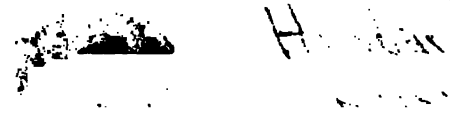

HUSBAND HUNTING;

OR, THE

MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS.

A TALE OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:
WELLS AND LILLY—COURT-STREET.

1825.

HUSBAND HUNTING;

OR,

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS.

CHAPTER I.

I'm lost in ecstacy.
Now shall I speak the transport of my soul.
I am so blest, I fear 'tis all a dream!
Fortune, thou now hast made amends for all
Thy past unkindness. I absolve my stars!

Addison.

It was the close of a tedious day of rain, which had drenched the landscape; when the sun suddenly shone out with the brief and rejoicing splendour that sometimes just precedes his setting; and the clouds, the range of hills, and the forest that swept along its sides, were lighted up with glorious beauty; Catherine's eyes were fixed on the southern heaven then glowing with rose and purple, and she thought of Spain.

But her contemplations were but little allied to joy. The state of the war almost

precluded letters; while reports of battles, attended with dreadful suffering on both sides, kept up the most anxious and painful interest. Some weeks had now passed away since the last despatch from Spain; and the partial intelligence by the public papers that Vaughan's regiment had been engaged, had been successful, and had purchased its success with heavy loss, had sunk her spirits into the lowest dejection. Her former graceful pursuits had now lost all their indulgence. She tried her pencil, and covered her paper with forms and colours, but they wore no loveliness to her eye; she sat to her harp, but some melody that she had played in Vaughan's presence touched her memory too deep for pleasure, and she turned away in sudden tears.

She felt how deeply and constantly the human heart is tried in this world of uncertainty, and how large a stock of human unhappiness is left in the hands of chance, even after we seem to have guarded against all its fluctuations. She was now free from the pain of submission to Mrs. Courtney's arrogance, and was under a roof of fondness and friendship; she was now secured from dependence, for she was the adopted daughter of her friend; her doubts of Vaughan's regard were converted into the honourable assurance of his heart: still she was unhappy,

and her unhappiness was connected with the very source of all her hope.

She thought, and shuddered as the thought arose, that at the moment its object might be in peril,—that he might be past all human hope or fear,—that he might be lying trampled in the indiscriminate ruin of some desperate field,—that he might be dust and air; and she wished for wings to pass over seas and mountains, and be at his side, living or dead.

As the vision grew, she imagined him calling to her from some spot crowded with the dead and dying; she imagined her own weary steps and searching eyes wandering among the wreck of man, unrepelled by night, and agony, and death, in all its forms of terror, till he was found, and she prayed for death.

"And may not his spirit be near me now?" sighed she, as her eye followed the fading glow of the heavens; "may it not be on those clouds, looking down upon the narrowness and folly of life, and watching with heightened love and power over those whom it loved and would have protected here?"

Her heart was full; she rose from her seat, and walked about the apartment to relieve herself from the sensation that almost stopped her breath. As she passed, her gown accidentally swept the harp, and it

gave a low and melancholy gush of sweet sounds. Unconscious of the cause, she looked upwards, as if they came from the air in response to her dream.

"Why," said she, "shall not the spirits of the dead hear, and remember, and love? Can the great change destroy the powers of the mind, when the mind itself is imperishable? Where can its wisdom be, but, like our own, in its experience? and what discipline can be so noble for the heart of the immortal spirit as that which softened and refined, raised and cheered it, in its trials here? or can those affections which we are commanded to cherish friendship, fondness, the love of parent and child, the deeper and more sacred love that binds for life, be condemned to be extinguished, when all that is good is purified and exalted, when our faith is turned into knowledge, our hope into happiness, and our imperfect homage into the burning adoration of the Seraphim and the Cherubim?"

Her tears flowed, and she gradually felt relieved, and even cheered. She took a volume from the cabinet,—and, as she turned the leaves loosely, a paper of verses fell upon the table. Her curiosity was not then vivid, and she would have returned it to its place, but that its subject was soldiership.

It was a mere ballad in memory of an officer whose rejection by a woman of distin-

guished beauty had made some noise at the time, and who was soon after killed in action.

ALLAN GOWER.

1.

They have fought, they have fallen, for their country dear!
Their blood the day has won;
And many a helmet, and many a spear
Are flung on the heather dun:
The hollow drum has ceased to roll,
It is the evening hour!
Now peace to every parted soul,
And peace to thine, brave Gower!

2.

He loved, and his lady's hazel eyes
Were lighted with answering love;
But clouds will come on summer skies,
And woman's thoughts will rove:
And woman's eyes will be witched by gold,
And faith's but an April shower;
What breaking hearts have this story told,
Long ere thine, brave Allan Gower!

3.

He chid her not, though his heart was torn,—
Though he felt he was all undone;
In secret the deadly sting was borne,
Till his spirit grew sick of the sun:
And still, false beauty, he kissed thy chain
With passion's bitter power;
But the strife is hushed, nor joy nor pain
Can now touch thee, Allan Gower!

4.

Here slumbers the last deep pang of the heart,
Whose pulse was agony;
Here from the bosom no longer shall start
The spirit's fiery sigh:

Thou art laid on the couch of a warrior's pride;
And thy love, in her stately bower,
Will yet long to lay down her woes by thy side;
Now farewell to thee, Allan Gower!

This ballad, slight as it was, awoke a train of melancholy reveries, and Catherine was mentally wandering over mount and main, when she was startled by the sudden tramp of a horse in the avenue. He came at little less than full speed; his rider was muffled in a blue military cloak, and her heart beat with a thousand conjectures, when the horseman leaped down, and with a pang of disappointment she saw Philip Courtney! who had already from time to time paid them a hasty visit, and whose attentions to herself had of late become obvious and painful.

He entered the apartment in high spirits; took Catherine's hand, and pressed it to his lips; she disengaged it with a look of coldness, which seemed to surprise him, and he pursued: "Dear girl, what have I done to deserve that glance; I have brought you news that ought to make me welcome, even if no kinder interest—but I shall say no more on that topic." "Your news," interrupted Catherine: "Is it from Spain?" was on her lips. "News so unexpected," said Courtney, "that I am almost afraid to announce it, most welcome tidings. But you have been weeping. Well, this will dry your tears.

Yet—I dread being too abrupt." His hearer's perturbation and its cause were so obvious, that he took a bitter pleasure in her suspense.

Mrs. Vaughan now entered the room; he turned to her, and, after the first congratulations, demanded a private audience. He had awoke the mother's feelings, and she exclaimed, "What news of my son?" "Yes, what news of Francis?" interrupted Catherine, thrown off her guard; "for Heaven's sake, relieve us all from this dreadful anxiety!"

"What, then," said Courtney, with a frown, which gave a fierce and fearful expression to his handsome countenance, "is there but one person on earth for whom present or absent you can feel?" She cast her eyes on the ground, like one convicted of a crime. "Do you forget, Miss Greville, that you have a father?" "My father, what of my father? does he live? in mercy answer me," cried Catherine, grasping his arm, and looking up in his face with intense emotion. "He does, and is at this moment on his way to England." "Merciful heaven!" cried Catherine, "am I so happy beyond all my hopes?" She endeavoured to cross the room,—and, sinking into a chair, a tide of anxious and joyful anticipations rushing into her mind, she covered her face with her hands, and remained

for some minutes almost insensible to all that was around her.

Mrs. Vaughan approached her tenderly. "Dear girl, look up; this event will fulfil all your wishes; you have nothing now but happiness to look forward to. All will now be well. Learn to bear joy as well as you have borne sorrow."

Catherine, aroused by her appeal, arose hastily. "Let me hear this delightful news at full length; I must know all that you can tell me." "I have a letter that will best explain all," replied Philip; "my mission here is to request that you will return instantly to Harley-street, there to await your father's arrival; and, if Mrs. Vaughan will for once desert her solitude, and accompany you, our pleasure will be so much the more increased"—putting at the same time a letter into the hands of each.

The lettter to Mrs. Vaughan was from Mrs. Courtney,—that to Catherine from her father. In her agitation, she was scarcely able to decipher the characters. But she was struck by the date. "This letter has been singularly long in reaching me; it is dated eight months back." Courtney's countenance struck her. "Can you explain this delay?" fixing her eyes inquiringly on him. "Explain,—delay!" he murmured; "no, my fair cousin,—that is a task above me,—ac-

cuse the winds and waves." "We may expect the General almost immediately?" "All is best as it is; the meeting will follow its announcement so speedily, that you will have no time for doubt or restlessness."

She again read the letter. "My father," resumed she, "I observe, complains of my silence; yet I have written letters innumerable; there is some strange neglect in this business." "Undoubtedly; but the mystery defies conjecture, and can be explained only by himself."

"Excuse us for awhile," said Mrs. Vaughan, smiling, and beckoning to Catherine to follow her. "Letters of so much importance are to be discussed only in a boudoir. I leave you better amusement till our return," pointing to a well-filled bookcase. "Books, my dear Madam," replied Courtney, "the resource of an exhausted mind; no, I am rather weary of my hasty journey. Honour me with the unlimited use of your sopha, and I will engage to sleep off my fatigue with first-rate expedition,"—at the same time flinging himself with fashionable indifference on a couch at the further end of the room.

In order to account for the delay in the delivery of General Greville's letter, it may be necessary to state that it had been in Courtney's possession for above two months. Nor must its delay be attributed to neglect

or forgetfulness on his part; it was, on contrary, a part of that ingenious po which formed the striking feature of his c racter.

Colonel (now General) Greville had England with a favourable remembrance Philip, as a remarkably lively and int gent boy,—so favourable as perhaps, e at that early period, to have excited so vague notion of one day uniting him to daughter.

The present letter had been enclosed one to himself. When he found that General, having amassed considerable weal was on the eve of returning to England, w the avowed intention of settling a handso fortune upon his daughter at her marria and making her his heiress at his death, former scheme presented itself in glowi colours.

But a sudden difficulty arose. Would a being of her spirit and feeling penetrate once into the motive which actuated hi shrink from attentions following so imme ately the prosperous change in her circu stances, and reject his overtures with scor As he revolved the business, and re-perus his letter, he perceived it was not the Gen ral's intention to quit India for three or fo months more, and suddenly adopted the ha py idea of withholding the intelligence for

certain period, during which he should pay assiduous court to Catherine. His attentions would thus have, at least, the merit, in her eyes, of appearing wholly disinterested, and might, in the lucky interval of Vaughan's absence, eventually prove successful.

Having thus worthily arranged his plan, he lost no time in putting it in execution. Deceived by the natural gentleness of Catherine's manner, and perceiving that she had almost forgotten her former cause of displeasure, he flattered himself that he had brought the matter to the point of triumph; and rode down full speed, overflowing with the utmost anxiety to communicate the newly-arrived and happy tidings.

CHAPTER II.

Who builds his hope in air of your fair looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

Shakspeare.

Mrs. Vaughan no sooner found herself alone with Catherine, than putting Mrs.

Courtney's letter into her hand, "I cannot," she said, "accept this invitation. Mrs. Courtney has always treated me with a marked and studied coldness. I would willingly keep up some appearance of friendship with her, remembering that she is my lamented husband's only sister; but then so unlike him: no,—Mrs. Courtney has no heart. Read her letter, and judge for yourself. And yet there is grace and warmth in that letter; but, knowing her as I do, I can dive into the feelings which prompted it, as much as if I had dictated it. She would stand well with your father, and cannot, without producing inquiries, exclude from her invitation his daughter's friend."

"It is all true," returned Catherine; "but, for my sake, overcome your reluctance,—forgive, forget, for awhile. I shall be again among a world of strangers, or acquaintances as uncongenial,—Martha's malicious smile,—Seraphina's hypocritical tears,—Lady Lovemore's fashionable indifference,—Mrs. Courtney's heartless hauteur,—all rise in odious review; and what will become of me?" "But remember," said Mrs. Vaughan, smiling, "you are about to appear before them in a new character,—as an heiress. You will be courted, flattered, caressed." "Perhaps so, but not deceived," said Catherine pointedly; "I have had a peep behind the curtain,—

and, amongst such minds as these, without the aid of your friendship and advice, I shall be miserable. The constraint shall be but for a short period; I will ask but to remain with them till my father's arrival; and then you will be my guest,—my father's guest,—and we shall all be happy."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Vaughan, "I see you have all the eloquence of the argument on your side. Be it so; and now, suppose we return to Philip?" "Leave him to the enjoyment of his meditations, or his slumbers, yet an instant longer: I have another request to urge. You will write to Francis instantly,—explain all; tell him how delighted I am at the prospect before us,—that my esteem, my regard,—no matter, say that I am charmed at this opportunity of convincing him of my sincerity. I would not for the world that he should hear the story from others, and construe my silence into the belief of a change in my opinion. And then ——" "And what then, my dear?" said Mrs. Vaughan, smiling at her romantic eagerness, "And then I will tell my father all; he will scarcely refuse his consent,—and—and" concluding as she began, "we shall be happy yet.

"You hesitate,—you do not approve of my plan?" "It is admirably conceived," was the answer. "I should merely reverse

the order of its arrangement; I would ask the General's consent first, and write to Francis afterwards. He may have other views for you. Philip Courtney was always a prodigious favourite; or he may bring over some Indian admirer, or design to marry you to a man of equal fortune. Then comes the old story, the paternal mandate, the daughter's tears, and the rejected lover." "No, no!" said Catherine, with a heavy sigh: "he will not return after so long an absence, only to set the seal to my misery. It is my privilege, my nature, to be sanguine. Allow me to indulge these hopes; while I promise at the same time to take no decisive step without your sanction, and then I cannot err!"

Having arranged their plans, they descended the stairs, to announce to Philip their intention of accompanying him to London in two days at farthest; an intimation which appeared to afford him infinite pleasure. He could willingly indeed have dispensed with Mrs. Vaughan's company, of whose influence with Catherine he had a secret dread, and whose penetration he sometimes feared might be the means of detecting and defeating his plans.

The day previous to her departure, Catherine spent with Mrs. Gordon. Julia took leave of her with many tears. "My ill-for-

tune pursues me," she said: "I congratulate you on having found a father. May he prove a gentler parent to you, than my mother has been to me. You will think me selfish in lamenting your departure under such circumstances; but I foresee that I have lost my only friend for ever."—"Why should you think so, dear Julia? My plans are yet wholly undetermined."—"If my father's tastes are at all congenial to mine," said Catherine, "he will soon grow tired of London, and I shall paint this charming spot in such colours, that he will be dying to visit it. I may yet persuade him to settle here altogether. We shall find something to his taste, some cottage, or villa, or castle."

"Ah," said Julia, with a gleam of her former vivacity, "a castle in the air." "Should it prove so, you shall build your castle in London. You shall return our visit. We shall make time pass as pleasantly as we can for you in your Frederic's absence. Till then I leave you, and your sweet boy, to amuse you. And recollect, Julia," and she looked down as she spoke, "I am almost as much a widow in heart as yourself; but I live in hope and in prayer, that our friends will return safe and honoured. Oh, that will be a day of joy to recompense all our sorrows!"

"Let me but see my Frederic restored t me, and I shall never repine again," and Juli kissed her babe, and wept. "I believe yo Julia;" but starting up suddenly, "I mu delay here no longer; I have many prepar tions to make. Adieu, for the present. will soon fulfil my promise of paying you visit." And Julia, a little consoled by h friend's assurances, fondly threw her whi arms round her, and bade her farewell.

On their arrival in Harley-street, the found the Courtney family, who had bee advertised of the day and hour of their a rival, assembled in full form to receive ther Mrs. Courtney had so far schooled her fe tures, and prepared her sensibilities for tl occasion, as to betray little embarrassmer The several members of the family all a vanced separately to offer their congratul tions, with the exception of Martha, wl stood somewhat aloof from the rest, almo palpably sneering at the whole performanc

"Welcome to London, my dearest niece said Mrs. Courtney, with supreme courtesy "I can hardly tell you how happy we a are to see you here, especially on such a occasion; nor can you think, my deare sister, how much we have regretted your d termination of solitude."—"I should imagir not," murmured Martha, "as she never hear a syllable of it before."

"The country has many charms," said Mrs. Vaughan. "Yes—oh—unquestionably; and my dearest niece must be well aware that I have always been among the first to consult her happiness. I imagined it most likely to be secured by permitting her the choice of her abode, though I must own that to wean her so completely from the attractions of fashionable life in London, my dearest sister," turning to Mrs. Vaughan, with a most gracious smile, "you must have cast an absolute spell around her."

"No other spell, Madam," replied Catherine, with cool dignity, "than that rare one of friendship and kindness in the extreme." —"The hope of seeing you here," said Mrs. Courtney, addressing Mrs. Vaughan, and too subtle to take any notice of Catherine's poignant remark, "was one which I had scarcely ventured to indulge. I had imbibed a notion that you had formed some sort of religious vow never to quit your retirement, and am the more flattered that you should break it on my account." "I had made no actual, precise vow," replied Mrs. Vaughan; "but must own I am sufficiently partial to my cottage, not to have deserted it even for so short a period, but by little less than the compulsion of friendship." Mrs. Courtney dexterously took the compliment to herself, and answered it by a pressure of the hand.

Seraphina Matilda at this moment broke through the throng, and flinging her arms round Catherine's neck with resistless tenderness, kissed her cheek. She fortunately did not accompany the action with a long and appropriate speech. Her feelings, and they had often done her this service before, overcame her, and impeded her utterance. She was at a loss for words to express her share in the general felicity.

"To do Seraphina justice," whispered Martha, "I believe she will find it in her heart to forgive you your fortune, provided always you take especial care not to rival her with her adorers." "I always warned them," resumed Martha, "that you would one day have your revenge. I long to see how you will use your triumph."

Catherine, without replying, approached Lady Lovemore with polite inquiries for the health of her lord, who, she perceived, did not make one of the family party that day. "Lord Lovemore!" answered her ladyship, with an air of profound indifference, "He is well, I believe; that is to say, he was well when I last heard of him. He has been, heaven knows where; down in the North, I think, these six weeks; electioneering, hunting, visiting; but it was too much to expect me to leave town at this season. I dare say his lordship will come back when he finds

it convenient." Catherine looked astonishment. "Now, what surprises you?" whispered Martha. "Do you think she consented to become Lady Lovemore, to have her inestimable old lord always at her elbow? Quite the contrary: she married him to get rid of his company; and the expedient has answered the purpose admirably."—"Still merciless!" cried Catherine; "will nothing soften your propensity to satire?"—"Nothing," rejoined Martha, "except burying myself in such a hermitage as you have just emerged from, where all is innocence and insipidity."

CHAPTER III.

Oh! where is honour safe? Not with the living;
They feed upon opinions, errors, dreams,
And make them truths: they draw a nourishment
Out of defamings; grow upon disgraces;
And when they see a virtue fortified
Strongly, above the battery of their tongues,
Oh! how they cast to sink it!

Beaumont.

The following day, the whole family, with the exception of Mrs. Vaughan, and the ad-

dition of one or two visitors, were assembled in the drawing-room, when a servant announced Mr. Mordaunt. "Mordaunt!" said Mrs. Courtney; "does any one remember the name?" As the servant stood at the door, waiting to know his mistress' pleasure "Not I," "Nor I," echoed several voices at once. "Mordaunt! Oh I now recollect, said Courtney, "a college friend of Vaughan's, brought here one evening just before he went abroad, something of a fashionable one who knows a good deal, and tells more than he knows."—"Oh, admit him, by all means," said Martha; "such a man is an essential of life. We shall hear all the news and all the scandal, about our dear absent friends."

Mordaunt entered. "Welcome to England Mr. Mordaunt," said Courtney, advancing to meet him with a hand of the most ready friendship. "Just arrived, I presume. What news from the peninsula? Our heroes all alive, all stirring just now."—"Why, faith not all," said Mordaunt, carelessly; "the campaign has done its work; but such as are alive, are driving the French famously before them." Catherine gave an involuntary shudder.

Mordaunt now found himself assailed by a string of inquiries made in such rapid succession, as scarcely to give him time to re

ply. One of the visitors had a brother, another a nephew, in the service. He was overwhelmed. "Really, madam, I don't know—I have not seen—I have not heard" —as he turned from one to the other, perplexed and bewildered by the multiplicity of questions. "Pray, sir," said Mrs. Courtney, with a countenance of that curiosity which is altogether independent of regard; "in the course of the campaign, did you ever meet with a Mr. Gordon, of the 49th? Is he likely to get on? Has his father made any exertion in his favour? Has he any possible chance of promotion?"—"Whether he is safe, is a minor consideration," whispered Martha. If he does not get a regiment at once, he may as well march civilly out of the world."—"Really, Madam, I am distressed beyond measure," said Mordaunt, in a tone of actual mortification, "to be obliged to profess ignorance on all these subjects of interest. But Spain is a wide country, our armies are vastly scattered, and it unfortunately happens, that I have not met with any of the gentlemen named."

"You left England, Mr. Mordaunt, I think, about the same time with our mutual friend, Vaughan."—"Some months before," replied Mordaunt, glad of having at length something to communicate, "I saw him the very day I set out homewards; a noble fellow—I left

him in excellent health; but"—Catherine felt her breath stop—"not quite so well in spirits as in health." "I am not much surprised at that," observed Lady Lovemore, "Mr. Vaughan, in my opinion, was never very remarkable for vivacity; he was looked on here as singularly grave for his time of life." —"It would have been singular, not to have been a little grave at the time I left him."—"A lady in the case, I imagine; a Spanish romance, such as fair ladies may easily conceive.—Oh! pray, leave nothing to fancy," said Mrs. Courtney, "I beg you will let us have it at full length," casting a keen glance at Catherine, who sat motionless, not daring to venture an inquiry, nor even raise her eyes from the ground.

"It is told in a few words," replied Mordaunt. "The rival was a fiery Spaniard, a jealous Don, as they all are. The Spanish ladies are dangerous beauties; the Don carried off the prize, and not content with being the successful wooer, must absurdly seek an opportunity of quarrelling with Vaughan, for having presumed to look with the same eyes upon the lady." "Strange," said Courtney, "who would have suspected this from Vaughan; that very wise and primitive person! I could have laid the long odds he would never find courage to talk on the formidable topic of love to any human being, fair or

brown." Catherine could bear no more. She rose hastily, and with a countenance "deathly pale," with difficulty found her way across the room, and sought the solitude of her chamber, where, flinging herself upon the sofa, she sobbed aloud in the fulness of her heart.

The deep though momentary silence which followed her departure, recalled the thoughtless narrator to a sense of his imprudence. He would have taken his leave, provoked beyond measure at his own indiscretion; but Courtney had other inquiries to make, and he led him apart from the group. "May I entreat, Sir," said he, "that you will complete your story. I am afraid that you know more of the subject than you choose to tell." "On the contrary, I rather think I have told more," returned Mordaunt, disconcerted, "than I had any right to tell. I speak from little better than report." "But report," argued Philip, "has but too often its foundation in something very like the truth; plainly, has there been a meeting, a duel?" "I have made a most unpardonable blunder in this business, Sir," was the reply. "I was almost under an injunction of secrecy, yet here have I let the whole affair slip in the first five minutes, and before ladies!" "And Vaughan gave you this injunction?" urged Courtney. "As to the intended duel, the ren-

contre is, I am afraid a fact." "And the cause?" "I know nothing beyond the common rumour of the camp; and I am most extremely mortified that I mentioned either the one or the other. It was the ladies! a man that falls headlong and unprepared into a drawing-room, can have no more chance of keeping a secret of the last importance, than —than I had."

"Well," said Courtney, laughing, "as I am no woman, perhaps you will acquit me of all irregular curiosity in my inquiries. I am, I assure you, actuated simply by an earnest wish to serve Vaughan. I would know the facts entire of this unlucky adventure, to enable me to repeat the story to his advantage. He has relations. If it should reach his uncle's ears, it might shake him considerably in his good opinion."—"Most unlucky," said Mordaunt, in an accent of real regret, "yet you may rely upon his coming off with honour."—"And did he," said Courtney, "knowing that you were about to depart for England so immediately, charge you with no letters, no message? strange."—"None," replied Mordaunt; "but that was scarcely to be wondered at, considering his reluctance to let the matter get loose in England. And after all, it might come to nothing. Those affairs you know blow over every day."

"No letter," murmured Courtney; his deep eye glistening with the triumph which he was to build upon this unwary omission. He walked away a few involuntary steps, to indulge in his exultation. Then suddenly turning to the perplexed Mordaunt, "You are perfectly satisfied that no communication, no detail on this subject has reached England. You have come alone from the army." "No, not absolutely alone," replied Mordaunt, laughingly; "but I can assure you, that my companion is not at all burthened with the histories of the campaign."

Courtney meditated again.—"Of the duel you are sure?" "Perfectly." "He would fight?" "No doubt of it. There was not a more dashing fellow in the brigade, I have good reason to say it."—"He may have been killed," murmured Courtney, "and you have brought the news?"—he approached and gazed with a wild eagerness in his hearer's face. "Heaven forbid!" said Mordaunt, shrinking at the thought—and overpowered by the fierce glare of his eye; "That is scarcely the surmise of a friend." —"A friend, Sir! ay, he shall find me a friend indeed," retorted Courtney, with a sardonic smile.

He stood silent for a while. Then suddenly recovering himself, with a look of his mother's subtle courtesy, he apologized for

any abruptness of which he might have bee guilty in the inquiry, on the ground of h extreme interest in his beloved relative welfare.

The ladies had already withdrawn, an Mordaunt took his leave, perplexed by wh he had seen, and regretting what he ha done. Courtney bowed him to the doo then violently flinging it to, paced the roo in a fever of exulting and inflamed feeling "Out of this imperfect story, this unexplai ed romance, this dubious duel, might h framed the ruin of the rival lover and th rival heir. His mistress was to be won, h uncle was to be alienated." The pictu spread in sanguine colours before him, and h long indulged in the luxuries of his ste imagination.

CHAPTER IV.

I must be
Envious, and so sit eating of myself
At other's fortunes; I must lie and damnably,
Beyond the patience of an honest hearer.
But when I am a lover, Heaven have mercy!
Love and ambition draw the devil's coach.

Beaumont.

The greater part of that wretched day was spent by Catherine in her chamber; but, conscious of the remarks to which she would subject herself by a longer seclusion, she joined the family at the dinner-hour. Mrs. Vaughan, unhappily acquainted with the leading points of the story, did not make her appearance, and she could feel it no shame to give herself up to the indulgence of a natural grief. Catherine envied her the freedom of her solitude, but knew too well that no such allowance would be made for herself. She felt that a mother's grief is sacred,—while the anguish of a heart like her's was much less likely to meet sympathy than ridicule.

By a violent and painful effort, she compelled herself to appear before them, and even tried to smile and talk on indifferent

subjects. But when they asked her to accompany them to the theatre, her heart felt that this was a task to which she was unequal; she declined the offer; and the quivering lip and the treacherous tear afforded strong evidence of the cause.

Fortunately, the whole party, intent upon amusement, speedily dispersed to make their preparations for the evening; and when Catherine, from the window at which she was seated, saw Lady Lovemore's carriage draw up, and the four ladies enter it with light steps and joyous countenances, she felt as if the sight, however wofully contrasted with her own feelings, was yet a relief to her overcharged heart.

Thinking that she was secure from intrusion for the remainder of the evening, and leaning her aching head on her hand, while she gazed vacantly on the various objects which passed in rapid succession before her eyes, she sank into a bitter contemplation of the change which had taken place in her hopes and prospects in the course of that luckless day.

Even the thought of her father's return, which she had anticipated with so much joy, was no longer a source of delight; she reproached herself for this unfilial sentiment, —but Vaughan had been too long the secret master of her heart. "How often have I

heard, that grief follows rapidly on the steps of joy! Shall I ever venture to be happy again?"

Absorbed by the painful train of thought into which she had just fallen, she had suffered Courtney to enter the room unperceived. She looked up, and saw him standing beside her, less with an expression of surprise in his countenance, than one that might have been mistaken for sympathy.

He took her motionless hand, and paused, as if respect and feeling for the circumstances in which she was placed checked him. "Dear Miss Greville," he said, "I am most deeply concerned that you should have heard any tidings that could give you pain. Believe me, I speak with all sincerity when I say, that the sight of those sorrows, from whatever cause they flow, has given me inexpressible regret." Catherine was still silent. He resumed: "So important is your happiness to me, that I could even find in my heart to plead a rival's cause, if I might hope to see you smile again."

"Sir!" said Catherine, interruptedly; "a rival's cause! I do not comprehend. I am indisposed. I have no grief,—at least, none of the nature that you attribute to me." "Nay, dearest girl, this to me, who know all? My candour should be, at least, repaid with equal sincerity, whatever may be the fate of

my respect,—my regard! You may not be aware that I was Vaughan's confidant from the first; but bear me witness, that a sense of honour and friendship towards him have till this moment silenced the pleadings of my own heart, and even now I should be silent, if I thought him still worthy of you."

A pang struck his hearer to the heart; but she made no reply but by turning away. Courtney again addressed her. "I should, dearest girl, teach myself to respect the priority of his claims,—yes, however hard might be the task, should forbear to name my hopes, perhaps I might say my claims; but appearances are fatally adverse to him."

"Appearances, Sir!" said Catherine, making a vain attempt to stifle her emotion; "I can have no right, no wish to inquire into their truth. The subject of your allusions is free, and doubtless perfectly at liberty to follow his own inclinations,—to make his own decisions." "For myself," rejoined Philip, "I disdain rumour, yet with loveliness and honour, with you before him, I cannot find a milder term than guilty, for one who could for a moment forget his allegiance."

His voice grew more pathetic. "Heavens! had such a heart been mine! But, no doubt, he will write; this will be the test. He

will not suffer a dishonourable, a deadly imputation to rest upon his conduct. No,—Vaughan will undoubtedly write,—if he be but living to make that explanation." "If he be but living?" exclaimed Catherine, clasping her hands; the dreadful thought of his death superseding every other consideration; and she felt at that instant as if she could have pardoned even his utter desertion of her, could she have been but assured of his safety.

Courtney gazed in dismay at her blank countenance and tearful eye. He saw that it was vain to attempt exciting in her bosom a prejudice against Vaughan, while she trembled for his life; and, repulsed in his first attempt, he stood irresolute what course next to pursue.

At this period, Mrs. Vaughan entered hastily, with an open letter in her hand. "Rejoice with me, Catherine, my love," she exclaimed, "here is a letter from Spain, from my Francis himself, this moment received." "A letter! where, where?" said Catherine, almost springing forwards to take it. Courtney gave it a single glance. "Has it a date?" he asked coldly. "Date!" said Mrs. Vaughan, referring anxiously to the letter; "I had forgotten to notice that. No; what an unfortunate omission." "An intentional omission I should be rather inclined to

fear," said Courtney. "Sir, sir!" said Mrs. Vaughan, in a voice of impatient sorrow, "this is cruel—thus to sport with my feelings, to renew my worst fears." "You do me infinite injustice, Madam; I would merely caution you against the indulgence of a too sanguine hope. The letter certainly may have been written after the event which has naturally alarmed us all so much. What account does he give of the Spanish affair?" "He does not once allude to it," replied Mrs. Vaughan. "It may be so, certainly," said Courtney, with an aspect of grave doubt; "yet I should have supposed that he would have been nervously anxious to explain every thing satisfactorily relative to a matter so very delicate; yet he *may* clear his honour still." "He will, I will answer for it," said Mrs. Vaughan vehemently. Catherine trembled, and listened intensely. "Yet, this silence is so unlike him," observed Courtney, with apparent carelessness. "Had it been my own case, I could not have rested under the suspicion of this levity and forgetfulness for an hour; but he has more resolution than I have."

In the steady and somewhat indignant gaze with which Mrs. Vaughan met his eye, he could discern no trace of the feeling he had been labouring to instil into her mind; but in the fluctuating and feverish tinge

which mounted rapidly to Catherine's countenance, he flattered himself that he could discover, at least, an indecision, which might by degrees be worked up into resentment and rejection. Catherine's heart was on the rack of uncertainty; but the more she felt conscious of doubt, the more she felt anxious to disguise it from all eyes. There is no love without some slight tincture of jealousy; and she felt for the first time the pains of the most imperious and mingled of all the passions.

CHAPTER V.

Let me kiss off those tears, O, beauteous tears,
If shed by filial love, if shed for absence.
Come to my arms, my girl! Of all the pangs
That lurked beneath the rugged brow of war,
When glaring day was closed, and hushed the camp,
Oh, then, amid ten thousand other cares,
Those stung the keenest that remembered thee.
Thompson.

Mrs. Courtney, elated by her fashionable alliance, and with two daughters still to be disposed of for the benefit and honour of the peerage, had plunged at this period into

more resolute dissipation. Still handsome though unhappily not within that period i which lovely ladies grow yet more lovely no artist in the great science of good look could exert a happier ingenuity in repellin the advances of Time, the only advance that women of a certain rank are presume to think of repelling.

A natural spirit of activity, which to th ruder eye often seems a talent for affairs; dignified and striking exterior, which seeme made for the palmy heights of life; and a iron heart within; were the qualification by which, having once attained a place i fashionable life, she held it as of right. Th attempts to dispute her right were few; fo her sarcasm was bitter, and her resentmer was avowedly quick, unsparing, and impl cable. She was hated, and was perfectl conscious of it; but like the Roman tyran her eye seemed to say, "Let them hat while they fear."

Yet, in all her state, there was one anxiet that envenomed the whole triumph. He income, however dexterously stretched, wa stretched beyond its strength, and the tim must come when the struggle must be rui and Mrs. Courtney be smiled on by duc esses, and be flirted with by their recrea lords—no more!

After one of her most splendid routs, sh

had scarcely sunk into a restless dream, in which creditors in a thousand different shapes from all the elements seemed crowding round her, when she was startled by the rolling of a carriage to the door.

Her attendant entered at the same moment to tell her that a gentleman had arrived, who had sent up no name, but had desired that none of the family should be disturbed on his account.

