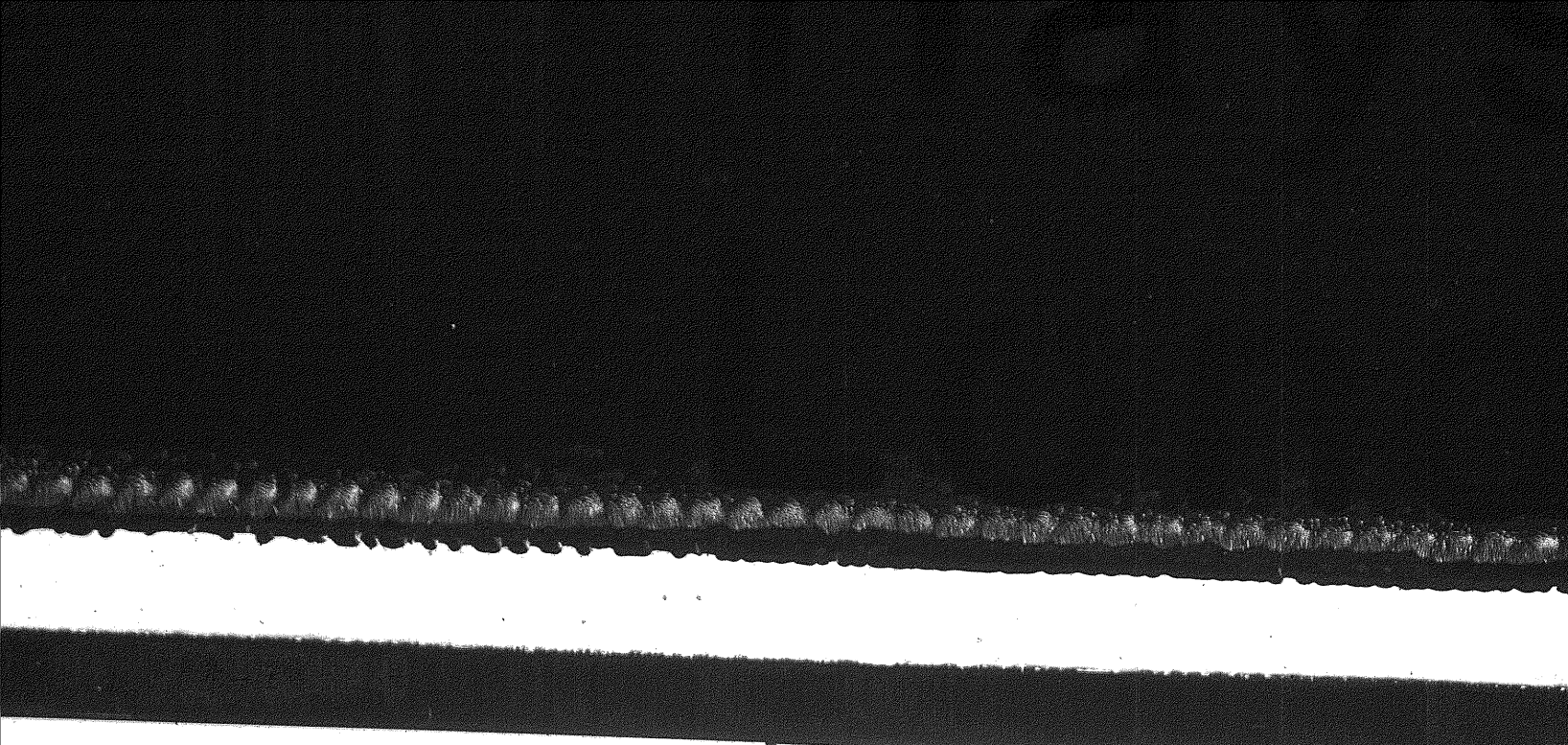
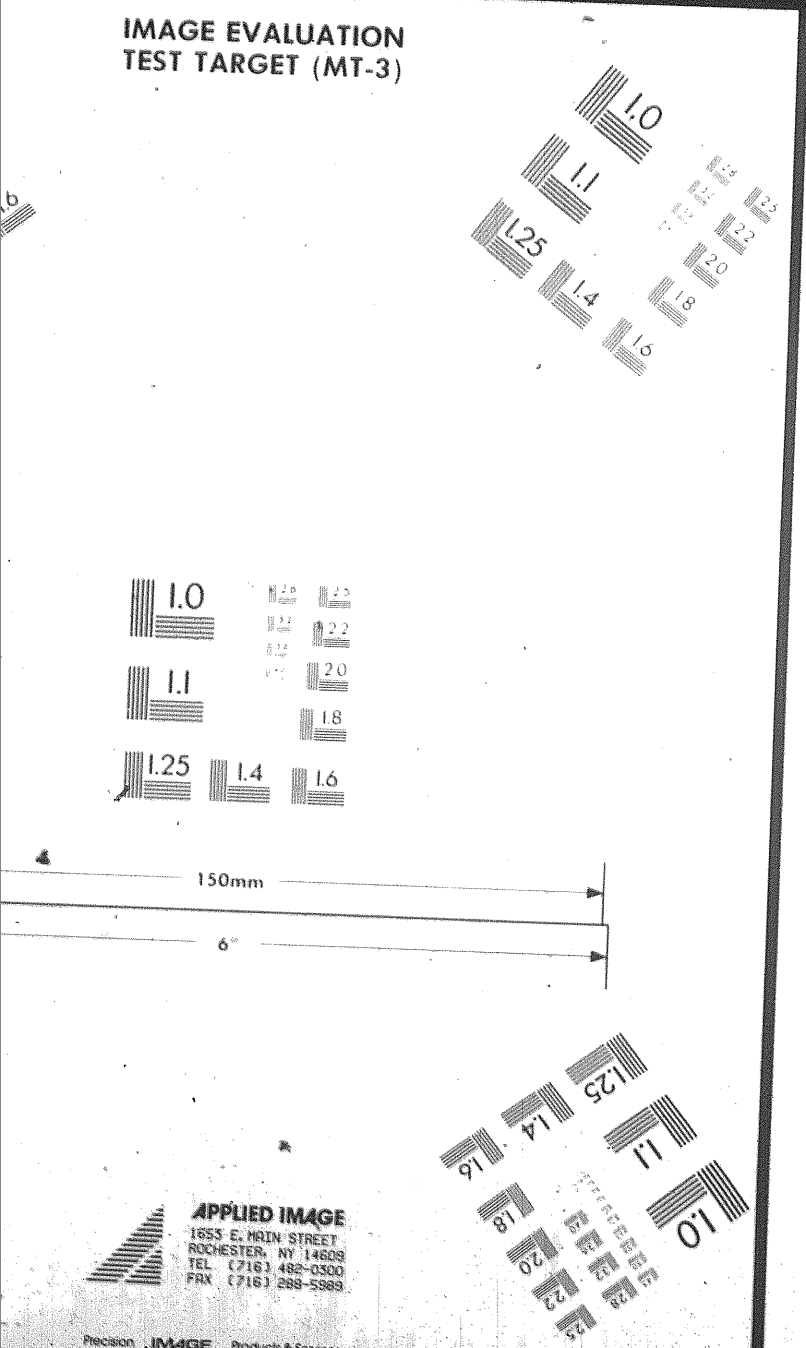


of
Children's
Literature

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AMILY
NNALS

FAMILY ANNALS,

OR

THE SISTERS.



Painted by J. Northcote

Engraved by J. Romney

Title Page 1817

Published for W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, Feb.y 1817

FAMILY ANNALS,

OR

The Sisters.

By MARY HAYS,

"Author of the BROTHERS, FEMALE BIOGRAPHY, HISTORICAL DIALOGUES for Young Persons, HARRY CLINTON, a Tale for Youth, &c. &c."

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. SIMPKIN AND R. MARSHALL,
STATIONERS' COURT, LUDGATE STREET.

1817.

Edward Hodson, Printer,
15, Cross Hatton Garden, London

To Mrs. FENWICK,

OF

BRIDGE TOWN, BARBADOES.

While the Atlantic rolls between us, allow me, dear friend, to gratify my feelings, by addressing to you this little volume, as a testimony of that friendship which nearly twenty summers have ripened; and which, founded on a parity of mind and principle, and a sympathy of feeling, neither time nor distance will, I trust, weaken or destroy.

"Is ought so fair,
In the bright eye of Hesper, in the morn,
In Nature's fairest forms—Is ought so fair
As virtuous friendship?"

Literature

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UMI

PREFACE.

TO Miss Edgeworth, whose name ought never to be pronounced without gratitude and respect, the public is indebted for a revolution in works of imagination. Delineations of real characters and manners, pictures of the age and times in which we live, (to which future historians and philosophers will be glad to refer) good sense, sound principle and unaffected feeling, have, in these lighter productions of literature, been substituted for the wonders of ancient romance, for the intricate incidents inflated descriptions, and still more in-

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flated sentiments, of the modern novel. Amusement and instruction are thus happily and inseparably blended; and, from their connexion, more widely and generally diffused.

I have been induced to resume a pen long thrown aside, by no other view or solicitude than that of co-operating, in some degree, with the admirable writer before mentioned, and others of my own sex who have entitled themselves to a portion of the same grateful respect. Though only *one* talent should have been entrusted to me; we are taught by the purest of moralists, that *one* cannot, with impunity, be folded in a napkin, or suffered to rust disused.

FAMILY ANNALS.

CHAP. I.

"THERE is something," said Mr. Seymour to his younger daughter, who, her work in her hand rather than working, sat, with her aunt and her sister, by the couch on which their father was reclining in his library—"There is something both supplicating and deprecating in the glance of those eyes that so frequently stray from thy work to the face of my sister, as if to implore her aid in some project or purpose."

"Why, the truth is, brother," replied Mrs. Percy to this observation, "that Char-

lotte, with, I am sorry to say, her usual improvidence, is again embarrassed in her finances; a circumstance which, as it has, I believe, occurred before more than once, she wants courage to reveal to you without my aid."

"That her courage," observed Mr. Seymour gravely, "should, on such an occasion, fail her, surprises me less, after what has before passed on the same subject, than does the occasion itself."

"Dear brother, we must make some allowances for young people and giddy heads: Charlotte is, beside, an open-hearted generous girl: she will learn the value of money, doubt it not, as she grows older."

"Perhaps when the knowledge is too late to avail her. My daughters, I hope, have not been so ill-taught, nor so ill-trained, as to plead youthful giddiness as an excuse for their faults,—more especially for

the repetition of faults. Charlotte is, you say, generous; I like to have words well defined, and things called by their right names. In what, I pray you, does her generosity consist?"

"She is free in making little presents to her young friends and acquaintance; and I have observed, on a variety of occasions with approbation of her magnificent spirit, that to our own domestics, and to the servants of others, from whom she receives any little services, she gives twice as much as do other young people of her age and rank in life."

"This *you* term generosity, and *I* an idle and pernicious ostentation. In respect to making presents, it is a hacknied but good observation, that we should be just before we are generous, and of true generosity some self-denial must make a part: what vanity takes from avarice is but the mere exchange of one vice for another. By

Iona & Peter Opie

Opie A532

a double payment of domestics for services which it is their duty to perform, and for which they are already sufficiently remunerated, we but encrease their cupidity; while, by rendering them dissatisfied with those who are less *lavish* (a word very distinct from generous), we seek, at their expence, to raise our own consequence. My daughters are not princesses, and have therefore no right to aim at being magnificent. I would have prudence temper their liberality. Generosity is a noble virtue; vanity the vice of little minds. Those who are the most lavish in all that concerns the indulgence of their own personal feelings and fancied importance, are uniformly the least generous; and for an obvious reason, because they can least afford to be so."

"But, surely, brother, this is being too severe! Eighteen rarely defines and calculates. Relieve Charlotte this once from her difficulties, and I will answer for her future discretion"

"You will in so doing be very bold. But I should be glad to know why it is, that, while I give to each of my daughters the same quarterly allowance, it is found insufficient by the younger only?"

"Dear sir," exclaimed Charlotte, with a mortified air, "I know not that I am, though far less wise and good, more expensive than my sister; my wardrobe is neither more valuable nor more various; and I certainly do not expend so much money upon books."

"That is because you have not the same pleasure in reading, and profit likewise less by what you read; you take also less care of your clothes when purchased, of course your wardrobe requires to be more frequently replenished. I have often observed, and with pleasure, that Ellen, though never fine or over-dressed, is always perfectly neat and even elegant in her appearance; while Ellen's sister is negligent or

dressed for parade and shew, alternately, in the contrary extreme. Those lesser ornaments, trinkets and trimmings, are multiplied, which, while they greatly enhance the expense and the labour of dress, add little or nothing to its general effect. The majority of persons who fall into pecuniary difficulties owe their ruin to small expenses frequently repeated. It is *but* this, and it is *but* that, say they; till trifles, by arithmetical progression, swell into a magnitude but little, in the first instance, anticipated. The true art of economy, like the true spirit of generosity, has its origin in *self-denial;* without it no fortune will prove sufficient, nor will there be any merit in bestowing. Charlotte is vain, profuse, self-indulgent, inconsiderate; therefore Charlotte cannot afford to be truly generous, and will always be embarrassed and exposed to mortification. But Ellen has acquired over herself a voluntary power; she knows how to refuse to herself what it would be imprudent to grant; she is neither ostentatious nor infirm of purpose; thus, when principle calls upon her and duty points, she is able to be generous to others and just to herself."

"Oh, my dear sir," said Ellen, while a modest blush overspread her cheek, "you give me too much credit, and do me too much honour. Precious as your approbation is to me, I am pained to receive it at my sister's expence: I am her elder, and various circumstances have combined to force upon me more serious reflection than ought to be expected from her younger and more lively temper. If I possess any just principles or modes of thinking, I am, and I own it with grateful pleasure, indebted to you as their source."

"You are a good girl, and I will not distress your delicacy even by giving you that commendation which is justly your due. But, my children, the present situation of my health, in addition to my various infir-

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mities, assures me that my life will not be long, or rather that it is drawing towards its close. My estate will be your brother's; it is not large, and very inadequate to the *really* generous and magnificent spirit which he possesses; a spirit which is not, I fear, with all his high and noble qualities, sufficiently balanced by discretion, or a calculation of consequences. Three thousand pounds each, is all that I can bequeath to my daughters; a fortune that, with the utmost prudence, will, unmarried, be but barely sufficient to their independence; and that will scarcely entitle them to form very splendid alliances. My sister must shortly return to her own house and family, and I would fain, if practicable, see you both married, and under good protection, before I die. Why that sigh, that blush, Ellen?"

"I was not conscious of either, sir."

"When you say so, you are not, I suspect, quite sincere. But to return to my

subject. I have had a proposal made for you, my girl, that, should it meet with your approbation, will enlarge the boundaries of that economy of which you are so admirable a mistress, and enable you to indulge the kind propensity of your nature in doing good to others."

"I have no ambition, sir. Wealth does not enter into my scheme of happiness."

"Will you, Charlotte, say as much?"

"No, indeed, sir; I frankly confess that affluence has for me great charms."

"You are right, my dear," observed Mrs. Percy, 'quite right. Young as you are, I perceive, and perhaps you have to thank me for it, that you know something of the world, in which every thing worth having is to be purchased?"

"I am not, sister, entirely of your opi-

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'As virtuous friendship?"

nion; though, I suspect, less romantic upon the subject than my daughter Ellen, who discovers but little curiosity respecting her wealthy suitor."

"If I am not curious, (replied Ellen, with a smile) it is because I have a presentiment that his suit will be vain, and I should feel no pleasure in inflicting mortification. What a pity, that he should make so unlucky a choice."

