Lady Frances Compton.
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR,

What?

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

AN OLD-FASHIONED ENGLISHMAN.

Oh! still be mine the gen’rous wish—to bless
And wipe the streaming tear from pale Distress,
Make keen-e’yd Malice hide her guilty head,
O’er the dim mind bright Truth her lustre shed,
Celestia. Freedom ev’ry charm unfold,
And firm Integrity the Fair uphold.

VOL. I.

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Says She to her Neighbour, What?

CHAP. I.

And Slander held her trumpet high,
And told the story to the sky.  

In the beginning of the dark and dreary month of November 1811, I had the good fortune to meet with the admirable history and opinions of my distant relation, under the title of "Thinks I to myself," and perceiving in them a fund of rational entertainment, and admirable example, though utterly ungarnished by any of the various adventures, incidents, politics, metaphysics, fashions, frights, doctrines, horrors, duels, robberies, elopements, and descriptions, which either constitute or orn
ment other works of apparently the same character, or at least agreeing in an outside resemblance, it struck me that the life of a country gentleman was not by any means so insipid a thing as many of the *haut ton* pretend to think it; and I therefore resolved to follow the excellent example of the author I had just read, and lay my own before the world, in connexion with those of my nearest relatives; for as we have never been divided in action, affection, or fortune, in any great degree, we must be considered as a set of beings whom God having joined together, even my newly-acquired title of author cannot put asunder; and it is probable this is the first time a new-acquired title was adopted, without the fatality of dividing some of the smaller branches, at least, from their principal trunk.

In order to accomplish this desirable end, I provided myself, in the first place, with a most admirable stock of new pens, and a ream of paper, which might withstand, if possible, my continual propensity to blot-
Says she to her neighbour, what?

ing; I shut myself many hours together in my library, and gave orders that no person should walk on that side of the house, which, for the better digesting of my cogitations, I desired to be kept as silent as possible.

No sooner were these orders communicated to my household, than they travelled forthwith to the lodge, and thence, by easy transition, to every human being who came either through it, or near it; so that, in a short time, not only all the neighbouring gentry and farmers, but every shopkeeper, manufacturer, and pedlar, in the adjoining town of Fairborough, was informed, directly or indirectly, that sir Theodore Sedgewood was going to write a full, true, and particular account of his life, parentage, and education.

Says she to her neighbour—"What can sir Thé be thinking of? He surely cannot be so foolish as to retail all the births, deaths, and weddings of the Sedgewoods, for a thousand years past, since the parish
register has already told it, and in doing so, probably comprised all that was really interesting in their history; for I do not consider the mention that is made of them now and then in the history of England, as fit to be made the subject of a novel at all. As to their faults, poor souls, why drag them from obscurity? And their virtues being chiefly negative, I don't see the use of attempting to illustrate them—What can sir Thé be thinking of?"

"As far as I can hear," returned she to her neighbour, "it is his own history he is going to write, which must be, indeed can be, nothing more than another name for his confessions: for as we all know what he has been doing, or appeared to have been doing, ever since he came into the world, if he pretends to give us any thing new, it must be an account of tricks we never suspected, of scenes we little thought he acted in, and of characters we little supposed him to be acquainted with. I shall not be surprised now if we hear a little more about Nancy Collett; for it always
appeared strange to me, that she should be married off while he was at London, in such a hurry, by her old aunt."

"Aye, true," interrupted the first speaker, "or something will come out, depend upon it, respecting Mrs. Bellair. I never could bear that woman, a fine, sentimental, tall thing: every name will be changed, of course; but I shall be able to find them out, I'll answer for it; not that I would say a word against sir Thé, certainly not; I always say he's quite a pattern of a man; but 'tis a long lane that has no turning; and he may have had many, for ought we know."

"Or may have them yet," resumed her friend; "in my opinion, there's a great hazard to run yet; let him get into parliament, let him live in London, then comes the time of trial for his integrity, his fidelity, and all that; aye, aye, 'well may the castle stand that never was stormed;' and I look upon the short trials he has had in the gay world, as just nothing at all, as one may say."
“But pray, sir, who is she that says this to her neighbour; or rather the two shes, for you have introduced a couple of speakers?”

My dear madam, there are a legion of them; and if you are not acquainted with some, or even many of the family, you are more to be envied than any person of my acquaintance, for you not only possess the best circle of friends in all Europe, but you are yourself the most perfect woman it contains, or very nearly so; and I hope before we part, to have obtained the greatest possible degree of intimacy with you, consistent with your duties and my own; and to this arrangement, your husband, brother, father, friend, or even heir, can make no reasonable objection.

“But this is not answering my question.”

Very true, madam; but knowing that too many ladies, albeit perfect in all other cases, preferred an act of gallantry to one of service, and forgave a man for disobeying their commands, at the very moment
when he was professing submission to their will, I took the liberty of following the beaten track, and now hasten to obey your wishes, by informing you who were the personages that, in my own immediate neighbourhood, were the more particular censors, controullers, guides, guardians, loungers, spectators, and tatlers, of the place.

Every place has its own circle, its little world, which is, to every resident connected immediately with it, of as much more importance to his appearance and comfort in that world, as the clothing which at this present moment warms or adorns him, is to that which is laid by in his wardrobe for splendid occasions, or that which, still resting on the shelves of the shopkeeper, he looks up to as the purchase of a future day: to carry the simile a little farther, the society of small towns is often like a suit of old clothes, grown too strait for the increased bulk of your fortune, or liberality of your opinions; yet that straitness produces warmth, for it was shaped by local
attachment, and buttoned by early friendship: in a more enlarged circle, you have the advantage of increased liberty; and if you advance to the metropolis, you have the advantage of fashionable latitude in perfection; but your coat hangs so loosely about you, that you scarce know whether you have got one on your back. In the sunshine of youth, health, and prosperity, this light summer wear is charming; but in those wintry hours to which every human being is more or less subject, we feel the want of a closer ligament with our fellow-creatures, and can the better submit to be pinched in one place, than deserted in another; and become willing to barter even ease and liberty for the support of esteem, and the nourishment of affectionate attention. It may be said, that in London, hospitality, individual affection, and every rite of unbounded benevolence and friendship, are every day exercised as fully as in the country, to which I fully assent; but these cordialities must be necessarily exercised in a certain circle, and she will creep
in, and make her observations on life, character, and fortune, much in the same way, though 'tis probable with less galling minuteness, from the increased difficulty of collecting family anecdote: this difficulty is, however, abundantly compensated for among the higher circles, by the publicity which the prints of the day give to the petty detail of malice, and the aberrations of thoughtlessness, when they are once broached; so that upon the whole, the advantages and disadvantages of each state of society are pretty fairly balanced; and after the closest investigation of the matter, I do not find any place of residence free from this disqualifying attendant, nor, I fear, am likely to do so, except I could fix my abode in Utopia; but as it is an increasing evil and one that may be corrected, as it proceeds frequently as much from idle levity as inquisitive malice, and many who promote it would shrink from the practice, if they were aware of the consequences, and others would blush for the meanness of the
practice, if they were aware of its contemptibility, I shall, now and then, as it may suit my narrative, just mention what I know has, from time to time, been said by one neighbour to another, in the way of chit-chat, with the consequences of these amiable communications, just as a glass for more enlightened, more fashionable, and, it may be, more noble personages to dress by.

Ten thousand times (according to the Spanish idiom, at least) ought I to crave your pardon, my good lady, for this second act of abominable digression; but the fact stands simply thus; the very day after my paper, pens, and ink, had been laid, *secedem artem*, in my library, my orders for silence issued, and circuitously promulgated, as I have already said, it so happened that I was engaged to dine at the house of a neighbouring acquaintance, where I was sure to meet the person, or persons, who are intended by the new mode of personification my title-page has bestowed upon them; and, with your approbation, we will
meet them together, as being the principal persons in Fairborough and its vicinity; and as Fairborough is the most ancient, most beautiful, and, of course, most interesting borough in the West-riding of Yorkshire, which, all the world knows, is the most populous, most wealthy, and most fascinating part of his British majesty's British dominions, I trust the visit will not be thought derogatory to you, madam; though it is with some degree of mortification I am obliged to announce, that the gentleman to whom we pay it was once much better known upon 'Change than in the county annals. There, indeed, it stood justly so high, that in despite of my aristocratic prejudices, to which, as an inhabitant of Fairborough, and the lord of Fairborough manor and forest, with an eternal list of legal rights to acts of despotic sovereignty therein, I do yet acknowledge, that, as one of the first citizens in the first city in the world, I think the said name of Mr. Jeremiah Dornton was as respectable as if it had flowed through the veins of country squires,
who had by turns bled for petty tyrants in the wars of the barons, or even supported royalty itself for the last thousand years. Unfortunately Mrs. Dornton was of a very different way of thinking; she was the last descendant of a house which had once borne baronial honours, and in every branch of it had strictly avoided all intercourse with the degrading name of commerce: how Mrs. Dornton herself, at the age of thirty-six, and in full possession of all the pride of her ancestry, came to make such a lapse in the family pedigree, she vowed she never could tell, further than imputing it to a fatality inexplicable and lamentable; for she never could allow that the tender passion had any thing to do in the case: this blindness in her own case, on Mrs. Dornton's part, was amply supplied by the quicker optics of her neighbours, who being well aware that the mansion-house of her late father, Gabriel Featherbottom, Esq. was, at his death, mortgaged to the last farthing of its value, whereby she was left portionless, at a time of life when beauty
is on its wane, and in a period of society when the claims of blood require the support of wealth to gain them respect, and in some cases even to insure them from ridicule; from these causes, it was pretty evident that Miss Patience Featherbottom (who, notwithstanding her name, was never mistaken for Job's eldest daughter) would find it a convenient thing to marry; and as she had in vain set her cap at the baronet, my father, then a widower, and after him at every man the least likely to repair the increasing dilapidations in Featherbottom Hall; and then finding all help hopeless in the country, had flown to London, apparently with a determination not to be sent from thence empty away; it appeared, I observe, not so extremely surprising that she should condescend to accept the ample fortune of Mr. Dornton, and ride in his costly carriage, and swathe her tall, meagre, stately person, in his rich satins; although obliged to endure the constant attendance of a husband who had once soiled his fingers with filthy trade, and whose language
and manners bore indubitable marks of his former line of life: but though many went so far as to hint this, yet year after year passed on, and the lady's surprise continued in full force; for as her mind was no longer oppressed with learning that most difficult of all sciences, the making a figure without the means to make it with, and which is, in the country, a matter of tenfold difficulty to what some practical performers find it in London, she, I say, being no longer oppressed by this evil, had the leisure to reflect upon her own weakness, and to lament her husband's unworthiness of the honour she had done him, in presenting him with the manorial residence of her ancestors.

The thorough good temper of Jeremiah was such, that although he very soon discovered his own utter incapability of being worked up into a fox-hunting Yorkshire squire, he would have been contented to spend his money in any way his lady had pointed out, and have made his bows in due proportion to all the degrees of respec-
tability and relationship, her cousins, and cousins' cousins, to the tenth degree of consanguinity, might have required; but by requiring too much, the lady, in a great degree, lost that which she possessed. She had set her heart upon his changing his name to hers; and in order to bring this about, she ridiculed his own name and past pursuits, his vulgar ideas, and low habits, without mercy—the mark was overshot; and though the poor man soon perceived that Jerry Dornton must never lie on down, he resolved most magnanimously, that no wife on earth, with all her family at her back, should make him into a Featherbottom.

"No," said he, his whole figure dilating with majestic rotundity, "this here is one of the things I never will agree to while I lives; tityvate the old ouse, gild the pictures, sash the windows, and put statutes in the gardens, if you please, but nivver go to persuade me to change my name—a name that was good for a plum ten years ago. A pretty tale, truly, if I shou'd go
for to have a son, and the poor babe never know his father's name!

"My son shall be a Featherbottom," said the lady, with a contemptuous toss of the head.

"My son," retorted her legal lord in great wrath, "shall be Jeremiah Dornton, or he shall never touch a shilling of the fortune I've worked so hard to get him."

It was, perhaps, a lucky thing for this young gentleman that he never once made his appearance in this troublesome world. Being the cause of daily altercations, in one way or other, for the first seven years after the marriage of his parents, as to his future disposition, he prudently appears to have given up all thoughts of venturing on a scene which portended so many difficulties; and as he has now ceased to be hoped for, Mrs. Dornton not being troubled with a family of her own, obligingly interferes as much as possible in conducting those of other people, often observing, that children are, indeed, certain cares, but uncertain comforts—that the present manner of
bringing up families is so ridiculous and improper, she cannot be surprised at any thing which happens;—and this exordium is generally followed by an account of the flirtations of Miss—- with the recruiting officer, or the passion of some young man of family for his father's dairy-maid. She is, therefore, undoubtedly one of those who "say things to their neighbours."

The gentleman who sits at her right hand is young lord Stickerton, sent, much against his will, to pay his annual visit to his two aunts, the ladies in blue damask, who are, in fact, his father's aunts, and reside in this neighbourhood on a fortune by no means large, but which the necessities of his father, who, with a noble estate, is grievously poor, renders worth his while to secure. Lady Betty, the elder of these virgin sisters, is sensible, humane, well-bred, and open-hearted. She says little to her neighbour, except to explain whatever appears paradoxical to the lovers of mystery, and meliorate the aspersions of scandal; the continual exercise of this employ-
ment is constantly prepared for her by her younger sister, lady Frances, who, having never forgiven the world for its neglect during the days of her youth, neglects no opportunity of making reprisals; and every human being, in or out of her vortex, from a countess to a charwoman, is, at times, honoured with her notice; she is, of course, one that "says things to her neighbour."