Conjecture ran over the number of gentlemen, old and young, to whom she was indebted; and, conscious of the easy disguises of a creditor, she felt sudden alarm. She sprang to the window, but the carriage had driven off; and the bright sunshine striking upon her own countenance, showed her in her mirror a face that must not be exhibited to any human being without a long and studious *surveillance*.

Catherine, who had reluctantly appeared on the night before, and was the first to retire, was the first to rise, and entered the breakfast-parlour, unconscious of the new arrival. She stopped on seeing a gentleman there, who unhearing her light step, and with his back turned to her, was looking intently at the family pictures. He was tall and stately; but his head partially bald, and his attitude slightly bent, as by illness or wounds, struck her with an instinctive impression for

which she could find no words. The stranger turned, and with military courtliness made her a low obeisance. He was a handsome and martial-looking figure; but his sallow countenance gave proof that he had long served abroad. He gazed for a moment, as if trying to collect his thoughts, then exclaiming, "Catherine, my girl!" caught her half fainting in his arms.

She was now happy, without a recollection of sorrow to shade her happiness. She was in the arms of her protector, and her parent. She fixed her fine eyes on his vigorous and joyous features with a strange delight: she felt as if he had never left her; yet she felt as if a new security from anguish, a new enjoyment of existence, a new tie to life had been created for her within that hour.

The General gazed at her with mingled fondness and admiration. "And is this the little one that used to climb my knees, that I have chidden and kissed a hundred times a-day? You cannot remember those early times, Catherine, but they are still fresh in your father's memory. Could I have anticipated the happiness of this meeting, I could never have found the courage to defer it so long." Catherine sent up a silent thanksgiving. "But it was for you, my child; and though India has left its marks upon me, I

hope to spend many a joyous day in England with you yet."

Catherine fondly replied, that his presence was enough for her happiness. "You talk like all girls, full of romance," said her father, laughingly; "but I'll answer for it, you will not find yourself the worse for possessing some of the good things of this world. You shall live like a Begum, a princess, my girl, and we must look out for a prince for you, ere long." The General, in the careless joy of his heart, had touched on an interesting topic; while Catherine, reverting with renewed pain to Courtney's story, trembled at the intimation.

Mrs. Courtney, whom the announcement of her visitor's name had for once induced to hasten the mysteries of the toilette more than usual, now entered, followed by her two daughters, to whom successively she introduced him: "But how is this?" said the General: "there is some familiar face, or familiar name, that strikes me as missing from the family circle. Julia!—Yes—Julia!—I hope no accident—she was a lovely child!"—"My dear General," said Mrs. Courtney, her former gracious smile giving place to an ominous gravity, "she is seldom named here—she is married!"—"So much the better," said the General; "she promised to be a fine sensible girl. Where does she

live? we must visit her and her husband."—"Ask no more, my dear General: she has degraded herself and us by an unworthy marriage."—"Why—what—that is bad. Has she run off with the footman, or been converted to matrimony by a methodist preacher?"—"Heavens, how you terrify me," said Mrs. Courtney, "by such shocking allusions! No, I flatter myself that a child of mine could not so totally forget what was due to me as to throw herself away upon any one unconnected with rank; but unfortunately the husband whom Julia has chosen has not the means to support her in that society to which she has been accustomed."—"Bad again," said the general. "Money is essential—yet if the fellow is a gentleman—" "Mr. Gordon, my dear father!" said Catherine ardently, "has only a noble presence, a cultivated mind, and a most generous and excellent heart to recommend him: rank and fortune are much; but shall those go for nothing?"—"Not in my eyes, I can assure you," said her admiring father; "we must look for these young people—bring the exiles home; and Julia shall be my guest—your guest, Catherine."

Mrs. Courtney, with the view of changing the subject, begged that the General would satisfy their curiosity respecting the cause of his long silence. The explanation was given at once.

As it had been Mrs. Courtney's custom to take flight in the season for some fashionable watering-place, General Greville had for many years, for better security, been in the habit of despatching his letters to his agent in London. When she had last called for her remittances, an unusual time having elapsed without a letter, she found the old agent dead, and his affairs in the hands of his nephew, a young, and as it afterwards turned out, an unprincipled coxcomb, who denied having received any packet from India. To all subsequent applications, made at different intervals, he invariably gave the same reply. Becoming seriously uneasy, and afraid to trust the conveyance of her own letters to this person, whom she began to suspect of negligence, at least, she wrote through other channels without receiving any reply. Her hard and selfish nature had from this adopted the opinion, which had produced so material a change in her behaviour towards Catherine. Foster, the agent's nephew, had been unable to resist the temptation of appropriating the handsome sums remitted by the General for his daughter, and had kept back every letter since his uncle's death.

In one of those, General Greville had apprized Mrs. Courtney, that his military duties would call him many hundred mile up the country, where he was likely to be sta-

tioned for some time, and where she mus
future direct to him; but, as this comm
cation never met her eye, her letters w
of course, addressed as formerly, and lost

In the mean time, the General hav
become greatly alarmed at this appar
silence, made preparations for quitting In
He wrote by an officer, to signify his int
tion to Courtney, and giving the same i
mation to his agent, Foster absconded im
diately.

Mrs. Courtney was now all indignati
and would have pursued the culprit fr
pole to pole. "Come, be more merciful,
fair sister," said the good-natured Gener
"I am rather glad that the scoundrel
escaped. These City coxcombs seldom
cape so well. The loss of the money i
trifle compared with the uneasiness wh
this piece of fraud has occasioned to
parties; but that is all over now."

Catherine gave him a look of gratitude
beauty that fixed her father's eye. He
silent in strong admiration; his heart
full, and something like a prayer quive
on his manly lips, that she might be ha
beyond the reach of chance or change.

CHAPTER VI.

How canst thou cross this marriage; not
Honestly, but so covertly, that no dishonesty
Shall appear in it. *Shakspeare.*

General Greville, not altogether pleased with the slight insight which he had obtained of Mrs. Courtney's character, made speedy preparations for establishing himself in a home of his own. Mrs. Courtney, who had acuteness enough to perceive the unfavourable impression which she had made, was no further anxious to detain him, than just sufficiently to gain time to promote her son's designs upon the heiress. Could she have any share in bringing about this opulent alliance, she would have some claim on Philip, perhaps so much as to add advantageously to an income burthened with two daughters, who, she began to fear, if some strenuous exertions were not made in their favour, might stand a chance of remaining upon her hands for life.

The splendour of the match might so far dazzle the eyes of their tardy admirers, as to bring them to the point desired; or failing this, she should, doubtless, be introduced to

the large and wealthy circle of the General Indian friends; and the interesting Seraphin in one of her melting moods, might posssib captivate the heart of a Nabob.

Meanwhile Catherine, occupied by h own reveries, had formed no idea of tl wary speculations of which she was the cc stant theme, but wandered from room room like a restless spirit, anxious and frett at being compelled to mingle in socie which daily became more irksome.

She had one morning excused herself fr all engagements for the day, and was ent ing the drawing-room, which, to her joy, s found vacant, when she perceived throu the folding-doors, partially open, Mrs. Cou ney and her son in earnest conversation. "It is really quite provoking," were the fi words which met her ears from Mrs. Cou ney's lips, "to see her moping about t house in this discontented manner; dear u fortunate girl, will nothing open her eyes

"Argument is out of the question," s Philip, in a still more emphatic tone; "ha we not offered plain circumstantial eviden of his infidelity," drawing at the same ti a letter from his pocket; "and yet even t proof could answer no purpose; read aga and be convinced. Catherine, intelligent she is, would attribute my interference, she has done all my previous sincerity, on to personal motives."

The actual pronunciation of her name would not permit the luckless Catherine to cling to the faint hope that they spoke of an indifferent person,—but the generosity of her nature, much as her curiosity was roused, would not permit her to satisfy her doubts by such means, and, throwing open the folding-doors, she presented herself before them. —"Madam," said she to Mrs. Courtney, "I have been an involuntary hearer of a part of your conference; as I am the topic, at least allow me time to retire;" and, without waiting a reply, she hastily quitted the room, but not without carrying away too clear a conviction.

"Very superb indeed," said Mrs. Courtney, "so hear the wise!" Philip laughed. "I think that we have clipped Vaughan's wings. Probably she has heard enough. Let the hint work;" this little dialogue having been planned to take place in her hearing.

General Greville could not remain an unmoved spectator of her continual sadness, although he deemed it almost impossible that she could have any sorrows beyond his power to remedy, or which she could be afraid to reveal. Thus he was at length led to fear that her dejection was a fault in her nature,—that hers was an unloving and unjoyous spirit.

He tried every resource that his affection-

ate heart could devise. The variety amusements which he offered to her w not declined, but they were evidently enjoyed. He drove her through the m fashionable streets at the gayest hour, without exciting a smile; he surrounded with his friends,—she received them politeness, but without animation. She t no interest in the choice of his furnitu She was indifferent to the place of his dence; the well-filled purse, which he thr upon her toilet, was surveyed with a carel gaze.

He had heard that she danced with pe liar grace; she now hated the very nam a ball:—that she was an excellent musici she now never played. He began to f that all his fondness was thrown away u an insensible heart. "I will procure for some agreeable surprise, purchase for some handsome present peculiarly adap to her taste, and try if she has any gratitu I have been told that she is strongly attac to the harp," thought the kind-hearted fath "she shall have the handsomest that can procured in London." He drove off morning early, and having fixed on an ins ment at an enormous price, ordered it to sent to Mrs. Courtney's house, till his should be ready for its reception.

Catherine entered the drawing-room

after the new purchase had been deposited in a conspicuous station. The General was impatiently awaiting her arrival; but her head was filled and her heart half broken by the conversation which she had overheard that morning, and she entered with even a more abstracted and disquieted air than usual. A chilling apathy had benumbed every feeling. Life, with all its allurements, appeared valueless to her. She approached the spot where her father's costly present stood in all its glory, heavily cast her eyes upon it, and turned away again. The General impatiently walked up and down, anticipating an expression of surprise and delight; still not a word. He could bear it no longer. "Catherine, my girl, do you see nothing to attract your attention?" She was silent.—"Come, child, this is perhaps the fashionable habit of the people of the present day; but, in my time, I have seen ladies pleased with more trifling attempts to consult their tastes." He approached her, and said with a softened manner. "They tell me that you have sometimes wished for an instrument; I have had a kind of pilgrimage in search of this before your indolent household were out of their first sleep this morning."

Catherine, excited by the voice of kindness in which this was spoken, exerted herself to thank him for his superb present, and

struck a few chords on it. Music had always a resistless power over her; and as she leaned over the harp, and listened to its rich and mingling vibrations, her eye involuntarily grew bright, and her cheek glowed. She sat down, and plunged into all the delicious depths and mysteries of its harmony. Her performance had the grace and brilliancy of habitual practice and natural talent; and the General's delight was boundless, or only to be excelled by his discovering that her voice was as captivating as her command of strings and pedals.

But here a deeper difficulty arose; the music-room must be first explored for a song and in that room of Mrs. Courtney's crowded house, some of the most important and undisturbable operations of the toilet were at this hour in solemn performance by the lady of the mansion herself. The whole tribe of those sylphs who preside over cosmetics and complexions would have been roused into cureless hostility by an irregular intrusion and Catherine, unhappy and reluctant, pleaded that she did not remember an air in the world. For this, however, the General had made provision. In the purchase of the harp he had brought with him some national songs which the publisher declared to be destined to immortal popularity. One of these, to a Spanish melody, he placed before her.

LA PARTIDA.

We parted in love ; and our tears fell like rain;
Yet still some sad pleasure was mixed with our pain;
To some wild forebodings my mind was a prey,
But none of them whispered that you could betray ;
I grieved when I thought of the world and its woes ;
But I thought of the time when our trials would close;
Hope sweetened the last dreary sound of "adieu,"
And still I was blest, for I trusted in you.

But tears must flow faster, and pain be more pain,
For the brightest and best of our hope may be vain.
Yet why should I weep, since the moment will come
When my heart will be calm, and the grave be my home?
Now, Fortune, thy sunshine can cheer me no more,
For my joys and my sorrows alike shall be o'er :
Yet had I earth's treasures, I'd think them too few,
To die, oh, thou false one ! still trusting in you.

Slight and simple as these verses were, their accidental allusions struck too bitterly upon a mind already stung. The General, delighted with the sweetness and skill of the singer, scarcely perceived the increasing feebleness, the faltering voice, the tear, that often wiped away would still come, till he was roused by a sigh that told the whole deep agony of the heart, and he had only time to catch Catherine's falling form in his arms.

Assistance was loudly called for, and immediately procured: the attendants bore away the unhappy girl to her chamber; and the General, anxious and alarmed, was left alone with Courtney, to obtain such explanation as he could.

That explanation was given with an air of infinite reluctance; but was, notwithstanding, given at an extent sufficient to stimulate ordinary suspicion, and with a skill adapted to deceive ordinary sagacity. Courtney distinctly attributed the conduct which had "equally pained all her relatives" to Catherine's prejudice against "some members" of her aunt's family, and to her unaccountable partiality for a worthless individual, "unfortunately a relative," who had, from various irregularities, been compelled to enlist as a common soldier. The General's face flamed at the recital. "Tis true," added Courtney, "that since, the mortality of the campaign, and the necessity of having officers on the spot, had," he understood, "been the source of some trivial advancement to this unhappy young man. But the occasional accounts which reached their family, for all correspondence had been long interdicted, described him as involved in low excesses followed by low quarrels in defence of those excesses, the result of which must be speedily the loss of his commission, and utter ruin."

"But Catherine, *my* daughter, to think of this scoundrel!" broke out the exasperated father, "a common soldier, perhaps already turned out by a drum-head court-martial!" He suddenly stopped, and fixing his full, bold eye on Courtney, who instinctively shrunk

from its investigation—"Upon my honour, Mr. Philip," said he, "I am beginning to think you have sufficiently tried the patience of an old Indian. This affair is to me altogether inconceivable. Ay, Sir;" and he strode through the spacious room; "if you had told me that the girl was fastidious; that she had turned upon her heel when some opulent booby paid her his homage; that she had laughed at some yellow admiral or duke on the retired list; nay, had set the whole peerage at defiance, I might have believed it; for my girl is handsome, has talent and taste, and would be thrown away upon nine-tenths of them. She has a touch of romance too in her composition——"

"There, my dear General, you have struck upon the very point. Miss Greville certainly has singular beauty, accomplishment, and genius, the rarest qualities under heaven; but she, it must be confessed, is inclined to invest the common characters of life with the hues of her own too vivid imagination. All is with her, either *couleur de rose*, or utter darkness; she always paints *en beau* or *en laid;* and I should not be surprised if she has imagined this reprobate subaltern into a hero full of every virtue, and wanting only opportunity to rescue all the way-laid damsels, and retrieve all the falling thrones of the earth."

"No matter," said the General, "I leave

you to cure her of that absurdity; this is an unromantic world. A London winter, nay, a presentation at Court, would put all romance to flight with the infinite majority of the sex. But the name of this abandoned fellow?"—"I regret to say it is—Vaughan," replied Courtney. His hearer was all surprise. "What, the son of that lady-like woman, who is in this house? her praise of him is boundless. Catherine has the highest opinion of her."—"And of her son, too," sneered Courtney. "The truth is, my dear Sir, this Mrs. Vaughan is lady-like and graceful, but she is also sagacious and worldly. Miss Greville has been attracted by her manners; and you may rely upon it, that Vaughan's merits will not be forgotten as long as his mother can find an auditor. Her game is now doubly difficult; for this scoundrel son of her's, as if to thwart all her objects, has actually entangled himself in some sort of equivocal Spanish connexion, for which his life may have answered by this time; thus adding dishonour to dishonour, and insulting the unhappily placed partiality of your incomparable daughter."

General Greville stood in a fever of disdain, sorrow and surprise; he was silent through perturbation; but his look was full of inquiry. Courtney disclaimed all further knowledge. He regretted that he had been

incidentally led into topics that must be so painful to all the friends of Miss Greville. "Excuse me, General," said he, with a depressed look and a sigh, "if I speak with more than common earnestness on a subject which interests me so nearly. Till Vaughan came across my path, I was not without hope; Miss Greville was the first name that ever claimed my homage. To connect our families was the first dream that ever charmed my fancy. When your long and melancholy silence had overwhelmed us all with a too natural dread, it is not for me to say how I laboured at a toilsome profession, with the hope of one day being able to share the result of my exertions with her. And then his man stepped in, obtained a heart of which he has since shown he did not know the value, and, even the promise of a hand for which I had not yet presumed even to sue. And how has he requited her!"—"Ay, so it has been from the beginning. Why will men have daughters?" said the indignant General. "But Catherine has sense and feeling—I will reason with her; my word for it, Philip, you are my son-in-law, after all."—"Yet, where are you going, sir, in such haste?" said Courtney, making an effort to detain him. "To my daughter, to be sure; nothing like acting on the spur of the moment,"—"But, sir, if Vaughan's name should

be mentioned, in the course of your con
ence, not a word that you have your int
gence on the subject from me."—"Let
alone, lovers are licensed to be jealous,
women are flattered by thinking so.) H
ever, I will keep the secret, I am confiden
success; good bye."—"Bravo, bravissim
said Courtney to himself, as the Gene
closed the door.

He had gained one material point; a
flattering himself that he now saw the p
clear before him—"I am a Machiavel;
so may any man be, who has such hos
fools to deal with. Bravissimo," he excla
ed aloud. Ending, as he strode exultin
across the room, with

"She is a woman, therefore to be wooed,
"She is a woman, therefore to be won."

CHAPTER VII.

"Nay never droop, nor let thy lip's red rose
Be sad as violets withered in the sun;
Life's but a tide, that hath its ebbs and flows,
And ere the one be past, the next's begun.
Then, sweetest, lady, look no more so pale,
But list a new love when the old doth fail.
Phineas Webb.

General Greville was not accustomed to let a matter rest, on which he had once set his heart. He hurried from room to room, fretted and fevered. "This wayward girl shall hear my whole opinion; Courtney shall be the man;" and as he pronounced these words, he opened the door of a small apartment, to which Catherine was in the habit of retiring, and in which she then was, deeply engaged in writing, and only stopping at intervals to wipe away her tears.

Pained at the sight, he stood irresolute whether to proceed; but the consciousness, that too free an indulgence of this idle sorrow might render its consequences serious, he approached her. "Rouse yourself, my child, what, always in tears? Was it for this that I returned to England? It is possible to make me angry at last. Exert that spirit

which so well becomes you—and strive to forget this Vaughan. Nay, no alarm, Catherine, your secret is no longer in your own power, and ought it, my dear girl, to have been so long a secret from me?"

"I ought scarcely," said Catherine, looking up mournfully in his face, "to be surprised at this intimation. Amid such a host of eyes, I could hardly hope that my regrets should escape notice, or avoid condemnation. I was never intended by nature for a hypocrite. These tears are my witness, that I have not the art to conceal the sadness which oppresses and overwhelms me."

"A truce to this language. Are you not aware that this is a sorrow which the world is apt to view with contempt, instead of compassion. My daughter must give no ground for private malice or public derision. You will be laughed at as a love-lorn damsel, and your cousins, of whom, to speak generally, I have no favourable idea, will be the first to tell the tale. You must appear again in their evening parties—join in their morning excursions. A little timely fortitude, and all will be well."

"Oh! sir, how hard is the task that you would impose. Give me but time. I cannot appear in the world with a contented countenance, whilst all within is desolate." And she placed her hand instinctively upon her

heart, the throbbings of which might almost have been heard in the silence.

"I have not come here to teach you artifice, Catherine; I ask you not to disguise but to subdue feelings which are no longer justifiable. Forget this Vaughan. I know that your sufferings are keen; but I know also, that griefs of this nature are not incurable. I have seen many who have wept like you, and who afterwards, in the protection of an honourable husband, have looked back with wonder at their own delusion."

"That time, my father, will never come to me."

"It will, it must," said the General, with a vehemence that alarmed the trembling girl. "Must I again warn you, that it is possible to awaken my resentment. I tell you that there are those at this hour anxious and worthy to dry your tears. To come nearer to the point, there is one who has my free consent to make the trial, and my hearty wishes for his success, and that one is Philip Courtney."

"He!" said Catherine, with a look of mingled scorn and fear. "And why not?" cried the General, his voice rising to its former pitch; "an honourable, excellent, plain-dealing young man. This is romance beyond belief, folly inconceivable; I had hoped better things. I saw there was no mild and gentle virtue which you did not practise,

I thought there was none, however bright and heroic which you could not attain. Is it not enough to drive one mad to see you waste your life in pining after a thoughtless, selfish, unprincipled ——; it is true, I speak only from report,—but report speaks strongly against him."

"And *I* speak from experience,—long experience. I have shown that I hold him not free from error."

"Can it be possible that you still feel any attachment to this fellow?"

"His unkindness fades from my mind. I can remember only that he was generous, noble, and kind." "I have done," said the General, receding; "I give up my task in despair; but recollect, girl, that this heart, old and insensible as you may deem it, may yet be broken by ingratitude."

"Dearest father? hear me,—spare me. You are now all to me; hear but the natural and last excuse I have to offer. You shall hear Vaughan's name from me no more; but recollect under what circumstances we met, and how we parted. We were both children of misfortune, and myself an orphan even in prospect. I was alone in the world, or surrounded only by unkind relations. The first voice of kindness that had ever met my ear was from Francis Vaughan. My sole hope was in him. We met in a melan-

r time; and, outcasts of fortune as we were, something like a providence ed to sanction the bond of two most un- y and bitterly tried beings."

e wept in silence. Then clasping her r's hand: "I never saw my mother. I not then a father's tenderness; and is be wondered at, that my thoughts, my m, should have been given to my only d?"

'ou shall have time; and I do not des- of yet seeing you transformed into that y being I had hoped to have found you." th these words he quitted her; and Ca- ıe once more left to solitude, (and to the :hed even the freedom of solitude *is* an 'ment,) resumed her occupation. It was aughan that she was writing. "It is ," she exclaimed as she folded the let- "on his reply hangs my destiny." Once 'ice she stopped to consider, whether hould not submit it for perusal to some on whose advice she could rely; but to n could she apply? "My father," she ed, "is unacquainted with him, and is les strongly prejudiced. He would dic- a harsher style than I can bring myself opt. Mrs. Vaughan, indeed, knows, or ines she knows him perfectly; but she be blinded by her partiality,—she d deem circumstances trivial, which so

fearfully startle me. None are so capable of judging rightly in so delicate a situation as those who are placed in it." She would not perceive that she was the last person in the world who could take a clear view of the question.

She had written accordingly to Vaughan, merely announcing her father's arrival as an unexpected and welcome event. Her pride would not permit her once to allude to the hopes with which they had parted,—hopes which were all to have been crowned by this event, and which then, touched with the colours of her brilliant and noble mind, presented a prospect of felicity almost too bright to be indulged. "No," she reasoned; "to renew promises made before suspicion came would be to solicit a similar reply. True or false, he cannot be ignorant of the reports respecting him. If he detect unusual coldness in my style, he will attribute it to natural and just displeasure; if innocent, he will hasten to refute the calumny of which he is the victim; my father's fortune and benevolence of heart have now removed every other obstable to our union,—for his consent he will not fear to sue, and to me he will address the language of an unchanged affection and an honourable heart." Satisfied with the wisdom of her resolve, and secure that it would be the means of bringing her

fate to a crisis, Catherine became gradually more composed; and when Mrs. Vaughan entered, just as she had sealed the fatal letter, no traces of her former agitation were visible.

"Well, my love," said her friend, "you have had, I perceive, a long conference with your father, and I will venture to hope, from all that I have seen of him, that the issue has been favourable."

"He is the kindest of human beings," replied Catherine.

"Shall I then write to Francis on the subject immediately, as you once wished me to do," said Mrs. Vaughan, doubtfully,—for she was not quite satisfied with the grave tone in which the reply was uttered.

"I have myself written," said Catherine, putting at the same time the letter into her hands. Mrs. Vaughan took it eagerly, but instantly laid it down in evident disappointment. It was sealed; the address alone was intended to meet her eye; and this palpable want of confidence, on a subject so near her heart, deeply disconcerted her. "You tell me good news, Catherine," she said, "but not with the voice of one who has happy tidings to communicate."

"The answer to this letter will either confirm my suspicions, or set them at rest for

ever. Till it is received, I dare not permit myself to hope."

"I scarcely dare advise," said her friend, gravely, "ignorant as I am of the plan which you have adopted; but let me entreat you to consider, before you make a final decision; let not this letter be rashly despatched. Beware how you suffer suspicion to creep into your style; this would be the first step towards sorrow and unavailing bitterness. The happiness of your whole life may possibly be ventured on a single throw of the die."—Catherine sighed, and answered nothing.

Mrs. Vaughan would herself have adopted the natural expedient of writing to Francis; but in a second visit of Mordaunt's, he had made an earnest request of her not to speak to her son of the report which had reached her ears. "I cannot bear," argued the penitent Mordaunt, "that my folly should be set down as a decided breach of confidence." She had promised, and her lips were closed.

CHAPTER VIII.

I cry content to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.

Shakspeare.

Philip Courtney, flattering himself that he now left matters in train for the rapid accomplishment of his most favourite scheme, began to reflect that it would not be unwise to take advantage of the interval to attend to his interests at Halston Hall. He left Catherine to grow pale and passionate over the memory of her insulted love, and tasked his invention, as he pursued his journey, to crush his rival in his last resource.

Truth and falsehood, cleverly combined, form the most effective mixture of delusion; and Courtney had the expertness of practice and the zeal of interest.

"Glad to see you, sir," said old Sarah, with her usual form of salutation, when Courtney reached his uncle's door; and, to do her justice, she spoke with all sincerity,—for she loved visitors, and she loved money, and Courtney knew the full policy of purchasing golden opinions.

To his inquiries after her master's hea an ominous shake of the head was the f reply. "Breaking fast, Sir," she exclaim "far gone indeed, as you will think wl you see him; he scarcely ever quits chamber; he talks often of young Mr. Vau an, and seems to miss him; but he has s his last of him in this wicked world." A Sarah tried to weep.

"Now then, or never," thought Philip, he ascended the stairs; "a desperate p may redeem all."

The chamber door opened, and his unc wan and wasted countenance met his alm shrinking gaze. The old man was seatec his arm-chair, supported by pillows. made no attempt to rise, but motioned w his shrivelled hand for Philip to be seat The sight of mortality arrived at the l stage of existence, joyless, helpless, and crepid, struck chilly even upon Courtne elastic and worldly mind. His purpos stern and selfish, were hushed, and his gua ian angel might then have taught him t folly, the madness, of plunging into dec and guilt to secure the inheritance of tl paltry wealth which had so little power securing the man before him from helple ness and the grave. "Now get you to r lady's chamber, and tell her let her paint inch thick, to this favour she must come

But a voice from the grave would scarcely have impeded his haughty heart in the pursuit of his avarice and ambition.

"I had heard that you were ill and alone, Sir," said he, in a voice of condolence, "and hastened to see if my presence could be of any service to you." "I am always ill and alone," said Vaughan bitterly; "the old man is no longer fit society for the young. He must not expect them to give up a particle of the world's enjoyments to cheer his last hours. My lamp of life is fast expiring, boy; and neither neglect nor attention can now much hasten or retard its decay."

Courtney was startled; but he had too much confidence in his own art to despair. "Heavens, my dear uncle!" he exclaimed, "I hope and trust you have many long and happy years before you.—The weather is unfavourable, and felt by persons of every age."

The love of live still clung to the old man. "I may have been out of spirits, Sir; but I still live, and take some interest in what is passing round me. Have you any news?" —"I am so convinced of it, Sir," answered Philip, "that I came here expressly to consult you on one of the most important actions of any man's life. And were young men oftener to suffer their conduct to be regulated by the advice and experience of their seniors,

they would escape half the errors and imprudences of their being."

"Justly said, Sir: but to the point, to the point."

"The question on which I wish to consult you was simply this. As I have now a tolerable prospect of advancement in my profession, and am besides eight-and-twenty——" "Eight-and-twenty! Impossible!" interrupted Vaughan, in surprise; "it seems but as yesterday when your mother sent me notice in all due form of having given an heir to the house of Courtney. Ay, those were the words; and I remember how my brother, that unfortunate Edward, and myself (for we were fast friends in those days) laughed at the expression. Ay, that was your mother's style, boy; proud as Lucifer. Her first born must be an heir, though the estate was in the moon."

"I was thinking, as I am at least arrived at years of discretion, it must be as well for me to marry."

"Marry! Why, I was fifty years old before I even thought of any thing of the kind," returned Vaughan, who always measured his standard of right and wrong by his own life; "but I had common sense; and here I am a bachelor still. But have you the means; are you rich, frugal, and patient; able to stand the waste of a woman's extravagance, and the fire of a wife's tongue?"

I hope, Sir," answered Philip, "though I
ot boast of affluence, my past and future
tions will at least preserve me from debts
difficulties. We shall begin frugally.
ing but little to spend, we shall early
economy ; and diligence, and economy
d——."

Very true; an excellent maxim for a
g man to begin the world with; a young
of small fortune, and without expecta-
."

urtney was not exactly pleased with the
lusion of this speech; but the critical
tion in which he saw himself placed,
l rather as a stimulus than a check to
loquence.

am glad, my dear uncle," he pursued,
an unaltered tone, "to have met your
obation so far; but one scruple yet re-
s. I am doubtful—the young lady ha-
been previously engaged to my cousin
han; how far (should I succeed, of
h I am not altogether certain) I may re-
on her sincerity."

'reviously engaged to Francis Vaughan!"
the old man, knitting his wrinkled brows,
it could involve him in any engagement
e kind?—a pennyless orphan!"

'erhaps I might have made use of a
g term, it might have been merely a
tional promise in case——"

"In case of the old man's death, and the event of his making a will in the fellow's favour. This it is to be surrounded by dependent relatives."

"No, let me acquit my cousin of all mercenary views. Let the promise be of what nature it might, it does not seem to have troubled his recollection long. I understand he has been since paying his devoirs in another quarter, and even involved in a squabble on the lady's account."

"In love and out of love, and a rioter; so much for the rising generation of premature vices. Yet are you sure of what you say?"

"Totally sure, my dear uncle; but you are almost too severe. You should make allowance for the natural heedlessness of soldiers. Yet should he have escaped with life, his utter ruin may be the consequence. The articles of war are strong, are severe, and in the event his commission may not be worth a straw."

These words, said with a common-place air, sank deep and venomous; fixing his glassy eyes upon Courtney's countenance, with an expression of intense vexation, the old man pronounced, "Not worth a straw! my bounty twice thrown away!—I was born to be the dupe of fools and knaves. Yes, twice," repeated Vaughan, raising his voice as high as his feeble powers would permit,

his impaired memory, roused by the anger of the moment, seeming to return with a flash before the period of its final extinction. "Have you never heard the story? his suffering himself to be swindled out of his money; my money, Sir, by a spendthrift companion, a needy vagabond, who, I am convinced, never meant to repay him. Yet I forgave him that offence; I overlooked the indecision of youth. His penitence, his subsequent good conduct; his candour, I will not deny him candour; no, he had generosity enough to reveal the whole; all had their effect; and I made up the loss. But I thought him principled—"

"And I, too," said the unprincipled Courtney, led by progressive steps to direct falsehood, "I gave him credit for honour; yet I, his declared, his bosom friend, never heard a word of this before. I knew him indeed to be involved in difficulties at the time; overwhelmed with debts which he had no hope of paying. It is totally impossible that he would, for the sake of *serving* a friend, part with that which presented the only means of keeping himself out of jail. In fact, my dearest uncle, I cannot bring myself to believe the money to have been ever thus bestowed."

The old man shuddered: his whole frame appeared convulsed; he sank back in his

chair; his face assumed a mortal paleness; the feeble spark of life quivered in the socket; it was evident that this rude discovery had gone nigh to extinguish it altogether. He exclaimed, in a voice of anguish, "Is this the end of all my hopes? You have robbed my closing hour of its last solace. Heaven knows how few indeed have been the hours of enjoyment which that wealth has procured for me, which it took me a life to bring together; but I had thought that I had found no unworthy use for it, when I made Francis Vaughan my heir."

"Your heir, Sir? good heavens! your heir!" said Courtney, springing from his seat, thunderstruck at the intelligence.

"Yes, Sir, my heir!" answered the old man, firmly. "What have you to say against it! Think well before you reply." He sent a fiery glance at the incautious liar. "I am dying, Sir—I am dying! Can you lay your hand upon your heart, and pronounce your accusation true?"

Courtney was staggered by the solemn appeal. His courage failed him for an instant; but he, dexterously, recovering his presence of mind, evaded an immediate answer, by hastening to the support of his uncle, and affecting strong commiseration for his obvious feebleness. "You are ill, Sir; very ill; I was wrong to shock you by such a detail;

I did not know the extent of your sensibility; in your chamber you will be more at ease;" and ringing the bell violently, he consigned his uncle to the care of Peter.

He sat long absorbed in tumultuous and bitter reflections, when the sight of his servant Benson, passing the window, roused him from his reverie.

Though Benson performed the offices of a domestic, he was regarded by Courtney, privately, more in the light of a humble friend than of a menial. He was a man whom a long course of folly and vice had reduced, but not wholly without education, and possessing an acuteness which Courtney had found extremely serviceable on occasion. He had once, at an earlier period of his life, in a fit of rare generosity, rescued this man from the grasp of a creditor; since which period there had been a sort of tie between them—that species of connexion which links one subtle and sordid spirit to another, at least till interest suggests any very decided advantage to be gained by its dissolution. Courtney, degraded by deviations from the straight path of integrity, had found it essential to employ some humble abettor, some one to appear in transactions, in which he dared not figure in his own person, some one ready to run the risk and endure the obloquy.

Benson had been this convenient tool to

Courtney. He was a fellow who, hire, would intercept a letter, or wri a letter as should be dictated to him ; being scrupulous as to the purpose. I been long promised a rich fee, sho succeed in favouring either of his n present schemes. Courtney beckon into the room, and in a few agitated explained the cause. "My uncle is c he has made a will totally in Va favour. I am undone for ever—" the thought, he clasped his hands toge rage and despair.