"Do not decide too precipitately; that will not become your character of prudence. If riches are not to you a recommendation, neither I presume, would they form an objection; you are too wise to affect to despise the power of benefiting yourself and others."

"Most certainly! Yet I should almost fear to encounter the temptations and the responsibility of great wealth."

"This lover, however, is not a Crœsus,

nor yet an Indian nabob; though he inherited from his family a handsome property, which he is reported to have more than quadrupled by extensive mercantile concerns. He is a bachelor of some standing, gay for a commercial man, and of a fair and honourable character. He has a fancy for a wife not quite half his own age, and my Ellen is the fortunate damsel who has attracted his attention."

"Alas, sir, I have no heart to bestow; and if I had, this man, as you describe him, would not be likely to win its affections."

"For the modest the prudent Ellen, this I confess (said the aunt of the young ladies) is rather an explicit declaration. I wish my little Charlotte had charmed the fancy of this antiquated swain. Let me tell you, niece, that, to a woman of sense, difference of years, where a tempting fortune offers, would form no such formidable objection. The chance of being a young, rich, and in

inflated descriptions, and still more in-

dependent widow, is what few women would despise."

"Pardon me, madam; but God forbid that I should be so profligate as to contemplate the death of a man to whom I solemnly promised to devote my own life."

"The rebuke is just, sister, and ought not to offend you. But tell me, Ellen, do you indeed believe, that, with an inequality of age, happiness in a married life is not compatible?"

"I do not absolutely assert its *utter* incompatibility, since there can be no rule that admits not of exception; but certainly, when that inequality is great, happiness ought not to be expected. Domestication is, I have heard, and I believe, a great trial; a trial perhaps which but few characters can abide; and, to give it a chance of success in a married life, it appears to me, that a certain parity of tastes, of principle, of feeling, of inclination, and of habits, is necessary; which parity is rarely to be found, and ought never to be calculated upon, between persons at very different periods of life. I am not so romantic as my aunt chuses to believe me. That delightful sentiment, or rather combination of sentiments, which is termed *love* in youth, appears to me principally valuable as a preparation for that tender, indulgent, more endearing species of friendship, which, arising out of a sympathy of character and a community of interests, alone can render marriage a desirable state. Respect, esteem, approbation must precede and accompany that affection, which I should consider it as indispensable to feel for the man whom I should make my husband, and the arbiter, if I may so speak, of my destiny. I am myself imperfect, and therefore perfection I should not require; but to distrust the principles, the honour, the morals of him to whom I entrusted my own, would render me either guilty or miserable. To respect and to confide in his

judgement and his understanding would also, I confess, be to me necessary. To a mind of any powers, feeling or delicacy, I know of few punishments more severe than the struggle between duty and contempt; than to be confined to the society of those with whom you have scarcely an idea in common, and by whom you can be as little appreciated as understood. Such a connexion would be that of the living with the dead; or, worse, the constant jarring of opposing elements."

"And yet, (observed Mr. Seymour,) it has been said by a man* both eloquent and wise, and frequently repeated, 'that the strongest affections have been founded on contrasts.'"

"Does not this observation, dear sir, require to be distinguished and explained? Contrast and opposition of character may stimulate the caprices of the passions; but

* St. Pierre, Studies of Nature.

surely you would not, as Dr. Watts in his charming poem* expresses it, 'join the gentle to the rude!'"

"But, in the same ingenious composition, two violent persons are compared to 'Sampson's young foxes, with fire-brands tied between.'"

"Yes, (said Ellen, gravely,) but the violent and outrageous should, I believe, always live alone; or, at least, remain unmarried, for woe to those who are subjected to their rage. I will not however, deny, that some contrast in temper and character may be favourable to domestication. A temper on one side too flexible and soft may be sustained by more vigour and firmness on the other; and the sallies of a lively imagination may serve to cheer the intervals of relaxation from profounder studies and pursuits."

* Indian Philosopher.

"Then you justify a man of sense and learning in making choice of a merely lively and agreeable—shall I say—common-place woman;"

"Indeed I do not. Such a woman, as I before observed, will never understand nor know his value; she will be incapable of sympathising in his pursuits; nor, as the mistress of his house, the mother of his children, the manager of his affairs, can he have any confidence in her. No friendship, properly so called, can exist between them; and marriage, it has been justly observed, if not a state of the highest and most endearing friendship, is something foolish or vicious."

"I perceive, that the suit of my rich merchant must prove vain; he is certainly not the *maid's husband*, as described by my romantic Ellen."

"But why *romantic* dear sir? Is it not

from your own instructions, your own observations on life and character, that my principles and opinions are derived? and if so, is there, let me ask, any thing in them so very impracticable and absurd?"

"It is not, my dear girl, to your principles or to your opinions that I object; but rather to what I suspect to be their secret application."

"If you, my kind, my indulgent father, really *object*, I shall, while thus immature in experience and age, certainly think myself bound to yield to your objections; and even in future, to give to them, with an attentive examination, their due weight."

"That is spoken like the daughter in whom I have ever delighted, and in whose duty and discretion I fully confide. At the same time, I owe it to the merit of Mr. Neville to declare; that, did I see any probability of his securing by his profession that competence which I consider as neces-

sary to the honourable and liberal support of a family, I know no man on whom I would so cheerfully bestow the hand of my Ellen, and a precious boon I should consider such a gift."

"But why should he not, sir? May not talent, probity, and perseverance, command success? In the mean time we can wait. We are both young."

"Ah, my love! you can yet scarcely understand the misery, where the feelings are deeply interested, of a protracted engagement; that suspense, those alternations of fear and of hope, that fret the mind, wear the health, sicken the heart, and like a deadly canker, blast the blossom and promise of youth. I will tell you *why* I doubt the success of our friend. In the first place, though his talents and acquirements are of a superior order, and though he is both active and capable of application, he is too modest, too sensitive, too delicately scrupulous, to be calculated for success at the bar.

He is unfit to brow-beat witnesses; he would undertake no cause which he did not believe to be just; he would not use his ingenuity to colour oppression or fraud, or to 'make the worse appear the better reason.'"

"Ah! dear sir, what an affecting eulogium."

"Hear me out. And, in the next place, were his character and abilities of a different order, his physical constitution, notwithstanding his profound legal knowledge, and the elegance and justness of his taste, unfits him for exertions of eloquence. To the talents of Cicero he should add the lungs of Demosthenes, and his are, I had almost said, alarmingly defective."

"You terrify and distress me, sir: I must and I will hope better things. But of one circumstance, but just come to my knowledge, allow me to inform you. A distant relative of Mr. Neville's who died a few days since, has, from the estimation in which

he held his character, bequeathed to him the sum of five thousand pounds. Now this, my dear sir, with the three thousand which you have had the goodness to allot as the portion of your daughter, will, should your sad prediction, which heaven avert! be realized, secure to us a decent competence; with which, not only comfort, but happiness, should life be spared, will, I trust, prove very compatisble. At least it will set us above sordid want, and preserve us from the misery of dependence and obligation."

"This, I confess, alters, in some respect, the question. But four hundred per annum, the interest of eight thousand pounds, for on the principal, I presume, you would not think it right to break, will afford but a scanty income to a young couple educated in affluence and in the lap of indulgence, and possessing a cultivated delicacy of taste."

"But, recollect sir, Mr. Neville is a

younger branch of his family, and I am a younger daughter of mine; on neither side therefore are we entitled to form expectations of wealth. Allow me also to say, that thanks to your kind instructions, I shall have, I hope and trust, sufficient fortitude and piety, good sense and good principle, more especially when aided and stimulated by a worthy example, to render me content with the situation in which Providence may think fit to place me: and to enable me to chasten my inclinations, and circumscribe my expenditure, within the limits of my circumstances."

"All for *love*, or the world well lost!" observed Mrs. Percy with a sarcastic smile.

The cheek of Ellen flushed.

"No, madam, I am not so giddy a creature; I would not dare to encounter hazards, and incur privations, to which I deemed my strength and resolution inadequate. Still

die. Why that sigh, that blush, Ellen?"

"I was not conscious of either, sir."

"When you say so, you are not, I suspect, quite sincere. But to return to my

perceive, and perhaps you have to thank me for it, that you know something of the world, in which every thing worth having is to be purchased?"

"I am not, sister, entirely of your opi-

less would I be the means of entailing failure and calamity on the man whom I love and esteem."

"But are you sure that in future, *he* may not reflect upon an early and imprudent marriage as having enchained him through life, and bound him down to a station mortifying to those aspiring hopes and anticipations by which every man, more especially when possessing talents, is animated and buoyed up on his entrance into life?"

"I have, indeed, been greatly deceived in the character of Mr. Neville, if it is of the description which you seem to suppose."

"But, that on these occasions, young ladies should be deceived, or should assist in deceiving themselves, is not, you will allow, very uncommon or extraordinary."

"Most certainly. But as the acquaintance between the gentleman in question

and myself, has been of long standing; and as our attachment, if I may so express myself, has been a preference, not founded on mere external advantages, fortune or showy accomplishments, but growing out of mutual sympathy and esteem, I have a title to hope, and to believe also, that it is something more than mere illusion; and that the sentiments and views from which it took its rise, are likely to render it equally permanent and sincere."

"I give you full credit, my Ellen;" said her father, with a look of affectionate approbation; "and though I am persuaded, that absolute want of decent comforts of life, uncertainty of the sustenance of to-morrow, or dependance upon others for support, are among the heaviest evils of life—yet, am I equally convinced that the luxuries, or the ostentation of wealth, are little connected with the happiness of a rational, virtuous, and well principled mind. Such I be-

responsibility of great wealth."

"This lover, however, is not a Crœsus,

The chance of being a young, rich, and in-

lieve both your's and Mr. Neville's to be; and I shall have joy in placing my darling, the comfort of my declining years and still more declining constitution, before I close my eyes upon this world, under the affectionate protection of a wise, a worthy, and virtuous man."

"Ah! dear sir; let my tears thank you, I cannot speak; and may I add with the Poet, 'If I could; words were not made to vent such thoughts as mine.' Allow me to retire."

"Excellent girl! image and representative of thy lost and ever lamented mother! Your sister, Charlotte, has given you a noble lesson."

"Yes, sir; and I both love and respect my sister; but her example is, I will own, beyond my soaring."

"This, my dear, I have not now to learn."

"True, sir; but though I shall never reach my sister's heights, for *all* have not the same vocation, I shall, I hope and trust never disgrace you, sir."

"I hope not; but to be in debt; and, when our expenditure exceeds our receipts, we cannot easily avoid debts, is, I should think, for a young lady, who, under a parent's roof can have no real want unsupplied, a situation, if not absolutely disgraceful, somewhat discreditable."

"Alas, my dear sir, I never in my life could learn arithmetic. In obedience to your commands, and in emulation of my sister, I attempted to keep a regular account of my expenses; but, somehow or other, I never could make a balance; and at length, wearied with puzzling my brains in useless endeavours, I was provoked to throw my book into the fire. And, then, every time I went out, so many pretty things fell in my way, and so many temptations

me, that a certain parity of tastes, of princi-

rable. To respect and to confide in his

assailed me, that all my good and economical resolutions, and indeed I made many, melted away before them."

"This statement may, by you, be considered as very amusing and very witty; but pray let me ask you, how, on these occasions, you would act, or how extricate yourself from the embarrassments into which your light and inconsiderate disposition had plunged you, had you not a father's purse to apply to?"

"Oh! if that unhappy period should ever arrive—and most grievous, notwithstanding my seeming lightness would it be to me—I hope I should have a *husband's* purse to which to apply; for, I do assure you, sir, if Ellen's old beau, in the sad disappointment of his ill-fated love, would be so good as to turn his eyes towards my charms, which my glass tells me are not less captivating than are those of my sister, I feel by no means ill disposed to console him for his mortifica-

tion, and to save him from hanging or drowning."

"Perhaps so; but this point appears doubtful. I do not know, indeed, whether I ought to wish it: a marriage on such principles is as indefensible as perilous: yet, light and thoughtless as you are, I believe you would shrink from actual vice, at least what is so deemed by the world; and a prudent man, or a man of moderate fortune, you would ruin or disgust. I have never ceased to regret, and to reproach myself also, that I should, by any circumstances, have been induced to allow you to pass so large a period of your childhood and youth at a distance from me."

"That reflection, brother (said Mrs. Percy, colouring) more than glances at me; and I think, I ought to resent it."

"No, pray do not; it is too late now, and all was kindly meant."

"It was so; and I trust, my niece's destiny in life will not prove the worse for it. You and Ellen may be very wise and good personages; but not over-well calculated for this world, or the existing state of things. My little Charlotte is a girl for whom no parent need blush; and, should she have the misfortune to lose you, or should she miss of a wealthy husband, to whose rank and station she would give so much grace, she shall find an asylum under my roof. She is innocent though gay-hearted, and with a taste for the gratifications suited to her sense and age. I have for her conduct no fears: and, while Ellen retires to a cottage and love, her sister will in the world, be more in her element."

"I believe so; and I thank you for the protection you offer her, and of which she may soon stand in need. I trust, she will herself, feel properly grateful. In the mean time, I will once more relieve her from her pecuniary difficulties but it shall be, and

indeed I feel it will be, the last time. Mark the counsel of a dying father, Charlotte; and, be assured, that liberty, independence, respectability of character and dignity of mind, are all inseparably connected with a wise economy. He who exceeds his income one year will be still more embarrassed in the next; to embarrassment, distress will succeed; and ruin and disgrace will terminate the scene."

"Ah! dear sir, you are very good; I am sorry for the concern I occasion you. I repent, I will (smiling through the tears that ran down her cheek)—I will make a new account book; I will try to imitate my sister in every thing but in falling in love with a man of poverty and honour, and this for *his* sake rather than for my own."

Mr. Seymour signified a wish for silence and repose. The conference broke up. Mrs. Percy left the room with some ap-

"But why *romantic* dear sir? Is it not

Neville to declare; that, did I see any probability of his securing by his profession that competence which I consider as neces-

pearance of displeasure. Charlotte remained a moment behind her, half bent her knees, kissed her father's hand affectionately, and softly withdrew.

CHAP. II.

"My dear Charlotte," exclaimed her sister, as she precipitately entered the dressing room, in which the former, elegantly attired, was, after dismissing her maid, most complacently viewing in a large mirror the entire reflection of her finely formed little person, "My dear Charlotte, I hope the hint which I have just received from Mrs. Percy has no foundation in fact?"

"Fie! Ellen; so you hope your good aunt has told a fib; or, to adopt the more polite language of Swift's Houyhnhnms, has said the thing that is not. Is this, think you, very respectful to her matronship?"

lous, to be calculated for success at the bar.

days since, like

"Dear girl, do, if possible, be serious on what appears to me a *very serious* subject."

"Why, to you grave and sentimental maidens, who conceive that, when they marry, every faculty and every inclination is, in submissive duty, to be yielded to a *despot*, marriage, to be sure, must wear a formidable aspect: but to me, a woman of the great, or, if you like it better, of the gay world, the subject has been otherwise considered. Yet, I will allow (smiling archly as she spake) that, to a true heroine, it is a little mortifying to find a discarded lover, instead of making a voyage to Greece in search of the promontory of Leucate, consoling himself by the exchange of flowery fetters for those more weighty and galling, in which he had witlessly entangled himself."

"It is then the mere triumph of coquettry, I will not say how unjustifiable at which you are aiming; or do you really in-

tend to vow at the altar, and bind yourself by the laws of your country, to love, honour and respect a man whose character and qualities are, I more than suspect, but little calculated to inspire either of those sentiments?"

"A mere custom-house oath, my dear: it is by the imposer of obligations, not by those on whom they are imposed, that they are violated."

