely well connected, and flattering expectations, he may, perhaps, be induced to alter his mind. He has been too much in a hurry to go so far without consulting *you* about the projected match.”

IN this manner did the worthy Mr. Merrick endeavour to comfort his amiable nephew, under the uneasiness which the earl’s letter had given him; and his benevolent efforts were so efficacious, that they excluded despondence, though they did not produce absolute satisfaction; lord Clayton was highly satisfied with his uncle’s kind offer to accompany him to England, and they both proceeded to accelerate the preparations for the intended voyage.

WHEN Mr. Meredith, on his return home, had finished his business with the person who waited to transact it with him, he acquainted his daughter with the disagreeable situation of her lover, in the gentlest terms he could make use of, because he knew that even in those terms his intelligence would occasion a considerable deal of anxiety in her gentle bosom: wishing at the same time that she had never seen his lordship, as their mutual attachment, which had appeared to be so auspicious, was likely to prove unprosperous. He felt as any affectionate father would feel in such circumstances; but feeling also that he should only act a ridiculous part by suppressing an event of which she could not be long ignorant, he communicated to her what he had heard, without any concealments, and then availed himself of the most soothing, softening language, to hinder it from making a fatal impression on her tender heart.

JULIA, notwithstanding her father’s very paternal behaviour upon this trying occasion, was so excessively shocked at the news imparted to her, the more affected by it was it was intirely unlooked for, that she fainted in her mother’s arms, who was near enough to receive her, and remained for some moments more like a beautiful corpse than a living creature.

WHEN she recovered, she, with a becoming blush, told her fond parents, who hung over her full of the sincerest compassion, that she hoped they would not think the worse of her for having been unable to support herself against the shock which her spirits had received. “Indeed, Sir,” added she, “I could not help sinking under it, nor can I now help sighing to think of his lordship’s departure — his separation from me — perhaps — for ever. Mr. Merrick has often said how very dutiful a son lord Clayton always was; if, therefore, after his introduction to the lady chosen for him, his filial obedience should continue unshaken — supposing him indifferent to my rival, which he may not be — I shall remember, with, the deepest regret, the day on which I first beheld him. Prejudiced, I will ingenuously own, at first sight in his lordship’s favour, and still more prepossessed in it when I became acquainted with his merit, I had not strength to resist his assiduities; how could I resist them when I thought myself particularly flattered by them? Yet had I not been encouraged by the encomiums which you, and my dear mother, bestowed upon that merit which I discerned in him, I should certainly have repelled his approaches to me in the light of a lover: animated by those encomiums I strove not to repress them, because I believed that the admission of them would not be condemned, and I was happy to find myself not mistaken — You, my amiable parents, by seeming to approve intirely of his visits to me, gave him but too much encouragement, for he by that encouragement made himself but too necessary to my happiness. I will, however,” concluded she, “try to bear my disappointment with a proper fortitude, and to behave in such a manner to his lordship, in the hour of separation, as not to excite in him a supposition that I cannot exist without him, though the felicity of my life will

be considerably diminished by his compliance with the contents of his father's letter — I am afraid to think of his *full* compliance with them."

ON Julia's ceasing to speak, her father assured her that her carriage to lord Clayton had never been censurable; that his merit sufficiently justified the esteem which she entertained for him; and that he received the news of his approaching departure from his uncle's with little less surprize and concern than herself. "Lord Clayton," added Mr. Meredith, "is a very amiable young gentleman, and I was, I own, pleased to see a growing inclination in you both for each other. Setting aside his rank, and the fortune he must inherit, he is a man who will be an ornament to any family with which he forms an alliance. He is, it is true, going to England in obedience to his father's urgent request; but I am not inclined to believe that his departure from hence will be attended with consequences totally unanswerable to our wishes. There are actual uneasinesses enough in life; we have no occasion to sharpen the edge of those which fall to our lot, by arming our fancy against our peace. It is by no means certain, that the earl of Bromley, when he hears of his son's attachment to you, will tyrannically insist upon his renderring himself wretched for the remainder of his days by marrying another woman. Besides, I have vanity enough to think that the Claytons will not be disgraced by an union with the Merediths. In short, my dear Julia, I would not have you give way to terrifying apprehensions: lord Clayton has, undoubtedly, the highest regard for you, and that regard will, I hope, prevent him from paying an implicit obedience to his father, under the influence of an unreasonable, a contemptible passion. Filial duty, I grant, stands in the first class of domestic virtues; but I cannot subscribe to the opinions of some rigid defenders of parental authority, who consider a son under the necessity of making himself miserable in the marriage-state, if his arbitrary father should, in a capricious humour, demand such a sacrifice of inclination to obedience. But you are, I see, Julia, too much affected by this unlucky affair to receive any consolation from me at present; I will, therefore, leave you to your mother, and talk it over more particularly with my neighbour Merrick, who is a worthy creature, and will, I am sure, from his natural benevolence of temper, as well as from his regard for his nephew, endeavour to make the earl lay aside his thoughts about the lady whom he has chosen for his daughter-in-law."

MR. MEREDITH then quitted the room in order to return to his neighbour, whom he now wished to see more than ever.

MEETING lord Clayton within about a hundred yards of his uncle's habitation, who came forward in a slow pace, and with a very solemn countenance, he stopped him, took him by the hand, and having pressed it affectionately, said, "I don't wonder, my lord, to see you look so grave — I heartily sympathize with you upon the undesirable occasion: if you are going to my house, you will find Mrs. Meredith with my daughter as little pleased with lord Bromley's letter as I am."

LORD CLAYTON, having thanked Mr. Meredith for speaking in such kind terms, told him, that he was indeed going to enjoy a melancholy pleasure in Miss Meredith's company; a pleasure, however, which he begged leave to renew frequently till the hour of his departure arrived.

MR. MEREDITH, pressing his hand again, said, "I won't detain you, my lord; you may depend on being well received while you stay with us: I only wish you had no reason to mention the word departure with so mournful an emphasis," and proceeded to Mr. Merrick's.

MR. MERRICK, as soon as Mr. Meredith entered the parlour, in which he was sitting, rose up from his chair with an unusual alacrity, and shaking him heartily by the hand, said, "My good friend, I am prodigiously glad to see you again."

MR. MEREDITH, somewhat surprized to perceive so much cheerfulness in his neighbour's looks, after the concern he had declaredly felt at his daughter's disappointment, could not help telling him that he did not expect to find him in such spirits, as he had left him in the morning rather in a chagrined and discontented situation.

"AND so I am now, Sir," replied he, "I am in a state of no small vexation, and not at all contented; but some thoughts have started into my head since you was here, which have made me appear in a different light to you: to speak plainly, my worthy friend, as I am very desirous of seeing my nephew united to Miss Meredith, and wish to promote their mutual happiness, I am going to England with lord Clayton, to make use of all my rhetoric to persuade the earl not to destroy his son's felicity, by obliging him either to incur his displeasure by disobedience, or make himself wretched for life by marrying Miss Jarvis, that is the young lady's name: her father came lately from the East-Indies immensely rich."

"JARVIS, Jarvis, said Mr. Meredith, a sad fellow of that name went over from hence about ten years ago: he was obliged to fly from his creditors, and to leave Ireland for other reasons: he had a pretty girl too, a natural child, for he was never married, of whom he was so excessively fond, that he carried her to England with him. I have since heard that he went abroad, but never could learn to what place he transported himself. — If this Mr. Jarvis should be the man I mean, I can give the earl some information concerning his moral character, which will not induce his lordship, I believe, to have any close connections with him. — But he may be quite a different person."

"HE may be, he may be," said Mr. Merrick, "but I should be glad however, methinks, to have the history of *your* Jarvis, because I shall certainly make very particular enquiries about lord Bromley's; and if he proves to be the same, the communication of that history to his lordship may, perhaps, do *our* cause no disservice."

MR. MEREDITH, then, after having declared how much he was obliged to his good neighbour for the extreme friendliness of his behaviour, proceeded in the following manner:—

"MR. Edward Jarvis, a reputable linen-draper in Cork, acquired by his sobriety, industry, and frugality, a very pretty fortune, and having bred up Tom, his only son, in his own business, left him at his death in so flourishing a way that if he had been of his father's happy and laudable turn, he might have greatly improved the capital which devolved to him: but Tom, who had always a violent aversion to a shop, which was strengthened as he advanced in years, by his frequenting the playhouse, and making the actors his companions, as soon as he found himself his own master, and under nobody's controul, disposed of all his stock in trade, in order to commence gentleman, and wipe off the disgrace which his father, he foolishly imagined, had endeavoured to entail upon him, by leaving that stock to his management. To support the character of a gentleman, according to his false ideas of gentility, when he had converted his effects into ready money, he launched into all kinds of extravagance: he glittered in laced cloathes, associated with the best company (tho' the *worst* for him because they were men of family as well as fortune, who despised him for the meanness of his birth, while they diverted themselves with spurring him on to ruin) kept mistresses, gave entertainments, played deep, drank hard, and, in short, did every thing to

break his constitution, and to bring himself to beggary — But the vices I have mentioned were not the only ones of which he was guilty: a very scandalous intimacy was generally supposed to be carried on between him and lord F—, and he certainly used the mother of the girl whom he took with him to England with a barbarity for which he richly deserves an halter. The mother of this girl was the only child of two honest cottagers, at whose house he was most kindly received, and hospitably treated, when, being seized with a sudden disorder, in consequence of some of his irregularities, he was unable to pursue his journey to the place to which he was travelling. Molly Barton had, unfortunately for *her*, charms sufficient to make Tom mad for the possession of them, and he levelled all his art against her simplicity with so much success, that he prevailed upon her, when he was well enough to mount his horse again, to get up behind him very early one morning while her parents were fast asleep.

“AS TOM was going to pay a visit to a gentleman full as loose in his principles and as licentious in his manners as himself, and at whose table a lady presided whom he could easily get rid of when he grew tired of her, he pleased himself with thinking, all the way he rode with his lovely innocent Molly at his back, how cleverly his design against her virtue might be executed in a house, the master of which would rather be inclined to forward than to defeat it.

“FLUSHED with the hopes of soon triumphing over that innocence which ought to have inspired him with emotions very different from those he felt, he arrived at his friend’s, who, never having seen him in such an equestrian equipage before, could not help looking at him as if his appearance required some explanation.

“TOM having answered his looks with others sufficiently intelligent, dismounted, and receiving his blushing Molly in his arms, recommended her to the care of Mrs. Murdel — She was allowed to take her keeper’s name, who had sagacity enough to see that her new female visitor was quite unacquainted with the intentions of her fellow-traveller, and was base enough to wish immediately to bring her into a condition similar to her own.

“MOLLY BARTON being a naturally virtuous, and not at all a silly girl, tho’ she had too hastily given credit to the promises of her pretended lover, who had indeed made a great impression on her tender heart, behaved in such a manner to Tom when he began to take advantage of the situation into which he had decoyed her, and to press pretty briskly for the only favour which he wanted to receive from her, as he beheld the sex entirely in a sensual light, that he was extremely disconcerted and thrown out of his play. After he had been so successful in drawing her from the protection of her parents, and had flattered himself that she was desperately in love with him, he little expected to have met with a sturdy resistance, instead of an unlimited submission. She reminded him of his promise to marry her, and absolutely refused to gratify his wishes till he had made her his wife.

“SURPRIZED at such a rebuff, Tom was, for some time, prevented from knowing what to say to her; but at last told her, that as he certainly had promised to marry her, he would as certainly keep his word on his return home, entreating her, with all the eloquence he was master of, to indulge him in the mean while with all the liberties of a husband.

“MOLLY, for a great while, was deaf to his elocution, and refused to grant the liberties he solicited till he had a right to demand them: but when he, longing with redoubled eagerness to enjoy her charms, as they appeared during her opposition to his importunities doubly alluring, gave a paper to her, in which he bound himself by the most solemn oaths, to

make her his wife on his return to his own house: that paper, and a sudden flow of tenderness coming upon her at the same time, conquered her scruples, and nature triumphed over virtue — She yielded — and was undone; for Tom having previously determined to get the paper which he had given her on purpose to silence her scruples into his hands again, soon found an opportunity when she was not in a situation to detect him in the execution of his treacherous designs, and by so doing fixed her entirely in his power.

“MOLLY, as soon as she missed the paper, was excessively alarmed, and informed her seducer of her distress in terms which were not less forcible for being natural, but with a simplicity which evidently shewed that she did not suspect him of having betrayed her. Tom, very happy to find that he was not the object of her suspicion, lamented her loss in well-adapted language, but could not be all her intreaties, he prevailed upon to supply it with another promissory note, though her intreaties were movingly addressed to him on her knees, and accompanied by streaming tears: he was equally deaf to the former, and blind to the latter; unmelted by either, he only begged her with much earnestness, to make herself entirely easy on his account, and to believe that he would not forget the promise about which she discovered so much anxiety; adding, that he wanted not the sight of his own hand writing to quicken his remembrance of it.

“MOLLY, relying on his honour, was comforted by his assurances, because she thought them sincere. In a few days afterwards he carried her home as his wife, and she contented herself with her shadowy character, hoping, that if she was studious to make herself agreeable to him, she should in time induce him to marry her. Animated with these hopes, she exerted all her endeavours to render her society pleasing, and they proved successful. Before the end of the year she brought him a daughter, of whom he grew more and more fond every day, when she began to prattle, and made his Molly very happy by his whole behaviour, which was affectionately conjugal and paternal.

“BY the extreme prudence of Molly’s conduct, and her unwearied efforts to deserve the appellation of a good wife, and a good mother, Tom was very well satisfied with his domestic life for near nine years; but then being unfortunately seized with a violent desire to revisit his native city (having quitted it for some years) he fell into the company of a set of sharpers, who soon reduced him to such difficulties, that, finding himself unable to discharge his debts of justice, when his debts of honour were settled, he resolved to leave the kingdom, and make a bold push in England, where lived a distant relation of his father’s in affluent circumstances, whom he had never seen indeed; but as he was a man distinguished for his benevolence and generosity, he presumed upon his own dexterity and address to procure the exertion of these virtues in his favour. As he, however, had not cash enough to defray the expenses for his removal, he went to his creditors, separately, and by amusing them with a specious story about an estate which had just fallen to him from an unexpected quarter, but loaded with some incumbrances, he raised contributions which enabled him to conduct his *manœuvres* in the manner he wished: when he had levied the necessary supplies, he left the house on a sudden, without communicating his designs to Molly, with Harriot Jarvis, his daughter, and a maid servant, who was also ignorant of his intentions, and hastened to the place of embarkation. He left his Molly in the same situation as he had left his parents when he robbed them of what they held most dear in life, asleep; and was in too much haste to fly from the embarrassments which he had brought upon himself by his follies and his vices, to think of the distress into which he should plunge her by so cruel a desertion.

“MOLLY, when she waked and found not her usual companion by her side, was not surprized, because he frequently rose before her; but she was greatly so when, on her going to

Harriot's chamber, she missed her dear child, on whom she doated, the more for resembling her father; for notwithstanding all Tom's imprudencies and disinclination to make her his wife, she felt the sincerest affection for him: the tenderness of her disposition excluded all resentment from her bosom, and she lived in hopes, that the reasons which he from time to time urged for not marrying her, would be removed.

"THE enquiries which she made upon the occasion were attended to with no success, for the remaining servant could give no account of the sudden diminution of the family. The day was spent in the most agonising suspense, and every following day did but increase her anguish of mind.

"HAPPILY for Molly, however, in the midst of her affliction, Tom's creditors were more considerate than she could have expected them to be. As soon as they heard of her calamitous condition, they waited on her, and pitying the peculiarity of her circumstances, assured her that they would not take advantage of Mr. Jarvis's infamous behaviour both to her and to them, and throw her into difficulties by seizing his effects: nay, they generously allowed her to dispose of them, when she informed them that the disposal of them would be absolutely necessary for her subsistence, and helped her to sell them to the best advantage; so much esteem, and so much compassion had they for her; but they assured her, at the same time, that if ever Jarvis came into their hands, they would not shew him the least favour.

"WHEN Molly had wearied herself to no purpose with conjectures about the route which Tom had taken with his daughter and maid, she reasoned herself into resignation; and by firmly believing that every thing in this world is ordered for the best, lived with a decency and propriety which charmed every body who knew her, upon what the sale of the household things produced.

"JUST when her little stock was exhausted Mrs. Jordan, a very benevolent lady, the wife of one of Tom's creditors, wanting a discreet person to be always about her, and being extremely well satisfied with Molly's conduct, asked her if she would come and live with her; Molly, with pleasure and gratitude accepted of the proposed terms, and was immediately received into the family.

"MRS. JORDAN, having soon afterwards some business in England, on the death of a sister in Leicestershire, prepared for the voyage, and Molly accompanied her. Since their departure I have heard nothing about the latter; and all I know concerning Tom is, that the relation to whom he went, having been formerly engaged in a mercantile life, had found an opportunity to send him abroad, but I never could learn whither."

HERE Mr. Meredith closed his narrative, and Mr. Merrick, who had discovered many laudable emotions during the recital of it, said, "I thank you, Sir, for what you have communicated to me: my blood rises at the very thoughts of such a fellow's existing who you have described; and if the Mr. Jarvis, in whose favour lord Bromly is so strongly prepossessed, should prove to be the identical man, I shall take no small pleasure in acquainting his lordship with his villainous proceedings. I can't pretend to say what effect my information may have on his lordship; but I do assure you, Sir, that I would not have any connections with such a rascal if he had all the riches of the *West*, added to those of the *East*, at his command."

WHILE the two above mentioned worthy neighbours and friends were employed in the above manner, lord Clayton and Miss Meredith were engaged in a very tender

conversation; a part of which may not, perhaps, be thrown away on the reader of sensibility, who, alone will feel the force of it.

“YOU look as melancholy, my dear Julia, as if I was going to be separated from you forever — Banish all gloomy ideas, my amiable girl, and believe me, when I call H—n to witness, that nothing shall shake my constancy to you. I am very sure I can love no other woman, and I am as sure that all the powers on earth shall never make me utter falsehoods at the altar. I am unhappy enough already by being obliged to tear myself from you; do not, oh! do not, render me more so by appearing as if you thought me capable of falsifying my vows to you.”

“I HAVE too high an opinion of you, my lord”, said Julia, raising her eyes, in which tears stood trembling, from the ground, “to imagine that the language of your lips at present is not the language of your heart: but you have owned that you never saw the lady whom your father has chosen for you, and, therefore, you cannot say how you will be affected at the sight of her.”

“YOU cannot entertain a very high opinion either of my love or honour, Miss Meredith, if you suppose that the brightest beauty nature every made, has charms sufficient to drive your image from my mind. No, my lovely Julia, wrong me not so much — think not so meanly of me. — By every thing dear to me in this world, by your sweet self, dearer to me than any thing in it, I solemnly swear, that you shall never have reason to tax me with perjury. No — Julia — you have twined yourself so strongly about my fond heart, that it will never beat for any other of your sex. Look up, my dearest girl — do you still doubt the firmness of my attachment to you? are you still disposed to harbour injurious suspicions concerning me?”

“I WOULD not, H—n knows, my lord,” replied she, “again lifting up her moistened eyes from the ground, I would not willingly harbour such suspicions: I would not encourage such enemies to my peace; but you have made yourself of so much consequence to my happiness, that I cannot think of your voyage to England, without alarming apprehensions; especially as you have generously acquainted me with the cause of it: and though you have, in the kindest manner, endeavoured to soothe the disquiet of my heart, which you have innocently occasioned to it, I cannot help feeling more than I can possibly express at the approach of the separating hour.”

LORD CLAYTON was at once pained and pleased by his Julia’s last speech; pained to think of the uneasiness, pleased to think of the tender sensations which she felt on his account. After such an affecting speech from *her*, operating in such a manner upon *him*, it may be easily imagined that the separating hour was a trying one to them both: it was indeed truly so in a very eminent degree, and the anguish which each endured at the other’s *final adieu*, was literally beyond expression.

LORD CLAYTON embarked with a heavy heart, and his uncle, with all his friendly attempts to comfort him, found it no easy matter to make him tolerable company: so much did the recollected parting-scene at Mr. Meredith’s, and the anticipated one upon his arrival at his father’s, employ his thoughts and increase his dejection. Little did he say for some hours, while they were under sail, and that little Mr. Merrick extorted from him with the utmost difficulty.

FINDING, at last, that his efforts to make him a chearful companion were not so effectual as he wished them to be, he turned to a gentleman who sat by him, who appeared to be not in the least of a gloomy disposition, and who had occasionally shewn himself very well qualified to carry on a lively and entertaining conversation, and said to him, in order to rouze his lordship, "Don't you think it a great pity, Sir, that love should make a man stupid? Lord Clayton here, my good nephew, could talk upon any subject whatever, and to the purpose too, let me tell you, before he fell in love; but now 'tis a devilish hard matter to get a syllable out of him once in a quarter of an hour."

LORD CLAYTON smiled faintly while his uncle was speaking, and at the end of his speech fetched a deep sigh, but said nothing.

"WHY Sir," replied the gentleman, "I am not at all surprized at his lordship's taciturnity: I have met with several people as silent in the same situation, and can easily suppose that a lover, when absent from the mistress of his heart, may have his attention so powerfully employed, as not even to know whether he is in company or by himself: love, Sir, is a mighty odd passion; it appears in various shapes, and its operations are sometimes very extraordinary, whimsical, and unaccountable; but thank H—n! amidst all my misfortunes, I never was in love."

"MISFORTUNES, Sir!" said Lord Clayton to the gentleman, looking at him with a wondering eye.

"AY, my lord, I have been harassed by a variety of misfortunes, under the pressure of which many men would have sunk: but I, being of a chearful temper and not liable to be so violently affected by any unprosperous occurrences in this world, as to sit down in despair, and murmur at providence, for not ordering every thing agreeably to my wishes, bore them with a firmness which my friends called philosophy, but which my enemies termed insensibility: however, that firmness enabled me to exert myself towards the removal of the misfortunes which oppressed me, and when the exertion of all my abilities was insufficient to remove them, the consciousness of having done nothing to deserve them, was a consolation not be described."

"YOU breathe the spirit of a true philosopher, Sir," said Lord Clayton, at his pausing, "and if you don't think my request impertinent, I shall be obliged to you for the recital of those incidents in your life, which most required the exercise of your fortitude."

THE gentleman, having made his lordship an assenting bow, opened his narrative in the following manner.

"MY name is Benson: my father was possessed of a large estate in the West Riding of Yorkshire: he was a man of learning, sense, and good-nature; but was so deficient in that sort of discretion necessary for the management of domestic affairs, that if my mother had not been more happily formed for the conduct of such affairs, he would not have been able to make his estate, considerable as it was, sufficient to defray his family expences. His good-nature was the cause of his indiscretion; for he was of so compassionating a disposition, that he could not bear to see objects in distress, without actually relieving them: but as his penetration was not equal to his pity, he frequently threw away sums upon unworthy objects, which should have been employed towards the relief of deserving ones; and too many of the former, availing themselves of his exquisite sensibility, appeared before him with

counterfeited wretchedness, in order to receive his bounty, well knowing that he could not resist the appearance of it.

“MY father, being as I have said, a man of learning, was pleased to see in me very early a turn to letters; and that my literary taste might receive all possible encouragement, I was placed under an eminent master in the county, in whom the scholar, the gentleman, and the christian, were most agreeably united; for his erudition was without pedantry, his gentility without affectation, and his religion without gloom. Under his care I spent the happiest days of my life, and I frequently remember those days with a particular satisfaction, because the instructions which then made an impression upon my mind, fortified it in such a manner, as to render it proof against the many rough attacks of adversity afterwards, to disturb its peace. Thank Heaven! it was never totally destroyed: for these instructions, and my own natural propensity to look upon every event in this world as ordered by a Being all-wise and all-good, for purposes not to be fathomed by our scanty understandings, co-operating, prevented me from repining at the various disappointments which from time to time tried my temper, indeed a good deal, but never plunged me into despondence; and I supported myself in the midst of the *sharpest* by considering, that this life is only a passage to another, in which, we are strongly induced to believe, those who have suffered undeservedly here, will be rewarded in proportion to their merit hereafter.

“THE death of my excellent mother, just when I had entered into my sixteenth year, was the first blow levelled against my happiness, and I felt it severely: a better woman, a better wife, a better parent never lived. The more severely did I feel the weight of it, because I had reason to expect very displeasing consequences from it: for my father not being so much concerned at the loss of her as I was, though an affectionate and indulgent husband, and not able to live without a female companion, married, as soon as the half year of mourning was expired, a lady young enough to be his daughter, with no fortune, with nothing to recommend her but her personal charms. Bewitched with her beauty at a ball, he had no occasion to make a long courtship; for the match was too advantageous to be refused by a lady who had always discovered an inclination to be *well married*, in the fashionable sense of those words, and no predilection for any particular man. — Like a prudent woman, she looked upon her beauty as a merchant does on a bale, and the best bidder had the best chance to get it into his possession.

“MY father, not being in a good state of health when he married Miss Pearson, was, before the end of his first year with her, in so declining a way, that every body, but himself, plainly perceived he was in a deep consumption; and before the expiration of the second year, he died, leaving me entirely in the power of my young mother-in-law, till I came of age. — Mrs. Benson’s behaviour upon the occasion was far from shewing any concern; there was, on the contrary, a very unbecoming levity in her carriage, as if she was delighted with her widowhood, which shocked me extremely; for I loved my father, and considered the want of decency in her deportment as an insult to his memory.

“MRS. BENSON, soon after my father’s death, gave such indisputable proofs of her dislike to me, which she had art enough to conceal while he lived, as I was greatly beloved by him, that I had more and more reason every day to lament, with the sincerest regret, the moment of his decease. — I could say, I could do nothing to please her: all my words were misinterpreted, and all my actions attributed to wrong motives — Even my literary taste subjected me to much ill treatment from her: — She hated reading, she could not abide bookish people: they were so awkward in company: they were only fit to mope by

themselves: — In short, she found so many opportunities to find fault with me, that I led a most uncomfortable life with her, and wished, with an inexpressible ardor, to arrive at my one and twentieth year, that I might be no longer under her controul.

“WARMLY, however, as I wished for that period, I did not care to let Mrs. Benson see that I was dissatisfied with the power which my father had given her over me in his will, naturally supposing that she would render my life still more disagreeable to me, if I made such a discovery. You may wonder, perhaps, that I remained under the same roof with her: my allowance was so small that I could not have subsisted myself like a gentleman from her; and though she treated me in a tyrannical manner, I thought it more prudent to endeavour to make her my friend, than to irritate her more against me, by flying from her.

“AFTER having felt the effects of her ill-nature and imperious temper, for near a twelvemonth, I was forced to a double load of uneasiness, for she then fell in love with a major on half pay, not worth sixpence besides that pay, in the very assembly-room which had proved fatal to my father, and in a few weeks afterwards was married to him.

“MAJOR DIXON was a man six feet high, and a spirited fellow: he had fought several duels; he had debauched an infinite number of women, and he danced, to borrow a female phrase, like a devil: but his stature, his bravery, his immorality, and his dancing, were his only attractions: he was illiterate to a contemptible degree, proud, passionate, and ill humoured; but Mrs. Benson only saw him at an assembly in a captivating light, and he had dexterity enough not to appear in any other to her till the indissoluble knot was tied.

“THE major, soon after his wedding-day, threw off the mask which he had assumed, in order to quarter himself upon a good jointure, for he had made proper enquiries into the widow’s circumstances before he ventured to go to church with her, and appeared in colours very different from those in which she beheld him while he courted her: the lover in a short time was lost in the husband, and the husband not long afterwards became an arbitrary master. So intoxicated, however, was Mrs. Dixon with the choice of her eyes, that though the despotism of his behaviour frequently pained her heart, she almost idolized the ground he walked on, and bore all his unkind usage with the apparent resignation of a martyr: yet, while she submitted without complaining, to the ill treatment she received from him in various shapes, she was far from being unaffected by it, and therefore wished to strike upon some expedient to soften the austerity of his carriage to her.

“THE, major finding her one day in tears, said to her in a fierce accent, ‘what do you blubber so for child? Hay, Bess, what ails you?’

“HOW can you ask those questions, my dear major,” replied she, with great mildness, “when you cannot but be sensible that your want of affection kills me? Are you not cruel in treating me with so much harshness for having put myself, and all I have in the world, in your power?”

“A MIGHTY all, indeed,” cried he, swaggering across the room: “I have been cursedly bit, madam: taken in by a lying rascal, d—n him — If I had known how little you have in your possession, I should have kept my neck out of the collar; but I am rightly served for being in such a confounded hurry.”

“WITH those words he stalked out of the room, and slapped the door after him, with a violence which at once proved the strength of his arm, and the weakness of his understanding. The discovery of his disappointment, with regard to her fortune, made a deep

impression on Mrs. Dixon's mind; but instead of resenting his having married her merely for her money, she formed an infamous design to induce him to behave to her with more kindness and consideration, which when communicated to him met with his hearty concurrence.

“FROM that time there was a striking alteration in the major's behaviour to Mrs. Dixon: they lived together in harmony which surprized me extremely, and I was not much less astonished at the change in the carriage of them both to me, for they equally studied to make me amends for all past neglect, and unaffectionate treatment.

“I DID NOT, however, long enjoy the pleasure which resulted from their kind behaviour to me. The day on which I came of age was my last happy day in a house I then had a right to call my own. The major before its arrival desired me to let him have the honour of celebrating it with spirit; and as I looked upon his request as a particular compliment, I made no objection to it. According to the usual way of proceeding upon those occasions, I should have been the master of the entertainment; but pleased to see him and Mrs. Dixon happy themselves, and desirous of making me so, I consented to be a guest.