Benson stood looking calmly at hi without uttering a syllable. "I tell repeated Courtney, seizing him by t "the will is made, he is dying."—" returned Benson, with a subtle smil is he yet dead? Is not the heir a Can he defend himself? And are yo hand to ruin him, if you like?" " been already tried," returned Co "No plausible story, Sir," said I "Ay, that was tried too, and it faile rably failed. The old man's appeal truth was so strong, that I do not kno came over me, but I could not go thro

Benson's smile assumed a yet meaning. It was that smile, mingled sion and affected incredulity, which of all others throws its object into t

perfect self-contempt. "And to-morrow, Sir, when your uncle is lying a corpse before you, and his estate will have passed into another's hands, where will your prospects be? Or have you courage to unmask the whole scheme, and declare the whole a calumny; no doubt, that would be an act of more than common virtue."—"Of more than I possess," cried Courtney. "It cannot be. There is no alternative, no resource, but in acts of more than common—no, not treachery, it is self-defence, not treachery," shuddering as he pronounced the word. "I think I have that fiérce old man before me still; but he is dying, and there is no time to be lost." Benson laughed almost aloud. Courtney started, but the menial composed his features at the instant; and Courtney walked slowly and haughtily to the door, muttering, "Ruin is before me.—I must plunge deeper still;" and with a wild look at his accomplice, he burst up stairs, and entered his uncle's chamber.

CHAPTER IX.

Oh, who could see that lady's starry eye;
And see of her sweet lip the deathly dye;
And see the raven richness of her hair
Tost on her brow of beautiful despair;
And see her roseless cheek upon the ground;
And her heart bleed—yet turn, nor staunch the wound?
Phineas Webb.

The day on which Mordaunt left Vaughan, spite of its gloom and anxiety, glided rapidly away. It is said, "Sad hours seem long." But his wordly occupations, and how much must necessarily crowd into one day, when it is deemed the last, appeared interminable; and when the shades of evening closed upon his labours, he felt, with a heavy heart, how short had been the space allotted to him to prepare for the chances of the morrow.

The revelry of his companions in an adjoining apartment struck a chill and joyless feeling to his heart. He could even distinguish the voices of some who had professed the strongest interest in his friendship. "And 'tis this heartless crew, these beings whose opinions on all other points I scorn, and whose conduct I despise, that compel me to this wretched extremity." He heard his

ollowed by a bumper and a burst of
:r. "Ay," said he, "they will tread
grave to-morrow, or step into my
without one pang of memory." He
indignantly from his chamber.
reached the fields, and flung himself at
t of a huge oak, whose dark and mas-
elter would have invited a heart at
no unwelcome repose. "Farewell,
pes of my boyhood!—farewell, the
of ambition!—farewell, friendship
ve,—farewell—" and his heart sank
pronounced the name—"my Cathe-

re was an oppressive stillness in the
t a breath agitated the thick foliage
, but once or twice a faint rustling
ed to indicate the approach of foot-
nd once or twice he had looked up,
ed to chide and repel the intruders.
sound passed away; again he leaned
rish cheek on his hand, and mused.
s on a night like this, ay, and at this
hat I saved the life of Velasquez from
ger, and for what? to see him pursue
ith blind and savage hate. I could
fancy myself surrounded by those
les of horror which then lay before

hat moment a figure gliding slowly,
h an almost soundless motion, towards

the spot where he was lying, completed the illusion. It seemed to his half-slumbering mind, as if sleep had utterly overtaken him, and a vision of the past had stolen upon his senses.

He placed his hand before his eyes in strange and mingled awe; the next instant he felt his arm grasped, as by one in agitation, and a voice, sweet yet faltering and hollow, called on his name. "Awake, arouse, Sénor Vaughan—look up and hear me." He started to his feet. The figure knelt before him. "I will never rise from this posture of supplication. I will never quit this spot, till you have sworn to me on your bended knee, by a soldier's honour, that you will grant the request which I came hither to make. I have watched through the whole of this wretched day for the opportunity which is now arrived. Let it not have been in vain." The figure raised her veil, and Vaughan, to his astonishment, saw the lovely wife of Velasquez.

He was deeply pained, and vainly endeavoured to raise her from the ground. "Sweet lady, spare me the pain of refusing the only petition of your's that I could bring myself to deny."

"I will not, I cannot rise; I am wild with apprehension; but I have no time to waste in dwelling on my fears. In a word, will

you forego your purpose of to-morrow? My happiness or misery depends upon the decision of this hour: have you the heart to send me to the grave?"

"Lady," said Vaughan, looking anxiously around, and moved even to weakness, "spare me, spare yourself. Should Velasquez discover you here, and at this hour, under such circumstances, I tremble for your happiness. I beseech you, leave me."

"It is in vain, Sénor," said Leonora, faintly, "that you attempt to intimidate me. If there were a thousand witnesses, I should kneel here. I know well my risk, but it is to save lives far more valuable than my own; lives for which the tears of my country would be shed, that I came, and with such an object in view, I scorn to tremble. I can die before you, but I cannot relinquish the purpose with which I sought you."

A gleam of feeble moonlight fell on her face, pale as monumental marble, and Vaughan, for the first time, was struck by some resemblance of Catherine. He involuntarily touched her forehead with his burning lips, and without a word led her into the open air. He pointed to the lamp of the Madonna which showed the entrance into the village. But she still would not leave him. She continued repeating, in a low and bewildered tone, "My husband *shall* be saved."

"Dear Lady—Donna Leonora, in pity, do not upbraid me. I call Heaven to witness, that I did not seek this quarrel—but I am not the less bound to abide its consequences."

"Obdurate man, stop one moment, and contemplate the fate that you have prepared for yourself and me. To-morrow's sun shall doom you to the long, last dreadful sleep—or *worse*, to sleep no more. Yes, I repeat it, should my husband fall by your hand, the image of him whom you have murdered will haunt you—the wasted form of the desolate widow you have made will pass before your eyes, the cries of her bereaved heart will break upon your ear, in the stillness of the night. No! Never shall you sleep the sleep of peace again!" Vaughan at once sighed and smiled.

"Think then of earthly agonies, of the tears of your mother, Sénor; or if there be a name yet dearer to your memory, of her's whose image will cling the latest round your heart; and shall they not prevail, though mine you scorn?" And she burst into loud and bitter weeping.

"Bathe with those tears the cheek of the proud Velasquez, Donna Leonora," answered Vaughan,—"try the same arguments with him that you have used with me—and if they succeed in subduing his haughty spirit,

I too will own myself vanquished." "The proposal is mockery," cried the wretched Leonora, clasping her hands in the agony of despair; "hope is at an end for ever; you know that I dare not. Velasquez is impenetrable. I have wept, I have prayed all this day before him, I have kissed the ground at his feet; and he spurned me from him—I am undone."

The lofty tone which had astonished the listening Vaughan, by the heroine heart which it seemed to indicate, had melted with these words into one of sweet but overwhelming sadness. The temporary excitement which had lifted her above her nature, gave way to the gentle feelings which it had restrained, but not subdued. She flung herself in anguish upon the dewy shrubs at her feet, and throwing one arm as if for support, round the trunk of a leafless laurel beside which she had sunk, she pointed with the other to the sky, then flashing with ten thousand stars.

"My sole hope," she exclaimed, turning to Vaughan, "was in you,—I relied upon your promise to him who is now a saint in Heaven;" and she continued pointing, as if she invoked her brother's spirit, to bear witness to its fulfilment. "Did you not promise to protect me in danger—to console me in distress—and is it for you to plunge me into grief which refuses all consolation?"

She kissed the cross on her bosom; s
then added, with the same solemnity of t
and manner, "When last we met at t
lonely hour, by the light of those stars, y
felt for my anguish; you led me to the s
where my wounded hero lay. Velasq
and I are now united by holier bonds; s
you would deny the life of the husband
the prayer of the wretched wife."

"Lady," said Vaughan, deeply affect
"thus far will I permit myself to c
your fears. Your husband's life on t
eventful night was in far greater dang
than it shall ever be from me. On that ni
of which you speak, the robber's weap
was at his heart. And by all the honou
ble sentiments that can influence me, I f
at this hour as much anxiety to preserve
life, as I did then to defend it."

He stopped suddenly; the generous
luctance to speak of his own services che
ed the explanation already on his lips. I
onora's eye gleamed like a flash of lightni
she sprang from the ground. "By wh
by what," cried she, in breathless eagern
"was he saved?" "By an ever watchful a
merciful Providence," said Vaughan, re
vering himself on the instant. A sudden
light appeared to illuminate Leonora's f
tures. A hope, the cause of which Vaugh
was at a loss to conjecture, was in l
wreathed and rosy smile.

"You will think me a trifler, Sénor," at length she said, "for what I am now about to say. No matter, I am content to be thought so to-night. I have, Sénor, a treasure which came into my hands by chance. A sudden recollection of the time and place in which it was found, have impressed me with the idea that you are the true owner."

She drew at the same time a small trinket from her breast. "To my thoughts memorials of this kind may not be unjoyously regained, even in such an hour as this." As she spoke the moon-light shone upon the ornament which she held up in her hand, and Vaughan recognised at the first glance the locket which he had received from Catherine. It had been long the object of his most anxious search. He caught it from Leonora's hand, and pressed it passionately to his lips. "My companion till death—my amulet through the troubles of existence, my preserver from all future ill!—regained, never to be lost again."

"Adieu, Sénor," said Leonora, waving her hand, and retreating with the light step of one who had attained the full object for which she sought the interview. "Adieu, we *shall* meet again;" and leaving him to muse upon the apparent inconsistency of her conduct; ere he had time for inquiry or gratitude, he saw her at a distance, that showed her, in the silver light, like a floating vision.

CHAPTER X.

Here are they, Sir! Their shining rapiers out;
Wrath on their sallow lips; their eyes are fierce,
Lighted with jealous flame. See how they stand,
Like tigers seeking 'vantage. Now they spring—
There will be murder; rush upon them straight;
Beat down their swords——

Phineas Webb.

It was a lovely morning when Vaughan, with a perturbed heart, went to the place of meeting. As he advanced, he could discern the tall and stately figure of Velasquez, a striking, and indeed the only living object visible in that secluded spot, and he hurried forwards. The spot of the rendezvous was well chosen, as affording security from intrusion; but so lovely, so sweet, so serene was the aspect of every thing around, that it seemed formed to lull all the angry passions to rest. A little rivulet, so clearly transparent as to reflect in unbroken beauty the cloudless sky, and the brilliant green of the over-hanging trees, ran murmuring at their feet. Velasquez, his arms folded, his brows bent, his whole countenance evidently the prey of conflicting but stifled emotions, stood with his eyes fixed vacantly on the stream,

and apparently unconscious of his antagonist's approach.

Vaughan gazed at him awhile with mingled feelings of surprise and compassion; but the Spaniard remained so long in this moody silence, that he at length deemed it necessary to remind him of his presence. Velasquez turned fiercely round, and looked at him with an expression so wild and singular, that Vaughan felt at a loss to interpret its meaning. "I need not, Senor Inglese," he said, "be reminded of the intention with which I came here; I know it but too well!" and as he spoke, he drew pistols from his belt. He stood for awhile with them in his hand; he then fired them successively in the air, and with an impassioned and frantic gesture, flung them both into the stream by his side. "I have scared the fiend from my heart," he exclaimed, "so perish the remembrance of this rash adventure! Yes, Senor," said he, in a still louder tone, "I have hated you with mortal hate—I thirsted for your blood!—but it may not be. You saved my life; and now, since all is known, to revenge my injuries were an act of unmanliness, of unholy ingratitude, an act which shall never stain the name of Velasquez. But would to heaven that my happier destiny had ordained that I should make this acknowledgment to any man living but you!"

"Senor Velasquez," said Vaughan, i
tone strikingly contrasted with the brol
and hurried accents of the impetuous Sp
iard, "this causeless animosity, and the
covery of a service that I had supposed
seen by any human being, are alike my
rious to me. We met with the view of ter
nating our unhappy difference, by the
crifice of one of our lives. Let us not p
till all strife is ended between us, either
our weapons, or, if you so please, by
more welcome expedient of mutual expla
tion."

"It is enough," said Velasquez, col
"that we have ceased to be enemies,
were never born to be friends. The dis
very which amazes you was owing to no
racle. Woman's wit never fails her; and
means of that trinket which you lost,
wife ascertained my debt of gratitude. W
was her motive for prosecuting the inqui
whether it was with the view of saving
life or yours, I leave to heaven and her c
conscience to determine." Velasquez aln
gnashed his teeth furiously as he spoke,
gazed at Vaughan with a flashing eye.

Vaughan returned his gaze with an
pression of deep sympathy, but made no
mediate reply. A fine and generous m
deformed by ungovernable passion, pres
ed a painful and humiliating view of hur

nature. Vaughan unconsciously stooped, and taking up a pebble from the ground, threw it into the brook. Half soliloquizing, he drew the moral with a smile. "How smooth and clear was the surface of that stream; what an atom had been enough to disturb its tranquillity—how rapidly the circle spreads and ripples. Is it not, Don Ferdinand, some trifle, immaterial as this, that has been the original disturber of your peace; and how wide, how lamentably wide, is the disturbance that it has made between us."

Velasquez appeared struck by the comparison. He stood silent and thoughtful; and Vaughan was encouraged to make one effort more. "Don Ferdinand, the Lady Leonora is worthy of all your confidence. In the sentiment which you have just now thrown out, you do that gentle lady, and, permit me to add, myself, much injustice. From my heart I feel for you; and so much do I esteem you both, that if it be necessary to secure your mutual peace of mind, I will pledge myself never voluntarily to cross your path again.

The Spaniard's stern countenance softened, and he stood in the attitude of deep attention. Vaughan approached him, "Senor, I have memories and attachments in my own country that must make me insensible to all beauty here." "You love!" interrupted the

Spaniard with a brightening face. "Most faithfully, most fervently!" was the reply; "but I am not selfish enough to wish the woman I love to share my uncertain fortunes."

"This looks like truth—this must be truth," said Velasquez, in deep emotion, "of what a weight have you relieved my mind! Answer me but one question. How long is it since your first acquaintance with Leonora? Was it begun in England?"—"No," was of course the answer. "Pardon me, one question more; when did you next meet her?" said the Spaniard. "On the night after the surprise of the French; I conducted her to the cottage in which you lay, nor ever saw her more till the day on which she was introduced to me as your bride."

"Gallant, generous friend," said Velasquez, extending his hand, and his handsome features resuming their original expression, "I fully believe all; and, as the best proof I can give of my conviction, will return your confidence with mine. You shall see the bitter workings of my rash heart. Leonora's hand had been long promised to me, when the ruin of her brother's fortunes, and some personal danger to which she had been herself exposed, induced him to fly with her to England. I remonstrated against this step,—my heart misgave me,—woman is fickle,—and man (*myself*, at least) prone to suspicion.

I trembled lest this parting should prove the prelude to a lasting separation. I bade her remember Velasquez, and suffer no flattering stranger to drive me from her thoughts. She gave the promise; but promises may be broken. I was ill at ease; I counted the days of her absence, and dreamt what might be.

"When next we met," continued Velasquez, "she was in deep affliction; her brother had fallen; she refused all consolation. Will you believe it? I was jealous even of her tears. I had witnessed the desolation of our house, sorrow and death by my side. But when Leonora returned, hope and joy appeared suddenly to bud and blossom around me. I expected the same feelings from her. She wept so long, that I began to fear her grief had some other cause,—that her heart was in a stranger's land. I told her my fears; she repelled them loftily. I claimed her promise; she became my bride. She forbore the signs of woe in my presence; but she wept in secret."

"Lovely and noble woman," cried Vaughan, "she ought to have been rewarded by your undying confidence." "My suspicions found an object," said Velasquez; "I will own, that from the hour we met in the villa of the Count de Alameda, they fell upon you. It was plain that she had an English friend till now never named in my

hearing. It was plain that the meeting gave her pleasure. My unfortunate fancy filled up the blank; her past grief, her present joy, were traced to the same cause."

Vaughan was affected by the manly, yet melancholy, confidence of the Spaniard. "I am a man of few words, Senor," said he, as he offered his hand; "but I can feel for the disturbance of an honourable mind. The Lady Leonora is beautiful, of eminent and most impressive beauty; yet my mind is so much filled by the image of another, that if she were this hour without a tie on earth, I should not dream of interesting her feelings. Let us henceforth be friends."

Velasquez grasped his hand. "Now and for ever," were the only words he uttered as he turned away. "Remember me to the Donna," said Vaughan, in a lighter tone, as he parted. "As her friend in life and death," said the noble Spaniard, in a voice broken with emotion; and, casting his eyes on Heaven, as if to register a vow, he plunged into the depths of the grove.

CHAPTER XI.

Of comfort no man speak;
Let's talk of graves, of worms, of epitaphs;
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth;
Let's choose executors, and talk of wills.

Shakspeare.

The story of the locket was simply told. t had been found by the peasant in the cot-ıge to which Velasquez had been carried ıy Vaughan. Leonora had kept it, in the ıea that it belonged to the stranger to whom ıer husband was indebted for the preserva-ion of his life; and as a means of discover-ng one who had rendered a service so worthy f all her gratitude. Vaughan's slight and ccidental mention, drawn from him by the trong excitement of Leonora's despair, had hrown sudden light upon the transaction. The only proof wanting was his acknowledg-nent of the locket. She trembled as she lrew it from her bosom; but her doubts vere delightfully closed by his recognising his little memorial of his "ladye love."

Leonora flew to her husband with the in-elligence. His haughty spirit resisted re-

conciliation, though it could not resist evidence; and the result was the singular meeting in which he satisfied, however strangely, at once his sense of injury and of gratitude. But the Spaniard's nature was generous; his love for Leonora was ardent; she taught it to be confiding, and Vaughan, without an effort or an explanation, was gradually adopted into the complete intimacy of the Spanish noble.

All now seemed to be auspicious; life shone around him. He wanted but a letter from his fair mistress, to place him beyond the reach of human anxiety.

When her letter at length reached his hands, it found him in that light and joyous frame of mind which appeared anything but the prelude to the coming ill. He tore it open. The impulse of surprise and joy occasioned by tidings of the General's arrival at first superseded every other feeling. "Now then all is safe and happy; we have had our evil day; but the storm has passed harmlessly over our heads. Lovely Catherine, there was surely a similarity in our destinies, which decreed that, together or apart, Fortune should dispense her frowns and smiles to both alike."

A second perusal, it may well be supposed, tended materially to moderate his transports. He could not fail to detect a singu

lar and studied coldness in her expressions, completely foreign to her usual style. And at such a moment, too. In what light could he view the unwelcome change? Thus wrote Catherine: "My father has returned at last, prosperous as I could desire, kind and indulgent as I could wish him." Murmured Vaughan, "Prosperous as I could desire him! No congratulation—no kind word on this approach to what was once a *mutual* hope—no remembrance of the faith she pledged. Had our situations been reversed, is it thus that I should have written? Let us read on: 'I am no longer the orphan you left behind.' How am I to understand this intimation? That she is now an *heiress*,—that I must aspire to her no more."

He dropped the paper, and in feverish bitterness of soul spoke as if she had been standing before him. "Catherine, there was a time, when scarcely daring to anticipate the event which has now come, you grieved that you had nothing but empty professions to bestow. Your father's return was to be the proof of your faith and fondness. 'Then,' you exclaimed, in a voice that was made to deceive,—'then may we lift up our heads, and defy this heartless world.' But you have learnt to follow the example of that heartless world; that young heart was not formed to withstand prosperity. What pro-

mises were not in the very silence of your lips! What love and truth strong as life or death were not in those eyes, that then seemed to have brought their light from Heaven! And, after all, to send this cold, heartless, haughty, insulting letter."

He caught it from the ground, tore it into a thousand pieces, and stood at his window, watching with a lover's vindictiveness the fragments as they fluttered through the air, and fell in the stream that floated, coloured with the richness of the setting sun, beneath his feet.

What was to be done? What reply could he send? or should he send none? To remind her of claims, which she appeared intentionally to have forgotten, was not to be thought of. There remained but one course to pursue,—to utterly renounce, disdain, and forget her for ever.

He flung himself into a chair, and prepared to write. The letter was to be cool and contemptuous, but utterly decisive. He sought for her's as a model; it was gone. He glanced from the window; and, to his surprise, saw its innumerable shreds coursing each other through the air like a swarm of butterflies, or trampled under the clouted shoon of the muleteers. He regretted that he had disposed of it so hastily. He sat down again to write; but her image rose be-

fore him in sweetness and beauty. He paused. "She might be dazzled and bewildered, but not wholly estranged; misled and overruled for a time, but not faithless and lost to him for ever." He tore his paper, and determined to await the explanation of time.

Having adopted this resolution, it may well be supposed that he looked for English letters with anxiety; but day after day, and week after week, passed on without the only letter that could set him at ease.

From his mother he heard occasionally; but she had left London almost immediately after General Greville's arrival, and her intercourse with the family had necessarily relaxed. Besides, he had never made her his confidant, and could not expect that she should enter on the subject which interested him with such deep and absorbing passion. Catherine's name was seldom and but slightly mentioned by her, and then not in a way calculated to give any clue to the mystery which perplexed him; the world was beginning to look like a bauble in his clouded eyes.

The gratitude of Velasquez had procured him several high and valuable introductions; and, as far as outward gratification could be supposed to contribute to his happiness, he would have been pronounced not justified in complaining; but he was disappointed and

darkened in soul. Even the grand struggle, in which all Europe was just then involved, had lost its interest for him.

As he one day walked thoughtfully along by the parade of one of the regiments, he perceived the officers all with countenances of peculiar animation, conversing apparently on some remarkable news; he turned away. "I shall know all in good time," said he to himself coldly, reluctant to enter into any discussion, and he passed on. He was suddenly followed by a young officer, one of his intimate friends, with "Where are you flying to, Vaughan? Glorious tidings! nothing less than that Napoleon has surrendered at Fontainbleau. Then comes peace,—then the route homewards,—and so for merry England again."

"How unfortunate!" said Vaughan, his thoughts instantly reverting to the dubious reception which awaited him at home.

The officer stared, and burst into laughter. "Mad," said he. "Perhaps so," said Vaughan; "I shall soon know my fate." "Know your fate!" said the officer hastily. "Why, we shall all know our fates before long. I am tired of forced marches and sleepless nights, sallow nuns, vesper bells, confoundedly hot days, and the eternal Bolero. England for ever!" "Well, then," said Vaughan, with a cold smile, "let come what will come. England for ever!"

CHAPTER XII.

Here's royal feasting! Here are lamps and flowers!
So thickly twined, that you would swear the buds
Grew from those starry cressets, and the flames,
Were but their lighted perfume. Here are roofs!
Old Titian's hand has laid his purple brush
Among those clouds. There Danae lies,
Lifting her blue and wonder-gazing glance
To the gold-dropping Heavens! Arcadia's here,
With all its crystal founts, blue mountain tops,
Deep meads, and bowers where winter dares not come
To kill the roses. There's a glorious shape,
Goddess or nymph, that sits beneath the trees,
Making them full of beauty; there one bends,
Listening the murmuring music of yon stream,
That glitters in the crimson set o' the sun!"

Phineas Webb.

A FEW days subsequent, there was a grand fête given at the villa of Velasquez, in honour of the general triumph of Spain and Europe, to which Vaughan, along with a crowd of his brother officers, was invited. On such an occasion, he would not absent himself; but he wandered through the splendid apartments like a living spectre, a joyless figure, which turned the same gaze on all. There was mirth and revelry in those proud halls that evening. Every tongue was loud with animation; but he spoke to no one. All his

countrymen exhibited the natural joy of the prospect of returning to kind friends and true. To him alone the future was dark; and he felt that "welcome," unless pronounced by the lips he loved, would be almost a pang.

The band struck up some triumphant national airs. The hall resounded with acclamations. Vaughan turned moodily away; he felt how coldly public triumph stirs the mind, when private feelings have been keenly wrung. They drank to the health of the British heroes; and yet he felt as if all around was but falsehood and delusion. He turned into an ante-chamber, which, to his relief, he found vacant, and stood for some moments leaning his head and arm against one of the marble pilasters, like one exhausted by bodily fatigue.

The sound of footsteps roused him. The Donna Leonora had approached him unperceived. "Why, Signor Vaughan, why this dejection? Do you alone refuse to share our fête? Has the word 'country' no charm in your ear? Oh! when my period of exile was at an end, with what a bounding heart I prepared for my return, though it was to a land of desolation, and you are returning to one of peace and plenty, and to the smiles of your fair lady. Ah! you see Don Ferdinand has betrayed you, Senor. Trust me, she will take it but an ill compliment if you appear before her with that clouded brow."

"Spare your raillery, Donna Leonora. The smile of which you speak will not meet me; enjoyment, friendship, are to me henceforth but a name. I begin almost to look upon the world but as one vast desert, in which my own country appears the most barren spot of all."

"Come, Senor, I must not hear such language; you are infected with some jealous mania;" (and she blushed as she pronounced the word.) "Yes, men of every age and country, I see, are all alike; all discontent, all suspicion,—yet infinitely easy to be imposed upon after all. You are too impetuous. Permit me to undertake this unknown lady's defence. I know too well the misery of being the object of unfounded suspicion, not to pity one who is probably thus circumstanced." She spoke in a graver tone. "Senor, are you afraid to state your case fairly before me? Women are the fittest judges of each other's actions. Your sex know nothing of the nameless scruples, the secret springs, which sometimes actuate us. Be candid."

"So much kindness well deserves to be trusted. There is nothing new in my story. It is a tale five thousand year old. Young heads made giddy with sudden prosperity—early promises set at nought, and the heart that would have loved till death insulted and

forgotten." He gave a slight sketch of his story.

"All women have a small portion of coquetry in their character. I know not this lady; but may she not have had only a little more than her share?"

Vaughan disclaimed the idea with a vehemence that made the Donna smile. "No one could be freer from such a failing. She was superior to artifice." "Ay, Senor Vaughan, you would not be her lover, if you did not even now think her little short of perfection. Yes, I see you are ready to kiss the hand that dealt the blow; but let us, for argument's sake, suppose her to possess some female foibles; what is the language that your own immortal poet puts into the lips of one of his most fond and faithful heroines? Your Shakspeare is one of my favourite bards;" and she repeated, with a strong foreign accent, but much grace and *naïveté* of expression, Juliet's address to Romeo:

"Yet, if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world."

"No," said Vaughan, still more earnestly; "she is above all trifling, and at all events would never have employed it at such a time, when her coldness was liable to a so much deeper interpretation."

"May she not have addressed you in a moment of irritation? Can you recal no letter unanswered?—no careless expression? May not this father of whom she speaks have enforced her obedience by some tyrannical command? Is there no such thing as an obstinate and imperious parent? May not this letter have been looked over, even dictated by himself? If so, I can fancy the anguish with which it was penned, the tears which were shed over it. I interpret but ill, if her heart is not yours."

"Would to heaven it were," exclaimed Vaughan. "A light breaks in upon me. I will see her, she may have been deceived—I may have been maligned—her own words shall decide. We shall be immediately under orders for England: then, Catherine," said he, almost in soliloquy, "all shall be known at once, and forever."

Leonora had stood watching the varying expression of his features; then turning away as if not to obtrude upon his feelings, that were evidently in high agitation, she walked into an adjoining saloon. Vaughan, recovering from the meditations which had shaken him, perceived her absence, and followed to thank her. He found her contemplating a magnificent Italian picture. She looked round on his entrance, and with a smile of celestial rosy red, love's proper hue, congratulated

him on what she entitled, "the most fortunat of all his battles," the conflict with his ow pained spirit. "I thought of you and you English lady, Senor," said she, "as I wa looking at that picture. Those two figure brilliant as they are, were my ancestors; th lady, with all that profusion of gold and jew els, and that still richer profusion of rave locks and dazzling glances, had been nearl the cause of that kneeling cavalier's layin himself and all his honours at the bottom o the Grand Canal of Venice. They were bot great people, and extravagant lovers in thei time, and jealousy had nearly sent them bot out of the world before their marriage. S you see," said she, laughing, "the narro escape I had of being forbidden to shin among the future ornaments of Spain."

Vaughan was animated in his praise of th picture, which was a magnificent work, fu of Titianesque splendour, and lavish beauty A large chandelier in the centre of the apar ment threw its full light upon the figures, an they looked radiant with chivalric pomp an loveliness. "But," said Leonora, "one ex ample is worth a thousand morals, and yo shall have the story of these lovers. Yet have an instinctive aversion to long storie and, above all, to stories of love."—"But, o your ancestors," said Vaughan, anxious t hear. "Yes, and *for* my friend!" said she

with a smile, and a graceful inclination of her fine form.

At some distance from the picture, and shaded by a canopy which shut out the descending blaze of the chandelier, was an alcove which looked into the extensive gardens. The casement was open, and the rising sweetness of innumerable flowers, softened and cool with the night dews, breathed deliciously into the apartment. The sound of the music in the concert-room was just heard; and Leonora, gazing for a moment on the picture, as if to gather inspiration from its glowing beauty, and with a low, sweet voice, which mingled well with the music on the air, began the story of Montalto and Adriana.

"The Carnival of the year 1615 was the most brilliant that had been ever known in Venice. The city was singularly crowded with foreign and Italian nobles, vying with each other in every kind of illustrious extravagance. Artists of the most distinguished rank flocked from all parts of the Continent. Venice was a continued tumult of pomp. But the proud and magnificent Venetian Lords, then masters of the commerce of the world, outshone them all. The season, too, had been remarkably auspicious; and the

evenings, which are generally chill so early in the year, were as mild as summer: the whole multitude of Venice covered the Lagunes in their boats for half the night, and the waters were illuminated with perpetual lights and fireworks, and the air was filled with the harmony of voices and instruments without number. The Venetian poets still celebrate that memorable year.

"On the last day of the Carnival, the public delight rose into its wildest extravagance; for in the morning despatches were received from the Doge Mancini, who had sailed some days before with reinforcements to the army in the Ferrarese, announcing that he had utterly defeated the troops of Mantua, and that the prisoners would arrive on that evening.

Venice, once the great queen of the Mediterranean, the conqueror of Constantinople, the golden Chersonesus, and the Isles of Greece, paramount in the sea that bathed the shores of all that was lovely, powerful, or renowned in the European world, had fallen from her martial supremacy. But she mingled with her ancient trophies of war the not less glorious trophies of civilization. Her people were the most polished; her poets and painters the most brilliant and sublime; and her merchants the richest of the age. Struggles with the Italian States had gradu-

restricted her territory, and diminished military strength. But Venice was still place of noble ambition, the old heroic embrances of her triumphal days were pride and the joy of her luxurious peo- and the spirit of knighthood still burned osoms that seemed devoted to the splen- and relaxing indulgences of boundless lth and unresisted power.

As evening fell, the Carnival was forgot- and thousands and ten thousands lined y canal that looked towards the Terra ɔa. The guard of the Council of State ɜ drawn up in front of the palace. A nphal arch was raised before St. Mark's, ɜr which the Doge, his troops, and his ɔners, were to pass. The Adriatic was ɜred with boats beyond all number; the t nobles, the military chieftains, the Le- merchants, were all abroad in their ɣes covered with every rich emblem and ce that Italian fancy and opulence could ɣd upon them.

While all were in this high-raised and ɔy expectancy, a low sound like that of ɔte thunder was heard in the direction 'usina, and the gondoliers began to pre- for a storm, and run to the canals. sun had now gone down, and the north- ɜhore was only a dusky line upon the ɜr; when a pale light rose slowly, spread

over the horizon, then disappeared, then rose, and sank again. The sound advanced, and now seemed human shouts, and the roar of cannon. At last one broad and fierce sheet of flame was seen to spring from the shore, it quivered for an instant over the whole sea, showing in a livid light every flag, and countenance, and roof of the city. In the next instant all was darkness, followed by a peal that almost burst the ear.

"The multitude were confounded, and thought that some new volcano had burst out in the Adriatic. But with the dying away of the sound, confidence returned, the light was taken as a signal, that the Doge with his army had arrived on the opposite shore, the shouts were the acclamations of the troops, and the multitude now pressed forwards to welcome their invincible chieftain, loaded with the spoils of Mantua.

"The sun went down on this evening with a grandeur and loveliness of colouring that overwhelmed even the Venetian eye. The clouds assumed innumerable forms under the light breeze that played above, while the whole sweep of sea below lay in the most unruffled stillness. The quick spirit of the people, always picturesque, found omens and resemblances of all lovely and visionary things in the aspect of the heavens. As the clouds moved down in long majestic trains to

west, lighted with every tint of the rain-
by the descending sun; some saw the
:h of armies to storm some glorious capi-
then as the vapours scattered and broke
nto fragments that, hovering over the
, turned it every moment to green, gold,
purple, they imaged the procession of all
birds to the nest where the phœnix made
epulchre of perfume and fire; then, as
scattered mists again formed into shape,
fancied a train of celestial beings float-
on the wing, angel troop by troop, to that
e too bright for human eyes, which the
lighted up in the depths of Heaven; and
mingled and delicious music that filled
air from the gondolas, now dimly seen in
twilight, was not unlike what the mind
ims of as the harpings of beings above
sphere.

CHAPTER XIII.