"Supposing them to be indeed an imposition; but, surely, not when they are voluntarily incurred?"

"You, dear Ellen, are a philosopher, and therefore can be at no loss to comprehend, that there is not only a *physical* but a *moral* necessity. Now, *physically*, I am not, I confess, compelled to console Mr. Wycherly for the scorn of my elder and more sage sister, by bestowing upon him my own equally fair hand, which my smiles,

"But, recollect sir, Mr. Neville is a

and incur privations, to which I deemed my strength and resolution inadequate. Still

in the very moment of mortified self-love and importance, gave him courage to solicit: but *morally*, I cannot, when our dear father is removed from us to his kindred heaven, live upon the interest of three thousand pounds. Even though I should resume my account book, the balance, I am persuaded, would never be even; and, though I have all due respect for our worthy aunt, her establishment in London is not exactly suited to my *magnificent* ideas; nor is her temper such as I should like to be constantly exposed to; a declining fashionable *belle* is usually a little soured. What resource then remains other than this which so opportunely offers, and which promises me, with independence and affluence, the power of indulging my favorite propensities?"

"Have but patience, a little patience: our dear father's life may be longer than our fears presage; my house, should I be mistress of one, will ever be open to receive

you; our brother, who loves his sisters, is daily expected in England; your attractions, your accomplishments, your powers of captivation, may draw to you other suitors, better fitted by age and character to give you a taste for higher, more endearing sources of happiness."

"I understand you; but as the French say, *chacun a son gout!* Now I never was in love with any thing but my own pretty person, and the last new fashion: I am too vain and too volatile to find happiness in a passion so serious as love. The more substantial, and more varied gratifications which fortune can give, are better suited to my tastes and capacities."

"You do yourself wrong; you are capable, and you will feel it, I fear, too late, of better things. How much to be deplored is that talent for the arts, for the cultivation of which in the metropolis our dear father was prevailed upon to allow of your so fre-

quent and long visits to Mrs. Percy. Yet, we had hopes that your superior intellect would not thus have been perverted and subjugated."

"It was my destiny, dear girl; and to repine would be vain. But, let me ask, whether, with your enlarged understanding and liberal principles, it is quite philosophical and fair, to insist on others seeing through your own medium? Whether the difference in our characters and tastes has its source in nature or in accident, in organization or in circumstance, I am not sufficiently profound to determine: but, certain it is, that difference is real and great. Love and a cottage would, in less than six months, kill me with *ennui*: the world is my passion, and the theatre upon which I am decided, if in my power, to exhibit myself and my pretensions."

And to discover, when the discovery is too late to be availing, the heartless, unsa-

tisfactory nature of the passion to which you sacrifice. It has been well and truly observed, that *fools* only are ever made happy by vanity.—And it is a fool's paradise to which the highly gifted Charlotte aspires."

"Your description, my dear, severely as it bears upon the foibles of your poor little sister, would, I shrewdly suspect, be found not inapplicable to other passions besides this universal one of vanity."

"Yes; to every mere passion, I allow, upon which duties and high duties, cannot be engrafted. Passions are the winds only by which the bark of life is wafted; it is the helm of reason that must safely direct its course."

"A very pretty metaphor, to which some few years hence I will pay more attention; but, really, my little vessel, at present, floats so smoothly on the summer sea, which

my sister; but her example is, I will own, beyond my soaring."

"This, my dear, I have not now to learn."

in useless endeavours, I was provoked to throw my book into the fire. And, then, every time I went out, so many pretty things fell in my way, and so many temptations

dimples and ripples and sparkles so prettily around it, while the light zephyrs of this same vanity fill and swell its gay streamers and silken sails, that I cannot but indulge the delightful placidity which its undulating motion produces."

"Beware of treacherous quick sands and hidden shoals!"

"Love also has its wrecks! Dreadful are the rocks on which its hapless votaries have been driven, and unfathomable the gulphs which have swallowed them up."

"Granted, if that love is not founded upon principle, guided by duty, and chastened by propriety."

"Even, with all these correctives, you will not deny, that it *may*, that it *has*, and that it is not unlikely to produce misery. 'The course of true love (says our own Shakespear) never did run smooth;' and

how did I see the cheek of my Ellen blanched, and even her lips turn pale, when our father spoke of the weak lungs and pulmonary tendency of her lover. Again, that tremor! Forgive me, my sweet sister, for thus renewing apprehensions so appalling.

I hope, Charlotte, and I trust, (still I own, at the idea my heart sinks within me) should the calamity you hint at, so *great a calamity*, be destined, as the trial of my fortitude, that, though the tenderness of my heart should render philosophy a too feeble support, resignation to the Almighty disposer of events, and confidence in the paternal wisdom of His providence, would yet sustain me?

And, doubtless, they would do so, my pious and amiable sister; but my mind must content itself with a lower flight. With a character less elevated and heroic than that of my Ellen, I neither aspire to her enjoyments, nor should dare to incur her hazards.

My happiness, or gratifications, if you judge that a more appropriate term, will never depend upon any *one* individual. I will take the world as it goes, and try to make the best of it. When all things change around us, it were folly to become stationary. If I cannot enjoy, let me at least be amused."

"There might be some wisdom in this, were the world eternal, or was no hope afforded us of a higher and a better, for which the performance of duties here, serious duties, must prepare and fit us."

"A truce, dear Ellen, I pray you! or, by summoning up all these sombre images, you will chace the bloom from my cheek, and spoil the harmony and play of my features. Not a trace, I declare (running to examine herself in the glass) of a dimple remains; and the liquid lustre of my eyes is becoming languid and dim. I have an engagement this evening, and was armed for conquest, merciless girl that you are!"

"The conquest, I understood, had been already atchieved."

"True, yes; but, after alluring a lover by complacency and smiles, a little coquettry is an excellent stimulatus to preserve the new born inclination from languishing. Know you not what is said by our English poet:—

'Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create
'As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate.'

"Farewell love; the *il-penseroso* becomes your soft expressive features, accords with the flexible sounds of your plaintive voice; while *l' allégro* should be the motto of your more animated, yet perhaps less affectingly seductive sister."

herself, feel properly grateful
time, I will once more relieve her from her pecuniary difficulties but it shall be, and

and repose. The conference broke up. Mrs. Percy left the room with some ap-

said the thing that is not. Is this, think
you, very respectful to her matronship?"

"It is then, the more triumph of [illegible] Waverly; for the scorn of my elder and

hibit myself and my pretensions."

And to discover, when the discovery is too late to be availing, the heartless, unsa-

"A very pretty metaphor, to which some few years hence I will pay more attention; but, really, my little vessel, at present, floats so smoothly on the summer sea, which

all things going on better than we, at first, had cause to apprehend. The courage, the calmness, the kind concern for those around him, displayed by my dear Neville on this occasion has, for my attachment is no light and capricious fondness, by heightening my respect for his character, and esteem for the qualities of his mind, endeared him if possible, more than ever to my heart.

"Alas! my poor sister: what a picture in thy last, on more than one account, affecting letter, dost thou draw of thy unhappy lot. Yet, remember, that lot chosen, delf-

at the most important period of susceptible youth, removed my Charlotte from the paternal roof, from the precepts, and from the example of true wisdom, and placed her amidst artificial and sophisticated society, amidst the contagion of what is falsely, because partially, called the world. But, withheld by true sisterly commiseration, I forbear.

"You judge rightly, my Charlotte, in believing, that after what has taken place, the valuable life of my husband must not again be put to hazard: and that an immediate

necessity, to galling dependence or sordid poverty, think you, that with my Neville and my infant children I will allow myself to complain?

"It is true, that I have felt, and still acknowledge, the value of affluence, from the power which is united with it, a power of great worth when rightly used and improved. I take also a pleasure in elegance as connected with refinement and taste. But what happy lot ever comprehended *all* that is desirable and good? While my heart is spared where it most exquisitely feels, it will cost me no great effort of philosophy to encounter, and to brave trials so much inferior: and even were I inclined to repine, I should be shamed by the example before me.

"Men are every where more exposed than are women to the assaults of ambition, and to the temptations of pecuniary accumulation. While my husband, in the spring tide

and summer of life, with talents and pretensions that justified the most aspiring views, shews himself superior to the accidents of fortune, shall I prove myself incapable of admiring his magnanimity, of sharing his principles, and unworthy of the distinction of his love? My habits, also, thanks to my excellent father, are simple and unexpensive? and shall I add (I believe I am too proud to be vain,) the value I have for myself is founded—next to the pride I have in being the chosen and bosom companion of a man of sense and virtue,—upon what essentially and intrinsically belongs to myself. It affords me pleasure to be esteemed by others, and the esteem of the worthy, I shall, I trust, never wilfully forfeit: but those whose regard for me rises and falls with the external advantages or disadvantages, with the accidents of my situation, can never inflict upon me either mortification or pain. Their comments and remarks will never reach my ear, or they will pass over it unheeded. The region I move in is, allow

me to say, too high to be obscured by the smoke and vapour of theirs.

"From this egotism you will at least gather, that we have happily no occasion to make application, even were that application likely to succeed, for assistance by the acceptance of which we could not but feel ourselves humbled if not degraded. Much less would we embarrass a brother, a kind and affectionate brother with all his faults, by our difficulties: when, alas! it appears but too probable, he will have still severer trials of his own."

"The small fortune with which we began our married life is not greatly lessened by those expences which necessarily attend the first outset in the world; and the formation, however frugal, of a domestic establishment: that *much* should, in so brief a period, be added to our original store cannot be expected. A capital, however, of seven thousand pounds remains; this, while

we determine and contrive to expend only the interest, will be a provision for our children, to educate whom in frugal and industrious habits will be at once our duty and our care.

"Neither inclination nor prudence will allow of our remaining in London; but an active friend of my Neville's has already undertaken to look out for a neat dwelling, suited to our views, in some cheap, mild, and salubrious situation in the western or southern parts of England or Wales. Thither, when our affairs are settled, and my husband's renovated strength admits of his removal, we shall repair, either by water if practical, or by some other easy mode of conveyance.

"You may perceive then, dear Charlotte, that we have but little cause to repine; we look forward, on the contrary with cheerful hope. Our new situation will find us occupation so constant, that we shall

that will remain to her and her's, must, with her délicate habits, and still more delicate frame, and with the feeble health of her dear invalid, prove insufficient even for

scarcely have time to regret those social advantages which are in the metropolis to be enjoyed, and which the learning, the knowledge, the talents of my husband so admirably fitted him to relish. That knowledge, however, those talents, will afford him resources in retirement; and, in the education of his children, will prove invaluable.

"When settled in our new plan of life, and the interval I trust will not be long, my Charlotte shall, if they will interest her, receive the details. Till then I shall not have time to write another line; for to relieve my husband, in his present circumstances, as far as in me lies, from every exertion and every care is, not merely my duty, but my highest gratification."

"Let me, nevertheless, before I depart, hear again from my sister; and more of the affairs of our brother, respecting whom I have serious anxieties.

ELLEN.

From Charlotte.

"Ah, yes! you are, you were always right, wise, amiable and respectable. But, as you justly observe, you soar in a region too lofty for us poor mundane creatures, entangled in the flowery, (or rather silken) fetters of terrestrial usages, fashions and pursuits, to look up to you without aching eyes. How the sage our father, with the good lady our mother, contrived to introduce into the world, creatures so varying in temperament and character as their three descendants have proved, is a problem too puzzling for my poor brain to solve. It is true, as you intimate, some variety existed in our mode of training; or, as the philosophers would say, in the circumstances that formed our moral atmosphere. But, beside this, I am greatly inclined to suspect, and, as some extenuation for my follies, very willing to believe, that an original germ of difference must have existed, whether seated

in the organs of the brain, or resulting from the system of the nerves.

"Yet, with whatever levity I may appear to treat this by no means light subject, far be from me the envious meanness of depreciating the admirable qualities to which I cannot aspire. And why *cannot*? asks my Ellen, with her usual mild and tender earnestness, when her heart is in the question. Is not reformation the next step to conviction? What merit can there be in acknowledging faults which we are determined not to relinquish? Why first, dear girl, if you have looked into society and character with a discerning eye, you may have discovered, that there are, generally speaking, only two causes, whether operating separately or combined, that can lead people to the confession of their defects: one is a secret consciousness, that the endeavour to conceal them would be vain; the other a determination never to attempt their subjugation. Nevertheless, to disguise from themselves

the feebleness or the odious selfishness which is thus implied, they spread before their mental eyes, the gauze veil of spurious candour: that is, they add to being unprincipled and unamiable, the effrontery of defying all decency, and glorying in their shame. The hypocrite is surely to be preferred to the daring profligate; the former, at least, shews a respect for virtue, the latter a contempt; and that which is at first merely affected, may, by repetition and habit, become at length genuine and sincere. Acknowledging folly, therefore, and acknowledging guilt, are sure almost to become inveterate. Take at his word, and avoid him who has for his own character no respect.

"How severe, in the preceding observations, do I seem to myself; for follies surely, great follies, I have and attempt not to deny: whether guilt can be imputed to me, is, I hope more questionable. Know you not, my Ellen, by theory at least, the fatal progress of error? One wrong step, one

abuse of reason or dereliction of principle, how does it entangle us, in what an inextricable labyrynth may it involve us! I have taken that step, as you tell me, with open eyes. Respectable and venerable as are the higher sources of morals, they are also surely much connected with taste. Man, we are likewise told by an eloquent French writer, is a bundle of habits; and it is true. My tastes and my habits were then, as you say, unfortunately and early perverted. The circle of fashion, narrow and factitious as is that circle, I falsely and foolishly considered as the *world;* I perceived not how illusive were its phantasmagoria; its imposing tone awed my reason, its insolent pretences imposed on my unwary mind. Its *fool's paradise* was spread out before me, and tempted my inexperienced feet: glitter and foil appeared to me as the solid ore; I became dazzled, intoxicated, and wilfully deceived. I perceived not the distinction between pleasure and happiness, the admiration of fools and the respect of my own

mind. I felt not, buoyed up by the light spirits of youth, how exhausting were tumult and crowds, how empty the gratifications they afforded, nor how vapid the state that succeeded.

"Thus I made my choice, and I must now abide by the result. But, by that choice, you say, however ill or mistaken, duties are imposed upon me. It may be so; but I cannot fulfil them. I neither love nor respect the man to whom I have given the title of husband, how then *can* I perform the duties of a wife? And does he deserve that I should perform them? What were his motives in taking for a bride one whose youth, whose gaiety, whose character, forbade all ideas of sympathy, all expectations of friendship, of tender confidence? Even, in what had the semblance of a wiser choice, when he directed the artillery of his antient gallantry towards my graver and more meritorious sister, her youth and personal graces were his princi-

pal, if not his sole attractions. Gross on one side, then, I fear, and venal on the other were the motives of our nuptial contract. He demanded not my esteem and respect; and to give him my affection was impossible.

"Yes, I cannot conceal from myself, that I bartered my youth for glitter and show: dearly would they have been purchased, even though the expectation of them had been less imperfectly fulfilled. But, with encreasing years and infirmities, accelerated perhaps prematurely by the excesses of a gay youth, infirmities from which my feelings revolt disgusted, and which I cannot solace, this husband of mine becomes more exacting, more querulous, more sordid, and less endurable to me in any light, least of all in that to which I have given him a title.

"How venerable and how lovely, after a

life well spent, consistent and improved, is a wise and virtuous old age! How odious at such a period the imbecile faults of childhood, the corrupt remains of the habits of profligate youth! *Home*, in its best sense, 'Where polished friends, and dear 'relations, meet, and mingle into bliss'—I feel, I have none. If then, upon the wing, I seek pleasure or forgetfulness, can I do otherwise; must I be severely blamed? The powers of my mind, the consciously wasted powers, the remorses of my heart, are surely my sufficient chastisement, and may prove an expiation. Ah, suffer me at least to believe this.