“A GREAT deal of company was invited, and a merrier day was I believe never spent: it was joyous beyond description; but I knew not how it ended. When I waked in the morning, I waked with such an outrageous head-ach that I was almost distracted: yet, even then the torment I endured was more supportable than the shock which I received soon afterwards.

“THE major, when he heard I was stirring, came to my chamber, and without discovering any concern at the situation in which he found me, told me in a peremptory style of speaking, that I must prepare to remove myself from a house in which my stay would be no longer agreeable to him.

“STRUCK with so sudden, so unexpected a speech, I never was so confounded in my life: I stood almost stupified with amazement; but, at length, beginning to feel my consequence, as I ceased to be a minor, I said to him, ‘What do you mean, Sir, by ordering me in so magisterial a manner to leave the house of which I am now the owner?’ With a sneer of inexpressible contempt, he replied, ‘You the owner of this house! No, Sir, I will make you feel that it belongs to me, with every thing in it.’”

“THIS second speech of his puzzled me prodigiously: I could not possibly account for the insolence of his carriage, and for his boldness in assuming a character to which he had no pretensions.

“YOU will find it difficult, I fancy, Sir,” said I, “to defend your assertions” —

“DIFFICULT! no — no, young gentleman, I know very well what I say, and what I do: I never do things by halves: it is not my method of going to work.”

“AFTER having thrown out several more phrases equally elegant and mortifying, he pulled a paper out of his pocket, and holding it out to me in his stretched hand, said, ‘Did you write your name at the bottom of this here paper?’

“I fixed my eyes on the place pointed out to me, and freely confessed that my name there was indeed in my own hand writing.”

“VERY well, very well,” replied he; “why then, Sir, by this same paper, I claim a right to this house and to every thing in it, as I told you before — you may read it, if you please,” continued he, with an execrable sneer, giving it to me, “for you will not be able to undo what you have done by looking at it.”

“I READ the paper, but will not attempt to describe my feelings, when I found that I had made over all my real and personal estate to him — It fell to the ground” —

“YOU are satisfied now, Sir, I suppose,” said he, grinning from ear to ear.

“I CANNOT deny my hand, Sir,” replied I; “but am well assured that some foul play has been made use of to procure the appearance of my name so much to my disadvantage.”

“HIS reply was brutal to the last degree: taking up the paper he gloried in having made me sign my name when I was not in a condition to know what I was about, and left me to my own reflections upon the occasion, highly applauding himself for his barbarous ingenuity.

“SUFFICIENTLY aggrieved by the major’s cruel cunning, I was still doubly mortified when I heard him and Mrs. Dixon laughing immoderately in a room under me soon afterwards — ‘They are rejoicing, said I to myself, on the success of their vile machinations; but they cannot with their most injurious treatment shake my reliance on that all-just and all-powerful Being, who will not suffer the wicked to go unpunished; he will assuredly make them feel the terrors of his vengeance either here or in a future state.’

“HAVING breathed that short soliloquy, which came sincerely from the heart, I went down stairs, and without taking leave of my triumphant adversaries, quitted the house directly. I had not much money in my purse; but after what had passed, I was not in the least desirous of receiving additional insults, by soliciting any favours of the pecuniary kind.

“WHEN my eyes had taken their last view of those grounds, the inheritance of which had been so unfairly wrested from me, I directed my steps towards a little farm a few miles off, which my father had stocked for a worthy man who had served him faithfully many years, in order to reward him for his industry, fidelity, and integrity. His name was Hudson, the most grateful creature I ever knew: he had a wife as good as himself; they managed their farming-affairs so well together, that they always contrived to be in comfortable circumstances. They had also a pretty innocent daughter whom the major had several times, but in vain, endeavoured to seduce.

“WHEN I related to him the story of my extraordinary ejection, the honest fellow lifted up his hands to heaven and cried ‘What will the world come to!’ By the simplicity of that ejaculation giving as a strong proof of the goodness of his heart as if he had been enabled by literary acquisitions to flourish with pompous periods on the iniquity of the times.

“THOSE who have used me so ill, William” said I, “may, perhaps, live to repent of their criminal conduct.”

“I HOPE they will, Sir,” replied he, “and ran out of the neatly furnished parlour, into which he had respectfully carried me, but returned soon with a bag in his hand.

“HERE is a small matter, Sir, which I have saved this year, take it, and God bless you with it; I only wish it was a thousand times as much; for I cannot do too much for the son of my old master, to whose generosity I owe all I have in the world.”

“HIS eyes glistened while he spoke those words, and I could not help throwing myself on his neck in tears, so much was I affected at so noble — I wish I could not add so rare — an instance of gratitude.

“NO, William,” replied I, “changing my attitude, and folding him in my arms, I cannot consent to be accommodated with the necessaries of life at the expence of your labour: your intended kindness to me, however, shall be always remembered, shall be always acknowledged with pleasure, and should I ever — should I ever have it in my power to reward you for thus honouring the memory of my dear father, by feeling compassion for me, be assured I will — I am not quite destitute of money, my good William; when the little I have is gone, I will try, by virtuous industry, in some shape or other, to procure a supply: but never will I do a mean thing, never commit an unjust action for the support of my existence. The nearest relation I now have, and the most likely to put me in a way to better my fortune, is my uncle Paterson at Jamaica, to whom I determined to convey myself, while I was coming hither, with all possible expedition. If I can but make my money hold out (and we never know what may be done by œconomy till we have been thrown into straitened situations) till I get to a sea-port, the well known name of my uncle, from his extensive connections, will, I doubt not, facilitate my passage to him, if I should have enough left to answer the charges of the voyage.”

“MRS. HUDSON entering the parlour just after I had spoken the last word, William ran up to her, and with that sort of affectionate smile which is oftener seen in the face of the married peasant than in the features of the wedded peer, said to her, ‘Do, my dear Sally, try to persuade Mr. Benson to take this bag with him: I am almost ashamed to offer him such a trifling sum, for there is but ten pounds in it; but I am sure he is heartily welcome to it, and I shall work with double pleasure to fetch it up again.’

“SALLY, a fit companion for her worthy husband, then advanced to me with the most winning countenance I had ever seen, and pressed me to increase their mutual happiness by accepting that small proof of their gratitude — holding the bag to me —

“SALLY’S persuasions were very powerful, but they were not irresistible. I agreed however to stay with them till I was in a properer condition for travelling, as I began to find farther ill effects from the base attacks on my constitution the preceding evening: attacks which would not have, perhaps, been so injurious to my health, if I had not been uncommonly temperate, and unaccustomed to deep drinking, into which I was scandalously decoyed.

“THE following day, while I sat in my chamber ruminating on the peculiarity of my own state, and on the precariousness of all human enjoyments in a world full of vicissitudes, and replete with wickedness, two of the major’s servants arrived with the cloaths, linen, &c. belonging to me. In one of the parcels I found a note written by Mrs. Dixon, which contained a feeble condemnation of her husband’s unjust procedure, and something like an assurance that she would endeavour to make him think seriously of a restitution. The note was accompanied with a purse: I tore the note, and returned the purse: but kept the other things, because I had a right to them.

“I WAS, I must own, very well pleased at the arrival of my cloaths &c. &c. — because I had then an opportunity of availing myself of some of the money offered to me by honest William and his wife, without feeling any conscientious scruples, by leaving with them what would rather encumber than be serviceable to me on my journey. In consequence of that pleasure, I converted all my unnecessary apparel into ready cash; finding myself able to lay aside the walking scheme, I employed William to procure me a good horse for the occasion: he did so, and urged me, as soon as I could bear the motion of riding, so earnestly to accompany me to the intended sea-port, that I could not refuse him. There we separated; and I shall never forget the humane anxiety he discovered because his duty as a husband and father would not permit him to attend me to the place I had pitched upon.

“HE poured out the most fervent — I will venture to add — the sincerest prayers for my safety and prosperity in every scene of life and in which I might be engaged; and I with as much fervor, with as much sincerity, wished him a long continuance of the domestic happiness which he deservedly enjoyed.

“I THOUGHT myself extremely lucky in meeting with a friend in the captain of the ship which was ready to sail for Jamaica: the more so as I had never seen his face till then, nor did he appear ever to have seen me before; but as soon as I made my name known to him, and my affinity to Mr. Paterson, he embraced me with a great deal of cordiality, and told me that he would do every thing in his power to render the voyage agreeable to me. By captain Thomson’s polite assiduities therefore, I had no reason to complain of my accommodations, which, with a fair wind, fine weather, and the society of some entertaining people on board, had such an effect on my spirits, that I gave the reins to fancy, and could not help buoying myself up with the hopes of a turn of fortune in my favour — was young at that time — I have long ceased to deal in such kind of self-flattery.

“NOTHING happened during the first fortnight of our voyage worth communicating except a little incident, the recollection of which almost brings tears into my eyes at this instant. Having occasion to change my cloaths I took out a suit which William had packed up in a box purchased by me at Hull, and to my very great surprize found in one of my waistcoat pockets the individual bag I had rejected at the farm, with the sum which it then contained.

“STRUCK at so unexpected a sight I stood for some moments with my eyes fixed upon it, feeling in these moments a variety of emotions: the gratitude and generosity of the good creature, who secreted it for my service, affected me very much. But as there was no possibility of my returning it to him at that time, I laid it by carefully with a determination to make him sufficient amends for his disinterested regard for me, if fortune ever enabled me to act agreeably to my wishes.

“FROM that day we pursued our voyage with such unprosperous omens, that I began to think I should never reach the port to which I was bound, alive. — Half a dozen resolute and refractory fellows gave the captain a great deal of uneasiness, and made him do violence to his inclination, as he was naturally humane, by inflicting severe punishments on them for their disobedience: punishments which they certainly merited; but they were attended with consequences which threatned destruction to every person on board.

“THE mutineers, thoroughly galled with the correction which they had received, meditated revenge: but, in order to conceal their infernal intentions, redoubled their activity

and diligence, and behaved in such a laudable manner, as to induce the captain to believe that they would never deserve the same discipline again.

“A FEW nights afterwards they contrived, when every body around them was either fast asleep, or too much intoxicated to observe their motions, to set fire to the vessel, after having thrown out a boat in order to make their escape in it; and we should all, it is highly probable, have perished in a dreadful manner, if one of the villanous gang, providentially repenting of what he had done, had not, instead of following his comrades into the boat, awaked the captain, and informed him of his dangerous situation, imploring his pardon, full of contrition, upon his knees, for having been accessory to so atrocious an action.

“AN alarm was immediately given through the whole ship: those who were asleep were soon waked, those who had lain stupified on deck were soon roused to a sense of their danger, and when they were sensible of it were not slow in exerting their endeavours to stop the progress of the flames; and, indeed, there was so much activity at every part of the ship, during which the captain himself, who issued the most prudent orders on the distressful occasion with the most admirable presence of mind, was not idle, that they were in a short time got under; but not before they had done considerable mischief.

“WHEN the flames were quite extinguished, the captain made a strict enquiry after the five delinquents who had been impeached by their repenting companion, imagining that they had concealed themselves somewhere; but they had rowed themselves out of his reach.

“BESIDES the damage done to the vessel by the flames, there was no small havock among the baggage belonging to several of my fellow-passengers; but I was the principal sufferer by them, for every thing in my possession, except the cloaths on my back, was consumed. However, I murmured not at my fate: I was ruined, but I was resigned: the greatest part of my cash was in the box which was destroyed, yet I looked forward with a lively hope, and felt the consciousness of my own innocence sufficient to bear me up against the shocks of adversity. One passenger only on board sustained no loss by the fire, and he was the most profligate wretch I ever met with; but his peculiar good fortune made no change in my sentiments with regard to the dispensations of providence.

“JUST when we were within two days sail of Jamaica, the elements conspired against us. A storm arose, and raged with such fury, that our masts were soon torn away, and our rigging scattered in the air: the majority of the crew were washed overboard, and many of the passengers overwhelmed by the bursting waves. We were driven several leagues from our track, and the ship from its leakiness filled so fast, that the captain, myself, and four men besides, could hardly keep her from sinking by pumping: we were also reduced to a deplorable situation for want of provisions, so that, after the storm had subsided for some hours, we expected every moment to be buried in the sea; and, floating upon the hulk, committed ourselves to the care of Heaven: weak, faint, and emaciated, we remained several hours in a state which made existence scarcely supportable. At last we descried a sail, at a great distance indeed; but we were ready to expire under the joyful emotions which it excited in us. As the ship approached we perceived French colours; but situated as we were, nature conquered all political considerations: for every human creature in distress is an object of compassion to another who is not entirely divested of humanity.

“THE French commander behaved on the occasion, as any truly benevolent being would have behaved in the same circumstances; but the politeness which accompanied his benevolence, gave it an additional lustre. He accommodated us with every thing necessary,

and assured us that he should on his arrival at Martinico, from which place he had been privateering, I found without success, with a great deal of pleasure, facilitate our passage to Jamaica, or to any other of our settlements more desirable by us.

“MONSIEUR de Bouchaine did not amuse us with flowery speeches full of excessive complaisance, without a grain of sincerity in them: he recommended us in so proper a manner to the governor (to whom he was distantly related) that he not only treated us with humanity but tenderness, and as soon as we recovered our strength and spirits, sent us in a sloop of his own to our wished for island.

“MY uncle received me very affectionately, and by thus receiving me, made me so happy that my past disappointments and distresses were but faintly remembered. When I had related to him the *occasion* of my voyage, he exclaimed with great vehemence against my mother-in-law, attributing the major’s villainous proceedings to her contrivance; and when I acquainted him with my misfortunes *during* it, he embraced me with all the eagerness of a fond parent, declaring that he would do his utmost to make me forget my ill usage and ill luck. — ‘I cannot help wondering, concluded he, at your philosophical and pious turn so early in life; but I look upon it as a right turn, and dare say that you will reap no small advantage from it in your journey through life.’

“MY uncle discovering in me an aptitude to learn mercantile business, trained me up in his compting-house, and when he died about ten years afterwards, left all that he was possessed of to me, as he was unmarried and had no child; but a little before his death, he recommended to his principal person to be my partner, having a pretty capital of his own, together with abilities which might be of considerable service to me.

“AGREEABLY to his dying request, as I may justly call it, I took Mr. Roper into partnership, with no kind of reluctance; he was, indeed, a very sensible, active man; he was formed for the management of commercial affairs; he was indefatigably industrious, and had a great many good qualities.

“MR. ROPER, when he was become my partner, struck out a variety of expedients to improve our fortune, and as those expedients proved successful, I began to have a higher opinion of his talents, than I had while my uncle was alive. Being always rather of a speculative than a bustling temper, I left the business almost entirely to him, and made frequent visits to a little retired villa I had purchased a few miles in the country, in order to enjoy my intellectual pleasures, which were ever my favourite ones, without interruption. In that retirement I spent my time with the more satisfaction, as I reposed the greatest confidence in my partner, and grew, at length, so fond of it, that I buried myself for weeks successively among my books, without feeling the least desire to make enquiries after my plantations.

“AFTER having passed about five years, partly at Kingston and partly at my villa, I was one morning extremely surprised at the latter, by a visit from a person whom I never expected to have seen there: my visitor was honest William, and he accosted me with such marks of undissembled joy in his countenance, that I could not help asking him, with a wondering accent, what brought him to Jamaica.

“I CAME on your account, Sir,” replied he: “I would have gone to the end of the world to find you out.”

“YOU are a good creature, William,” said I, “but sit down and tell me your business.”

“WHY, Sir, you must know, after my return home, I could not rest for thinking of major Dixon’s roguery, and so resolved to get at the paper he made you sign, if possible.”

“IT was a kind resolution, William, but I cannot flatter myself with supposing that you ever found an opportunity to carry out your point.”

“I HAVE carried it at last; though Sir,” replied he, rubbing his hands, “I have, indeed, been a long while about it; but better late than never you know, Sir: howsoever, I don’t know whether I should have had the paper if Mrs. Dixon had lived.”

“LIVED! Is she dead then?”

“SHE is, and it pleased God not to let her go out of the world, till she had done all I her power to right the injured.”

“YOU amaze me, William — but pray go on.”

“WHEN she found herself past recover, Sir, she sent for me, and after having prayed to Heaven to forgive her for conniving at your being kept out of your estate, gave me the paper by which you was deprived of it, and desired me to convey it to you, that you might proceed to take measures immediately against the major, whom she accused heavily of having used her very ill, and of being the cause indeed of the condition in which she then lay: she did not live many hours afterwards. As soon as I heard she was dead, I determined to set out myself to Jamaica, not only to thank you in person for the several kind remittances which I have received from you, but to be sure of your having this paper, which I thought of too much consequence to be trusted to the hands of any body else.”

“WILLIAM then gave me the very paper which I had signed in a state of intoxication, and I clasped the honest fellow close to my bosom, for his gratitude and affection; telling him that the trifling sums I had sent him from time to time were not equal to his deserts, and that if I lived I would give him reason to be more satisfied with my acknowledgements for all his services to me.

“THIS unexpected event almost threw me out of that æquanimity which I had, hitherto, firmly relying on the goodness and justice of providence, maintained: the pleasure I felt upon the occasion broke out in a manner not altogether philosophical; but the little transports of nature were soon checked, by the reflections on the uncertainty of every sublunary enjoyment which followed them.

“HAVING furnished myself with a pretty large sum, imagining that my adversary would not evacuate his ill-gotten possessions without being compelled by a superior weight of metal, and taking leave of Mr. Roper, who very warmly congratulated me on my seeing the road clear to the recovery of my estate, I left Jamaica, and after an uncommonly expeditious voyage, surprized the major with my arrival in England.

“THE major was startled at my arrival, but not intimidated; for when I, after having upbraided him in the severest terms, though in terms not half so severe as he merited, for his treacherous proceedings, produced the paper by which he had divested me of my lawful inheritance, he with an insolent composure in his countenance, drew another paper out of his

pocket, and told me, that while he was master of that manuscript, I might whistle for my estate.

“HE would not let me see the paper on which he so much plumed himself; but I supposed it to be a duplicate, with the forgery of my name at the bottom of it: and finding, by his behaviour, that my conjectures about him had not been too hastily formed, I set off for London to consult a gentleman equally eminent for his abilities and integrity in the law, that I might at once, act against him with vigour and with prudence. By *his* advice I entered into a prosecution against the major, who made the most spirited preparations to keep the rent-roll which he had wrested from me in his own power, and made my suit so very expensive, that I was obliged, in a short time, to send to Jamaica for a supply.

“INSTEAD of a supply, I received intelligence which cut off all the hopes I had entertained of recovering my right, just when they were the most flattering: for Mr. Roper informed me, that my plantations were totally destroyed by a hurricane.

“I WAS, I own, shocked at the contents of his letter on my first perusal of it: I was moved, but I murmured not: I had for many years been blessed with prosperity, and I was thankful for so long a continuance of it: I had formerly supported myself under the trials of adversity, and I prayed fervently for the same fortitude on the return of them.

“I went to Jamaica, and beheld the havock which the hurricane had made with the eyes of disappointment, not despair: but all that havock did not afflict me so much, as the treachery of him with whom I was too closely connected, not to be absolutely ruined by it. Mr. Roper, in short, pretending to have received my consent, had sold my house, disposed of my effects, and conveyed himself away nobody knew whither.

“MY situation was still more distressful: my appearance at Kingston brought a number of creditors about me, and as my partner had rendered it impossible for me to answer their demands, my person was seized, and I was imprisoned. It was to no purpose that I gave a succinct account of the state of my affairs, and assured them that they never would receive any benefit from my imprisonment. Mr. Roper had, I found, before his precipitate departure, informed them that I was gone to take possession of a considerable estate in England: they, accordingly, disbelieved me, when I urged my inability to discharge the debts which stood in their books in my name.

“PROVIDENCE, however, did not permit me to remain a great while bereft of my liberty, and poorly accommodated with the meer necessaries of life. Mr. Sullivan, a young gentleman of Irish extraction, but a West-Indian by birth, the son of the most merciless of my creditors, having a large fortune bequeathed to him by an uncle in Ireland, by such an unexpected legacy, rendered independent on his father, generously bound himself to cancel all my debts, and begged me to accompany him to Dublin, where his uncle had long enjoyed a lucrative post.

“IN consequence of this happy alteration in my condition, I accompanied Mr. Sullivan, and lived with him in friendship and affluence several years. — I should have, perhaps, lived with him at this time, if he had not married a woman of so perverse a temper, as to have no rest till she had occasioned a breach between us. As her husband was extravagantly fond of her, she easily filled his mind with suspicions concerning my honour, with regard to him: in short, she contrived to make him so jealous of me, that I thought it more prudent to withdraw, in order to prevent any fatal consequences arising from his

credulity. I am, therefore going, with a small sum which I saved out of his liberalities to me (for a temporary relief, in case I should be again the sport of fortune) to retire to my faithful William's farm, where I am sure of being well received. Under his humble, but happy roof, I shall endeavour to busy myself in some manual occupation for the benefit of my health, and to earn something that I may not be a burden to him: and by having frequent recourse to intellectual amusements, I hope to keep my mind in a state of contentment and tranquility. — I have gone through a variety of scenes; I have met with ill usage and good treatment, I have been lucky and unlucky in this world, but my success never made me forgetful of the mutability of all human affairs, nor did the misfortunes I encountered ever drive me to despondence: so that I am, I trust, better prepared for another change, whether prosperous or adverse, than if my life had not been distinguished by such striking vicissitudes; and I thank God, with all my heart, for not having made me of a disposition to censure his government of the universe because every thing does not happen exactly according to my wishes."

HERE Mr. Benson finished his narrative, and all who heard it not only admired the enviable frame of mind by the assistance of which he had supported himself under his several distresses, but assured him that they hoped he would live to triumph over the base possessor of his patrimony.

AT Chester lord Clayton and Mr. Merrick took a friendly leave of Mr. Benson, and his lordship gave him a sincere invitation to his father's house in — Square, being certain of his meeting with a cordial reception, if at any time business or pleasure should bring him to London.

WHILE the earl of Bromley and Mr. Jarvis were like two mercenary *dealers* pleasing themselves with coupling their children together like cattle, and waiting with impatience for lord Clayton's arrival from Ireland, Miss Jarvis took no small pains, as she abhorred their Smithfield transactions on her account, to make them of no consequence to her. In the most supplicating strain she implored her father not to force her inclination to rebel against her duty, nor to condemn her to be married to a man whom she had never seen, and whom she could never like, when seen, as her heart was too strongly pre-engaged to be at her own disposal.

LANGUAGE of this kind, uttered with all the appearance of sincerity, and in an affecting manner, would have moved many parents to compassion, and have made them repent of their arbitrary behaviour; for certainly to take steps to render a child miserable for life by a detested marriage is to lay aside the tender, and to assume the tyrannical parent. Children ought to be implicitly dutiful, it will be said, by those who are warm (perhaps weak) advocates for parental authority: but by what law are children necessitated to become wretched in a state from which they cannot extricate themselves to humour capricious or avaritious parents? not surely by the law or nature, nor of reason?

MR. JARVIS dazzled, with the prospect of a coronet in his family, was equally deaf to his daughter's supplications, and unmoved by her tears — Ambition and affection are hardly compatible; the man who thinks of aggrandizing his child by marriage seldom bestows a thought upon her happiness at the same time. But happiness is now grown so unfashionable a word, that an apology is almost necessary for the use of it. — Day after day however Charlotte endeavoured to make her father relent in favour of Mr. Harrison to whom he had himself given the greatest encouragement, and whom she could not give up for any other

man, so deep was the impression which he had made on her tender heart. — Every day her endeavours proved fruitless indeed, but every day strengthened her attachment to her lover.

MR. HARRISON had neither high birth nor a large fortune to recommend him; but he was a gentleman, and had a very handsome allowance from his father, who was in exceeding good circumstances: — the old gentleman, having acquired a genteel fortune in a public employment, was *retired* to taste the sweets of it, as he never was found of a public life, though nobody was better fitted to make a figure in it. He loved his son with the sincerest affection, and very much approved of his prepossession in favour of Miss Jarvis — He felt himself, it is true, somewhat piqued at the behaviour of Mr. Jarvis; but for Charles's sake he stifled his resentment, and deemed it more prudent to try to bring about his son's union with the only woman he could be happy, by address, and by concealing what he felt upon the occasion, than to defeat his wishes by avowing his chagrin.

THINGS were in this situation when lord Clayton and his uncle arrived at Bromley-house. They were both received with open arms by the earl, who expressed particular satisfaction at the arrival of the latter, not having expected ever to have seen him again in England.

LORD BROMLEY very soon came to the point, telling his son, that he hoped to find him pleased with the contents of the letter which he had sent to hasten his departure from Ireland; but lord Clayton's answers upon that subject were so little satisfactory, that the old earl grew warm, and left the room in a passion, swearing that if he did not consent to marry Miss Jarvis he would never see his face any more.

LORD CLAYTON was much affected at his father's passionate carriage, and moved towards the door in order to follow him, that he might give a new turn to his ideas, and inspire him with new sensations; with ideas and sensations more favourable to him: but Mr. Merrick stopped him. "Stay, my lord," said he, "and be advised by one who is truly your friend, and will leave no stone unturned to throw matters into another channel. Your father is now in a violent passion, and, therefore, he cannot be talked to, especially on a subject disagreeable to him, at a worse time: have a little patience till he is cool, for cool, I know he will be, by and bye, (I am no stranger to his quick flying-out when his temper is ruffled) then I will attack him, and muster up all the logic I can, to convince him that he is acting a part for which he will be justly condemned by every man who has a drop of good-nature in his veins. Our first business must be to make a strict enquiry about this Jarvis, to whom his lordship is in such a hurry to be allied, only because he has brought home such a d—d deal of money from the East-Indies, that is, in other words, cheated the poor tawny devils without any conscience. Remember Mr. Meredith's story — If he turns out to be Tom Jarvis of Cork, I shall without difficulty, I believe, put a spoke in his wheel for all his *lacs* and *rupees*."

LORD CLAYTON very readily agreed to govern himself by his uncle's advice, and took care, during the remainder of the day, not to whet the earl's anger by opposition.

MR. MERRICK, not being of a humour to delay the execution of any scheme which had started into his head, went the very next day to the Jerusalem coffee-house. There, while he was drinking his coffee, asked the waiter, who brought him the paper of the day, whether a Mr. Jarvis, lately arrived from the East-Indies, used that house.

THE waiter answered in the affirmative, and told him also he was expected every minute.

MR. MERRICK, then, observing that a gentleman who sat by him made up a lip at the name of Jarvis, took an opportunity, without appearing impertinently inquisitive, as he found by his conversation, that he had not long been from Bengal, to ask such questions as would, he thought, tend to procure the intelligence which he wanted. He was not disappointed; for on his saying that he had heard Mr. Jarvis came over with a very large fortune, the gentleman replied, "Aye, Sir, a much larger one that he deserves, between you and I: but some folks have better luck than others: Mr. Jarvis was not always the great man he is now: there was a time when he would be glad to crack a bottle with *me*, but because I have not been so fortunate as himself, he turns up his nose at me, and looks as if he thought me unworthy of his notice: he has forgotten his creditors at Cork, I suppose."

"AT CORK, Sir!" said Mr. Merrick, eagerly; "did Mr. Jarvis ever live at Cork?"

"AYE, Sir, as sure as you sit there. He was born at Cork: his father was a very eminent linen-draper there, and left him at his death in a good way of business: but he chose to be a gentleman, and therefore sold off all his stock, kept the most expensive company, lived in a most extravagant manner, ran deeply in debt, debauched a pretty innocent girl, the daughter of an honest cottager who entertained him hospitably when he was seized with a sudden illness, and fled from Ireland for fear of being arrested: I could tell you a great deal more of his history, a great deal more than he thinks I know of; but I don't care to run on against him, lest I should be suspected of speaking thus concerning him out of envy." —

MR. MERRICK certainly *did* suspect the communicative gentleman of being under the influence of that very common passion, though he seemed not conscious of its operation on him; but being satisfied with what he had heard, he laid down his three-pence, and walked away.

WHEN he came to the earl's and was told that lord Clayton was in his own apartment, he went up to him, and as soon as he entered the room, said, perceiving him in a melancholy attitude, "Courage, my lord, we shall prosper at last, I believe —

LORD CLAYTON, starting from his pensive posture, replied, "What do you mean, my dear Sir?"

"MR. JARVIS is the very man we could wish him to be: the individual Tom Jarvis of Cork, and I shall take the first opportunity to make the earl acquainted with his history, not doubting but that his lordship will then see him in another, and less advantageous light."

"YOU are extremely kind, Sir," said lord Clayton, "to give yourself so much trouble on my account; but I am afraid you will not be successful, for —

"WELL, well," said Mr. Merrick, hastily interrupting him, "I hear your father's voice; I will go and try what effect my intelligence will have upon him — His family-pride and his regard for *character* may, perhaps, get the better of his avarice, when I have informed him of Mr. Jarvis's origin, and of his dishonourable actions."

THUS having said, he went directly in search of his lordship, and found him in the library.

WHEN he had related all that he had heard, on very good authority, concerning Mr. Jarvis, he added, “And now, my lord, can you really think an alliance with such a man a desirable thing? will he not, with all his wealth, be a disgrace to your family?”