A very different character appears to her right; poor Mrs. Maxwell being left the rich jointured widow of an old man, whom at seventeen she was commanded to marry by her aunt, on whom she was dependent, was determined, in her second union, to please herself; she did this, by uniting herself to a handsome man whom she met with at a watering-place, where, like the devil, "he was seeking whom he might devour." Plausible and insinuating, he perceived that the externals of virtue, at least, must be adopted in his conduct; and as he had pretty well exhausted the world of dissipation, he found it no difficult task to lead, for a season, that orderly kind of
light which suited alike his constitution, his purse, and his designs; new to the world, and romantic in her dreams of felicity, the widow thought the poverty he honestly avowed, and the long story of misfortunes he recounted, from which it appeared that he was the most injured of men, was no bar to their union, since it appeared that each party had what the other wanted; and in a fit of imprudence, (she, poor woman, dignified with the name of awakened sensibility,) gave him her hand, and, too late, discovered that she was become the wife of an unprincipled gamester, and a sordid tyrant. As, however, his scene of action had laid in a part of the kingdom far distant from her home, she thought it possible to hide her vexation from her own world, and succeeded better than could have been expected. As her income, though ample, was only a life-annuity, to which was attached a handsome residence, Mr. Maxwell declared his intention of renouncing the world for her sake, and living henceforth in elegant seclusion; he therefore came to our
neighbourhood, under a favourable impression it has been the constant endeavour of his wife to promote; but it is a task to hide the cankerworm which the consciousness of being united to a cool, unfeeling, systematic scoundrel must create, to which even female ingenuity is unequal; and the pale cheek of Mrs. Maxwell tells the truth her lips would willingly deny. Unable to speak of herself, every tale of disaster and sorrow gains in her a willing auditor and retailer; and she gains a species of melancholy comfort, from learning that fraud, injustice, unkindness, and misfortune, are to be found, more or less, in the families of all her acquaintance; her mind, opened to suspicion from the baseness of the person whom she fondly and weakly trusted, has learnt thence to doubt the existence of worth in any other; and the continual shifts she has recourse to, to hide the anguish of her own heart, and gloss over the meanness and cruelty of her husband's daily conduct towards herself, induces her to conclude that many other wives are in the same pra-
dicament, notwithstanding the smiles they assume, and the saucy happiness their appearance displays. Thus sorrow has made a croaking tatler of a woman, whom a different situation would have rendered lively, beneficent, and candid.

The two young ladies, Misses Mariana and Julietta Robinson, are of a still different description, having read the choice productions of the Fairborough circulating library, till their heads teem with delicate distresses, mysterious embarrassments, concerted elopements, tender sentiments, and equivocal assignations without number; and being so situated as to preclude either the active duties of household management, or the dissipation of varied amusement, from the usual effects of forcing them to see things a little as they are, they have obtained the faculty ascribed to the jaundiced eye in perfection. For them the world teems with adventures, in a situation where no human being, less gifted, could see the possibility of such agreeable surprises. As it cannot be doubted but these ladies are con-
verted, by a lively imagination, into the respective heroines of each book they per-
use, it generally happens that their neigh-
bours become, in their eyes, subordinate characters of the piece in question; and if the distresses of said heroine arise from a distressing litigation—an overbearing guardian, in the shape of a fat waddling dignitary of the church—a cross old maiden aunt, or a rich persecuting landlord, who distresses the parents that he may ruin the child—in these cases, some hole is sure to be picked in the coat of honest Manby, our wealthy attorney, poor Mr. Elland, our worthy vicar, Mrs. Barbara Sedgewood, my maiden aunt, or, lastly, in the lord of the manor himself. There is no malice in all this; 'tis the rage for novelty; but in how many cases is all the evil which malice could desire effected by it? When the dear creatures were contented to improve Maria into Mariana, and Julia into Julietta, it was a little harmless incroachment, very tolerable in pretty girls; and even when two itine-
rant performers were declared noblemen in
disguise, lounging about the town to seize some lovely orphan, and convey her perforce to a lone house and old woman, (these being modern substitutes for a castle and a drawbridge,) the thing was not so much amiss; but when it became expedient to give hints that an upright man had come unfairly by his money; that a benevolent minister of the gospel was not only tyrannical and prejudiced, (as all priests are, unless they are poor Welch curates, with hoary locks, and, I should suppose, silver beards,) but that he had wronged his orphan charge of some fortune never heard of, save in the ladies' wits; when it appeared that my dear aunt Barbara, whom Heaven in mercy gave the world for a pattern of unassuming wit, unostentatious charity, and cheerful good-humour, was sour, splenetic, morose, satirical, and tyrannical; and that the benevolence practised at the Hall towards its dependents, was meant to trepan pretty girls, while it pretended to assist declining fathers—the system of romance became then too serious for jest, and has given me an
undoubted right to place these two pretty misses on the list of those who "say to their neighbours" what they ought not even to whisper to themselves.

Mrs. Manby, the wife of the attorney mentioned above, is a scandal-monger by profession; she was married from town; and declares the country would be a positive bore, if a woman of spirit were denied the privilege of chatting about her neighbours; she is well aware that her fashionable dress, her tasty little routs, and her frequent jaunts, find abundant food for the comments of all around her, and considers herself as possessing the right to ridicule those who abuse her. She is feared by some, dreaded by others, and courted by all. She is not an ill-tempered woman, and I always find her amusing, I confess; but she is much to blame; the random shot which punishes justly a faulty character, may wound a tender heart; and no apology, no act of future kindness, can atone for the wounds thus inflicted; I have told her so many a time, and as I have found her hitherto incorrigible,
Says she to her neighbour, what?

She must be considered one of the leaders in my band of reprehensibles.

Dr. Cantharides, (yes, ladies, all scandal-mongers, petty calumniators, compounders of truth and falsehood, so as to make "the worse appear the better truth," listeners to servants, and retailers of family quarrels, are indubitably old women,) Dr. Cantharides will be there; he has survived his practice and a considerable part of his faculties; but that of receiving a simple fact, and making it into a slanderous anecdote, will, I believe, never forsake him: 'tis but, however, justice to say, he never dispenses his too acceptable prescriptions, without abundantly accompanying them with these lenient emulsions—"I could scarcely bring myself to believe it, but my authority was indisputable; it came from —— himself, though not immediately to me, yet by a channel I cannot doubt;" a significant look or reference explains the channel also: the company are satisfied as to the truth, but frequently condemn, with
propriety, the person who had so communicated with the doctor, who tells all under the seal of secrecy, for he thinks it should be stopped in the progress. Thus several are implicated; confidence is lost in society; aversions contracted; and the "love of many wax cold" towards their dearest connexions, from a circumstance as trivial as the mixing of a pudding, or the pattern of a new waistcoat. This animal says things to its neighbour.

Mr. and Mrs. Parley married when they were very young, by command of their respective parents, for the best of all possible reasons; Mr. Parley's father had a large estate, very considerably mortgaged; but he was a man of family, and not far removed from a baron's title and contingent estate: the father of Mrs. Parley was rich, but his grandfather was unknown; the young couple were commanded to marry, and to have an heir to the barony; they complied with the first requisition, but were disobedient to the second, for Mrs. Parley brought nothing but daughters the first five years of
her marriage; after which she most provokingly retired from, or at least suspended, her labours, having nothing more to do; for she had always heard her girls spoken of with contempt by her father and her father-in-law, who were her guides in all the momentous concerns in life; she began to turn her attention to her husband, and most affectionately undertook his tutelage; he was just desiring to undertake the same task for her; so they mutually endeavoured, for two or three years, to benefit each other, and in the course of this pursuit, each discovered that they were ill-matched, and never could assimilate: each grew discontented and ill-humoured with themselves and every one around them; instead of remembering the sage adage of "make the best of a bad bargain," each thought only of making the worst, by aggravating the case as far as possible. During this time, the father of Mr. now the honourable Mr. Parley, obtained the expected title, and the family-wishes for an heir were increased. The cou-
people who had aggravated petty discontents into actual miseries, contrived to increase the sum, by assuring themselves that even their dislike of each other would be removed by this bond of union; and that which had ever naturally been an object of desire, became now one of such absolute necessity, that, notwithstanding the regular pleasure each enjoyed of quarrelling with each other three times a-day, life was little better than a blank, for want of that very thing which, by healing all their differences, seemed likely to deprive them of this agreeable stimulus.

Notwithstanding these bickerings, which probably are of greater benefit to the physical system than the moral, it came to pass that Mrs. Parley was once more pregnant, notwithstanding the repeated assertions of her husband, who had maintained, that such an event never would take place with a woman of her perverse temper; she, on her part, maintained, that she should have another girl; for Mr. Parley's invincible obstinacy never changed his system in any thing.
The fathers interfered; fearful that the lady's health, and, what was of more importance, the health of her expected heir, might suffer from too much irritability in her nervous system, both parties were prevailed upon to delay for a season their habitual recreation: obedience to parental authority was habitual to each, but the habit of finding fault was become necessary; debarred from this agreeable entertainment at home, each sought it abroad, and became at least similar in one pursuit, that of backbiting their higher neighbours, and reproaching their lower. In due time an heir was given to the house, and the two grandfathers exultingly looked upon it as the bond of union: for nearly a month it appeared so to their children, and there were even moments when they fancied they could love each other, (it must be observed, at that time they only passed moments together). The lady recovered her limbs and her tongue; old feelings and old habits returned, with the additional taste acquired during the cessation of hostilities; and Mr.
and Mrs. Parley may both be fairly set down among those who "say to their neighbours, and of their neighbours," such things as their neighbours all say of them.

"Dear me, you have a strange set of acquaintance, sir!"

*Strange,* madam! let me tell you, few neighbourhoods can boast of any so respectable; perhaps I have told you the worst part of them, only to make the best more interesting and agreeable; you will there see sir James Incledon, who rails at nothing but government, and his two charming daughters, who are incapable of railing at either government or any thing else.

"Are they dumb, sir?"

No, ma'am, but they are highly accomplished, and very amiable, which amounts, in this respect, to the same thing; for as they can always speak well on any subject, and are desirous of saying no ill on any subject, they never talk scandal at all.

Then we have likewise squire Brushwood and his son, the former a tough sports-
man, who talks of nothing but hounds, game acts, and the superior merits of ale to madeira; the latter an Oxford scholar in his noviciate, of course he never condescends to talk farther than he deems it necessary, to shew his unqualified contempt for the whole college of Fairborough. We have also colonel Hatfield, his son and daughter, all enlightened, agreeable people, who have seen much of the world, and blend benevolence of heart with suavity of manners. We have the vicar of our own church, Mr. Elland, a man whom to know is to reverence and love. Likewise Dr. Wilkinson, a neighbouring rector, who, though somewhat inclined to "talk to his neighbour," is yet a very good-humoured man, and only chatters scandal when the conversation is so dull that there is no other method of rekindling the flame of conviviality. Then there are the respective curates of these two gentlemen, one of whom is—

"Curates, sir Theodore! do you admit curates in your circle?"
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

My good lady, at Fairborough we all go to church; and how you suppose we can be so inconsistent as to sit down on Sunday to listen to the advice, or it may be remonstrance, of a man whom, on Monday, we consider unfit even to bear us company, I cannot conceive. Be assured, with all our rusticity in the country, we are not so ridiculous as to exalt a man over our heads one day, whom we put under our feet, without any provocation, another. So, as I was saying, one of these is a married man, whose wife is a companionable, sensible woman, the daughter of a worthy gentleman in—

"Oh, well, if he has married somebody's daughter with fortune, 'tis all very well; but I thought you were speaking of a poor curate and his dowdy wife."

I am speaking of a good man, who is only a curate, and certainly not a rich one; but I have mentioned many rich people in the neighbourhood; I have told you, too, that our vicar was an excellent man, and from this I concluded, it was impossible to
Says she to her neighbour, what? suppose any man in the sacred office, whose practice accorded with his profession, could not in our neighbourhood be as abjectly poor as I fear many clergymen are. Mrs. Grant has written an admirable little book she calls a view of a state of society in some part of America; now it is my intention to give you a view of the state of society, as it exists at this very hour, in my native place, with its merits and faults, the latter of which are either caused or connected solely by the encroaching evil of "saying things to our neighbours, and of our neighbours," which we ought not to say, but which it appears I am saying very freely; but as I do it with a purity of intention they cannot pretend, I make no apology for my conduct; but shall add, in their behalf, that while I thus hold up the sins of Fairborough to light, I may safely challenge every borough in England, without her sin, to throw the first stone at her.
CHAP. II.

I do not think
So fair an outside, and such stuff within,
Endows a man but him. Shakespeare.