"On casting back my eye through what I have been scribbling, I am both surprised and shocked. In no hands but in those of my Ellen would I entrust such dark reflections. But I dare not at present proceed. The cloud, I trust, sombre and threatening as is its aspect, is composed only of va-

who will learn wisdom by the experience of others: and deeply I again repent, are the circumstances ever to be regretted, that,

stances may require! The wants of my heart only were ever absolute and imperious. While not exposed to physical

pours and will pas away. I close then this sheet, and wait a brigter moment.

* * * * * * *

"In a mood more like myself, I resume my pen. The sun shines gloriously, and the breeze, which my open windows admit, wafts a thousand balmy sweets. I am half tempted to burn what, in a day of heavy rain, with the wind due east, was written yesterday. How atmospherical influence subdues the liveliest spirits!

"But I must now talk to you of this brother of our's, who is just returned to us, and half distracted between his *penchant* for his pretty mistress, and his sympathy in the fortunes of our Ellen and her worthy Neville. Your letter, which I put into his hand, breathing so much patient and even cheerful resignation, has been scarcely sufficient to soften his alarm.

"Dear creature! (he exclaimed) admirable woman! so fitted to shed lustre over the humblest; to grace and to adorn the highest situation. How proud am I of my sister! But I will not suffer her to sink so low, my fortunes shall be shared with her.

"Are those fortunes so ample? asked his younger sister, of whom, I suspect, he is not *quite* so vain. Has no improvidence lessened their original amount; and will they more than suffice, unshared, and without farther diminution, to the present plans of my romantic brother, and the little captive princess whose deliverance he meditates.

"We will take for our example the heroic Ellen, seek a cottage in her neighbourhood, and emulate her virtues and her happiness.

"In *theory* a very pretty scheme truly; but not quite so well suited to the practical characters of those for whose use it is pro-

are women to the assaults of ambition, and to the temptations of pecuniary accumulation. While my husband, in the spring tide

reach my ear, or they will pass over it unheeded. The region I move in is, allow

jected. *La principessa* is no heroine, no philosopher, no saint: the world, the fashionable, fascinating, wicked world, has, or I am greatly mistaken, charms irresistable for the fair one: and, as for the lover, when was his magnanimous and chivalrous soul ever debased by the petty cares, or bowed down to the sordid calculations, which a rigid balance between expenditure and its sources requires?

"For these impertinent questions you may guess how the worldly-minded and unheroic Charlotte was reviled. In vain did I, to this dear thoughtless brother of our's, endeavour to distinguish between the principles of a sound and elevated mind; the sensibilities of a pure, unpractised, tender heart, and those frothy ebullitions of the imagination, and transient impressions on the senses, which are so often confounded. A celestial angel differs not more from an earthly gnome, than virtuous affection from its base counterfeit. A first-sight impression from skin-deep beauty, and a studied manner, was made on the heart, the fancy, I should rather say, of our brother, who, setting out on no mathematical principle, his eye gratified by externals, took all that was not visible for granted. Not that I know of his dulcinea any positive ill: she is a handsome, accomplished, common-place young woman of fashion; and, added to these circumstances, her present situation, humiliating and oppressive as it certainly is, has awakened the quixotism of her lover, who is sworn to deliver her from durance vile. The great evil of the business is, that she possesses not the qualities in which he is deficient; and that the ruin which that deficiency threatens will, probably, be thus accelerated.

"Of this letter he will be the bearer; try then your influence over his wayward feelings. You can preach prudence with a grace and weight, that the example of the preacher always gives to his precepts.

period, be added to our original store cannot be expected. A capital, however, of seven thousand pounds remains; this, while

cheerful hope. Our new situation will find us occupation so constant, that we shall

"We are about to set off for the races at York, the weather continues propitious, and the carriages are in preparation. I have just received a tolerably liberal remittance from my churlish *caro sposo*, my spirits are again buoyant, *vive la bagatelle!*

"Your's,

"CHARLOTTE."

CHAP. IV.

THE meeting between Mr. Seymour and his favorite sister was affecting. His kind offers of pecuniary assistance, pressed with earnestness and fervor, were, with gentle firmness, repelled.

"We know how to contract our wants, observed Ellen; we shall not therefore feel ourselves poorer than before."

"But the sacrifices, my dear sister, that you must make!"

"Are, I believe, principally ideal. The necessaries, the decent comforts of life,

hear again from my sister; and more of the affairs of our brother, respecting whom I have serious anxieties.

ELLEN.

willing to believe, that an original germ of difference must have existed, whether seated

will be our's; all beside is purely factitious, and depends upon opinion?"

"But may not habit render certain accommodations indispensable?"

"Habits are not, though strong, unconquerable to the determined mind: to the resolution which the breaking of them requires we feel ourselves not unequal."

"Can you relinquish the charms of society, the pleasures which the metropolis affords?"

"Happiness and pleasure are distinct, bearing to each other but little resemblance. The former only have I been taught to value."

"But can you contemn the advantages of polished society, you who are so fitted both to enjoy and to adorn it?"

"I do not contemn those advantages; on

the contrary, when the mere paltry gratification of vanity is not the only end sought, I consider them not less useful and instructive than agreeable."

"Yet, you are content to resign them."

"Who can enjoy *all* they desire? With so many blessings left, ought I to be so ungrateful to the Giver of all good as to repine? Is not the beloved husband and father spared to me and my children? Are we not still placed above want and dependence? and have we not, in our own affections, and in the duties we are called upon to perform, resources to compensate the privations of which you speak?"

"Tell me, Ellen, and tell me truly, whether the heroism you display has not its source in *love*, that inspirer of all that is noble and great? A passion less lively would, I am convinced, be inadequate to the effects I see produced."

"That I love my husband, I do not hesitate to confess, and that I love him tenderly. The love which I feel, however, is not a blind impulse, an imperious passion, but an *affection* founded upon a conviction of worth, and, may I be allowed to add? a sympathy or similarity of character. Had I not first esteemed my Neville, I had never loved him. I thought I perceived in him those principles and dispositions, those qualities of the heart and mind that would confirm and strengthen what was of any worth in my own. In my union with him I sought what I have uniformly found, a faithful, enlightened, affectionate friend, a worthy father for our mutual offspring, and a prudent manager of my own and their most momentous affairs."

"Then, in your choice of him from among wealthier suitors, you were altogether cool and dispassionate."

"I do not affirm that; I felt as a human

being, as a woman, as a young woman, whose sympathies, sentiments, tastes and affections, both natural and acquired, were blended."

"You might have been deceived, or have deceived yourself."

"Doubtless; who is infallible? least of all is it to be expected from inexperienced youth."

"And had accident or time at length convinced you, that you had bestowed your heart on a libertine, a selfish and unprincipled profligate, whom your imagination had decked with every virtue, had adorned with every grace?"

"It would have proved to me most grievous and heavy of all afflictions. But, as I decided not rashly from a transient interview, or a few weeks acquaintance, and, as I also consulted the judgment of others,

between pleasure and happiness, the admiration of fools and the respect of my own

youth and personal graces were his princi-

less interested and more experienced than myself, that of my dear father especially, upon the character of the man to whom my heart inclined, I was less liable to be exposed to the misfortune of which you speak."

"But had it happened, nevertheless?"

"The shock would have been great, the trial severe: in weaning my heart from its object I should, for a time, have suffered keenly; but that heart is, I feel, so constituted, that in it love could not long have survived esteem. A virtuous mind can hold no communion with what is vicious: to such a mind vice needs only to be seen to be abhorred.—Even, 'though to adorn her every art contend.'"

"Had you been married before this discovery was made?"

"Oh! speak not of it. My mind shrinks from so terrible a supposition."

"But in its possibility?"

"Still, I should have duties to perform: the worthlessness of another could not justify me to my own heart, or acquit me at a higher tribunal, for a dereliction of those principles, the basis of which is immutable."

"Pardon me, my sister, this trial of your heart: your's is, I perceive, sterling virtue. With such a wife, I can give to Neville but little credit, and still less compassion. He must be a brute indeed whom such a woman made not all she wished."

"We are mutually indebted to each other. In the intimacies of married and domestic life, if virtues are not reciprocal their foundation is insecure. The constant dropping of water may at length wear away marble. Who can touch pitch and not be defiled?

"Why sighs my brother?"

"I can scarcely say: Charlotte, who is not gifted with secresy, has, doubtless, informed you of my present situation."

"She has told me that you are about to take a wife."

"And what says she of the object of my choice?"

"But little."

"I understand you: Charlotte is often severe, without a right to be so."

"She has not in the present case deserved to be called severe: she has spoken no ill of the lady in question."

"Nor any good, I presume!"

"But, why presume so; is there then no good to be spoken?"

"I should be very unjust if I said so. Clara is young; she has not been fortunately circumstanced; she has, by thoughtless parents, been educated above her fortunes, and is at present an unhappy, an almost heart-broken dependent upon the bounty of a female relation, a woman of a narrow mind, sordid principles and ungoverned temper. What heart can be unmoved by innocence and beauty in distress, and Clara is eminently beautiful. The commiseration and tenderness with which her situation has inspired me, appear to have procured for me a lively interest in her affections; she looks up to me as her friend and deliverer: when I appear, smiles, like the sun bursting all radiant from a cloud, light up her lovely countenance. Can I disappoint her hopes? It is true, I have made her no direct offer of my hand, but is a man of honour bound only by what he swears or says? Will he not deem equally sacred an expectation given, in what ever manner?

Such an expectation I feel I have excited, and it shall be fulfilled."

"Alas! for my brother."

"And why that *alas?* No unfavorable impression has Clara yet given of her character; circumstances only are against her?"

"And they are strong."

"But, at her age, is she not still yielding as wax?"

"I fear not."

"But I will *not* fear: the influence of the man they love, is, with your sex, all powerful."

"Admitting *this* my brother."

"Is Ellen sarcastic?"

"No; but she cannot flatter. Many high and noble qualities does my brother possess: but one more humble, not less useful, is wanting; and without which every other may become not merely worthless but pernicious."

"Name it."

"Sober self-controul."

"It is true; but can I, in a wife, expect to find a substitute for this—or, indeed, can I, does any man, wish it?"

"Why not?"

"Because it implies qualities scarcely consistant with feminine softness; or a strength of character which the generality of women, whether from nature or education I will not say, do not possess."

"Yet some do, and without being deficient in true feminine gentleness."

"I grant it: Ellen, for example; and Clara shall be schooled by my sister."

"Oh, no; excuse me; that is what I dare not undertake."

"Well, well; I will think of all this; fore-warned is said to be fore-armed. I have been thoughtless and extravagant, but my heart is tender and warm. For the wife of my bosom, the mother of my children, surely I shall be able to make great efforts."

"I hope so; yet, before taking the important step you meditate, would it not be advisable to examine and arrange your affairs, to mark out some steady plan of conduct, and to endeavour to put it out of your own power to be otherwise than equitable and just?"

"Do you then believe me capable of injustice?"

"I believe all your *feelings* to be honorable and good; but feelings are at once imperious masters and dangerous guides. The conqueror of the world would be weak could he not govern himself. With a voluntary power over ourselves virtue is intimately connected: without such a power it can scarcely exist."

"All this my be, and is, very good and very true. But, in the mean time, while I am waiting to be wise, my lovely girl will be suffering martyrdom, from that most odious of all tyrannies, the tyranny of an outrageous temper, that, with a disgusting and detestable species of selfishness, makes its splenetic gratifications out of the wounded feelings of its helpless victims whose hatred and contempt it at once provokes."

"For *hatred* substitute compassion."

"And why? Does not the daily influence of a bad temper injure as well as torture those upon whom it operates? He who is compelled to suffer injustice, to be a slave, will, when his turn shall come, be prepared to inflict it, to play the tyrant. All the vices are, like the virtues, contagious: painful and resentful feelings, too frequently called into exercise, will, in time, stifle the benevolent affections. I must first snatch Clara from the evils that surround her; and then we will mutually project our future plans."

CHAP. V.

To Charlotte.

"IT is long since I heard from my sister: I, nevertheless, take up my pen to fulfil the request contained in her last letter, with an entire conviction, that her interest in our welfare and comfort is not less lively and sincere than when that request was made.

"Tell me (said my Charlotte) when settled in your new situation, whether your resignation in the change of your circumstances, and fortitude under that change, remain unabated?

"If I feel any hesitation in replying to such an inquiry, it is from a suspicion that what I *have* experienced, since the life of my husband was no longer in danger, and *do* experience, can scarcely entitle me to claims so high. It requires but a small share of fortitude to submit to the privation of that on which a high value never was placed; and less resignation to acquiesce in a destiny better suited, perhaps, to my turn of mind and character than that for which it has been exchanged. Having therefore, no title to demand either your admiration or your sympathy, how shall I render interesting to my Charlotte, in the great and gay world of fashion and intellectual variety, the quiet narrative of simple occupation, uniform duties, and rural peace.

"We left London, and all which it contains, on the last day of April; travelling westward, by easy stages, rather more than two hundred miles. The weather brightening and softening as we proceeded, the

languid powers of my dear Neville appeared daily, I may say hourly renovated. The journey, as we managed it, far from fatiguing and exhausting, as I dreaded, seemed to give him strength. With reviving nature our hearts and our hopes revived; and when, at length, at the close of day, we reached the hamlet near which our wanderings were to terminate, nothing like the depression which exiles are supposed to feel clouded our spirits.

"It was deep twilight when the chaise stopped before a small neat farm-house, the faint outline of which only was discernable. A clean elderly woman, the ruddiness of youth on her cheek, summoned to the rustic porch by the sound of the carriage wheels, met us, with a light in her hand, at the entrance: curiosity and respect were blended in the expression of her features, as, dropping many a rustic curtsey, she conducted us into a parlour on the ground floor. Here we found a cheerful fire blazing on the

hearth, some showers having in the course of the day a little chilled the atmosphere; the tea equipage arranged in exact order, and two candles burning on the table.

"As the good woman left the room, to assist in the removal of our baggage from the chaise, my eyes and those of my beloved husband, after glancing round the apartment, met each other, and, as by a spontaneous impulse, our arms extended in a mutual embrace. If at this moment, our tears mingled, there was in them more, infinitely more, of tenderness than of sorrow. Our children claiming a share in these caresses, were alternately pressed to our hearts, and a devout aspiration of grateful reverence, mutually and fervently breathed to that beneficent Providence, from which every good and perfect gift descendeth, raised for a moment our minds and our affections from earth.

"These blended and sweet emotions gradually and gently subsiding, we gazed with encreasing satisfaction and confidence leisurely around. The room was of a moderate and convenient size; the furniture good, plain and appropriate. Every thing appeared clean and new, and all was arranged with precision.

"My brother, doubtless, informed you that a portion of our property had been expended by my Neville in the purchase of a small farm, from a more wealthy friend, who engaged to prepare it for our reception and residence.

"Behold us now then in our simple *home*, enjoying our tea by our fire-side. Small loaves mixed with milk, excellent fresh butter, sweet cakes of various shapes and forms for our little ones, new milk and cream spread our cheerful board. Never, at any table furnished with dainties, had I enjoyed so refreshing, so exquisite a meal. The looks interchanged between my hus-

band and myself, the pleasurable tears that moistened the eyes of each, needed not the aid of words to express what was passing in our thoughts. The silence of happiness, of sympathy, of confidence, is more eloquent than speech. The glee of the children on having escaped the confinement of the carriage, and on finding their limbs once more at liberty, was more loud and joyous.