Then get thee gone and dig thy grave thyself,
Only compound thee with forgotten dust,
Pluck down thy officers, break thy decrees,
For now a truce is come to mock at form.
Down royal state, all ye sage counsellors, hence.
Shakspea

"THE crowd of gondolas were now r
ly approaching the shore, when a larg
ley with torches at the poop and stern
lamps hung on the masts and sails,
rushing from the mouth of the Brenta
simultaneous shout of applause rose fro
the gondolas, but the galley was alon
she swept down, it was observed tha
sails were torn, and her pennant half b
The lamps on her rigging rapidly sl
their places, and those signals were foll
by similar changes of the signal lam
the tower roof of the Ducal palace. A
men were now seen crowding her d
some obviously wounded, and some i
tudes of strong dispute. The torches
a red and melancholy glare over the w
and the galley swept her way amor
barges, that scattered and fled befor
towering height and wild speed, like

cles. To the anxious inquiry of the
le, no answer was given; but as she
ied the entrance of the canal, in front of
ducal palace, the great bell of St. Marks
eard tolling, a sign that some great dis-
had befallen the state. The doubt was
cleared up by the coming of other gal-
shattered and full of wounded and dy-
en. The Venetians had been defeated
great slaughter. On the first advance
e Doge with his reinforcement, the
s of the Duke of Mantua had, after a
contest, retreated with the loss of bag-
and prisoners, and the Doge had pur-

An unexpected army, under the com-
of a foreign general, had fallen upon
during his march; the Venetians had
way, and their broken troops were
d to the shore. The shouts heard
in the evening were the shouts of that
rate struggle in which they were en-
down to the water's edge. The fire
an along the land was from the cannon
matchlocks; and the great sheet of flame
owing up of the citadel of Fusina.

During that night no eye was closed in
e; the grand council was busied in de-
tion; the bell of St. Mark's tolled omi-
; messengers were sent off continually
different points of the land; every
cast towards Fusina showed some

galley hurrying across the waters with its freight of death and defeat, and still the pallid light played along the shores of the Brenta, and, at intervals, the heavy sound of artillery was heard. At day-break one solitary vessel was seen still lingering on the coast; boats were frequently passing from her to the sands, notwithstanding the fire of matchlocks which absolutely rained upon her. It was conceived that she had struck upon some shoal, and two of the best equipped galleys in the canal were ordered off to her assistance. But before they had weighed anchor, she was observed to stand clear of the shore, and giving a broadside which crushed and utterly silenced the enemy's fire, she steered directly, with all colours flying, for Venice.

"The multitude received her as she came with mingled mourning and acclamation. Her sides and rigging bore marks of a desperate struggle, and the thick mass of pale and lacerated figures that lay upon her poop, or hung their dejected heads over her lofty side, showed that she had gallantly waited to collect the remnants of the battle, and save the last wounded from the cruelty of the enemy. On her touching the steps in front of the Ducal Palace, an officer sprang from on board, and demanded to be led to the Grand Council. They were still sitting. A wound-

ed man was carried out of the vessel after him, whom he ordered to be held in readiness at his call. The populace made way for him, with a homage inspired by his appearance.

"He was in the prime of manhood; a wound on his forehead hastily bound up, and still dropping blood, did not lessen the admiration with which they gazed on his noble and Roman countenance, his flashing eye, or the statue-like proportion, and nervous activity of his figure. Long service on sea and land had made him almost a stranger in Venice; he had fought against the Turk, and the Algerine, and had been now for some years employed in the war of the Republic against the Duke of Mantua and the Pope. A train of gallant actions had raised the Count de Montalto to the command of a detached body of troops, whose name was a terror to the enemy; in the late battles, the flight of the Doge, and the death of the second in command, who had been transfixed by the lance of a Spanish Knight, placed him at the head of the defeated army, and it was owing to his valour, talent, and chivalrous humanity, that the retreat was secured, and the last of the wounded were brought off from the shore.

"Morning had dawned upon the Grand Council, and found them still deeply occu-

pied with the formidable business of the night. The Doge, Mancini, had already, in a long and pathetic harangue, related the circumstances of the unexpected catastrophe which had overwhelmed the Venetian army; and had given his opinion, bitter to the pride of the great republic, that they should send ambassadors to treat for peace. The moment was terrible. The blood of the chief Venetian families had been shed in that disastrous battle; the last army of the state been driven with ruinous loss and shame out of their last territorial possession. The palaces of the nobles on the Brenta were in the power of their plunderers; a day might bring the whole hostile armament to Venice; and the queen of cities, with all her glories, might be extinguished in her own slaughter.

"The question was put, and the council had risen to give their ballots, when an officer arrived, announcing the demand of the Count de Montalto for an immediate audience. It was granted from the emergency of the time. He entered, accompanied by some of his captains, and his presence excited an involuntary murmur of admiration. The first cessation of effort had left him pale; and when he took off his crimson cap, of which the emerald band was won by him from the neck of a Moorish Bey, and the heron plume from the turban of an Arab

Emir, and bowed before this august tribunal, he seemed fainting with fatigue and loss of blood. His crimson cloak covered a wounded arm, and the ray that now shot down from between the pillars, fell on his tunic, and shewed the trace of blood on the gold-embroidered cuirass within.

CHAPTER XIV.

He's traitorous, there are stains upon his palm:
Gold has been there. Pluck off his ermine, Sirs,
You'll find the dagger in't, that was to strike
The state i' the heart. Mind not his hoary hairs.
There's burning passion, hot Ambition's thirst,
Pale Envy's gall, Revenge's poisonous blood,
Hid in that Ancient, harnessed as he stands,
In armour for your Venice. Down with him!
Phineas Webb.

"On being questioned on his business with the council, he advanced to the foot of the table, and, in a firm tone, pronounced the words, 'I come to accuse a traitor among you of his treason.' The surprise was indescribable; every man looked at his neighbour in astonishment. But the feeling of the offence was stronger than the suspicion; and Montalto was ordered to be seized, to an-

swer for his insult. 'Hold!' said he, turning to the guard; 'I have not yet named the traitor!' There was a pause, and all eyes were fixed on the lofty and composed countenance of the accuser. 'Name the traitor if thou darest, if thou canst,' said the Doge, in a low but distinct tone. 'Mancini!' was the answer. The Doge, who had sat with his eyes fixed on the Count, at the word sprung upright from his throne, as if he had been pierced by an arrow, stood for a moment in unconsciousness, and then sank feebly into his seat again.

"The cry for the accuser's seizure was now universal; but his bold voice was heard through all. 'The Venetian troops,' said he, 'have shed their blood and tarnished their honour; but it was through treachery. The enemy were already beaten, when your Doge led his army into a defile where no valour could save them. I saw gallant squadrons crushed by rocks and trees without the sight of an enemy. I saw their chieftain the last to enter the field, and the first to fly.'

"Mancini rose to contradict the charge. 'It is the business of a traitor not to ask for justice, but to solicit mercy,' pronounced Montalto, in an appalling tone. 'But if you want proofs, here take them;' and he drew a packet from his bosom. 'Here is the secret correspondence of your Doge with the

Duke of Mantua and the Pope. Here,' and he flung one of the papers on the table,—'here is the secret treaty by which the Doge Mancini binds himself to deliver up the army of the state to the enemy. Here,' drawing out another, 'is the secret treaty by which Sforza, Prince of Mantua, and that holy fox, Innocent of Rome, pledge themselves to give the Doge Mancini the full investiture and sovereignty of Venice and her isles on his betraying the army and abandoning your provinces on the *terra firma*.'

"The confusion in the council had now risen to its height. No suspicion had hitherto dared to breathe against the Doge. Mancini had risen through all the ranks of public office; he had distinguished himself in successive wars as a daring, prompt, and dextrous leader; in office he had been remarkable for the vigilance and sternness of its execution. In the government and the council he was sagacious and splendid, eloquent and bold. On this terrible emergency he was not wanting to himself. He laughed the charges to scorn; he showed the strong improbability of their truth; he descanted on the daring and desperate subtlety which had made a tool of the unsuspecting soldier before them. He asked, what honour could be expected for his gray hairs higher than that which encircled them in the ducal coro-

net; what room was there for ambition in a mind that must so soon be closed upon the world? what frantic passion for dominion in a bosom that must so soon have all its territory in the narrowness of a grave? or for whom could he be ambitious, if not for himself? He once had a son; that son had exiled himself by his vices,—had been unheard of for years, and was now probably lying among the unburied dead of some remote field or unfathomed ocean.

"The elements of oratory had been nobly combined in this man. Stung by the feeling of the hour, he rose into a magnificence of thought and language that held the council as in a chain of enchantment. The burden of years was thrown off, and he stood before them in the freshness and vigour of youth; his voice rich, deep, and solemn, at one while melted them with a recital of his services and sufferings in the cause of their common country; then rising into full volume, it thundered out resistless indignation on the gloomy artifice and subtle, satanic guilt, that rejoiced to seek its prey among the noble in rank and nature, the pure, the aged, the faithful servants of the state, and the generous, long-tried, and stainless friends of mankind.

"An universal shout of applause burst from that grave assembly; and Montalto, as

the acclamation subsided, was contemptuously called on for further accusation, if he had it to offer. He had listened with equal wonder and sorrow to the Doge's eloquence; but his heroic patriotism was not to be captivated or shaken. 'My Lord Doge,' said he, 'I feel for the noble talents which a desperate ambition has rendered hazardous to the State. I have other proofs. Let the Doge give up his dignity, and retire from Venice, and my lips shall be sealed.' The Council turned their gaze on Mancini. The old man, exhausted by his own energy, seemed scarcely to have heard the words. They were repeated. He stood up at once, and stripping the robe from his breast, said, with a glance of fiery contempt round the hall, 'If ye want my life, strike here. But while there is blood in these veins, never will I give up my honour. Am I not your prince? Are you all turned traitors? Begone to your homes. I dissolve the Council!' He rose from his throne, and was hastening out of the hall, when Montalto stood before him, leading a figure wrapped in a military cloak. 'Look here!' said Montalto, uncovering the head of the stranger. The Doge started back in sudden horror. 'This is my proof—Pietro, your highness' private secretary, whom I seized in attempting to make his escape to the enemy; whose hand

wrote these papers, and whose evidence now comes forth to convict you of treason to your country!' Mancini listened with a bitter smile: his lips moved, but no words followed. On a sudden, his frame struggled as with some strange and fierce emotion. He plunged his forehead in his thin and quivering hands, and fell upon the ground. The officers and Council started back in awe, till a groan, and a gush of blood on the marble pavement awoke them. They raised him; but life was gone; a dagger was found planted in his heart. He had *died a Doge!*

"The intelligence of this self-inflicted justice was rapidly spread, and the people surrounded the Council on their way through the city with prayers and benedictions. The body of the Doge was exposed to public view, and his estates were confiscated. Montalto was almost worshipped as the guardian angel of Venice, and the people and the troops alike demanded his elevation to the ducal throne. But his noble nature was proof against ambition; and in a meeting of the Council he solemnly declined all pretensions to the sovereignty. 'It is,' said he, 'not wise to choose a soldier, for his nature must be a love of war; nor a merchant, for his wealth may make him shrink from hazard; nor a noble, because he may have prejudices against the people; nor one of the people,

because the privileges of the nobles must be sacred! Choose, if you can find such, a stranger and a sage, bold enough to head your armies in this peril of the State, wise enough to guide your councils, and honest enough to desire no power beyond that of the law, and no reward beyond the consciousness of having done his duty.' His speech, delivered with the simplicity of a hero, was followed by a burst of admiration. He was asked to name his choice. 'Justiniani!' was the answer.

"The name was well known to the chief part of the Council; and some of the elder members recollected with remorse the name of a renowned senator, who after having served the Republic with distinguished honour many years, had been sent by the influence of faction into exile in Dalmatia. The sentence had been revoked not long after; but the illustrious exile had refused to return, declaring that he felt grateful to the hostility which had compelled him to learn the true enjoyment of life, in domestic happiness, in learned leisure, and the cultivation of the lovely landscape of his Dalmatian valley.

"'His proud spirit will not stoop to our solicitation,' was the general sentiment. 'Not if you were in prosperity,' answered Montalto; 'but in peril your request will be irre-

sistible with Justiniani. I have never seen him. I know him only by the knowledge of his heroism and his wisdom: I will be your embassador, and I shall succeed.'

"The commission was instantly conferred upon Montalto, and after making some military arrangements for the defence of Venice in his absence, he steered in the galley of the Doge for Dalmatia.

CHAPTER XV.

Chaplets and bowers, rich wines and cooling streams
Wherein the cups are dipt, and gentle gleams
Of valleys kindled by the western sun,
Are sights mine eye doth love to look upon.
Phineas Webb.

"The galley soon reached the shores of Dalmatia; Montalto and his train mounted on some pompously caparisoned horses that had been sent to meet them on their landing by the Venetian Governor, and set off full speed for the house of Justiniani.

"They rode during the day through the bold and picturesque country formed by the skirts of the hills that shoot down from Croatia to the sea. Evening was coming on, when

y reached the edge of the valley in which
ir journey was to end. It was one of
se secluded spots common among the
tern shores of the Adriatic, a singular
nbination of the sweetness and magnifi-
ce of the mountain landscape; a cataract
st through a chasm of the blue hills that
ned its rampart against the north, and
ves of thick and vivid foliage skirted the
ghts and the stream.

They gave the reins to their horses, and
them choose their way down through the
gments of marble and tufts of luxuriant
etation that filled the ravine. As they
cended, the wildness of the mountain-
ge passed away, and they found them-
es in the midst of cultivation, that grew
tinually more profuse and splendid.

The bold Venetians lingered with the
ght of men bewitched by the new luxu-
of the landscape. The spirit of the time
still more deeply upon Montalto, and he
luntarily contrasted the happiness of a
passed in those shades of fresh and quiet
liness, with the rude trials and fierce dis-
ances of the life of state and war.

But a sudden gush of fragrance awoke
as he turned from a deep path by the ri-
s side into the open air; and he saw the
lling of the future Doge. The country
Spalatro had been a favourite retreat of

the opulent Romans since the residence of their philosophic emperor, and the taste of those masters of the world seemed still to linger in the soil. Montalto's eye had been caught, as he rode along, by fragments of architecture in the exquisite style that Diocletian revived; and he now saw before him a palace that might have been built in the happiest hour of Grecian elegance.

"Justiniani received his distinguished guest with the lofty etiquette of a man accustomed to the ceremonial of courts and senates. He still retained the establishment of a Venetian Lord, some of the officers who had served with him in his earlier triumphs were still attached to his household, and his domestics were all men who had borne arms under his command; it was a household of old and gallant hearts, and it had the habitual pomp of the palace of a great military chieftain. The master of this house of high recollections, was a stately figure, bowed by his years, his hair white as snow, but his eye full of the fire of manhood, and his step firm and martial.

"Montalto read his commission from the senate. It was listened to with the most profound attention, but without an answering word. He looked upon the vigorous and penetrating countenance of the old chieftain for an answer; but the expression there was

of the same proud and imperturbable tranquillity. He felt an embarrassment mingled with reverence, like one compelled to consult a reluctant Oracle.

"At length he demanded an answer. 'Not to-night, Count de Montalto,' was the reply. 'The senate must not be treated with the disrespect of a sudden resolve. You will do us the honour to accept of our hospitality for this night.' Montalto urged the necessity of his return, but the old man was immoveable; and the Count ordered his attendants to dismount, and partake of the entertainment which was provided for them with princely hospitality in the great hall.

"A banquet was served up for Justiniani and his guest, and they gradually grew more animated. 'Count,' said the old chieftain, 'I have been long anxious for this interview, for I have long known you by fame. We have heard from a brigantine, commanded by one of my old friends, something of what the Sforzas have been doing. Forty years ago they dared not have lifted a spear in all Italy. We had chased the father of the family into the Apennines, and there kept him among the wolves and wild boars, the natural companions of the robber, for a more thorough bandit did not live from Milan to Naples. But things are altered now.'

"'Yes,' said Montalto, 'Sforza now wears

a diadem, and claims to be our master. We have force enough in Venice to pluck every jewel from his crown; but he makes a subtle use of his treasury, and there are gondolas in the Laguna that, if I do not deeply mistake, carry other freights than gallant cavaliers and bewitching signoras. Mancini was but *one* of the fallen.'

"'I knew him well,' interrupted Justiniani, with a flashing eye. 'A great production of nature, but mad with ambition. He was my most trusted friend. I raised him step by step to eminence. His soul was a mixture of grandeur and perfidy. To be Doge, he was a traitor to me; to be more than Doge, he was a traitor to Venice; once King of Venice, he would have betrayed mankind to be sovereign of Italy. But he was a great being, full of magnificent conceptions, and with magnificent powers for their execution. But he is fallen; tell me how he died.'

"Montalto briefly narrated the event; his hearer's countenance rapidly lost its commanding expression; he at length wrapped it in his ample cloak, and wept; Montalto respected this noble sorrow, and felt doubled homage for the grandeur of spirit that could thus forget its injuries.

"A sound of music was heard; Justiniani raised his head. 'Those,' said he, 'are some of my hunters returning from the hills.

We live wildly here, Count, and have only the simple pleasures of the forest. Let us order our horses, and meet my friends on their return.'

"The evening was lovely, and all the lustre of the southern landscape was deepened by a sun that sank with unusual radiance among the clouds. The train passed up the mountain that overhangs Spalatro, and Montalto gazed with Italian enthusiasm on the glorious ruins spreading out below—the palace of Dioclesian, bathed in the violet-coloured mists of the evening, and lighted by strong bursts of sun-light through the openings of the mountain-range.

"To Montalto they looked like the visionary palace of the Genius of Rome in her splendour. To Justiniani they assumed a graver cast; 'There,' said he, 'is the very type of human ambition. A mixture of pomp and decay—the house of pride turned into the monument of emptiness—the bones of the mighty master buried in the dust of his throne; all to furnish a passing gaze, and a passing moral to the stranger, and all to be soon covered in one cloud of night and oblivion.'

"The hunters now came bounding down a vast ravine, wooded to the brow; the horns flourished as they approached, and the sound spread in rich and softening echoes among

the hills. Montalto's vivid spirit was delighted with the bearing of this gallant troop; but his eye was soon more deeply captivated by the advance of a train on horseback issuing from one of the avenues of the palace. It was composed entirely of females; they rode the beautiful and spirited horses of the country, richly caparisoned, and the pageant ascending slowly into the light through the grove that covered the side of the mountain, seemed like a brilliant cloud rising from the earth to meet the sun.

"Justiniani spurred his horse to meet them, and introduced the female who rode at their head to Montalto as his daughter. The young soldier had never seen a creature so lovely; and, as they returned to the plain, he listened with a spell-bound ear to the discourse sustained between Justiniani and the fair Adriana. It was on the common topics of the country; an accidental overflow of a stream which had swept away some peasant cottages, the arrival of a troop of pilgrims from Palestine in the neighbouring hamlet with relics, the rumour of a Moorish felucca having been seen from one of the towers on the coast, and the march of a body of peasantry to repel the pirates.

"Nothing could be less interesting to the ear of a stranger; but the silver tones of Adriana's voice, her sparkling eye, and her

graceful animation, made the deliberations of camps and senates trivial in comparison to Montalto's ear; and, on his retiring at night to his chamber, he began seriously to question himself whether it was allowable for a soldier and an envoy to commit the folly of falling in love.

"His sleep was invaded by dreams restless and strange, but without pain; and he rose at day-break with a frame refreshed, and a mind soothed by gentle recollections. The breath of morning came round him with living fragrance, and he gazed long upon a landscape, assuming at every instant some new shape of beauty. The sound of voices below awoke him; he saw Justiniani and Adriana passing down the valley, and followed them through an absolute wilderness of colour and perfume; plants of every climate and every brilliancy of hue covering the sides of the valley with a luxuriance that looked like the various and spontaneous richness of an evening sky.

"'I can now give you your answer,' said Justiniani, smiling; 'last night, when you arrived, my best figures of speech were gone to rest; my old friends, the fields and the mountains, had lost their persuasion. But look round you now, Signor, and tell me what is there in coronets or helmets that ought to

overpower the pleading of what we now see round us.'

"'These flowers, my father,' said Adriana, in a suppressed voice, 'are no courtiers, —they will never betray you; and these mountains will be guards that will never desert their lord.'

"Justiniani pressed her hand. Then turning to Montalto, whose spirit was absorbed by all that he had seen and heard; 'Count,' said he, 'when the fickle Venetians shall be no more like their own sea, the smoothest and the most treacherous of all things, then let me trust them. You are young, bold, distinguished; while the republic has you, she can want neither counsellor nor soldier; and when you shall have no want of her, come here among us, and despise the emptiness of popular fame, in the presence of the solid and simple happiness of nature.'

"Montalto remonstrated; he described with the vigour of conviction the hazards of Venice, and the strong necessity of placing at the head of her affairs a man whose eminence would at once extinguish all rivalry among the nobles, and restore the confidence of the people.

"Adriana had, almost for the first time, looked upon the noble Venetian in the course of this remonstrance. He was no habitual

orator, but his sincerity and the fervour of his feelings gave his words a natural eloquence. As he talked of the campaign, the chivalric gallantry of the Venetian troops, circumvented and wasted away by the perfidy of their general, and their last desperate stand as they rallied round the banner of the *winged lion* on the shore of Fusina, and looking to their own glorious city fought with the untameable valour of heroes resolved not to return with shame;—his voice involuntarily swelled, his fine form dilated with sudden energy, and his bronzed cheek grew crimson with the glow of patriotism and soldiership. Justiniani gazed on him with the generous admiration of one lofty mind for another, and saw before him a long career of renown. Adriana gazed too, but it was with a sentiment strangely mixed of delight and pain. She had never before seen a being that so much realized the pictures of her solitary hours, when she sat revolving the illustrious days of antiquity. She could have thought that she was looking upon another Alcibiades, with all his beauty, but without his weakness, made to command armies, and wield senates, and lead the hearts of women in his chain of gold and flowers. But when she heard him talk of the perils of the troops, and the crisis at hand, her admiration was forgotten in the sudden thought, how soon

some trivial chance of war might make that perfect and splendid being but as dust and ashes. She turned away with a pang of heart, and could listen no more.

CHAPTER XVI.

Oh Love, what art thou? April smiles and tears;
Dreams, waking follies, idler hopes, and fears;
Joys, bitter sorrows; of what art thou made?
Canst thou be substance, where all else is shade?

"MONTALTO prepared to return to Venice; but a new and unaccountable heaviness pressed upon him. In his chamber, during the preparations for his homeward journey, thoughts came over him of the vanity and transient nature of human ambition, of the melancholy glories of war, and of the precariousness of public honours. All around him was in favour of the argument. His noble entertainer enjoyed a happiness not to be found under the proudest roof in Venice. Montalto looked out upon the landscape, and it lay before him in a dewy and tranquil loveliness that he thought he had not perceived before. He must go through his task,

stern as it was; but he made in that hour a secret vow of finding out some nook of the earth that resembled this, if such enchantment was to be found besides; and there turning his sword into a pruning-hook, and sitting under his own vine, and his own fig-tree, till all human joys and anxieties were alike at an end.

"He was startled by the trumpet that assembled his troop; he heard the trampling of their horses' hoofs, and their jovial voices as they mustered; never sounds came so dissonant to his ear. The hour had worn away in no undelighted though grave meditation; and a pilgrim passing down the avenue, with his scolloped hat, and habit brown with the dust of the Holy Land, the only living thing that had till then passed before his eye, had only mingled an abstracted and solitary image with the thick-coming fancies of his perturbed mind.

"He returned to the saloon, where he had held his conference with Justiniani the night before, and where the ancient statesman and his daughter were waiting to bid him farewell. The parting was one of few words; presents were exchanged; and when Adriana added her's, an amulet which had just arrived from the holy sepulchre, and which had the repute of curing wounds, she gave it with an involuntary sigh, and an inward prayer, that its virtues might be never required.

"Montalto felt his eyes dazzled as he gazed upon her beauty. The brown profusion of tresses that wreathed under her purple Dalmatian turban; the statue-like grace of her arms visible under the robe looped up with pearls; the marble neck glittering with precious stones; the whole countenance and form, in which even the splendour of her dress seemed but to make a part of the pure and simple superiority of her beauty, reminded him of some of the visionary shapes that had just floated in his dreams. He had seen the most captivating women of the Continent; the grandeur of the Greek expression, the brilliancy of the French, the rich and beaming sensibility of the Italian, but till now his heart had slumbered; it waited, like the image of Prometheus, but a spark from this high source of magnificent and candid loveliness to light it up into passion and power.

"He already had his foot in the stirrup, with a silent, proud determination to earn a title to the hand of Adriana; when a trumpet sounded through the wood, and a small troop of horsemen glittered through its windings: they came at full speed, and their leader delivered a sealed packet to Montalto. It was from the senate. It contained the alarming intelligence, that Sforza had collected all the shipping of the Terra Firma, had

hed his army to the shore, repulsing
Venetian squadron, and that Venice was
nger of immediate attack; popular com-
ns had arisen, fomented equally by the
sans of Mancini and the alarms of the
lace, and the universal cry was for Jus-
ii.

The despatch was put into the hands of
eteran hero. He read it with deep
ion; then turning to his daughter, he
'On leaving my ungrateful country, I
a solemn vow never to return but by
ntreaty; she now supplicates. I vow-
efore the altar, never to draw my sword
er but in her day of threatened ruin;
now in imminent hazard; but I made
d vow, the deepest and dearest of all,
to leave this spot but with your con-
my child.' Adriana turned away to
her emotions; she wept, and would not
spoken. Montalto besought an answer.
ttered the single word 'Go.' Justiniani
ed her in his arms.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lights there; who struck him, is he wounded deep?—
This is true blood!——— *Fletcher.*

"This illustrious exile was received with the extravagance of popular feeling, eager to atone for its past ingratitude, and exulting in the assurance of preservation. His galley was met by those of the Senate and the patrician families, and even the distant thunders of the Milanese cannon battering down the bastions of Fusina, increased the general joy by reminding the people of secure vengeance to come.

"Justiniani soon gave proof that retirement had not diminished his great qualities. At the age of seventy he assumed the sudden activity of youth, reviewed the troops, refitted the arsenals, equipped a fleet, and was on the seas almost before the Milanese had heard of his return. They made some able efforts to retain their superiority. A Genoese fleet appeared in the Adriatic. It was attacked, and dispersed. The conquerors instantly landed their troops in front of the Milanese. Sforza was bold, sagacious, and cruel: he fought with barbarian desperation;

but after a contest prolonged into the night, the firing of his camp covered his retreat; and he drew off his broken army to Padua, leaving the country beyond Fusina covered with marks of fierce and ruinous defeat. Montalto had led the vanguard, and eclipsed his former glories. Justiniani had fought on foot, rallied some battalions, and distinguished himself with the ardour of a young soldier.

"All was now rejoicing in Venice; the Doge and his general returned in triumph; and Montalto, honoured with the splendid distinctions of Venetian gratitude, was pronounced by the public voice, and received by the Doge as, the noblest suitor of his fair Adriana.

"About this time there appeared at Venice in the fêtes given on the public triumph, a young improvisatore of extraordinary faculties. The waywardness of genius, as well as its vigour, characterized his whole conduct. His mode of life was simple, his manner secluded and strange, yet at times he indulged in extravagant excess, scattered gold among the populace, played in the casinos with the recklessness of an habitual gamester, and then disappeared to his solitude again. He had more than the usual accomplishments of the times, spoke several languages with striking fluency and elegance,

was a master of the lute, and sang his own graceful verses with matchless taste and captivation. His story of himself was, that he was of a noble Veronese family ruined by the war, and utterly scattered through the world; that he, a younger son, had determined to wander till his fortunes changed, and he might return without dishonour to the place of his ancestors. He acknowledged that he had assumed a name for the purpose of more complete disguise.

"The Venetian populace are fond of poetry and music, and the singular powers of this young bard made him an eminent popular favourite. Petrarch himself, if he could have risen from his mausoleum, with the laurels of the Capitol upon his head, and his inspired harp in his hand, could scarcely have more deeply delighted the enthusiastic multitude. He was followed through the streets by a crowd of gazers; and often when in the fine evenings of the advancing summer he wandered by the banks of the Grand Canal, or leaned on one of the bridges contemplating the brilliancy of the moving scene below, the waters coloured with the tints of the gorgeous buildings, the boats loaded with the riches of the East, or the fruits of the Terra Firma, and the quays covered with men of all nations, in all their glittering varieties of habit, from China to

the Atlantic, the multitude could not be restrained from surrounding and imploring him, in the touching strain of Venetian entreaty, for some display of his powerful and bewitching genius. He generally repelled them with a lofty disdain, and plunged into darkness and loneliness for days and weeks together. But he sometimes allowed himself to be won, and the hearers then owned that such gifts ought not to be lavished upon common and capricious entreaty.

"His fame had reached the palace, and he made the ornament of some of the brilliant fêtes given by the Count in honour of his approaching marriage with the daughter of Justiniani. Adriana, too high-minded to feign reluctance, and too sensitive to generous and noble qualities not to love the Count Montalto, had accepted his suit; and the ceremony awaited only the final cessation of hostilities with Sforza, whose envoy had already arrived. A sudden calamity clouded this bright prospect. A grand entertainment had been given to the envoy, on his public reception; it continued till a late hour, and the Doge had retired overcome with the tumult and heat of the festivity. The casement of his chamber was open, and he stood for a moment enjoying the tranquillity of the contrast with that crowded and dazzling splendour which he had left behind, when a

pistol was fired into the casement, and he felt himself wounded. His firmness of nerve sustained him; he rushed out into the parterre that lined the shore, to seize the assassin, but no living thing was visible. There was no gondolier on the canal, the moon showed the whole extent of the waters; the assassin must have sunk into the earth, or gone up into the clouds.

"Justiniani tottered back to his chamber, the blood flowed profusely from his side; he felt himself fainting, and with a last effort, he rushed back into the banquet-room, and fell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

By many things have many men been tried,
Love, sorrow, riches, madness, folly, pride;
But Fate, when it insures their deadly fall,
Sends Jealousy, the fiercest fiend of all.
Phineas Webb.

"The confusion among the multitude was instant and indescribable. Cries of 'treason' were loud, the gates of the palace were closed; the senate were summoned; and the

midnight tolling of the bell of St. Mark, so long the signal of public danger, had roused the whole of Venice from its sleep. The citizens and troops poured tumultuously through the streets. For the time Venice had the look of a city taken by storm.

"Among those who raised the wounded Doge, Montalto was the first and most anxious. He staunched the blood with his scarf, before even the practised skill of the Ducal surgeons could stop its dangerous effusion. But it began to be a matter of surprise that among the crowd that knelt, and prayed, and pressed round the couch of Justiniani, there was one wanting, whom every eye expected yet dreaded to have seen foremost in those offices of duty and love. Adriana was not in the banquet room.

"A moment before the Doge had appeared among his terrified guests, tottering in like a spectre, pale and covered with blood, she had suddenly left the room. Montalto flew to find her. She was not in the palace. She was sought for through the gardens. The moon was at the full, and nothing could have escaped the eye under that full splendour. She was not to be seen.

"As Montalto was returning in despair to the palace, by an intricate and unfrequented path, he heard a rustle in a thicket; he rushed in. A figure in a gondolier's habit sprang

out at the opposite side, and plunged into the Lagune. Montalto sprang after him, but the thicket was entangled, and before he had forced his way through it, there was no trace of the fugitive. A gondola was lying beside the bank, and in it, to his joy and terror, was Adriana, speechless, cold, and apparently dying.

"His presence of mind did not desert him in this terrible conjuncture. He tried to recover her senses. On her first opening her eyes, she gave almost a scream of joy, and then turned away in sudden and strange abhorrence. She held a paper in her hand, Montalto read it by the moonlight. It was, in a few words, imploring 'the Lady Adriana, if she would prevent an atrocious crime levelled against the dearest object of her affections, to give the writer a moment's interview.'

"Jealousy, the native passion of the south, shot an icy pang through Montalto's heart. In the lofty sincerity of his nature, he charged Adriana with having forgotten him for another. The charge was answered by tears that would not be denied. 'No, Montalto,' said the weeping beauty, 'If I had not a confidence in you stronger than all that eyes or ears, or man or spirit, could shake, I should at this hour fly you as a murderer!'

"He sprang backwards, gazing on her in

astonishment. But she looked on him with a smile full of such sweet sadness, there was such a faithful, fond dependency in her exquisite form as she bent towards him, that he at once, and more deeply than ever before, felt the conviction, that nothing but death could divide them.

"Adriana's story was brief. On receiving the note, which left her in doubt whether the danger threatened her father's or Montalto's life, she had gone into an inner apartment, where she found the messenger, an attendant in the dress of the Ducal pages. He had detailed a long narrative of conspiracy, which he said had for its object the overthrow of the government, and to her disbelief and horror, Montalto's usurpation of the throne. On her bursting out into scorn of the accusation, and threatening to have the accuser seized, he threw open a concealed door, and she found herself in the hands of a group of men in masks; her mouth was bound, to prevent her alarming the palace, and she was thus conveyed to a gondola which immediately passed round to the canal in front of the chamber of the Doge.

"There she saw, in constrained silence and desperate expectancy, the whole preparation for the murder. She saw her unconscious father come to the casement, while at the same moment his assassin was gliding

through the trees to make sure of his victim. She struggled, but was held down by a hand of iron. To her doubled horror, if that were possible, the assassin as he stood by the bank with the pistol in his hand, uttered the words, 'Montalto goes to be revenged.' A gleam of moonshine fell across his figure; the dress, the martial step, the stately gesture, all were those of her lord; she saw her father lift up his hands; she would have given worlds to know that it was in prayer. In the next instant she saw the fire of the pistol. She heard a sudden cry, and saw and heard no more!

"Montalto's manly love could not be overpowered by mere suspicion; but the scene of this night hung irresistibly upon his spirits. He was bound to Adriana by the solemn engagement which was so soon to be ratified, and still more bound by the devotion of his own impassioned heart. But it was plain that some agents were at work to degrade him in her eyes, and to render him an object of alarm in those of the Doge.

"Justiniani had rapidly recovered; for the wound, formidable as it looked, was not in a vital part. Extensive inquiries had been made, but the assassin seemed to have dealt with other powers than those of man, for the whole proverbial vigilance of the sbirri was baffled. Adriana was still the same

fond and noble-hearted being, but her cheek had not yet recovered the rose-like beauty that it wore at that fatal banquet, and even in her happiest hours, a transient shade of melancholy might be seen passing over a countenance on which Montalto gazed with something of the mingled fear and delight of an ancient idolater on the face of his Divinity.