“MY dear Merrick,” said my lord at the conclusion of those queries, “you have discovered a great deal of affection for my son, by endeavouring to prejudice me against an alliance which squares not with his inclination; but all you have heard concerning Mr. Jarvis may be false, for the distinguished favourites of fortune are always enviable objects, and it is the perpetual employment of the poor to circulate malicious reports against the rich. Somebody, I suppose, who knew *him* in different circumstances, and is discontented with *his own*, has trumped up a heap of lies, in order to tarnish the lustre of his wealth: what you have communicated, therefore, will not deter me from entering into any family-connections with him.”

MR. MERRICK was going to authenticate his narrative, by mentioning Mr. Meredith’s name, with whose character and connections his lordship could not be unacquainted, hoping thereby to remove all his incredulity; but a servant coming in, to announce the very man of whom he had been talking, put a stop to any farther conversation about him at that time. He therefore retired, in order to look for his nephew, not at all pleased with the opening of his interview with lord Bromley, yet not in a despairing way with regard to the result of another: he was not easily thrown out in the pursuit of any kind of game; he was of a most persevering disposition, and consequently very well qualified to go through the business which he had undertaken.

MR. JARVIS, having congratulated his lordship on his son’s safe arrival from Ireland, asked if he was at home. Lord Bromley said that he had not seen him for some hours, but touched the bell — Lord Clayton was abroad.

“WELL, my dear lord, I hope to have the honour of your lordship’s company and your son’s to-morrow at dinner: I shall have a few friends of both sexes: and then lord Clayton and my daughter will have a good opportunity to chat a little together, and make themselves agreeable to each other before they join hands.”

LORD BROMLEY, while he was returning home with his son and Mr. Merrick, asked the former how he liked Miss Jarvis?

“HAD not my affections been pre-engaged, my lord, I might have, perhaps, found her charms irresistible: but handsome and accomplished as I will allow her to be, I feel that I can love no woman but Miss Meredith.”

“AND if your lordship knew as much of Miss Meredith as I do,” said Mr. Merrick, “you would not wonder at my nephew’s attachment to her — Miss Jarvis is to be sure an agreeable girl, and talks very modestly, very sensibly indeed; but she must not be mentioned the same day with Miss Meredith, for all that. I only wish you could see them together; you would soon see the difference between them, and if the scale did not turn in Miss Meredith’s favour —

“PRYTHEE, dear Merrick,” said my lord, interrupting him, “do not Meredith my ears in this manner: you make me quite sick of the name” — Then addressing himself to lord Clayton, added, “You will like Miss Jarvis more and more, George, every time you see her: she is one of those girls who improves upon an acquaintance, and will, I dare swear, make an excellent wife. But however, whether you like her or not, you *must* marry her, because I have settled every thing with regard to fortune (which is the main point), with Mr. Jarvis. Relying on your obedience, as you never gave me reason to believe that you would prove an undutiful son, I made a good bargain for you in your absence, not imagining that you would have any desire to start objections to it. Besides, you might have informed me, I think, of your prepossessions in favour of Miss Meredith, had you been open, and consulted me upon the occasion as a friend as well as parent — I have not been a bad father to you, George — I should not have gone so far, perhaps: but since things are thus situated, I can not set aside the match with honour, and I hope you would not wish me to lessen myself by any dishonourable proceedings.”

LORD CLAYTON made no reply: nor was there a word spoken either by himself, his father, or his uncle, during the remainder of the ride.

AS soon as they got home, however, lord Bromley, closeting his son, said to him “Well, George, have you considered about what I told you in the coach?”

“IT requires all my consideration, my lord: your lordship has acted in so precipitate a manner as to lay me under a necessity of being either undutiful or unhappy.”

“NAY, George, it is you who have acted precipitately in this affair: the transaction of my business with Mr. Jarvis was the result of much reflection; and I do assure you that his daughter will bring more money into the family than I could have expected.”

“MONEY, my lord, alone, will not make the marriage-state happy.”

“WITHOUT money, it will certainly be miserable.”

“IT cannot be totally so, if the parties love each other sincerely; for then they will do every thing in their power to lessen the weight of their poverty, and have recourse to a thousand ingenious expedients for the improvement of their circumstances, which those who are not linked together by mutual esteem would never dream of.”

“I HAVE known instances to the contrary: I have seen many very loving couples completely wretched for want of that necessary supplement to matrimony which seems to be, in your opinion, of so little consequence. But your thoughts are too much employed about Miss Meredith to let you see what I have done for you in a proper light: I will, therefore, give you time to prepare for the event which I have so much at heart: only remember this, George, if you do not make Miss Jarvis your wife in a fortnight, you will perhaps drive me to discover some marks of my resentment, which may tend to make you repent of your disobedience. I once flattered myself, indeed, that you had filial affection enough to hinder you from wishing to render me an unhappy father: but now I find that I foolishly flattered myself, and that you have no regard either for my honour or my happiness.”

AT the conclusion of that speech, lord Bromley quitted the room, and left his son in a situation more easily to be conceived than described. Various and violent were the emotions which he felt in his distracted breast, and cruel was the conflict in it between love and duty.

The threatened resentment, in case of his disobedience, made a deep impression on his heart, full of sensibility; but the severe and injurious charge against his filial affection pierced it to the quick.

IN this torturing situation he remained till the day before the expiration of the fortnight allowed him for coming to a resolution concerning his union with Miss Jarvis: he then received some respite to his cutting disquietude, by the arrival of an express from his father's steward in Cheshire, (in which county his lordship had a considerable estate,) to inform him that his house had been fired by lightning, and that the flames had done a great deal of damage before they could be extinguished.

VERY much chagrined at such disagreeable intelligence, lord Bromley left London directly, to be an eyewitness of the havock committed by the fire, and to see what orders were necessary upon the unfortunate occasion. He was, also, the more eager to pursue his Cheshire journey, as he had some curious furniture and some valuable pictures there which he wished to find uninjured.

WHILE lord Bromley was surveying his house in its ruinous state, a few apartments only having escaped the fury of the flames, and lamenting the destruction of that furniture and those pictures the sight of which used to give him inexpressible satisfaction, he was seized with a malignant fever, which, though he recovered from after a long and severe conflict, left such a weakness in his limbs that he could not walk across the room without assistance.

LORD CLAYTON, having like a dutiful son hurried down to his father as soon as he heard of his being taken ill, and behaved to him while he lay in a very dangerous condition with the most affectionate tenderness and solicitude, made so great a change in his sentiments, that he began to wish he had not so hastily tied himself in such a manner with Mr. Jarvis, (who was bent on making his daughter a countess,) as to incur the forfeiture of a considerable sum, if the match was broken off by him: the thoughts of that forfeiture, his strong passion for money, and his paternal feelings operating together, produced a violent commotion in his mind; and he was the more miserable because he was ashamed to tell lord Clayton what a rash promise his avarice had prompted him to make to Mr. Jarvis.

HAMPERED in this manner, lord Bromley did not know how to enquire after his son's resolution with regard to the lady whom he had provided for him, because he had reason to believe, that he should receive an answer which would embarrass him extremely. — "I have been too precipitate — George is too good a son to be rendered unhappy — I would give *some* money, with all my heart, to be off my promise to Jarvis; but the sum stipulated between us is too much to forfeit." Thus was his lordship pulled different ways by his paternal affection, his avarice, his shame, and his repentance.

LORD CLAYTON, not being acquainted with the change in his father's sentiments, attended him in a state of no small anxiety, while his carriage was in every respect dutiful and affectionate; hoping, however, at times, that from his lordship's never mentioning the name of Miss Jarvis, he was reflecting upon the unjustness as well as precipitation of his proceedings with Mr. Jarvis, and contriving some means to annul them with a good grace.

WHILE lord Bromley and lord Clayton were in this situation in Cheshire, Mr. Merrick received a visit from a female whom he had never seen before. — The servant, from

the shabbiness of her appearance, refused to let her in; but Mr. Merrick, happening to have a view of her as he crossed the hall, and perceiving something agreeable in her *tout ensemble*, in spite of her disadvantageous dress, desired John to admit her.

AS soon as she entered the parlour, Mr. Merrick, having begged her to sit down, asked her what business she had with him? — “I don’t remember,” added he, “that I ever saw you till now, madam.” —

HE made use of the word madam, because he discovered something in her, which distinguished her from the vulgar of her sex.

“YOU never, I believe, Sir, saw *me* before; nor can I recollect *your* face: but I am come to you as a man of whose humanity and benevolence I have heard a great deal; so much, Sir, that I have the less occasion to make an apology for presuming to wait on you.”

MR. MERRICK was a little puzzled at her preamble; but, thanking her for the compliment she paid him, intreated her to come to the point at once, and tell him who she was, and what she wanted with him.

“MY name, Sir, is Barton.”

“WHAT, Mr. Jarvis’s Molly Barton!”

“THE same, Sir.”

“I AM glad to hear you say so, with all my heart.”

“MY parents.” —

“I DO not want any account of your parents — only tell me what has happened to you since you left Ireland with Mrs. Jordan. You have been used very ill, I know, but I hope your unhappy days will soon be over: over they soon shall be, if I can make them otherwise.”

MRS. BARTON having bowed her head to thank him for so good-natured a declaration, thus proceeded:

“WITH Mrs. Jordan, Sir, I came to England, and lived with her five years as happy as I could be in a state of separation from Mr. Jarvis, who, in spite of his cruel behaviour to me, I still loved, and from my dearest daughter, whose absence I severely felt, not hearing any thing about either of them during that time. By chance, I was then informed, that Mr. Jarvis was in the East-Indies in a very flourishing way, but of my daughter no tidings came to my ears. Mrs. Jordan finding herself, on her arrival, in the possession of a large fortune by the death of her sister, acquainted Mr. Jordan with the news, which soon brought him over; but he lived not long to enjoy the addition to his income. For five years, as I said, Sir, I lived with Mrs. Jordan, I was treated by her with the greatest kindness, and she always told me that she should remember me in her will: she died, however, without a will, and her heirs at law not only paid no regard to a verbal request which she made a few minutes before her decease in my favour, being utterly unable to use her hand, but stripped me of the presents which my liberal benefactress had occasionally given me, and turned me out of the house, to shift for myself, with only the cloaths I wore, and the little money I had in my pocket. Opposition to

their ungenerous proceedings would have been equally ridiculous and ineffectual; I therefore quitted the house, without saying a syllable to them, and solicited the protection of a lady who had been intimately acquainted with Mrs. Jordan, and who always behaved to me in a manner as if she thought I merited the kindnesses bestowed on me: consequently I had no reason to expect an unfriendly reception from her. Mrs. Mawson did indeed receive me with a friendship for which I was very grateful, and told me that if I chose to live with her as a companion, she would endeavour to make some amends for the loss I had sustained by the death of her friend. I readily accepted her flattering offer, and found her as good as her word: she treated me as affectionately as if I had been nearly related to her, and whenever I was indisposed, left nothing undone to recover my health: but my happiness under her roof was not of a long duration; for in less than half a year it was interrupted by the arrival of her son, an officer in the army, who was just come from Gibraltar.

“CAPTAIN MAWSON was every way formed by nature to attract the attention, and to engage the affections of our sex: he was extremely agreeable in his person, and insinuating in his manners; his eyes and his voice were both so bewitching, that no woman, I believe, could be totally indifferent to his looks, or his conversation: I was, I confess, not insensible to his captivating powers, but I was not so far seduced by them, as to prove unfaithful to Mr. Jarvis, though he had proved so unkind, I might also say, inhuman to me: I loved him, as I said before, in spite of the ill usage I had received from him, and consequently resisted all the captain’s solicitations. It is impossible to enumerate the methods he took to gain my affections: he spent his whole time in trying to soften my heart; but all his art and assiduities were insufficient to obtain the point he aimed at. I behaved to him with the greatest complaisance, on Mrs. Mawson’s account; but I kept him at a proper distance, and would not suffer him to take unbecoming liberties with me. My reserved forbidding carriage to him, however, did not discourage him: he was unwearied in his perseverance, and grew, indeed, at last so troublesome with his importunities, that I determined to remove myself, in order to avoid them. The captain, to do him justice, when he found that I resented the licentiousness of his conversation, offered to marry me: but if I had loved him ever so much, I would not have, by accepting his offer, made so base a return to my generous benefactress for all her goodness to me. I, therefore, told her the truth of the affair, and informed her, at the same time, that I scorned, by taking advantage of the captain’s proposal, to render myself unworthy of the esteem she had discovered for me: but I could not help adding, that I must leave her house, if her son continued to distress me with intreaties I could not comply with honourably, supposing my inclination led me to a compliance.

“MRS. MAWSON was very much pleased with my openness upon the occasion, and said, that she would talk roundly to her son for degrading himself in such a manner. With all her amiable qualities, Mrs. Mawson had a great deal of family-pride, and never would have forgiven me, I dare say, if I had consented to become the captain’s wife. She also desired me not to think of leaving her. — You have shewed yourself, continued she, so deserving a girl by this honest confession of yours, that I may safely trust my son and you in the same house together.

“AFTER such a speech I expected to remain in the situation I was, unmolested by the captain, and without having any reason to apprehend a compelled removal: but envy and malice were employing their invention against me, and I was destined to be a victim to their combined attacks.

“AMONG the ladies whom Mrs. Mawson visited, was a Mrs. Banister, who had a daughter, a very pretty girl, and the toast of the neighbourhood. Captain Mawson was a man

of no small consequence in the eyes of all the ladies in whose circles he appeared; but Miss Banister was particularly struck with his whole figure and appearance; and as visits between the families were frequently exchanged, fresh fuel was perpetually added to the flame which love had raised in her tender bosom. Finding, however, that the captain seemed to be quite unaffected by her charms, and perceiving whenever she saw us together, that I was a superior object in his eyes, envy fired her with resentment against me, and prompted her to do every thing in her power to procure my dismissal from Mrs. Mawson's: she was exceedingly artful, and I was sacrificed to her malicious ingenuity. She had address enough to make Mrs. Mawson believe, that I had abused her with a fictitious story; that I had endeavoured to draw in the captain to marry me; and that finding he was not to be wheedled into matrimony by me, I had very impertinently accused *him* of having strongly solicited *my* consent.

“MISS BANISTER's efforts to throw me friendless again into the world, were but too successful: for the captain having declared to his mother, to prevent my removal, as he afterwards told me, which he could not bear to think of, that he had no designs upon me in any shape, Mrs. Mawson immediately beheld me in a new light, after Miss Banister's visit to her on *my* account, and concluded that I had done my utmost to seduce her son; and considered me, therefore, as no longer worthy of her regard and protection. In short, Sir, I was dismissed with a severe lecture, in which my insolence and ingratitude were pretty largely insisted on, without any recommendation to another family. However, as I was persuaded I did not deserve the treatment I had met with, and conscious of having merited a very different behaviour, as I might have been married to the captain, if I had been governed only by interested considerations, I did not give myself up to despair, but conveyed myself to an adjacent county, where a distant relation of Mrs. Jordan's lived, a Mrs. Davis, a very good kind of woman.

“WHEN I arrived at Mrs. Davis's, she was surrounded with company: it was a merry day, for it was the wedding-day of one of her nieces: the old lady was, therefore, in high spirits. She received me in the most cordial manner imaginable — Why did you not come to me at cousin Jordan's death, Molly, said she, you should have been vastly welcome to live at my house till you heard of a place you liked better? In this hospitable and good humoured strain did she talk to me. I thanked her with a most grateful heart for giving me so friendly a reception, and acquainted her with as much of my history, as would, I thought, serve to prejudice her more in my favour.

“MRS. Davis's niece being married to the son of an East-India director, I availed myself of the kindness of her carriage to me, and of her husband's friendly behaviour in consequence of it, to get me a passage to Bengal in the first ship that sailed thither: and by Mr. Thornhill's powerful recommendation of me to his father, I was not only put upon the list of those who were to go passengers, but furnished with a sum more than sufficient to defray the probable expences attending so long a voyage.

“I LEFT England with the less regret, with the more pleasure indeed, because I heard a little while before my departure, that Mr. Jarvis was well at Bengal; though some discouraging sensations were mingled with the animating ones. If after all the pains I have taken to see him again, he should either pretend not to know me, or spurn me from him with contempt, how melancholy, how distressful will be my situation in a part of the world to which I shall be an utter stranger, unprovided with the least means for subsistence, friendless and forlorn! Such were the discouraging thoughts which frequently came across my mind; but the longing desire I had to see the dear cruel man, whose unkindness I forgave, and

whose love I could not forget, drove away all such thoughts, and I went on board full of the most flattering hopes.

“AFTER a safe and pleasant voyage, I landed at Bengal, but with a variety of emotions; some of which were, in spite of my hopes, so very disheartening, that I with difficulty supported myself from fainting while I was carried ashore: I actually did faint soon afterwards, when I was informed that Mr. Jarvis had sailed the week before for Holland, on board a Dutch India-man.

“I WAS, in a short time, restored to my senses by the humanity of the people about me; but they only, by their humanity, made me feel the full force of their information, which shocked me the more because it was unexpected: the unprepared are always doubly disappointed; and such a disappointment would have perhaps unhinged my reason, had not a shower of tears seasonably relieved me.

“WHEN I had wept till was almost sick, I, in the first place, implored the protection of Providence with unfeigned humility and devotion, and then considered how to act in so distressful a situation. While I was considering in what manner to conduct myself, that all-wise and all-good Power, whose assistance I had sincerely and fervently invoked, sent a friend to me, who not only pitied my distress, but exerted himself to alleviate it. Mr. Thornhill, I afterwards found, had strongly recommended me to him as a person deserving of his attention and friendship, if I should stand in need of them. Mr. Graves finding that I was more inclined to follow Mr. Jarvis to Holland, than to return to my own country without him, generously procured me a passage on board a Dutch ship, with the captain of which he was very well acquainted, and made a generous addition to my little cash, which was nearly exhausted, that I might not be embarrassed for want of money.

“FLATTERED again by hope, I took leave of Mr. Graves, after having gratefully acknowledged the kind presents and kinder advice I had received from him, and went on board the Texel, captain Tromper, who, though not a polite, was not at all an ill-bred man, but behaved to me with a blunt civility not at all disgusting, and took care to see me decently accommodated.

“MY arrival in Holland was attended with the same disappointment which I had met with on landing at Bengal. Mr. Jarvis had been at the very place where I was put ashore, but had left it several weeks before my coming to it.

“I then enquired if he was sailed to England or Ireland, and on being told to the latter, soon agreed with a Dutch captain, who was luckily, just at that time, going thither. My informer deceived me, not intentionally, I believe, as I appeared utterly unknown to him; for as soon as I arrived in Ireland, I heard that he was gone to England. This was indeed a very disagreeable additional disappointment. My affection, however, for Mr. Jarvis increasing in proportion to the difficulties I encountered in trying to get sight of him, would not suffer me to remain inactive: I therefore made the best of my way to Dublin.

“HAPPENING to pass by the cottage in which I was born, and from which I was seduced, I could not avoid shedding tears in abundance. My father and mother had not been dead a great while; by memory brought them so strongly to my view, that a train of the most melancholy reflections immediately arose in my mind.

“AT Dublin I took my passage on board one of the packets, and thought myself very happy in finding Mr. Meredith and his family in the same ship. My father had formerly been a tenant of Mr. Meredith’s, who often honoured our little hovel with his presence. I was then very young; but I remember that he took much notice of me, and that he never failed to call me a good girl before he left it.

“PERCEIVING that neither he nor Mrs. Meredith, nor Miss Julia, recollected me, I discovered myself to them: they looked at me full of astonishment, and could hardly give credit to what I said, when I told them who I was. They had not seen me, it is true, for several years, and I had certainly endured enough in that time, both in body and mind, to occasion the surprize which my discovery excited in them: for though I always so far trusted in Providence, as to believe that every thing in this world is ordered by him for the wisest purposes, I could not divest myself of sensibility: I could not help feeling the vexations which destroyed my peace, though I endeavoured to bear them with patience.

“WHEN the first moments of surprize on their side, and of awkward embarrassment on mine were over, I began to make an apology to Mr. Meredith for the liberty I had taken in acquainting him with my name. Those were the happiest days in my life, Sir, said I, in which you knew me at our little cottage: I have gone through more trouble than I can well describe, since I saw you last there.”

“I KNOW, my good Mrs. Barton,” replied he, with the most benevolent aspect, “that you have been very ill used by Mr. Jarvis in various shapes; but I was in hopes when I heard of your being under the protection of the worthy Mrs. Jordan, that a great part of your affliction, if not all, occasioned by his injurious treatment, would be removed. Have you received any intelligence about him, or your daughter, since your leaving Ireland with that lady?”

“AFTER having thanked him from the bottom of my hear for expressing himself so kindly about me, I informed him of the vicissitudes in my life, from my leaving Ireland with Mrs. Jordan, to my meeting with *him*. I am now going to England, continued she, in hopes of finding Mr. Jarvis there, in hopes of reviving his affection for me, and in hopes of discovering my dear long-lost daughter.

“MR. MEREDITH, when he had told me that he hoped I should see no more unhappy days, acquainted me with lord Clayton’s uneasy situation on Mr. Jarvis’s account, and added, Now, Mrs. Barton, I have a scheme in my head, by following which you may, perhaps, find yourself benefited by it: my very good neighbour, Mr. Merrick, lord Clayton’s uncle, is now at Bromley-house in London: he was no stranger to your history before you went to England with Mrs. Jordan; he will be very ready to do all in his power to break off the intended match between lord Clayton and your daughter, as both she and his nephew are otherwise engaged; and he will also, I am sure, take no small pleasure in trying to prevail on Mr. Jarvis to make you his wife. To him, therefore, I would advise you to go, with all possible haste, after your arrival in England, and he will put you in the best way to procure an interview with Mr. Jarvis, and with your Harriot.

“I PROMISED to follow his advice punctually, and gave myself up again to the flattery of hope. Our voyage was pleasant, having no bad weather, and, as the wind was brisk and favourable, expeditious. We arrived safe at Holyhead: Mr. Meredith, being taken extremely ill there, could not proceed: I would have staid to assist Mrs. and Miss Meredith to

attending him; but he desired me with so much importunity to come to you, Sir, and inform you of his arrival, that I could not refuse his request.

“ONE of my fellow travellers being an agreeable young woman, who seemed to have taken a great fancy to me, I was also prejudiced so much in her favour, that at the inn where we stopped at the end of our first day’s journey, we agreed to sleep together. As my spirits had been jaded, I soon closed my eyes. When I awaked the next morning, I was somewhat surprised not to find my companion with me, but more so when I was told that she could no where be found. As I proceeded to rise, my astonishment was increased; not only the greatest part of my cloaths was missing, but all the money I had in my pocket. I was almost stunned by a blow for which I was not in the least prepared. Just when I recovered a little from it, I received another shock; for my landlady, when I represented my distressed situation to her, instead of offering to give me any assistance, behaved in the rudest manner, and absolutely refused to furnish me with any kind of apparel, though I begged for only the oldest and worst things she had in her possession, to enable me to pursue my journey, assuring her, that she would be no sufferer by her good-nature.

“WHILE I was soliciting, and she turning a deaf ear to my solicitations, a lady who had treated me with great politeness during the voyage and in the coach, came into the room and upbraided Mrs. Twisden, that was the landlady’s name, in very keen language, for her inhumanity. I have overheard, continued she, what has passed between you, and think you ought to be ashamed of your behaviour — However, if you really have any old cloaths in the house of the sort wanted at present, I desire you would produce them: you shall have a reasonable allowance for them.

“THE lady pulling out a purse at the same time, Mrs. Twisden, as soon as she saw the contents of it, made several awkward apologies for the brutality of her conduct, and waddled out of the room, in order to receive some of them, saying, as she went along, that she would see what she could find for the young lady.

“WHILE Mrs. Twisden was gone out, repeating those words, I expressed my gratitude to the lady in the strongest terms I could make use of, for so kindly coming to assist me when I stood so much in need of a friend; and I found by her answers, that the regard shewn by Mr. Meredith and his family have been very serviceable to me; though she seemed to be naturally of a benevolent, compassionating, and generous disposition.

“MRS. TWISDEN returned with the cloaths in which I now appear. The reception I met with at the door by the servant who opened it, was not altogether unexpected, because I felt myself a forbidding figure; but I was in hopes, notwithstanding the shabbiness of my appearance, to get at the sight of *you*, having all the reason in the world to believe that you would excuse that appearance when you was acquainted with the cause of it. And now, Sir, as I have informed you of what you wanted to hear concerning me, I hope you will favour me with your advice how to act with regard to Mr. Jarvis and my daughter: I wish to be introduced to them both, but for the manner of my introduction I beg your advice. From what Mr. Meredith said to me concerning you, Sir, I am greatly encouraged to believe that you will be my friend upon this occasion.”

“THAT I will,” said Mr. Merrick eagerly, on her ceasing to speak, “that I will, to the utmost of my power. I have been much affected with several passages in your story, and am the more inclined to serve you from the propriety of your behaviour in situations which required no small discretion. I have your happiness at heart, Mrs. Barton, I have indeed, and

will think how to bring about the completion of your wishes: I know what your wishes are, and they ought to be gratified. Come again to me to-morrow: perhaps by that time, I may put things in a train; for when I undertake any form of business I lose not a moment — Where are you to be found?”

MOLLY, having returned Mr. Merrick her sincerest thanks for interesting himself so much in her behalf, promised to wait on him the next morning, and told him that she lodged at Mrs. Jones’s in Bond-street.

“A RIGHT kind of woman,” replied he, “a right kind of woman: I know her very well: I am glad you lodge at her house; she will not draw you into any disagreeable scrapes.”

MOLLY then took her leave, and returned to her lodgings.

MR. MERRICK, soon after Molly’s departure, thought that a visit to Mr. Jarvis might not be a bad step. — “I will go and sound him about Molly Barton, and ask him some artful questions, the answers to which will, probably, instruct me what measures to take for the intended interview between them: and I shall endeavour to paint the good creature in such colours to him, as to render him desirous of making her all the amends in his power for the injuries she has received from him.”

WITH these sentiments he sat out directly for Mr. Jarvis’s.

MR. JARVIS, though he knew that Mr. Merrick was averse to the marriage of lord Clayton and his daughter, and had, indeed, taken no small pains to dissuade lord Bromley from making his son miserable by insisting upon his subscribing to engagements into which he had rashly entered during his absence from England, received him very politely. When they were seated, Mr. Merrick delivered himself to him in the following manner:

“I AM come to make you a visit, Sir, on a particular occasion — I fell into company yesterday with a Mrs. Barton, an Irish lady, upon my word a sensible, well-behaved woman, and seems to be a very amiable one in every respect. I was wonderfully struck with her, and I do not know whether I shall not make my addresses to her: she tells me she is extremely well acquainted with you, and has spent many agreeable hours in your company — will you favour me with your opinion about her?”

THE word Barton had such an effect on Mr. Jarvis’s countenance, that he looked disconcerted: and at the end of Mr. Merrick’s speech his emotions were so violent, to such a degree was he shocked by the remembrance of his cruel behaviour to his Molly, that he could only say, “Barton, Sir!” “O ho, Sir,” replied Mr. Merrick immediately, “it is very well I mentioned her to you before I made my addresses to her; if I had been in a hurry, I might have subjected myself to a disagreeable rebuff from your mistress.”

THERE went another arrow to his heart: “O Mr. Merrick,” said he, you have, undesignedly, given me unspeakable uneasiness — A dear, good creature of that name I once knew; I used her extremely ill: I am ashamed to say how ill I used her; but I have been severely punished for all the unjust unkind treatment she received from me. In spite of my prosperity whenever I think of it, and my reflections on it are, I do assure you, very frequent. Could I be blessed with the sight of her now, I would make her all the reparation in my power for my past cruel, I am sorry to add, criminal conduct.”

MR. JARVIS uttered the latter part of his speech with a tone so expressive of unfeigned contrition, that Mr. Merrick was moved at it, and was only not sorry for having occasioned such an avowal of his disquietudes, because he was so able to remove them. — “Whatever your past behaviour has been, Sir,” said he, “your present carriage is altogether commendable; and the Mrs. Barton whom I met yesterday may, perhaps, prove to be the person whom you wish to see.”

“I AM afraid to expect so much happiness,” replied Mr. Jarvis; “I have heard nothing about my poor Molly these ten years, and therefore dare not hope to be informed of her being alive: my cruelty was sufficient to break the heart of any woman of a tender disposition, in her circumstances, and she was surely the tenderest of her sex.”

“WAS you acquainted with any lady of the name of Barton, Sir, during the connections with your Molly?”

“NO, Sir.” —

“THIS Mrs. Barton then is most probably your Molly —”

“I RATHER apprehend, Sir, that the lady you have seen was not a Barton during my acquaintance with her, but became so by marriage after my departure from Ireland.”

“YOU are not willing, I see, Sir, to encourage flattering expectations, and I cannot blame you for not giving way to them; but it gives me a great deal of satisfaction to tell you, that the Mrs. Barton whom I saw yesterday, is the very person whom you are so desirous of seeing.”

MR. JARVIS stood for some moments motionless with astonishment.

“ARE you serious, Sir?”

“YES, Sir, I am very serious; and you may depend upon my intelligence: I had been acquainted with Mrs. Barton’s history before you left Ireland, by a friend, and she has herself related to me the various changes in her life since.”

“YOU amaze me,” said Mr. Jarvis; “but you also fill my bosom with sensations pleasing beyond description. — I wish to see her, I wish to fold her in my arms; to tell her how sincerely I repent of having so long deserted her, and to fulfil that promise, for the breach of which I have endured the most cutting anxiety. — Where is she, Sir? with whom does she lodge? let me fly to her instantly, and, throwing myself at her feet with the truest penitence, solicit her pardon.”