"Several hours thus fled rapidly away, till a languor that stole over the softened features of my husband gave a signal for the removal of our darlings, whose eyes also began to show symptoms of heaviness, to their chamber. We followed at an early hour, but retired not to our own rest, till after, kneeling on the opposite sides of the bed in which our infants slumbered in the calm repose of health and innocence, we had, with hands extended and joined over them, offered up our united thanksgivings to that power, who like a parent at once tender and wise, had, even in the cup of

chastisement, mingled the sweetest consolations. Then, with arms affectionately entwined, and spirits calm as infancy, we entered our chamber, and, on our clean but homely bed sunk into a sleep more refreshingly profound than we had ever before, even on beds of down, and in seasons of the most prosperous fortune, experienced.

"Between six and seven in the ensuing morning our slumbers were dissipated by the rays of a bright sun, that, beaming through the opening of the window shutters, played on the white coverlid of the bed. The sound of infantine voices, as in renovated spirits, reached, at the same instant, our ears :

'The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly the approach of morn.'

"I would not allow my husband so early to quit his couch, lest the dews of the morning should not yet be exhaled; but,

remembering that I was no longer a fine lady, (though I had never indulged much in that most pernicious of all luxuries morning dozes) I sprang from my bed, passing into a dressing closet by its side, threw open the casement, and, with delight, inhaled the fresh and balmy morning air. My eyes dwelt for some time with joy on the rural scenery which spread itself beneath my windows. The vivid green of the meadows, the budding trees, the expanding blossoms, all bespoke the presence and the progress of the lovely vernal season, when, as in the youth of life, every thing is full of promise and of hope.

"Having dressed, and administered to the dear invalid a cup of new milk, I assisted the maid in preparing my little ones for their breakfast, and afterwards in making ready our own.

"Be not shocked, dear Charlotte, and believe, that, in these domestic offices, how-

ever new to me, and perhaps from that very circumstance, for novelty communicates to most things a charm, I rather experienced a pleasure than felt a humiliation. Action is to me always pleasurable, and what to me are now fastidious and artificial distinctions?

"Yet, had I been wicked or weak enough to murmur, a delightful discovery and consolation came to my aid. We had passed the preceding evening in a room at the front of the house, and had postponed till a future opportunity all farther examination; but, in search of something I wanted, just before my Neville came from his chamber, I accidentally opened the door of a back apartment, to which a short passage led. At the prospect which presented itself, I stood for a few moments in a kind o transport for which I want a name.

"The room was larger than that in which we had supped the preceding evening. The

cieling, however, was, like that, somewhat low. A moss pattern paper covered both the ceiling and the walls, and a carpet of the same colours and pattern spread the floor. The front of the room, which faced the south, was entirely of casement, in the centre of which a door stood open. A rustic viranda, which ran along the outside of the casement, was supported by the trunks of small trees, round which, and through the lattice work of the viranda, was entwined a rich profusion of Chinese roses, in every progressive state of bud and bloom; their stems sprung from between small round pebbles, of different colours, which formed under the viranda a mosaic pavement. Before the windows was a small but beauteous lawn, sparkling with dew-drops, which appeared as if of emerald green. In the centre of the lawn was a cluster of flowering shrubs, consisting of the almond tree, the snowy florica, the double hawthorn, peach and cherry blossoms; the white and the pink Siberian crab, the

purple lilac, and the labernum's showering gold, &c. A border of rich mould passed round the lawn, planted with a variety of the choicest flowers which a forward spring afforded. High hedges, mingled with forest trees, sheltered, on the eastern side, this lovely spot, as did the house on the north; while, on the south and west, a sunken fence concealed the termination, and led the eye over meadows covered with sheep, which, sloping downwards, and then again rising, in gentle undulation, presented a rich, a lovely and variegated prospect. Neither wood nor water were wanting to complete the scene, over which a brilliant sun spread all its glories. Such was the view without!

"Within, a simple and tasteful elegance was displayed. The furniture consisted of two small couches (or lounges) constructed of bamboo and cane, provided with cushions, pillows, &c. of white dimity fringed. The chairs, tables, and window curtains

were of similar materials, the latter hung and arranged with peculiar taste. Over the chimney was a glass, let into the paper, and surrounded with a wreath of flowers, exquisitely painted. On two sides of the room, from the floor to the cieling, were bamboo shelves for books: on the third was a small upright grand piano, which we had sent before us. The casement filled the fourth. Over a large table that stood near the windows was spread a green cloth, and on it were implements for drawing and writing. A celestial and terrestrial globe, handsomely mounted, occupied the corners on each side the casements.

"The muses and the graces needed not to have disdained such a temple as the benevolent and liberal taste of our friend had thus provided for us. Yet, were its decorations simple and unexpensive, suited at once to our fortunes and to the turn of our characters and minds.

"Have you not already anticipated the delight with which I ordered our breakfast into this elysium, and conducted my husband to the double regale thus prepared? His pleasure, his gratification, were not inferior to my own, and sweet was the love, the confidence, the pure and unmingled joy, that presided over our repast. It seemed as if we had, for the first time in our lives, taken possession of a *home*. What magic is there in that little word! If happiness is ever to be found—and *He* who implanted the craving in our breast has surely for *this*, as for every other natural and laudable desire, provided its gratification—if happiness is ever to be found, it must be sought, not in great cities and among the works of art, but in the real solid pleasures of nature and virtuous affection:

'Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Time hath but little left him to destroy.'

"When the breakfast table was removed

we walked out on the lawn, made the tour of our little domain, and joined with the matin song of the ascending lark the soft breathings of thanksgiving and praise. Already the long faded colour dawned on the wan cheek of my love; every vestige of remaining languor had vanished; and his active mind and character seemed at once to have regained their native energy and powers. I left him, seated in a rustic chair, shaded by a young acacia, on a rising ground that overlooked the farm, consulting with his bailiff on their future agricultural operations, and returned to the house to arrange my domestic affairs.

"On this subject you will, I believe, scarcely require detailed particulars; suffice it to say, that, with the aid of two female servants, I have brought my little household into excellent order. The woman who received us on our arrival does the business of the kitchen and dairy, of the latter it is, however, my intention to take

the superintendance: our house maid, a clean, hale, rosy cheek damsel, is daughter to the cook, whose husband is bailiff to the farm. The whole family stood in need of some teaching and disciplining, but, thanks to my wise and worthy father, the ornamental, though it was not entirely neglected, formed but a subordinate part of my early training: to a knowledge of the useful, I was taught, the first and the longest attention was due.

"My girls (said this dear parent) will not have commanding fortunes; should their merits or their attractions raise them to rank, they shall be so formed and instructed as not to disgrace it; should their station fall below their merits, though it may humble it shall not degrade them. While we hope for good fortune, it is prudent to prepare for ill: a mind alike fitted for prosperous and for adverse circumstances will dignify both; since it is in itself, and not in what is accidental and ad-

ventitious, that its resources and real respectability will be found. The world, however capricious or undistinguishing it may be deemed, never despises those who respect themselves. He who unaffectedly places himself in his proper situation will provoke no one to push him lower. The seat of genuine refinement is in the mind. True polish, which solid materials only will admit, will beam unobscured even in a cottage: mere varnish can rarely be so artfully spread, that the coarse and flimsy material beneath shall not appear.

"Unpardonable, my sister, should I have been, whom no untoward accident or event ever separated from this good parent and prudent monitor, had I utterly failed to improve the invaluable opportunities I enjoyed.

"But it is time to relieve your attention from domestic and rural affairs. In connection with the former subject, I will only

observe, that, by the union of firmness and kindness, more may be done with servants than is generally imagined. Imperfect, like ourselves, or, from fewer opportunities of knowing the right and the proper, still more so, we must practice with them patience and forbearance. If, incapable of governing our own passions, we outrage their feelings, by expressions of contempt and bitterness, we fail at once in engaging either their attachment or their respect; and they become in consequence hardened in wrong. The character of those superiors is ever suspicious who are continually reviling their domestics. Servitude, at best, is a hard lot; perhaps it has also some tendency to degrade the being, since all masters and mistresses do not abstain from abusing the power which it gives to them: it is therefore our duty to make allowances, and in this, as in all cases, put in practice the christian maxim, of doing unto others as, were we in their circumstances, we would they should do unto us. The

management of servants and of children has in it this in common, that *example* is of more importance than precept: by tyranny, caprice, or intemperate language towards either, we lower ourselves to their level. If we have not our passions and tempers under controul, how can we expect, how dare we exact it of those whose advantages have been so inferior to our own. With these general reflections I dismiss an important subject; a subject involving more moral responsibility than the majority of masters and mistresses appear to suppose: by entering farther into the detail I should be liable to fall into the error of those, who, by perpetual discussion of the failings or merits of their domestics, disgust or weary such as by propinquity or complaisance are compelled to listen to their harangues.

"I turn then to pleasanter themes, to such as, I trust, will be to you, to whom the happiness of your Ellen is dear, more interesting. The health of my beloved husband daily improves, as does his perfect contentment. His mornings are devoted to agricultural studies, for which he ever had a predilection. Breakfasting early, we dine early also: in the afternoon, education and our children, theory and practice, claim our united attention; at six o'clock we take tea or coffee in our elysium, study, or library, I know not which term is most appropriate, our retreat of recreation, improvement and delight.

"In this our books are now all regularly arranged, and of these no small number treat on rural and agricultural topics. I do not, as formerly, allow my Neville to read to me, from the dread of injuring his lungs, so delicate yet so happily healed and restored; but I take upon myself the office of reader, and find in every subject that engages him the same interest and delight. Thus, while strengthening the sympathy that unites us, I am improving myself for

the task of future preceptress to our offspring. It appears to me as if, till now, I never knew the extent of the acquirements and the resources of my husband's ever active mind. My respect for him encreases with that knowledge in so great a degree, that it requires all the endearing confidence which has so long subsisted between us to enable me to continue the sweet familiarity, that has, for hearts capable of affection, so exquisite a charm. Ah! how I pity the votaries and the victims of vanity; for weak indeed are those among its *votaries* who do not sooner or later become its victims!

——— "The seasons thus,
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll,
Will find us happy! till evening comes at last,
Serene and mild,———
When, after the long vernal day of life,
Enamoured more, as more remembrance swells,
With many a proof of recollected love,
Together down we sink in social sleep
Together free'd, our grateful spirits fly,
To scenes where bliss and love immortal reign."

"Forgive this egotism; prudence and my household cares tear me from a subject on which I could for ever expatiate.

"When enumerating our sources of recreation I should have told you, that for the double purpose of exploring the lovely scenery around us, and extending our botanical researches, we have a low open carriage, upon two wheels, a sort of domestic non-descript, safe and easy, and requiring but one horse to draw it: we can thus, when the weather shall become more fervent, avail ourselves of the benefit of gentle motion and the free air, without fatigue or exhaustion.

"It is not then, you may perceive, for fortitude and for resignation that I now offer up my prayers; but for sobriety of mind and feeling, for a heart prepared, amidst its grateful emotions, to acquiesce in those trials or vicissitudes that may yet await it,

believe, that, in these domestic offices, how-

we had stopped the preceding evening. The

and capable, amidst its gratifications, of expanding its sympathies.

"ELLEN."

From Charlotte.

"Happy, thrice happy, yet romantic Ellen! for fanaticism, Proteus like, takes many shifting forms; and a visionary and a fanatic, with the substitution of earthly and human love for spiritual fervors and devotion, you surely are.

"Do you not perceive, my sister, that your sensibility, your sentiments, your tender enthusiasm, the lot which you have drawn in the lottery of life, are altogether *unique* and appropriate?

"Where is another woman to be found, in talent, in feeling, in modes of thinking, and habits of acting, altogether like yourself? Where another man like the husband of whom you have made an idol? Or, admitting, that other such *individuals* may exist, how rare must be the chances that bring them together in union! Your's is, I will contend, a singular character and destiny, affording no model, no criterion for others.

"Could I consider it in any other light, self-condemned and most humbled indeed should I be: but to one is given ten talents, to another five: various circumstances, physical and moral, produce characters and beings infinitely modified, and *all* fulfilling their several destinations—rays, diverging from a common centre; and, in a common circumference, forming an harmonious whole. Thus conceiving, I raise my tearful eyes from your eloquent and affecting descriptions, and cast them around me into the world. Then I begin to breathe again; to throw off the load that pressed so heavily on my heart; and, by less painful, less abasing comparisons, than those which your letter suggested to me, regain, in a degree, that self estimation the loss of which is of all calamities the direst.

"If all, like Ellen, shunning the world, were formed only for tender retreat, civilization itself would be arrested in its progress. Great cities, men in crowds, numerous associations, call forth and stimulate the mental powers: arts and sciences, from which so many conveniences, so many pleasures flow, are the result of combined intellect, stimulated by vicinity and competition, the offspring of luxury and dissipation. Even the position of Mandeville, in his celebrated Fable of the Bees, that private vices become public benefits, however alarming it may sound, it would be difficult to disprove.

"Having thus, in some degree, settled the matter with my pride, for what mind can sustain itself under its own condemnation? let me assure my sister, that envy at her higher, more favoured destiny, has no power to lessen my admiration of her qualities, my respect for her principles, or my sincere gratification in their reward. Long, long, without a cloud to obscure for a moment its beams, may the sunshine of joy and

peace irradiate her retreat, and realize around her the fabled golden age.

"A severer warfare is, in the mean time, my lot, full of peril and ill omen, and over which victory, I sometimes fear, is more than dubious. A derangement in the affairs of Mr. Wycherly, of the extent of which I am ignorant, threatens to arrest my career of pleasure, or of vanity shall I call it? midway in the race.

"Having no turn for business, I never troubled myself with the affairs of my husband, nor indeed did he shew any disposition to place confidence in my judgement. Our marriage, I take shame in acknowledging, was a barter of selfish and sordid passions: no sympathy produced, and none could follow it: scorning to play the hypocrite, the mingled disgust and contempt betrayed on one side, soon excited on the other hatred and distrust. Yet, incapable of actual crime, and haughty in unsullied fame, ru-

mour itself has never dared to throw a stain on my name.

"But I believed myself justified in using the advantages for which I had so dearly sacrificed; and I sought, in amusement, admiration, distinction abroad, a compensation for the privation of all that could endear a name. I took no warning from the earnest remonstrances of my Ellen, both before and after my marriage, so fatally prophetic of what has been, what is, what yet may be my fate: having never beheld the object that could call them forth, I believed myself incapable of the sentiment that has decided her happier lot. And I still believe this:—my heart is warm, my propensities social, but *love*, affection in its devoted, exclusive sense, I certainly never knew. I perceive in the persons around me a mixture of good and ill, blended in different proportions and degrees, but no one ever appeared to me so perfect, or so faultless, as to be entitled to the entire devotion of my soul.

"With this character of mind I thought I had reason to be content, for, if I attained not the heights, so I also missed the depths to which more sensitive natures are exposed. For example, sweet as are my sister's present feelings, what, had the recent accident, now merely altering her external circumstances, and thereby but varying her mode of enjoyment—what, had it proved fatal to the life in which her own being is entwined, had been the *misery* thus inflicted? but to image it makes me shudder, and will blanche the cheek of my Ellen as she reads.

"Be persuaded, my dear, *that* happiness which is dependant upon another is a fearful and precarious possession. Not to insist on the subjugation it imposes, the various casualties to which it is liable, its destruction may follow a momentary caprice. In opposition to this uncertain blessing, this thirty thousand pounds prize in the lottery of life, of which so few have the small-

est chance, I conceived I made a wise choice in accepting the substantial goods, the power, the enjoyments which wealth bestows. Thus, under the wing of philosophy, my vanity, *you*, who call things by their right names, will tell me, took shelter.