"It was clear that evil had been done; both had received a shock. An impression had been made, mingled of painful yet not unpleasing elements, that took from their love all its brilliancy and animation. It was perhaps dearer and deeper, but it was sadder and more meditative. The saint's day on which the marriage was to be solemnized was not yet come; and the Doge, to spare them both the anxieties of interviews that left both obviously less happy, offered Montalto the command of an expedition about to cruise against a pirate squadron from Tangier. His native ardour returned. He left Adriana with a soldier's brief farewell, kissed away the tear of faith and fondness that hung on her pale cheek like the dew-drop on the lily; flew to his squadron, and returned with the pirate fleet captive into the Laguna, with a rapidity and heroic enterprise that raised him to the highest point of naval honour.

CHAPTER XIX.

Look on me, maidens; you are now the rose,
And I the trampled weed; you are the lute,
Whereon the idlest wind makes melody;
I am a broken instrument, whose strings
Will never sound again.

All's fair in lo

"MONTALTO had scarcely surrendered his trust to the Grand Council, when he f to seek his bride. He found her pale worn down; she had been even in tears, the look of involuntary and unrestrained light with which she welcomed him, sudde subsided into a melancholy expression t struck cold to his soul. He questioned on the cause; she assigned some gen reason, and talked of his expedition. the quick eye of fondness, sharpened by recollection of past anxieties, was not to eluded, and Montalto at length heard fr her own lips that some occurrences dur his absence had given her peculiar pain.

"He laboured to obtain the secret; but entreaty could prevail upon her to say mo her only answer was tears that coursed e other down her cheek. His spirit, high haughty, was roused by this apparent ol

nacy, and he rose to leave the apartment; but the parting look which fell on him from those eyes, on which his very spirit lived; the sad and utter withering of hope that was in their slow and fixed gaze; the quenching of those brilliant orbs in sorrows that sprang from the heart, broke down all his determinations. He suddenly returned, and with a cheek as pale as her own, and a lip quivering with bitter and indescribable emotion, strove to soothe her.

"Adriana, I know that you are above all female affectation, all desire to try how far my fondness, my perfect and unalterable esteem will go. But I have almost a right to be told of whatever presses on your generous and gentle spirit. What living being has dared to pain, to offend—No answer? Are you not assured of my honour? Still silent? Then hear me, Adriana.' He caught her hand that hung by her side, as if life had left it to gather round the heart in that moment of agony. 'By this pledge of truth and love, I swear, not to rest till I shall have discovered this fatal secret, let what will come.'

"Adriana gave a sudden shudder, and withdrew her hand, to prevent his taking the oath. He made no attempt to retain it.

"The apartment opened to the gardens and the west; the air from the sea flowed,

in with a delicious coolness, and swept the raven curls round Montalto's forehead; the passion of the hour threw a deep glow over his martial and lofty countenance; and as he sank upon his knee, and with one hand instinctively pressed upon the hilt of his scimitar, as if to attest his resolution to dare all hazards, and the other throwing back the folds of his crimson military cloak, and lifted to heaven, vowed to perish or relieve his bride from the oppressions of that fatal secret.—Adriana, overwhelmed by a host of mingled sensations, love and admiration, anguish and despair, feebly approached him, and strove to kneel by his side. She gave a deep sigh, and fell.

"Montalto, in wild anxiety and alarm, caught her from the ground, and bore her to the window. Twilight was coming on, and the sea was falling into shade. A gondola that rapidly glided down the canal, stopped below the apartment. A loud laugh was heard, and a man sprang on board from a cluster of shrubs that shaded the casement.

"The lover felt as if his strength had at once forsaken him; the slight form of his mistress that lay so unmoving in his arms, seemed to crush him; fiery jealousy shot through his veins; but when he looked again upon that face where life was but just returning, and saw the faint, sweet smile that

seemed to thank him in unabated and confiding love, he felt that if innocence was upon earth, it was in the bosom of Adriana.

"But she was still silent; her recovery was slow and feeble; her attendants were summoned, and he saw her borne away, as he would have seen hope and love depart from his exhausted heart for ever.

"On that night a letter was sent to him from the palace. It was in the hand-writing of Adriana, and was found at his side on the marble floor, where he appeared to have fallen on reading it, and to have lain till morning.

"The note was brief, and expressing the deepest interest in Montalto's happiness, released him from all engagement, and entreated him to 'forget the unhappy Adriana.'

"Montalto's illness excited the strongest public regret. His splendid endowments, his military successes, the vigorous decision of his character, had made him already the popular hope: he was looked up to by the soldiery as the only officer capable of commanding them in the field, and by Justiniani as the only Venetian who could be matched against the martial genius and political dexterity of Sforza. But of him, as the future husband of Adriana, all his hopes had passed away. A dreariness of soul overhung her; there was a continual cloud upon her

mind; the dazzling loveliness, on which no eye gazed but with homage and admiration, had lost its lustre, and, to her father's thought, her smile was more melancholy than even her tears. She had declared her intention of retiring to a convent; and Justiniani, sick of life, and bitterly regretting the hour when he had left the quiet of his Dalmatian valley, for a troubled and evil world, was restrained from abandoning the ducal throne only by the knowledge, that mighty armaments were preparing by the Genoese and a combination of the Island States against his country.

CHAPTER XX.

Come to my heart; and ere thou tell'st thy tale,
One sigh of thine shall o'er that heart prevail;
Be cruel, heartless, false, one glance of thine
Shall like a chain around my spirit twine.
Phineas Webb.

"MONTALTO languished for some weeks in a state between life and death. His recovery was slow and feeble: in the intervals of suffering, he had adopted a sudden passion for music, and the improvisatore, Vincentio was the frequent and favourite attendant o

his couch. The variety of this youth's acquirements, the vivacity of his anecdote, and that nameless delight communicated by genius to genius, made him important to Montalto's tired mind; and even in some degree the depositary of its burdens.

"He one evening found Montalto in violent agitation, and ventured to ask the cause; the Count threw a letter on the table. 'There,' said he, 'is the explanation of all that has made me miserable, that has half made me mad,—or is it but a new device of woman?'

"Vincentio read the letter; it was anonymous, and stated, that 'the writer, a female attendant on the Lady Adriana, had accidentally discovered the cause of breaking off the alliance, in a report, that he had been privately married to a Ferrarese Jewess, in one of his early campaigns; that a female of remarkable beauty had suddenly arrived in Venice, and had an interview with her Lady, which removed all doubt, and that in her reluctance to upbraid him with an act of treachery to herself, and dishonour to her family, she had resolved to be silent, and to bury her disappointment in the sisterhood of the Santa Maria Dolorosa, in Sardinia.'

"Vincentio smiled as he laid down the paper. The Count demanded the reason of his smile. 'The letter is without a name,' was the answer.

"'What then, has it not the look of truth?

"Why should truth wear the dress of falsehood?'

"'But do you see no consistency, no natural train of circumstances, no plausibility in the statement?'

"'A vast deal. I think it a dexterous and daring, and, as the seal of all, I see it a successful contrivance; doing as much honour to the subtle head that invented it, as dishonour to the unprincipled heart that could send it forth for the delusion of a noble and unsuspecting love.'

"'But the probability of the story?'

"'Is it true, my lord?'

"'Not one syllable.' Montalto sank back on his couch.

"'Then it argues only the deeper stratagem and readier malignity of its inventors. And now, my lord, I will tell you what I have heard,—what nothing but a sense of devotion to the interests of a master so deserving of the homage, of the duty, of the life of his servant could have wrung from me. The Lady Adriana is——'

"Montalto sprang on his feet at the tone and shot an involuntary glance of searching fire at the young narrator. He was silent The Count strode through the room in feverish agitation. 'Speak, Sir,' said he, 'if you value my commands, my peace of mind, my honour. Let me hear the worst at once.'

"'My way of life,' said Vincentio, hesitagly, 'brings me sometimes in contact with nks of society, of which your lordship can ive no knowledge. I have had an early ndness for variety of character, and this is be found only among the populace. I ve been often amused by their native hu-our, sometimes startled by their ferocity, t have from time to time heard among em matters which would be thought high crets, even in the Doge's council. A few hts since, after an evening spent in exhiing my powers, such as they are, in the lace of the patrician Lerici, I made my y, tired to death of lights and music, oupes of plumed and jewelled beauty, and bles covered with scarlet and stars, to the le obscure Casa di Marte, beside the St. orge's Canal. The hour was too early the usual conflux of its grotesque visitors, d I was sitting in a dark corner, when one the usual Buffos of the place came in to epare for the business of the night. I had en laughed at his exhibitions, and I invited n to take coffee with me. The conversan turned upon your illness, my Lord, ich was then the general topic, and I exessed the common hope of your recovery. this the Buffo gave his assent, but with air half mystery half jest, which induced to inquire further. It suddenly struck

me that, according to our practice here, some attempt had been made to take you off by poison.

"'Against this surmise the Buffo protested with an unwary seriousness that proved his being master of some of the springs of the affair. I insisted; he was alarmed and reluctant. I at length obtained from him the confession, that the Lady Adriana ——. But you change colour, my lord,'—Montalto made him a sign of nervous impatience.—'Simply, she loved another.'

"Montalto's face was covered with his hand; he sat upright as a pillar, not a nerve quivered. 'In my lord's absence,' added the improvisatore, 'a young Dalmatian had arrived, probably an early intimate, and had made his way to the palace; he had been even seen in the gardens under the lady's windows.' Montalto shook from head to foot with bitter recollection.

"Vincentio went on. 'The matter was soon known to the police; the Sbirri were set to watch him; the gardens were planted with spies, gondolas rowed up and down the Laguna for weeks together; but he had become invisible, in all but his traces; fresh foosteps were found night after night under the windows of the left wing of the palace; music was heard,—nay, even voices in deep conversation; yet nothing could be discovered of the actual maker of all this fatal mi-

chief. Whether he sank into the earth, or had the gift of living at the bottom of the sea, no man could conjecture how he came or how he escaped. He had vanished.'

"Montalto groaned in agony, and flung himself down like one whose life was stricken. Vincentio approached to assist him, but he repelled all help; and, lifting his head alone from the ground, like a lion dying by the shaft of the hunter, and retaining his majesty and his rage while his strength was ebbing away, demanded in a voice of thunder, 'Did Justiniani know those things?' 'All,' was the brief answer.

"Montalto drew the scimitar from his side, and lifting it up with his feeble hand, seemed by the quivering of his bloodless lip, and the fierce convulsion of his frame, to be making a vow of vengeance. The Improvisatore interposed. 'Let not my lord give way too openly to his just indignation. The stories of the rabble are often wild exaggerations. The Buffo may have repeated but the fiction of some Casino, or the scandal of some dismissed menial.' Montalto gave a smile of haughty incredulity. He slowly returned the scimitar into its sheath, and, just before it was completely in, checked his hand, gazed on its glittering blade, and uttered in a low and gloomy soliloquy: 'When next I see you, you shall be red in Justinia-

ni's heart's blood, or—in mine.' He struck it into the sheath with sudden force, and doubly exhausted by the effort, again sank down.

"Vincentio soothed him with all the arts of entreaty and consolation, and finally acknowledged that from his strong interest in discovering the truth of the tale, he had by the united force of ducats and menaces, led the Buffo to confess, that he was deeply acquainted with the purposes of the young Dalmatian. 'This evening,' added he, 'I was to have had the proof with my own eyes of the Lady Adriana's reception of this stranger. The Buffo had been employed to make the arrangements for continuing those interviews in safety, and I was to be conveyed within sight of those treacherous lovers before the moon rose.'

"Montalto was himself again; he started from the ground, and sternly commanded that no interruption should be attempted. 'If a faithless woman has deserted me, let her go down the wind. She is not worthy of making a man of honour either a slave or a criminal.' 'Then all is well again,' observed Vincentio, 'and the Doge is safe.' 'No,' said Montalto; 'but I scorn to use the means of treachery, and he is yet inaccessible to the revenge of a subject. But the time may come. In my madness I thought of stabbing him on his throne.'

"Montalto's eye was caught by a sudden movement of his listener, who had unconsciously half drawn his dagger. He checked the weapon; and Vincentio, recovering from his surprise, allowed that he had been straying into reveries of Venetian vengeance for the wrongs of the most generous and most forgiving of lords.

"The conversation was long and painful. Montalto, with a helpless confidence unusual to his vigorous and proud nature, gradually disclosed to Vincentio the progress of his passion, his hopes, and the agony that disappointment and insults were twining round his heart. Vincentio, with the quick vindictiveness of the Italian, urged him to abandon his hankless allegiance to the Doge, to seize the lucal throne, which the popular favour had already marked out for him, and which his troops would render secure, and then to punsh the accomplices in the insult to his honur and feelings.

"But to inflame Montalto to this height he ound impossible, and he was forced to conent himself with a compromise that the Count hould accompany him in the gondola, and atisfy his own eyes of the presence of the Dalmatian.

"The moon was touching the trees of Frili with her first light, when the Count's gonola fell slowly and silently down the Grand

Canal. Here Vincentio came on board, and directed the rowers to pass through a narrow vaulted entrance under one of the superb palaces on its banks. The gondola was lost in darkness for awhile, till a lamp glimmered from what seemed a shrine; here it was left, with orders to wait the Count's return.

"Vincentio lighted his lamp, and glided on, frequently stopping to listen, as sounds of laughter and music, with the tread of many feet, followed by lonely hurried steps above their heads, were heard from time to time. 'We are now,' said he, 'under the Senator Varini's palace: he gives a ball to-night.' A shadowy figure passed in the distance. Vincentio gave a signal; it was answered. 'There,' said he, 'is our man; the Buffo is one of the spies of the police; he has been on duty here, catching the whispers of a menial, who communicates to him regularly every proceeding of the night, every name, every word, nay, almost every look, for the benefit of my Lords the Inquisitors to-morrow.'

"The Buffo left his post, and followed. Farther on they heard sounds as of a violent struggle above, the fall of something heavy, and in another moment screams and groans that made the Count shudder and stop. Vincentio raised his lamp, and demanded of the Buffo the cause of those frightful clam-

ours. As the light fell on his countenance, Montalto thought that the features were familiar to him; but their expression was a wild and repulsive mixture of ferocity and grim ridicule. 'Nothing but a murder, I suppose,' said the Buffo. Montalto was startled; and his companion pressed his finger to his lip. 'Well, if I am not to answer, why do you ask me questions?' said the Buffo, with a sneer; 'To die, is but to die. We are now under—let me see,' and he took out a kind of chart of those subterranean passages, 'ay, we are now under the Marchese Malatesta's palace; she has married four husbands already; and, if I am not much mistaken, by to-morrow she will be ready for a fifth.'—'Can she have murdered her husband?' burst out Montalto, in a tone of undisguised horror. 'Why, perhaps, not with her own hand,' said the ruffian, with a laugh; 'though such things have been before now. But this evening Tomaso, Bartolomeo, and Giovanni were under orders; and as the Signora is engaged to open the ball at the Grand Fiscal's house, and she would not keep the noble company waiting, it is likely enough that she has expedited the matter.—But here is our door.'

"The Buffo opened an iron wicket, which led into the depth of the wall, and in a few steps Montalto found himself, to his unequalled surprise, in a grotto, where he had often

sat with Adriana, enjoying the evening ai and the rising of the moon over the magnil cent bosom of the Adriatic.

The evening breeze now breathed; th moon was covering with a sheet of liquid si ver the waters that lay smooth as a mirror the mingled sounds of the great city fell lik music on the ear in that spot of solitary love liness. Before him shone in the moonlight among a cluster of roses, an exquisite statue of Venus, which he had brought as one of the trophies of his first Ferrarese expedition, and which he had dedicated to Adriana. With in view was the casement of her chamber; it was shaded by a profusion of fragrant shrubs, luxuriant and blooming with the fresh beauty of spring; but a lamp burning within, as at the shrine of an idol, lighted up the richly coloured panes, and threw a long line of radiance on the ground.

"Montalto felt his revenge die away as he gazed on a scene so full of unspeakable remembrances. He drew his cap upon his brows, and felt all the bitter sweet of those thoughts that make up so much of love. But at that moment, the Buffo making signs to him to approach, Vincentio led the Count by the arm to a spot from which the apartment might be fully seen.

"Adriana was in her chamber: she had been reading a letter, which she often lai

down to wipe away a tear. The sound of a guitar among the trees caught her ear; she slowly arose, and kissing the letter once more, folded it, and put it in her bosom. As she stood up, the light of the lamp fell on her forehead, and threw round it a white splendour like the halo round the brow of an angel.

"Montalto had never seen her look so lovely; the paleness of her cheek suddenly suffused by emotion with a tinge of rose; the dark tresses, braided under an antique diadem; the large and noble eye, no longer sparkling, but filled with a rich melancholy as she stood listening to the prelude of the guitar, overwhelmed him with a sense of sublime and unearthly beauty.

"Even his companions were struck with admiration. 'She looks like the Madonna,' whispered the conducting ruffian. 'She is the fitter to die!' returned Vincentio; then in a low and shuddering tone murmured, 'It must be done.' They glanced round at Montalto; he was still standing on the same spot, fixed as by a spell. Vincentio seized his passive and icy hand, and forced him forwards.

"Adriana now left the chamber, and passed into the grotto by which they had entered. A figure stole from the cluster of roses, and knelt at her feet. Montalto felt his brain

grow dizzy, a darkness came upon his eyes —Vincentio was suddenly at his side. He muttered, 'Now! strike the traitress, and be revenged!' forcing, as he spoke, a stiletto into the Count's grasp. Montalto dropped it in horror on the ground. The noise aroused Adriana; she shrieked; the youth sprang from his knee, and fled; and at the same instant Montalto felt himself stabbed behind. He instinctively caught up the stiletto that sparkled at his feet, and struck a desperate, random blow at his assassin. The stiletto was plunged up to the hilt; and the wounded man, with a heave and a groan, dropped, writhing round Montalto's knees.

"The tumult had alarmed the palace; and a crowd of officers and domestics, with torches, rushed confusedly through the garden. In the grotto they found Montalto bleeding, with Adriana in his arms; and Vincentio dying before them.

"The Doge alone was absent. He was engaged in high council. A conspiracy had been detected, which was to have broken out at midnight; the firing of the arsenal was a part of the design, and the blaze was to have been a signal for the embarkation of an army, already brought down by a forced march to the opposite shore.

"But Adriana's danger overpowered all public cares, and he hastened to the garden.

Vincentio raised his dying eyes on his approach, and desired the forgiveness of all. 'This night,' said he, 'was to have been a memorable one for Venice, and the enemies of Venice. The son of Mancini was to have washed out in blood the injuries of his father!'

"The Doge gazed on him with a look of strong inquiry. 'In these dying features,' said Vincentio, 'there may be now no resemblance. But I have stronger proof, that I was the son of that bold, noble, undone, lord of your proud Venice.'

"The crowd drew back, and stared at each other. 'My story,' added he, 'is one of few things and few words. I was a rebellious son, and I abandoned my father; I was a rebellious citizen, and I conspired against my country;—allured by the promises of Sforza and the Genoese, I drew the noble Mancini into my views; another day, and the army which I then commanded would have been within your walls, and Mancini your monarch. The Count Montalto snatched the victory from my very grasp, and gave my father over to popular vengeance. I swore his destruction. I left the army at Milan. I came to Venice; I made my way among your populace; I prepared an insurrection that was to have broken out this night. But my first business was to smite the man who had laid my father's crown in the dust.

"He loved; I wrought him by a trai
trivial circumstances to suspect the consta
of the lovely being to whom his soul
bound.

"I urged him to the murder of the Dc
but his generous nature shrank from
thought. Determined to make him drink
blackest draught of vengeance, I urged
even to the death of his mistress. But
me not die without your forgiveness,
Lord Montalto, to that crime you could
be tempted.

"'She was innocent; the tale that
separated you was of my invention;
youth that but now knelt at her feet wa
agent of mine, whom she met in the hop
receiving tidings of you. All has been
sion on my side—all has been honour, tr
and fidelity, on yours, and that of the l
of your love.'" His eyes closed, and
sank into a silence unbroken by the circl

"'Was it your hand that treachero
struck me?' at length said Montalto.
never struck man but in his front,' was
answer. The villain who stabbed you i
behind is gone. I heard him plunge
the canal. I had reserved you for a lo
vengeance. This night, when your fl
should have been blazing round you,—w
your palaces should have been falling be
our cannon,—when your citizens should l

been driven to slaughter like sheep before wolves,—I had determined to single out the author of Mancini's fall, and on the very spot dyed with my gallant father's blood, to have made libation of yours or my own.' He stopped, turned on his face, and died without a groan.

"There was now no further room for doubt or sorrow. Montalto's wound was rapidly healed, for happiness alone makes no mistakes in science. The letter over which Adriana had wept was one which told of Montalto's enduring passion. She awoke to a new life of joy; and Justiniani, in his old age, full of fame and honours, saw his children's children."

CHAPTER XXI.

Therefore, before I speak, arm well your mind,
And think you're to be touch'd even to the quick,
That so prepared for ill, you may be less
Surprised to hear the worst.

Shakspeare.

Vaughan departed for England with something like renewed hope. All that he had supposed might not have happened. His

own experience of human nature presented a melancholy evidence of its probability, but yet he rejected the conclusion, and Catherine's name was again pronounced with its former tenderness.

As every day shortened the period of his painful suspense, his agitation continued to increase. Dr Johnson says, "We are never so impatient of delay, as when we know that delay cannot be long," and sensibly did Vaughan feel the truth of this remark, at the close of each day's journey.

The face of the country through which he travelled already bore striking evidence of the tyrant's overthrow. The labours of the husbandman were renewed; the sounds of desolation had given place to the busy hum of industry; the cottage was no longer untenanted; the deafening drum, the shrill trumpet, were exchanged for the cheerful tones of the native guitar; the clear air was no longer darkened with columns of smoke the bright green of the summer-landscape was no longer disfigured by ghastly remnants of battle. Some hearts yet heaved with the memory of recent loss; some hurried graves remained, to point out those hallowed spots which had been the scene of such mournful devastation, and even those the hand of piety had decorated with flowers and laurels, thus giving to their sad mem-

rials a covering of bloom and beauty, which might almost have banished from the mind of the stranger the images of death and suffering.

On his arrival at Lisbon, all around him appeared to tell the same tale of returning prosperity. It was a season of general rejoicing. He remembered his remark on landing, that this was a country which wanted but peace to make it a terrestrial paradise, yet he prepared to quit it now in all its luxuriance, without one lingering feeling of regret. The friends of his childhood awaited him on another shore; the hopes of his youth, the dreams of his ambition, all pointed towards England; and it was with a beating heart that he set his foot in the proud vessel, whose sails were swelling for England.

The passage was unusually tedious; the winds and waves had no sympathy with his impetuous feelings. In vain he paced the deck with fretful and impatient steps. No kindly breeze fanned his feverish cheek. He urged the sailors with a multiplicity of useless questions, and often fancied that he could descry the outline of the English shores, when other eyes could see nothing but the expanse of waters.

But the anxious and weary hours were exhausted at last, and with a burst of instinctive joy he leaped on shore. At Falmouth,

where they landed, he stopped awhile to collect his thoughts. His first idea was to write to Catherine; but this project was abandoned almost as soon as formed. A day's further delay could be now of no material consequence; and the surprise and agitation of this unexpected meeting might possibly be the very best method of ascertaining the true state of her feelings.

Towards his uncle and mother, no such motive could exist, and to them he prepared to write. Even then he felt something of the painful doubt that absence so often brings. It was long since he had heard from them. Unhappy casualties might have occurred even in the weary days of his passage, and his nervous fancy began to figure some sudden and fearful shock awaiting him on his arrival. As these reflections chased each other in rapid succession, he thought that he heard a voice familiar to him in the court-yard below. He started up, then smiling at his own impulse, "Psha," he exclaimed, "I forget that I am in England, and the voice of every clown now appears familiar to me." But the next instant, the decrepid yet busy form of old Peter, his uncle's domestic, met his eye, immediately under the window. "But, what calamity may not have brought him here? Is the household broken up?" thought Vaughan. He threw up the window,

and called the old valet. His surprise would have made a subject for the pencil. The old man turned suddenly round, let the stick drop from his hand, and remained with open mouth, and vacant gaze, rivetted to the spot where he stood. "So you don't know me," said Vaughan: "Did you think I was no longer in the land of the living, my old friend? how goes on all at home?"

Peter recovered his recollection and speech together. "It is himself, sure enough: oh, that your honour had but come a few days sooner, or not at all. You have chosen an evil hour. Alas, the day!"

"What can have brought me home?" exclaimed Vaughan; "what should bring me, but peace, and the hope of a welcome home. Come, find your way to me here. Let me know all that you can tell me."

Peter at length made his appearance at the door, which he continued to hold in his hand, as if even then loth to advance any further, his eyes bent on the ground, sighing bitterly; a few tears even found their way. "Come, Sir," said Vaughan, struggling against his fears, "out with the worst at once. I am prepared for any thing."—"Alas, the day," ejaculated Peter, "that my master had but lived to see this day."—"Dead!" cried Vaughan; "dead! There passed away a spirit not understood by the world. He

had a heart, generous and forgiving. He was kinder to me than I deserved."—"Less,—a hundred times less," exclaimed Peter angrily, "I thought—but it is a strange world, Mr. Francis. But there may be treachery and deceit at the bottom of the will."—"I can easily guess what you have not the courage to tell me, Peter," said Vaughan; "my cousin, I conclude, inherits all."—"Every shilling, sir!" cried Peter, wrathfully; "and never came an estate into the power of one that will misuse it more; and how it came about at this moment I am at a loss to tell. Why, it is not six months since that my master made a will in your honour's favor; and then, when he lay on his death-bed, down comes this artful nephew, and turns every thing his own way. That will was made on the very day after the news reached us of the great battle of Vittoria. When your honour got promotion—when the Gazette came in that night, my master made me read every syllable of it—said that you were a credit to the name of Vaughan, and should have wherewith to support it when he was gone. Next morning he sent for a lawyer, and made his will in my presence—locked it up, and bade me remember where he had placed it. When I saw plunder and treachery going on, almost before the hearse had left the door, I secured this will, and

produced it too. But Mr. Philip Courtney laughed me in my face, said I knew nothing of law, and that the first will went for nothing. But my mind misgave me, he was so anxious to get hold of it; and I swore by my master's death-bed, that it should never pass from my hands into any but your honour's. I have borne it about me to this day; and here it is."

"Your zeal and fidelity shall not go unrewarded," said Vaughan; "but you must not be sanguine in your hopes for me. If I have been played false—I shall assert my rights. But are you still living at the hall?" —"No, sir," said Peter, with a heavy sigh; "I had hoped to have died in it; but young Mr. Courtney was not one to whom grey hairs and long service are any recommendation. Thank heaven, I am not left to starve in my old age; my worthy master took care of that. I am now on my way to London to spend the remainder of my days with a widowed sister."

"And does my cousin mean to reside in the old mansion-house?" said Vaughan.

"Yes," said Peter, with fresh indignation; "there is a new housekeeper come down already; a fine town lady, all drest out in flounces and laces that put old Sarah quite out of the world; and a new butler or steward, one that seems to know how to act the

gentleman as well as his master; an
powdered puppies, that seem to kno
how to lounge about all day, and p
cards half the night."

"But the house is so unlike all Cou
ideas of modern elegance," said Va
rather musing aloud than addressir
faithful domestic. "Ay, he'll soon
that," cried Peter; "why, there hav
a crowd of upholsterers and carpent
work ever since the day of the funeral.
old furniture, that my old master val
much, my new one says is good for n
but fire-wood. The picture of the ol
tleman's father, the admiral, that ha
up in the front drawing-room time
mind, was thrown into a cart, to b
along with the rest. The curiosity-r
to be pulled entirely down, to make w
an entrance-hall or greenhouse, or som
of the kind. The two parlours are
thrown into a ball-room; and his very
is to be all new furnished as a dressing
for young Mrs. Courtney that is to be.

"Going to be married too," cried
ghan, with a pang; "to whom?"

"Nay," said the old narrator, with
pressive shake of the head; "the lad
could make such a choice has not
chance of happiness; poor as I am, I
not let a child of mine change place
his bride."

A horn sounded below; the London coach was driving into the yard. Peter rose. "I must be gone, Sir," "Not without some remembrance, my old friend," said Vaughan, putting a purse into his hand. Peter bowed profoundly as he retreated towards the door, and alternately muttering benedictions and poising the purse in his hand, took his slow way down stairs.

CHAPTER XXII.

When we two parted,
In silence and tears,
Half-broken hearted
To sever for years;
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Surely that hour foretold
Sorrow to this. *Lord Byron.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the fortitude with which Vaughan had disguised his feelings from the messenger of such unwelcome news, he was not such a hero, or to speak more properly, such a stoic, as to contemplate his loss with absolute indifference.

The evidence which he held in his hand

of his uncle's previous intentions; and the account of the immediate consequences of his cousin's arrival, admitted of but one interpretation. Courtney stood before him in his native hue, and his heartless baseness presented a sickening and revolting picture of human nature. If it be true that early life is more susceptible of happiness than a more advanced period, it is equally true that all the painful emotions are with it proportionably keen. To the aged, an act of unkindness or treachery is no longer new, and all sensibility is deadened by frequency of trial. There are individuals, around whose life a miserable fatality appears to cling,—whom disappointment awaits at every turn,—whom, even in the morning of life, the sickness of hope deferred wraps like a cloud. Vaughan began to fear that he was one of those. There had been times, still fresh in his recollection, when hope had animated every thing round him, but they had been "beautiful and brief," meteors that shed their brilliant but uncertain light across a waste.

Might not Catherine's coldness and long silence be traced to this one fatality? Solitude is the natural diet of melancholy. Vaughan felt its danger, and resolved to shorten the period as much as possible. "If Catherine still display but the independent spirit

which glowed in her early professions, the loss I have now sustained will appear comparatively trivial,—and my confidence will rest upon a basis which henceforth nothing can shake. But two days' journey separates me from the object of all my solicitudes. My last stake will be cast; I shall then have nothing further to learn,—perhaps nothing further to hope; but suspense will agonize me no longer."

It was too late when he reached London to intrude on General Greville's house. The night, spite of his fatigue, appeared incalculably long, and the morning seemed as if it would never break through the dark and lurid mists of a November sky.

It was but a quarter of an hour's walk from the hotel to the General's mansion, and when he reached the door, he felt that the distance had not given him time to collect his thoughts. He knocked with a palpitating heart,—and when the door of the lofty hall was opened, he stood like one afraid to pronounce the name that hovered on his lips. To inquire for General Greville, who had possibly never heard his name, or worse, to whom it might be no welcome sound, would have been doubly embarrassing; and he had at length gained courage to ask if Miss Greville were at home? "At home and alone, Sir," was the answer; "but far from well, Sir."

"Ill!" cried Vaughan, in alarm. "No
fined to her room, Sir; but I do not
that Miss Greville will see any one to
"She *must* see me," said Vaughan,
tiously; "I am ———. Come, Sir
may venture to admit me against all
bition. I shall announce myself." Va
burst impetuously forwards; and the
domestic, retreating in surprise, per
him to pass without further opposition.

The apartment into which he was
was magnificent; but it gave an impr
of unhappiness in its owner. Specim
unsettled and varying occupations wer
tered over the or-molu table,—drawir
finished, as if abandoned in wearine
book turned upon its face, as if unable
ford the solace which had been sough
pages,—and the commencement of a
letter, which the writer had apparently
ed resolution to complete,—all met hi
in the rapid glance which he cast ov
apartment. A Virginia nightingale, wh
had given her the day before they
seemed the only object which had er
attention; its superb cage was ornar
with fresh roses. The door was ope
kindness had evidently so conquered
midity of its nature, that it hopped fea
upon his hand, and seemed unwilling
its station. "Poor bird, perhaps you

that remains to me of old recollections!" were the first words that broke from Vaughan's overpowered spirit.

He heard his name pronounced in the next room; he was unable any longer to restrain his feelings, and flinging open the door, saw Catherine.

But what a countenance met his gaze! so sad, so care-worn, so unlike that bloom of young beauty indelibly impressed upon his heart. He had seen her in sadness before; he had left her helpless and dependent; but the spirit which unkindness could not subdue,—the affection which broke through all restraint, and survived in darkness and storm, had then lighted up her eye, and flushed her cheek, and given brilliancy and vividness to every feature. But never had he read such a tale of suffering as that sunk eye and wan cheek now discovered to him.

"Can I hope for pardon? I who dared to doubt you, but in thought," cried Vaughan, rushing forwards. "My Catherine, that pale cheek tells more than words."

Catherine pronounced his name in an accent of thrilling tenderness, which could not be mistaken; but, overwhelmed by surprise and agitation, she would have sunk at his feet, had not his arm given her aid,—her head resting on his arm, her eyes closed, even her lip colourless, and her heart beat-

ing so feebly as scarcely to give symptoms of life; Vaughan hung over her in terror. "I have killed her; I have tried her too far; look up, my Catherine. But speak; this chilling, this death-like silence will break my heart."

"Oh, Francis!" sighed she, turning upon him a gaze of mingled despair and fondness, "loved but too well, and restored but too late."

"I may have been loved too well," said Vaughan dejectedly, his heart sinking with vague apprehension, almost less from the words which fell from her lips than from the hollow and sepulchral tone in which they were uttered. "Loved beyond my deserts I may have been; but not returned too late, if your affections are still mine. I am returned, as you once hoped to find me, constant to my early love, and not altogether unhonoured. I have won, and am free to seek you; Heaven permits our union, and man has no power to part us."

"But man has the power, and will exert it," cried Catherine, wildly; "there is a barrier more fearful than a heart like yours can be led to imagine. The ocean has had no power to sever us; but there is a gulf which you cannot pass, and I, I myself have pronounced the decree." She wept a flood o tears.