Having devoted the first chapter of this work to my neighbours, I think it high time to begin my promised history in my second, though, as my neighbour justly observed, it is more likely to contain that of some of my ancestors than my own; I have already premised, that we cannot be parted, and this I am aware will lay me under the imputation of family pride, aristocratic prejudice, and all the et cetera of exploded notions, which ought to be buried with the feudal tenures by which they were once supported. To all this I may answer in the language of my accusers—It is not my fault that I was the son of a gentleman, who was the son of a gentleman, and so on, back to the reign of the first Saxon princes: nor am I to blame if the deeds of my ancestors,
their love of freedom in some reigns, their unshaken loyalty in others, and their private virtues in all, were so unceasingly descanted upon in my infancy, so completely sucked in with my mother's milk, that they have become interwoven with my very being. How far I may be better or worse for circumstances over which I could have no command, I cannot say; but I will venture to observe, that in my intercourse with the lower orders of society, which has been pretty extensive, I have always observed the common boast of, "my feigther was as honest a mon as ever brak bread," to have ever a salutary effect on the mind, and generally on the morals, of those who make it; and as human nature is still human nature, through every gradation of society, I apprehend the same pride may have equally salutary effects in every station under heaven. Do not mistake me, I speak of the pride of virtue when connected with rank, not of rank as unconnected with virtue: my family prejudices may, at times, lead me to think "a saint in crape is twice a saint in
Says she to her neighbour, what?

lawn;" but they will, I trust, never be found to make me mistake a sinner for a saint in either case, or palliate the errors of an earl, while I condemn those of a tinker. In truth, my family antiquity says more for my family honesty and good sense, than it does for my family greatness; for since it appears a plain case, that we have, on the whole, not advanced one foot farther in rank and consideration than we did at the conquest, notwithstanding we have at various times drained our estates, and spilt our blood, in defence of our monarchs, it must be inferred, that although good soldiers, we were bad courtiers; and that although we knew how to love our friends, we did not know how to flatter even our sovereigns: after a close examination, I scarcely find one family in the peerage of equal importance with our own in the twelfth century, which is not at this moment in possession of nearly ducal honours. It has been our custom to live quietly at home, till we were called out by some strong or sudden emergency, which being
past over, we returned quietly to the government of our fortress, too indolent or too proud to solicit reward by court attendance.

Once upon a time, I find a sir Thomas Sedgewood intreating the restoration of rights which had been infringed by the insolent favourite of the weak Edward II. and they appear to have been immediately restored; but I cannot learn that sir Tom budged one foot from the castle in search of them, or even to thank the poor shadow of a monarch who had restored them. I hope he was not ungrateful neither, as I find he soon afterwards endeavoured to do him essential service; but this was impossible; for who can benefit the man who is his own enemy?

The last of my ancestors whose blood flowed for a Stuart, shed it on the scaffold—"I die," said he, "for being an honest man." I believe every person in the kingdom thought the same, and no one was more fully persuaded of this fact than the usurper who had placed him there; but
the second Charles, for whose sake he thus suffered, considered, on all occasions, virtue was its own reward, and did not trouble his family with any intrusions of royal gratitude, for which I at this day most sincerely thank him, as I should certainly blush to retain any thing given by his hands; so we are perfectly agreed.

Passing by the rest of my ancestors, with whom I have certainly an intimate acquaintance, but no personal knowledge, I will stop at my grandfather, whom I remember as a fine old man, with white locks and a little bend in his shoulders, who used, with somewhat of trembling in his hands, lift me on his knees, gaze on me with fine mild eyes, in which the beam of affection restored a temporary brilliance, and, moving the locks that clustered on my forehead, which he gently kissed, used to tell me stories of good little boys, that became great men, and rode upon fine horses, and built hospitals. This gentleman's history is certainly very remarkable, and deserves your consideration, young ladies, for he was a
Says she to her neighbour, what?

hero of the first order, and so singular a one, that if Cumberland had not, in his history of Henry, (which, by the way, is a work quite worthy of the excellent author,) proved the existence of similar virtue in Mr. Delapaer, I should not have ventured to offer my poor grandfather's to the world, lest this infidel age should have denied the existence of that merit it had not found paralleled; his story was simply this:

Theodore, the eldest of a large family of children, was the offspring of the second son of sir Charles Sedgewood; but as his uncle, sir Charles, was a bachelor turned of forty, it was pretty generally supposed that he would prove his uncle's heir, especially as he generally resided with him, and appeared justly dear to him; he did not, however, oppose his entering the army, when at eighteen he appeared to desire it; on the contrary, he bought him a lieutenancy—gave him letters of recommendation to some of his friends—and agreed to remit him an annuity, rather calculated to obviate his necessities than provide for his
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

pleasures, and which was, therefore, no inducement to rest upon as an assurance of future heirship. This was, however, no matter of regret to the gallant boy, who, full of the enthusiasm natural to his age, and the romantic visions nurtured by his education, hastened to join his regiment, then in Germany; and had the satisfaction of making his *debut* in the field of honour, in a manner which secured him the affection of his commanding officer, and the esteem of all his messmates: at the end of his first campaign he was promoted; the second saw him in possession of a company; soon after which he had the satisfaction of returning, for a short time, to the embraces of his family, to every branch of which he was tenderly attached, and which had been lately much afflicted, from the loss of two of its most promising scions by an epidemic fever, a circumstance which Theodore lamented the more, from perceiving that this circumstance had exceedingly affected the health of his mother.

This fond parent hoped that her brother-
in-law, by some positive declaration of his will in favour of her eldest son, would obviate the necessity of his continuance in the army; but she soon found, that during the prolongation of the war, her high-spirited son would never be induced to quit it; she therefore did not oppose his first-expressed wish to rejoin his regiment, concluding that all eyes would see him with a mother's admiration, and that honour and pleasure must await his acceptance wherever he moved; nor was she greatly deceived, for as far as he was enabled to appear in the gay circle to which his connexions and profession introduced him, so far was he admired; and though ladies did not, as they do now, call a man handsome to his face, and make love in a way that cannot be mistaken by even the dullest observer of sighs and glances, yet there were many indirect means, even in the days of good queen Caroline, whereby ladies could convey encouragement to the sons of Mars, with as much intelligence and more insinuation than they do now; the elegant Sedgewood had no right to
complain of their cruelty, and his first winter in London was passed in as much devotion to the sex as a very handsome man, who happens to be likewise a wit, could give—he danced with them, dressed at them, chatted to them, and languished for them (in ogles and sonnets); but his heart was untouched; and he repaired to the standard, at the first summons, with an alacrity that bespoke glory his first mistress, and that the reign of the senses must, to a mind like his, be ever of temporary duration.

It was nearly three years before my grandfather returned to England, and in that short period his two eldest sisters had fallen victims to the small-pox, and of his father's large family, one daughter, about ten years old, alone remained: as soon as possible, he hastened to Fairborough, to console the bereaved parents, and to shed the tears of fraternal love over these blighted blossoms; he found his mother now sunk in her health beyond the possibility of recovery, and his father little better than the semblance of his former self, since he was
hourly dying, in one more dear to him than life. The heart of Theodore was pierced with affliction, but not lost to hope; he perceived the pleasure his presence gave his drooping parent; and though at this time the metropolis was shining in all its pleasures, and his friends, the late companions of his toils, were pressing him to join them there, his only care was to obtain a longer time to spend with his mother; and as it was easily granted, he remained at home during the winter, where his presence might be truly said to gild the chambers of death, and irradiate the grave.

But the hour appointed for all is inevitable; and despite of unnumbered cares, from the tenderest of husbands, and vain hopes for ever nurtured by the most affectionate of sons, this amiable woman breathed her last sigh as they were both supporting her on the couch, and left, for some time, a chasm in the existence of each, those only can estimate, who have lost a virtuous and beloved friend in so near a connexion.
The tears and endearments of little Barbara, ever the most affectionate, and once the most vivacious of children, at length recalled Mr. Sedgewood to a sense of what he owed this last pledge of his lost wife's affection, and his fears for her health superseded, in some measure, the indulgence of his own sorrow; this circumstance was consoling to Theodore, as about a month after his mother's death, he was promoted to a majority, and requested to join his regiment, then at Winchester; but soon afterwards removed to Reading, from whence the easy distance to London made him accessible to his friends; but his mind was untuned to light pleasures; and a solitary ramble, in which he could sigh unheard, possessed more charms for him than any society in which the heart had no intercourse.

In one of these desultory rambles, as he pursued the windings of the Thames, and was comparing its majestic course with the silent lapse of life, he was startled by a loud scream, as of a woman or boy in extreme
distress, and looking forwards, he perceived a boy in the water endeavouring to raise something which he had not strength to effect; it immediately struck him that it was some youths from Eton college, who, in the poet's words, had "disdained the limits of their little reign," and were come hither for the purpose of bathing; he flew to the spot, and found his fears were verified; the youth whose shrieks had drawn him to the spot was so nearly exhausted, that it was with difficulty that the cheering and commanding voice of major Sedgewood enabled him to avail himself of his assistance, and point to the place where his friend had sunk, apparently to rise no more.

The major was an excellent swimmer; throwing off his coat and sword, he plunged into the river, and had soon the satisfaction of seizing the body he sought, and of bearing it to the shore; but he was bitterly disappointed on arriving there, to find all signs of animation fled from the most lovely features he had ever contemplated. Not, however, despairing of restoration, he urged
the young companion, who appeared a year or two older than the youth he held, to exert himself in procuring assistance; and heard from him, with great satisfaction, that he knew a small farm in the neighbourhood where help could be procured, and which he rose to show him. Taking his precious burden in his arms with the greatest tenderness, the major followed his languid and mournful conductor; and had soon the satisfaction of entering a decent cottage, where the inhabitants instantly obeyed his wishes of procuring necessary warmth, so far as it was in their bounded power. Major Sedgewood, after nearly an hour of incessant labour in chafing and fomenting the body, had at length the inexpressible satisfaction of perceiving a faint pulsation; his hopes revived, and his efforts were quickened; with a delight scarcely to be conceived by those who have not witnessed resuscitation, the benevolent Theodore beheld reviving life animate the features of the pallid boy; and at length heard him, in a faint voice, pronounce the
The name of his companion, whose extreme agitation, at this moment, was so great, that he sunk in a swoon by the side of his reviving friend, while the major, scarcely less affected, burst into a flood of tears.

The good woman of the house prudently gave it as her opinion, the moment she saw the youth recover from his faintness, that they had better both lie down together, after drinking some of the warm wine the gentleman had sent her son for; and she likewise insisted upon it, that he ought to take some himself, and to put on John's Sunday clothes till his own fine ones were dry. The woman, though perfectly respectful, pronounced this request with an urgency that amounted to command, for the heart which is truly affected cannot stand on forms; and the major, mounting her little chamber, obeyed her wishes, and equipped himself in her husband's Sunday apparel. He then stepped into her parlour, which had been time immemorial the drawing-room and bed-room, kept for all grand occasions, and there beheld the boys fast.
asleep in each other's arms; the fine hair of the younger, which the good woman had taken infinite pains to rub dry, now waved over his forehead, and gave a finishing grace to his inimitable features; and the major again thought, that although his eyes were closed, he had never seen such perfect beauty as his face displayed; his brow was open, his eyebrows pencilled by the graces, his nose was a little aquiline, and threw new beauties over a mouth of the most perfect symmetry, on which sat a sweet smile, as if conscious, though in sleep, that he was embracing his friend, and was restored to existence from the very jaws of death. As the major gazed on this boy, new thoughts, new wishes, crowded on his heart, and awakened his imagination; he had never yet seriously thought on marriage, except as of late the pains it sometimes induces had afflicted him in sympathy for his father; but as in the bustling life of a soldier, principally spent in a camp, he had found little leisure to cultivate female acquaintance, except during the single win-
ter he had spent in London, he had made a hasty conclusion, that there were no more women in the world like his mother, and, of course, none with whom he could wish to make a lasting connexion; and as he was merely a soldier of fortune, he thought it was a very happy thing that he could pursue his profession without the incumbrances too frequently attached to it; yet he was sensible that if ever a truly amiable woman should attack his heart, her power would be decisive; but never had he felt the conclusion so positive as at this moment—"Were I," said he to himself, "the father of that boy, what should I not feel towards his mother!"

The boy awoke from his short but refreshing slumber as he spoke, and fixed upon him a pair of soft blue eyes, so dove-like, yet so animated in their gaze, that they penetrated his heart.—"Who are you, sir?" said he, modestly, yet tenderly.

His voice awoke his slumbering companion, who, catching the sound of his words,
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though he marked not the question, cried—"Oh, my dear Ingleby, that is the good, good gentleman who saved both our lives, who took you from the water a dead corse—brought you here in his arms—and rubbed you with his own hands till the life came into you! Oh, he is not a man, Ingleby, he is an angel sent to save us!"

The grateful boy arose in the bed, but unable to leave it with the rapidity his companion had done, knelt there, and, with clasped hands and upraised eyes, invoked the blessings of Heaven on the saviour of his life: at this moment a carriage bowled hastily along the greensward past the window; in a moment a middle-aged gentleman rushed from it into the room, exclaiming—"Where? where?" he saw the angelic countenance of his boy beaming with awakened gratitude—he fell upon his neck, and sunk into the faintness with which nature in mercy relieves the outstretched feelings of moments such as these.