MR. MERRICK imagining that the sudden appearance of Mr. Jarvis might give too violent a shock to his Molly’s spirits, told him, after having expressed the pleasure which he felt in finding him possessed of such just sentiments, and animated with such agreeable sensations, that he would, with his consent, go and prepare her for his intended visit.

“DO, do, my dear Sir,” replied he eagerly: “go, I beseech you, immediately, to the much injured, amiable woman: I shall wait with impatience till you return; and I shall hasten

with transport to her, when you have prepared her to receive me. — O may I be received rather according to my wishes than my deserts!”

WHILE the above dialogue was carried on between Mrs. Merrick and Mr Jarvis, Mrs. Barton’s tenderness and sensibility were severely tried. — Passing through Mrs. Jones’s shop (on her return from Bromley-house) who was a milliner, in order to go up to her own apartment, she took particular notice of a fine girl looking over some laces, and thought she recollected in her face the features of her Harriot. As there were several ladies, however, examining the things offered to their inspection, she beckoned Mrs. Jones into a back-parlour, and asked her if the name of the young lady who stood near the window talking to one of her apprentices, was not Jarvis.

ON Mrs. Jones’s answering in the affirmative, Mrs. Barton begged the favour of her to bring Miss Jarvis into the parlour, under a pretence of having something out of the common way to produce, for her opinion about it.

MRS. JONES readily complied with her request, and Miss Jarvis with the invitation which followed it.

AS soon as Miss Jarvis entered the room, Mrs. Barton rose from her chair, advanced towards her, and having attentively fixed her eyes upon her for some moments, threw her arms around her neck, burst into tears, and said, with interrupted accents — “Yes — yes — you are my dear, my long-lost daughter — my Harriot — my” —

MORE words she could not utter: she felt much more than she could articulate — She could only press her beloved child closely to her tender bosom, and murmur out the gratitude of her heart to Heaven for the restoration of her to her fond endearments, after having been so long separated from them.

MISS JARVIS not having been in the least prepared for so important a discovery, so melting an interview, was not able to support the surprize which they occasioned, but fainted in those arms which affectionately embraced her. Soon recovering, however, she fell on her knees, and bathed her mother’s hands with her tears — “Am I then,” said she, “so blessed as to see again a parent whose tenderness to me I well remember, though I was very young when my father carried me away from her — Surely, madam, you are greatly altered, for I should not have known you any where — but I thank Heaven most fervently for this unexpected, though often wished-for event.”

MRS. BARTON having raised her daughter from the floor, replied, “I believe I am greatly altered, my dear child, since your father conveyed you from me, for I have met with many trying disappointments: but I forgive him; I forgive him from my heart.” —

“He deserves your forgiveness madam,” said Harriot, “for he sincerely, I will venture to say, repented of his cruel behaviour to you. — O how rejoiced he will be to be informed that you are so near him!”

JUST when she had pronounced those words, Mr. Merrick entered the room, and with all the warmth of true benevolence, enjoyed the discovery which the interview between the mother and the daughter had produced: then, having confirmed what Miss Jarvis had said

with regard to her father's repentance, with several additional circumstances not less agreeable, he offered to wait on them both home.

MISS JARVIS told him that his offer was a very kind one; but added, that she thought it better for *her* to go home first, and for him to follow with her mother. As they both readily subscribed to her opinion, she immediately took leave of them.

THE pleasing emotions which the discovery of a parent from whom she had been so long separated had raised in her gentle bosom, winged her feet, and she was soon at home.

AS soon as she entered the room in which her father was sitting, she said, "Oh, Sir!" and burst into tears.

MR. JARVIS could not possibly conceive what she had met with abroad to occasion so afflicted an appearance, as she went out in good spirits, and remarkably cheerful indeed; but imagining that some distressful object had fallen under her notice, which, from the natural tenderness of her temper, she wished to relieve, he asked her in the most soothing terms, in what melancholy scene she had been engaged — "What has happened to excite so much sorrow, my dear?"—

"OH! such a scene — such a scene — Sir — But my tears are not tears of sorrow — I weep for joy — My mother, my dear mother is" —

"WHERE? where? I have heard of her since you left me, and am impatient to embrace her." —

"She will be here presently, Sir, with Mr. Merrick." —

"AYE, he is the person who informed me about her, and who generously undertook to prepare her for our meeting: the worthy creature, how I love him for his humanity!"

HARRIOT then related to her father what had passed at Mrs. Jones's, and just as she had concluded her narrative, Mr. Merrick arrived with Mrs. Barton.

MR. JARVIS flew to receive his Molly with open arms; but before he could reach the door, she fainted in those of her daughter.

WHEN she, by their affectionate assiduities united, came to herself, she lifted up her hands and eyes, and thanked Heaven in the most grateful language, the language of her heart, for having blessed her again with the sight of a man whom she had so many years wished to see.

"YOU had no reason to wish to see me again, my dear Molly," said he, pressing her to his bosom, because I behaved to you with a baseness which at this instant strongly recollected, calls up blushes in my cheeks, the blushes of remorse; but I will make you all the amends within the reach of my abilities for the cruelty of my past conduct: it can never be forgotten, but I hope it will be forgiven by you."

"IT is forgiven: it is sincerely forgiven, Sir," replied Molly, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief: "the excessive pleasure which I feel in being so kindly received by you, and in

finding my dear Harriot, almost overwhelms me: I cannot describe what I feel on this unexpected flow of felicity.”

“THE pleasure which I feel too,” said he, “is not less intense than yours, my dearest Molly; but you seem to be in so tremulous a state, that you had better, in my opinion, retire till your spirits are not so fluttered.”

HARRIOT, who had been talking aside with Mr. Merrick, struck with the latter part of that speech, went directly to her mother, and said, “Will you give me leave, madam, to wait on you to another room? my father’s hint is of too much consequence to be neglected.”

THESE words prettily spoken, and happily timed, had the intended effect upon Mrs. Barton, and she willingly, after having looked very tenderly at Mr. Jarvis, who returned her look with equal affection, retired with her daughter.

WHEN they had left the room, Mr. Merrick, advancing to Mr. Jarvis, heartily congratulated him on the happiness which he felt. “I am sure this interview has proved a satisfactory one: your eyes sufficiently declare your sensations, without the assistance of words.”

“MY eyes then, Sir, are faithful interpreters of my feelings, for I never was so happy in my life; no, not when I first became acquainted with my Molly’s blushing charms: and as you have been so instrumental in procuring me the happiness which I at this moment enjoy, in so high a degree, I shall always think myself under great obligations to you.”

MR. MERRICK, having made a proper reply to that speech, deemed it prudent to retreat.

SOON after his departure Mrs. Barton re-entered the room with her daughter, and a very affectionate scene followed between her and Mr. Jarvis; who, no longer able to bear the thoughts of having seduced her from a state of innocence by villanous proceedings, heightened the transports which his presence had excited in her breast, by assuring her, with the most solemn and binding expressions, that he would in a few days atone for his barbarous triumph over her virtue at the altar. “When I have made you my wife,” continued he, “I shall have entirely quieted my conscience, for I have already satisfied all my creditors at Cork, from whom I fled in so dishonourable a manner — And now, my dear Molly, I should be glad to hear what adventures you have met with since I left you so cruelly.”

MRS. BARTON having acquainted him with the generous behaviour of his creditors to her, proceeded to inform him of the many changes she had experienced in her life, and concluded with saying, “You see,” my dear Mr. Jarvis, “I have been rather fortunate than unlucky upon the whole. Providence, on whose goodness I constantly relied, and at whose decrees I never murmured under any disappointment, never suffered me to be in absolute distress, and my heart now glows with gratitude to him for having thus so amply rewarded me for my resignation.”

MR. JARVIS was equally ready to acknowledge the goodness of providence, in bringing about an event so long, so mutually wished for, when such an event was almost, on both sides, despaired of; and told his Molly, that what she had endured for his sake, would make him doubly careful not to be the cause of any future infelicity to her.

MRS. BARTON looked at him as if she fully believed him to be sincere, and when she had declared the satisfaction which that assurance had given her, intreated him to relate what adventures he had met with since his departure from Cork, if the relation of them would not be disagreeable to him.

“I AM very ready to comply with your intreaty, my dear Molly,” said he, pressing her hand, “though the recollection of the past I had in some particular scenes will occasion painful sensations in me. However, as I am a sincere penitent, I will be a faithful narrator: the recollection of my past vices and follies may perhaps tend to strengthen the resolution which I have formed to lead a new life.

“WHEN I left you in so abrupt a manner, in such embarrassed circumstances, I hastened with my Harriot (whom I could not help taking with me, so fond was I of her) and with her maid, to embark for England. I had plunged myself into such difficulties by my foolish and vicious pursuits, that I could no longer remain either in happiness or safety among the people who had ruined me, especially among those whom I shamefully amused with a fictitious story about an estate fallen to me — The truth is, I had determined to convey myself to England, in order to try the generosity of a distant relation of my father’s: I had never seen him indeed, but I presumed upon the known benevolence of *his* disposition and my own address for an easy passage to his purse. However chusing not to depend entirely either upon my dexterity or my consanguinity, I resolved to draw money enough from my deceived friends to enable me to subsist for some time, in case of meeting with a forbidding reception from my cousin Tisdale, that I might have leisure to strike upon a new expedient for the bettering of my fortune. Happily for me, Mr. Tisdale was the very person I wished him to be; he received me as the son of a man for whom he had had the highest regard; and accommodated me and my Harriot in the most desirable way at his house. Mrs. Tisdale soon grew so charmed with Harriot’s entertaining prattle, that she paid as much attention to her as if she had been her own daughter, having no child of her own.

“YOU may, with great reason, my dear Molly, ask me what you had done to deserve so cruel a desertion. You certainly had done nothing to deserve it: my conduct must therefore be attributed to some of those inconsistencies belonging to human nature which are never to be accounted for: you merited quite a different treatment, and I suffered enough afterwards by approaches of a guilty conscience, for having barbarously treated the woman who had proved herself to be the best friend I had in the world.

“WHEN I had been a few months at Mr. Tisdale’s hospitable mansion, Mrs. Tisdale’s brother, whose name was Jordan, came down on a visit. This gentleman, having been lately chosen an India director, and finding me of an enterprising turn, told me, that if I had any inclination to go a nabob-hunting, he would endeavour to procure me a genteel employment in the company’s service.

“I ACKNOWLEDGED myself much obliged to him for so polite and generous an offer of his friendship and assistance, and I really was so; for I had a strong desire to raise a large fortune with rapidity.

“MR. JORDAN proved to be *not* a mere man of words; for in about three weeks after his departure from us, he begged me, in a very kind letter, to favour him with my presence in Crosby-Square. I lost no time, but set out as soon as a post-chaise could be got ready, and made my appearance at the place appointed sooner than it was expected.

“MR. JORDAN having informed me on my arrival, that I had been, by *his* recommendation, nominated to an advantageous post at Bengal, I returned him my sincerest thanks for his friendliness and activity on my account, and was carried by him the next day to pay my respects to the court in Leaden-Hall Street.

“MR. and Mrs. Tisdale felt, apparently, little less pleasure than myself on my appointment, and most agreeably, as well as most usefully, assisted me in making preparations for my voyage.

“WHEN I was ready to go on board, I began to feel some parental emotions which prompted me to give up the flattering prospects which hope pictured to my view. I loved my Harriot, so tenderly loved her, and reflected so deeply on the uncertainty of my ever seeing her again, that my resolution was staggered, and my rage for sudden riches considerably abated.

“AT length, however, a different train of ideas arose in my mind. I considered that I should leave my child to the care of an amiable woman, who seemed to be maternally fond of her, and who would therefore, I could not but believe, bring her up with as much circumspection and solicitude as if she had been *her own*. I considered also, that if heaven should not permit me to see that child again, I should die with the satisfaction of being firmly persuaded that she would, in some shape, be decently provided for by those who had voluntarily undertaken her education. These united considerations soon got the better of all others, and I embarked in a short time afterwards without feeling any more retarding reflections.”

HERE a servant coming in to tell Harriot that her milliner wished to speak with her, she quitted the room.

MR. JARVIS, on his daughter’s retiring, said to Molly, “I am not sorry, my dear, that Harriot has been called away, as I shall, before I have finished my narrative, relate passages not proper for *her ears*; because the delivery of them will kindle blushes in *my face*. — Parents discover no prudence by communicating to their children a catalogue of their weaknesses and of their vices, of their follies and of their crimes — But to proceed —

“AFTER a pleasant voyage I arrived at Bengal, and took possession of the post to which I had been nominated, by producing a letter to the governor. The respect which that post procured me, and the emoluments annexed to it, gave me, at first, so much pleasure, that I thought myself in a very happy situation, and dreamt of nothing but diamonds — But I soon found myself in a very unenviable condition. The person who had been removed to make way for *me*, had many friends, much money, and a great deal of spirit. He resented extremely the ill usage he had met with from the court of directors, not being conscious of ever having had recourse to illicit proceedings to push his fortune. In consequence of his connections, his wealth, his spirit, and his resentment, he raised such a storm against me that my life was a life of turbulence and disquiet. Yet, disquieting as my station was, I might have perhaps, by an irreproachable behaviour, silenced the clamours of my bitterest enemies, and conciliated them so far to me as to have induced them not to render me weary of a post to which I had been promoted without having taken any measures to make my predecessor obnoxious to his superiors. By such a behaviour, I might have, perhaps, enjoyed my post in peace; but I certainly, by the folly of my conduct, increased the infelicity of which I complained.

“ELATED with the power with which I was invested, and flushed with the riches which rolled in upon me, I abused them both; for I added extravagance to extortion. The same follies, the same vices, to which I had been from early youth — I am ashamed to say — strongly addicted, still haunted me, and drew me with an irresistible violence from the paths of virtue and discretion. I dissipated profusely the wealth which I iniquitously obtained; and by alternately devoting myself to women, wine, and dice, drove away the few friends from me which I had, at my first setting out, interested in my favour, by the propriety of my carriage. — What havoc does prosperity make in the human heart!

“WHEN I had been about three years rendering myself less and less worthy of the good fortune which I enjoyed, I received a letter from England to inform me that I must, immediately, on the receipt of it, resign my post to the gentleman who had been dismissed on *my* account.

“I WAS very much surprized at this intelligence: but I ceased to be so when I found by another letter, that my good friend Mr. Jordan had no longer any influence at the India-house: I was however extremely chagrined at the information I received from *that* house, because I had by debauchery and profusion injured my constitution, and brought myself into an entire dependence on the profits arising from my post.

“THE intelligence which I received from England was doubly galling, as my successor was to be the very man whom I had superseded: for, having treated *him* with great insolence, from the time of my taking possession of my employment, I had no reason to expect any but the most provoking behaviour from him in return.

“AFTER so severe a blow, my pride would not suffer me to remain in a place wherein I could not, possibly, think of keeping up the splendid appearance to which I had been accustomed: I therefore packed up the most valuable effects I had, and moved to Madrass. *There*, by living privately, frugally, and temperately, in every respect (for how many blessings are we indebted to adversity!) I in a short time, recovered my health, and began to look back on the gay, the gaudy life I had led, without regret. *There*, however, I did not live in absolute solitude: I met with unexpected civilities from several people: I passed my time very agreeably, and felt more real pleasure in my new situation in three months than I had felt during the three years of my residence at Calcutta.

“IN less than three quarters of a year after my arrival at Madrass, the gentleman with whom I was most intimately acquainted, dying, I could not help instantaneously forming a design to make my addresses to the lady to whom he had left all his riches, which were considerable. Mrs. Turner was a very agreeable woman, and not at all a disconsolate widow. From the time of my being well received by her husband she gave me sufficient reason to believe that I might offer to supply his place at a proper juncture, without being apprehensive of a repulse: I had nothing, therefore, to do, I thought, when the last duties were paid, but to mix the tenderness of the *lover* with the condolance of the *friend*: I succeeded according to my wishes; and, after a decent delay, we were married.

“AS soon as I found myself once more in prosperous circumstances, I longed with all the ardor of a mock-patriot to be hollowed by a mob at his heels, to return to Calcutta, and blaze among those who had exulted at my degradation. My wife having some relations at Patna, readily closed with my proposal, and we embraced the first opportunity we met with to be conveyed to Bengal.

“ON my arrival at Calcutta, I received a disappointment which gave no small uneasiness to my foolish heart; for the person whom I had left re-inflated in his post, and whose envy I intended to have excited by the renewed splendor of my appearance, was dead: my vanity, however, was not totally disappointed; there were many people remaining whom I wished to mortify, and whom I actually mortified with my presence.

“BY prosperity, all those passions which had hurried me into many ridiculous and ruinous pursuits were again inflamed, and I was once more driven by them to injure my health, and to impair my fortune; the former by an indiscreet commerce with *your* sex, the latter by imprudent connections with *my own* — By that commerce and those connections I soon alarmed my wife, who had reason, indeed, to fear that the riches which she had put into my possession would, in a short time, be wasted among those who found my follies and vices so profitable to them; and that we should be reduced to necessitous circumstances. She was an amiable woman, and very fond of me; but I behaved to her like a brute, and turned a deaf ear to all her judicious and salutary remonstrances against my pernicious proceedings.

“AS I now began to grow rather weary of Mrs. Jarvis, having, indeed, only married her for her money, though she had charms and good qualities sufficient to merit my attention as a woman and a wife, I made several efforts to persuade her to stay with a brother of hers at Patna till my return; but my persuasions were ineffectual: we therefore embarked together.

“WHEN we were within two days sail of Madrass, we fell in with a French man of war, who carried us to Pondicherry.

“THE governor of that place treated us with great politeness, and assured us that we should have no room to complain of our accommodations. Finding very soon, that my wife’s person and genteel carriage had not a little contributed to the kind treatment which we received, I availed myself of the governor’s passion for her to let him know that if he would indulge me with a passage to Madrass, Mrs. Jarvis should be extremely at his service in my absence. As Monsieur le Chevre was an amorous man, he closed with my offer, and in a few days I left Pondicherry, on board a Dutch ship, furnished by him with many presents in return for the surrender which I had made to him.

“WHEN I was under sail I could not help reflecting on the baseness of my conduct with regard to my wife, and the remembrance of my base behaviour to *you*, my dear Molly, (the recollection of which had frequently, before, damped me in the midst of a joyous scene) gave me also, at the same time, many corroding sensations, which became at last so painful, that I had recourse to the bottle, in order to forget them. — How naturally does one wrong action produce another; and how absurdly do we act when we attempt to ease the anguish of our minds by throwing our ideas into confusion! — I drank myself into a fever. I was attended with the greatest care during my voyage; but when I arrived at Madrass my life was thought to be in the most imminent danger. — During my delirious fits I raved, I was afterwards told, sometimes about my wife, sometimes about my dear Molly: the two women whom I had the most injured, the most haunted my imagination.

“I recovered, but I recovered only to feel the weight of a new calamity which I, in truth, deserved, though I did not bring it upon myself, for my past misdeeds. My agent, who had a great deal of my property in his hands, went from his house suddenly, and nobody could inform me whither.

“THIS was a heavy blow, and I in a little while found myself in a straitened situation: so straitened that I was under a necessity of disposing of the presents which I had received from Le Chevre to supply myself with the necessaries of life.

“THE reflections which arose in my mind, when I converted those presents into money, were of the most dispiriting kind; for I spent the time chiefly in reproaching myself sharply for having merited my misfortunes.

“WHILE I was turning about my thoughts to strike on some method to better my situation, news came from Calcutta that violent commotions were among the leading men there; and that their differences and distracted councils would, probably, give the Indians no unfavourable opportunity to attack *that* capital.

“I WAS desperate — I had little to lose — I might gain a great deal — I therefore proceeded to Bengal with all possible expedition, and arrived at Calcutta just when our troops were making preparations to march against their enemies. I offered myself immediately as a volunteer to the commanding officer, who imagining, perhaps, from the natural vivacity of my appearance, and the alacrity of my address to him, that I should not be unserviceable on the urgent occasion, animated me sufficiently to exert all my personal courage in the approaching action.

“BEING resolved to distinguish myself, I fought like a fury: the day was our own, and the plunder was immense; and (as I had during the engagement, greatly contributed by a particular *coup-de-main* to the victory which we obtained) I was very handsomely considered in the distribution of it.

“AS the action in which I was engaged proved to be decisive, I had no inducement to appear again in a military capacity: and as I was extremely well satisfied with the honour and the profit I had gained in the *field*, I endeavoured to improve by traffick what I had acquired by arms.

“FORTUNE, being once more in a good humour with me, I was so successful as a merchant, that in a few years I was a master of more wealth than I had ever possessed: during those years I became quite a new man, sincerely repented of all my former follies and vices, and had firmness enough to keep those passions strictly under subjection, which had occasioned such unhappy vicissitudes in my affairs.

“WHEN my acquisitions were adequate to my wishes, I took my passage in the first ship that was going to Holland, having some business to transact there: from thence I went to Ireland, and when I had discharged all the debts which I had contracted in that kingdom, sailed for England, fondly hoping, but little, I confess, expecting to see *you*, my dear Molly, again. My wife, whom I had sacrificed to the wanton appetite of a debauched old soldier, died, I was informed, soon after my departure from Pondicherry: I had, therefore, nothing to wish for but to return to my Harriot, from whom I received several dutiful and affectionate letters; but in none of them was she able to answer the queries I had transmitted to her concerning her much-injured mother, and to settle her happily in the marriage-state — Luckily I have, since my arrival, had an opportunity to put her into a fair way of being a countess; and if she is not contented with the husband I have provided for her, she deserves to be unhappy, for he is allowed to be one of the most amiable young nobleman of the present age.”

HERE Mr. Jarvis, tenderly embracing Mrs. Barton, closed his narrative with saying, “And now, my dearest Molly, as you have generously forgiven what is past, I feel myself happier than ever I was in my life.”

MOLLY having re-assured him that her forgiveness was as sincere as her affection for him, he desired her to give the necessary orders for her *appearance* in a *light* suitable to *his own*, adding, at the same time, that he should not look upon himself as thoroughly worthy of her pardon till he had made her his wife. — Molly was all love, gratitude, and obedience.

DURING the abovementioned interviews, discoveries, dialogues, and narratives in London, interviews, &c. &c. of another kind were going forward in the country.

LORD BROMLEY grew better every day, but he mended slowly. Lord Clayton attended him with all the duty of a good son, and all the affection of a fond one.

IT has already been said that the old earl was very much hampered by the bargain which he had made with Mr. Jarvis, relative to the union between their children: lord Clayton’s dutiful and winning behaviour affected his father in such a manner, that he began to wish heartily he had not tied himself down to the forfeiture of a considerable sum, if that union was not confirmed: all this has been already taken notice of, and is only now repeated, because several pages of digression have since intervened.

LORD CLAYTON flattering himself at length, from the satisfaction which his father expressed at his assiduity and solicitude about him, and from the general kindness of his carriage, that he would not persist in making his inclination and duty clash with each other; he, therefore, ventured one day when his lordship seemed to be remarkably pleased with him, to address him in the following terms: “It gives me the sincerest joy to see your lordship so much satisfied with my attentions; and I hope you will soon be as well, in every respect, as you was before you was attacked by so alarming a disorder.”

“AS to my health, George, I gain ground, thank God, every day,” replied his lordship; “but I am far from being happy: I am unhappy on your account.”

“IF *your* happiness depended on *mine*, my lord, you might in a very short time talk in a different strain: for it is in your power, by a very few words, to make me the happiest of men.”

“I WANT not to be told your meaning, George; but I have brought myself into such a scrape with Jarvis, that I am ashamed to mention it.”

“THE mention of it, my lord, may, perhaps, enable me to strike upon a method for your disentangling yourself from it.”

“No method can be possibly proposed to hinder me from reproaching myself for my folly — I wish *now*, that I had consulted your inclination before I had consented to the forfeiture.”

“WHAT forfeiture, my lord?”

“THE forfeiture of five thousand pounds, in case of your not marrying Miss Jarvis: there is, indeed, no written agreement between us, but I am a man of honour, George.”

“MR JARVIS, my lord, discovered a small regard to his daughter to enter into a treaty of marriage for her with a man whom she had never seen.”

“I strongly feel the force of that reflected reproof, said his lordship — Jarvis and I have both acted like unkind and mercenary parents, but I cannot bear to think of his having out-witted me — That sum, George, sticks in my stomach — It will go confoundedly against me, and yet I must consider it.”

WITH those words he left his son abruptly, who, in a little while afterwards, met with an unexpected adventure, which will be related in the next Volume.

END OF VOL. I.

**THE HISTORY
OF
LORD CLAYTON
AND
MISS MEREDITH.
VOL. II**

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**THE
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MISS MEREDITH**

LORD Clayton coming from a visit on horseback one evening, was struck with the distressful sounds of a female voice. Turning his horse towards the place from whence they issued he rode up to it: in other words, he quitted the high road, and galloped down the lane to which his ear and his humanity directed him.

IN the middle of that lane, at the foot of a tree, he discerned by the pale light of a feebly shining moon, a lady: he quickly dismounted, and coming up to her – what was his astonishment to see his Julia in so pitiable a situation! What was his affliction to see her tied to a tree at the foot of which lay, appearing by the blood sprinkled on her cloaths to have been wounded!

“MY dear Miss Meredith,” said he eagerly, “ for God’s sake tell me immediately where you are wounded, and how you was brought into this unfortunate condition?”

“OH, Sir,” replied she, “how providentially are you come to my relief, and how particularly grateful am I to heaven for having sent *you* to be my deliverer!”

“BUT where are you wounded, my dear Julia?” interrupted he with additional eagerness.

“NO where,” said she; “ but had not a noise alarmed the villain, he would, most probably, have murdered me; for having tied me –“

LORD Clayton, having sharply charged himself with an unpardonable want of consideration for not having instantly disengaged her from the tree, ran to it, and, not being able to untie the cords, immediately cut them asunder.

WHEN he had unbound her hands, he raised her from the ground, and asked her if she thought she had strength enough to walk to the nearest cottage, which was no great distance, and in which, he told her, an honest old woman lived who would do her all the service in her power.

Julia, assuring him that she could walk extremely well, and wished very much for the assistance of such a woman as he had mentioned, he begged her to lean upon his arm, and led her with the utmost care and tenderness to dame Dobson's, ordering his servant to follow with the horses. – While they paced slowly along he frequently asked her how she felt herself, with all the anxious solicitude of a fond lover; but postponed the further gratification of his curiosity, as he perceived by her tremor (occasioned, no doubt, by the mingled passions which arose in her gentle bosom at the sight of a man whom she so little expected to behold at that time) that she was not sufficiently composed to relate what had happened to her. He could not help, however, before they directed their steps towards Mrs. Dobson's, asking her from whence proceeded the blood on her cloaths, and she silenced his fears by informing him that it was only caused by a blow which her nose received while she struggled with her assailant.

Julia, when she told her lover that shew as strong enough to walk to the cottage, was not acquainted with her own strength; for before she reached the hut, she found herself so faint, that lord Clayton with great difficulty prevented her from falling.

Mrs. Dobson, as soon as his lordship had recommended her to her particular care, cried out, “ O dear Sirs! the poor lady is vast bad indeed, and must be put to bed out of hand.”

Julia, ready to sink under her mingled sensations, replied, “ You say very right, Mrs. Dobson, I am certainly much indisposed, and will if you please, accept of your kind offer.”

“You shall be obeyed, Madam, in a whiff,” said the good creature, “my Sue and I will do all we can to get you well again”.

Lord Clayton being satisfied that his Julia would be as carefully attended as if he himself was present, and being also apprehensive that the earl, whom he wished not to make uneasy, would be alarmed at his failing to return, agreeably to his promise before the night was far advanced, took leave of her in the tenderest, most affectionate but most respectful manner, and, promising to come to her in the morning, remounted his horse in order to go back to his father.

Lord Clayton, finding that his father had been somewhat alarmed about him, amused him with an excuse for not coming home before, which prevented any enquiries concerning the cause of his late return, and pleaded also a slight indisposition, to apologise for his retiring to his own apartment soon after his arrival. The adventure of the evening had made such an impression on his mind, that as he could think of nothing else he wished only to give loose in private to the various thoughts which it occasioned, and to see the sun again begin its daily course. Many a sleepless night, indeed, before that adventure, devoted to his Julia; but such a night, so full of tender solicitude, he had never spent in his life.

While they were sitting at breakfast the next morning, the earl said, "I have almost fretted myself to death, George, about this d – d five thousand, and do not know how to bring myself to relish the payment of it. Why cannot you now drive Miss Meredith out of your head, and help me out of this horrible dilemma by marrying Miss Jarvis? She is a sensible girl, and looks as if she would make a very good wife."

Lord Clayton being just at that time thinking more about his Julia than either his breakfast or his father, started not a little at so unexpected a speech, having flattered himself from the manner in which he left him after the mention of the forfeiture, that the affectionate feelings of the parent would get the better of the sordid sensations of the miser.

"Do I stagger you, George?" asked his lordship, on lord Clayton's making no reply:

"You do indeed, my lord: from the vexation and concern which you expressed yesterday, on having asked so precipitately, I formed pleasing hopes which you have now cruelly blasted; for I find, to my extreme uneasiness, that you prefer five thousand pounds to my felicity."

He said no more. Lord Bromley returned no answer with his tongue, but his features plainly shewed that the father and the miser were engaged in a sharp contest in his bosom.