"Do not ask me, I pray you do not, whether in its gratifications I have found the promised good? I believe, even in their highest zest, they exhausted without filling my mind and my heart. The cup seemed sparkling and brilliant to the eye, luscious and sweet to the taste, but the dregs were vapid or bitter, yet now when it appears about to pass from me, I wonder I prized it not more dearly. How full of contradiction and inconsistency is that most curious machine the human mind! But to return from this philosophising, in which I seek to beguile my anxieties, to common fact and life.

"My *husband*, alas! must I call him? is, I am assured, perplexed with many affairs, and declining rapidly in health and life. Six months have elapsed since we met; for why should persons, who are to each other a mutual mortification and plague, persist in the self-inflicted penance of becoming each other's punishment? In such circumstances, it is surely wiser to live asunder. This we have pretty much contrived to do, without incurring the discrédit of an open and formal separation. It is, however, at present intimated to me, that policy, if not duty, demands my return to my *home*—let me not say, for home is the resort "where polished friends and dear relations meet and mingle into bliss;"—but to the residence of Mr. Wycherly I am preparing to go; reluctantly, I own, and with a heavy foreboding mind.

"Tenderness may endear a sick chamber, and even mingle a delicious sentiment with poignant apprehension; but, in forced duty

"But it is time to relieve your attention from domestic and rural affairs. In connection with the former subject, I will only

lowances, and in this, as in all cases, put in practice the christian maxim, of doing unto others as, were we in their circumstances, we would they should do unto us. The

or heartless decorum, how repulsive is its gloom!

"Write to me, and let the picture of your happiness cheer me into forgetfulness of self, or rouse me by the chastisement you doubtless think I deserve. Call me in any way from my own thoughts and sensations. I begin to suspect that thoughtless folly may border close on crime.

But, before I dismiss my pen, let me inform you, that your brother has taken his Dulcinea to wife. They were married with great pomp and parade on Thursday last; and in a new and shewy equipage, drawn by four horses, and attended by two outriders in gay liveries, and with enormous white favours, immediately set out on a tour to the north, by the lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland, through Scotland, its Highlands and islands.

"Peace go with them, or prudence, I would rather say, had they not evidently

manifested a determination to leave it behind. Thus concludes the preacher; and preaching and practice, though I by no means intend to insinuate that they never meet, require, you cannot but be aware, different talents.

"CHARLOTTE."

that unites us, I am improving myself for

CHAP. VI.

From Ellen.

"DEAR, ingenuous, ingenious, and unhappy sister, how easy, did not my heart bleed for you, and did not yours evidently rise in opposition to every sophistical position, how triumphantly so ever it seemed to be brought forward by the powers of your acute and cultivated mind; how easy would it be to convince you of error: dare I add—of studied sophistry, of wilful, of indulged error.

"While I cannot but shudder at the avowed principles on which your ill-assorted and fatal marriage was formed, I should

yet hold myself criminal if I forebore to urge upon you, that a dereliction of principle and duty in one instance affords an ill excuse for the breach of them in another; and that it is not by adding fault to fault, by heaping, I had almost said, crime upon crime, that we can expect to expiate, or be exonerated for, the past.

"Whatever might be the motives by which you were induced to bestow your hand on Mr. Wycherly, he is not the less your husband; since with that hand you pledged to him duty and faith, in the presence of the Supreme Being, and with the laws of your country to witness and sanction that pledge. You promised to take him "for better and for worse"; to be his solace in sickness and in health; to share with him every vicissitude of life; and, in all cases, in all circumstances, to afford him all the aid and consolation in your power to bestow.

"I will not ask, whether, on either side, those vows have been fulfilled? But, now, declining in fortunes, in health, in life, has the *husband* no claim to all that a *wife* can perform, how unwisely so ever chosen that wife may have been: and is *she* not imperiously bound, not merely by selfish policy or cold decorum, but, by every obligation, every law, religious, moral and civil, to fulfil all that remains of the obligations which she, without compulsion, without either deceiving herself, or being deceived, voluntarily and deliberately—alas! even against warning, took upon herself?

"You are returning, you tell me, reluctantly returning to your forsaken *home*, from which you have so long absented yourself. Hasten then before it is too late; hasten, with feelings and with resolutions very different from those which dictated the letter before me, if you would escape that most poignant of all miseries, self-accusation and unavailing remorse.

"Dear infatuated Charlotte, how you misuse the powers with which you have been so liberally endowed. If, for indolently suffering our faculties to rust (or, in Scripture language, folding our talent in a napkin) we may be called to a solemn account, what may we expect will be the fate of those by whom they are consciously and wilfully perverted?

"It is true, that good and evil, humanly so termed, are in the plans of Providence, of which our intellect can take in but so small a part, apparently blended: that is, man, in this life, this perhaps first step in a series of infinite existence, is not made perfect: mistaking his true happiness, he wanders in error, till experience, or it may be suffering, shall enlighten his spirit. "The rock must be convulsed ere it produces the diamond:" a *woe* is nevertheless denounced against those by whom offences shall come.

"I will not here enquire whether the plans of an infinitely powerful, wise and benevolent intelligence, *can* terminate otherwise than in ultimate and consummate happiness to *all:* but, even with this glorious perspective, who would not wish to shorten the period of probation, to rise and not sink on quitting this world, in the scale of existence and enjoyment? To suffer here a few years, a few months, weeks, days, or even hours, is, to a sensitive being, sufficiently painful: how appalling then the thought of more acute, more protracted sorrow, or degradation; of conflicting through ages, through indefinite duration, with misery and vice! but to return from reflections which are not mere hypothesis, and in the support of which much both from reason and scripture might be urged, to the subject more immediately claiming my attention.

"Of luxury and dissipation, you say, art and science are the offspring; and, triumphantly quoting Mandeville, advance a

a step farther, and aver, with that dangerous because ill understood writer, that private vices are public benefits.

"That the wealth of a nation, a commercial and manufacturing nation, may receive and encrease from the luxury of its inhabitants, which, ever craving, affords a stimulus to ingenuity, to industry, to the inventive arts, is a position that I will not attempt to dispute; and more than this I trust, was not meant by the author of the Fable of the Bees: but though wealth may in some sense, be termed power; are wealth and power synonimous with virtue and happiness? and has their progress always been simultaneous and uniform? Luxury, to a certain degree, as an extension and general diffusion of the decent comforts of social life, and even as connected with refinement of feeling and of mind, is, I grant you, a good to be desired. But, like all other things, it has its limits, beyond which it cannot with impunity pass; an observation that may be

extended to commerce itself, that source of freedom, of improved civilization, of all that gives dignity and value to life,—these are truths attested by history in every page.

"I descend from general to particular remarks on a letter by which I have been so variously affected. I will not, however flattering they may be, accept your compliments to my sensibility at the expense of my principles. That my lot is most favoured, though I trust not *unique*, I am gratefully disposed to acknowledge: but yet, as a wife and a mother, I am not without sources of deep anxiety: my Neville, though restored to a family of which he is the centre and the animating spirit, has still a varying flush on his cheek, a humid brightness in his eyes, an atmospherical tenderness of constitution, that promises not length of years. Yet, with those apprehensions, that might, otherwise, I own, dash with bitterness the cup of joy that I gratefully raise to my lips, hope is mingled;

a hope which has for its foundation his present temperate, easy, equal tenor of life; to say nothing of the solicitudes of affection watching constantly over an existence so dear and valuable.

"But, should my fortitude be eventually destined to struggle with that *most severe* of trials, I should not, I humbly trust, allow myself to sink in helpless despondency; but, remembering that I had other duties to perform, that my children had a claim on my redoubled cares, that, whether contemplated with the eye of reason or of faith, it would be vain to expect in this life a scene of unmingled good; I should not dare to repine at sharing the universal lot—much less venture to call in question that omniscient power, by whom the universe is ordered and directed aright. Nature, it is true, would assert her powerful rights; but philosophy, which compels our submission to what is unavoidable, to an unyielding, a stern necessity, would, I

faultless, as to be entitled to the entire devotion of my soul.

tery of life, of which so few have the smart-

trust, mark their limits; while religion, by its cheering assurances of the inseparable connexion between infinite wisdom and goodness, would pour in its divine consolations; would teach—

> 'That this dark state
> In wayward passions tost, and vain pursuits,
> This infancy of being, cannot prove
> The final issue of the works of God,
> For ever rising with the rising mind.'

"Do not call *mine* a singular mind and character, and a singular destiny, because, surrounded by the great and gay world, you have not allowed yourself leisure to look into the quiet circles of family affection, of domestic peace. Many happy families have I seen even in the metropolis, where temptation to seek pleasure from home more particularly abounds: of many domestic virtues and endearments have I been the delighted witness.

"The gay and fashionable, like certain

bigoted religionists, make to themselves a little *Goshen*, where light only shines, and decorate that with the name of the *world*, which is merely a contracted artificial theatre, in which all is factitious and delusive, calculated wholly for stage effect. "They are dogs without!" say the bigots, with exclusive pretension and spiritual pride: with similar self-complacence, originating in a similar source, though somewhat differently modified, does the fashionist disdain as *canaille* (a word imported from the continent with other silly vanities, and for which, in free and happy England, where the dignity of human nature and of reason are respected, we have no appropriate translation) all not included in his own petty sphere.

"It is only among the varied ranks of society, of social and civil life, that a real knowledge of the *world*, that is of human nature and character, can be acquired. Intelligence must be the result of stronger pursuits, of warmer feelings, than a life of idle

amusement affords: every faculty of the mind must, like every organ of the body, receive from vigorous exercise its healthy tone.

"My Charlotte herself, in the letter before me, affords an illustration of what has been observed. 'The cup seems luscious to the taste' says she 'but its dregs are vapid: the gratifications of vanity, even in their highest zest, exhausted without filling my heart.

"Exchange then, dearest sister, pursuits so unworthy of your heart and your mind: try, at least, whether in the fulfilment of duties a more solid recompense is not to be found. Dissipation, amusement, heartless splendour may suffice for the real *canaille*, but will ever be found insufficient for an understanding and character like yours.

"Leave these idle pursuits, these idler distinctions, to such as have no power to distinguish themselves otherwise, to those

who can take no flight beyond them. Let the moth hover round the taper till his flimsy substance shrivels in the flame; let the painted butterfly waste his short summer-day, sporting on the wing of zephyr over flowery beds; and select for your model the industrious bee, who, foreseeing that a winter will arrive, uses the season of action in accumulating stores whereby its rigours may be softened or endured.

"The spring and summer of life flit swiftly away; but, when not abused, their blossoms will be succeeded by fruits richer and scarcely less fragrant or fair, affording for the winter a solace and supply. Oh! how lovely, how venerable, is virtuous, wise, benevolent old age! Then indeed is the hoary head a crown of glory! From the reverse of the portrait, we turn pained, with mingled pity, disgust and contempt.

"My sister, my friend, worthy of better things, of a better fate! a crisis seems ap-

"Peace go with them, or prudence, I would rather say, had they not evidently

proaching, that before the chains of habit are rivetted beyond the power of unlocking, may yet redeem the past. Not midway has thy sand yet run—Stop, reflect, retrace thy steps, be wise and yet be happy!

"ELLEN."

CHAP. VII.

BY the preceding letter the heart of her to whom it was addressed was wrung, while her mind seemed to experience an electrical shock. Restless, disquieted, unsatisfied with herself, she was yet lingering, when the remonstrances of her sincere and tender monitress roused her to activity. She determined, though late, to fulfil to the man to whom she had voluntarily pledged her faith the last duty that remained; and to plunge at once into scenes so distasteful to her apprehensions, to her imagination so appalling.

She reached the house of her husband

avowed principles on which your ill-assort
ed and fatal marriage was formed, I should

to bestow.

but a few days before he expired: she shuddered as she entered the chamber of death, as she gazed on the wan and sunken countenance of the dying man, and beheld herself surrounded by the melancholy apparatus of sickness and of mortality. All was alike shocking to her spirits and to her feelings: she tried to make herself useful; but, unaccustomed to a sick room, and inexperienced in the tender charities that seem more peculiarly to belong to her sex, she, by her officiousness, rather interrupted than aided the cares of the more practised and skilful.

The dying man manifested no emotion at her presence, his faculties were torpid, and he looked on her with a glazed and vacant eye. Perceiving herself to be useless, or worse than useless; revolted, disgusted, horror-struck by the objects that encompassed her, she retreated to the solitude of her chamber, where she remained motionless, in sad abstraction, without power to compose or to arrange her bewildered and

tumultuous thoughts. Self-accusation, regret, dread of the future, and remorse for the past, rent her heart by turns; or rather, struggling together, produced a frightful chaos in her mind.

In this dreadful state, with little variation, a week passed away, during which she slept not and took little sustenance. At the termination of this period death closed the scene; and complicated and deranged affairs now roused the still youthful widow from sensations by which she had been, not afflicted, but stunned.

Extravagance, losses, unfortunate speculations, had ruined the once ample fortune of the deceased. Disappointed in his ill-assorted marriage, and perplexed in his affairs, he had recourse to inebriation to drown reflection; and a constitution which early dissipation had enfeebled, and later anxieties broken, soon yielded to this pernicious habit. Nothing remained from the

that most poignant of all miseries, self-accusation and unavailing remorse.

wreck of his fortune but the settlement made on his marriage upon his bride. This was only double the small portion she brought to him of three thousand pounds. Her father, hurt at the sentiments which had prompted her to court so unequal an alliance, declined a larger jointure, lest, considering herself independent of the man to whom she sacrificed her youth, her conduct should have no check; and, on the principles of a young woman who could thus feel, and thus act, he dared form no reliance.

The interest of six thousand pounds, (three hundred pounds per annum,) was therefore now all that remained to her; an income, which, though sufficient amply to supply the temperate wants and wishes of a rational, virtuous, well regulated mind, was to her to whom it appertained, her expensive tastes, and profuse habits, but little apportioned. Some personal debts, also, thoughtlessly incurred, which she

shrunk from bringing forward, and which she had yet sufficient rectitude to deem it indispensable to discharge, would, for the first year, involve nearly the whole of her scanty stipend.

In the privacy of a house, over which the gloom of death still seemed to impend, she deeply meditated: the errors of her past conduct glared upon her in strong colouring; while the powers of her understanding asserted over the prejudices and sophistries by which they had been obscured their natural force. She believed, that they would in future direct her aright, and that the experience she had so painfully acquired would prove their auxiliary. She felt as if shaking off a *slough* that had clogged her efforts, and impeded her progress, in the path that now plainly appeared to her the direct road to all that was valuable and good, and which she determined should be henceforth her straight forward course. Her mind had received a severe shock, her

nerves were unstrung, her spirits depressed, temptation was absent, and she had not yet *fully* weighed and estimated the imperious power, and almost resistless sway of *habit* long unused to opposition or controul.

Her thoughts, at this crisis, turned naturally towards her sister, her now more than ever respected monitress, her beloved and sympathising friend. She wisely resolved to pass at least the year of her mourning beneath the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Neville, however humble she might find that asylum, and thus at once to strengthen her resolutions, form new occupations and sentiments, and, by a strict economy, relieve herself from pecuniary embarrassments. She had, in a few lines, announced to her sister the death of Mr. Wycherly, and the derangement of his affairs. She resumed her pen to detail more at large her present situation and circumstances, to develope her plans, and to unfold with candour the state of her mind.

But a letter from Ellen anticipated her purposed communication, revived her drooping spirits, and accelerated the settlement of all that, on her part, remained to be done. The cloud that hung over her prospects appeared to disperse, she breathed freely once more, she dared to look forward, and the sanguine character of her mind again beamed in her eyes, and shed a lustre over the sables and trappings of woe.