While the gentleman was under the care of his servants, the major resumed his own
habiliments; but he was scarcely allowed time for this, ere the gentleman burst upon him with the eager embrace of anxious gratitude, and with trembling joy informed him, that he was the preserver of the only son of the earl of Brooksbury, whose gratitude should be as lasting as his life, and who besought him to return to town with the son he had saved, and the father he had delivered from a thousand deaths. He now learnt that the boys had been meeting the earl to dine at Windsor, and on their return, finding themselves warm from the wine they had taken, had resolved on the frolic of bathing before they returned to Eton. Agreeable to this juvenile scheme, they had contrived to send away their servants, whose suspicions having been awakened, the accident which had taken place was discovered, the earl overtaken on his way to London, and happily brought back to witness the restoration of his son, a circumstance he was not apprized of till his arrival, as the servants had learnt where
their young master was carried to by the boy who had been sent for wine, and who had positively asserted, that if "the soldier gentleman rubbed and rubbed he for ever and ever, he would nivver come bock agin in this world."

This adventure had both fatigued and affected major Sedgewood too much to allow him, with comfort, to accept his lordship's invitation on this eventful night; but as he greatly approved of his intention to have medical advice for the young nobleman, he gladly assisted in wrapping him up and placing him in the carriage, answering his importunate inquiries by an assurance of seeing him in London very soon; adding—"Surely, my lord, you do not suppose it possible I can forget you."

"Do not call me my lord," said the affectionate boy; "call me Frederic—your own Frederic—for surely I am your own; I have cost you a great deal, I am certain, and I have little doubt but you are very ill, though you don't say any thing about it."
A shade of something like displeasure passed over the earl's brow at the beginning of this speech, but was dissipated before the end of it: manners were at this period more formal than they have been for some time past, and the earl was a nice observer of forms; his heart was, however, too nearly touched at present to feel their influence beyond the moment; and when he turned, for the last time, to shake hands with the major, he fell into his arms, dissolved in feminine tenderness: the major felt his own weakness return as he contemplated the emotions of a father, and, in order to relieve both, he inquired if the other young gentleman accompanied Lord Ingleby to town, or returned to Eton?

"I shall do neither," said the youth, with great sang-froid, "I shall remain with you."

"My dear marquis," said the earl, recovering himself, "you must by all means go with us; medical advice is necessary for you as well as Frederic, and I—"

"What would you have me to do, major? I shall not easily forget the way in:
which you gave me the word of command in the water—"exert yourself—life is in your power—be a man;" for I felt that it made a man of me, and therefore I abide your decision.”

"Then I shall certainly command you to march under the earl’s orders," returned the major, with a smile, "and hope to find you, in a few days, able to march anywhere."

They parted, each boy twinkling away the tear which would intrude as they grasped the hand of their new-found friend and idolized preserver.

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**CHAP. III.**

How many sit
Beside the deathbed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish.

**Thomson.**

In a very few days major Sedgewood presented himself at the earl of Brooksbury’s,
and was told by a servant out of livery, that his lord had expected him sooner; that an apartment was prepared for him, and begged he would step into the breakfast-parlour till the earl was disengaged.

"Is lord Ingleby perfectly recovered from the effects of his accident?" inquired the major.

"I don't think he is," said the man, "for he looks pale, and he can't eat; but he was always a delicate creature; he has, however, spirits enough for any thing, and was dressed out last night, playing a tragedy-queen, for all the world like Mrs. Pritchard, swinging his hoop about; he would have made any body die of laughing, that's for certain."

The major entered the breakfast-room, which he found empty, but "Pope's Essay on Criticism," then a new thing, was on the table; and though he was impatient in the first moment to see his young friend, yet he became soon wrapt in this masterly production, and had nearly got through it when the door gently opened, and lord
Ingleby entered in a complete suit of female apparel, and with a cheek glowing with such perfection of health and beauty, as, after the account he had received, at once pleased and delighted him: he flew to the door, and, seizing the hand of the fair actor, cried—"Admirable, indeed, lady Frederic, or by whatever other name your ladyship may please that I yclep ye; you have certainly put yourself into a form in which a soldier must be very ungentlemanly not to claim the honour you offered of calling you my own. Aye, well, prettily attired enough—very dignified, upon my word— I perceive you will not unsought be won, and you blush as becomingly as any miss in the kingdom; how that is managed is above my comprehension, absolutely above it."

While this speech was passing the major's lips, the object of it had retreated, with an air of dignity and surprise, not unmixed with fear, back to the door, which, just as she gained it, was pushed hastily forward by Frederic, in his own habiliments, who,
entering, ran and threw himself on the neck of the major, exclaiming, "Here he is! help me, dear Caroline, help me to thank him as I ought; you would have had no brother, Carry, to make you laugh or scold, if it had not been for this good gentleman; and as all young ladies love both dearly, pray consider the strength of your obligations."

The major was now, in his turn, dumbfoundered; and the lady might have said—"How a man could blush so, was utterly above her comprehension;" but as, from the stammering apology the major made, she really did comprehend the manner in which he had been deceived, and knew the likeness between her brother and self was so remarkable, that, in the same apparel, it would be easy to mistake a boy of fourteen for a girl under eighteen, she most kindly accorded a full pardon to the trembling culprit, (for certainly my brave ancestor did tremble this time,) and joined with her brother in saying many grateful
things to their mutual benefactor. The earl soon after joined them, and general conversation took place of sentimental. In the course of the day they were joined by the young marquis of Blandington, who was delighted to meet their guest. The happy ingenuity of these boys was exerted to find every means of amusement in their power for their visitant; and lady Caroline lost no opportunity of proving how truly she understood the rites of hospitality. Music at that time was a rare accomplishment, and she possessed this power of communicating pleasure in a high degree: she had a good taste for drawing; and as the major was a proficient in that charming art, he gave her many lessons in it, which were received with as much goodwill as they were bestowed. While the major had his pencil in his hand, he was often thoughtlessly employed in sketching faces of lord Ingleby, he said, for his features were indelibly impressed on his memory. Lady Caroline said it was very natural they should; but she could not help remarking,
as from the corner of her eye she glanced at her new master's progress, that the pictures of Frederic had often a cap on, and were seldom shaped exactly like a boy in the bust.

The time for the major's departure came, and he met it with a much worse face than he had ever met death in the field. He discovered now, that the time was indeed come, when he, like all other men, had bowed to female beauty, or rather female excellence; for in the conduct and sentiments of lady Caroline, he had met all he had honoured in his still-lamented mother, or imaged to himself in those moments when he had first allowed himself to dream of connubial felicity; his heart, softened by affliction, was predisposed to tender impressions; and having confided the story of his late sufferings to the sympathizing ear of lady Caroline, he had received in return the little history of her own privations, for sorrow at this period of her fate is, perhaps, too strong a term for the present tone of her feelings: it appeared that
the earl, her father, had been particularly anxious for a male heir for his estates, but had been disappointed in his wishes by the successive births of four daughters, towards none of which he had ever shewn any marks of paternal affection: at length his lady was so happy as to present him with the present lord Ingleby, but had paid for this precious purchase with her life; hence lady Caroline had never experienced the tenderness of maternal love; and as her sisters had all dropt off in early infancy, she had been thrown on the protection of her mother's aunt, who, notwithstanding an unfortunate temper, had fulfilled the duties of a parent to her, and was becoming dear to her by her worth, as opening reason shewed her the value of her character, when she too was taken by death, and the amiable girl was again consigned to the ceremonious manners and formal attentions of her only parent, who was so entirely wrapt in his boy, that he appeared almost to grudge even a single sister the privilege of partaking in the comforts of his establishment,
or the small fortune it was likely he should spare for her. Lady Caroline had of late found that the earl treated her with more kindness than usual; but this she imputed to the intervention of her brother, whom she described as a boy of such amiable dispositions, that he was justly the joy and hope of her existence.—"I fear," said she, innocently, "I never loved my aunt as I ought to do; my father would, I think, prefer the sentiment of awe with which he inspires me to any other; but Frederic has my whole heart—it will never be so devoted to any other human being."

"Never!" exclaimed the major, with a start of terror.

"I shall never have another brother, you know," said lady Caroline simply—"but—but—perhaps—if—if—"

The Spartan if was, in the major's opinion a very unimportant if, when compared with this; yet such was his extreme trepidation, that he dared not even look whether the eyes of the lovely girl seconded the confusion so evident in her speech; and
terrible as he felt suspense to be, yet so many terrors assailed him, from the fear that another step might for ever annihilate his hopes, that he dared not give birth to the soft confession which trembled on his tongue; and alike unable to conceal his passion or avow it, he hastened from the apartment in the most distressing confusion.

Under these circumstances he bade adieu to the family; but as he received from the earl a most polite, and from lord Ingleby a most urgent invitation to return very soon, he was the better enabled to tear himself from a house which held over him a species of magic bondage. It was happy for him that lady Caroline communicated her adieus through the medium of her brother; but the tenderness of the youth's adieu, and the striking similarity of his softened features to his sister's, awoke the chord which vibrated through every nerve of the heart-stricken Theodore.

Major Sedgewood was now in his twenty-sixth year, a period when some of my
young readers will think he was past the age of romance; others will, perhaps, think he has not arrived at that of dotage; and both may therefore conclude, that love in him would be a flame attempered by reason, cheerful enough to warm his heart, but not vivid enough to scorch it. To this I answer, that the major was, indeed, too far advanced in life to feel that hope which, in younger subjects, often supports its victim by fallacious food, and urges him on to deeds of folly and desperation. But his affection was more consolidated, his feelings more intense, from the perpetual contemplation of the difficulties of his situation, since they only led him to appreciate more highly the excellence of which they deprived him; and he returned to his circle, the complete picture of that pensive, yet not dejected, lover,

Whose leaden eye still seeks the ground;
Whose tongue, chain'd up without a sound,

prefers wandering

Thro' trackless hills and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves,
to the gayest scenes and liveliest companions, where the state of his feelings can neither be soothed nor appreciated. This air of tender melancholy was generally imputed to the loss of his mother, for whom he had been ever heard to declare that fervent attachment he really felt; for at this period of society it was believed consistent for men of gallant hearts, and even first-rate understandings, to love their mothers, and therefore the major's sombre air awakened sympathy, where it might otherways have excited ridicule. The ladies, whose sympathies are ever ready to console affliction, would willingly have re-echoed sighs to his, spent many a tender look, and many a sentimental harangue, upon him in vain, and were at last obliged to confess, that notwithstanding he was immensely handsome, and tolerably polite, yet he was absolutely insensible; since it was found, that neither the charms of beauty, even when combined with the lure of ambition, could affect his recovery, or awaken his pursuits.
The earl of Brooksbury and his family had set out for their Hampshire residence soon after the major took his leave. He heard frequently from Frederic, and every letter teemed with invitations to join them there; but they did not appear sufficiently guaranteed by the earl, his father, for a man of the major's description to avail himself of—"And wherefore should I go?" he would mentally exclaim; "I cannot offer poverty to Caroline; nor can I endure that the earl should say that I restored him one child to rob him of another." Yet with all this reasoning, to resign that other was impossible; and there were many times when the unhappy Theodore was on the point of rushing on his fate, and ending a suspense he now found it as impossible to bear, as it had once been to end, when speaking was in his power.

Time passed; and the cold breeze of autumn whispered the return of that season which would restore Caroline to a place in which he could visit her with propriety. As he hastily walked up Piccadilly one morn
ing in November, consoling himself with this idea, his arm was hastily seized by a young man he did not immediately recollect, and who was too much out of breath to make himself intelligible. While he stood still, to enable the gentleman to recover himself, Theodore perceived that the person was no other than the marquis of Blandington, who having adopted the dress of a man, which was, according to the fashion of that day, very distinct from that of a school-boy, he had not immediately recognised him; and when he did so, he could not forbear smiling at the metamorphosed appearance of the volatile lad into the embroidered petit maitre. "Aye, you smile," said the marquis, "and well you may, for a couple of years hence would have been all in good time for my sword and solitaire; as, however, I am indebted to you solely for the figure I cut in my present habiliments, you are the last who has a right to laugh at me for adopting them."

"To me, my lord? Really your con-
"I apprehend so, but I will enlighten you. Know, then," he continued in a style of affected bombast, "most rev'rend, grave, and potent seignior, my very worthy and approved commander, that I, from a most unhappy circumstance, became possessed of a large fortune and an old title; and about the same time became excessively fond of Ingleby, because he soothed me when I was unhappy, without insulting my sorrow, by the insolent, common-place cant of supposing fortune and independence could console me for my incalculable loss."

The marquis twinkled away a tear, and raising his voice, that it might conquer his sensibility, proceeded.

"Now it came to pass that I frequented the house of John earl of Brooksbury much at that time when the said John's daughter having lost the only friend she had, returned to her father's mansion; but
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

he saw her not, for his heart was with his son.

"Now the damsels was very fair; moreover she was forlorn and sorrowful.

"So I piped unto the damsels, and played about her, and became unto her even as a lap-dog.

"And the thing pleased John the earl; and he said in his heart, 'I will that this youth espouse my daughter, for he hath flocks and herds, and much cattle, and he will not ask for a dowry at my hands; but he is yet young, and for a time shall my daughter tarry.'

"Then came there to the house of John a mighty man, yea, a man of much valour; and he was comely withal, having a sword upon his thigh, and a beard upon his chin; yea, and there was wisdom in his words, and his speech was gentle, although his heart was very brave.

"Then said the damsels unto herself, 'Behold this is a man, the like of which I have not beheld until this day.'
"And when he departed, her eyes, which were like unto the dove's eyes, looked mournful in their meekness, and the rose waxed pale upon her cheek, and her lute was silent in the grove, and the voice of melody dwelt not on her lips.