"And is this my welcome home?" cried Vaughan; "I am beset by evil on all sides; I have been calumniated and betrayed,—but on one I rested my sole remaining hope; he who is in his grave cannot now rise from it to repair the injustice which he has done to me,—but you might have atoned for it. I thought that there was one who had still the heart to make England what I once hoped to find it—a home."

"It is no home for either of us," returned Catherine weeping, "my only home can be the grave. Look not on me thus, I may not meet that look as I should once have met it. I may not listen to your language. I may not answer you, as I should once have answered. Leave me, Vaughan, leave me; your right over me has passed away."

"And who has acquired my right," said Vaughan, proudly. "Was not your image beside me in the delirium of fever? did not your remembrance stimulate every action of my life? did I not tear myself from you and England to earn a name and income worthy of your acceptance? An income which, however small for ambition, is enough for love; and a name which I am now returned to defend, and which the breath of calumny shall never injure more."

"He is coming, he is coming!" cried Catherine, casting a bewildered glance around,

as if she heard some intruder, whom yet s
feared to name, "he is coming!" "No o
is coming whom you can dread," said Va
ghan, tenderly attempting to soothe the a
ny which seemed to alter every featur
"nor father nor friend shall oppose the clai
which your own generous heart ackno
ledges." "He is coming, he is coming
she repeated, in yet more terrified accen
with her eyes still glancing at the door. "I
can, he will separate us; he must not fi
you here. Your mutual recognition wou
kill me. Guess, but do not impose on t
the task of telling my own bitter tale. Le
me, Francis, to the dark fate, the miserab
unspeakable, lot which I have chosen; a
which I deserve to meet, since I could bri
myself to choose it." "There is some fe
ful mystery in your words," exclaimed Va
ghan, "which must be explained. I cla
your promise—I claim my bride."

"He is come," she almost screamed,
the door opened, and the object of her nam
less terror appeared to Vaughan's astonish
view in the person of Courtney.

"Vaughan! you here?" exclaimed
starting back, as if he had seen a spect
But suddenly recovering his presence
mind, he advanced with a fixed eye; and
a low deliberate voice said, "Mr. Vaugh
I am surprised to find you under this r

But you are perhaps not aware of this lady's circumstances. And for you, madam," darting a fierce glance at the trembling Catherine, "it is improper, situated as you are, to admit of such interviews." "Stand off, Courtney," exclaimed Vaughan, flaming with indignation. "She is mine by every bond. Come not one step nearer, if you would not have me forget the relationship between us." "Question *her*," said Philip, as he stood with folded arms and gloomy brow, but yet a gleam of triumph playing across his dark countenance, "if you wish to hear her with her own lips renounce you for ever."

"Look up, my love," said Vaughan, tenderly, "Why do you tremble? Disprove by one word so base a charge. Have I not sworn to you, that neither father nor friend shall oppose those claims which your own noble heart acknowledged?" "Neither father nor friend," cried Courtney with a sneer, "but perhaps a husband may; your right, sir, over that lady ceased from the hour she promised to become my wife. This, I presume, will suffice, with a man of honour." "False," cried Vaughan, rendered furious by the bare intimation, "it is, it must be false. A word, Catherine, one word, to put that slanderer to shame—speak and fear not." "The truth," murmured Catherine, in a voice so low and broken as to be almost

unintelligible; but Vaughan caught the fea
sounds—he looked despairingly in her fa
"Catherine, this moment decides all—
heart is bursting. I am bewildered. Is
the world deceit and treachery?"

"You are right, Francis," she murmur
making a convulsive effort for disclos
"for you *trusted* me."

The hand which but a moment bef
Vaughan had raised to his lips, with all
devotion of a confiding spirit, he dropped
sudden despair.

"Are you satisfied?" said Courtney, w
a sardonic smile.

"I *am* satisfied, sir," answered Vaugh
in deep but dignified indignation. "I a
satisfied that truth exists not in the world.
am satisfied that you are formed for ea
other. May neither of you ever cross t
path again."

"Oh stop, Francis!" cried Catherine, in
voice of piercing anguish, "one mome
Hear but my defence." He paused; b
she was silent, overcome by emotion. I
turned away. "You need make none, M
Greville. To betray me, and for him, t
bitterest enemy! There wanted but this
complete the mortal injuries which I ha
received at his hands." He turned with
fiery eye upon Courtney. "You, sir, t
frauded me of my inheritance; you ha

robbed me of a heart which I *once* valu-
nore than life. Beware!"
He turned wildly towards the door. Ca-
rine lifted up her hands and eyes to
ven in supplication. He gave her a
ing look. On Courtney, who shrank at
approach, his glance shot wrath inextin-
hable. "From you, sir, I expected no-
g less than fraud and falsehood; but
a her!——she has made me sick of hu-
nature. Farewell, madam, for ever!"
aying, he rushed down the stairs with
impetuosity of a maniac, and was gone.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"For I am in so far in guilt,
That sin will pluck on sin."
Shakspeare.

OR some time after Vaughan's departure,
herine stood gazing at the door with the
ionless attitude of one overwhelmed by
e incurable grief. Courtney advanced,
attempted to take her hand, but she drew
ck with an air of disdain which stagger-
him. "Leave me," she exclaimed, in a

stern and lofty tone—"leave me to the d solation which you have brought upon me, you would not see me driven to frenzy b fore your eyes."

Courtney beheld her anguish with an u altered countenance; and emboldened b previous success, stood as if waiting till th storm should blow over. "I have no re source, then, but in my own chamber," cried Catherine, slowly and haughtily pass ing by him; "which I will not quit, till yo have left the house, I will admit no intrude on this the darkest day of my existence."

Courtney dared make no effort to detai her. "I will tame that fiery spirit of her's," said he, breathing more freely when h found himself alone. "Mine she shall be in spite of this unlucky meeting. Women's purposes are feeble. Experience has showr me this. There was a time when she would not hear me speak. She repelled me with true female scorn. Others might have given up the affair, yet here we are on the brink of marriage. Her fortune is worth the trou ble; for without it I am ruined."

There was one thought which occasione some temporary anxiety. He wished t have ascertained what degree of explanatio had taken place between Catherine an Vaughan; but still flattered himself, as w the case, that he had interrupted them

time to prevent Vaughan's vindication of himself. If so, all might yet go on well, as he trusted to Catherine's delicacy, and Vaughan's indignation, to prevent all future communication. But one train of ideas had scarcely been laid at rest, when they were succeeded by others of a more startling nature. Vaughan had intimated some knowledge of the injustice which had been done him. "Defrauded of his inheritance!" Could his agent in this dark transaction have betrayed him? He could not shut his eyes to the danger of his situation.

Courtney returned home; the family were all dispersed on various engagements. There was no witness of his agitation. As he walked hastily up and down the room, his lip quivered, large drops stood upon his forehead, and his cheek became of a frightful and death-like paleness. He felt that his character and fortunes alike hung upon a single thread, that a sword was suspended over his head.

He was interrupted by the entrance of Benson, whose treachery was then uppermost in his thoughts, and whom he had kept in peculiar attendance ever since the eventful day of his uncle's death, with the view of keeping an eye upon his conduct. Benson entered with an air of almost insolent freedom, and sneeringly put a paper into his

master's hands. "What do you mean by this?" said Courtney, haughtily. "I am not to be interrupted."

"It is a trifling bill, sir, over which you will perhaps cast your eyes," answered Benson, without retreating a step. "A bill," said Courtney, glancing over it. "Yes, so I perceive, and to no trifling amount; but what have I to do with it, is it not a debt of your own?" "I beg your pardon," answered Benson, adhering to his point, "it is a concern of your's, as I have not the means of discharging it at present. I will thank you to give me a cheque for the money."

"Scoundrel!" cried Courtney, rendered furious by the application, and yet more by the manner in which it was made.

"You will perhaps do well to consider it, sir," said the man, with the same imperturbable air. "I have lived on promises for some time, but begin to find the necessity of a more substantial recompence. I cannot find that I am much the better for having consented to play the rogue, and begin to think that it might be as well to turn honest for the future."

"Oh, quite as well," said Courtney, with a sallow smile, "if you think that with that front of your's, and such a report as I may give of you, you will find many to believe in its possibility. Let me tell you, sir," his

voice trembled with sudden rage, "that once thrown on the world again, you may not find it so easy to obtain another shelter."

"And let me tell you, sir," said Benson, in the same easy and assured accent as before, "that if you refuse my request, beggary—ruin—a prison, stare me in the face. And desperate circumstances sometimes—suggest desperate means of relief."

"Desperate means," said Courtney, starting at the words, and yet more at the resolute look and tone of the speaker, "Villain!" grasping his arm with nervous violence, "you have not dared to betray me. Punishment as well as reward is in my power." "And revenge," answered Benson, in his stern accent, "is in mine. I have but to throw myself into a coach this day, and take the road to Caversham, where Mr. Vaughan is now gone—."

"And come in for your share of the punishment," bitterly retorted Courtney, and then, with his habitual presence of mind, added with a smile, "Instead of quietly awaiting the *certain* testimonies of my gratitude. I have already told you, that I found my uncle's affairs greatly embarrassed; that I must clear the estate of some heavy incumbrances, before I can have much in my power." Benson looked incredulous, and Courtney turned to another topic. "But

who told you that Vaughan was in England? it is probably a mistake; the report of some blunderer," said he, with carelessness. "That blunderer was myself," replied Benson. "I saw him not ten minutes ago in the very hotel where I was sent with your letter; he looked as pale as a ghost, and ordered horses for Caversham, where Mrs. Vaughan resides."

Courtney was silent, struck his hand on his forehead, and walked away in thought. At length he said, "Here is a cheque for the money you want; I would save you from a prison; but I give you warning, that this is the last money which I will pay for you."—"Not the last," muttered Benson, as he withdrew, with the glance of a snake at the creature that is to be its certain prey.

"While Vaughan lives," said Courtney to himself, "I am in this miscreant's power. While Vaughan lives," he repeated; but so dark were the thoughts that followed this reflection, that he shuddered, unable to give them utterance. He caught a passing glimpse of himself in a mirror opposite, and started at the ashy hue of his complexion, and the wild expression which glared in his eyes. "Afraid of a shadow!" said the wretched man, turning away, and covering his face with his quivering hands. "Could the world see me now!" His mind burned with con-

tending passions; but his frame gave way, he flung himself upon a couch, and spoke with the wild and broken interjections of a terrible dream. "Life of continual terror!" he exclaimed; "he will seek justice!—I shall be undone!—he must not cross my objects again! Vaughan, Vaughan, what curse fixed you between me and fortune? Why am I exposed to temptations beyond the strength of man to resist! Shame, beggary, all to be cured by one act of self-defence. No more?—life for life!" He clenched his hands, and struck them against his forehead in an agony too bitter to be controlled. Glancing suddenly round, he perceived, to his horror and amazement, the door slightly opened; it closed. Springing forwards, he perceived the figure of Benson stealing down the stairs.

He rushed after him, and dragged him into the room, furious with passion, "Stop, villain—spy!" he exclaimed, "where are you going?—what brought you here?—what have you heard?—how dared you steal upon me? I have satisfied your demand. Begone!"

"Am I to go or stay, sir," said Benson, calmly disengaging himself from Courtney's grasp, and looking up in his face with an air of cool inquiry. Courtney was baffled by his look. "Scoundrel, what have you heard?"—"Nothing, sir." "Nothing," said

Courtney. "Well, and right, there was nothing to hear. But I have been ill of late," he tottered again to the couch, saying, as he sank upon it, "I am feverish, Benson; I should not be surprised if I were to go mad!"

The menial cast a keen glance, which had something of triumph in it at his fallen master. "If, sir, you have any burden on your mind, I am faithful," said he, in a whisper. "Unburden myself, and to you!" retorted Courtney, with a smile of supreme contempt; "Unburden myself to you;" he burst into a paroxysm of laughter; then suddenly breaking it off, and fixing a strong glare on his listener's countenance, "You,—whom a guinea would bribe to betray me at any time! I have nothing on my mind.—Begone." Benson was retiring. He was called back. "Captain Vaughan has taken the road to Caversham—he cannot reach it to-night." "I overheard him saying, that he should have some delays on the road, and might complete his journey by late to-morrow evening." "It is very well," said Courtney: "his motions are so rapid, that I must lose no time in writing to him, lest he should again change his residence as quickly as he has left London—leave me now." He hung his head, and seemed to compose himself to sleep. Benson drew himself up in a sudden

attitude of superiority and scorn, and slowly stalked out of the room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
The very stones prate of my whereabout,
——— While's I threat he lives.
I go, and it is done."

Shakspeare.

The year was declining, and as Vaughan rolled rapidly along the fine roads of Oxfordshire, he might have filled his eye with the alternate beauty of mighty woods wearing their last autumnal tints, and the little pastoral streams swelling into rivers, and rushing through fields and valleys that seemed planned by the very genius of landscape.

But his spirit was wearied and worn out by succession of bitterness. And the sounds of the rustling wind that shook showers of foliage round him, and the general look of pale decay that touched the mountain and the valley, only formed a portion of his saddened feeling, a kind of attendant chime to the progress of a dejected heart from sorrow to the grave.

Some business which he had to arrange at Oxford detained him till the early nightfall of a November day, and when he had lost the glimmer of the town lamps, he pursued his road in total darkness. The night grew stormy, and the road seemed to have been suddenly cleared of all other travellers. Vaughan, wrapped in his cloak, and by custom careless of accidents by flood and field, was revolving the long series of his anxieties; when he found the carriage suddenly checked. He started from his musing. In all the rush of the wind the sound of a low peculiar voice struck his ear. The postboy was evidently struggling or parleying with some one. The night had suddenly grown intensely dark; but Vaughan, with the habits of soldiership, sprang out of the chaise, and felt his way to the horses' heads. At the sound of his voice, a horseman plunged against him, and with an execration discharged a pistol full in his front.

At the flash the horse wheeled round, and burst away into the darkness. Vaughan, in the shock of the moment, could see only that his rider wore a crape, and that the animal was covered with mire and foam. Pursuit was impossible. As to the stoppage of the chaise, the driver could tell him nothing more than that a man, who called himself a London traveller, had been inquiring the

nearest way to Caversham at the Golden Eagle, where they had last changed horses. That he had followed them, and was trying to persuade him, as they reached the foot of the very steepest hill on the road, that he had mistaken his way.

Terror had made the post-boy stop; and the sight of the crape convinced him that the traveller was no other than the famous Tom Castles, who had been the terror of the country, till he was transported seven years before, but who was said to have returned and taken to the Oxford road, now that the gentlemen were coming up to their terms.

This was unsatisfactory enough, and Vaughan strongly suspected that the fluent describer of Tom Castles' achievements knew more about his present enterprise than he was willing to acknowledge. But there was no resource. He got into the carriage; and his charioteer, possibly to whirl away any opinions unfavourable to his integrity, flogged his steeds into a gallop.

Vaughan tried to compose himself again; but a sudden pang made him writhe. He found his coat stained with blood; a ball had struck his arm, unfelt in the hurry of the struggle. But the pain grew keener still; the blood flowed rapidly; and he had but just seen the lights in the avenue of his home, when he fell and fainted.

CHAPTER XXV.

Love is life's sunshine, and when most it shines
It calleth up the sullen-frowning clouds,
Wherewith to spoil its beauty.

Phineas Webb.

The grief and terror of the household, when Vaughan was carried in speechless and streaming with blood, were beyond description; but the wound was soon ascertained to be slight, and a few days subdued the danger.

But the fever of the mind subsisted still; and his mother saw with silent misery the waste of life and hope in a countenance once so buoyant with delight and enthusiasm. Their conversations were long and sincere; Vaughan declared that with life, as offering a chance of future enjoyment, he had utterly done; the world was dark to him, and he now scarcely wished to see it brighten. His profession would henceforth occupy all his mind; the war had ceased, but he was determined to occupy himself in resolute and absorbing professional study, and to take advantage of the first opportunity of joining the service again, no matter where.

He gradually recovered; his health, shaken by even the ardour and exhilaration of the campaign, or by that rapid burning of the lamp of life so often felt by Englishmen in the brilliant climates of the south of Europe, was undergoing a slow but secure restoration. The coming of spring, that season which speaks with a music of its own, a sweet voice heard by no ear so deeply as the ear of returning health; the variation of studious hours by the pure and quiet pursuits of a country life; the presence and conversation of that accomplished and intelligent mother—one woman in whose love he might trust without a possibility of being deceived; the revival of some of those graceful pursuits to which he had devoted himself in the intervals of campaigning; the poetry of Spain, the most romantic of all poetry,—its music, the most original and delicious—its landscape, unrivalled for richness of colouring and picturesque pomp of cultivation and nature, engaged him in no undelighted employ.

Other feelings of a still more exalted rank took root in this retired and thoughtful turn of his mind. From his mother's lips, the lips of an Israelite without guile, he heard, with almost a new-born perception, the truths of Religion. From her life of trial, resignation, and confiding faith, he might have drawn its purest example.

Those truths were not made the matter o formal discourse,—they were not pressed b the zealous mother upon the struggling an reluctant conviction of the son. They cam casually, the almost accidental excitement o the common things of the day. They wer not talked of with a brow rigorously com posed for the high subject, but as a portio of the general truths which make the sum o human happiness and wisdom.

Like the great Author of Christianity wan dering with his disciples through the field of Palestine, and turning the simplest object by the way-side into the lesson of immorta knowledge—an observation on some shap of the landscape, on a flower, or a cloud, o the last book that they had read together often led them into an unconscious and loft interchange of thought upon things above th world. With Vaughan this was new, an he felt in such hours something of that pur and vivid sense that might be imaged in spirit just risen, and for the first time feelin its pinions wave in the expanse of Heaven.

With his mother it was graver, but not les sublime, the rich and composed joy of spirit already accustomed to their possessio and prepared to move or rest as it please the Supreme.

In Vaughan's solitude those feelings som times took the shape of poetry, the natur

form of all strong and solitary emotion. His verses were written merely as giving a channel to the overflowings of his mind, the mere impress of the passing sensation, and were flung away in the moment after their being written. One of those was found, and treasured by his mother, as in some degree a proof of the general state of his mind:

"BEHOLD I WILL SEND YOU A COMFORTER."

Thou Mightiest of the Mighty, come!
  Thou drier of the bosom's tear,
Thou giver of the wretch's home,
  When all his heart is withered here!

Is life but lent, to wake and weep?
  Is love but like a summer gleam?
When shall I sleep the quiet sleep,
  That rests unbroken by a dream?

My spirit still is dark and low:
  Oh! for thy light to chase its gloom!
Oh! for the Christian's fiery glow!
  Thou Mightiest of the Mighty, come.

But in this powerful illumination of his mind there was nothing of the moroseness and affected peculiarity which degrades religion into a sectarian sign, a sullen and repulsive denouncer of the natural pursuits and enjoyments of accomplished understandings, a melancholy figure of lank hair and grimace, meagre spiritual pride, and peevish habitual hypocrisy.

He wore no countenance in mourning anathematized no pearls round the nec beauty; nor sermonized the village out of their courtships and cherry-colo ribbons. He even set himself at little than open war with a popular preache the sternest sanctimony, who had itiner through the country, scattering denunciat of divine wrath against the entire famil village amusements, and marking his wa sallow faces, matches broken off, and an extinction of May games, dances on the and the regular Thespian troop, who out of mind had delighted the men and dens of the vicinage of Caversham with loves of Juliet, the gaieties of Rosalind, the griefs of the whole heroine tribe Desdemona down to Jane Shore.

All inquiry relative to the highway who had given his wound was unproduc He was recollected at the inn, as extrer anxious about the arrival of the chaise having shut himself up in his chamber du the few minutes of its remaining there, as having set off at full gallop from the soon after its departure. The post-boy ready to depose that he was the iden Tom Castles, who had a few weeks be robbed in one post-chaise the three lea counsel of the circuit of their stock-purse their briefs against one of his accompli

an act of gallantry which had spread his fame through the race of innkeepers, who disliked this economy of conveyance; and through the very considerable majority who, from fellow feeling, desired to see a man of honour and the road stand by his friends.

Vaughan's impression was, that he was a common marauder, whose pistol had gone off by accident; the inquiry was hopeless, and it was pursued no further.

CHAPTER XXVI.

And now, my gentle bark, I bend thy prow
Wherever winds can breathe or waters flow;
And now, my sail, I hoist thee to the air;
And now, farewell, thou land of my despair.
Good Men and True.

CATHERINE'S name was mentioned from time to time in those lonely and interesting conversations, but it was without pain or passion. She was looked upon as the mind might look upon some remote and lovely being of history, whose errors and charms were to excite human sensibility no more. Vaughan spoke of her as he would of the dead;

with a fondness incontrollable by time, but with the melancholy fondness of the grave.

But the flame only slept; one evening his mother, in adverting to the Peninsular campaign, mentioned Mordaunt's arrival, and the sudden result of his too candid narrative upon the Courtney family and Catherine.

A flood of conviction burst upon Vaughan's mind. "It must have been the story of his imprudent friend that had bewildered Catherine's pure and generous heart. His faith stained, his pledges to her forgotten, what could she have done, but abjure him?"

He announced his intention of instantly setting out for London, there to demand an interview with Catherine, and clear up at least his own honour.

But this the more mature wisdom of his adviser opposed. That incomparable woman felt an instinctive dread of the scenes and struggles to which his still precarious health, and his still vivid affections, might be exposed. To escape all disappointments, she entreated him to sound his way by a letter to Catherine; and she threw into her request so much united reason and entreaty, that Vaughan at length complied.

The letter was answered by return of post, Vaughan grasped at it, but the name of Courtney on the corner was a death to hope. While he held it quiveringly in his hand,

unable to open it, or cast it from him, his mother drew it away, and read as follows:

"SIR,

"I cannot easily express my surprise at your continuing to obtrude your correspondence upon Miss Greville. You have been already acquainted with her engagement to me, an engagement which I have the gratification to say is amply sanctioned by Miss Greville and her friends. Your letter she has just put into my hands, with the *express* desire, that all further intercourse on this painful subject shall be forbidden.

"Acknowledging you, Sir, as a connexion of my family, it is my personal wish to avoid all unnecessary irritation; but I must take the liberty of suggesting to Captain Vaughan, that his comfort, or perhaps even his individual safety, may be best consulted by abstaining from all interference with the arrangements of Mr. Courtney's family.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient

And very humble servant,

"PHILIP COURTNEY."

Mrs. Vaughan read the letter with fear and indignation. Vaughan with stern composure. "You were right, madam," said he, after a long pause, and a repeated perusal:

"I should have been exposed to circumstances unsuitable to honour; that unhappy woman might have been compelled to play the hypocrite; Courtney might have been compelled to hear of his villany, and the lesson would have been thrown away. It is better as it is."

He walked to the window with the letter clasped in his hands. It was the wane of the moon, and as he stood gazing at the pale light, it fell round his form with a sad and spectral lustre. His mother's eye could not bear the sight, and she rose to withdraw him. He started round as she approached, and she saw his countenance covered with tears. He attempted to say something, but his tongue failed, he laid his cold lips on his mother's hand, and hurried to his chamber.

He was up at sunrise, and when he entered the breakfast-parlour, he had even the glow of exertion upon him. "I have come to my true point at last," said he. "Lingering in England is idleness. Time flies, and if we cannot overtake it, we must follow it as fast as we can. I am about to leave England."

Mrs. Vaughan had contemplated this resolution, and had almost wished it; but its actual approach struck her painfully; she combated it. His bosom swelled, and he broke

out into the whole disburthening of his harassed soul. "No—never will I dream of happiness within the borders of this land.—Better fly to India, to Africa, to any spot of savage or solitary life, to any corner of the earth where I can be insulted, betrayed, tortured, no more.—I would not grieve you. I disdain the affectation of complaint. But those people have given me the cup of misery to drink,—and I have been forced to drink it to the last drop:—you must come with me—the Continent has a thousand spots made for the unhappy and wronged to lie down in, and forget the world and the things of the world. Yet why should I ask you to be a wanderer? I shall go alone."

The love of England was strong in his mother's bosom; she might meet in other countries more than its tender and pathetic landscape, more than its quiet fertility, more than the romantic story that lives in its wooded mountains, and populous vallies crowned and ennobled by monuments of its heroic times; but where could she meet its security, its law, the dignity of its national character, or the purity of its national religion.

While she was anxiously attempting to decide, a note was brought to her.

"Madam,

"Captain Vaughan's life has been once

miraculously preserved. But the first escape is no security for the future. He has an enemy, of whom he has no suspicion; and this enemy, the last man who ought to seek his life. Let Captain Vaughan be cautioned against walking unarmed towards night-fall. This notice comes from a concealed friend."

There was no name to this alarming intimation; it had been thrown into the avenue. The mother's heart was in an agony of apprehension, but her scruples on the continental journey were extinguished at once. She tore the note, lest it might meet Vaughan's eye, and urge him to inquiry and hazard. Early on the next day the cottage was given up, and its inmates were on the road to Dover.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of all her hopes, the labour of her years,
What is her harvest?—Sneers, eternal sneers.
Savage.

This had been Mrs. Courtney's most brilliant winter. Her new alliance had opened

the circle which it had been the business of her life to penetrate, but which had till now been a circle of adamant. She moved among the stars of fashion, herself a luminary; and what she wanted in rank she made up in address, in display, and what the censorious would call the effrontery of fashion. Her handsome person was seen every where, and was always conspicuous for splendour and singularity of dress wherever it was seen; she played, and played high; she talked, and talked loud; her spirits were unfailing, and her smile was beyond all the power of weariness or vexation to subdue.

Nature had given her beauty, which time had rather shaded before she could reach the true position for its triumphs; but nature had given her a powerful mind, which time had only matured, and from which it had removed the last obstacle by taking away whatever heart she once had. She was now a bold, brilliant, dashing woman, whom men of a certain age followed, and whom women of all ages fled or feared; for she had wit, and the will to use it; and many a high-born insolent, and many an opulent *imbecile*, did homage to her supremacy of sneer.

But in all this triumph there was a latent pang. In this full-blown elevation there was a worm; and Mrs. Courtney, when after seeing her apartments cleared of her multi-

tude of titled guests, and smiling the last of her dukes and princes down her glittering and flower-wreathed stairs, she closeted her lawyer, and, with an aching head and a racked frame, consulted how to meet the demands of her morning creditors, might have been thought to purchase her distinctions under a severe penalty.

Every inspection of her resourses was less and less cheering; her income had sunk with a rapidity that surprised even herself; her expectations of repayment on the marriage of her daughters, for whom exclusively she professed that she mixed in the world, had failed; a little scheme of a more personal nature, excited by the dangling of a superannuated Marquis, and kept long in suspense by the most active yet most cautious attentions of the handsome widow, seemed sinking into utter hopelessness; and what was scarcely less vexatious, the secret which she had kept with such dexterous care, had obviously become no secret to fashion.

Desertion and destitution were the prospect now before her; and in bitter reluctance she addressed a long letter on her necessities to Lady Lovemore.

The old feuds between Mrs. Courtney and her daughter had died away by their separation; but utter coldness had come in their place. Her ladyship was the bird sent from

the family nest to wing her own way; and like the bird, she never winged her way back again. Mrs. Courtney, with all her fashion, was still untitled: her patrician daughter was perfectly sensible of the distinction of ranks; and the plebeian mother shrank before the stern superiority of the handsome and haughty Lady Lovemore.

The answer to her letter was simple, but expressive. "The Countess Lovemore lamented that it was a rule which she had prescribed to herself, not to apply on matters of money to the Earl Lovemore."

London was now no longer tenable. The season was in its full tide; but Mrs. Courtney suddenly discovered "that she had raked too much for her health, that her dear girls were right in entreating her, as they had long done, to sacrifice something to herself, and that Baillie would not be responsible for her constitution another week in the atmosphere of town."

"Brighton, the next remove of fashion, was prescribed; and to Brighton the family cavalcade swept down before the week was closed.

Mrs. Courtney's eclipse made the talk of a day. Her embarrassments had long been the laugh of her thousand dear friends; it was secret, but not the less sincere. The laugh was now loud; and the superannuated

Marquis detailed the story of his flirtation with the loudest laugh of all.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Come to the woods, for there the nightingale
Sings to the moon; or to the twilight shore,
And hear the seamen's songs, as in their ships
They slide along the mirror of the deep.
Night is the time for talk of gentle love.

Phineas Webb.

Brighton is, as all the world knows, London in little. The sea is certainly rather more obvious than the Thames, and the South Downs are more sheep-covered than Constitution-hill. But in all else, in formality of brick, in chicanery of trade, in folly of the suprême bon ton, there is not a hair's breadth between the London in Middlesex, and the London on the shores of the Channel.

Mrs. Courtney's arrival caused a *sensation;* her entrance had been made in the most triumphant style; her barouche and four, with its attendant equipages, freighted with her multitudinous establishment, had whitened the promenaders of the Steyne with more

dust, and excited more curiosity in the hotel-world than had been known within the season; and before she had well slept off the fatigues of her travel, she found her table variegated with the cards of all the *comme il faut* of Brighton.

Yet there was something more than suspicious in Mrs. Courtney's leaving London at this period. Hitherto she had never appeared before winter "with saddened breath had chilled the year." There were now but some half dozen of peers and their spouses, even the baronets were not in abundance, and the chief population of strangers was made up of persons whom nobody knows. Lawyers and parsons, country gentlemen come to refresh themselves after the assizes, and the palpable obscure of citizenship. The London rumours had preceded the showy matron; several invalid exquisites, undone by the clubs, and driven by the remorseless persecution of their creditors out of town, had arrived successively with fresh relays of intelligence touching the fashionable extinctions, and Mrs. Courtney's had just furnished the promenade with conversation for the day. To see the heroine of the tale, to ascertain the truth of the facts, and to amuse themselves with the defection of the dilapidated belle, were the stimulants which crowded her levee on the Marine Parade.

But those who came to scoff, remained, i not to pray, at least to feel that they were baffled. They found the lady of the mansion in the highest animation. Every thing round her wore an air of elegance. Her daughters, dressed *à la Parisienne*, sat in ar accumulation of all the superfluities of accomplished taste and costly expenditure. The Sevre flower-vase, the harp, the morocco volume, the richly embossed Album with its golden lock, to be opened by none but the hand of the most tender amity; the jewels which there had not been time to put by, and which lay in their embroidered cases for the envying eyes, and fond temptation of their dear detesting friends, all combined to effect the victory. But her daughters were merely satellites round the superior star. She discussed London with such brilliant nonchalance, and laughed at all that she had left behind with such dexterous poignancy, that she satisfied the general circle a once, of her having broke through the rule of the season from the mere capricious power of a leader, and that to provoke her ridicule might be attended with peculiar inconvenience; in short, that to be Mrs. Courney's friend might be much pleasanter an more politic than to be her victim!

The matron, disgusted with her Marqui had now determined to exert her energi

for the disposal of her daughter Seraphina, who was already verging on the time when, to speak it tenderly, the natural rose yields to the artificial. For Martha, all exertion seemed useless; she had protested so sternly and so often against the folly of giving up her freedom to the whim of man, that she was looked on as irrevocably vowed to single blessedness; Seraphina's romance was a perpetual source of her pleasantries, and she was rapidly rising into the rank of a *blue!*

Among the men who had most diligently attended Mrs. Courtney's *at homes* in Harley-street was Jack Flatter. He was presumed to be poor, and was treated with correspondent neglect; but he still made his way, and was even a favourite with the fair of a certain age. Youth fled him; and beauty turned away its smiles; no mother wooed him for her daughter, and no father gave him champagne to animate him into a proposal. Yet he still kept his ground, where bolder, and younger, and richer, and handsomer, gradually sank *hors de combat.*

Jack's secret was the faculty of detecting female attractions. Where the less gifted eye would have been repelled by timely antiquity, or the rigid stamp of unpitying nature, Jack Flatter's connoisseurship found loves and graces, and, as a matter of princi-

ple, communicated his discovery to their possessors.

Jack declared, that in his time he had heard much of Scepticism, but had never met with any; that a few minutes' application to the understanding produced the most perfect conviction, and, for his part, he believed that of all female qualities stubborn doubt was the most rare.

He had been an occasional visitor at Mrs. Courtney's for some years, and had there indulged himself in the charitable pursuit of persuading the antiquated into youth, and the deformed into beauty. This indulgence to the sex he however varied, as it suited his circle, by the most scornful opinion of the general human race; and his knowledge of the unsuspected sides of character gave him the most peculiar powers of anatomy.

But at the bottom of all this elio of compliment and contempt, Jack had some fragments of the original good-nature, which had made him a dupe, and sent him stripped of his patrimony to sneer at the world in revenge.

Mrs. Courtney's distresses were not the less pursuing, because she had fled from them to Brighton. The new display by which she had been compelled to signalize her *entré*, and abash all those "troops of friends" who would have been charmed to see her driven

out of fashion, had already increased her embarrassments in a formidable degree; as a last resource, she sent for Jack Flatter, and closeted him.

Here she threw off all disguise, which she knew would have been no disguise to his penetrating eye, and plainly and with many a bitter invective on the tardiness of titled male flirts, the malevolence of the town, and the merciless persecution of creditors, pronounced, that unless something little short of miracle should fall in her way, she was absolutely ruined!

Flatter had sat with his elbow on the table, and his chin resting on his hand, looking at the lady's agitated visage. His own did not move a muscle. She paused breathlessly, and, as if hope might live in his answer, asked, "Whether he did not think that she was totally undone?" He calmly replied, "Totally."

"What then is the resource?"

"None: except ——"

"Your exception! out with it at once. I will do any thing."

"Then, retire from this idle struggle to keep yourself in a rank above your means; abandon this heartless pack, whose understandings, motives, and principles you know, and knowing, despise; feel that you have lived long enough for their paltry envy, their

low jealousy, and their reluctant and co
temptible admiration."

The handsome matron listened with som
thing of a sigh, her countenance fell, and sl
asked in a subdued tone, "How was all th
to be done?"

Her adviser still sat with the same unmo
ed look. His answer was—

"You must retire from London finally, an
for ever!"