During that contest his steward entered the room with papers which required his immediate perusal : lord Clayton availed himself of the arrival of those papers to repair to the cottage, as he most ardently longed to know how his Julia had rested after her fright and fatigue, especially as he had left her complaining of being much indisposed,

Mrs. Dobson's humble and hospitable dwelling was not far from the earl's house : lord Clayton, therefore, went thither on foot : but he went with such expedition that he rather flew than walked. When he arrived at the cottage he was not a little happy to find, that Julia had been considerably benefited by the rest which she had enjoyed in her new apartments which the worthy owner of it had administered to her,

After a number of enquiries relating to her health, to which he received the most satisfactory answers, his lordship intreated her to gratify his curiosity by informing him what accident had brought her to England, and by what accident she had been separated from her parents; being well assured, he added, that Mr. and Mrs. Meredith, fully sensible of the happiness they enjoyed in the possession of so amiable a daughter, would never have suffered her to undertake a voyage from Ireland without them.

Julia having thanked him in the most captivating manner for the disquietude which he had discovered about her health, and for the compliment at the close of his speech, proceeded in the following terms; while he with a greedy ear devoured every syllable she uttered.

“My father having received a letter from England to acquaint him with the death of his elder brother, by whose decease a very good estate fell to him, thought it quite necessary to come over to take possession of it, and, therefore, make immediate preparations for his voyage.

The letter of intelligence was written by Mrs. Meredith, my uncle’s second wife, who having a son by a former husband had, we heard (for after his second marriage my uncle broke off on a sudden all correspondence with my father) taken an infinite deal of pains to get the estate for that son : but though she had influence enough over my uncle to occasion an interruption to the harmony which had long subsisted between him and his nearest relations, she could not prevail on him, by all her insinuating arts, to do an unjust action; that is, by cutting off the entail, to leave his estate to Mr. Norton. Mrs. Meredith, in her letter, would have appeared in a very advantageous light if we had not been too well acquainted with her real character to be duped by the flourishes of her pen; for she lamented the loss of her excellent husband in the most pathetic language, and expressed the strongest desire to see a man to which his unbrotherly behaviour had ever given her the deepest concern, and which behaviour was the only censurable part of his composition – (I use her own words).

At such a letter, in such a style, my father could not help smiling, though he was actually sorry to hear of his brother’s death, as he was naturally of a benevolent temper, and a considerable benefactor to his poor neighbours : we were all indeed struck with the flagrant insincerity running through it, as well as with the writer’s affectation in her phraseology. But to the purpose.

We embarked with all possible expedition on board a packet, esteemed an exceeding fine sailor, and after a very pleasant voyage, arrived at Chester. There my father was taken so ill, that he could not think of proceeding. My father, Sir, is subject to a gouty disorder, and whenever he is attacked by it, is generally confined for some time, though he had never, what is called, a regular fit in his life.

My father growing somewhat better in a few days, began to be so dissatisfied with his accommodations, that he wished heartily to be removed to more agreeable quarters. He felt himself just able to bear the motion of the carriage, and was therefore desirous of making a visit to a worthy family not many miles from hence, as I am informed by Mrs. Dobson, with which he was, when he lived in England, upon an intimate footing; not doubting but that he should find a cordial welcome from his old friends again, and a comfortable residence among them till he was perfectly recovered.

In consequence of this desire in my father, and of his being in a condition to bear a removal, a post-chaise was soon hired for him, my mother, and her *woman*; and two horses, the one for me (as I preferred a saddle to any other seat) and the other for our servant.

In this travelling equipage we left Chester this morning early, and I kept up with the chaise pretty well till about two hours before you discovered me in so deplorable a situation : my horse then falling lame, I was obliged to stop; but not imagining that I should be detained a great while, as John told me he saw plainly what ailed the creature's foot, and could soon set him to rights, I did not think it necessary to retard the progress of the chaise till I was ready to follow it. The driver therefore whipped on without looking behind him.

When John had examined my horse's foot very attentively, he made me extremely unhappy by telling me that the poor beast having lost a shoe had been so wounded by some sharp stones that he was unable to walk without limping – If therefore, madam, continued he, you choose to mount my horse I will change saddles.”

“No, John,” said I, “as you will be prevented by that exchange from following me with equal quickness, I shall receive no benefit from it : but this is a most unlucky event; for we shall not only be hindered from overtaking the chaise, but we may also turn down a wrong road, and even find ourselves benighted in the right one.”

“As to that, madam,” replied John, “you need not trouble yourself a bit; for I know all this part of the country as well as I do my own name, and will bring you safe to your journey's end, though not so soon as you perhaps wish.”

I was rather silenced than satisfied by John's answers. In spite of his assurances, I was alarmed and full of a thousand disquieting apprehensions : imploring, however, the protection of providence, and trusting both to the knowledge and fidelity of my guide, I moved on slowly under his directions.

When it grew dusk, I felt an additional damp upon my spirits, and from that moment, a thousand terrifying reflections crowded into my mind, Separated from my parents, uncertain of their safety, and strongly conceiving their sensations by my own, I should, I believe, have been deprived of the power of holding the reins, had not John perpetually endeavoured to cheer me, and to dispel my fears by animating speeches, for which I often thanked him, as I thought he deserved to be thanked for the solicitude which he discovered about me. But how difficult is it to know when the language of the lips, speaks the language of the heart! – Soon after we got into the lane to which my screams drew your attention, The man on whose fidelity I had so much depended, dismounted, and coming up to me, plainly told me that if I did not quit my saddle, and submit to his desires, he would prepare to take that by force which I would not give him with my free consent.

I was, at first, so astonished at so unexpected an address from a person who had till then, not only behaved to me with a decent submission, but with a remarkable respect, that it struck me dumb: never had I been more surprised in my life; but recovering myself a little, I replied, as fiercely as I could, “What do you mean, John, by accosting me in this insolent and very unbecoming manner?”

“Mean,” said he pertly, and taking hold of one of my hands, “I will soon tell you what I mean when I have got you out of your saddle: do you think I have brought you into this lane for nothing?”

Provoked at his doubling the impertinence of his carriage, instead of making an apology for it, I whipped my horse, in order to convey myself from an impudent fellow with whom my honour was no longer safe, but I whipped in vain; and recollecting the creature’s lameness, I shuddered to find myself unable to save that honour by flight. I was now absolutely in the power of a wretch who was deaf to all that I could urge to soothe him, or to deter him from his infamous intentions. He pulled me with violence from my horse, and finding me struggle with all my strength to disengage myself from his arms (for I wished to try whether I could run into the high road, hoping that somebody might be passing by who would pity my distress, and deliver me from it) he dragged me to the nearest tree, and tied me to it with cords, which he took out of his pocket. While he was tying me, he threatened to murder me if I made any noise; but all his menaces made no impression upon me, I screamed as loud as I could. When he had bound me so fast as to render any resistance ineffectual, he was, in his turn, alarmed : happily for me he was alarmed by some rough voices in an adjoining field, After having rifled my pockets, and uttered words which I cannot repeat, he went to the lame horse, and did something to his foot which gave him immediate relief : for as soon as he galloped off on his own, the other followed him with as much swiftness as if nothing had ever hurt his foot. The moon shone only faintly while these proceedings were going forwards : but the light arising from it was sufficient to let me see what I have described. Distressed, however, as I was, in a place totally unknown to me, far from my kind relations, far from my friends, and far from being easy with the rustic voices by which John had been alarmed, I could not help feeling an agreeable sensation throbbing in my heart at his departure : but that sensation was momentary, terror again took possession of me, and I again screamed as loud as I could : most fortunately for me I did not scream in vain. – My cries soon brought a deliverer; but I how was at once astonished and rejoiced to see you, my lord, approach me in so very amiable a character.”

Lord Clayton, finding that his Julia had concluded her little narrative, raised the hand which he had held in his during the utterance of it to his lips, and having pressed it to them, looking most tenderly, most respectfully at her, “You do not know, my dearest Miss Meredith, how much joy I feel, how sincerely I am delighted, in having been singled out by providence to be instrumental to the preservation of your honour; perhaps to the preservation of your life : for if the infamous wretch, who had dared to form a design against the one, had not been luckily intimidated, there is no saying to what length his fears of another kind might have carried him against the other. – But why stand the trembling tears in those lovely eyes, my dearest Julia? (continued he) You are now under my protection, and you may be thoroughly assured that no unhappiness shall ever come near you, if I can possibly avert it.”

“I am exceedingly happy, my lord,” replied Julia, “ in your kind assurances, and think myself particularly fortunate in being under your protection : but while I am in a state of uncertainty about my dear parents, my heart cannot be at ease; I *must* feel for those who

have ever made it the constant study of their life to make my life every way agreeable to me, and should be the ungratefulest of daughters, nay, quite destitute of sensibility, if I could, under my present separation from them, enjoy a perfect tranquillity of mind.”

“You have considerably increased the high opinion I had of your filial affection, my Julia,” said her fond and faithful lover, “by that dutiful speech; and believe me, I will do everything in my power to learn whether Mr. or Mrs. Meredith are with their old friends in this neighbourhood, as soon as you have acquainted me with the name of those friends; or endeavour, should they have met with any retarding adventure, to procure speedy intelligence about them.”

Julia, having thanked his lordship in the politest terms for so kindly confiding the anxious situation of her mind, by offering to make enquiries after those concerning whose safety she had a thousand apprehensions, informed him that a Mr. Chapman was the gentleman by whom her father expected to be hospitably received, and with whom he purposed to stay till he was able to undertake his northern journey; the estate which devolved to him lying in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

When Lord Clayton heard the name of Chapman, he felt the most pleasing sensations in his breast, as he was no stranger to the domestic merit and conjugal felicity of that gentleman : he therefore replied, “You have given me no small satisfaction, my dear Julia, by your last speech, because I am very well acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Chapman, and do not know a more agreeable, more amiable couple. They have been married about half a century, and are as happy in each other now, as they could have been, I think, on their honey-moon. I will very readily wait on you to Mr. Chapman’s house, which, as Mrs. Dobson rightly told you, is not many miles from hence : perhaps we may be lucky enough to meet Mr. and Mrs. Meredith there.”

Julia, sighing said, “You are extremely kind, my lord, to offer to conduct me to such valuable people; but I am afraid to flatter myself with the expectation of meeting my dear parents under *their* roof. However, as there is, I must own, *some* possibility that they *may* have been safely lodged with their old friends, I am the more desirous of accepting your eligible proposal.”

Lord Clayton, after a very affectionate adieu, returned to his father, whom he wished to find disposed to give up the forfeiture to Mr. Jarvis with a good grace. He had determined, from the moment of his being acquainted with that forfeiture, to discharge it, in order to reconcile the earl to his marriage with Miss Meredith, having been able to make such an advance for her sake by a legacy which was left him by an aunt; but he was willing to see paternal affection get the better of avarice.

While the horses were putting to the phaeton in which he intended to carry his Julia to Mr. Chapman’s, he went in search of the earl, who was, his servant told him, gone into the garden. He found his lordship in one of the temples, but in so thoughtful an attitude, that his approach was not perceived till he had ascended the steps, and asked him if he was out of order.

Lord Bromley, starting from his reverie, said, "A man is always out of order, George, when he is conscious of having done either a ridiculous or a wrong thing. Now, as I have behaved both like a foolish and a bad father, I am smarting under the correction of self condemnation."

"It makes me uneasy, my lord, to think that you are suffering in this manner on my account."

"I have not deserved such a speech from you, George : but I will deserve your pardon, for having permitted a base passion to hurry me into measures destructive of your happiness. I will go to town immediately, and cancel my precipitate agreement with Jarvis."

"You are so generously condescending, my lord, and fill me with such grateful sensations by the return of that paternal affection which has lain so long dormant in your bosom, that I beg you would permit me to advance the sum stipulated between your lordship and Mr. Jarvis, as I cannot bear the thoughts of your being deprived of that sum for my sake."

"No, George, this fool should ever pay for his folly : I am resolute, and I will be expeditious."

As lord Bromley was a man who hated delay when any thing on which he had fixed his mind was to be executed, he was in a short time after delivery of his commands, seated in his post-chariot, and whirling into the road to London.

Lord Clayton, having staid to take leave of the earl, mounted his phaeton, and drove to the cottage which contained the sole mistress of his affections, conceiving a scheme as he rolled along to facilitate his union with her. "I am well assured that the payment of this no trifling sum, can never be remembered by my father without the greatest regret : I will, therefore, endeavour to make him doubly reconciled to my marriage with Miss Meredith, by telling him, that I do not desire him to advance a shilling towards it. My aunt's legacy, and the fortune which Mr. Meredith always intended, I have heard, to give with his daughter, if she married with his approbation, will furnish an income sufficient, if managed with economy, to support us in a genteel and respectable style of life. Pomp and parade have no charms for *me*, and if I have made right conjectures about Julia's disposition, they have no allurements for *her*: what is grandeur without happiness? And how rarely are grandeur and happiness united?"

With reflections of this kind lord Clayton arrived at Mrs. Dobson's, and found his Julia ready to leave her rustic apartments, though she declared at her departure from the good woman (after having made her ample amends by giving her some money which the ungrateful wretch who robbed her had, in his hurry, left in her pocket) that she should prefer a cottage with his lordship's company to a palace without it.

As lord Clayton always drove spirited cattle, he soon made his appearance at Mr. Chapman's. The worthy old gentleman, having been riding over his grounds, was just

going into his house, when the rapid approach of his lordship's phaeton attracted his attention.

Lord Clayton, when he had jumped out of his chaise, paid his compliments to Mr. Chapman, and having told him that he had brought a young lady to visit him, turned about to Julia, and received her from her exalted seat in his arms. Then, presenting her to his good neighbour, said, "Here she is, Sir, as amiable a woman as ever existed, and I dare swear both you and Mrs. Chapman will be pleased with me for bringing her, when you have been five minutes in her company."

Mr. Chapman behaved with the utmost politeness to Miss Meredith, but, at the same time, like a man who had never seen her before, and taking her by the hand, conducted her towards the house, telling lord Clayton, to whom he looked over his shoulder as he led her along, that his lordship's taste in beauty was not to be disputed.

Lord Clayton, while he followed them, longed to ask Mr. Chapman if he had any friends down with him; but apprehensive that Julia might be too much affected, if she heard no mention made of her father and mother, he chose to postpone, on *her* account, the gratification of his curiosity.

When Mr. Chapman had carried Julia into the parlour fronting the avenue, lord Clayton said to him, "You do not know your visitor, Sir?"

"I do not, I confess," replied he, "recollect the lady's face: I can only say that both Mrs. Chapman and myself, will endeavour to make her visit to us agreeable."

Julia expressed the pleasure which she received from his polite carriage to her by a most obliging smile, and on Mrs. Chapman's entry into the room, civilities of the same nature with those already past were renewed.

Lord Clayton then having informed Mr. Chapman who his visitor was, and in what manner she had been separated from her parents, concluded his communications with saying, "I was in hopes, Sir, all the way I came, that I should have found Mr. and Mrs. Meredith here; but though I am not so fortunate, you will, I dare believe, readily take their daughter under your protection till you see them, for you may reasonably expect to see them soon, as they have only been, in all probability, either by accidents along the road to the carriage, or by the mistakes of a blundering driver."

Mrs. Chapman, seeing Julia's eyes moistened with the tears of filial affection, retired with her into another apartment, in order to administer to her all the comfort in her power, under a disappointment which seemed to be insupportable.

Lord Clayton, as soon as the ladies had quitted the room, consulted with Mr. Chapman what steps to take in order to produce the wished for discovery : and in consequence of a plan of operations settled between them, several servants were immediately dispatched on fleet horses to make the most diligent enquiries in different roads.

When the servants returned without having made any successful enquiries, poor Julia fainted away – When she recovered her senses, she broke out into such despairing expressions with regard to the fate of her parents, during the delivery of which her whole frame was violently agitated, that all the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Chapman and lord Clayton united, were insufficient to persuade her not to terrify herself with the dreadful apprehensions of never beholding them again alive – “ I shall never see my dear parents again,” said the amiable girl, wringing her hands, and throwing up her streaming eyes to Heaven, in the depth of her distress, “ I shall never see her any more – they are gone – gone for ever – dead – dead – perhaps murdered by the very villain who was providentially hindered from accomplishing his brutal designs against *me* .”

Here the anguish of her mind became so intense, that she fell into another fit, in which she lay a considerable time, and appeared so totally disordered that it was judged highly necessary, late as it was, to send for a physician who lived a few miles off.

Lord Clayton having spent the evening, he could not think of supping while his Julia remained in such an alarming condition, at Chapman-Place : he began therefore to make a motion towards his departure from thence, though with a reluctance which was strongly imprinted on every feature of his face.

Mr. Chapman, putting himself, like a humane man, into his lordship’s situation, could not perceive *that* reluctance without compassion, and therefore very earnestly pressed him to stay where he was, till the next morning at least – “You had better take a bed with us tonight, my lord, continued he, you will only sit moping at home by yourself, as the earl is gone to London, and have a thousand fears about Miss Meredith, who, by following the prescriptions of Dr. Friendly, will, I daresay, feel herself quite another thing tomorrow.”

As lord Clayton had secretly wished to be detained by his benevolent neighbour, he wanted not a renewal of his persuasions to induce him to continue under his hospitable roof during the remainder of the night.

Doctor Friendly came soon after he was summoned, found his patient better than he had expected from the message which he had received from lord Clayton’s servant, assured his lordship that she was not in a dangerous way, and having wrote a few lines in a violent hurry, took his leave with the most animating expressions.

Before morning, however, notwithstanding the doctor’s consolations and prescriptions, Julia’s fever increased, and she grew delirious.

While she lay in a very affecting state, with her intellects extremely disturbed, Mr. and Mrs, Meredith arrived : but she was not capable of being made sensible of their arrival : and, indeed, when her senses returned, it was deemed prudent not to make their arrival known to her with abruptness.

Mr. and Mrs. Chapman welcomed their old friends in the heartiest manner imaginable, who returned their civilities with equal politeness and cordiality, but with striking marks of disquietude in their faces; and could not help asking them, as soon as the first civilities were exchanged, if they had seen their daughter, or heard anything concerning her?

The answers which they received to those enquiries filled them with a variety of emotions, at once pleasing and painful, but the latter were predominant; for, from the tenderness of their Julia's disposition, and the delicacy of her constitution, they were greatly alarmed at her *described* constitution, and their fears were much stronger than their hopes.

Lord Clayton, by his behaviour upon the melancholy occasion, rendered himself still more amiable in the eyes of his Julia's fond parents, than he had been before his departure from Ireland, and sincerely proved the fervour of his affections for their most deserving daughter, by the sincerity of his sorrow,

When Julia's fever left her, and she was able to sit up and to converse with her friends as rationally as ever, lord Clayton undertook the agreeable task of breaking that news to her which had given him so much pleasure, so much heartfelt satisfaction; and disclosed it to her in so gradual a manner, with so much address, that it did not upset her spirits, though it threw them into a very great commotion.

When she had repeatedly asked his lordship if his intelligence was true, if her dear parents were actually on the road to Chapman-Place; or if he had not too hastily credited a favourable report about them; and when his lordship had repeatedly assured her that he had not been deceived by any false reports, but that she would really be happy in their embraces in a short time, she fell on her knees, and in lively language, highly suited to the occasion, returned thanks to the Supreme Disposer of all events, for the transporting felicity which she, at that instant, enjoyed.

Lord Clayton, then, raising her from the floor, seated her in a chair with the utmost tenderness; and having pressed her hand in his, looking at the same time very affectionately at her, said, "I may, now, I believe, my dear Julia, venture to inform you, that Mr. and Mrs. Meredith are in this house."

"In this house, my lord!" replied she, gazing earnestly on him –

"Yes, my lovely angel; they arrived here a few days ago, but you were not in a condition to be acquainted with their arrival; and when your senses returned, we all thought it imprudent to communicate intelligence of so particular a nature, without preparing you for the reception of it. I, therefore, desired to be the person employed to make the necessary preparation, and I am happy to find that I have not, through my eagerness to impart to you the delight which I myself felt at the sight of my long-missing friends, occasioned too vehement a shock to your spirits."

Julia, having breathed a second effusion full of piety and gratitude to Heaven for the preservation of her parents, turned to lord Clayton and said, “You have by your kind and prudent carriage, my lord, increased – if it *can* be increased – the regard to which you are so justly entitled from me; and I shall ever be ready to acknowledge my obligations.”

“Name them not, my dear Julia, but compose your spirits, which begin, I perceive, to be a little fluttered, while I go to inform Mr. and Mrs. Meredith of my successful visit to you; and assure yourself that I shall soon return with them, and enjoy the most pleasing satisfaction I ever felt in my life.”

He then quitted the hand he held in his, in order to forward the interview for which he had so happily planned the way; but she seizing his coat, cried out, “Oh! Do not go alone, my lord – I am not very strong, indeed, but I will try to walk down stairs – It is my place to go to my parents, and not *theirs* to come to me.”

“Excellent creature!” replied my lord – “but I must stop you, my Julia, (continued he re-seating her in her chair) – You are too feeble – I dare not comply with your wishes – If any accident should happen to you from this resolution, I shall never forgive myself.”

With these words he left the room, and gave everybody below not a little pleasure by relating what had passed above, especially to the amiable pair who were the most interested in what he related; and requesting that he might introduce them to their daughter, preceded them to her apartment.

As soon as he re-entered the room he saw his Julia slowly advancing – for she had quitted her chair on hearing feet upon the stairs coming up – He ran immediately on her, and prevented her from stirring a step farther; but he could not, without some difficulty, prevent her from moving towards her mother when she appeared behind him. Mr. Meredith soon made his appearance too. A very tender scene then followed, in which Julia and her parents showed themselves in a light equally amiable and affecting.

Lord Clayton, when that scene was over, imagining from his Julia’s looks, for his eyes were riveted on her while she poured forth her filial effusions, that she wished to be with her mother in private, took Mr. Meredith aside, They whispered a little together, and then went down stairs.

As soon as Julia perceived herself alone with her mother, she threw her arms round her neck, and said, “Oh! How much I have suffered since I was separated from you and my father! – how transported am I to see you both again! – and how much I am indebted to the humanity and tenderness of lord Clayton, whom Heaven sent to my relief, when I was in a situation pitiable beyond expression!”

“The transports which I feel, my dear Julia, on your being thus restored to my fond arms, are too exquisite to be described : and I am well assured that your father’s feelings on this unexpected and most happy discovery, are familiar to mine. To Heaven, indeed, out gratefulest acknowledgements are justly due from us all; and I must own, I am doubly

delighted to hear that the man, who ever since you knew him, merited your esteem by his behaviour to you, has acted in such a manner as to increase it. But of what kind, my dear,” continued she, “have been your sufferings since our separation, and from what distressful circumstances did his lordship relieve you?”

Julia, then, gave her mother a succinct relation of what had happened to her from the moment of her being retarded by the lameness of her horse, and closed her narrative with the following words – “And now, madam, have not my sufferings been severe? Have I not been cruelly distressed, and have I not reason to pour out my sincerest thanksgiving to Heaven, for sending a deliverer to me at so critical a juncture? Whoever had been my deliverer I should have felt myself under the deepest obligations to him, but the appearance of lord Clayton in that noble character, certainly heightened the pleasure which I felt from the prospect of being speedily released from my painful condition.”

“You have indeed been particularly favoured by providence – What a wretch! – Little did I imagine that a man who had behaved for so many years unexceptionally, would turn out so infamous a fellow – I heartily rejoice at your deliverance, my dear girl; entirely rejoice at your sentiments arising from it, and will, in my turn, relate the situations into which your father and I have been thrown, and the interruptions we have met with from the time that we missed you, without being able to guess at the cause of your delay, or how to discover the road in which you had been retarded.”

Julia, having told her mother that she should listen to a narrative which could not but be very interesting to her, Mrs. Meredith opened it in the subsequent terms ;

“Concluding that you were not far behind in the chaise, as we had frequently seen you on looking out at the windows, we were not disturbed with any apprehensions about you; but on putting out my head, in order to beckon you to me, and to desire you to take particular notice of a view which appeared to me to be the most *picturesque* one I had ever beheld, and not seeing you, Mr. Meredith bade the driver walk his horses a little.

When he had moved slowly on for about a quarter of an hour, without being joined by you, we did indeed begin to be alarmed, and were extremely at a loss how to act, as we had passed several roads during our slow progress, in several directions. At last being overtaken by a countryman, we asked him if he had seen a lady on horseback, attended by her servant. The countryman answering in the affirmative, pointed to the road in which he had left them, and we turned into it immediately, hoping to meet you. We travelled however some hours, but at an unsuccessful rate. Finding then, upon a second enquiry, that we were at too great a distance from this hospitable place to think of reaching it before the next morning, so far had we been carried out of our way, and night approaching very fast,, we resolved to stop at a town which was near us, and to take up with what accommodations we could procure, for the remainder of the evening.

When your father was going to quit the chaise, he felt himself crippled by having sat so many hours in a disagreeable posture, as the narrowness of the carriage would not admit of his sitting at his ease, that he could not get out by himself; the man of the house,

therefore, came to assist him; but he and the driver together found it very necessary to lend him all the assistance in their power to prevent him from falling. I too was not a little fatigued; and as our minds were pretty equally agitated on *your* account, we spent our time in a manner the most dissatisfactory to be imagined.

Your father had scarce any rest all night; and the few slumbers into which I fell were short and interrupted; and I often started out of terrifying dreams.

In the morning, however, when we rose, we flattered ourselves, after a variety of reflections occasioned by our distracting situation, that you would, most probably, on being separated from us, ride with the utmost expedition to Chapman-place, assured of a hearty welcome, though not *personally* known, as your father and I have not seen Mr. and Mrs. Chapman since you were born, and therefore ordered our chaise to be got ready.

Just as we were on the point of leaving the town, your father was taken so very ill that he was obliged to give up all thoughts of his journey – his gouty sensations were sufficient to render his confinement in a house to which nothing but the necessity of the moment would have carried him, thoroughly miserable; but his reflections super-added entirely deprived him of his usual philosophic composure, and drew from him many peevish and some highly passionate expressions, which contributed, no doubt, to increase the acuteness of his bodily complaints. To want the power to move from a spot when we most wish to leave it, is surely to be in a condition much to be pitied – and I could not help looking on our condition at that time as singularly compassionate – None but parents know what parents feel in such circumstances. Our tender regard, and sincere affection for you, my Julia, gave a poignancy to our disquietudes not to be described, and, for my part, I was more than once, when the anguish of my mind was almost insupportable, induced to envy the childless wife – such a day I have never passed before – and I never shall, I hope, pass another like it. – Your father frequently pierced my ears with his cries while he lay tossing on his pillow, uneasy in every posture, and I was rooted to the bedside applying all the remedies I could procure, and administering all the comfort I could think of – What a trying situation for *him* ! – what a melancholy one for me!

The day was distressful enough, we wanted no addition to the unhappiness which it brought to us: but the evening immediately succeeding it made us still more sensible of our infelicity.

In the middle of the night we were alarmed in a dreadful manner, The room over our apartment was in flames. A careless servant had gone to sleep without putting out her candle, which falling against some linen curtains soon threw them into a blaze. The imprudent creature herself, waked by the violent heat around her, was the first to raise the family, and by doing so preserved the house; for *her* room was the only one rendered absolutely useless, so successful were the vigorous proceedings of her master and his men upon the pressing occasion. However, before they had extinguished the flames, nobody, I believe, suffered more than I did : as soon as I heard the word fire, the sound of it made me shudder, but not so much on my own account as your father's, who could not, possibly, remove himself from the dangerous spot.- The fright had disabled me from

lending him any assistance, and every person belonging to the inn was too much engaged to think of us. For some time, therefore, I remained in a state which I cannot paint in proper colours – Your good father, ill as he was, seemed to be far more affected by my appearance than by the cause of it.- During the moments of uncertainty with regard to the operations above stairs, my ignorance of your fate, my dear Julia, almost distracted me – I repeated your name frequently in bewailing accents – I raved about you – I wished myself out of a world in which I could no longer expect to enjoy any happiness – forgetting – ungrateful as I was – how happy providence had made me in a husband, the kindest, the tenderest of his sex.

When our landlord came to inform us that the flames were extinguished, my fears began to subside, and my reasoning faculties to return; but several hours elapsed before I could reflect on the agreeable intelligence which he communicated, without a confusion of ideas.

After this alarming incident, however, and after I had recovered from the agitation which it had occasioned, I could not help wishing for your father's being able to bear the motion of the chaise.- Fortunately, to my extreme satisfaction, he was, in less than a week in a travelling condition; he came hither alternately animated with hope and damped with despair. – Thanks to all-gracious Heaven, we heard on our arrival that you were safe under this hospitable roof; and though we could not but feel a diminution of our joy when we were informed of your being confined to your bed, the consideration that we should once more have the happiness of beholding you; and that the sight of us might, probably, contribute to the return of your health, flattered us too much to make us encourage any desponding thoughts. – We have been here several days without seeing you, because you have for several days been prevented by the raging of your fever from knowing the people who addressed themselves to you : and even when your fever left you, and your senses were restored, our good friends here judged, perhaps very prudently, that our too sudden appearance before you might occasion a relapse, and be attended with fatal consequences : in compliance, therefore, with their well meant suggestions, from our first coming hither, we have denied ourselves the pleasure of seeing you till this morning.”

Here Mrs. Meredith, pausing, tenderly embraced her daughter, and then, added, “It gives me unspeakable satisfaction, my dear Julia, to find you as well as you are, after so severe a shock to your constitution, and sincerely hope that you will feel every hour an alteration to yourself for the better – But why do you weep so *now*, my dear? continued she : why do you sob thus as if your heart would break?”

“I weep, madam” said she, in broken accents, “to think how much you have suffered for my sake – can I feel too much for so kind, so affectionate a parent?”