"Then arose John earl of Brooksbury, and he said unto me, 'Boy, gird now thy sword upon thy loins, and command the hair of thy head that it become as the hair of the aged ones, yea, as the snow upon the mountains of Cambria, for behold thou hast numbered thy sixteenth summer, and thy days of Greek and flogging at an end.'

"Then was I wroth in my heart, and I said, 'Who is John, that he should beguile me? Have I not read the wiles of his heart, and know I not that his tongue is deceitful?' But I remembered the dove-eyed maiden, and my heart warmed towards her; and behold her brother, is he not also my brother; yea, are they not as the light of my eyes unto me? So I consented unto his words, and arrayed myself as thou perceivest, and I went straightway
to the house of John; but behold the eyes of the damsel regarded me not, albeit that in my eyes her beauty was increased, and my heart yearned towards her with an abundance of love, for behold a flame was kindled.—But at what a monstrous rate you are walking! Why, major, you won’t hear my chapter out if you go on at this rate.”

“I believe I cannot have that pleasure to-day, my lord. I am—that is—I have an engagement.”

“I hope you have, major; for I wish you to promise me to visit immediately our dear Frederic; he is ill, very ill, and I am the only confidant of his complaints; and in reporting them to my tutor, I find they are of the most dangerous tendency; and as I am compelled to leave him, my only consolation during absence will be the knowledge, that in your superior skill and kindness, he will find more than a compensation for the loss of his juvenile friend.”

“Going! whither then are you going, marquis?”

“The grand tour. It is premature, I
grant; but you see the old earl will make me premature in every thing. Come, let us turn into this coffee-house: you will not see me again for a long time, and must indulge my request."

Would I had never seen you! thought major; you have, indeed, ended my suspense with a witness. He commanded himself sufficiently to say—"How long do you propose being absent, my lord marquis?"

"My lordship," said the youth, smiling at the grave tone and lengthened title with which he was greeted, "will be governed by circumstances depending on the will of lady Caroline Ingleby."

The major sat down—rose again—but his breathing was oppressed; he believed he had over-walked himself, so perforce he sat down again.

"Over-walked yourself, major; aye, that's true, I'm certain; you have half-killed me, besides breaking the discourse, and ruining the finest chapter of family chronicles that ever was heard, in the most critical part."
The major rose—"I must now wish you good morning."

"Indeed you must not. When a man is the hero of his own tale, and there is only one man upon the face of the earth to whom it can be related, depend upon it he will not part so easily with his auditor. I was going to tell you—but if you won't listen to eastern oratory, take my sad story in English poetry.

Like Phæbus sung the no less am'rous boy:  
Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy.

In short, 'twas a plain case, that 'concealment, like a worm i'th' bud, preyed on her damask cheek;' of course she loved; and as I began to find that was not the most easy of all sensations, and that it was plain one or other must find it in all its pains and penalties, I thought it would be more gallant that I should take that trouble than the lady; this consideration led me, as far as I was able, during such a very short campaign in the service of the blind archer, to trace the effects of his power, and I clearly
discovered, by the aid of a little light afforded by Frederic, and a more brilliant one lent by my own jealousy, that ‘you were the man.’ I then saw my duty—no! duty is a cold word; for my love, my admiration of you, would have obtained the sacrifice, even if I had not owed you my life. Be that as it may, your way is clear; my work is now finished, for I shall leave England to-morrow.”

“My dear friend! my noble boy! I cannot allow this; I have no words to express what I feel.”

“I am sorry for you, for really if I did not chatter so fast, I should be very ill; my heart feels so big, as if it would choke me at times; and if I were not to amuse myself with talking, I know not how I should sustain it: but indeed parting with Frederic is—but you see what a woman it makes of me!”

The noble youth, in despite of the spirits he had hitherto rallied so successfully, burst into tears, and sinking on the major’s
shoulder,—indulged the emotion till he became more calm, when he informed him that he had concerted every thing ready for his journey; that he should leave the kingdom in privacy, which he had arranged with his guardians; after which, a letter, through their means, would be delivered to the earl of Brooksbury, informing him, that peculiar circumstances, in which a female of high rank was concerned, would most probably induce him to remain on the continent many years, as they included an engagement of so binding a nature, that it was become absolutely impossible for him to form the honourable connexion with the earl's family he had once fondly contemplated.

"But will not this letter reflect upon you, my lord, in a way that—"

"Not at all; I have never spoken of love to Caroline; how could I be so presumptuous?"

"Then you have indeed felt the passion!" said the major, with an expression
of the tenderest compassion in his countenance.

"Felt it! aye, or I should not have traced it as I have done in either of you. But no more of this; I know the earl, young as I am, perhaps better than you do; and I am perfectly well aware, that so long as any hope remained of bending the gentle Caroline to his projected contract, he would not allow her the liberty of choosing for herself; it has been his intention to precipitate my marriage with her, because there is a bill talked of in the house, to render the marriages of minors illegal; this subject has been repeatedly introduced in my hearing at his table, and he naturally concludes that I have taken advantage of the information given me at such times to enter into some sudden and ridiculous engagement. Be it so; his reflections on my conduct will give me no pain; those which are thus forced upon his own may be salutary, and will teach him, that cunning often defeats its own purpose. He has sought to
take an unfair advantage of an inexperienced orphan, and to expose a most innocent and dutiful daughter to the evils which might arise to her, either from marrying a person whose character is unfixed, or whose affections might be alienated from her, when he discovered, in future life, the duplicity of her father. Who then can pity his disappointment, although

"To-morrow brings a frost, a nipping frost;
And while he thinks, fond, easy man, too surely
His blossoms are a rip'ning, nips the root,
And makes him feel as I do."

No! no! the earl deserves no pity, and his daughter deserves whatever devotion man can give. Now all I have to say farther is this; enable me to know my sacrifice has not been in vain; tell me that you are blest, and Caroline is happy: 'tis a sad thing to be only in one's seventeenth year; but I shall be of age some time, you know, and then you will honour me, by considering me your friend, will you not, major?"

"My friend!" cried Theodore, clasping
the noble boy to his beating heart, "my angel! my preserver!"

The day following saw the young marquis of Blandington on his way to Dover, under the care of a worthy man, to whom every thought of his generous heart was open, and who rejoiced in rescuing him from what he considered, very justly, a tie rendered improper by his extreme youth, notwithstanding the great merit of the lady; and especially as the extreme vivacity of his pupil proved him precisely the character who ought to be married rather later in life, instead of earlier than usual; and he was convinced, that a mind awakened, as lady Caroline Ingleby's had been, to contemplate with admiration the matured graces and established virtues of major Sedgewood's person and character, could never be able to descend to the amiable, but far inferior qualities of his beloved pupil, however promising they appeared in his eye.

A sentiment of delicate refinement, of which few minds are capable, prevented
the major from calling on the earl of Brooksbury; notwithstanding his impa-
tience to behold lady Caroline, he dreaded lest she should read in his eyes the happi-
ness which the marquis's assurance of her partiality to him could not fail to inspire
him with; and he trembled lest he should appear presumptuous in her sight. His
reason informed him he had still many ob-
stacles to contend with, for who knew the
number of rich and titled suitors which the
earl still held in his eye, as dernier resorts?
but his feelings bade him bow only to the
fair arbitress of his destiny; and a week had
passed since his young friend had bade
adieu to the white cliffs of his native shore,
ere the major had courage to announce
himself as a visitor in St. James's-square,
though many a time he had, like the lover
in Shakespeare,

Sigh'd his soul towards the place
Where Jessy lay that night.
An unspotted life is old age. Ecclesiastes.

During this period of the "life of a lover," the major was most agreeably surprised by receiving a note from the earl, earnestly requesting the pleasure of his company to dine with them, saying, "that he should have had the pleasure of calling upon the major on his first arrival in London, but had been prevented by political engagements of the last importance; that he entreated the major to visit them en famille, as frequently as possible; adding, that Ingleby was very delicate in his health, and so much attached to him, that he had it still in his power to bestow the most important obligations upon a family who were, and must ever remain, eternally his debtors."

The major was not long in obeying this summons; and the profuse thanks of the earl, the delighted fondness of lord Ingleby,
and the flattering confusion of lady Caroline, made him complete amends for past anxiety and forbearance; but he was sincerely sorry to find that there was indeed a visible change in the person of that lovely boy, whose life he had only saved from sudden death, that it might be sapped by slow disease; he was now become taller, but so thin and fragile, as to appear scarcely like a being of earth's grosser mould, while on his transparent cheek sat the hectic bloom, which assumes the tint of health, while it menaces decay.

It was observed by all the party, that Frederic had not appeared in such health and spirits, for a month past, as during the time that major Sedgewood had sat with them, and the major was pressed to return on the morrow; to-morrow and to-morrow came, and the major was assured that Frederic was better for every visit he made; but the major, in every visit, saw disease making such regular advances, that he was surprised how the earl and lady Caroline could still allow hope to deceive them;
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT? 81

alas! he had forgot that, in his mother's case, the same insidious power had prolonged her empire over his own heart, almost to the hour of dissolution; and they had not, like him, had any previous experience of the peculiar traits of pulmonary consumption. To tear the veil from their eyes would have been equally cruel to themselves and their patient, since it would have been absolutely impossible for them to have attended on him with that cheerfulness, or amused him with that animation, which was now become the only medium through which affection could benefit its object. Indeed it appears the single blessing attending this lamentable disease, that it possesses, almost invariably, the power to cheat both the sufferer and his surrounding friends into expectations of relief, from an evil they are unable to meet with that steadiness and fortitude demanded from all who attend the sickbed of departing friends, and particularly those who are called to bid adieu to youth in its most inte-
resting form, which is the most frequent case in this disease.

It was not in the nature of things that major Sedgewood should every day behold that beautiful young creature, to whom he had given a heart as warm, as tender, and as faithful as ever warmed the bosom of any human being, constantly engaged in those tender offices which render woman a ministering angel below, without finding some moments in which to pour into her ear the homage of his soul, which, in these moments of tender anxiety, became doubly dear to her who had already felt the purest emanations of gratitude and esteem. Frederic was no stranger to the feelings of either; and though incapable of judging the extent of the major's sensations for his sister, yet from the love he bore for each party, he judged of what each felt for the other—"I could not bear," said he, mentally, "to lose Caroline; every thing she makes me (yes, ladies, seventy years ago an earl's daughter could make a thing for a sick brother) is so good, because she sits.
by me, and gives it me herself; and even the medicines are not so bad when Caroline pours them out. Then her voice is so sweet, and she reads to me so pleasantly; and when she prays by me, I feel assured that God will hear her, she is so pious and good. Altogether, I could do nothing without her; and the poor major loves her as well as I do; but she is not his sister, so he had better marry her, as I used to think Blandington would, till we found out she did not like him so well as Sedgewood; that seems the only way to bring us all together; and I see no reason against it at all; Caroline will always have a title, and the major has, in my opinion, got a very good one.”

In the evening of that day in which these cogitations passed the mind of lord Ingleby, as these dear objects of his solicitude were sitting nearly opposite the sofa on which he frequently lay, watching, as they hoped, his gentle slumber, and now and then casting towards each other a look, in
which the purest love was mingled with the most cordial respect, he suddenly opened his eyes, and said—"Pray, now, wouldn't you two like to be married? Why don't you speak? there's no harm, I suppose, in it; for you know I know all about your love for each other. Well, to be sure, I've been told people in love looked mighty silly; but I had no notion any thing I could have said would have made the major so very queer. There, Caroline, you've ruined your netting, I see you have!"

Caroline threw the netting on the floor, and escaped out of the room, just as her brother burst into a laugh, and her father entered. To hear Frederic laugh was so delightful to the earl, who had not often had that pleasure lately, of course, that he sprung forwards, regardless of his blushing daughter, and eagerly inquired, "what had made his dear Ingleby so merry?"

"They are always doing something to make me happy, father," said the youth; "and when they do not, I laugh at their
expence. I have been proposing to the major there to marry Caroline, and they both fell a blushing, so I laughed at them.'

"You are, my dear Ingleby, a privileged person certainly," said the earl, contracting his brow; "but you certainly went beyond even your prerogative here; lady Caroline, I hope, will forgive you on her return; the major will have the good sense to know that sick boys often talk nonsense."

Major Sedgewood foresaw that nothing but flight would save him from either giving or receiving offence; he was lothe to give the former to the father of Caroline, and the latter he could not receive from even her father; so hastily snatching his hat, he said he was quite happy to leave lord Ingleby so much better, and bowing to the earl, he retired.

"I shan't be much better long, now he is gone," said the invalid, throwing his languid head again upon his pillow.

"My dear boy," said the earl, drawing his chair to the sofa, "surely you will con-
sider the company of your own father—a father too whose only wish is your indulgence, a sufficient compensation for that of a stranger?"

"Stranger!" exclaimed the boy, again rising indignantly; "do you call major Sedgewood a stranger? the man who at the risk of his own life preserved mine—a stranger! the man who, for the last three months, has forsaken every pleasure, at a season when pleasure is at its meridian, to sit by my couch, and unite to me the cares of a parent and a brother!"