"Come to us, dear Charlotte (said the letter of Ellen,) hasten to our embraces, our arms and our hearts will expand to receive you. Your accommodations, under our humble roof, will be simple, but a cordial welcome, tender sympathy, will, in this sweet season of the year, when the whole country is a garden, when nature wantons in her prime, supply, we trust, all other privations and defects. Pass with us your first year of widowhood, (though we should fail in attractions to detain you longer,) during which decorum would enforce retire-

gratefully raise to my lips, hope is mingled;

an unyielding, a stern necessity, would, I

ment from gayer scenes; and who can tell but within that period, new tastes and new habits, less perilous than the past, may be acquired and formed.

"You will not find yourself among savages, or uninformed rustics; we have already gained several valuable friends to enliven, and to afford variety, to our domestic circle. A gentleman of polished manners and cultivated mind, a baronet, possessing large landed property in our neighbourhood, has discovered the worth of my Neville, through the obscurity that narrow circumstances had thrown around him, has delicately courted his acquaintance, and is our frequent visitor. He would have introduced to me his lady and family, but this I for the present declined, though report speaks to their advantage. When you are with us, I will, however, seek that enlargement to my little circle, which domestic avocations, and retired tastes, have hitherto made me avoid.

"A son of our new friend, a fine lad, eleven years of age, has been, at the earnest request of his father, placed under the care and tuition of my husband. His acceptance of the trust was solicited as a favor, accompanied by an offer of pecuniary remuneration so liberal as to distress the delicacy of him to whom it was tendered, and prove for some time an impediment to the arrangement of the affair.

"Thus has our before straightened income been rendered amply commensurate to our wants and comforts, and even a surplus offered to add to the savings which our encreasing family renders it prudent to lay by.

"In the rector of the village, his wife and sister, we have likewise respectable and agreeable neighbours. The former is a man of learning and of worth; the latter affords an example of the fulfilment of all her duties, without the stimulant and the

recompence which your more favoured Ellen has enjoyed. An early disappointment of a tender kind had thrown a gloom over her youth: her marriage took place many years afterwards upon principles of a less seductive kind. Without that impassioned tenderness which, as you justly observe, is, though a sweet, a perilous charm, perfect esteem and friendship appear to unite this respectable pair. Animated by the same principles, their duties form their occupation and reward. Peace and order preside over their family and their affairs: a sort of patriarchal simplicity breathes around them: their example, their precepts, and their assistance, have produced among the neighbouring hamlets a realization of the fictitious golden age.

"The sister of this worthy pastor, to whom an aunt hath bequeathed a moderate independence, was, by an infirm and sickly youth, determined to renounce the ties of marriage, and to fix herself near, though

in a separate residence, the house of her brother and his wife. This respectable and amiable woman unites with the family at the rectory in all their benevolent plans for meliorating the condition of the village poor; and in active occupation for the benefit of others; the best preservative from selfish anxieties and cares, by which she has acquired, with cheerfulness, a mind at peace with itself, and a more vigorous tone of health.

"My Neville and myself give to the projects and institutions of these excellent people the little aid that is in our power. A village school, a bank well secured for the savings of the labouring poor, loans for the assistance of their temporary exigencies, a fund for the aged and infirm, rewards for the sober and industrious, reproofs and privations for the refractory and wilful, instruction for the ignorant and council for the humble and diligent, are among the means of reformation employed. The good baro-

nights an occasional friendly intercourse

frequent

distinguish themselves otherwise, to those

net, as magistrate for the district, lends to us occasionally his weight and his purse. The results are more than was expected, and nearly all that could be wished.

"With so many delightful occupations, 'All various *nature* pressing on our hearts!' can we be in want of objects for our faculties, can we be in dread of weariness? Early hours and long summer days scarcely suffice for our enjoyments and pursuits; and our moments of leisure are delicious because they are few.

"Come to us, dear sister, and learn how to be happy! it is not among the works of art, of factitious cravings, of fleeting and exhausting pleasures, that Happiness, fair fugitive, is to be found: she must be sought, if we hope to obtain her, in the consciousness of duties performed, in benevolent and pure affections, in a well governed temper and mind, and in sympathies that carry us out of ourselves.

"Hasten to us, dear Charlotte; my beloved husband unites cordially in the invitation; leave painful retrospections behind, and add to the joys of your Ellen all that was wanting!"

CHAP. VIII.

MRS. Wycherly eagerly acceded to the request of her sister; her imagination warmed by the novelty of the picture presented to it, turned gladly from the gloomy present and agitated past: persuading herself, that she already felt all the pleasures so affectingly pourtrayed, she determined on an immediate departure.

A chaise carried her in a few days to the village of——: it stopped on a fine evening in June near a gate which led through a garden, glowing in beauty and fragrant in sweets, to the rural habitation of Mr. Neville. Wishing to surprise her sister,

by replying to her letter in person, she had ordered the chaise to the back of the house, where she alighted without suffering herself to be announced. Proceeding hastily round a small verdant lawn, bordered with flowers and flowering shrubs, she reached a casement door, that stood open beneath a rustic viranda, round which the honey-suckle entwined with the rose.

She recognized the little library described in a former letter of Ellen's, and paused before she presented herself at its entrance. Softly putting aside a cluster of roses, and sheltering herself behind their stems, she could perceive, without being herself perceived, the interior of the room. On a low couch, near the windows, Mr. Neville was reclining, but with no appearance of languor or sickness: one hand playfully repulsed a lovely little girl who was attempting to climb to his knees: the other encircled the waist of his wife, who sat beside him, a book half closed in her hand, in

compose or to arrange her bewildered and

nicious habit. Nothing remained from the

which she seemed to have been reading to him, till broken in upon by the little intruder. Her dress was of plain materials but snowy white; her dark brown hair formed the only ornament of her head: her form had attained more roundness, and a livelier bloom glowed upon her cheek than it had in former periods been accustomed to wear. The countenance of Mr. Neville exhibited a ruddy tan, and his whole figure and aspect appeared animated and improved.

Breathing a deep drawn sigh, Charlotte drew back for a moment, and the next presented herself at the door. With a shriek of joy, her sister sprung forward, and they remained for some minutes folded in each others arms.

Mutual gratulations and felicitations ensued: the evening passed swiftly away, amidst those sweet sensations, those affectionate greetings, enquiries and retrospec-

tions, which so endear the meeting of long parted friends. Charlotte remembered no more the fatigues of her journey, and retired late to the chamber allotted for her, where the repose so much needed by her frame was, for some hours, suspended by the blended pleasant and painful perturbations of her mind.

Succeeding days, weeks, nay months glided agreeably away. Ellen, for the entertainment of her sister, relaxed, in some degree, from the regularity of her accustomed avocations. The introduction to the family of the baronet took place; and various little excursions, amidst the surrounding scenery of the country, were projected and executed.

Autumn at length came on, the days closed in earlier; the animated season of harvest arrived and passed away; stubble fields succeeded to the waving of golden grain; the rich mingled tint of the foliage,

changed to a sicklier hue; the equinox brought heavy showers and gales; the dead leaves strewed the path; the atmosphere became chill. Ellen returned with cheerfulness to her domestic occupations, and to the duties which her family demanded. Charlotte was more frequently alone; she could no longer amuse herself with the garden, ramble through the meadows, or recline with a book in the shade. The library afforded but few works of imagination or of amusement; over more serious studies she but lightly skimmed; of the society which the village afforded she had become tired, and the county town was many miles distant. Wet and dark evenings even kept the little neighbourhood assunder; and, through the long nights, the late autumnal blast, the gusty storm, frequently, by its loud howling, banished sleep.

Her sister, and her sister's family, were not less dear to her; but the mind of Charlotte wanted a more powerful stimulant

than the circle at *home*, however endearing, could afford. She lost her gaiety, became absent, abstracted, incapable alike of giving or of receiving pleasure. The *habits* of her former life had, like inebriating potions to the wretch who has unhappily indulged in them, incapacitated her for the enjoyment of simple pleasures: novelty had only given to them a charm, a charm that had faded with those of the season; and which even returning spring would have failed to renew. She felt an imperious craving for stronger sensations, she had been used to look for resources without, and not within, and she had never been accustomed to submit her inclinations to controul.

Her spirits sunk in contemplation of the winter before her; balls, routs, plays, and admiring crowds, were, in vivid colouring, presented to her recollection; yet, still ashamed to acknowledge even to *herself* all that passed in her mind, she tried

to persuade herself, that, taught by experience she could now enjoy, without abusing, the advantages offered by that more polished and varied society, which she believed herself fitted at once to delight in and to adorn. She had neither the duties, nor the avocations of her sister to fulfil; she was no longer a wife and had never been a mother; in the attentions paid her by Mr. and Mrs. Neville, and in their efforts made to entertain her, she felt herself as a restraint upon their employments, and interruption to their duties. She laboured to convince herself, that the benefit of others rendered her removal necessary, and, that, in resolving upon it, she should yield to reason and to principle, (so ingenious is self deception) rather than to her own weakness. This idea silenced the reproaches of her heart, and restored to her mind a temporary relief.

At this crisis, towards the middle of December, a letter from her brother was, as

she concluded her morning toilet, put into her hand. Its contents, though most acceptable, were brief. It stated, that he had, with his wife, for the purpose of disentangling themselves from a round of company, which their connections and facility had drawn about them (and which was found inconvenient to their finances) come to a resolution of retiring to the continent, on a plan of retrenchment and economy. Mrs. Seymour, who had all the feebleness and timidity which the habits of female education tend, if not to produce, to flatter and encrease, shrunk from the idea of such an expedition without a companion of her own sex. A project, that to prudential consideration added the attraction of novelty, was deemed likely to recommend itself to the young widow; who was, doubtless, by this time, fully prepared to exchange her scheme of rustication for one better suited to her tastes and time of life; and her society and lively talents could not

fail to be to the travellers a most desirable acquisition.

With an animated glow on her faded cheek, and eyes beaming with the lustre of former days, Charlotte hastened to the breakfast table, to communicate the welcome contents of the letter which she bore in her hand, and the cordial remembrances which that letter contained to the owners of the peaceful habitation in which she was a guest and inmate.

Mr. and Mrs. Neville, who had too much penetration not to be aware of what had for some time been passing in the mind of their guest, received her communication with friendly interest and gratulation, though, on the part of the latter, not unmixed with concern.

The preparations of Charlotte, the spring of whose mind appeared by the prospect before her to have regained its elasticity and

tone, were speedily made; and the real tenderness which mingled itself with her adieus to the amiable family she quitted, clouded her brow but for a moment; even with the tear that glistened on her cheek, a smile was blended. Her impression in favour of rural life and the domestic circle had been but as the morning dew, which the first beams of the sun exhale and dry up. A taste for simple pleasures can only be acquired by unvitiated minds.

With the friends she left behind her the winter passed tranquilly, and not unimproved, away. Regular and successive occupation rendered still shorter its transient days; while separated till the approach of evening by their peculiar avocations, the hours that remained were, by the consciousness of duties performed, felt as a sweet recreation, which never palled, and to which confidence, useful studies, conversation, books, and the endearments of a chaste affection, combined to give a zest and a charm. On moonlight

nights an occasional friendly intercourse with the neighbouring families varied the scene, and rendered *home* still more dear.

Spring returned, bringing with it the youth and promise of the year: the lawn, the garden, the shrubbery, the plantations, every thing flourished beneath the fostering care, the judicious management with which all was ordered and executed. Several years thus glided placidly away, the family of Ellen had received encrease; and the growth and improvement of their children, and of all around them, only marked, to this happy and rational pair, the progress of time. Their days flowed on with—

"Content, retirement, rural quiet,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving heaven.
The seasons thus, as ceaseless round a
Jarring world they rolled, still found
——— them happy"

During the first period of the separation of the sisters their correspondence had been

frequent: the letters of Charlotte were long, descriptive, animated; all was new, and in every thing a charm was found. It appeared, however, that Paris, Brussels, Dresden and Vienna, had more attraction for the travellers than the vine covered hills of the south, or the peaceful vallies of Switzerland.

A taste for dissipation, and the fatal habit of living but to be amused, assumed the imposing character and name of a liberal curiosity; and economical arrangements were suspended. It is true, that, on many parts of the Continent, the means of living were, when compared with a residence in London, or in places of fashionable resort in England, found comparatively cheap and easy; but the expenses of constant motion, and of an exhibition in every circle of the great and the gay, had not been adequately appreciated by a party of which not one of the individuals who composed it was in the habit of calculation.

The letters of Charlotte to her rural friends became less lively, less frank, and more brief, and were written at longer intervals.

Five years had now past away since the separation of the sisters; during the last not a single line had been received from abroad; and the affectionate Ellen, though in the bosom of virtuous felicity, became disquieted and solicitous respecting the fate of those endeared to her by habit and by blood.

A pacquet with a foreign post mark at length arrived, which was received and opened with mingled trepidation and joy. It was from Charlotte, and its date was from the Italian side of the Alps.

"Alas, my sister (it began) how shall I address you, or wound your affectionate bosom by a narrative of imprudence, of ca-

lamity, that is, perhaps, already but too well anticipated both by yourself and by your worthy husband?

"The good resolutions of our little party, wise to know and weak to execute; infirm of purpose, and without habits of self-government, yielded, I scarcely need say, to the temptations by which they were every where assailed; and our projects of retrenchment and economy led but to the practice of encrease and lavish expenditure. "A rolling stone (says the homely proverb of my native country) gathers no moss." Those who would be prudent should remain at home, and not expose those wavering principles by which the rover is too frequently characterized, to the multiplied allurements which novel scenes are sure to afford.

"Our unhappy brother and myself are, among a thousand fellow sufferers, melancholy examples of this truth. Our fate has been well merited, though not on that ac-

count felt with less severity: it is in the common course of cause and effect; such appears to be the moral government of the world. Would to heaven that I could submit with more meekness to the chastisement of my errors, and thus expiate them without daring to repine.

"My brother is less guilty, yet more to be compassionated than myself, who, without the plea of strong passions, with a judgement clear, debased myself, and degraded the talents entrusted to me, by offering them up, a voluntary sacrifice, at the shrine of a cold and heartless vanity, that most contemptible, most pernicious and most universal of the vices.

"My jointure mortgaged, my affairs deranged, beyond all hope of retrieval, I have yielded to become what is most abhorrent to my nature, a dependent on the caprice of another. Yes, the high spirited Charlotte is now the humble companion of an

imperious and feeble minded woman of quality, whom, in evil hour, she consented to accompany beyond the Alps.

"Caressed at first, like every other novelty, my favour is, I perceive, already on the wane: I know not how to flatter and fawn, to amuse when my spirit is writhing with anguish, to school my features to a complacent expression, when contempt or indignation agitates my heart; to veil my own real superiority under an affected humility, or to endure without resentment, or a too evident disgust, follies and weaknesses of which I am the victim. Never surely was any one less fitted to play the part I have undertaken,

> "And just to move, and just to speak, with
> Self reflecting art!"

"But with my brother or his wife it was not possible longer to remain: on my Ellen and her virtuous husband I dared not become a burthen. Among the talents I

possessed, and of which I was so weakly vain, there was not one which I could render useful either to others or to myself. The wants of nature are imperious, and will not be evaded or denied: in a moment of almost desperation, Lady R—— presented herself with simulating smiles. I had known her in London; and estimated her, I believe, at her real value; but I persuaded myself, that my stronger mind would, without difficulty, acquire the ascendant over one so flimsy and weak. Select, amidst dissipation, in the associates with whom I had hitherto intimately conversed, experience had not taught me the impenetrable nature of folly; and that imbecility, exaction and tyranny, are ever, where the power is afforded inseparately allied. Sympathy cannot exist where there is no power of appreciation; and the mean triumph of the feeble is to subjugate the strong.