Mrs. Meredith, in return for so filial a speech, of the sincerity of which she was as strongly convinced as she was of her own existence, redoubled her maternal endearments, kissed away the last tears ere they fell on her pallid cheeks, and endeavoured by the most soothing language to prevent her from sinking under her sensibility.

While she was so laudably employed Mr. Meredith came into the room, and by his paternal behaviour appeared to the greatest advantage. In a short time after his entrance, however, Mrs. Meredith believing that rest would be of more service to Julia than a continuance of their conversation, she informed her husband of her sentiments, and in consequence of his declaring the propriety of them, they left her to the care of her nurse, that she might, by having nobody with her to occasion an exertion of her spirits, drop into a refreshing slumber.

In a few days afterwards lord Clayton received an express from Bromley-house which required his immediate departure, and he set off, when he had taken leave of his agreeable friends at Chapman-place, of his Julia in particular, who mended very fast, with uncommon alacrity, because his father's letter encouraged him to imagine that he should soon make his reappearance among them happier than he had ever yet been.

Lord Bromley, on his arrival in town, gave Mr. Merrick no small pleasure by acquainting him with the occasion of his journey. "George's behaviour, my dear Merrick," said he, "was so dutiful and affectionate during my illness, that I am determined to give up the five thousand pounds to Jarvis rather than make so good a son unhappy by pressing him to marry a girl whom he could not bring himself to like as a wife."

"You could not have come to town, my lord, on a better errand," replied Mr. Merrick, "but I must beg leave to desire your lordship to delay the execution of your commendable design, because I have hit on a way of promoting your nephew's happiness, and of saving your lordship's money at the same time."

As no man loved money more than lord Bromley, the latter part of Mr. Merrick's speech sounded agreeably in his ear; but as he was conscious of having promised upon his honour, to advance the sum above-mentioned in case of lord Clayton's marrying any woman except Miss Jarvis, he was at a loss to conceive in what way he could be honourably released from his promise, without the payment of it.

Mr. Jarvis and his Molly, whose meeting together after a very long absence, was described towards the latter end of the first volume, finished the day like the happiest couple in the conjugal state; but as they were not legally united, though their hearts were closely linked by love, Molly retired to her lodgings at Mrs. Jones's, to which Mr. Jarvis attended her, in spite of all she could urge with regard to the needlessness of such a proceeding, as his servant would be sufficient to protect her from any impertinence in the streets between the two houses, which were too public to be dangerous.

At the lodgings Mrs. Barton remained till Mr. Jarvis called on her to make her his wife. When the marriage-ceremony was performed he carried her down, with Harriot, to his seat near Bath.

Mr. Merrick having called at Mr. Jarvis's house soon after his departure, was not a little chagrined at his disappointment, on his nephew's account; though he was very glad to hear that he had married the very woman whom he ought to have married so many years

before. Being however not of a disposition to postpone the execution of any scheme he had conceived (this turn of mind in him has, I believe, already been mentioned) he resolved to go down to Ravens-Nest. Accordingly he set out from Bromley-house the next morning, and left the earl at the same time very much puzzled to guess what would be the result of his visit to that place.

Being obliged to stop for a temporary complaint at a public house about half way to Bath, he overheard, while he was taking the refreshment which had always agreed with him, a conversation which insensibly attracted his attention, because the word *Jarvis* was frequently mentioned in it. A father and a son were, he soon discovered, the speakers: and as he knew that Harriot was engaged to a young gentleman of whom her father did not approve, he thought he might by making his appearance before them, see perhaps the Mr. Harrison to whose name he was no stranger, though he was not personally known to him.

In this way of thinking, he, with several apologies for his intrusion, entered the room from which the sounds issued which had sharpened his curiosity, and advancing to the elder gentleman, asked him very politely if his name was Harrison.

“And this young gentleman is your son, Sir?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And in love with miss Jarvis, the daughter of Mr. Jarvis, of Ravens-Nest in Somersetshire?”

“Yes, Sir. – But pray give me leave to ask you, in my turn, why you question me so closely, and with an earnestness as if you was, though I never saw you before, interested in my affairs?”

“I certainly never saw you, Sir, till now,” replied Mr. Merrick with a complacent countenance; “but I cannot help being desirous, notwithstanding, of an acquaintance with you. However, to convince you that I have not thus introduced myself to you merely to satisfy an inquisitive temper, I will tell you who I am, and what I come about. And you, Sir,” continued he, turning to the young gentleman, “will not be sorry, I fancy, when I have made my discoveries. My name is Merrick, I am nearly related to the earl of Bromley: he married my sister; but that is neither here nor there - his lordship and Mr. Jarvis have, for some time, been laying their heads together to make an alliance between their families, which I am endeavouring to prevent, because my nephew lord Clayton cannot bring himself to marry miss Jarvis; (the truth is that he is desperately in love with another lady) and as miss Jarvis has as little inclination for his lordship as she has for her, I am willing to kill two birds with one stone, by trying to prevail on her father not only to give up all thoughts of urging her to marry the man for whom he feels no tender sensations, but to give his consent to her being united to him who has gained her affections. Now, Sir,” added he, addressing himself to young Harrison, “as you are that man, I will use my utmost efforts to make you both happy in the married state; I delight

in making people happy: I am never so well-pleased as when I am doing something to promote the felicity of my fellow creatures.”

The younger Mr. Harrison bowed his thanks to Mr. Merrick: the flutterings of hope, at that instant, hindered him from articulating them: the *elder*, after having complimented him upon his philanthropy, paid him proper acknowledgements for having his son’s happiness so much at heart.

As Mr. Harrison and his son were going to Bath, on particular business, Mr. Merrick proceeded with them towards that city, and exhibited during their journey several additional proofs of the benevolence of his disposition.

At Bath Mr. Merrick took leave of his travelling companions when they had heartily wished him success in his friendly undertaking, and when he had assured them that he would spare no pains to bring Mr. Jarvis to consent to make his daughter happy, according to her ideas of conjugal felicity, however different from his own.

Mr. Merrick was not only very politely received but cordially welcomed at Raven’s Nest, and the whole Jarvis family seemed to be highly and equally pleased with his arrival. Full of the business which had occasioned his appearance there, he availed himself of the first opportunity to closet Mr. Jarvis, and to open the design of his visit to him. When they were closeted, he addressed himself to him in the following terms: “My dear Mr. Jarvis, as you have now made Mrs. Barton all the amends in your power for the many severe sufferings on your account (in doing which you have, indeed, but barely done your duty, for she certainly, from the moment she became your mistress, deserved to be your wife) you will not, I hope, throw her into new affliction by denying your daughter the happiness which she herself at present enjoys, that is, the happiness of being inseparably united to the man whom she prefers to all other men in the world: especially as the person who has made a very deep impression on your daughter’s heart is by no means unworthy of being nearly related to you.”

“I perfectly understand what you mean, Sir,” replied Mr. Jarvis, “and I dare say you will not be sorry to hear that I am quite ready to release lord Bromley from the promise which I drew from him with regard to the forfeiture of five thousand pounds, by readmitting the addresses of Mr. Harrison to my daughter, whom I once encouraged, but whom I very genteely, flattered with the prospect of a splendid alliance, afterwards rejected. My dear Molly has infused better sentiments into my mind than I had before she was restored to me. Actuated with those sentiments, I shall with pleasure, in a short time, wait on his lordship, and cancel all agreements between us, to his no small satisfaction, I imagine, as well as to lord Clayton’s.”

“And to mine, Sir,” interrupted Mr. Merrick, “for lord Bromley and my nephew have both endured a great deal of uneasiness about that same forfeiture: and the removal of any uneasiness from them will be a satisfaction to me. Lord Bromley, Sir, thinks now as a father, so much more justly than he did a month ago, that he would pay ten thousand

pounds rather than desire his son to make himself miserable in the marriage-state in compliance with his particular humour.

“There is no occasion for his Lordship to advance a shilling,” said Mr. Jarvis, “for as I shall break off the projected match, the forfeiture will of course be annulled.”

Mr. Merrick, then, related to Mr. Jarvis what he had overheard at the house at which he had stopped upon the road; and what passed during the subsequent interview, repeating as much of the conversation on the side of Mr. Harrison and his son as would he thought tend to celebrate the renewal of their visits to Raven’s Nest.

Here ended the closet-scene between Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Merrick, the former of whom went immediately to make his wife and daughter happy by imparting the result of it to them, while the latter retired to communicate the issue of his negotiations to Bromley-house with his pen,

When he had dispatched his letter to the nearest post-town, he prevailed on Mr. Jarvis to consent to take a ride with him to Bath, and to throw himself, as it were accidentally, into Mr. Harrison’s way, that an acquaintance might be revived between them, without an awkwardness on their side.

They met in the rooms.

As soon as Mr. Harrison saw Mr. Merrick he advanced towards him with a smiling countenance, but perceiving Mr. Jarvis a little behind him, felt a slight emotion of resentment. Concluding, however, from the turn of Mr. Merrick’s features that he had succeeded according to his wishes, he tried to stifle that emotion, and prepared to receive the person by whom he had been, he thought, unhandsomely treated in a forgiving manner.

Mr. Jarvis, on his part, was somewhat abashed at the sight of a gentleman with whom he had *trifled*, and to whom he had behaved not at all like a man of sense or a man of honour; but by the dextrous mediations of Mr. Merrick, the resentment of the one and the shame of the other were soon put to flight, and a cordial conversation was carried on between them.

Young Harrison in about half an hour joined them. Mr. Jarvis gave him a great deal of pleasure by his behaviour to him, and he looked his thanks very significantly to Mr. Merrick for it: justly considering himself much obliged to the latter for the behaviour of the former.

Mr. Jarvis, in a few days, quitted Bath, but not till he had pressingly invited both the Harrison’s to favour him with their company at Raven’s-Nest, when they had finished the business which had brought them to that place; and they gladly promised to accept of this kind invitation as soon as they were at liberty.

Mr. Merrick at the same time set off towards London.

Lord Bromley received him with open arms, and with a face strongly expressive of inward satisfaction: "My dear Merrick," said he, "you are an admirable negotiator: you have brought me out of a devilish bad scrape with infinite address: and so Jarvis and the Harrisons are upon good terms again?"

"The best in the world, my lord," said Mr. Merrick: "they met at Bath; indeed I contrived to bring them together: and I think myself very happy in being able to tell your lordship that things are in a very fair train for the promotion of a union between the young folks to whom I heartily wish all the happiness in wedlock which they themselves can possibly desire; for they are both of them good creatures, and seem to be made for each other. – You are thoughtful, my lord."

"I want to see my son, Merrick – I sent an express to him yesterday morning, after the perusal of your letter."

"Yesterday, my lord! Did you not receive it till yesterday?"

"The evening before."

"Then it was a d-d while upon the road, or put into a wrong bag. – However, as long as your lordship has got it – I want also to see my nephew – Now, my lord, I hope you will follow Mr. Jarvis's example, and make the conjugal happiness of your only child your principal concern."

"I wish to see George," replied his lordship, "on purpose to shew myself worthy of the proofs which I have ever received of his affection and duty – George is a deserving young fellow – I have not used him well; but I will use him better for the future – If the Merediths were in England now, my dear Merrick!" –

"I have reason to believe that they are, my lord,"

"Say you so? Have you heard of their arrival?"

Mr. Merrick then related the part of Mrs. Barton's story concerning the Merediths, and added, "Whether they are still at Chester, my lord, I cannot pretend to say; but if lord Clayton, on his arrival, should bring no intelligence picked up by chance about them, I will gladly accompany him to that place."

The next day lord Clayton arrived at Bromley-house,

Lord Bromley, having embraced his son in the most affectionate manner, told him that he never was so glad to see him in his life, because he had determined no longer to oppose his inclination with regard to the marriage-state. "Mr. Jarvis and myself, my dear George, have both been precipitate, I wish I could not say also very unkind, parents, but our eyes

are at last opened (your good uncle has, I believe, greatly contributed to the change in our sentiments, and as *he* has re-admitted the addresses of Mr. Harrison to his daughter, I am of course released from my forfeiture. Had I broke off the engagements between us, I should have been, in honour, bound to pay the stipulated sum. Your uncle will relate the whole affair to you, for he is just come from Raven's Nest – Do, Merrick, relate it.”

Mr. Merrick accordingly delivered a faithful narrative of what had occurred concerning the Jarvis's and the Harrisons during his stay in Somersetshire; and by that narrative filled his nephew's bosom with the most pleasing sensations.

Turning to his father, Lord Clayton said, “How happy I am, my lord, to find you released, honourably released, from a promise, the remembrance of which began to give you no small disquietude! Doubly happy am I to find your lordship disposed to make my inclination and my duty act in conjunction.” Then, addressing himself to his uncle, he added, “To you, Sir, my obligations” –

“I will not hear of them, my lord,” replied Mr. Merrick, abruptly, “we have something else to talk of now – Have you picked up any intelligence in your excursions about Miss Meredith; for I am pretty well assured that she, with her father and mother, was in Chester not many weeks ago.”

This question produced a full account of her unfortunate adventure, and of the subsequent scene at Chapman-Place, to which lord Bromley and Mr. Merrick were extremely attentive.

When lord Clayton had closed his relation, his father said to him, “Well, George, you have certainly deserved Miss Meredith's heart, by having saved her honour when it was in such imminent danger; and though I have not the pleasure of knowing her personally, I am thoroughly persuaded from what you have said concerning her (I can depend on anything *you* say, George) that I shall be, when I see her, as much prejudiced in her favour as you are : I hope to see her soon, added his lordship, for we will set off to Cheshire tomorrow morning : do you relish this scheme, George?”!

“You would be very much disappointed, I believe, my lord,” replied he, smiling, “if I should start any objection to it; I beg leave, therefore, to tell your lordship, that the return to Cheshire will be, in the highest degree, agreeable to me.”

Mr. Merrick, however, though he by no means disapproved of lord Bromley's desire to see Miss Meredith, could not help advising his lordship to postpone his journey, till he had received a visit from Mr. Jarvis, which might be every day rationally expected; and his reasons for such a piece of advice appeared so cogent, that his lordship was so far influenced by them, as to resolve to stay in town, till the visit in question was paid. “I will wait till I have seen him, Merrick,” said the earl: “but you, George,” added he, turning to his son, “may as well go down; probably, I may follow you in a few days; certainly, I will as soon as Jarvis has been with me.”

Lord Clayton wanted not to be pressed to leave London: he, therefore, threw himself into a post-chaise the next morning, accompanied by his uncle, who longed to see his old friends.

The day after his departure Mr. Jarvis made his appearance at Bromley-House.

Lord Bromley and his expected visitor looked rather embarrassed at each other, on their first salutation, both feeling as if they had taken steps with regard to their children which could not stand the test of cool reflection. Their mutual embarrassment, however, was momentary: they soon proceeded to business, behaving like a couple of good parents who wished to see their children happy, and who were ready to rectify the mistaken notions which they had entertained about their felicity.

Lord Bromley and Mr. Jarvis being reciprocally satisfied with the transactions of the afternoon, the former so earnestly treated the latter to finish the evening with him, that he could not handsomely avoid accepting of his lordship's invitation, having had really no engagement on his hands.

As the remembrance of what they had been settling together gave them more spirits than they had on their first meeting, they spent the evening very cheerfully; and when they separated, each wished the other the highest pleasure possible, from the intended addition to his family.

Mr. Jarvis, having been more free with his bottle than he had been a great while, found himself so extremely exhilarated, that he could not help attacking every woman he met with, in the street, in the more exalted strains of romantic gallantry. To many women those strains were not unacceptable, though they came from a man evidently in a state of intoxication; nor did the liberties which he took with them in consequence of his joyous feelings, provoke their resentment. But unfortunately for him, while he was dancing (for he was too merry to walk) across Hanover Square, he addressed his amorous nonsense to a lady who sauntered soberly along, leaning upon her husband's arm, and had no relish for his rapturous effusions; instead of giving him any encouragement, therefore, she called him an impertinent coxcomb, and desired him to go about his business; which words were accompanied with others of a less digestible nature, from her companion.

“What do you mean, Sir?” said Mr. Jarvis, “what do you mean by calling me a scoundrel? I am no more a scoundrel than yourself, Sir, d—n me if I am.”

This speech, though Mr. Jarvis delivered it in fierce accents, standing with his arms akimbo, in a swaggering attitude, did not in the least intimidate the gentleman to whom it was directed.

“The man who offers to be rude to a lady under the protection of her husband, Sir, replied he, is a scoundrel, and deserves to have his nose pulled for his insolence.”

“Upon my soul, Sir,” said Jarvis briskly, “you are the first man who has ever talked to me in this way, and so I demand satisfaction on the spot.”

“Satisfaction, Sir!” replied the other coolly, “what satisfaction? *I* am the offended person, as I conceive, not *you*.”

“The satisfaction of a gentleman, Sir, and I *will* have it by –“

“When you have *deserved* such satisfaction, Sir, you may *demand* it, but not till then.”

The gentleman having spoken those few words emphatically, and being alarmed about his wife, who stood trembling by his side, and earnestly conjured him not to stay quarrelling with a madman, walked on with her: but before they had walked twenty yards, Mr. Jarvis stopped their passage.

“And so, Sir, you think to sneak off, do you, Sir? After you have treated me with language which no man of honour can put up with?” – At that instant his sword started from the scabbard, and he added, “Draw and be d—d.”

The gentleman, though he had given many indisputable proofs of his personal courage, was sorry to find himself under a necessity of fighting with his antagonist: being willing to impute his behaviour, reprehensible as it was, to the liquor which he had drank, and not to the natural licentiousness of his disposition, unchecked by the remonstrances of discretion: however, as his life was in danger, he *drew* immediately to defend it.

The lady, frightened to see them actually engaged, ran away screaming “Murder.”

“Where, where, madam?” cried a watchman who met her as he was going his rounds.

“Oh! For God’s sake,” said she, “come this way, my poor Mr. Strutton will be murdered by a madman.” She hardly knew what she said, and instinct rather than reason brought her back to the spot on which she had left her husband, defending himself against the passes of his adversary.

The watchman, advancing closely to Mrs. Strutton knew *her*, as she lived in a neighbouring street, though she did not, terrified as she was, recollect *his* face; And followed her with a particular alacrity, hoping that his good master “ had come to no mischief.”

A very melancholy sight presented itself to Mrs. Strutton on her return. Her husband lay wounded on the ground, bleeding fast – His antagonist, sobered by the success of his sword-arm, was standing over him, lamenting his unhappy fate and cursing his own rashness which had hurried him to act the atrocious part of a murderer.

“Your husband, madam, is wounded by this villainous hand,” said he, stretching it out, “but I hope, and believe, not mortally; though he is unable to speak to you – “

“Oh! He is dead – he is dead!” –

“Do not be too much alarmed, Madam,” replied he, “I do assure you that he is not dead, and beg you would give me leave to see him safely conveyed home. Run for a chair, this moment, honest fellow,” continued he, turning to the watchman, who went off directly, calling “Chair, chair,” as loud as he could bawl.

Mr. Jarvis, then re-addressing himself to Mrs. Strutton, said to her, on her loading him with some cruel epithets for having thirsted for the life of a man who had never done him the least injury, “Your concern for your husband, Madam, *just* as it certainly is, transports you too much against me: I might have left your husband in this distressful situation; but whatever you may think of me, I scorn to do so base an action: I have, I freely own, been greatly to blame: I sincerely repent of what I have done, and will lend you all the necessary assistance in my power upon the disagreeable occasion.”

Struck with the truth of the assertion in the *former*, and mollified with the contrition discovered in the *latter* part of that speech, Mrs. Strutton accepted of his proffered assistance, and begged him to raise her husband, while she endeavoured to recall him to life, by putting a bottle of salts to his nostrils.

That application answered the end proposed; Mr. Sutton soon opened his eyes, and, in about two minutes afterwards, his lips.

Seeing his antagonist officiously employed in helping his wife to stop the bleeding streaming from his side, he said to him, “Fly, Sir, and save yourself – I forgive you – may Heaven forgive you –“

“I shall never forgive myself, Sir,” replied Mr. Jarvis, pressing his hand; “nor shall I feel a moment’s satisfaction till your surgeon assures me that you are out of danger. As to flight – I abhor the very idea of it – I have acted like a madman in compelling you to draw your sword in your own defence, and if –

Here he was prevented from going on by the arrival of the watchman, followed by a chair, and attended by two constables, who, seizing Mr. Jarvis, informed him very roughly that he was *their* prisoner. “If the gentleman dies, you must be tucked up,” said one – “Ay, and he will deserve to be turned off,” added the other, “for he looks like a d-d mischievous fellow.” The watchman, by the manner in which he had related the affair, probably occasioned the utterance of such illiberal language. They suffered him, however, to help Mr. Strutton into the chair, and then hurried him to a lodging in which he little expected to find himself when he quitted Bromley-house.

As soon as Mr. Strutton was carefully carried home, a surgeon in the neighbourhood, whom they occasionally made use of, came in a short time after he was sent for. When he had examined the wound, he declared that though it was deep, it had not the appearance of a dangerous one: having finished the dressing, and strongly hinted the necessity there

was for his patient's being kept quiet, as he had a little fever upon him, retired, hoping to find him better in the morning.

When the surgeon was gone, Mrs. Strutton sent away a servant to an apothecary of whose skill they had a very fine opinion, and who had made up medicines for them with success for several years.

Mr. Barker confirmed what Mr. Lancey had said with regard to the fever; and assured Mr. Strutton, that he believed it would rise to no alarming height when he had taken what he should, without delay, order for him.

Mr. Strutton, however, notwithstanding the well-meant consolatory speeches of the above-mentioned gentleman, spent a very restless night.

Mr. Jarvis, being too well acquainted with the world, (with life, according to the *bon ton* among the *bucks* of the age), and having been too often in the hands of the constables not to know how to deal with them, disposed of his silver in such a manner that he was as *genteelly* treated in his new apartment as a gentleman could be in his situation.

In the morning he dispatched a letter to lord Bromley, who, after having read it with surprise and concern, made him a visit, and answered for his appearance if Mr. Strutton died of his wound.

Mr. Jarvis, on being set at liberty, went directly to Mr. Strutton's, but, to his inexpressible affliction, was told by the servant who answered the door, that his master was light-headed.

"How unhappy you make me by saying so! But may I not speak with your lady?"

"She is too ill to see anybody, Sir."

"But she will, perhaps, see me. Tell her that the unfortunate cause of her just affliction waits, most sincerely wishing to administer all the consolation in his power to her under her sufferings."

"I dare not let her know that you are in the house, Sir: pray Sir do not ask me why."

"Nay, now that you have so strongly excited my curiosity, that I must insist upon your explaining yourself."

"To tell you the truth then, Sir, my mistress has given me particular orders to shut the door against you."

As Mr. Jarvis could not, by any means whatever, extort any other answer from the servant, he was obliged to retreat with an additional weight to that already hanging upon his mind.

When he arrived at his own house, he threw himself upon the sofa, and having sat for some time, stung with the most poignant reflections, wrote the following lines to his wife:

To Mrs. JARVIS,

My dearest Molly,

“When I left you last Friday I was the happiest of men – I am now wretched beyond expression: doubly wretched, because I deserve to be so. O how torturing are the pangs of a guilty conscience!

I supped with lord Bromley last night, and never spent a more cheerful evening- But how shall I relate what happened to me afterwards! I shudder at the remembrance of it.

Elevated with the wine which I had drank, I very indiscreetly attacked, in my way home, a lady who was walking under the care of her husband: and upon *his* resenting my behaviour to *her*, laid him under a necessity of drawing, in his own defence – We fought not long: I soon disarmed him; but not till I had deeply wounded him in the side. He fell at my feet and fainted. I am half mad to think of my rashness – O Molly, into what a dreadful condition I have plunged myself! – If Mr. Strutton dies – I cannot bear the thought – I called this morning to see him, he was delirious – I wished to be admitted to his lady; she would not see me – How could I suppose that she would admit the murderer of her husband! – murderer! – Is there not something singularly horrid in the sound of *that* word? I shall never behold again either Hanover-square, in which I acted so criminal a part, or George-street, in which Mr. Strutton lives, without feeling the keenest self-reproaches – and yet I ought to have those places ever in my mind, to warn me against the indulgence of passions productive of so much misery in the world.”

Such, my dear Molly, is my present racking situation – Blameable have I been in the highest degree; but am I not also an object of pity? – To you I shall certainly appear in a *pardonable* light. I was, it is true, not in the full possession of my reasoning powers when I provoked Mr. Strutton to fight with me; but as I had with my own hand weakened those powers, how poorly shall I apologise for my conduct, by pleading the imperfections of human nature! The most abandoned wretch who has justly merited a halter, would as justly merit a reprieve after condemnation, if such a plea was not an affront to human understanding.

I am going to send to Mr. Strutton’s, hoping to hear he is better –

He is worse – O Molly! Come and comfort me under this heavy affliction, for I cannot yet think of leaving London – Come, but do not let your compassion for me flutter your spirits so much as to injure your health. – I am very unhappy. Adieu – bring Harriot with you, that I may have those whom I love most in this world about me; and believe me to be,

Your affectionate husband,
THOMAS JARVIS.”

When this letter arrived at Raven's Nest, it occasioned some moving scenes. Mrs. Jarvis, alarmed at the contents of it, imagining from her husband's description of his situation, that his own life was in no small danger, so forcible were her fears, by turns wept, prayed, and raved over them, and was indeed, for a great while, not in a condition to undertake the requested journey. Harriot behaved upon the melancholy occasion in a manner uncommonly amiable, and gave, at the same time, the strongest and most endearing proofs of her filial affection.

When Mrs. Jarvis was composed enough to order the necessary preparations for her journey, she and Harriot received a considerable addition to their distress from the natural softness of their dispositions, from their sympathetic sensibility, by the arrival of a young lady, who came in a violent agitation of mind to know the name of the gentleman dangerously wounded by Mr. Jarvis; having heard from the family that he lived somewhere near Hanover-square.

On being informed that his name was Strutton, and that he lived in George-street, she sunk to the floor in a swoon.

Here was a scene sufficient to excite compassion in the cold breast of *Indifference*.

Harriot flew to her relief, and Mrs. Jarvis for some moments forgot her own sorrows, while she assisted her daughter in succouring a fellow-creature, a female one too, apparently bereft of life by the words which she herself had uttered, without apprehending, in the least, that they would have proved so fatal to the hearer of them.

When the young lady, after many powerful applications, was roused from her torpid state, and she recovered her speech, she murmured out, "My poor father, my poor father" – She could say no more, being again deprived of motion and articulation.

Those few words went like daggers to the bosom of Mrs. Jarvis: the most unwelcome contents of her husband's letter all crowded into her mind, and she could not help reflecting, with horror reflecting, on the complicated misery which his rashness had occasioned.

On the second recovery of her senses, Miss Strutton clasping Mrs. Jarvis's hand very eagerly, said, "I am doubly grieved, Madam, in finding that I have gratified my curiosity so much at your expense: but my feelings for the best of fathers overpowered me. You want no addition to your concern, Madam, on Mr. Jarvis's account. I shall increase it by staying with you: I will, therefore, remove from your sight an object which cannot but give you uneasiness. I must return to Mrs. Collier's, with whom I have been only a week, and consult with her about returning to London, for I shall not be able to remain at such a distance from a dying parent."

Mrs. Collier lived a few miles from Raven's Nest; but being in a bad state of health, made no visits; and Miss Clinton, her niece, was so fond of her that she rarely left her but

to change the scene a little with some intimate friend in the neighbourhood. Captain Clinton, her brother, was expected from Gibraltar every hour, when the above-mentioned intelligence was communicated to the mistress of his heart; for between him and Miss Strutton there had for several years subsisted a tender regard for each other, which was encouraged by the nearest relations they both had in the world. Captain Clinton and his sister were both orphans.

As soon as Miss Strutton returned to Mrs. Collier's, Miss Clinton seeing her advance towards the house with a pale and dejected countenance, wanted not to be acquainted with the cause of that paleness and that dejection; for knowing what errand her friend set out, she was naturally prompted to imagine that the gentleman wounded by Mr. Jarvis was her father.

“My fears were but too well grounded, my dear Lavinia; my father lies in a doubtful, if not hopeless, condition. Mrs. Jarvis would not own that he is mortally wounded, but I am afraid I shall never see him again alive. However, I will endeavour to see him before he dies, Your good aunt will, I daresay, pardon my abrupt departure. – Where is she, my dear?”

“In her dressing-room.”

“There is no time to be lost,” said Sophy, and went up stairs immediately.

Mrs. Collier was very much shocked at the information which Miss Strutton brought her, and could not wonder at her being desirous of going to London. Not chusing, however, to send her with only a servant, she tried to induce her to wait till she received a letter from her mother: “Mrs. Strutton,” continued she, “would certainly have sent for you directly, if your father had been in the dangerous way you imagine him to be. Till you hear from *her*, therefore, my dear, you ought not, I think, to encourage the most gloomy conjectures.”

Finding, however, that neither her arguments nor persuasions were sufficient to remove her dispiriting apprehensions, Mrs. Collier consented to her departure. A post-chaise was therefore ordered, and Sophy left her aimiable friend, gently chiding her for her precipitation. Before her setting out, Mrs. Collier ordered one of her servants, a very faithful fellow, not to lose sight of the chaise upon the road.

About the same time, Mrs. Jarvis and Harriot entered upon *their* journey: they travelled quick, and arrived safe.