Alarmed with the agitation that shook his son's emaciated frame, and the lambent fire that gleamed from his sunken eye, the earl, assuming his most persuasive intonation, said—"My dear boy, do not agitate yourself in this way; I do not mean to insinuate any thing to the major's disadvantage; he is a very respectable gentleman, but yet he is only a private gentleman, you know: and certainly coupling your sister's name with his, the daughter of the earl of Brooksbury with the nephew of a country
baronet, was not exactly as it ought to be. It was an improper jest, my dear, quite improper; it vexed me, I confess, and threw me off my guard, and— and— but I am certain you see the impropriety of it."

"I know very well that many earls' daughters, and even dukes' daughters, have married Sedgewoods centuries ago, who, you must know, papa, were a family, and a great family, before the Brooksbury name was ever heard of; so I think there is not much in that: perhaps you have not read about them in the baronetage; but I have; they were a powerful family in the days of Edward the Confessor, and possessed a right in their own domains almost regal; they were called lords Searchwood, from their right over the immense forests of Fairborough, which name is now, by corruption, become Sedgewood. The conqueror confirmed and increased their privileges: in the days of Stephen they built and fortified a strong castle: Edward the second confirmed their charter of dispensing life and death within their own de-
mesnes: in the wars of the roses, we find Hugh de Sergewood, and Ralp his son, at the head of——”

A violent fit of coughing checked the youthful orator, and for a short time suspended the earl’s attention, when his exhausted son laid down, unable to proceed in what he concluded his father would deem irrefragable proofs of major Sedgewood’s worth. That father replied to his foregoing observations, by saying, “that the major’s family were certainly unexceptionable; that he was a fine young man, of excellent address, and might cut a figure in the lower house; but he rather thought his father was poor, very poor; and there was no living without money; Caroline would have little, very little; and therefore, were he inclined to favour the major’s addresses, he could not see what could be done.”

“ You must help them, father, till I am of age, and then you know I can give them my mother’s jointure.”

The earl did not answer, for his surprise was not of the most agreeable nature.
Lord Ingleby mistook his feelings—
"My dear father," said he, "if you were poor, as I take it Mr. Sedgewood is, I then would do as the major I find does; I would not take my mother's jointure during the life of my father—no not for all the wines in the world; but as you are very rich, and have only your poor Frederic to provide for, I think I should like to give that to Caroline, who is so good a nurse to me, and to the major, who saved my life."

"Who told you the major did this?"

"Lambert, my valet; he comes from Fairborough, and he says he knows it for a fact from the late Mrs. Sedgewood's maid, who overheard her master and the major disputing about it before he bade his father farewell, and that the major got the better, and would make his father keep the money, at least till he married; and if ever that took place, which the old man thought not unlikely, he said he would accept of half of it."

The earl ruminated some time in a kind of half sad and half sullen silence, while
the lovely pleader, fatigued with exertion, and still agitated by fear, looked wistfully in the face of that parent who, from his earliest recollection, had never denied him a request; his good sense pointed out to him an immense difference between his present requisition and any of those things he had hitherto desired; but yet when he considered the merits of the object, as they appeared in his eyes, he felt the impatience natural to an indulged, and especially a suffering child, to have his reasonable wishes granted; and he gazed upon the earl as if his whole soul were centered in his eyes, and would take its flight the moment it was repulsed: the earl was unable to bear these ardent glances; he rose, intreated Frederic to compose himself, and said he must give the matter very serious attention.

"My dear father, I cannot part with you in this suspense: something must be decided, or I perceive that I must see the major no more. Will you allow me to recall him? Will you allow him to hope for
Caroline? May I flatter myself that the day will come that I shall call him brother?"

"No, Frederic, he can never be your brother," said the earl, in a voice never before assumed to Frederic.

"Then I shall die," said he, sinking back, with such a deadly paleness of features as appeared already to have verified the prediction; the earl, alarmed, rang for his valet, who entered, accompanied by lady Caroline. The earl, though trembling for his son, cast a look of reproachful rage upon his daughter, which informed her but too well of what had been passing betwixt her father and brother; but she forgot her own feelings in the evident sufferings of her now speechless advocate, and flew to administer the usual remedies for exhaustion. As soon as Frederic was able to speak, he desired to be put to bed, saying—"He now felt that to be the only place for him."

A night of increased fever and perturbation followed this scene, which was increas-
ed by the anguish felt by this most amiable and exemplary boy, for having offended his father, and the self-conviction that he had not submitted as he ought to the parental mandate; yet when he beheld Caroline—when he thought of the dear major, he felt as if he had not said a thousandth part of the kind things which flowed to his tongue on their behalf. Universal trepidation seized his frame; the fever which had consumed him in the earlier part of the night was exchanged for cold shudderinglings, which appeared to his agonized sister the immediate forerunners of death. In great alarm she sent for the physician; and went herself to the apartment of the earl, who, in reply to her information, bitterly reproached her as the occasion of her brother's increased indisposition; and she returned to him bathed in tears, and overwhelmed with a double portion of wretchedness.

The report of the medical attendant was precisely what might be expected—some circumstance, by occasioning mental irri-
stability, had increased every bad symptom, which continued through the day following, in the course of which the weather, which had hitherto been favourable for the complaint, changed to a severe frost, which no artificial warmth could prevent from its usual effects. Before night the earl had acceded to every proposal of his son; had even dispatched a note in his own hand, in which he had, with wonderful facility, ascribed the little acidity his manners, though he trusted not his words, had shewn the preceding day, to a vexatious occurrence in the cabinet, and intreated the major would favour his son's couch with another of those visits which never failed to be efficacious; hinting, at the same time, that his visits would be equally agreeable to his daughter and himself; and that so soon as his son's recovery should enable them to speak on more agreeable subjects, he should be happy to do it.

The major flew to the bedside of his young friend, shocked to see the ravages which sorrow, in so short a time, had made
on his shadowy form. Sweetly consoling was the view of him to the suffering boy; and so happy was the effect upon his health, that as soon as he felt the major's hand clasped in his own, he resigned himself to repose, and, after sleeping several hours, awoke apparently invigorated and refreshed.

The earl perceived now that this redoubtable major held the life of his only son, the heir of all the honours of the Brooksbury domains, in his hands, as effectually as he had done when he took the lifeless form from its watery grave, and bestowed upon it a first resurrection; and as his daughter had lost the title on which he had set his heart in the first instance, and he concluded a small dower would be sufficient to satisfy the enamoured Sedgewood, he very prudently made the best of a bad bargain, and allowed the major to enter into all the rights of his son-in-law elect, with the single condition, that lady Caroline must not marry till the restored health of her brother enabled her to do it
with propriety—a condition that appeared extremely unnecessary, as she was incapable of omitting (by any temptation that affected herself) even the slightest mark of personal attention, and her cares to the sufferer had already extended so far as greatly to affect her own health, and sometimes from that cause to awaken extreme solicitude in her lover, though her father appeared utterly to disregard it.

But the days of Frederic were now numbered, for the little strength he had was exhausted in the conflict with his father, and the calm which followed was sweet, but deceitful; as if conscious himself of the inward change, which he sought to guard from those around him, he omitted no means in his power of giving his sister's engagement the utmost publicity it was capable of; and never failed informing all those friends of his father whose intimacy warranted their approaching his couch, that the matter was finally settled, and this more especially in his father's presence. The earl was much engaged in politics; and
while ambition urged him to court power and accumulate riches, he suffered himself not to perceive that the cankerworm was destroying his root, even while his eager hands were plucking laurels to adorn the tree: one evening, on his return from a private audience with his sovereign, which had elevated him beyond measure, he was desired by his servant in waiting to hasten to the chamber of lord Ingleby, who had desired to see him the moment he returned.

The pulse of Frederic beat very low, and his eyes had lost that radiance which had lighted their victim to the borders of the grave; his breathing had been difficult, and major Sedgewood, seated on his bed, supported him in his arms, while lady Caroline was chafing his cold hands gently between her own: a pensive smile illumed his lovely features as he perceived his father approach his bed, and he stretched out his right hand to receive him. The earl took it in speechless agony, for the sentence of death was written on that face, and it fell like an ice-bolt on the heart of the late
exulting father; gently he raised that cold hand to his parched lips; it was then as gently withdrawn, and pointing directly to the face of Theodore, a faint voice distinctly said—"Father, behold thy son."

The earl dropt nearly lifeless on his knees by the bedside, and, for the first time in his life, found himself supported and embraced by his daughter; but one of her hands was still retained by Frederic, who made a faint effort to unite it with the major's; they perceived his desire, and instantly took each other's hand, on which those of the dying boy were laid; a faint murmur, as of prayer, was heard to issue from his lips, and an awful silence sat on all around. It ceased; yet in trembling anxiety each waited in breathless expectation, but not a sigh was heard; and Theodore found, from the lifeless corse upon his breast, that the pure spirit of this beloved boy had fled to the presence of its Creator.
CHAP. V.

He that imposes an oath makes it,
Not he that for convenience takes it. Hudibras.

To attempt describing the grief and disappointment of the earl at the loss he had sustained is impossible; it was severely felt by all who had known the amiable object; but the earl had a manner of making all around him participate in his afflictions, which we believe, or at least fear, was not peculiar to his lordship, though nothing could be less calculated to relieve himself; he quarrelled with all around him, and seemed to imagine that the sorrow which stuck to him like the poisoned shirt of Hercules, could only be torn from his own burning skin by plaistering the back of every unfortunate being who came in his way. His medical, his more immediate attendants, were dismissed with opprobrium; and his patient daughter, who had been the most affectionate attendant of her
dying brother, and would have been the kindest consooler to himself, was the medium by which that anger, which in fact he nourished against the divine decree, found vent in the most cruel sarcasms or the most bitter invectives; nor would the major have escaped his share of unmerited reproof, had he been in the way to receive it; but scarcely had he attended the lamented heir to the house appointed for all, when he was informed by his father, that finding his health extremely delicate, he had at length adopted the resolution of repairing, with his daughter, to the south of France, and should, in a few days, be in London, on his way thither.

Filial piety had ever formed too decided a part of the major's character, to allow him to neglect a parent so justly dear to him; he therefore not only paid the kindest attention to his father during his stay in London, but accompanied him across the Channel, and so far on his tour as appeared necessary to him, and consistent
100 says she to her neighbour, what?

with his own engagements in the earl's family. His prospects there were fully explained, and delighted the heart of a father, who was justly proud of a son, whose exaltation appeared to him to be only the natural reward of his superior excellence, for Mr. Sedgewood was literally a country gentleman of fine taste, retired manners, and nearly as ignorant of the world now, as at the time when he first entered it; he had himself married a woman whose fortune was much superior to his own, and who, for his sake, had refused many great offers, and who had to the end of her life persisted in pronouncing herself the happiest of women: this conduct did not excite in Mr. Sedgewood any undue opinion of his own merits; it only decreased his opinion of the influence of riches; and in supposing the earl of Brooksbury gave his daughter freely to his son, he concluded that the earl was a wise and liberal man; but he hoped there was nothing new in that: in fact, poor Mr. Sedgewood was an odd man in those days—he is incomprehensible in these.
Says she to her neighbour, what?

During major Sedgewood's absence, the earl had tasted of the cup of consolation; and though it was but a poor draught, yet it was better than nothing; and that inclination every human being has to accept any prop in the hour of sinking, induced him to snatch it with eagerness proportioned to his wants. This cup was not presented to him by the hand of Religion, for she requires patience and submission ere she bestows the balm of resignation; nor was it given by the hand of dutiful affection, whose incessant watchfulness sought to assuage his sorrows by increasing his comforts: no! it came in the shape of the duke of Roverton, who, although neither so spotless as the first, nor so fair as the last, was more efficacious than either.

"I condole with you most sincerely, my dear friend," said the duke, with a most affectionate squeeze of the hand; "your loss has been great, aye, very great, I confess."

The earl was really unable to reply; he could only bow—and he did bow.
"But your lordship has a daughter, whose children may perpetuate her father's honours, and who is so lovely, so very charming, that—"

"Your grace is pleased to flatter me; the poor girl has the merit of resembling the features of my son, and that is now the only consolation that is left me."

"Then your lordship must allow me to say you are an absolute stranger to your own treasures, whereas I had concluded you were a miser; lady Caroline Ingleby is, in my opinion, a perfect paragon; I never remember to have seen so beautiful a woman; yet your lordship and I have seen many fine girls in our time."

"Your grace is many years my junior."

"A mere trifle; I think we might each of us take a wife, Brooksbury, without being laughed at for old fools by the boys of this day, hey?"

"That your grace might do it, there can be no doubt; but on this subject my mind has been made up many years. I shall never marry again."
The duke had been told as much before, but he wished to be satisfied in this point; having obtained such satisfaction, he again launched out into praises of lady Caroline’s fine person, and withdrew; but leaving behind him a ray of light which cheered the benighted mind of the bereaved earl of Brooksbury.

Lady Caroline received more attention from her father during their dinner-hour than she ever remembered had fell to her share; her heart was affected and penetrated by it, and she redoubled her attentions to him; every overture towards familiarity which she ventured to make was received with kindness, and, for the first time, she ventured to whisper to herself, that her father had some affection even for her. She felt the value of this kindness more especially now, on account of the major’s absence, and because she had found her father’s austerity increased since her brother’s death; with the eager hopes of youth, she fondly anticipated an entire change in the manners of her parent, and trusted she
Says she to her neighbour, what?

should henceforward supply the sad vacuum in his heart hitherto held by the brother, who innocently usurped her rights in addition to his own.