She raised her fine eyes to his count
nance with a glance of resignation; but ju
above him was a mirror, and there thos
eyes caught a glimpse of a countenance muc
more interesting to her contemplation.
looked upon her in all the charms of han
some matronage; even the partial troubl
that sat upon its brow, seemed to give it bu
a more touching right to conquest. The
single glance overthrew her philosophy; an
Jack Flatter thenceforth reasoned no more
He had now found that Scepticism was no
altogether lost to the world.

"Retirement," said the lady, with a smile
"yes, by all means, nothing could be so de
lightful to all my tastes; but, my dear sir
what right have I to plunge my daughter
into the wilderness?"

"Oh, very true, none in the world," sai
Flatter, yawning and rising from his chai
He at once resumed his old tone. "O

yes, infinitely fine girls, every thing on their side. Whom will they have? They would be, as the poet says, 'the cruellest shes alive, to leave the world no copy.' But I must absolutely be gone."

"No, I must absolutely detain you a moment longer. You know every soul, good and bad, here. The whole tribe of the witless, the wealthy, and——"

"The matrimonial.—Why yes," yawned Flatter, "our population here is various and silly; and they do marry from time to time. We have the people about the pavilion——"

"Pah, they have nothing but their epaulettes."

"Well, we have the marquis,—a widower, —a politician, and confessedly the most captivating *roué* of the race."

"Absurd,—let him marry his tailor's daughter, and pay his debts."

"Then, let me see, we have the colonel, a brilliant fellow in his way, the very prince of projectors; come down to build a bridge from Brighton across the Bay of Biscay."

"Ridiculous! But are we reduced to this muster? Have we nothing more original in our Curiosities?"

"Nothing; our remarkable men have died off to the French coast, from a principle of delicacy; for knowing that a prison was their natural destiny, they have preferred a

foreign one! And there, I am told, with the usual habit of the English, they have absolutely raised the expenses so high, that living in gaol will be extremely difficult to their successors. But let me see,—you, I presume, disdain the Yorkshire Baronet, Sir Peter Pudding, the choicest specimen of a country productive of the best horses, the most dexterous rogues, and the most unequivocal fools within the limits of the land."

"Detestable; he might indeed be well enough for a husband; but what would he be for a son-in-law?"

"Right, he would make a miserable flirt for you; a man of fashion and figure is indispensable to a handsome mother-in-law; and as to poor Pudding, 'pon honour, I don't think that he could say a tender thing to you for his life. And as to waltzing, saints preserve my dear Mrs. Courtney from the horrid experiment! I saw him at it the other evening. He was the most perfect imitation of a dancing bear. And his countenance had, I assure you, not the slightest tendency to destroy the illusion. But there's Gordon; the Gordon——"

"I detest the name—I have recollections."

"Yes, possibly. But, my dearest widow, all detestation of names is unpardonable, except in one of the two instances; where a lady, tired of her own, desires to exchange i

for a husband's; or where, tired of the husband's, she desires to get rid of the name, in the idea that it and the man will go together. But the Gordon is really a superior animal; heir to twenty thousand a year, a future baronet, and as handsome as gambling, champaigne, and late hours, can leave any man. He would make a passable, easy, careless, husband for your daughter, but, and this is clearly the principal point, he would make an incomparable *cicisbeo* for you."

In the course of the conversation it was ascertained, that this Gordon was the elder brother of Julia's husband; a showy wanderer through fashionable life, easily attracted, and easily lost. It was Mrs. Courtney's policy, that her acquaintance with him should be commenced in the most unsuspicious manner; and this was contrived by the experienced ingenuity of Flatter.

Gordon's curiosity was gradually excited by descriptions of Seraphina, who, hitherto absorbed in some personal objects which loved the twilight, had been scarcely seen. Gordon came, was fêted sumptuously, was surprised by the discovery that "relations so interesting should have been at once so near, and have so escaped his knowledge." Seraphina's delicate and romantic beauty pleased the eye of this man of dissipation, wearied with the glare of high life; and Mrs.

Courtney looking forward to brighter prospects, recovered her smiles, and launched out into additional expense; nay there were moments when her "strong imagination saw all but a *crown* dropping upon her head," and her hand swaying the sceptre of Brighton!

CHAPTER XXIX.

They come, like sacrifices in their trim,
And to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war,
All hot and bleeding we will offer them.
Shakspeare.

After some months of wandering through the south of France, Vaughan and his mother had fixed their residence within a few miles of Bourdeaux. The Garonne flowed under their windows, the hills behind were covered with the garden and the vineyard of that delightful region, and before them lay the city, and the sea upon the blue horizon. Here the weary spirit might have rest, and sorrow might grow calm, and anger might be turned to forgiveness, and all but love be forgotten!

Vaughan was a patriot in the truest sense; but his generous spirit had been bruised, and he felt that England was yet no place for him. He looked forward to long retirement. But one evening, as he was riding towards Bourdeaux, he observed a military courier with a peculiar look of anxiety and haste, stop at one of the village post-houses to change horses. Some accidental delay had occurred, and the courier stormed with more than his national impatience, and burst out into a tirade against all the post-masters on the face of the earth, whom he declared to be to a man in league with the devil, and he added, emphatically, with Napoleon besides! The horses were at length put to, and as he stepped into the cabriolet, he pronounced, with the importance of an official big with a state secret. that "such news as he then brought would bring blood and battle among them." The horses were set to their speed, and the courier flew to Bourdeaux.

Vaughan rode on to the city, and as he reached the heights above it he could perceive an extraordinary bustle among the shipping, boats continually communicating with the shore, and evident preparations to put to sea. Couriers were dashing out in all directions, and a regiment of dragoons which had been quartered near his village, had mustered, and overtaken him on the road.

upon as the direct breaking out of civil wa he turned from the casement, flung into hi trunk such matters as might be necessary t a speedy removal, and watched with his pis tols beside him till dawn.

The detachments had re-united in th plain, where they formed a vast column evi dently under military guidance, and move on to a range of hills on the north, wher they halted. The summits almost instantly sparkled with innumerable fires, and Vau ghan could have thought himself once more campaigning in Spain; there was the same serenity of sky, the same fragrant air, the mountain covered with the same rich vege tation, the vineyard, the white cottage, and there too were the sterner signs that had so long told that in the midst of all the bounty of nature, there was the perverter of all, that great curse of mankind, a thousand-fold the substitute for all their other scourges— WAR.

The morning's intelligence was more dis tinct. "Napoleon had landed, he was now at Lyons, he had defeated or drawn over all the troops which had been hitherto marched against him; and last night three-fourths of the garrison of Bourdeaux had gone off hoist ing the tri-coloured cockade." Those were the men whom Vaughan had seen marshall ing the peasantry, themselves chiefly retired

veterans of Napoleon's armies, and to whom his coming was as the sound of the trumpet to the war-horse.

The news now came crowding on them in still more authentic shapes. "Napoleon was marching on Paris.—The Bourbons were preparing to defend the capital. The English were flying, to escape a repetition of the odious treachery by which they had been entrapped so many years before." But not the least interesting part of the news to Vaughan was contained in a letter from his late colonel, telling him that he was called again into service, and that his regiment was under orders for Belgium.

This was a summons which he had no right to decline. He made his way to the north of France, sent his mother under the escort of an English family across the Channel, and joined his regiment, where he was received with the welcome of a distinguished comrade.

Vaughan's heart still turned to England; but the hurried preparations for the great struggle which was to decide the European sceptre, and the harassing marches through a broken-up country perpetually traversed by troops of all services, and about to become the seat of war, prohibited all regular correspondence; and the first letter which arrived from his mother was evidently only

one of many, which, more than probably, were in the hands of some roving Hulan, or resting quietly in the *debris* of some baggage-waggon.

CHAPTER XXX.

Here is her letter, writ with bitter words.
This should be blood, not ink. Gonsalez, see,
How sharper than the dagger's point, than gall,
Than the keen falchion's edge; how heavier far
Than iron manacles, a few sad words
May smite upon the heart. *Phineas Webb.*

This letter was of a nature to awake all his feelings, if they had slept. "I mentioned in my last," it began, "my surprise at Philip Courtney's marriage. Yet I will own, that notwithstanding the prejudice which I had imbibed against his young wife, principally from her unlucky choice—"

"Unlucky," mused Vaughan, "heartless—guilty—these would have been the appropriate terms."—"There is yet something about this graceful woman, which renders it almost impossible to deny her one's esteem."—"Esteem," cried Vaughan; "she forfeited all claim to the esteem of man or woman

even of her miserable and culpable husband, when she consented to receive him; even with my mother she is Catherine no longer."

"I have before mentioned to you," continued the letter, "that having to seek a new abode, and my passion for a country life being as strong as ever, I have at length fixed myself in the village where your uncle resided, as the next most familiar place in my recollection. The Courtneys have just come down here for the summer. Young Mrs. Courtney's affability and unaffected sweetness——"

"Sweetness! ay, so it is," murmured Vaughan, with a sad smile of recollection—"have won all hearts. Chance has thrown them often in my way, and I cannot deny that I have caught the general feeling."

Vaughan laid down the letter in sudden disappointment. "Are all women then alike, all destitute of firmness, young and old; all vacillation, incapable of retaining even a just resentment?" He returned to the letter. "Especially," observed Mrs. Vaughan, "as I have strong grounds for believing that she was urged, nay, even compelled to this ill-assorted union by her father. I grieve for her situation; I grieve for the companionship which she has chosen; it is plain that she is not blind to the dark and repulsive features of her husband's character."

"Had she not time to think of this before?" cried Vaughan, at once grieved and offended; "was not their acquaintance long enough. If she could be blind, she was blinded by vanity, by inconstancy, by ambition, and deserves to feel."

The letter concluded thus—"She has made many advances towards an intercourse, which I have hitherto avoided; but I will frankly confess, that in this I am making a sacrifice to your injured feelings. My dislike of Courtney continues unabated; but my heart would yet lead me to his very interesting bride, and I wait only your approval."

"Can all this be?" cried Vaughan, giving way to an agitation which he had so long laboured to subdue. "This woman has destroyed my happiness. Yet for some trivial taste is sacrificed that honest pride and justified disdain which would have renounced them for ever."

He wrote a few lines in reply. It was the briefest and least affectionate letter that he had ever addressed to her. "Be it as you will, my dear mother, I can have no right to object to any friendship which you may wish to form; but I implore you, that your hand may not be the first to open those wounds which can hope for an effectual cure only by my ceasing to hear of those who have in-

licted them. And now," said Vaughan, as ıe closed the letter, "my account with the vorld is completed. I knew that this mar- iage was to be. Why does the blow fall hus heavily! Was I mad enough to hope— ould I think that a touch of human feeling vould have arrested her at the very altar! Catherine—traitress! I have pronounced 'our name for the last time!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

Death has been here, and with his armed heel
Has trod out noble lives. Look on that face
That was the merriest rover in our camp,
He sat but yester-even in my tent,
And wagered on our years to come. Look there,
Another! loose his morion. In that eye
Was yesterday a light that laughed at fate,
And now the dust will shroud him.

Phineas Webb.

This was the memorable period of Water- ɔo. It would be idle to repeat the details f a day familiar to the English heart, and hich will stand before the eye of future ges among the noblest exploits of manly ɔunsel and heroic valour.

The greatness of the stake; the renown of the two leaders, themselves the guiding spirits of European war; the character of the armies meeting to decide the military eminence of the two most warlike nations of the earth; all placed Waterloo in the foremost rank of national glories.

But when the glow of combat was over, the scene was one of undissembled pain and sorrow. Every man had lost some friend; and as the line, which had advanced to complete the rout of the French, returned through the field, the most bitter recognitions occurred in the trampled forms and ashy faces that they had seen rushing forwards a few hours before in the ardour of assured victory.

As Vaughan's regiment moved down towards the highway, in rear of the memorable Château de Goumont, he was roused by the voice of an officer, whom a soldier had just lifted on his shoulders to carry to the hospital.—"Have we gained the day?" were the first words which he uttered on being released from a pile of dead. "Ay, captain," said the soldier; "and only that I saw when your honour fell, you would have been with many a fine fellow that this day has cost." The officer clasped his hands with a faint effort of triumph, and relapsed into insensibility.

The soldier laid his gallant burden on th

ground in despair, and, standing over him with folded arms, made a rude recital of his virtues. "There goes as good an officer as ever wore the king's red coat, and as kind to his company as he was bold at their head. It is long before we shall see your like again, Captain Gordon."

Vaughan sprang from the column, and found in the silent subject of this honest panegyric, his friend, the husband of Julia!

Assistance was, of course, now promptly given. Gordon, still insensible, was carried to the village, and Vaughan insisted on attending him in person. As he looked on the pale features of this handsome and high-minded man, the thought of Julia's desolation struck bitterly upon his mind, and he involuntarily pronounced her name.

Gordon started from his insensibility at the sound, and, in a feeble and bewildered utterance murmured, "Who talks of Julia? I am dying. She has but one friend on earth, and he is about to leave her."

"She has another," said Vaughan; "one who has pledged himself never to desert her."

"'Tis Vaughan!" said Gordon, sinking back exhausted, but not unconscious, on his pillow. "Come near me,—nearer still; I have scarcely power to speak above a whisper; it is of vital consequence that you lose

not a word of what I am about to say. You remember your promise to me, Vaughan, when we parted; I was a true prophet. See what I am now. It was a kind fate that sent you there to make that promise, and here at this hour to fulfil it.

Vaughan tried to give him hopes of speedy recovery. "No," said Gordon, struggling for utterance; "I must die!—I have faced death before,—but life is dear to me now for the sake of my wife and child. Here," drawing from his bosom two letters, "take these; the one is a farewell to my Julia, the other a last appeal to the heart of a father."

A silence ensued, which Vaughan could not trust himself to break. "I wish," said Gordon feebly, "that these letters should be delivered by your own hand. You will see England again."

"I had thought," said Vaughan, his heart swelling with the bitter recollections associated with the sound, "to have seen England no more; but, rely upon it, happen what may to me, these letters shall be guarded as sacred,—confided to none but such as I may safely trust, or retained in my possession till I can deliver them myself. In such a cause I would go to the remotest ends of the earth. I will come face to face with your inexorable father."

"You have a warm heart, Vaughan," an-

swered Gordon, wringing his friend's hand; "it renders the tongue eloquent, and I could hope all things from your noble energy. My father must give way; his resentment will not extend beyond the grave."

"Impossible," cried Vaughan, with a burst of feeling, "if he be a man."

"It is plain, Vaughan," answered Gordon, with a dejected smile, "that you have still something to learn of human nature. I too once formed hopes, of which time has since shown the fallacy. Fondly as I loved Julia, I would not have yielded to the generous romance of her nature, and condemned her to such a life as she has since known, had I not placed some reliance on my father's subsequent forgiveness. But he has a stern and haughty nature. Heavens! when I saw Julia, once the life and spirit of an admiring circle, banished to her hopeless solitude, and felt that my father was at that hour sitting in his proud mansion with almost boundless opulence at his command, surrounded by a train of pampered slaves, every one of whom was more an object of his consideration than his exiled son, the thought has stung me deeper than I would tell to any other ear."

The surgeon entered; and having dressed his wounds with the air of one to whom such scenes were familiar, took Vaughan aside. "He will not die to-night," he observed;

"life is stronger in him than you think; but if he has any thing to communicate let it be told to-night."

"Are we again alone?" said Gordon, looking anxiously around; "then listen. It is of consequence that you should know those with whom you have to deal. I have a brother, who, strange as it may seem, neglects no means to fan the family irritation. He is extravagant, selfish, and splendid ——, a profligate of the first celebrity; my father's idol from his birth; the chief bond of union is perhaps the resemblance which we can trace in others to ourselves."

"And shall I find this brother too?" said Vaughan; "tell him how and where I left you, and subdue him if I can?"

"No," said Gordon, "he is heartless. Obtain a private audience of my father; 'tis your only chance. Yes," he repeated, "it is poor Julia's only chance! From her own family she can have no hope. Their wretched extravagance must end in ruin."

Vaughan soothed him. "The pledge which I have given is too sacred to be forgotten."

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," said Gordon; "I will bless you as long as I live. I had forgot," he said, a transient flush mounting to his hollow countenance, "how short can be my term of gratitude; but I leave those behind who will bless you for me."

The drums beat. "Farewell, Gordon, for to-night." "Farewell in this world—for ever," said Gordon, in a broken voice, turning to his pillow.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The spear is in his side. A surgeon, ho!
He breathes,—there's colour in his cheek; some help.
Now his life's tide has ebbed again,—he sinks,—
He's dust and ashes.

Phineas Webb.

The following morning, at day-break, the army was in march on the traces of the French. Vaughan snatched a moment to fly to the cottage. There, to his dismay, he learned that Gordon had been worse during the night, and that he had been conveyed away by a waggon of the commissariat, but where no one could tell. Further investigation was now impossible. His regiment, of which, by its loss of officers, he was now major, and in command, was already in advance, and he was forced to put spurs to his horse and follow.

The second capture of the great disturber of mankind once more appeared to proclaim

long and universal peace; and Vaughan found himself again a wanderer.

His first inquiry was as to the circumstances of Gordon's death; but they totally eluded him. His next was how best to fulfil those offices which he had promised to his gallant and unfortunate friend.

England was the last place which he could have desired to revisit; but Staffordshire, in which the Gordon estate lay, was sufficiently remote from the abode of his treacherous friends. Even had it been otherwise, it was a sacred duty. "If those Gordon's are such as they have been represented to me," said Vaughan, as he drove up the long and ancient avenue, "it is no easy task that I have undertaken; but I will not suffer myself to be repelled. Unhappy Julia! I am your last, your only friend, and I shall be strong in the cause of your beauty and your affliction."

At the door of the magnificent mansion stood an equipage apparently constructed for the comfort of an invalid. On Vaughan's sending up his name, he was led through a suite of splendidly-furnished rooms; the crowd of liveried idlers, the antique statues, the paintings, the whole stateliness round him, struck deeply on his mind, burdened with its heavy mission. "What a contrast to the hovel in which my brave friend spent his last hours of pain," thought Vaughan

"yet this was the roof under which he was born. Were there no yearnings in a parent's heart?"

"Tell Sir William Gordon," said he to the valet, "that Major Vaughan desires to see him on business of consequence." The servant delivered the message, and threw open the door of a large apartment still more magnificent than any that he had yet seen. It was partially darkened, and he looked round for the superb lord of all this luxury.

He heard a faint voice inquiring "If the gentleman was come?" and advancing to a corner of the apartment, thrown into almost total obscurity, found the master of the mansion in a sallow and feeble invalid, wrapt in flannel, and a martyr to the complicated diseases of high living.

"I understand, Sir," said the Baronet, "that you have done me the honour of calling on me relative to some matters of importance."

"Of the highest, Sir," returned Vaughan, "to you, as a man of feeling and honour,—as a father."

The old man raised his head, and fixed a dim and half-sleepy eye upon the speaker. He made a slight sign to him with his hand to go on.

"You have had, Sir William, a son, who was an honour to his profession, to human nature, a most generous, gallant, and noble-

minded man. This son is now beyond human injury or kindness; he has died the death of a soldier." Vaughan's voice trembled, and he was silent.

His hearer passed his shrivelled hand across his forehead; then, stifling his emotion, said fretfully and at intervals: "Sir, I was acquainted with all this before.—Why have you thought fit to disturb my declining days with bitter recollections?—I did my duty by my son; he was determined to take his own way; he had his own romantic principles.—I might have sent him into parliament for the county, but he refused to pledge himself to my friends; I might have allied him with the peerage, but he refused the lady, the most opulent match in fifty miles round; he determined to choose for himself, —and well and wisely he chose. What was to be done with him?"

Vaughan attempted no answer against those common complaints of authority and prejudice; and the old Baronet continued, with many interruptions of feebleness:

"Major Vaughan, you have probably learned to think me a fretful and tyrannical father. I had sent that young man offers of reconciliation, even since his marriage; to those he had never replied, I had even proposed to exert my interest for him in his profession, much as I was adverse to his

adopting it; all remained unanswered, in contempt of my wishes and feelings. What was to be done with him?"

Vaughan expressed his utter astonishment, and was about to mention the circumstances which made him conclude that some singular misconception had occurred; when the door was thrown open, and a tall and fashionable figure made his abrupt entrance.

"My son, Reginald Gordon, Sir," said the old man. Vaughan was struck by the hasty and suspicious glance which the younger Gordon cast alternately at both. After a brief and embarrassed silence on all sides, Gordon expressed his happiness at seeing "the friend of his lamented brother," but wished that his father, from his state of health, could have been spared all mention of business.

"I deeply regret, Major Vaughan," he continued, "that the unhappy turn which my brother took has been too long a source of pain to his family. On my father's spirits it has hung with the severest effect, and it will be, I think, most gratifying to all concerned, that you and I should together arrange his debts and other affairs."

As Vaughan listened to the smooth tone of this speech, which was evidently directed more to the invalid than to him, he had also looked upon the speaker's countenance, and

found that it was one which could not bear his look. The haughty expression had sunk into shyness, and the habitual sallowness of dissipation had burned up into the colour of shame.

Vaughan's generous feeling spoke out in sudden disdain. "Captain Gordon," said he, "left no debts upon his memory, but a heavy debt upon the honour and heart of his family. He has left a wife, worthy of all his love and of all their respect, and a child whose rights it will become them to acknowledge."

The old man raised his head, and listened with interest and surprise. His son was palpably anxious that the development should go no further, and repeated his declaration of the most profound interest in the fate of his sister-in-law.

"There is but one point more on which I must clear the character of my gallant departed friend," said Vaughan emphatically. "My intercourse with him was unfortunately brief; but even during that period I was present at his writing, even during the hurry of preparing for service, successive letters, expressing every sentiment of a manly and filial heart. Yet he was painfully conscious that he had an enemy somewhere; and, but for the fate which removed him from us, not too soon for glory, though much too soon for his friends and his country, he would at this day

have been breaking up the whole system of insidiousness, cruelty, and guilt, which had made him an alien to his father's house." He fixed his eye on the younger Gordon, who busied himself in playing with a pointer at the fireside.

"He wrote, you say," said the Baronet, "why did I not know this before—before he died?—Unfortunate son, and more unfortunate father!" Then turning to Vaughan, with a hurried voice, "Wrote in your presence, sir?" Vaughan bowed assent.

The old man's feeble countenance filled up; the eye, clouded and pale with long exhaustion, distended, and shot flashes of rage. He rose on his feet by the impulse which seemed to have given new life to his entire frame, and in a voice of stern wrath exclaimed: "Then, sir, I have been scandalously deceived. Treachery has been at work! I have long suspected that some base and villanous spirit, nay perhaps under my own roof, was busied in sowing dissension between me and my son. I had employed that young man," pointing to Gordon, "to ascertain the criminals; but they were too well concealed, we were both baffled. But your declarations, sir, have roused me again, and if there is truth to be found on earth, or power in man to punish fraud, hypocrisy, and heartlessness, the actors and abettors in this

foulest of all conspiracies shall be the sufferers."

The younger Gordon had listened without lifting his eyes till the close, when casually raising them, he caught Vaughan's levelled at him with an expression that could not be mistaken. His haughty spirit caught fire. He started from his chair. "Do you menace me, sir," said he to Vaughan, in a tone of arrogance and anger. But before he could reply, Gordon had turned to his father "Am I, sir, the object of this unnatural suspicion?" "Heaven forbid!" said his father as he drew back, and the passion of the moment vanquishing, sank upon his pillows "Then, sir," said Gordon, "I presume that we are entitled to expect some evidence of this extraordinary duty and attention on my brother's part. Let whatever determination to interfere with, nay, to intercept his letters exist, all could not have been intercepted—"

"Not all," returned Vaughan, taking Gordon's letter from his pocket. The brother drew back in unequivocal surprise. "This one," continued Vaughan, "it was my friend's last request that I should personally deliver to his father, no matter in whose presence I should find him, and under what unhappy delusion he might have been retained."

He put it into the hand of the Baronet. "I have now, sir," said he to the younger Gor-

don, "done a sacred duty, in perfect disregard of what may be thought of my doing it." "Disregard, sir!" repeated Gordon haughtily, and approaching him.

"Understand me, Mr. Gordon," pronounced Vaughan, firmly. "Disregard was my word. I am not much a provoker of altercation, and least of all in the family of a man for whom, living and dead, I felt and feel the interest of a soldier, and a relative. But I insist on, at least, one letter being allowed to remain in the hands for which it was intended; I insist on justice being done to the widow and child of my friend; and I insist on nature and reason being suffered to make their way with that unhappy and much-abused old gentleman."

He looked back on the Baronet, who was reading the letter, with his face bathed in tears. Vaughan would not obtrude on a sorrow that had so much of repentance. He bowed sternly to Gordon, and left the house; desiring the valet to inform his master that he should remain in the village for the rest of the day.

In the evening he received a note from Gordon, couched in the most conciliatory terms, regretting the misunderstanding which had occurred, and pledging his father, who was unfortunately too much indisposed to have the pleasure of personally seeing Major

Vaughan on the subject, to the most a provision for the "interesting survivor his ever-to-be-lamented brother's family Vaughan's task was now done; and w lightened heart, he ordered the postillic drive to his home.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"We weep, we smile, we love, we marry, die!
Then comes the solemn, sable pageantry.
The mute, the hearse, the mourners, and the plume
To close our giddy transit in the tomb."

There were some embarrassment Vaughan, connected with his mother's ch of a residence in the neighbourhood of late uncle's house. It was now Courtn probably his fraudulent disinheritor, certa his bitter enemy, and as certainly the tr phant husband of the woman who ha sulted and abjured him.

As the village came in view, Vaughan pressed by painful emotion. The obj by the way-side were familiar, and t familiarity was connected with unhappy membrances. Halston Hall was visible the road. He gave one almost involun

glance at it, and was surprised to see its windows closed.

"Courtney, at least, is not here," he exclaimed, and felt his bosom lightened. The postillion suddenly drew up to the road-side. "I must stop, sir," said he, "for the grand funeral, that is coming round by the trees. I think it is from the Hall yonder."

Vaughan's attention was deeply stirred. The procession advanced dimly through the winding road, made doubly dark by the shade of the trees and of the declining day.

Alone, in the first mourning coach, with folded arms and gloomy brow, sat the man whom he had hoped of all mankind to shun, his treacherous relative, Philip Courtney. A fearful suspicion, that he found impossible to suppress, struck across his brain at the sight. A long train of private carriages followed. The cottagers were all standing at their doors, and not a few, as it passed them, turned aside and wept. Vaughan could bear no more delay. He leaped from the chaise, and, nervously agitated, asked who had died? "Bless you," answered a peasant, "'tis plain that you are a stranger in the village, by that question, 'Tis young Mrs. Courtney, the sweetest lady eyes ever looked on. She had been pining and drooping, one may say, almost ever since she married; but her troubles are over now, poor thing, and not a dry eye will follow her to the grave."

Vaughan rushed wildly forwards after the funeral. "I must have one more sight of her," thought he, in bitter sorrow. "Yes, Catherine, you loved me to the last. Your pride urged you to complete the sacrifice, and your heart has broken in the struggle. A villain divided us in life, but his malice can extend no further." He followed through a path of the grove leading directly to the church-yard. He felt his limbs fail; there was a mortal sickness at his heart, a mist was on his eyes; the world seemed to be gliding away from before him. He stopped in a transient stupor; from which he was aroused by a voice calling repeatedly and wildly on his name. He looked up—he saw standing before him the image of her whom he mourned!

He continued gazing, but spoke not. His mind was in the state of one who felt conscious of some mental delusion, which he yet wanted the power to shake off. He caught hold of her hand. It was thin and cold, but it returned his pressure. "She lives," cried Vaughan, with a burst of exultation. "By what miracle." He gazed upon her. "It is, indeed, a pining and drooping flower that I see, but it is enough for me that she lives." A painful recollection rushed to his mind. "Yet, she can never live for me. This hand has been pledged to Courtney. We have met for the last time.—Once more, farewell!"

"Never, never!" cried Catherine, detain-
; him with the gentle force of tears.
top, dear, rash, cruel Francis. Though it
re to see me die on this spot before you,
ver shall you leave me again, till all is
plained. You shall not deny me a second
aring. Oh! how much evil might not a
st have spared? I have deserved your
entment Francis, but not, not your scorn.
ave endured a period of lengthened mise-
. But you turn away; you think that I
serve to be abandoned; and you desert
therine *Greville!*" Vaughan, overcome by
ubt, fear, and love, repeated the name,
Your's, and your's alone!" sighed the love-
and impassioned girl. Vaughan pressed
burning lips on her forehead. "That
rd has pronounced you mine for ever.
l is forgotten, Catherine, my first, my only
e. This moment, this confession, repays
for a world of anguish. We will part
more."

Catherine's heart was too full for words,
t she stood looking up in Vaughan's manly
d ardent countenance, while a glow passed
er her own, such as might have animated
n other times, and placing her hand in his,
h a devotion and utter confidence which
med to pledge their union for ever; "I
ve a long and strange explanation to make,"
length she said; "but this is not the

place; come with me to the house of h
who has been my best and truest friend.

"Be my guide for the future; hencefor
I have no will but yours," answered Vaugha
and Catherine, with a returning smile, t
first which had illumined her countenance f
many a long day, put her arm within his wi
the frankness of former times.

The cavalcade which had plunged him i
such needless sorrow was now returning.

"Whom have they just carried to t
grave?" asked Vaughan. "I see the erm
under which you have lain," answered Cath
rine; "but once more let me remind yo
that this is not the place for explanation.
She looked anxiously behind her. "The
is one, the first in that sad procession, who
we ought not to meet just now."

"Lead on," said Vaughan. "I am t
happy not to be submissive, the veriest
your slaves, my sweet Catherine. Lead on.
She led him through by-paths of fragrant
and dewy freshness to a cottage of romant
beauty. At its door stood his mother. H
rushed into her arms.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Come now, be strict to the letter, tell it out;
I'll have your blushing sins, your smiling hopes,
Your sunshine wanderings, and your nightly dreams!
There's not a moment in Love's calendar,
But I will bring to book.

Phineas Webb.

This meeting, though not altogether one of surprise, as Vaughan had written immediately on his landing, was yet, under such unlooked-for circumstances, one of unlooked-for pleasure. After the first emotion had in some degree subsided, his mother would have left the betrothed pair to their interchange of confidence; but Catherine opposed her departure. "We can have nothing to say to each other," she said, "which your interest in both has not entitled you to hear."

Mrs. Vaughan thus urged, willingly resumed her place, and Catherine commenced her recital by the events of Vaughan's absence, the story told by Mordaunt, the advantage which Courtney had taken of it; and the conversation which she had overheard between Philip and his mother, and which, from all that had since occurred, she had reason to believe planned for that express

purpose. "But still," said Catherine, her eyes filling, "hope, uncertain and fleeting visitor as it was, lingered with me; and I wrote, yes, I wrote such a letter as I deemed would be sufficient to shew the unhappy impression that my mind had received, and flattered myself that your reply might be of a nature to remove it altogether. But, Oh! Francis, your long, and as I then thought, contemptuous silence, confirmed my worst fears."—"That letter, that luckless letter, Catherine," interrupted Mrs. Vaughan, "had you been but warned; had you but informed me what you were about to do, and suffered yourself to be guided by an older and cooler experience, it would never have been sent, and this long period of causeless anxiety had all been spared."

"Pity me, feel for me," said Catherine, raising Mrs. Vaughan's hand affectionately to her lips; "think, by what artifices I was assailed, of what treachery I was the object; yet, even then, tortured by suspicion as I was, I still hesitated; for to find that I had not been forgotten was my last hope on earth; and then, that heart of all treachery, Philip Courtney, stept in, and put into my hands a letter, which he affirmed to have been written by a mutual friend in Spain, announcing your actual marriage. Thus irritated, thus bewildered, urged by my fa-

ther's remonstrances, entreaties, commands—(forgive him, he knew you not), is it to be wondered at, that I was driven to the very verge of that precipice, from which I still shudder to look down."

"But," said Vaughan, all his soul hanging on the words which she pronounced with such pure and lofty feeling, "knowing Courtney as you did, his spirit of deceit, the low and subtle malevolence of his nature, and with such a motive, such a prize in view—"

"Is there a reproach in that expression?" answered she. "I could never have thought him base to the depth of that baseness of which he has lately proved himself capable. I thought him driven by early extravagance to some meannesses which he had since regretted, but do me the justice to acknowledge that his vices are disguised by an appearance of sincerity, a plausibility of kindness, well calculated to deceive. Yet he never possessed my friendship, never even my good opinion; and I should have turned in scorn from all that he could have urged, had not the testimony of your friend Mordaunt compelled me to believe. He had no design in this; he could know nothing of the misery that it must cause. Where two of such opposite characters agreed in the tale; where friend and enemy united, might not the firmest confidence have been shaken, the fondest

heart have felt itself abandoned and undone. But on the morning of our agonizing and fearful meeting in my father's house, of which I still tremble to think, one word, one look from you, outweighed all that I had heard. From that hour I renounced Courtney for ever. My father knew not what to believe; but he laid his commands on me no further; he left it to my guilty relative to vanquish my reluctance; but what could overcome it then? I was convinced that you had been caluminated; and with such a conviction, what motive could have bribed me to accept of any other human being?"

"Yet how shall I acquit Mordaunt of the wretched carelessness, that produced so much suffering?" said Vaughan.

"We all have our faults, and that levity evidently inherent in your friend's character is one not easily eradicated; yes," continued Catherine smiling, "we all have our faults, and yours was impetuosity. Oh, had you not fled from me in such disdain——"

"I was, I own it, rash, unfeeling, mad; but I wrote to you, Catherine; I wrote, soliciting any excuse that you might offer; my reply was a haughty billet from Courtney, assuring me that your marriage was irrevocably fixed. That hour pronounced sentence of my banishment from England, as I then thought, for ever!"