Mrs. Jarvis, having from the contents of her husband's letters worked herself up into a belief that Mr. Strutton would be a dead man before she could get to town, was a very melancholy companion to her daughter during the journey, who said everything she could think of to comfort her; and when on her arrival she entered the room in which Mr. Jarvis she was told was sitting, she had little more life in her than a corpse: she tottered, and looked ready to fall at every step. In such a situation, how great, how agreeable was her surprise to see Mr. Jarvis coming towards her with a smile upon his face, and to hear him

say, folding her in his arms, “Oh! My dearest Molly, I am quite transported at the sight of you: I am only sorry to think of my having written so alarming a letter to you: but banish all distracting apprehensions, my love, for Mr. Strutton is pronounced to be out of danger, and to be in a fair way of doing well: his fever is off, and his wound, his surgeon tells me, has a very kindly appearance”.

This speech of Mr. Jarvis’s was truly of the animating kind to his alarmed wife, who had not expected so satisfactory a reception: it was also almost too much for her to bear: the pleasure, indeed, which she felt, while the last word vibrated on her ear, was so painful, that having been just able to utter, in broken accents, “I am sincerely rejoiced to hear you say so” – her head fell upon his shoulder.

In a few moments, however, (during which Harriot and her father were tenderly employed about her) she gently raised it again, and returning his affectionate embrace, added, “Pardon, my dear Mr. Jarvis, for not having strength enough to bear your reviving news in a more becoming manner. Terrified as I was by your letter, I came to town with a heaviness upon my spirits not to be described; but now – it is all over, and I congratulate you on the favourable account you have heard concerning Mr. Strutton – But don’t deceive me – tell me the truth – is he really likely to be cured of his wound?”

“He is, he is, my dear Molly; I don’t deceive you – I never will deceive you again.”

“I am thoroughly satisfied, then.”

“I am not wholly satisfied with myself, Molly; who can be satisfied with himself unless he so far keeps his passions in subjection as to prevent them from running away with him? But I will hold a stricter rein over them for the future. – How often have I suffered the brute to get the better of the man? How often –“

“Well, my dear,” said Mrs. Jarvis, interrupting him, “don’t reproach yourself any more now: great allowances will always be made by those who are not too proud to acknowledge themselves to be imperfect beings, for the involuntary deviation from the path of discretion, occasioned by a temporary suspension of our rational powers; and a sincere repentance after such deviations ought certainly to be considered as no small atonement for them.”

“You have a charming way of thinking, my dear Molly,” said Mr. Jarvis, “but such conduct is not so frequently to be met with in the world as one would wish to find it.”

The next morning Mr. Jarvis received a visit from lord Bromley, who congratulated him also on the probable recovery of Mr. Strutton in a short time. Having paid his compliments to Mrs. and Miss Jarvis (without, however, taking notice of the marriage of the former, not deeming it delicate to remind her of her late situation) and chatted about an hour on the reigning topics, he took his leave with a second volley of congratulatory speeches, in order to prepare for his journey to Cheshire. When he got home he found a

letter from lord Clayton, dated from Chapman-place, and contained in the following lines:

To the Right Hon. The Earl of Bromley, at Bromley-house, London.

“My Lord,

After having expressed so much satisfaction at the conclusion of the interview between Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Merrick, for reasons too obvious to be mentioned by me, and no little pleasure on my being able to return to this place with happier sensations than I left it, you will, I dare say, be sorry to hear, that on my arrival this afternoon I met with a considerable disappointment –

(Hah! I wonder what!)

Mr. Meredith set off yesterday morning to take possession of the estate in Yorkshire, fallen to him by the death of his brother, with Mr. Meredith and my amiable Julia.

(A disappointment indeed! I am sorry for it, but I am glad I was not the cause of it.)

“Had I not been detained on the road I should have seen Miss Meredith before her departure; and should have, I am well assured, made her happy by communicating to her what I had heard during my stay in town.

(What an unlucky affair!)

Our chaise was overturned upon the road, by the violent efforts of the driver, to outstrip another carriage, and after it was put in a travelling condition, my uncle’s bruises confined him to the first inn we could reach two days. Gratitude, as well as affection, strongly prompted me not to proceed without him: I could not possibly bring myself to leave so kind a relation, eager as I was to fly to my Julia. I therefore staid till he was well enough to go on, and by doing so met with the above mentioned disappointment.

Your lordship making proper allowances for the agitated state of a lover’s mind, will not, I hope, be offended at my resolution, to endeavour, by riding night and day, to overtake the Meredith-family. Consider, my lord, how much time I should lose by coming to inform you, by word of mouth, of my determination; and be assured that I will return to pay my dutiful respects to you, as soon as I have made *her*, in whose favour you now, I flatter myself, feel prejudices, thoroughly easy on *my* account.

I am, my lord, most truly,

Your lordship’s very
dutiful and affectionate son,
CLAYTON.

P.S. Mr. Merrick, the best uncle in the world, has desired to accompany me; how can I refuse his request?”

“Well, George, thou art something like a lover, I must confess; and I wish thee success with all my heart. Miss Meredith will find thee every way worthy of her.”

Such was lord Bromley’s soliloquy at the close of his son’s letter.

Lord Clayton, having despatched the foregoing epistle to his father to the post-house, made preparations in order to set off in pursuit of his Julia: and in less than an hour departed from Chapman Place, with his good uncle, like another Achates, by his side.

By travelling in the most expeditious manner he, at last, came up with the carriage which Mr. Meredith had hired for his journey: the sight of it made his heart leap for joy, and he was ready to fly out of the window next to him, so impatient was he to behold the lovely creature whose various charms strongly imprinted on his mind, had so powerfully drawn him after her.

The heart of a fond and faithful lover in such a situation must have been undoubtedly in a palpitating state, and as lord Clayton was such a lover, it may be easily imagined by those who are not composed of the toughest materials, what his lordship felt when he quitted his own carriage and advanced towards that in which he expected to find Miss Meredith.

Let those imagine his surprise and sorrow when he beheld only Mr. and Mrs. Meredith with a maid-servant in the carriage, on his desiring the driver to stop the horses.

He stood almost rooted to the spot staring at the amiable parents of his Julia, without being able to articulate a syllable.

They were not less surprised to see him, than he was to see them without their daughter, and they were all for some time silent.

Mrs. Meredith was the first who spoke. “I little thought of seeing your lordship in this part of England.”

Mr. Merrick, not being able to follow his nephew with equal velocity, did not make his appearance till his old friend was uttering those words, to which, observing his lordship’s petrified aspect, he answered, “Why, truly Sir, you have some reason to wonder at our thus meeting together; but love will do wonderful things: my nephew’s love for Miss Meredith would not let him rest when he heard of her departure from Chapman Place, and *my* love for him would not suffer him to undertake his pursuit after her without *me*. You must know. My good friend, that we have brought agreeable news with us for the young lady, and such news as will not, we trust, be disagreeable either to yourself or to Miss Meredith – Your most obedient servant, Madam,” continued he; but, hey day! I do not see Miss Meredith; what have you done with her, good folks?”

Lord Clayton was roused from his attitude of astonishment, as soon as his uncle opened his lips, and longed to make a particular enquiry after Miss Meredith himself; but he

respectively waited till his uncle ceased to speak: then he could not restrain the desire he had to be acquainted with the cause of Miss Meredith's absence.

A violent fall of rain falling just at that instant, Mr. Meredith intreated his lordship and Mr. Merrick to return to their carriage, telling them at the same time, that he would on their meeting together at the next town, within a quarter of a mile, gratify their curiosity concerning their daughter.

When they were all seated in a room in the best house in the town, Mr. Meredith delivered himself in the following manner:

"You, my lord, and *you*, my old friend, are, I plainly perceive, disappointed by not finding Julia with us – Your lordship looks somewhat alarmed about her: but you may be assured that if any mischief had happened to *her*, I should not appear so easy. The truth is, she is well, and in good hands; passing by the habitation of a sister of Mrs. Meredith's, a Mrs. Norman, who buried a very worthless husband about a twelvemonth ago –

"Norton, Sir!" said my lord, excuse me for interrupting you – "was he related to the gentleman whose widow your late brother married"?

"His first cousin once removed, my lord," replied Mr. Meredith: "passing by Mrs. Norton's habitation" continued he "near Leeds, she pressed us so much to leave her niece with her, whom she had not seen for some years, (never in England) that we could not resist her importunities; especially as she had always been a very generous aunt, and often assured Julia that she would be handsomely remembered in her will. Mr. Norton was a worthless man, because he behaved unkindly to his wife, in various shapes; but he was not a niggardly husband, and left her in affluent circumstances."

Here Mr. Meredith pausing, lord Clayton replied, "disappointed as I am, Sir, in not seeing Miss Meredith with you, I am pleased to hear that she is so agreeably situated, and beg your permission to make *her* a visit while you pursue your journey – I have news to communicate to her which will, I flatter myself, be welcome to her ears – lord Bromley is now the *father* I wished him to be: his engagements with Mr. Jarvis are dissolved, and he has consented to give my hand to the lady who has long been in possession of my heart."

Mr. Merrick having been whispering aside to Mrs. Meredith, while the above dialogue was carrying on, turned briskly about to Mr. Meredith, at the close of his lordship's last speech, and said, "Ay, Sir, my nephew is quite free to make your daughter an offer of his hand without giving any uneasiness to the earl: I hope, therefore, that you and your *better half* – (bowing to Mrs. Meredith) will excuse us from going an inch further with you, as we are so powerfully prompted to take a different route."

In consequence of the replies which Mr. and Mrs. Meredith made to the above speech, lord Clayton and his uncle took leave of them, after having promised, at their request, to remain at Leeds (within a few miles of which town Mrs. Norton lived) till their return, that they might all set off towards London together.

When lord Clayton and Mr, Merrick promised to stay at Leeds till they were joined by their friends, they fully intended to have waited for them at that place; but they were prevented from acting agreeably to their intentions.

Julia, though she parted with no small reluctance from her indulgent parents, found herself so tenderly treated by her affectionate aunt, that she soon reconciled herself to her temporary separation from them; the sooner, as her father had assured her, with his last adieu, that he would come back from Meredith Castle when he had finished his business there.

Mrs. Norton took infinite pains to render her niece's residence with her as happy as possible, and studied to make the hours fly away unperceived: and that the home scenes might not grow disgusting for want of variety, she called in all the amusements which the *environs* afforded to her assistance.

When Julia, after having been only two days with her aunt, was walking with her in the garden, a very smart young fellow, booted and in a genteel riding-dress, came down the steps. And advancing towards them, said to the latter, "So, cousin, you are taking a mouthful of air this morning, to get a stomach for your dinner, I suppose."

"Aye, cousin," said Mrs. Norton, "and if you will stay and dine with me, I shall be glad of your company."

"Dine with you!" replied he, - "harkee, cousin, I shan't be satisfied with that: I shan't: I am come to stay a bit with you, if you can put me into my old quarters."

"If you behave yourself well," said she, "I don't know what I may do for you; but I declare positively, that if you have not left off your wild tricks, I shall desire you to decamp; for the last time you were here, your mad pranks were insufferable."

"Oh! I am quite another creature now, cousin," said he, "but pray, what pretty girl have you picked up since I was here?" (throwing his eyes strongly on Julia, who was amusing herself at a little distance from them.)

"She is something of a relation of yours," replied Mrs. Norton,-

"Not a very near one, I hope," answered he abruptly. -

"She is my niece Meredith, lately arrived from Ireland with her father." -

"O, ho! I smoke you now, and will soon introduce myself to her. - I am very glad Miss Meredith to find that we are - that we are - related - but not so related - as - as you understand me." He looked very silly, and could say no more.

Mrs. Norton seeing Julia extremely confused, on being so oddly and abruptly addressed, and not in the least ready to answer her cousin, said to her with a smile: "This gentleman, my dear, is the Mr. Norton of whom I was talking last night."

Julia, having by this time recovered herself, made so polite and proper a reply to Norton, that he was as much charmed by her *manner*, as he had been before she had opened her lips with her person, and felt himself deeply wounded by her various attractions.

From that day Norton grew more and more delighted with his cousin's company, as he called her, and endeavoured to make himself as agreeable to her as possible; but all he could say or do, however, was insufficient to inspire her with any passion but disgust. — Norton was a very pretty fellow, and took a great deal of pains to make his exterior parts striking, but he had so shamefully neglected his mind, that Julia received far greater uneasiness from the insipidity of his conversation, considerably heightened by the lowness of his phraseology, than pleasure from his civilities; by which, indeed, he became so troublesome to her, in a short time, that she earnestly wished for his departure.

Mrs. Norton, to whom Julia had opened her heart with regard to lord Clayton, soon after her arrival, not imagining that *Charles*, who appeared in *her* eyes too much an admirer of the sex in general to feel any *penchant* for one particular female, laughed at him a good deal whenever he made complaints to her of Miss Meredith's chilling behaviour to him: but when she found that he was actually in love with her, she talked very seriously to him about his passion, and advised him, as a friend, if he could not get the better of it, to withdraw himself from the object which had kindled it in his bosom, as his continuance near that object would only increase the disquiet he endured. "If you have not courage enough, Charles," added she, "to conquer your passion for Miss Meredith, you must fly from her charms; for I can assure you that her heart is engaged, and that you will never be able to make any impression upon it."

"Never!" replied he, looking at himself in a glass which fronted him, in a coxcomb manner. —

"No, never," answered Mrs. Norton, "if I am not greatly mistaken in her."

Being at that instant called out of the room, she left him seemingly highly satisfied in the survey of his own personal charms..

Charles's vanity not suffering him to be in the least rebuffed by his cousin's discovery and friendly admonitions, he was not only determined to stay where he was, but to try whether he could not bend Julia's stubborn breast in his favour.

In this situation was Julia persecuted from morning to night by a man who was, in the highest degree, disagreeable to her, when lord Clayton and Mr. Merrick came most seasonably to her relief.

Julia, seeing them coming up the avenue one afternoon, flew to her aunt, and acquainted her with their approach, with animated expressions which equally declared her pleasure and surprise. Teazed as she had been with the impertinence of Norton, she could not, at the unexpected appearance of lord Clayton, silently enjoy the satisfaction it excited in her breast.

Mrs. Norton received his lordship with all the politeness due to his rank, and with all the marks of esteem to which he was, she thought, indebted, as the declared and every way worthy lover of her niece.

When the full compliments were exchanged, Mr. Merrick, in his jocular strain, took Mrs. Norton aside, in order to give his nephew an opportunity to have a private interview, knowing how much he wished for it, with his Julia.

Lord Clayton soon availed himself of his uncle's well-timed movement, and having respectfully embraced her, addressed her in the following terms :

“My dearest Julia, how have I longed for this happy moment to tell you that I can now, with my father's entire approbation, make you mine for ever, and that the lawyers on both sides will be the only people to retard our union. Your amiable father will be here as soon as he has settled his business at Meredith-castle, with your excellent mother; and we have agreed to go from hence to London together, to put things in a prosperous train.- You look, my dear Julia, as if you wonder to hear me talk thus about your valuable parents”.

“I do indeed, my lord,” said Julia, “because they knew nothing about this turn in your lordship's affairs when they brought me from Chapman-place, or when they left me here.”

Lord Clayton then having given her information which removed all her astonishment, and increased her tender regard for him, she, with her usual sweetness and modesty, replied, “I have not deserved these repeated proof of your lordship's partiality for me; but I will endeavour to merit them, by never ceasing to consult his happiness, who has mine so much at heart.”

Before his lordship could get out an answer to that speech, his uncle entered the room with Mrs. Norton, and the conversation then became general.

Charles, having dined abroad that day, was, at his return, very much chagrined on being told of the guests who had arrived during his absence. So thoroughly disquieted, indeed, was he upon this occasion, that he could hardly behave with common civility to lord Clayton and Mr. Merrick, when they paid their compliments to him as related to the honourable lady who had so politely received them. He sat in a sullen humour the whole evening, and looked at his lordship frequently as if he wished to murder him with his eyes; and when he and his uncle retired to their lodgings in Leeds, he went to his

apartment without taking leave either of Mrs. Norton or Miss Meredith, and early in the morning decamped.

When Mrs. Norton came down to breakfast, she was not a little surprised to hear of her cousin's departure, but was not so sorry that he had taken himself away, as he had made himself so very disagreeable to her niece. Julia could not help discovering the satisfaction which she felt on the removal of her tormentor, in pretty strong expressions; because he had really occasioned a great deal of uneasiness to her, and because she was not altogether unapprehensive that lord Clayton might, if he had stayed and renewed his familiarities, have imagined he had met with some encouragement from her.

Lord Clayton too on his reappearance was pleased, though he kept in his joy, to hear of Norton's departure: for though he had no reason to doubt the sincerity of Julia's regard for him, he wished to have no rival in his way; and Norton, though he spoke but few words during the evening, strongly proved himself to be, by his envious glances and malignant looks, an alarmed lover.

Lord Clayton and Mr. Merrick spent the greatest part of every day at Mrs. Norton's, and their rooms at Leeds were almost literally sleeping ones. Julia every hour received new marks of his lordship's attachment to her, and as he studied, with an unwearied assiduity, to make her happy, she had nothing to wish for but the arrival of her amiable parents to make her completely so.

While in the pleasing situation a sudden and unexpected event gave a cruel interruption to the felicity which she enjoyed with the higher relish, as she fondly flattered herself that she might depend upon the continuance of it.

Norton, piqued at the coldness, not to say contempt with which Julia had treated him, and not choosing to have any *rencontre* with lord Clayton about her, as he loved his own dear person too well to endanger it for any girl, went off, determined to get her into his power by surprise. In consequence of such a determination, and of the promise which he received from a servant whom he had bribed to his interest, to acquaint him with all the motions of the family, he lodged himself at a farmhouse not far off, and never sallied out but so disguised as to bid defiance to discovery.

Having waited several days for an opportunity to carry his point, he was, at last, informed that Mrs. Norton and Miss Meredith, having heard that lord Clayton was seized with an indisposition which would, in all probability, prevent him from going abroad for some time, were preparing to set out to make him a visit.

Charles immediately threw himself into the road to Leeds, and soon afterwards perceived the very people whom he wanted to see: he followed their carriage at a proper distance, and when they were set down at lord Clayton's lodgings, gained intelligence from the driver sufficient to induce him to believe that he should not find himself an unsuccessful schemist. By him he was told that they were to return in the evening, and by him, who was not proof against the arguments which he made use of to stagger his fidelity, he was

assured of his assistance towards the execution of his designs. The plan of operations was concerted between them at the inn, and Charles thought the time extremely tedious, till his infamous coadjutor drove away to take up the ladies whom he had brought to town in the morning.

When the evening approached Mrs. Norton felt herself desirous of being at home; but his lordship, loth to part with his Julia, pressed her to stay a little longer, as often as she rose to go home, and urged the advantage of a full moon so judiciously, that she was encouraged to remain with him much longer than she intended.

Charles having secured the driver, and taken care also to ply Mrs. Norton's footman, who was addicted to drinking, with liquor, saw the chaise set off from lord Clayton's lodging with an exulting heart; as the former had promised to follow his directions faithfully, and as the latter was too much muddled by the ale which he had swallowed, to make any opposition to the projected *manoeuvres* of the night. Having also furnished himself with a horseman's coat, a mask, and a pair of pistols, he rode away to the spot on which he intended to exert his ingenuity in a new way.

He waited not long for the chaise: riding up to the driver, he with a threatening voice ordered him to stop, swearing, at the same time, that he would blow his brains out, if he stirred an inch farther.

The driver accordingly stopped. The ladies screamed. Mrs. Norton called out Thomas, Thomas, with great vehemence; but Thomas being top-heavy, had lost his equilibrium, and was, at that instance, sprawling across the road, not in a position either to move or speak.

Charles then dismounting bade the driver hold his horse, and advancing to the side in which Mrs. Norton sat, opened the door and said, "Come, madam, let me beg the favour of you to quit your chaise for a few minutes."

"Oh for God's sake, Sir," replied she, "do not use us ill: you shall have all the money we have about us."

"Do not be afraid of my using you ill, madam," said he, "I scorn to use any lady so; but you must come out, because there is something belonging to you which I cannot so well get at while you are in the carriage."

Mrs. Norton, finding herself too much in his power to think of making any resistance with probable success, quitted the carriage. He led her about a hundred yards from it, and then briskly left her, to take possession of that seat which she had vacated. When he had fastened the door, and whistled, the driver knowing what he had to do, whipped his horses, and turned them into a different road, regardless of the cries of Mrs. Norton, who ran as fast as she could begging him to stop, and promising to reward him richly; but her intreaties and her promises were equally in vain. She strained her voice while the carriages were out of sight, and then, unable to support herself any longer, fell down.

Such was Mrs. Norton's situation on being separated from her niece. To describe Julia's feelings is impossible: she was sufficiently alarmed on the entrance of the supposed highwayman into the chaise; but how much more must she have been terrified, when her new companion, taking off his mask, discovered the very man who had given her such exquisite inquietude at her aunt's, and to whom she had shewn so strong an aversion!

She screamed again, louder than before, and immediately attempted to open the door next to her, in order to throw herself out of the chaise; but he soon prevented her from making so dangerous an effort to fly from him. Conscious of having greatly provoked his pride by her repeated refusals, she trembled to think to what lengths that pride might carry him; and could not help thinking that she had every thing to fear from a man who had taken such steps to get her entirely into his hands. In this state of mind, which may justly be called torturing, she wept and raved alternately by his side, without moving him in the least to pity her distress; he only triumphed at the success of his stratagem, and told her that he would make her pay for the many disagreeable hours he had spent on her account.

Julia, finding at length that her situation admitted of no relief, that opposition might only render her confinement less supportable, and that she could not possibly hope to regain her liberty by force, began to consider of the expediency of setting art against art; and while Norton was enjoying, in the most insolent expressions, *the coup de main* of the evening, silently schemed in what manner to escape from her prison, and from the snares spread against her peace.

While Julia was conveyed away by the abovementioned dishonourable procedure from her afflicted aunt, she remained in a condition very much to be compassionated. For some time she lay on the spot on which she fell, without being able to raise herself from the ground; so fatigued was she by having exerted herself beyond her strength: and the violent agitation of her mind was a cruel addition to her other complaints.

At last, feeling herself able to rise, she got up in order to walk home; with a heavy heart she rose, and was alarmed at the thoughts of being above two miles from her own house later than she had ever been from it, and never in such distressful circumstances. The sky grew cloudy, the moon was darkened, and she was terrified. She walked on, however, but made a small progress. There was so faint a light, that she began to be afraid of mistaking her path. Under that discouraging apprehension she stood still, and could not help exclaiming, "How unfortunately am I situated! And yet my poor Julia, Heaven knows that I feel for thee much more than for myself!"

Thomas, having swept away the fumes of the ale which had flown into his head, was not a little surprised to find himself lying in the road in a dark evening – for when he mounted behind the chaise, it was a bright one – and got up in a great hurry, with his imagination disturbed by the stories he had heard of ghosts and goblins, Being a superstitious fellow with a weak understanding, those stories had made such an impression on him, that he was just then seized with a panic, and afraid to stir. Luckily, while he was filled with false terrors, a brisk wind blew away the clouds which had

obscured the moon, and the full-orbed regent of the night shone forth in all her splendour. With that splendour, Thomas was instantaneously cheered; so comforted, indeed, that his fears were totally dispersed, and he went whistling homewards, as blithe as a bird, only stopping now and then to call the young 'squire a wicked one, for making him drink more than he could carry.

Hearing a female voice at a distance, he made up to the place from whence the sound, according to *his* ear, issued. On a nearer approach he started, as if he had trod upon an adder: "It is my mistress! Good gracious, how came she out here?"

With these few words, the honest effusions of his heart, he redoubled his pace, repeatedly saying as he advanced towards her, "It is I, madam, it is Thomas; do not be afraid."

It is not easy to determine whether Mrs. Norton or her honest servant was the most pleased at their unexpected meeting in so unexpected a place, at so unexpected an hour.

"Oh! Thomas," said she, "I am glad you are come to my assistance."

"And so am I, madam, I am sure; but if I might be so bold as to ask, madam, how came you here?"

"I will tell you if I can, Thomas, as I go along, only keep close beside me."

"That I will, madam – I would follow you to the world's end."

Mrs. Norton arrived safe at her own house about midnight attended by her faithful Thomas: but so wearied by her walk, that she remained a good while in her easy chair before she could recover spirits enough to inform her maid what accident she had met with to occasion her coming home so late, why she came without her niece, and why she came on foot.

As soon as she rose the next morning, Mrs. Norton dispatched Thomas with a letter to lord Clayton, to acquaint him with the very extraordinary adventure of the preceding evening.

Lord Clayton read Mrs. Norton's letter with the utmost consternation and concern, "Good God!" cried he, "what is to be done?"

Mr. Merrick having had his eye fixed on a newspaper while his nephew was reading his letter, threw it down upon the table when he heard that explanation, and said, "What is the matter, my lord?"

"Matter, my dear Sir! – I want breath to tell you – my Julia, my life, my all, is ----"

"Not dead, I hope."

“Worse, perhaps, for she may by this time – be ruined for ever.”

He then, giving the letter to his uncle, walked up and down the room violently agitated, and much more like a distracted man than a rational being.

Mr. Merrick, having perused it, said, “This is a very ugly affair and a very odd one, indeed, my lord. I never heard of a highwayman acting in such a manner: and to tell you the truth, I am of opinion that somebody has disguised himself in order to carry off your mistress.”

Lord Clayton started at that speech, and cried out, “You have hit upon it, Sir; I believe that the highwayman was only assumed to conceal the rival.”

Neither of them, however, in the least suspected Norton to have been the man who had appeared in that character, and separated Julia from her aunt.

“I will go immediately to Mrs. Norton,” said Mr. Merrick: “perhaps, by laying our heads together, we may make some useful discoveries.”

“I will wait on you, Sir,” replied his lordship.

“By no means, my lord – by striking your *rash* in you may endanger your life.”

“What is life without my Julia? No, no, Sir, I *must*, I *will* accompany you – pray do not oppose me – pray do not attempt to detain me.”

Mr. Merrick, finding himself utterly unable to persuade his nephew to remain in his lodgings on account of his health, ceased to make an opposition to his wishes, but could not help intreating him with all the pressing importunity of a kind relation to wrap himself up well before he set out.

When they had left their apartments about a couple of hours, Mr. and Mrs. Meredith, stopping at Leeds in their way to Mrs. Norton’s to enquire at what quarter of the town lord Clayton lodged, were to their great surprise acquainted with the extraordinary transactions of the preceding evening between *their* place and Mrs. Norton’s house, and being also informed that his lordship and Mr. Merrick had both been gone to the latter, followed them immediately.

They found the whole family, except the maid whom Charles had bribed, truly unhappy: she however affected a concern upon the occasion, and seemed to sympathise deeply with those who had most reason to lament the loss which they had sustained.

On a general consultation it was believed that Norton was the man who had by so uncommon a device drawn Julia into his power: but they were all extremely embarrassed with regard to the means proper to be used for the recovery of her.

While they were deliberating how to act in such perplexing circumstances, they were most agreeably astonished to see Miss Meredith riding towards them in a post-chaise. Mr. Meredith who first perceived her was particularly so to behold her by the very servant who had left her in the melancholy situation from which lord Clayton had relieved her. He was doubly astonished; but the joy of the *father* rising superior to the resentment of the *master*, he went forth to receive *her* with paternal delight, without feeling disposed to load *him* with reproaches for his past ungrateful behaviour; concluding, not unjustly, from the satisfaction visible in his daughter's countenance, that John had done something to merit a pardon for his former base and barbarous carriage to her.

Mrs. Meredith followed her husband with tears of transport, attended by Mrs. Norton, lord Clayton, and Mr. Merrick, whose different sensations, though all of the joyous kind, cannot easily be imagined.

When the first congratulations on Julia's return were over John threw himself at Mr. Meredith's feet, and in the humblest terms begged his forgiveness for what he had formerly done to deserve a very severe chastisement from him: "When you have heard what Miss Meredith has to say about me, Sir," continued he, "I dare believe that you will not think me altogether unworthy of it."

Mr. Meredith turning to his daughter, as if he wished to have an answer from *her* before he made a reply to that speech, she said with a most winning benignity of aspect, "You may forgive John, Sir, for he has been of infinite service to me."

He then bid John rise, and promised not only to forgive him for his *ill*, but to reward him for his *good* behaviour. When Julia had received some refreshment she was desired by her amiable parents to acquaint them in what providential manner, by what unlooked-for means she had been restored to them. After a few dutiful and affectionate expressions she gratified their curiosity in the following words, to which lord Clayton listened with particular attention.

"My dear aunt has undoubtedly mentioned her being taken out of the chaise in which we were returning from Leeds by a person appearing like a highwayman, who, having seated herself in her place, carried me away from her: but she little imagines, perhaps, that the supposed highwayman is related to her."

"We all guess that Mr. Norton is the man," said Mr. Meredith, "but go on, my dear."

"Mr. Norton is indeed the person," continued Julia, "who assumed such an appearance, and had recourse to such an expedient to make me subservient to his wishes. Let me do him the justice however to say, that he discovered no dishonourable designs. When he pulled off his mask, I was more terrified than I had been at his first approach, and filled with more alarming apprehensions. I attempted to deliver myself from his hands, though at the hazard of my life, as the chaise was swiftly moving; but he soon made me feel too sensibly that I could not escape from him. I was compelled, therefore, to hear all his insulting language; for insulting it was to the highest degree, as he rallied me in the most

provoking terms for the distress which he saw strongly painted in every feature of my face, laughed at my tears and bewailings, and with the vainest expressions complimented himself on his cruel ingenuity.