Several succeeding days passed in the same happy intercourse, during which the duke of Roverton frequently made a familiar call: the manners of his grace, though free, were polite and unexceptionable; the freedom of that day was chastened by its formality, and rendered a man at fifty only the more agreeable, as he wore then very near as much modest assurance as the boy of this day adopts at fifteen; the duke was therefore pleasant as a companion to lady Caroline, for his society evidently relieved her father, and was therefore gratefully enjoyed by her.

"Would you like to be a duchess, Caroline?" said the earl one day to her, soon after the duke had left them.

"I have no desire to be any thing more than a private gentlewoman," replied his daughter.
"But you were not born to be a private gentlewoman."

"I was educated for nothing else, my lord."

"Your aunt was an old fool, and put a parcel of humdrum notions into your head that it is high time you got quit of. Besides, what was very proper for you as a younger daughter, is not any longer so, since you are unhappily become my heiress."

"I hope, my dear sir, I shall never disgrace the name I have the honour to bear; but as my fate is in one sense decided, it is perhaps as well for me that I have no ambition to be a duchess, or any thing else inconsistent with probability."

"Your fate decided! Really, lady Caroline Ingleby, you are rather paradoxical; how is your fate decided?"

With a look of mingled sorrow, surprise, and modesty, the lovely girl faintly articulated the name of major Sedgewood.

"Nonsense, nonsense; you cannot be
so ridiculous as to suppose that a folly I was obliged to countenance, for the satisfaction of my poor boy, could be considered an engagement. The major himself knows better; his little trip to the continent is a proof that he considers the affair as ending with the dear, unhappy boy who caused it; and if you have been so weak as to consider it more binding, his absence affords you the opportunity of retrieving your reason, and of convincing me that—"

The earl might have continued, if, at this instant, his speech had not been interrupted by his auditor falling prostrate in a death-like swoon: her features, in this moment of temporary death, so strongly assumed the likeness of his son, that he felt as if the tomb had released him, for the purpose of reproaching his father: in great agitation he summoned his servants, and desired she might be carried to her chamber; nor did he retire to his own till he had visited her, and by the tenderness of his manner make some reparation for the suddenness with
which he had opened this first battery against her inclinations and her principles.

But the breach was made, and every hour that now marked the progress of time, in one way or other, was rendered distressing to lady Caroline: happily the major returned, and the first sounds of his voice seemed to dispel the clouds that hung around her; but the alarm he felt, from her pale, dejected countenance, was not so easily dispersed; and no sooner had he learned the persecution she was undergoing, than he determined to demand a full and unequivocal explanation from the earl her father.

The earl, a little softening down the high tones he had assumed to his daughter, repeated the substance of his assertions; and concluded by a courteous hint, that the major's visits would in future be dispensed with, although in any other manner the earl would be most happy to prove his gratitude to major Sedgewood.

The complete and ineffable contempt visible in the fine countenance of the ma-
yor, as he heard this right honourable declaration, was more forcible than words, for of them Theodore was sparing; he remembered it was the father of Caroline to whom he spoke, and this remembrance again checked his tongue; but he nevertheless informed the earl—"That the promise he had received from him being in many instances not only tacitly, but positively and repeatedly given (though it might be at the earnest solicitation of lord Ingleby), he should consider it as binding, and would certainly call upon lady Caroline to fulfil her part of it, the first moment it was in her power. From the earl he should ask nothing; the man who, day by day, could have countenanced a contract, while he had been pushing, to the utmost of his power, a bill in parliament, which he knew would suspend, and, as he doubtless hoped, would eventually prevent its fulfilment, was not a man from whom he could accept obligation, even if it were dispensed by a monarch's hand."

So saying, the major withdrew.
dignity of offended virtue; and as the last glance from his commanding eye beamed on the earl, he felt his own conscious inferiority so acutely, that even a review of all his titles, and their substantial accompaniments, failed to restore him to his wonted self-satisfaction. Humbled, yet enraged, he sat down, and, in suspended vengeance, listened the last steps of the major as they fell heavily on the staircase; when the porter had closed the gates, the earl experienced instant relief; he rose, rang the bell, and ordered his daughter into his presence; but as if doomed to be tormented, she entered so sad, so pale, so woe-begone, that even his right honourable rage was abated by the first glance of her features, for they were again those of the dying Frederic; in a stern voice he bade her go to her room, and send for her physician; to this she would have replied, but by an imperative motion of his hand, silence was imposed, and the heart-stricken Caroline retired.

The earl felt assured that his children
sickened and died on purpose to vex him, and he therefore concluded himself the most miserable of all fathers. Extreme misery ever presents the desire of removal; and the earl therefore gave instant orders for that of his family immediately leaving London, for one of his mansions in the north of England. Great bodies move slowly, and it was not the fashion of that day for coronetted coaches to move with the celerity of mail-coaches; but the earl was seized with a flying mania, and the slowness of his servants' motions, as they appeared to him, served for an admirable excuse for the raging anger in which he now freely indulged. It was doubtless the general opinion of his household, that he was carrying lady Caroline into the country to keep her from eloping with the major, towards which consummation of the affair each was willing to lend a helping hand; and so soon as the earl allowed himself to comment upon the appearance of this suspicion, he favoured the idea, though he protested he did it for the sake of his
Says she to her neighbour, what? 111
daughter's health. The fact was, that he
had a just reliance upon the delicacy of
his daughter's mind, and the firmness of
her principles; he knew that ill as he had
used her, she would not conceive his un-
kindness could justify her disobedience, es-
pecially at a time when his heart was still
bleeding from the recent loss of her bro-
ther; and he was confident that no solici-
tations of the major could induce her to
marriage, much less clandestinely, during
the period of her mourning.

When the major arrived at his lodgings,
he found that the "pomp of words," with
which he had endeavoured to fortify his
heart during his walk home, had left that
heart cold, languid, and wretched. The
fate of Caroline, meekly enduring for him
the cruel taunts and haughty menaces of
her father, rose before him, and he felt for
a moment as if it were his duty to resign
all claims to her that might interfere with
her peace: but then should she become
another's?—the thought was agony beyond
all human endurance.
M^\text{SAYS\ SHE\ TO\ HER\ NEIGHBOUR,\ WHAT?\ }

To trace the sufferings of each party is utterly out of my power; Caroline, who could not be intimidated by the threats of her father, though divided from her lover, and unable to learn his sentiments, farther than as she read them in her own heart, was at length softened by the apparent affliction of her father. The earl had found, in his own case, the efficacy of a pale face and a sick-bed to make him forego his purpose; he therefore adopted it in turn; and after declaring that the death of one child, and the obstinacy of the other, would break his heart, he shut himself up in his chamber, and denied himself to all but his physician.

It was well known to the earl's family that he had laboured many years under an inward complaint, which, although not immediately dangerous, rendered him incapable of any extraordinary degree of exertion; that he should suffer, therefore, after a hasty journey, was not in the least degree surprising; nor was it possible that the severe grief, followed by anger, which
of late had agitated the earl, could escape making the ravages common to such companions; and it was therefore no wonder that Caroline's pity and concern were deeply excited, when, after her services had been repeatedly rejected, she was at length admitted to the sick-bed of her father.

Affliction appeared to have softened every harsher emotion in the earl; he addressed his child with great tenderness, and without adverting to the past, seemed only anxious to ensure her tenderness for what he called the short remnant of his future days; he even condescended to lament that he had not hitherto been so kind a parent as he ought to have been; and said, in a tone of the most distressing self-reproach, that Heaven had punished him by a stroke which had been at once his scourge and his cure, by opening his eyes to the blessing which was left to him in a kind and tender daughter.

The earl seldom spoke of heaven; and his daughter, while deeply penetrated with grief for his sorrow, heard with pious joy,
that his heart was thus led by affliction to look to the hand that in mercy had chastised him; she endeavoured to assure him of her love and duty, and entreated him to permit her to become his constant attendant.

By degrees the tender heart of his child was drawn towards him, by a confidence rendered sweeter from the new sensations it inspired; and at the moment when the earl perceived that her pity for his sufferings, and her sense of obedience to his will and love for his person, were all most strongly melting her heart and disposing it to his views, he once more mentioned the tacitly-proscribed name of major Sedgewood, and in the most soothing tones he could assume, besought her to relinquish a connexion which was altogether improper for her, and which would destroy her father.

Lady Caroline said she considered herself bound by the most solemn ties to consider major Sedgewood her future husband; but she did not wish to precipitate her union;
she would, if possible, reconcile her love for the major with that she felt for her father, and—

"Then," exclaimed the earl, with an anxious impatience, which, by agitating his frame, inspired the mind of lady Caroline with the most alarming ideas for his health, "promise me that you will not marry Sedgewood till he is in possession of his uncle's title:—a short, perhaps a very short time may suffice for this; and during the interim, my mind will have inured itself to contemplate the subject, and, should I be spared so long, to endure, nay, even to rejoice in it. Sir Charles Sedgewood is older than me, and they tell me terribly afflicted with the gout."

Caroline was silent: a vague recollection passed her mind of having heard one of the servants say to another, that he had heard bad news of sir Charles Sedgewood; it was the Yorkshireman formerly mentioned; the words caught her ear as he was delivering some soup that morning to the earl's own valet; this she concluded was the more
immediate cause of the earl's entreaty, as it was not improbable that the name of Sedgewood reaching his ear had induced him to make those inquiries she did not feel authorized to do, when the words were uttered at the earl's chamber door in the morning; this request did not therefore appear unnatural or constrained in the earl, and the beseeching look with which it was reiterated entirely subdued her; yet neither unmindful of her promise to Theodore, nor unmoved by the painful image of prolonged absence, already so irksome and heart-wounding as she had found it, she answered by saying—"But will you then, my lord, promise not to oppose my union, and promise in a way that it is impossible to retract?"

"Alas!" said the earl, "short as that time may be, Caroline, from what I now feel there is little probability that my consent will then be wanting, I shall then sleep with my poor boy, and the last Brooksbury will be forgotten. But if it will satisfy you, my love, I will take the
most solemn oath, in that case, to sanction your union."

The nearer the earl approached the goal at which he was aiming, the more terrible became the trepidation he experienced; his bosom heaved with convulsive sobs; his anxious eyes appeared starting from their sockets, and his cheeks assumed an ashy paleness; with the most dreadful solemnity he called on God to witness the oath he made, and pour on his devoted head the vials of his wrath, if, in one jot or tittle, he deviated from his awful promise. Having spoken, the earl, seizing the hand of his trembling daughter, called upon her to repeat his words.

Lady Caroline faintly articulated—"It was impossible."

"Wretch! accursed wretch! canst thou see thy parent thus supplicating thee for a moment's peace—a transitory cordial to his agonized heart, and in such a moment as this deny it him? Then may the last accents of thy only parent meet thy ears to
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

blast thee and the husband thou hast chosen! may—"

The horrible countenance the earl assumed in this moment of terrible transition from sorrow to rage, blended in it all that was appalling in death and diabolical in madness; the terrified girl, sinking on her knees, motioned him for a moment's respite; he ceased, and received the agonized accents which bespoke the dreadful promise he had dictated; but nature could go no farther; and the moment this dreadful effort was passed, she sunk breathless on the floor.

A dreadful pang shot through the heart of the earl, and a cold sweat bedewed his forehead; the end he had so ardently laboured to attain was arrived, yet the joy he had promised himself followed not his success; so terrible were the sensations he experienced, that for some minutes he doubted whether the hand of that awful monarch with whose name and terrors he had been taking such unwarrantable liber-
ties was not really upon him, and the consciousness that such a fact would be the just retribution for his dissimulation; for although he had really suffered to a certain degree, and was thought by some of his attendants, besides his own daughter, to be in a bad way, such a thought had never entered his own head; for dying was, of all others, the thing to which he had an insuperable objection; and on that solemn night when he was called to witness the last moments of his son, the face of death, though drest in angel smiles to that meek soul, was a source of as much distress to the earl as even the eternal separation to which it condemned him.

The moment he was able to summon his fellow-creatures about him, the earl felt relieved, for they seemed in some degree to banish the consciousness of that all-seeing eye which alone had witnessed his late conference; he gave immediate orders for the removal of lady Caroline, and told his valet and housekeeper to remain with him, and endeavour to amuse him.
Lady Caroline was soon restored, and on being left to the composure of her own chamber, and to the liberty of prayer and meditation, she was enabled to find some consolation, under the idea that she had satisfied her father's mind, without destroying her own hopes of eventual happiness. She could not reflect without horror on the turbulent and vindictive passions which had swayed her father's breast at that awful period when he appeared likely to be called to the bar of heaven; and she fondly hoped that now she had appeased these unholy fires, by a submission which had cost her so very dear, a happier frame of temper would arise; and that her hand might be appointed to lead her returning father to the throne of grace, during that period when she had not any other claimant on her cares; she trusted that a tender correspondence with her Theodore would now be permitted to her, and would relieve the pangs of absence, and the sickness which arises from hope deferred; and that although joy was denied to her, yet re-
signation would soften the thorns of her sorrow.