"I never received that letter," interrupted Catherine; "he must have intercepted it. It was easily in the power of a bribe. His undisguised rage when he found that all was at an end between us; his subsequent and speedy marriage with another; and, lastly, the full exculpation which your mother has within these few days had an opportunity of making, have at length completely opened my father's eyes to Courtney's character."

"This, then," said Vaughan, addressing his mother, "is the bride of whom I heard, and in whom my jealous fancy could see no other than my own false Catherine."

"The letter," said Mrs. Vaughan, "which I had previously written, and which by some accident you never received, would have prevented this mistake. I had heard on my arrival in England, that the marriage between Courtney and Catherine was broken off, and had been followed by this heartless step. Of course, though compelled to meet Courtney subsequently on business, it was not a subject on which I could enter with him. There was a touching melancholy about his young wife, which I traced to her unhappy connexion, and, in spite of my dislike, I might say, my abhorrence of him, I was not unwilling to offer her such resources as she might find in my acquaintance."

"Unfortunate Amelia!" said Catherine,

with a tear to her memory, "she deserved a better fate. How she married Philip Courtney is to me inconceivable. I am convinced that she never loved him; but educated in country life, she might have been dazzled by his showy manners. She had been, in former days, a schoolfellow of mine; and when she married, gave me many pressing invitations to her house, which I was of course compelled to refuse."

"Yet I find you here, my love," said Vaughan.

"You find me, indeed, here," returned Catherine, in a tone of deep feeling; "but remember where you saw poor Amelia Courtney borne to-day, and pardon me. The knowledge that she had made a man of dissipated habits and debased principles her husband, came upon her but too soon; it preyed like a worm upon her heart; consumption seized her delicate constitution. When she gave up all hope of life, she wrote, imploring me not to carry my resentment against her husband so far as to deny her the consolation of seeing me on her death-bed. Your mother offered to receive me, and give the opportunity of visiting my unhappy friend. Our meeting produced an immediate explanation, and she was preparing to write to you, when your letter announcing your intended return to England

received. Amelia Courtney died last
; and it is as a tribute of my esteem
ɔity for her that I wear this mourning."
Ie married her for her fortune," said
Vaughan; "but I am inclined to think,
in his eagerness to secure it, he has
reached himself. There has been some
in the settlements; her father is a cold
:autious man; and now that the unhap-
melia is no more, I should think that
tney is undone."
.nd now for less painful topics," said
;han; "there is an introduction to which
k forward with no small anxiety; to
ral Greville."
shall return to town immediately," an-
ɛd Catherine; "Mrs. Vaughan and
ɛelf must accompany me. There is but
lrawback on the pleasure I should an-
ıte. Julia Gordon and her child have
for some time our guests. The account
ɛr husband must have by this time
ıed her. I own I dread to meet her
w."
No more sorrow for such a day as this,"
Vaughan; "where you go, I shall fol-
—where you are happy, I shall be hap-
The world has bright days in the midst
its trials; and, if we find it too dark,
nust only make a little fairy world of
ɔwn, a world of faith and fondness. You

smile at my romance, Catherine; but tr
love has the wand of an enchanter, and ca
turn the very sands of the desert into gold!

CHAPTER XXXV.

But now I am returned, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires.
Shakspeare.

It was now the general wish to return t
town as soon as possible. Catherine antic
pated the pleasure which her father's hea
would receive at the sight of her restore
happiness; and, he had suffered so much u
easiness almost from the very hour of his a
rival, and had always expressed so affe
tionate a solicitude on her account, that sh
felt it her first duty to relieve his anxiet
She wrote a few hasty lines, announcing h
intended return, and the happy circumsta
ces with which it was connected, but defe
ring more minute explanation till their me
ing. General Greville was perfectly satisfi
to await the appointed time for the final d
closure; for he had seen enough of the

ent to which Catherine's indignation, when she deemed it just, had power to carry her, to believe that Vaughan would not have been able to effect such an entire reconciliation without having adduced strong evidence in his favour.

On their arrival, his future son was received with a cordial and manly welcome. "I am glad," said the General, "that the affair has turned out as it has; and Catherine, now that I see your choice, I find it easier to forgive the obstinacy of your resolution." Vaughan bowed. "I had but this girl, Major Vaughan, and pleased myself with the idea of installing her husband, whoever he might be, in the rights of the son whom Fate had denied me; but ladies, my dear Sir, are capricious beings at best, and I was beginning to fear that she would never give me the opportunity."

"Spare me," said Catherine, playfully silencing him; "this gentleman knows the full extent of my caprice already; let the past be forgotten, or he will absolutely think that I could not have lived without him."

"Nay, never blush, my girl; there is no shame but in denying our honourable feelings. I see by your eyes, before your lips have told it, that you are about to pledge yourself to an injured, not a repentant lover, —and this is as it should be. The man who,

after trying to gain the affections of a confiding and innocent woman, abandons her, is among the worst evils of society; he is answerable for every misery of her life; his shame ought to be branded on his brow for a mark to all mankind. I could extend no mercy to heartlessness."

"Ah! Sir," said Vaughan, "could you think, that one who had once ascertained the value of this hand could lightly throw it by?"

"No," said the General, feelingly; "you sought and won her, in her orphan, her most unprotected state,—and deserve her now. You have had some trials, but they are past not to return, if the possession of ample means and a father's blessing may avert them from you."

"There is but one shade on our felicity now," said Catherine, "which is" (and she sighed) "that all are not equally blest; my poor cousin Julia!"

"And why Julia?" returned the General "is there but one man in the world, think you, that a fair lady can fall in love with?"

"I see too plainly," said Mrs. Vaughan "that you have yet to learn the unhappy tidings of Gordon."

"Gordon!" repeated the General, laughing; "why, has he been playing the coquette? But come, I hate long explanations

the shortest way to set all at rest is to let you judge for yourselves;" and, opening the folding-doors, he displayed to their astonished eyes a scene which fixed them to the spot; Julia by the side of her husband!

"There, there," said General Greville, his countenance beaming with that benevolence which was the spring of every action, "what melancholy tale have you to tell to these good people, Captain Gordon?"

Vaughan advanced towards him, and shaking him most cordially by the hand, "I am at a loss how to express my astonishment, my sincere joy, at this unlooked-for event."

"Yes, yes, satisfy his curiosity by all means," said the General, impatiently; "explain, if there be any thing to explain. For my part, I see nothing very surprising,—nothing but what is very natural in this business. Gordon was wounded, carried off by our commissariat, and intercepted by a party of French fugitives, who made free with his cart, and left him to recover in a French cottage, or die as he pleased."

"The state in which you left me, my dear friend," said Gordon, "was such as sufficiently to justify your present amazement. I have little to tell in addition to the General's story; as you see, chance and constitution enabled me to combat the great enemy. I was slain at the War-Office, but kept alive

by an old French peasant and his wife, and was recovered time enough to reach England almost as soon as yourself."

All was now harmony in this united household. When a few days had elapsed, Vaughan, remembering the devices which Courtney had employed, and dreading any farther obstruction on his part, implored the General to permit him to fix a day for the marriage.

"Not so fast," was the answer; "this is no every-day marriage, and shall be celebrated in a style befitting the occasion. You must allow the lady at least time to consult her milliner, and me to assemble my friends. As for Courtney, he has by this time perplexities of his own sufficient to keep him at a distance; or, if he should approach, he shall learn a lesson addressed more to his feelings than to his understanding."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The spirit that I have seen
May be a devil, and the devil hath power
T' assume a pleasing shape.

Shakspeare.

Mrs. Courtney was still a leader among the leaders at Brighton. Her parties were brilliant, and her daughters were belles; she herself had foresworn matrimony, but she was only the more in fashion; and the mightiest of the mighty had found it desirable rather to soften her rivalry than to contest her power.

She felt, however, that she was playing a desperate game; and, with the spirit of despair, she determined that, if it was her last, it should be worthy of her fame. Gordon, Seraphina's declared lover, had been absent for a week, called away by "most pressing business" to Staffordshire. In a few days after his departure, the *Morning Post* announced that "Sir William Gordon, of Gordon Castle, Staffordshire, long an invalid, having abruptly received the intelligence of the death of his gallant son, Captain Gordon, of the 72d, had died of the shock within a

few hours; and was succeeded in his title and estates by his fashionable and accomplished heir, now Sir Reginald Gordon, Bart."

Jack Flatter was instantly consulted. His advice was short and stern. "Leave this paradise of fools; in another week you must be undone. I see your predicted ruin in the softest smile of your fondest Marchioness. As to your new Baronet, if you want to find his match, marry him yourself."

The handsome widow looked at the sarcastic visage of her adviser, as Faust might have looked at Mephistophiles, in ridicule, surprise, and fear.

"Do you want to know more?" said Flatter.—"Why then I will tell you that this Gordon will be no son-in-law of your's. He is a heartless, subtle, and unprincipled pursuer of his indulgences.—You may rejoice in your daughter's escape."

"And in my own beggary, I suppose," said Mrs. Courtney, with a sigh from the depths of her bosom. "You know, or you must be told, Flatter, that my principal creditor has given me but one week's respite on the strength of this match. Gordon will not, dares not break it off. I am even persuaded of his attachment to Seraphina."

"Gordon," was the reply, "is attached to Seraphina, probably enough, just as he is at-

ched to every pretty woman that passes
:fore his eye. But he has restraints, bonds,
'rangements—in short, my dear widow, in-
st upon no more of my knowledge."

"Devil," exclaimed Mrs. Courtney, with a
tter smile, "why am I to be tantalized in
is manner? What encumbrance has he
on his inclinations? what control now?
hat necessity to follow any will but his
wn?"

"All those questions may be answered
ith more ease than, for your sake, my
andsome Mamma, I should desire. His
:cessity arises from having anticipated his
icome, and being tied up from mortgaging;
hich will prevent his paying his *encum-
rance*, a bond of twenty thousand pounds;
hich will prevent his getting rid of what you
all, and fairly enough, the *control* of your
rmer friend, Champetre's friend, every
ody's friend, the fair philanthropist, Lady
)iana Prudely!"

Mrs. Courtney was thunderstruck, but soon
artially relieved herself, by the simple mode
f doubting Flatter's authority.

"Never lay that flattering unction to your
oul. My authority is unquestionable. I
ad it last night, in peculiar friendship, from
ne of the greatest scoundrels of my acquain-
ance, a fellow who, of course, on the mere
trength of his reputation, makes his way in-

to the very first circles. He was a reject adorer of her ladyship, and in mere *delica* feels it a duty to thwart her further infide ties. In two days Gordon will be here, two days her ladyship will arrive, bond hand, payable either in money or marria In the next four and twenty hours, the ba net will be Benedict, the married man."

"What has become of Champetre," sa Mrs. Courtney, with the quickness of one whom a sudden scheme has suggested itse

"Lounging at Worthing in the fondest curity. The death of her ladyship's husba had given a new turn to his thoughts, a her jointure became an object of his aff tions. She abandoned the colonel on t happy occasion, and winged her way to t Continent; there her reputation had prec ed her, and there she sustained her repu tion. Returning through mere *ennui*, s dropped into Champetre's way, as a pearl said to drop into the jaws of an oyster. T bond with Gordon is an affair of this co nental trip, and her ladyship, sick of Cha petre's exquisite stupidity, and stimulated once by avarice and ambition, is watch your new-fledged baronet as the hawk wat es the pigeon."

Mrs. Courtney made a note in her mer randum-book.—"Now, Flatter," said she, must have no more lectures. My minc

made up on two things. The first is, to have this baronet for Seraphina; the next, to expose, to extinguish, this monopolizing Lady Diana, whom I thoroughly detest, and whom, indeed, as a mother, and as a friend to public principle I—"

Flatter laughed out, and she left the sentence unfinished.

The result of the consultation was, that for the double purpose of pre-occupying Sir Reginald Gordon, and of fixing him irrevocably to Seraphina, a fancy ball should be given on the night of his arrival.

The ball was given, it was superb. Seraphina was in peculiar captivation. Even Martha, to whom the country air had given pretensions, on which Mrs. Courtney had commanded her to lay siege to the soul of a retired Indian general, whose body had vanished under age and the liver complaint, figured as a belle on that night of triumph. Sir Reginald Gordon was present, and in the highest possible animation. Neil Gow's band, that ubiquitarian troop, whose harps and fiddles seem to meet us at all corners of the isle at once, was in full harmony, and the votaries of Terpsichore, as the papers say, were 'tripping it on the light fantastic toe,' when Gordon and Seraphina withdrew from the quadrille, loaded with admiration, and exhausted with mutual delight, into the refreshment-room.

They were followed by Mrs. Courtn vlgilant eye; but she would not intrude. knew that in matters of the heart, mon like this were invaluable; that love spee and lemonade had a thousand times gor gether; and that half the booby lords lisping countesses of her circle had over their horror of declaration under cov ices and bonbons.

The dance went on. Supper was anno ed, and the multitude rushed down in appetite and pretended sport to *feed.* Courtney reserved a place next the th for her future son. But he did not con claim this distinguished honour. He sought for, but in vain.

The fair Seraphina was now misse her mother's inquiring eye. She too sought for in vain. In the midst of her turbation, Mrs. Courtney saw Flatter m his way towards her through the lines kept their places with the most resolut cipline. He took the vacant seat. "G is gone off," whispered he.

"With Seraphina?—heavens!" ret the matron.

"No; with Lady Di. as I warned She had an interview with him within ten minutes. He was reluctant. Sh duced the bond; the menace produce effect in the shape of an order for the

net's travelling carriage; they are already on their way to London, and after that, wherever her ladyship's fancy may please."

"For once I have outwitted her ladyship," thought Mrs. Courtney, with anticipated triumph, "were they followed?"

"That is more than I can tell, unless it was by the gaze and laughter of all the mob of the hotel."

"But what can have become of Seraphina?"

"There my knowledge fails me."

Morning dawned on Mrs. Courtney sleepless, and with it came a letter. It was signed Seraphina, *Comtesse de Valincourt*, and "implored her dearest mamma's forgiveness for having given way to the impulse of a too tender attachment to the most interesting of men, a noble *emigré*, next heir to a duchy, under the old *regime* of France. He had met her in her wanderings on the cliffs; their minds were congenial; nature and sentiment had decreed that their hearts should not be divided; and as they dreaded her repugnance, she had given way to the Count's entreaty for a private marriage."

"Fool!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtney, "you are a beggar for life!" She rang the bell, it was unanswered. She rang more violently; one of the footmen at length came up, breathless, and looking alarm, she inquired what had detained him?

"Sir Reginald Gordon, Madam."

"What of him?——Order a post-chaise."

"He is dead, Madam; and they are now bringing him down the Steyne to the York, Madam."

"Has the man lost his senses? Dead! impossible! How could it have happened?"

"Shot by Colonel Champetre, Madam. The Colonel followed Sir Reginald on the way to London; they say on account of his wife; and Sir Reginald is now coming back a corpse in the chaise, Madam."

Mrs. Courtney was overwhelmed. This was her doing. Determined to counteract Lady Diana, she had sent a sarcastic note to the Colonel, acquainting him with her ladyship's intention of engrossing Sir Reginald.

Champetre was a coxcomb; but the language of this bitter and contemptuous note stimulated him to revenge. Her ladyship was missed almost immediately; and the Colonel mounted his horse, and followed full speed to Brighton. There again he was baffled. He followed again, and overtook the fugitives a few miles on the road. He demanded that the lady should be given up instantly. Her ladyship resisted with screams. Gordon, who would have been rejoiced to get rid of her on any other terms, could not abandon her under the appearance of force.

Accordingly, he accepted the Colonel's defiance; and scorning the quarrel, and despising the object, he took his stand. Their pistols were discharged together. A ball went through Champetre's knee, and lamed him for life. Sir Reginald was shot through the heart, and dropped dead without a word.

There is a remnant of human feeling in the sternest bosom of woman. Mrs. Courtney, proud by nature, and hardened by the habits of her ambitious and struggling life, was still woman; and she could not reflect on the mischief that she had done, without a keen and remorseful pang. The blood of this wretched profligate, cut off in the very flower of his sin, was on her head. Years might have brought him a change of mind; accident or mercy might have taught him penitence; but now her unhappy hand had as much broken off his hope of better, as if she had fired the pistol that extinguished him in the midst of all his evil.

Seraphina's letter met her eye. She tore it in mingled disdain and anguish. Her knowledge of the world told her of what materials a stolen match with an "interesting *emigré*" was composed. She looked upon Seraphina as duped by some travelling valet, who had assumed his master's title, and as, of course, utterly lost to her and to society.

From Martha she expected but little relief

in this sea of troubles. Her contemptuous and sneering spirit was no pillow for the bruised feelings of her clever and unhappy mother. From Lady Lovemore all hope was out of the question. A separation had been already determined on by her antiquated Lord, and the wrongs of both parties had been laid at the door of her who had brought this ill-suited couple into the bitter bonds of matrimony.

To Julia how could she apply? There was a time when, in her haughty selfishness, she would not have hesitated to demand from this injured daughter all that she could give; but that time was past; a quick and deep sense of the return due to her long abandonment of this gentlest and most sensitive of all her children, had come upon her, and she flung away the pen that had just commenced a letter of reconciliation.

Of her son she had long ceased to receive any tidings. The last which she had heard, even in general rumour, represented him as totally ruined, and struggling to keep up appearances by means whose result might drive him from society altogether.

Martha found her in the midst of this overwhelming depression. The intelligence of her sister's elopement had already spread through the town, and she had returned laden with the sneers and galling condolences of

the whole beau monde. Her indignation at Seraphina's conduct was boundless. The idea of elopement, of which she spoke as at all times degrading, unfeminine, and childishly romantic, was "doubly base in this time of family perplexity."

The day passed away in solitude; and as the evening fell, and twilight was dropping that propitious veil under which tears and blushes are equally concealed, Martha proposed a walk on the cliff, as a balm for the head-ach, which had oppressed both during the day.

The air was refreshing, and the London groups wandering to catch cold from library to library; the sounds of the broken voices, and exhausted pianos, which they delight in as harmony; and even the rattle of the loo-tables, amused Mrs. Courtney with a rude picture of the world of May Fair. She even began to think, that excepting that there were fewer titles, less ruinous fooleries, and less bitter scandals among the idlers before her, the difference was but little.

Martha was less amused, glanced at the hour, complained of the sea-breeze, and returned to the house for a more protecting shawl. Mrs. Courtney lingered on the cliff, half forgetting her delinquencies and their fruits, in the bustle of the Steyne.

Jack Flatter passed her, and suddenly re-

turned with a look of surprise. "What, widow, you here still? I had thought that Brighton was to weep the vanishing of its brightest ornament."

"Have done with this style. You shall see me in that character no more. To-morrow I leave Brighton; and, but let it be a secret with you, England, for heaven knows where."

"All inconceivable! It was but this moment that I called at your house; a post-chaise had just left the door, and I was told by the fair soubrette, with a most gracious smile, that her mistress had left Brighton in that post-chaise."

"There must be some new villany in this. Will you come with me?" said the lady, hurrying to the house.

"To the world's end!" said Flatter, with his habitual bow and tone.

There Mrs. Courtney found a note from Martha, "lamenting the severe necessity under which she found herself of attending her husband Captain Montague, who had received an unexpected order to join his regiment; she having been married to him that morning, and keeping her marriage secret only by his positive commands. She now implored forgiveness," &c.

Mrs. Courtney held the note in her hand in a state of stupor. Flatter took it from

her. "Montague!" exclaimed he; "rascal! the very fellow whom I mentioned to you as having given me the information about Champetre, a showy scoundrel enough; but the maker of his own commission; in short, a notorious black-leg. Where could he have met your daughter?"

Mrs. Courtney's heart smote her. It was she who had brought him into the house to assist her plot against Lady Diana. The pretended Captain was not worth a shilling; the house was showy; the mother presumed to be still rich; the daughter was disgusted with singleblessedness, and determined not to be the only unmarried one of the family. The swindler saw a hope in at least the connexion; and Martha was made his sixth wife living.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

This is a fellow, Sir, that would draw blood
Were you mail-proof. He hath an eye that glares
With fiery memories. Gird on your sword,
Before you come athwart him.

The month of preparation which General Greville's decree had pronounced had nearly glided by. It seemed to be a sort of understood compact between the now happy members of the domestic party, that Philip Courtney's name, associated with so many unwelcome remembrances, should be buried in oblivion; and by degrees the apprehension which had once been entertained of further obstruction on his part had completely subsided.

One night, as Vaughan was hastening home through Park Lane, which, never a very frequented spot, was at this time unusually lonely, he found himself closely followed by a man, who began to accost him in a style and manner so peremptory, as seemed to imply that violence would be resorted to if his request were not complied with. Vaughan had no doubt that the fellow had robbery in view, and looked round to ascer-

tain whether he should have to contend with one footpad or many. But they were still alone. Vaughan stopped, and demanded, why he followed him.

The man drooped his head. "I am a desperate man, Sir; made desperate by utter ruin!" was the reply; "nor do I suffer alone. My shame and guilt have involved a wife and two children. They must follow me to a prison; and it may be well for them to find shelter even there, for this night they may have no other home. They must perish, or I must perish. Beware how you deny me."

Vaughan, moved by the despairing accents in which this was pronounced, said, "You take a bad mode of relief; but follow me where I can hear what you have to say; and if you prove not altogether unworthy——"

"Unworthy!" returned the man, impatiently, "then I have no hope. Have I not already told you that I am bowed down by guilt and shame; but they, they for whom I plead, are innocent. Save them, and leave me to my fate!"

"Follow me," said Vaughan; "but I repeat, that I must know more of you." And turning into the first coffee-house, he ordered a private room.

The waiter stared at the appearance of his companion.

"Well," said Vaughan, when they were

secure from interruption, "what further hav you to tell."

"I have told all," said the man, sternly "I have already said that I am reduced t the lowest poverty."

"And what can have reduced you to th extremity; you have not the appearance c a common mendicant; what has plunged yo into this desperate career."

"Folly, waste, credulity mocked by fals hopes, a villain's airy promises, all have con bined to work my destruction. I have ap pealed to none as I have appealed to you the death of my children will be at you door if you refuse me."

Vaughan was penetrated by the almo convulsive agony impressed on every feature "Take this card and this purse; see if wha it contains be enough to relieve your neces sities for to-night, and call on me to-morrow."

The man grasped the purse with the eager ness of a savage joy. He next glanced o the card; and, hurrying to the table on whic a lamp was burning, he held the light ful up in Vaughan's face, scanning his feature with a look of wild astonishment. "Thi name,—that countenance!—can it be? Wer my eyes blinded or my senses maddened that I did not know you before? Is it Mr Vaughan that I indeed see? When last I saw you, I was in the service of your relation,—

more properly, your enemy, Mr. Philip Courtney. We met in an evil hour. I had known better days, wild and unprofitable perhaps,—but still not those of a menial. Now, Sir, let me reveal a tale of iniquity. When you left England, you were high in favour with your uncle; but your absence gave room to your enemy. He gained the ear of the old gentleman, then feeble both in body and mind. He slandered you; his story was artful. But, in his hatred, he pushed his falsehood too far,—he overshot his mark. Your uncle, probably, had begun to suspect, from his very eagerness to wrong you, that there was villainy at the bottom. Whatever might be the reason, he died without altering the will, which had been a year ago made in your favour. My master, or rather my accomplice in many an act that I shall regret as long as I have life, was furious at the disappointment; he instantly tried a scheme, for which you could now bring him to a miserable end. You have heard of the previous will?"

"I have not merely heard of it, but have it in my possession," said Vaughan, deeply agitated with this variety of fortunate and painful intelligence.

"Then, Sir, the way is clear," said Benson; "the will by which Courtney has seized the estate is not worth the paper it is written

on. It is a total forgery; I was, with shame I say it, one of the subscribing witnesses."

"Yet," said Vaughan, hesitating, and looking at Benson's gloomy countenance, with something like doubt expressed in his own; "has no pique against your late master instigated you to this? May I trust you?"

"You may," said Benson, firmly; "and the motive is plain. Courtney had need of an agent in his scheme; and he made choice of me, because he knew me to be undone,—poor, wretchedly poor, and felt that the money which he offered was a strong temptation. He cheated me like the rest; he satisfied some trifling demands from time to time, but the stipulated bribe for my life has never been paid nor half paid. To-night my effects, such as they were, were to be the prey of my creditors; my wife and children were to be driven out houseless. I went to Courtney, and laid my case before him; but I had found him in an unlucky hour. You may have heard that he married some time since a reputed fortune, and buried her not long afterwards; but her money had never been received; on this night he had been at her father's house to demand the payment. The father, disgusted, had spurned him. It was in this mood that I found him.

"He derided my misery, he denied my claims, commanded me from his presence,

and, when I still lingered at the door, drove me out with a blow. I left his house, vowing never to return,—the blow fresh in my memory, and indefinite thoughts of vengeance in my head. Frantic, I hurried to a low gaming-house,—my last resource. I staked, and lost my last shilling. Despairing, I rushed into the street, and met with you, my deliverer. It was well that you turned not a deaf ear to my tale."

Vaughan listened to this fierce confession with horror and astonishment. "Those things must be sustained by evidence," said he, "Your testimony is strong, but——."

"I am aware of my unhappy character, Sir," replied Benson; "but I have served you before now. It was I that discovered his attack upon your life, and warned you of a second attempt; when you departed from England, my heart felt lightened of a load. But now, Sir, will you follow me? Courtney is at home. The charge must be made without delay; he leaves town to-morrow. Your very sight, in my company, will wring confession from him; he will know that further contest will be useless."

"If," said Vaughan, his generous mind shrinking from the painful interview, "I were sure of finding Courtney at home at this hour,—"

"If!" said Benson, fiercely; "is such a

stake to be thrown away? Take me while I am in the mood, Mr. Vaughan; your fortune is in my power. If I chose to recant my evidence, it is lost. Should Courtney try his temptation to-night, I may change my purpose; I may be doubly a villain by to-morrow."

"Go on," said Vaughan; and in silence they reached Courtney's house.

Courtney was alone when they entered; there was wine upon the table before him, and his flushed countenance and heavy eyes betrayed the nature of his refuge against uneasy thoughts. Vaughan looked at him almost with a sentiment of compassion. He could scarcely recognise the handsome and fashionable man whose society he had sought, and whose animated manners had introduced him so much into the circles of the gay and fashionable. Courtney started and turned deadly pale as he was announced. The unexpected sight of Vaughan, thus attended, opened his eyes instantaneously to his danger; but still his former presence of mind did not quite forsake him. He attempted to stammer forth a feeble welcome, and even extended his hand with something like the familiarity of former days.

"It is too much, Sir," said Vaughan indignantly; "I must be now aware of the deceit which you would practise upon me. It can

avail you no longer. I bring a charge against you of so foul a nature, that he who has no means to disprove it, can never hope to hold up his head in the world again. But we are united by the ties of blood, Courtney. Agree to give up your ill-gotten possessions without a struggle, and I pledge myself that the transaction shall never be brought forward."

"I scorn your contemptuous, your pitiless mercy!" said Courtney, stamping with rage. "What is life without the means of sustaining it? Who would believe the tale which I might tell, that saw me thus despoiled, degraded, stripped of my last shilling?" He flung himself into the chair, filled his glass to the brim, and drank it off.

"I know the world," said he, in a low and sneering tone; "I know its tender mercies, and will never go forth in it again to meet the scorn, the insolent obloquy which awaits me there: but I have resources which will not fail me, and which not you, Sir, nor you, black and treacherous villain!" darting a fierce glance at Benson, "have heart enough to try or dream of."

He flung open the door, and rushed furiously by them.

"What can this mean!" exclaimed Vaughan: "have his contrivances been deeper than you were aware? have you brought

forward a charge which you have not the power to prove?"

"No," said Benson, "it is altogether impossible. This is merely a bravado: he can have no document which my evidence would not turn to waste paper."

The report of a pistol was heard. Vaughan flew up the stairs in horror, and burst open the chamber-door. His unhappy relative was stretched on the floor, a fearful spectacle! Life was utterly gone. He lay on his back; his teeth clenched; his open eyes glaring with an almost living expression of despair. The pistol was in one hand; the other had been instinctively struck upon his wound. The floor was covered with blood. Vaughan turned away in anguish. Benson stood gazing, and unable to draw his eyes from the dead.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Now are our woes all come to pleasant ends;
Our dropping tears are dried by sunshine smiles;
Our wringing hands are laid on merry hearts;
Our wandering locks that wore the cypress leaves
Shall now be braided with rich jewelry;
Our voices, griefs' companions, shall be tuned
To silver harmonies that, like the lark,
Shall wake the morn, and then outwatch the moon,
More sweet and constant than the nightingale.
Phineas Webb.

Mrs. Courtney's establishment at Brighton now came under the hand of the law; and her bijouterie gave a new subject, at once, for the admiration of the loungers of this classic and conversational spot, and for the florid eloquence of Pulpit, its celebrated orator, politician, and auctioneer.

Her spirit was broken: deserted by her children, foiled in all her personal prospects, insulted by the open ridicule, or worse, by the affected pity of her fashionable associates, she at length felt of what feeble and visionary materials the glories of high life are made.

Vaughan and Catherine were generous and feeling in their offers of kindness; but she refused all pecuniary assistance, and

with the trivial wreck of her property prepared to bury herself in some of the obscure and cheap villages of the Continent. Till final arrangements could be made, she came to London, and there shut herself out from all intercourse with society.

Vaughan alone was an exception, his sensitive delicacy, and noble ingenuousness, had won upon her, and with tears which he vainly sought to check, she lamented the injuries which she had in her day of folly and pride, attempted to do him and his love.

She refused all knowledge of what was passing in the world, and it was only by Vaughan's representing the necessity of completing the business which devolved on her by the death of her son, that she expressed a wish for his opening the letters which had lain on her table for a week together.

One of these was from Lord Lovemore's agent, announcing his Lordship's death, and the unexpected discovery that he had been privately married to a celebrated *danseuse* of the Vienna theatre ten years before. The true wife, who had been silenced by the payment of a large pension, and the perfect indulgence of her own modes of living, had come to England on the intelligence of her old lord's demise. The letter concluded with the agent's "most respectful regrets

that he could not henceforth have the high satisfaction of honouring Miss Courtney's bills for the amount of her annuity."

"The next letter," said Vaughan, as he opened it, "is from your daughter, Lady Gordon."

"Close it again, my dear sir." said Mrs. Courtney, with a deep sigh. "From Julia I am determined to receive nothing, not even compassion. Her I treated with a severity, at which I now wonder; and from her, now happy, honoured, and rich, I would rather die than receive services imbittered by the remembrance of my tyranny; I must not disguise it, it deserves no other name."

"But this letter, I can perceive from the first line, is neither of compassion nor of triumph; Julia is ill."

There is something in the parental tie, that however it may have been stretched, can never be broken. Mrs. Courtney's heart felt an indescribable pang at the sound. The world seemed to be forcibly torn away from her by the chance of such a loss. She seized the letter, and read it with breathless eagerness.

It was simple and expressive. An entreaty, that "as her dear mother would not honour her by allowing of her visits when able to make them, she would, at least, not refuse her dutiful and affectionate daughter the con-

solation of seeing her, when she could see her only on a sick bed."—The letter was finished by Gordon, who said that Julia was, from illness, unable to write any further, and implored Mrs. Courtney's presence to receive "perhaps the dying prayers of her child."

We must conclude our history. Julia had been seized with a fever, and on her mother's arrival in Staffordshire was in a state of danger that utterly subdued the remaining hardness of that proud and worldly heart. She knelt by her daughter's bedside, and for the first time for many a year offered up the mingled tears and prayers of contrition. Julia recovered; and her mother, still more softened by what she believed was an answer to her agony of prayer, imbibed at that bedside hopes and feelings, more sacred and consoling than we will here venture to define. Gordon, who had by his brother's death succeeded to large property, was generous to this changed and bowed-down spirit; and his generosity had sought out even the fugitive daughters.

The fair Seraphina's fate had been already decided. Her Count was a smuggler from the thriving town of St. Maloes. In a fortnight after his astonished wife's introduction to her new relatives, a large circle of poissardes and contrabandists, the Count himself in a se-

cond venture to Brighton, with a freight of teas and brandy, went to the bottom in a gale off Beachy-head.

Seraphina, who had lived in perpetual terror in the midst of those Tritons and Nereids, fled on the very night that the news of the catastrophe sent this whole piscatory race, wringing their hands, and weeping their marine tears, down to the shore. She was now fairly in the way for adventure; and with three five-franc pieces for her whole finance, and on foot, she must have perished in the cross roads of Normandy.

But the genius of romance watched over her. As she sat sleeping, through exhaustion and the heat of the rising sun, on the skirts of a thicket through which she had been toiling during the night, a stranger in an English travelling carriage was struck with her desolation. He stopped and spoke to her. Her surprise and delight at hearing an English voice, awoke all the roses in her cheeks: and as she told the story of her escape, tears gave the heightening which we are told makes beauty irresistible. The stranger was fine and fastidious, a man of fashion, and an invalid. The adventure interested him, and he liked the novelty of being interested about any thing. He liked the courage which had prompted so pretty a creature to make her escape; and when she

accepted a seat in his carriage on the way to Calais, which she did with a doubled blush, and as he thought a tenfold charm, he felt himself more awake to life than he had been for some months before.

When they were about to part at the packet, the stranger found that he was less serene than became a hero and a philosopher. He attended the fair Seraphina to the pier, and made a parting speech. Seraphina thanked him with real gratitude. He gazed on her deep blue eyes, and the gaze was long. He pressed her snowy hand, and it was not withdrawn. He recommenced his adieus; but the packet was under weigh, and to complete his speech, he had no resource, but to leap in, and sail for England.

In a fortnight after, Seraphina was the wife of Arthur de Grey, Gordon's eccentric friend, and lord of the romantic Hertfordshire cottage.

Gordon procured a commission for Martha's husband, who had ruined himself by play; yet was not incapable of higher pursuits.

But of Vaughan and his Catherine what shall be recorded. Is there no love dream left among the young, or no love memory among the old?

FINIS.