"But, let me turn from the odious subject; deliverance is, perhaps, nearer at

hand than, even in my present mortified state, I dare to wish.

"Alas! my Ellen, my truly wise, good and happy sister, your Charlotte is indeed greatly changed both in body and in mind. Dear and prophetic friend, too truly did you warn me, while yet in the first blossom and hope of youth, that *one* wrong step of importance, may, in fatal concatenation, decide the whole destiny of life. Vanity, on the one side, held out to me her inviting hand—virtue and reason on the other, exhorted me with a brow, that, to unreflecting youth, seemed too austere: I made my choice, my deliberate choice, and I suffer the full penalty.

"Yes; vanity has, through the portal of promised pleasure—promised, but never in a single instance truly realized—allured me into a wilderness, entangled with briars and beset with thorns, that now, on

every side, pierce through my too proudly, sensitive soul.

"But my Ellen, with truer wisdom, and a gentler nature, has, in an opposite direction, marked out by reason, and circumscribed by virtue, held her steadier way, and reaped her reward.

"Shall men gather grapes of thistles, or figs of thorns?"—"As we sow, so (does the gospel tell us) we shall reap." How often is Providence, nature, fortune, accused for those sufferings of which we ourselves are the authors; those miseries which, with rash and frantic folly, we have pulled down on our own heads!

"But deliverance is, I feel, at hand; my health weakened by the habits of earlier, and what I then considered more prosperous life, rapidly sinks beneath the perturbation of my mind. I am, in all things, but the shadow of my former self.

"Did I know how to sustain it, I would yet pray for longer life. I am no infidel; I would suffer *here*, rather then hereafter, the consequences and penalties of my faults. I would, if I knew how, make amends to those whom my giddy example may have misled, by a better use of those faculties which I have so much abused.

"But it will not be; and my only remaining hope is, that the sincerity of my contrition, the pangs I so keenly suffer, may, how short-soever their duration, be accepted by *Him*, who chastises but to correct, who searcheth the heart, and, in whose sight a thousand years are but as a day.

"Of myself, and self-inflicted calamities, I will now, however, no longer speak; but use the strength which yet remains to me in stating to you the situation of our brother, whom you or your worthy Neville may yet, I fervently wish and pray, find means to rouse and save.

"As vanity has proved the bane of his less sensitive sister, so has the ruin of the brother been consummated by a spirit of chivalrous romance, untempered by reason; and a habit of yielding, unquestioned, to his sensations, and of following headlong the dictates of an ardent temperament and character. In the possession of every higher feeling and talent, these have, through the want of practical knowledge and sound judgement, that sagacity by which we are fitted to act with propriety the part allotted to us in the world, been rendered, both to himself and to those intimately connected with him, not merely useless but pernicious. Like myself, he, was, through various accidents separated, during the most important period of susceptible and teachable youth, from our excellent father, and absent from his paternal home. In these circumstances, the follies and errors by which he has been misled, not only took deep root, but sent forth vi-

gorous shoots in the rich and warm soil of his ardent mind.

"His patrimonial fortune, which he inherited too soon, has been lavished and scattered abroad, not in personal indulgences, in sensual or in selfish gratifications, but in thoughtless profusion, and in lavish and ill-judged generosity. His heart and his purse were open to every one who had speciousness or art to address themselves to either. Averse to calculation, and with a sovereign contempt for gain; ignorant of the value of that of which, through the generous tenderness of his father, he had never known the want; his prosperity was already melting fast away, when marriage compleated his indiscretions.

"Had he, however, made a different selection, and consulted his judgement rather than his fancy; had he (a custom too common with that sex which arrogates to itself the title of the *wiser*) instead of chusing "a

The preparations of Charlotte, the spring of whose mind appeared by the prospect before her to have regained its elasticity and

useful studies, conversation, books, and the endearments of a chaste affection, combined to give a zest and a charm. On moonlight

wife for a month," selected a friend, a companion for life, a future mistress for his family, and mother for his offspring, every thing might yet have been retrieved. But a fair face, a fine person, shewy accomplishments, and a situation, that, by awakening his tenderness and calling forth his sympathy, was to a character such as his, still more prevailing and resistless, decided at once his choice and his fate.

"The temper and manners of his bride were sufficiently soft and tractable, and this only made the matter worse: she attempted but rarely, it is true, to lead; but she followed without question or demur. He was hospitable and "*magnificent*;" she engaging, pretty and tasteful; their house and table were open to their *friends*, by whom they believed themselves encircled; and neither had forbearance sufficient to resist the allurements to pleasure and expense that assailed them on every side.

"The lady had ben too fashionably edu-

cated to acquire any useful quality; she knew not how to handle a needle, she could not even dress herself, and of economy and domestic management she understood not the names.

"At this crisis, the prospect of an heir to the ruin, rather than to the fortunes of this but too well matched pair, awakened in the mind of our brother, painful reflection. To cut the knot which could not be unravelled, to flee from habits he had not strength to relax or break, he determined on a residence abroad. Whether he acted wisely in inviting his sister to accompany them, I will not presume to decide; but this I will say, that your admirable example and conversation, which I had so recently contemplated and enjoyed, had not been altogether thrown away upon that sister.

"After a short stay in Paris, to behold the wonders of art and the novelties in that metropolis, our first plan was to proceed

During the first period of the separation of the sisters their correspondence had been

individuals who composed it was in the habit of calculation.

southward, and there to remain stationary. but a premature *accouchement*, on the part of Mrs. Seymour, stopped us on our progress, and a languishing state of health and spirits, into which she afterwards fell, alarming my brother for her life, he determined to endeavour to effect her restoration by frequent changes of air and a moving scene.

"My remonstrances on this subject failed to convince; and it may be, that I too easily yielded to a plan, which, but for prudential considerations, would have accorded so well with my habits and tastes.

"Indiscretions, like other evils, are rarely single; and reformation and retrenchment were ever in a perspective that still seemed retiring before us.

"How rare is decision of character, how easy and smooth the declining into wrong! He, who once sets his foot over the descent,

proceeds by scarcely sensible, yet accelerated, degrees, and finds himself at the bottom long ere he is aware.

"Without resolution to look into his affairs, our brother, till remittances from England actually failed, neglected to consider seriously his situation. My finances, entangled before I left my native country, were in a condition but little better than were those of my fellow travellers, from whom I was on the point of separating myself, when destitution and ruin fell, as if unforeseen, like a bolt from heaven upon them. What was now to be done, where were resources to be found; all was consternation, terror, and a too late repentance.

"The gaming-table offered a desperate and transitory relief: this, however, soon failed; and our unhappy sister-in-law, unable to contemplate steadily the evils that menaced her, or to endure the novel spe-

"Alas, my sister (it began) how shall I address you, or wound your affectionate bosom by a narrative of imprudence, of ca-

"Our unhappy brother and myself are, among a thousand fellow sufferers, melancholy examples of this truth. Our fate has been well merited, though not on that ac-

cies of misery thus fallen upon her, listened to the seductions of a foreign libertine of rank, and fled with him from the ruin of her husband.

"He bore this stroke with more apparent calmness, than, from my knowledge of his ardent spirit and delicate honour, I could have believed possible—." It is *I* (said he) who have destroyed her! she is too delicate for poverty. Why should I wish her to share my misery and thus to double it? God grant, that the man whom she has preferred to me, justly no doubt preferred, may shelter her from those evils which I had no longer the power to avert!"

"He groaned deeply as he finished speaking, and he mentioned her no more. A torpor now seemed to seize upon his faculties; he prowled through the country during the day, and returned every night, at a late hour, to a cheap and obscure lodging which he had hired.

"With the remnant of my effects, I retired to a convent, whence I accompanied my present lady patroness to Italy. Before my departure, I was so fortunate as to meet with an English friend of my brother's, whom I had known in London. To him I related the particulars of what had occurred, to which he listened with friendly commiseration.

"This gentleman, equally munificent and kind, sought out, with offers of service, his fallen friend, whom he endeavoured in vain to rouse from the stupor into which he had sunk. His feelings which his judgement had never been exerted to controul, seemed paralyzed by the rude shock which they had sustained.

"All that can at present be done for him his friend has undertaken; that is, to support, till his faculties can be reanimated, by defraying his expences, his wretched life. This, however, will, by the almost

of another. Yes, the high spirited Charlotte is now the humble companion of an

Ellen and her virtuous husband I dared not become a burthen. Among the talents I

constant inebriation, which, unable to endure his own reflections, he, either by liquor or drugs, keeps up, soon be consumed, unless your influence, my Ellen, or that of your husband, be exerted to save him.

"Lose no time then in retiring to him; warm again his frozen affections; you he justly loves and admires; if *you* cannot prevail, he is for ever lost.

"Pity, pray for, still love if you can, a brother and sister whose relation to you and to your virtues, would, had they been worthy that relation, have proved heir happiness and glory, as it is now their condemnation and shame.

"CHARLOTTE"

.....

Ellen, on perusing this affecting letter, poured into the bosom of her husband the

first bitter tears she had ever shed. Touched by her grief, and by its occasion, Mr. Nevill declared his determination of setting off immediately for the Continent, for the purpose of prevailing on Mr. Seymour to return with him; when, by assisting him in making some kind of arrangement in his disordered affairs, he trusted, that he might be enabled to divert his thoughts from the principal and most poignant source of his distress.

Ellen, at the same time, addressed a letter to her sister; and, in the name of herself and her husband, urged her to come back to her country, and to the asylum, where she should be ever joyfully received, and which she had been so fatally induced to quit. By a few years retirement and frugality, much, she suggested, might yet be done to retrieve for her a decent and independent support: while still in the meridian of her days, rendered wise by the past, and wary for the future, events, it

was more than possible, might, in the vicissitudes of life, yet present themselves, to afford a compensation for an experience so dearly purchased.

Hope cheered the spirits of Mrs. Neville on this first separation from a husband so worthy and so beloved; and she smiled gratefully through the tears that fell from her eyes.

Mr. Neville reached the coast without allowing himself time for rest; a letter there met him that stopped his farther progress. It was from the friend of the unhappy man whom he was hastening to save. Mental and physical intemperance had, it informed him, produced, on the organs they had deranged, a fatal injury. With amiable propensities, but the victim of ungoverned feelings, the feverish existence of the object of their mutual concern had terminated in a premature death. How, or by what *immediate* means, it was not

specified—perhaps in pity and respect to the tenderness and to the virtues of those to whom the information was addressed. The body had been decently interred, and all was concluded. The letter ended with some details respecting the pecuniary affairs of the deceased.

Mr. Neville, having no farther motive to continue his journey, returned deeply meditating, to his *home*.

His presence, his countenance, rendered other explanations useless respecting the tydings of which he was the bearer; but virtuous sorrow, while it chastens, purifies the heart.

Charlotte learned the fate of her brother, and received the tender letter of her sister, at the same instant. The mingled effect produced on her feelings was powerful: unable to endure the humiliating reproaches of her own mind, her heart was corroded

rather then softened by grief. It is much easier to pardon others than ourselves; even to stand in need of forgiveness from our fellow beings is a wound to our self-love.

If Charlotte was affected by the tenderness of her sister, by the leniency and friendly earnestness expressed by the worthy husband of that sister, in a few lines which her letter enclosed, she shrunk, nevertheless from the idea of receiving from them obligation, of daily contrasting with their's her own less estimable character, and the consequences which thence had flowed. She determined on avoiding dependence on any one, and on remaining an exile from her native land.

A small pittance, from the sale of her valuable ornaments, remained to her; which by submitting to many privations, might, she deemed, in some obscure retreat, suffice

for the frugal support of what still remained of life.

She executed with resolution the plan she had meditated, and retired to a small village in a valley of Switzerland, carefully concealing from every one the place of her retreat.

By the wounds of the affections the character is frequently ameliorated and improved; those of pride have a tendency to irritate and sour. Wilful grief, indulged regrets, are, though sometimes slow in their operations, yet sure destroyers of life.

Charlotte had acquired a taste too decided for artificial pleasures to have any genuine relish for those of nature. The romantic scenery around her diverted for a time her thoughts; she even believed, in the transient excitement which it afforded, that it would never tire. But she deceived her-

self. The charms of inanimate nature, how delightful, how sublime soever, uncheered with social gratification or endearment, become at length monotonous to the fancy and appalling to the heart.

Charlotte had no sentiment, no idea, incommon with the simple people, and simple manners, by which she was surrounded. Her mind languished; its powers, no longer exercised, became gradually extinct: her temper, always unequal, was now reserved and unsocial, or querulous and severe. She excited fear rather than respect, was approached with unwillingness, and subjected to many neglects: disgust with life seized her; and death, often invoked, still delayed to strike.

"It arrived at last; and for a few days previous to the final blow, her mind seemed to recover a portion of its original vigour and powers. She wrote a last farewell to her sister; prepared herself with humility

to pay the universal debt; sent for the village-pastor, a plain and pious man, and entreated him to unite with her's his prayers. She then took leave of the humble family under whose roof she resided; divided among them the few effects she possessed; and asked their forgiveness for any unkindness which they might have received at her hands.

"I have, I hope and trust, (said she) suffered *here* the chastisement of my many errors and faults. May *this* expiate! My Father and my God, into thy hands from which I received it, I resign, submissively, the mysterious gift of life! From *Thee*, again may I receive it in regions of unclouded mental light.

She bowed her head meekly, and spake no more.

Ellen mourned the fate of her sister, and cherished in her remembrance, as an affect-

ing lesson for her daughters, the events and catastrophe of her life.

Mr. and Mrs. Neville passed together many years of national and virtuous happiness, as little overclouded as consists with that character of imperfection which belongs to human affairs. Always actively and usefully employed in duties softened by affections; and by affections, in their turn chastened by duties, they experienced no satiety and felt no weariness. Grateful in prosperity to the Giver of all good, resigned under privation, thankful for the gift of life, yet ready, when required, to yield it up, a sound philosophy, a tender piety, at once strengthened and elevated their minds. Their precepts, their example, their lives, were to their children an impressive and habitual lesson.

Rarely will any other than good qualities and good dispositions be developed, when neither provocation nor excitement is found

for those of a contrary nature. "Train up a child (said the wisest of men) in the way he should go, and he will not depart therefrom." Man (we are told by an eloquent French writer) and we are told with truth is a bundle of *habits*, and very early does the formation of these habits begin.

The children of Mr. and Mrs. Neville were never confined within a nursery, nor to the association with domestics; they were never sent from under the paternal roof; their play-mates and companions were carefully selected, and their faculties expanded under the eye and immediate direction, of those most interested in the results. The mild yet steady government of their parents was felt by them no otherwise as a yoke than that of a moral necessity to which they all must yield; and the character of parent and monitor so gradually gave place, in the progress of years, to those of counsellor and friend, that the limit was passed without being marked.

One lesson more, one trying and affecting lesson only remained: it was to learn how a christian, a reasonable, a virtuous, and a good man dies; and how a tender and susceptible woman sustains the loss of the husband, the supporter, the friend of her youth and of her life, the father of their mutual offspring. Nature suffered, but piety, duty, virtue, were finally victorious!

In seeking to supply a father's irreparable loss, the mother seemed to acquire a new character; her mind assumed a more vigorous tone. That expression of softness, which to her varying countenance had once given its peculiar charm, gave place to a look mor decided,—calm, however, but with a slight *trait* of sadness, which time softened into melancholy; and which by longer time, settled at length into that serene and cheerful seriousness, that becomes those who can, though conscious of many imperfections, look backward without self-

reproach, and forward with hope, resting on the surest basis, a profound conviction of the existence and of the perfections of that BEING, whose nature is *love*, and to whom all created excellence must be refered as to its source.