Whither he intended to carry me I knew not: but when we had travelled some hours at a great rate, without meeting a single creature, I began to think it might be more prudent to seem reconciled to my situation, and to assume a character in my turn, in order to facilitate the recovery of my liberty. Drying up my tears, I told Mr. Norton that he had taken very unnecessary pains to get a woman into his power who could not make him the expected amends for it, as her heart was not in her own possession. As I spoke those words without appearing to resent his having *surprised* me into his hands, he assured me that though he should think himself very happy in the possession of my heart, he would be satisfied with the surrender of my person to him, as he flattered himself that time and his perpetual endeavours to please me would produce an alteration in my sentiments in his favour.

As I did not in the least expect such a speech from him after the raillery which he had vented against me, and indeed the insolence of his whole behaviour, I was, I own, softened by it, and conceived a better opinion than I had before: but I was not so far affected by that speech, as not to form little schemes while we whirled along to disengage myself from captivity by calling in art to my aid.

I therefore told him that he paid too much regard to my person; and that I hoped he would be contented to wait till the alteration in my sentiments was brought about by time.

In this manner we conversed till soon after day-break; then seeing a gentleman galloping towards us with a servant at a considerable distance behind him, I could not help making an effort to interest him in my behalf. I desired Mr. Norton to stop the chaise, to put his head out at his window, as the gentleman was on that side of the chaise, and to intreat him to come to my window, as I wished to speak a word to him. Mr. Norton concluded that I knew the gentleman, and not imagining, I believe, after what had passed between us during the last hour, complied with my request immediately. While he was so employed, I took my pocket-book and pencil, and hurrying down a few lines on a piece of paper, had them ready concealed in my hand to deliver to the stranger, by that time he came upon me. Addressing myself to him as if I was intimately acquainted with him, I begged the favour of him to read my note, stretching out my hand. He took it with a very polite air, but proved not to be a man of spirit as well as politeness; for he only bowed his head and rode on.

By this time the gentleman's servant came up: I was not a little surprised to see the person by whom I had been formerly so ill-used, but the distress of the moment extinguished my resentment, and I implored his assistance. Deliver me from my prison John, said I, and you shall be well rewarded.

John, being no stranger to my prejudices in lord Clayton's favour, seeing me in the hands of a man very unlike his lordship, and struck, I suppose, with remorse for what he had

done, when in your service, Sir, (turning to her father) immediately asked Mr. Norton what he meant by forcing a young lady away from her relations.

Mr. Norton being unprepared for such an address to him from a footman, seemed to be very much disconcerted, and having forget to take his pistols out of the holsters when he dismounted in order to execute his designs against me by separating me from my aunt, found himself not in a condition to appear in a formidable light.

However, his pride was roused; he jumped out of the chaise and ran towards his horse, which the driver had fastened behind it: but John dismounting with great agility, seized him before he could arm himself; they struggled a good while, but John had at last so much advantage, that Mr. Norton thought proper to beg for quarters, and to promise his adversary that he would not interrupt him, while he took me under his protection. But Mr. Norton, as soon as he rose from the ground, making an attempt to snatch one of his pistols, notwithstanding his promise, John was so provoked at his cowardly behaviour, that he fired the two pistols belonging to him into the air, and bid him ride away as fast as he could, and think himself very well off at not being more severely handled. Norton, taking him at his word, threw himself into his saddle, and soon disappeared. John then came to me, and after having, in a suppliant posture, intreated me to forgive him for his cruel treatment of me, of which he said he had most sincerely repented, told me that he was ready to wait on me to whatever place I chose to go; and as I had, during his contest with Mr. Norton, gained the driver over to me by a handsom present, I found them both very willing to conduct me hither.”

Here Miss Meredith ended the account of her happy escape from Mr. Norton, and all her hearers received great pleasure from it. Mr. Meredith closed the congratulations repeated on the occasion with saying, that he would go and talk with John a little. “Perhaps he may lose his place for having left his master for so many hours, though he has been so laudably engaged. Should he be discharged at his return, I shall look on myself as obliged to take him again into my service.”

With these humane and just sentiments he quitted the room: *humane* every body will, surely, pronounce them to have been, and nobody, I imagine, will deem them to have been *unjust*, who has a liberal way of thinking. If the commission of a good action is not to atone for the perpetration of a bad one, what encouragement has vice to come over to the side of virtue?

Mrs. Meredith, though not a woman of narrow notions, declared herself to be of the opinion that her husband would act too hastily by taking John into his service again; allowing him, at the same time, all proper praise for the deliverance of her daughter from such an alarming situation.

What struck Mrs. Norton most in her niece’s narrative was, her having courage to trust herself with a man who had actually behaved scandalously to her: whereas her cousin had only filled her with terrifying apprehensions.

Lord Clayton could not help seconding Mrs. Norton, and expressing his admiration at the confidence his Julia reposed in John.

Julia endeavoured to defend her conduct upon the common in the following manner:

“The gentleman whom I accosted on his coming up to me, as if we had been very well acquainted with each other, behaved, indeed, politely to me, but with that sort of politeness as if he had never seen me before; and when he had read my note, looked at me, while he rode off, as if he thought he should gain no honour, but run himself into much danger, by concerning himself about me. After such a carriage, therefore, on his part, I had no reason to expect a great deal of indulgence on Mr. Norton’s: for, from the hurry with which I delivered my note, and from my confusion, which was certainly observed, he could not but suppose that I had tried to interest the gentleman in my behalf, and to induce him to procure my releasement. I felt myself so distressed at the failure of my stratagem, that the appearance of John, which, at any other time must have made my blood rise with indignation, occasioned a very different emotion in me. I beheld him not as *the man* by whom I had been so cruelly used, but as *a man* who might, possibly, be of service to me. I was pretty sure of not being better treated by Mr. Norton, after having made an attempt to disengage myself from him; and I should, I thought, run no risqué by returning home with John, if he succeeded according to my wishes, and would accompany the chaise, when he had obliged Mr. Norton to remount his horse, and give me no further molestation. The driver I also imagined would readily bring me hither, when I had made it worth his while to follow my directions.”

While Julia was making the above-mentioned apology for her conduct in a very critical situation, Mr. Meredith was giving an attentive ear to the self-reproaches of an apparently sincere penitent, intermixed with his honest confessions.

“If you knew, Sir,” said John, how much I suffered since the day I set out with you from Chester, you would, I do believe, have some compassion for me, as you was always the best natured gentleman alive. Oh, Sir! I don’t wish my greatest enemy to feel what I have felt since. I have had no peace in my mind from the day when I behaved so badly to Miss Meredith, and the sight of her this morning made my heart sink within me. I was ashamed to see her, and was going to turn my horse another way; but hearing her call on me to deliver her from the person in the chaise with her, I immediately thought that she had fallen into bad hands, and was determined to lend her all the assistance in my power. Providence blessed my endeavours, and I shall be happy if you think that what I have done in her behalf, will make amends for my former ill behaviour to her, of which, heaven knows, I sincerely repent.”

“I believe you to be sincere, John,” said Mr. Meredith, “you have acted like a sincere penitent; you have deserved forgiveness, and I hope you will not lose your place by having left your master, in order to be serviceable to my daughter.”

“My master, Sir, is not an ill-tempered gentleman: I do hope, therefore, that when I have told him the truth of the affair, he will rather commend me than turn me away, though he

did not care to assist Miss Meredith himself. My master is a very good sort of man, Sir; but he never chuses to meddle with any business which he thinks will bring his person to danger.”

“Well, John, if your master should not be satisfied with the excuse you make for your absence, return to me, with an assurance that I will not suffer you to be a loser for having brought my daughter to this house.”

Mr. Meredith then went back to the parlour, and communicated what had passed between him and John; and they all approved of his carriage to his late servant, especially of his not having induced him to believe that he should again be received into the family as a domestic: that he ought to be rewarded they were all willing to allow, but looked upon his being restored to his place as an unnecessary consideration for his services.

Lord Clayton and Mr. Merrick, having spent a very cheerful evening with their agreeable friends, returned to their lodgings. Before the next morning, his lordship was convinced of the error which he had committed, with regard to his health, by not following his uncle’s advice; for he had caught cold, as the night was a damp one, and struck his rash in; so that he was obliged to keep his bed for a few days: during which time Mr. Merrick, though he often gently chid him for being refractory, was extremely assiduous about him, and administered, with his own hands, the medicines which were thought proper for him.

As soon as he was recovered, Mr. Meredith acquainted him with his intentions to set off for London, having only waited for his lordship’s being able to travel. Lord Clayton being quite ready to accompany him, Mrs. Norton was in a short time deserted by the amiable group from whose company she received so much satisfaction.

The day before that fixed for their departure, while lord Clayton and his uncle were superintending the package of their things, they were surprised by a visit from a gentleman whom they little expected to see again.

The gentleman was Mr. Benson. “You seem surprised, my lord, and you, my good Sir,” turning to Mr. Merrick, “to see me here; but I could not possibly go through this town, after having accidentally heard that you were both lodged here, without paying my compliments to you.”

“I am exceedingly glad to see you, Sir,” said lord Clayton; “and I will venture to say, that my uncle is as much pleased as myself at your unexpected, but not therefore less welcome, appearance.”

“Your lordship has ventured to say nothing but the truth,” said Mr. Merrick: “Yes, Sir,” continued he, “I am truly glad to light upon you again, and hope that you have met with no more disappointments since we parted.”

“No, Sir, thank heaven! In whom I always firmly trusted, I am as happy a man as any in England; and, to speak a bold word, thoroughly *contented*.”

“Few people can, indeed, speak that word, Sir,” replied my lord, “and feel the true meaning of it; and I shall be rejoiced to know in what manner you have arrived to such rare felicity.”

“I will relate the sequel of my story, my lord, with a great deal of pleasure.”

“You have recovered your estate, I suppose, Sir,” said Mr. Merrick in his lively way.

“You shall hear, Sir. – When I left Chester, I went directly to the honest fellow from whom I had received so many kindnesses, and whom I wished to reward more than I had yet done for his uncommon fidelity and friendship. On my arrival at his cottage, the worthy creature received me with such extravagant emotions of joy, that I could not help looking at him with *some* astonishment.” “Oh! Sir,” said he, “I never was so delighted to see you in my life,” and ran away from me, but returned in a short time with a box in his arms. “Here they are, Sir,” continued he, “and I pray to God that you may live long to be happy with your good fortune.”

“What good fortune?” replied I, not knowing what to make of his preamble.”

“This box, Sir,” said he, “contains all the writings belonging to your estate.”

“How! Are you in earnest, William?”

“Indeed it does, Sir, and I heartily give you joy on your coming to take possession of the estate which has been kept from you for so many years.”

“You amaze me! – How came you by the writing?”

“The major gave them to me, Sir.”

“More wonderful still! – and the major! Major Dixon!”

“Yes, Sir, he himself, I do assure you. He sent for me when he was on his death-bed, and put them into my hands, desiring me, at the same time, to inform you that the thoughts of so long having deprived you of your estate made him miserable beyond expression; and he told me nothing but the truth, indeed, I believe, for I never saw a poor gentleman in so terrible a way. He died the next morning, raving in such a manner, that I was almost afraid to stay in the room. – I shall never forget how he struggled for breath to say something to me a little before he died: I hope I shall not see so shocking a sight again. But I’ll try to forget him, Sir,” continued he, opening the box.

“I was so much affected with the account of the major’s appearance in his last moments, ill as I had been used by him, that I stood for some time looking at the box, lost in thought – William, at length, roused me from my reflections, by presenting my writings to me, which I received from him with an effusion of gratitude, warm from the heart to

that Being at whose decrees, in the middle of my heaviest disappointments, I never murmured, and on whose justice I had ever a strong reliance, for having rewarded my patience by the completion of my wishes”.

Here Mr. Benson closed his story, and received the sincerest congratulations from lord Clayton and Mr. Merrick, on the recovery of his estate. When he had wished them both all the health and happiness they themselves could desire, he took leave of them; but not without being heartily invited to Bromley-house, whenever he made a visit to London.

Lord Bromley having been acquainted by his son with the various situations into which he had been thrown, during his absence, and with the day fixed for his return to London, immediately formed a scheme to surprise *him*, his uncle, and his friends upon the road. In consequence of his design, his lordship, as soon as he had read lord Clayton’s *long* letter, ordered his post chaise and four to be got ready.

Stilton was the town at which his lordship intended to wait for the party from Yorkshire, in case of his not meeting them before he reached it.

Just as he was entering the town, he saw Mr. Merrick advancing in a post-chaise by himself.

“So, ho, my dear Merrick,” replied his lordship, “I am come up to you at last.”

“Hah, my lord,” replied he, starting, not being in the least aware of beholding his lordship in that place, “who would have thought of seeing you here?”

“I appear, unexpectedly, I believe, but so much the better – what have you done with your nephew, for you seem to ride solus.”

“Quite so, my lord: your son is not far off, with the Meredith-family, in a post-coach.”

“That is well, that is well; how far do you think they are from hence?”

“They will soon be here, I dare say.”

Hardly were those words out of his mouth, when the wished-for coach made its appearance.

Lord Bromley and Mr. Merrick having both agreed to put up at the inn nearest to the spot on which they met, quitted their carriages, and waited at the door of the house till the coach drove up to them.

When lord Clayton beheld his father and uncle talking together on foot, he could not suppress the astonishment which that sight occasioned. Turning to Mr. Meredith, “there is lord Bromley, Sir,” said he, standing with Mr. Merrick. I never was more surprised!”

The coach, at that instant, stopped. Lord Bromley approaching it, said to Mr. Meredith, “I have not the pleasure of being known personally to you, Sir, yet I flatter myself that I am not a total stranger to you, as I imagine that my son has informed you who I am: I therefore beg leave to welcome you to Stilton, and you, Madam, and you, Miss Meredith, -bowing to them alternately – and I am not sorry to see *you*, George, especially in such good company – but come we will not waste the time in ceremony – open the door, my lad.”

When that command was obeyed, his lordship handed Mr. Meredith out of the coach: lord Clayton followed with Miss Meredith, and Mr. Meredith closed the rear alone: but was soon joined by Mr. Merrick; and the two old friends embraced each other with the utmost cordiality.

While the ladies retired to take a walk in the garden, Mr. Merrick whispered his nephew, and they immediately left the room: “let your father and Meredith,” said he, as they were going across the yard to look at the smart carriage which stood there, “have a little chat by themselves, you will not be a jot less happy for their interview, I will answer for it.”

When lord Bromley found himself with Mr. Meredith in private, he began in the following manner:

“it gives me a great deal of pleasure, Sir, to think that we are in a fair way to be better acquainted; and that pleasure is considerably increased, when I reflect on the happy choice my son has made of a partner for life – your amiable daughter.”

“She is a good girl, my lord, thank Heaven.”

“I have no doubts concerning her goodness, Sir: and I shall speak of her in no higher terms than what she is justly entitled to, by saying that she is the most agreeable young lady I ever beheld; and that she seems to be thoroughly qualified to make a desirable wife to a man of so domestic a turn as my George is; everything that both my son and Mr. Merrick have told me in her praise is legible in her countenance; and I dare swear that lord Clayton will have reason, every hour after his union with Miss Meredith, to remember *the* hour with peculiar satisfaction in which he first became acquainted with her.

“You do my daughter, you do *me*, you do all my family, my lord, too much honour.”

“Not at all, Sir: I shall think myself, I do assure you, honoured by the alliance: therefore pray do not mention a syllable more upon that head. Let us rather talk to the point – what fortune do you propose to lay down with your daughter?”

“Ten thousand pounds, my lord.”

“Many of my brother-peers,” said his lordship, smiling, would like to be dishonoured in that manner – But to be serious – George shall be enabled to treble that sum for *her*

advantage, and nothing shall be wanting on *my* side, to make them live agreeably to their wishes in every respect. I have occasioned many vexatious moments to my son, by opposing my wrong ideas of conjugal felicity to his right ones; and as I am thoroughly convinced of the justness of *his* notions with regard to *that* felicity, it is high time for me to prove the sincerity of my conviction by the propriety of my actions; and so, Sir, with your leave, I will go in search of lord Clayton, and tell him the result of out *Tete-a-Tete*.

Without waiting for a verbal answer from Mr. Meredith, because he saw a very insignificant one in his face, he left the room.

Soon after his lordship's departure, Mr. Merrick entered the room.

"Hey-day, my friend; what alone, and in a brown study? I took lord Clayton aside, that you and the old earl might lay your heads together without any restraint or interruption: where is his lordship? You have settled matters I hope to your mind?"

"Very much so, Sir," replied Mr. Meredith: his lordship has behaved generously; far beyond my expectations."

"I am glad to hear you give so good an account of him; generosity was never reckoned among his virtues: but I have taken no small pains lately to inspire him with a liberal way of thinking, equal to the largeness of his possessions – Well, what has he done?"

Mr. Meredith then related the conversation which had passed between them.

"Upon my word, his lordship has exceeded *my* expectations too – But truly, considering the lady and her fortunes together." –

At that moment lord Clayton entered the room, leading in Julia.

"My father, Sir, has made me the happiest of men," said his lordship, addressing himself to Mr. Meredith, "by informing me of the satisfaction which you discovered at his behaviour on *my* account"

"I should be, indeed, my lord, unworthy of such a son-in-law, and my daughter would not deserve such a husband as your lordship, were we not both extremely well satisfied with the earl's generous proceedings, and with your unexceptionable carriage."

Julia smiled alternately on her father and on his lordship, and Mr. Merrick, with his usual vivacity, removed all the little delicate awkwardnesses naturally rising on such an occasion among many people of refined sentiments, by saying "I protest now, you three make the most agreeable trio I ever saw in my life, and if I was a painter, hang me if I would not clap you on canvas."

This speech of Mr. Merrick was uttered in so particular a manner, and accompanied with so many arch looks, that it occasioned a laugh. Before any part of the trio returned an answer to it, Mr. Meredith entered the room, followed by lord Bromley.

“So –so- good people,” said his lordship, “I am glad to hear you so merry, and shall be more to hear the cause of your mirth.”

“One of *my* odd speeches, my lord, that is all,” replied Mr. Merrick: “there’s no repeating it, it will be good for nothing at second hand: it will be like a bottle of bad wine, consisting of *bottoms* left the preceding day, and barbarously jumbled together by a rogue of a butler.”

The subsequent conversation was entirely of the cheerful kind; but as few of my readers would, I believe, feel themselves interested in it, I am not willing to tire their patience by committing it to paper.

During the abovementioned scenes and transactions in Yorkshire, Miss Jarvis and Mr. Harrison, after having met with a small interruption to the happiness which they mutually enjoyed on being re-permitted to see each other on the wished-for footing, were united with the most prosperous omens: for, according to all human probability, they had from their naturally domestic definitions, the greatest reason in the world to expect felicity in the marriage state – But I must not forget the interruption they met with previous to their union.

There are some people of so strange a turn, of a temper so unaccountably perverse, that they cannot bear to see any of their fellow-creatures happy: whoever appear contented with themselves or their affairs, are objects sufficiently enviable, and are sure of provoking the spleen, and irritate the ill-nature of such people; and the more deserving they are, the more is that ill-nature irritated, and that spleen provoked. What dreadful relations do some people make! Friends they cannot possibly be: they are utterly incapable of friendship, and even for common acquaintance they are dangerous. How often is the peace of a whole family destroyed by the execrable ingenuity of one religious being either related to it or acquainted with it: nay sometimes the *malevolent* infernally please themselves with having thrown families into confusion only known to them by name – Can they be too sharply satirized?

Such a being was a Miss Mowbray, almost old enough to be a Mrs. who living very near Raven’s-Nest, waited on Mrs. Jarvis soon after her arrival there, and, by a flattering exterior, added to much politeness in her manner, for she was a woman of birth, and had genteel connections, rendered herself so agreeable to Mrs. Jarvis, that she returned her visit in a short time, and told her, at taking leave, that she hoped they should be good neighbours.

Miss Mowbray lived with an aunt who never appeared abroad, for she was bed-ridden. Having been formerly, in her opinion, ill used by young Harrison, with whom she was desperately in love, the prospect of his being married to Miss Jarvis, after the match had

long been broken off, gave her inexpressible disquietude: she thought she had been ill used by him, but she thought very unjustly: the truth is, he was not mean enough to encourage the indiscreet advances of a young lady for whom he felt no prepossessions. Hence arose her resentment, and that passion co-operating with a fertile brain, occasioned no small vexation to the amiable couple, who began to look upon themselves as out of the reach of disappointment.

Being intimately acquainted with Miss Clinton, she went to her one morning, and desiring to be closeted with her, unbosomed herself in the following terms:

“My dear Clinton, I am come to beg a prodigious favour of you.”

“Out with it then, my dear Mowbray, without any farther introduction.”

“Mr. Harrison is, you know, on the point of being married to little Jarvis.”

“True, they only wait for those dilatory gentlemen the lawyers – what then?”

“Why then, I should be glad to prevent their coming together. I shall be glad to tear Jarvis’s eyes out if she is happy with Harrison, and happy she will certainly be to my sorrow, if married to him, for he will make her an excellent husband.”

“How, Matilda! Should you be sorry to see two deserving people formed for each other’s felicity, happily united?”

“The sight of any people happily united is extremely painful to me; but the sight of *them* so united would be insupportable – If *you* had been treated by a pretty fellow as Harrison has treated *me*, you would not wonder at my thus resenting his desertion from me, especially to take up with such a chit as Jarvis, I can’t conceive how he came to find any charms in that baby face of hers, for there is just as much meaning in any of the paste-board ones in a milliner’s shop – But I ramble from the point – I want to separate the doves, if possible, for ever.”

“You will not find that so easy a matter.”

“I have schemed their separation, but your assistance will be necessary towards the execution of my design.”

“What is it?”

“They are both to drink tea with me this afternoon. When we have chatted for some time, I will take Harriot with me into a different room, and as a friend, for there is nothing like the mask of friendship when any mischief of this kind is to be done, advise her to put a stop to all proceedings between her and her lover; telling her that he has proved himself totally unworthy of her, as his whole aim by marrying her is to supply a poor girl whom he privately married while he was a student at Cambridge with money, in order to hinder her from claiming him as a husband. To strengthen my advice I have drawn up a letter in his name, which will, I believe, not a little stagger her. Now, Clinton, while I am

employed with *her*, you must go to work with *him*; and contrive some plausible story to set him against her: but that story I leave to *you*, for I am sure that you can, if you please, be very serviceable to me by your invention, on this occasion. When the doves meet afterwards, they will feel rather awkwardly, I imagine, look at each other with embarrassed countenances, and be in a strange agitation concerning what they have heard. When we have gone so far we must prevent them from coming to any explanation, if they should be inclined to make attempts towards an *eclaircissement*, by not suffering them to go home together. Here your brother may step in to our assistance.”

“Not to-day, my dear, for he went to town this morning, in consequence of a letter which he received to inform him of Miss Strutton’s illness.”

“Well then, on second thoughts, we may do without him, I believe, and venture to let the lovers return as they came, for in all probability our joint endeavours to disturb the harmony between them may produce a violent quarrel; if we are disappointed we must have recourse to new plots, for I shall have no rest till I have broken all their measures – Should all my schemes prove unsuccessful, and should they be, in spite of my efforts to divide them, connected together by the closest ties, I shall – I don’t know what I shall do – leave the kingdom, perhaps; for while I remain in it I may have a chance to see their happy faces somewhere.”

With these words Miss Mowbray wished her friend a good morning, repeatedly desiring her neither to disappoint her, nor to forget the game she had to play, and went home very well satisfied with her visit, as Miss Clinton had assured her that she would wait on her in the afternoon if her aunt was tolerable.

When Matilda was gone, Miss Clinton, being of a very different disposition, went directly to her aunt, and told her how much she had been shocked at Miss Mowbray’s having discovered such a bad heart. “I always thought, indeed, Madam, that she was of a discontented and satirical turn, but I never imagined she would take so much pains to gratify her ill-nature.”

She then acquainted her aunt with the schemes which Miss Mowbray had been communicating to set Mr. Harrison and Miss Jarvis at variance.

Mrs. Collier lifted up her hands and eyes – “I really did not think that Miss Mowbray would have turned out such a disgrace to her sex – I am sorry you have any acquaintance with her: such people are very dangerous companions: the friendship which they profess can never be sincere. If you was in Miss Jarvis’s situation just at this time, she would, I dare say, take as much pains to destroy your happiness. You do not intend, I hope, my dear, to forward her iniquitous designs?”

“No, madam, I fully intend to defeat them: but, with your leave, I will comply with her invitation this afternoon, that she may not, from my staying away, suspect my intentions.”

Miss Clinton, however, soon afterwards was obliged to send a message to Miss Mowbray to put off her engagement for the afternoon, her aunt having fallen down a long flight of stairs, and received some very dangerous wounds to her head, to all appearance.

Mrs. Collier's melancholy situation engrossed her niece's attention, and made her very unhappy, though the surgeon, when he dressed the wounds, assured her that they were not so dangerous as they had appeared to be at first sight. And indeed she was in so fair a way to recover in a few days, that Miss Clinton began to think of putting Miss Jarvis on her guard against Matilda.

She accordingly wrote a letter to Miss Jarvis to inform her of the schemes which Miss Mowbray had formed against her peace, that both she and Mr. Harrison might be prepared for any of her attempts to alienate their affections from each other.

With such laudible intentions Miss Clinton dispatched her letter, but it arrived too late to answer the end for which it was written: tho' the motives of the writer rendered it very acceptable.

Miss Mowbray, being deprived of Miss Clinton's company by Mrs. Collier's accident, engaged another female friend in the neighbourhood to supply her place, who luckily being of a similar disposition, entered with great spirit into the business proposed to her: so that by their combined efforts, Miss Jarvis and Mr. Harrison returned from their visit not with that mutual satisfaction which they before enjoyed.

While they were riding home with Mrs. Jarvis who called for them after having made her visits, they exchanged not a syllable, and *she* could extort from them very few words.

"You have had a very stupid visit sure, my dear –" said she to Harriot –

"I wish I was at home, madam," was her answer. –

"You seem to be low spirited too, Mr. Harrison; have you met with nothing diverting?"

"Nothing, madam," said he, and sighed.

When they came home they found Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Harrison at back gammon. – Harriot went immediately into her own apartment.

Mr. Harrison, as soon as his son came into the room, put a letter into his hands. "I am sorry," said he, "that we must leave our good friends here for a few days; but the death of your uncle makes our journey to Berkshire absolutely necessary on many accounts."

Harrison would have been very sorry to leave his mistress so near the time appointed for their wedding, if his mind had not been deprived of its peace, by the intelligence communicated to him at Miss Mowbray's: but he left Raven's-nest the next morning with his father, without reluctance, because Harriot's altered behaviour to him before his

departure, convinced him that the intelligence which he had heard might be depended upon.

Mr. Harrison, perceiving his son extremely dejected, asked him with his usual tenderness, if he was not well.

“I am perfectly well in health, Sir,” replied he, but –

Here he stopped and sighed.

“What then has happened to occasion such a check to your natural cheerfulness?”

“A lady, Sir, at Miss Mowbray’s last night, shocked me to the greatest degree, by informing me that Miss Jarvis had, to *her* knowledge, an affair at this time with a young officer not worth sixpence; and that she had promised to enable him to make a figure agreeably to his wishes out of her pin-money.”

“I can hardly believe what you tell me, son – Some envious devil has trumped up this story on purpose to make mischief – It is a very unlikely story, and I will not give credit to it: I have a better opinion of Miss Jarvis than to think that she has deserved so heavy a charge.”

“I wish, Sir, that *I could not* give credit to it; but this intercepted letter will, I trust, exculpate me from the accusation of credulity.”

He then gave the letter to his father, who was struck dumb at the perusal of it.

Harriot, in a short time after the departure of the *Harrisons*, was questioned about *her* dejection, and surprised her parents in the same manner as her lover had surprised *his* father, by producing an intercepted letter: by that letter it appeared that he had been married for some years.

The astonishment and concern which Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis felt upon that occasion, I will not pretend to describe, because I cannot describe them with adequate expressions. They both highly resented young Harrison’s behaviour; and both determined not to re-admit him on his former footing, till he had proved the letter with his name at the bottom of it to be a forged one. Little did they think what reflections were agitating *his* mind at the same moment.

In a state of the most disagreeable suspense, the whole family at Raven’s-nest remained, till the arrival of Miss Clinton’s letter. The perusal of that letter gave an instantaneous turn to their ideas, their spirits, and their features. Miss Mowbray now appeared to Mrs. Jarvis not in an amiable, but an execrable light. An express was immediately dispatched to Mr. Harrison, at Harrison-Hall in Berkshire. They met – were reconciled – and soon afterwards married.

The wedding-day of Lord Clayton was the happiest he had ever spent in his life; and from the auspicious omens with which he entered into the marriage-state, he had sufficient encouragement to expect a long continuance of the exquisite felicity which he felt, when the ceremony at the altar was finished. For many years, never had there been more festivity at Bromley-house – Wit, humour, and mirth, enlivened every moment. Mr. Merrick greatly contributed to the merriment going forward with hardly any intermission; he was always a cheerful, he was now a highly entertaining companion. The completion of his nephew's happiness seemed to have thrown him back several years: he was quite a young man in his carriage: lord Bromley himself could not have enjoyed more sincere satisfaction at his son's happiness.

When the bride retired with her mother and some ladies who were invited to the wedding, Mr. Merrick gave a vent to certain conceits which darted into his mind during the circulation of the claret, but which he suppressed out of respect to the female ears in his company; and when lord Clayton expressed a desire to retreat, he grasped the bottle which stood before him with looks strongly expressive of his joyous feelings, and drank, "LUCK AT LAST," in a bumper. Lord Bromley followed him immediately, and every man in the room closed the evening with the same significant health.

Finis.