The day following, to her great surprise and comfort, the earl quitted his room, and requested her company to take a short airing. As he was so much better, lady Caroline conceived the design of finding, from some of the servants, what had been the nature of the bad news respecting sir Charles Sedgewood; but on questioning the earl's valet, he positively denied having received any communication, and the servant whom she had heard speak to him was sent to Hampshire. Confident as to what she had heard, it immediately struck her that sir Charles Sedgewood was really dead, and the silence of the major confirmed her in the idea; for although she knew that every person in the house had been strictly charged on no consideration to bring her a letter or message, yet as she had, during the first weeks of their parting, received several kind mementoes from her lover, she still hoped that she could only be prevent-
ed from doing so by some extraordinary circumstance.

While these things crossed her mind, she remembered, for the first time, that the life of the major's father must intervene between his possession of the title and the death of his uncle, and her heart recoiled at the promise she had given, since it had made the happiness of her lover incomplete, till the death of a parent he had ever tenderly loved; but even on this subject hope still whispered peace; she had heard so much said of the character of Mr. Sedge-wood, that she could not help hoping he would resign his rights in favour of a son so singularly situated, and so fondly beloved.

While lady Caroline was thus fondly building hope on the wreck of happiness, the duke of Roverton arrived, as he said, on a visit to the earl, of whose health he had heard the most alarming accounts, he said, and was therefore unable to deny himself the satisfaction of personal inquiry. His grace was by no means an unwelcome vi-
sitor to lady Caroline; for as he was become of late so much the bosom friend of her father, she concluded he would soon hear all that had passed on the subject of her engagement; and of course concluded, if he had ever been weak enough to think of marrying such a girl as her, that his hopes being completely cut off, it was foolish to give her the trouble of refusing him.

Contrary to her expectations, however, the duke lost no opportunity of paying her the most courtly attention, yet without making any immediate advances; this conduct in a short time lulled all her fears, and his society became pleasant to her; she began to hope he would become her friend, and that through him she should again hear of the major, whose letters she was convinced were intercepted. At this period only one newspaper found its way to the mansion of the earl, and it did not contain any of those important informations relative to the world of fashion which could
satisfy her inquiries; so that she sometimes fancied he was gone to France, sometimes that he was attending his dying uncle, and sometimes that he was hovering near her, but was unable to see her; she never, however, doubted that he continued unshaken in his fidelity, unchanged in his affection.

One morning, just after breakfast, the duke having received his letters, which he begged permission to open in her presence, expressed some surprise, by the usual exclamations of, "Umph! surprising! who would have thought it!" as he perused one of them; on which the earl observed—"I am glad to see your grace amused by your correspondent's information of this morning."

"I am so, indeed; 'tis a droll account of the wedding of a Yorkshire baronet, with an account of his bride's paraphernalia, and the provision made for the ten children she expects to have, though the youthful bridegroom has seen fifty-five; but he is a fine hale fellow, save a smack of the gout, which indeed will lengthen
his life. I don’t wonder at the girl taking him, for he was thought devilish handsome at college; we used to say sir Charles Sedgewood was the Yorkshire Apollo.”

Lady Caroline did not faint; she rose from her chair, and left the room with a stately step and a majestic countenance; but when she arrived in her own apartment, the nerve that appeared to have sustained her gave way, and she sunk upon the floor in a state to which insensibility would have been a blessed relief. Was this then the “bad news” the honest man, anxious for the major’s welfare, had communicated, and which had led her father to adopt a system of the most refined treachery, the most barbarous meanness, that was ever acted on a tender heart, in the very moment too when that heart was bleeding for his wounds, and willing to sacrifice its happiness to his prejudices? Yes, it was too plain that she had been the victim of a scheme; and she had no doubt but her Theodore was in some situation suffering, at least, anxiety equal to her own. The
sense of the deep injustice she sustained awoke indignation, which for a short time overcame the sense of sorrow, and made her determine, at all risks, to learn the fate of her "bosom's lord;" her pure ingenuous mind, which would hitherto have scorned the idea of tampering with the integrity of a servant, or even disobeying the implied will of her parent, now felt as if the ties that bound her were all dissolved, save that awful bond, which was the register heaven held, as the renunciation of her happiness, and of her father's honour.—Artless as she was, she could not doubt but a scheme existed between her designing parent and the duke, which she apprehended the late suavity of her manners towards a man whose age made her naturally look up to him for protection, had induced them to develop more speedily than they had first intended. Her conjecture was not wrong; for after giving a few hours to what they conceived would suffice for the workings of disappointment, in a mind which they hoped was already weaned by
absence from its object, she received a letter from the duke, making her a most splendid offer of his hand, and such arrangements for her future appearance in life as were calculated, in his eyes, to awaken at least her ambition, which he had found, in many women, a passion not uncommonly built on the ruined structure of disappointed love.

Lady Caroline was by nature meek, and from principle humble and obedient; but her mind was strong, and her feelings exquisitely acute. The youthful predilection which circumstances had led her to form with a handsome and accomplished man, had been, on her second intimacy with him, confirmed by her admiration and esteem for his many virtues; and when at length it had received her parent's sanction, had become, in habit as well as sentiment, so interwove with every idea of her mind, and feeling of her heart, that it became a part of her existence. In the presence of her dying brother, she had, for his satisfaction, given and received the
most tender, and to her most solemn, assurances of fidelity; and although she had been led to delay the fulfilment of actual marriage, in obedience to her father's request, yet the idea of even his daring to absolve the contract had not entered her mind. As she read and re-read the letter of the duke, every passion that could agitate a human being rose to her mind, and agitated her almost to frenzy: at some moments she felt that she should be justified in flying to the major, wherever he might be found, and in beseeching him to place her under the care of his father in France; but her total ignorance of his situation precluded this plan, which her delicacy condemned, while her anger and her love approved it: while these thoughts rushed to her brain, she was interrupted in her reverie by a letter from her father, in which he not only urged her to accept, with all due gratitude, the noble offer of his friend, the duke of Roverton, but begged to inform her, that major Sedgewood was already acquainted that such had been her
determination, in consequence of which he had left the kingdom, and would probably ere this have reconciled himself to any trifling disappointment he had received, by the selection of some more suitable bride.

"Left the kingdom!" exclaimed Caroline, as her eye flashed over the detested characters, "left the kingdom, under an impression of my falsehood!—Infamous! oh, most infamous duplicity!—Where is the earl—the earl of Brooksbury I mean, for I have no longer a father?—Tell me, I say, where can I find the earl?"

The servant to whom this question was addressed was so thunderstruck by the imperious tone in which it was uttered, by lips that till now were never opened but in gentleness, and still more so by the look of agonizing sorrow which accompanied them, that he could scarcely answer; but when lady Caroline exclaimed—"Where shall I find him?" it immediately struck the man that it was his duty not to permit:
her approach at this time to the earl, as he had perceived the family of lord Egerton approaching the breakfast-parlour as he left it with the letter; and knowing the estimation of that excellent family, not only in his lord's house, but every other where they were known, he justly concluded that it would be particularly desirable to prevent their witnessing the present situation of lady Caroline. In most respectful terms he mentioned lord and lady Egerton's arrival, with their son, the honourable colonel Saville, and two visitors of theirs; he therefore presumed her ladyship had better not descend into the breakfast-parlour immediately.

"I have been long surrounded by demons," said lady Caroline exultingly, "but I now rush to the presence of assembled angels;" so saying she fled past the man, whom an united sentiment of terror and compassion prevented from detaining her, and with the letters of the duke and the earl in her hand, ran impetuously into the breakfast-parlour, where the party were
seated, and were at that moment making the tenderest inquiries after her health.

The wild and haggard air that agitated her whole frame, the deadly paleness and alternate flushes of her countenance, and the manner in which she held the letters, her total absence of all forms of good manners, as they were held at that day, petrified and shocked the whole group, who imagined she was seized with sudden madness, as they could in no other manner account for an appearance so singularly opposed to that she had ever exhibited, which was meek and retiring, even to timidity; but every feeling was now absorbed in one, and rushing forward to lady Egerton, she dropt on her knees before her, and seizing her hands, which she pressed to her forehead and her heart, she exclaimed—“Oh, lady Egerton! dear, excellent lady, the friend of my mother and my aunt, have mercy upon me, I beseech you; I have no longer a mother or a friend, in the wide, wide world!”

The earl, astonished and confounded,
flew towards his daughter, endeavouring to raise her, and to apologize for a conduct equally novel and indecorous, and which, he protested "it was utterly out of his power to comprehend;" but the high-wrought feelings of a mind so completely wounded beyond its power of endurance, were not now to be restrained by common barriers; the agitation she endured rose almost to frenzy, and assumed the commanding mien of madness, blended with the deepest subjugation of distress. In a tone of despair, and with that striking energy of language which is given by the inspiration of sorrow and injury, she briefly recapitulated the most striking circumstances attendant on her connexion with major Sedgewood, the manner in which she had been induced by her father solemnly to postpone her engagement with him until his possession of the family honours, and which she now saw was, a mean advantage taken of her feelings, in a moment when her heart yielded to the dictates of duty and affection, and which had doubtless...
been represented to her lover in such a manner as to induce him to consider her worthless and perjured, and to fly from a country she had rendered hateful to him. In concluding this striking appeal to their feelings, she again fell upon her knees, and with uplifted hands besought the great Ruler of heaven and earth again to register that vow which indissolubly pronounced her the wife of Theodore, and of him alone, however separated; and repeated the horrible invocation she had so lately learnt, if she dared to become the wife of another.

The earl and the duke, in equal astonishment, gazed at each other, and felt how completely "a plain tale could put them down," though from a "puling girl," while the tenderest compassion and the most ardent indignation by turns affected the hearts of the rest of the party. Lord Egerton was the father of one amiable son, whom he had often wished to see the favoured lover of lady Caroline, but whose professional engagements had kept him from seeing her, till his heart had formed
another attachment, equally worthy, though not yet declared to the world. He, together with his lady, had often visited the sick couch of lord Frederic Ingleby, and were well acquainted with the engagement of his sister; and though they knew too well the probable change of the earl's conduct towards the major, yet they could not suspect that it would have led him such dishonourable lengths, since it appeared to them that he had not only destroyed the peace, but unsettled the reason of his only daughter, for whom they were so truly sorry, that lady Egerton entreated lady Caroline's return with her as a means for tranquillizing her spirits: the earl had not the power to refuse; for the consciousness that lord Egerton must learn, and would detest his conduct, stripped him at once of the proud superiority of rank he held, and made him timid, meek, and conciliating, even though the duke, his friend, stood at his right hand—such is the dignity of virtue.

Before lady Caroline had reached Thorp
Hall, the mansion of her new protectors, lady Egerton trembled lest she had been too precipitate in removing her; she became evidently more feverish and ill every moment; and it was found necessary to send for a physician immediately on their arrival, who no sooner saw her than he pronounced her in a most alarming state of fever.

For several weeks a dreadful delirium disturbed the senses of lady Caroline, and a consuming disease wasted her frame; often did her soul tremble on her pale lips, as if ready and anxious to take its flight to that fair spirit which had preceded her, and whose beckoning hand her frenzied fancy told her was ever luring her away. Yet still an idea of her lover, entreating her to return and live for him, seemed to intrude on the departing spirit, and delay its flight. At these moments she would sometimes pour out such unpremeditated strains of harmony in irregular verse, suited to the feelings of the moment, as astonished, delighted, and yet harrowed the heart of
every one who approached her, but gave her an interest in the bosoms of her friends, which was as powerful as her claims, and as tender as her heart, and which death only had the power to dissolve.

During this melancholy period, the earl paid those occasional visits to Thorp Hall which decency called for on his daughter's account, and which he wished to improve to his advantage, by inducing a belief that she was actually in a state of madness when she threw herself on the protection of lady Egerton; and that her accusations of him, the extraordinary oath she took, and the entire change of character which took place in her that morning, were all corroborations of this melancholy truth. Lord and lady Egerton readily admitted that delirium was indeed visible in their young friend; but there was at that time method in her madness, which spoke from whence it sprung; and giving the two letters into the earl's hand, which his daughter, in her confusion, had still retained open in her hand on leaving home, they remained si-
lent, thus giving him a proof that they were not deceived as to the causes of his daughter's illness, and yet not affording him a pretext for discontinuing his visits, and allowing the claims of his child.

Youth, aided by tenderness and skill, overcame the fever under which lady Caroline suffered; and dreadfully as she was reduced, her friend had the sweet satisfaction to perceive that some degree of strength was restored to her languid frame, and that her mind, to a certain degree, regained its powers; but a deep and settled melancholy pervaded her once-animated features; she never spoke farther than by monosyllables, in answer to her friends; and the only signs she gave of recognising those she had pleasure in seeing, was by a smile so melancholy, that it seemed like the blossom of affection springing from the root of despair. It was the opinion of the good physician who attended her, that her memory was perfectly restored, and her judgment unimpaired; and that whenever she obtained the power of weeping freely
over her sorrows, and of speaking of major Sedgewood, the most salutary effects might be expected; and he therefore wished her to remain ever under the immediate eye of lady Egerton, as the only person to whom her grateful heart and gentle nature would ever be enabled to speak in confidence. He likewise recommended travelling as likely to amuse her; and particularly requested that she might not return to the house, or especially not visit the apartment where her mind had received the shock that first overpowered it. To these propositions the earl made no objection; he had no inclination to perceive a dumb statue at his table, whose silence spoke volumes to his recollection; and he readily and politely closed with lady Egerton’s proposition that she should remain her guest; and as she proposed travelling on her account, he readily accorded every facility within his power; and this point once settled, the earl having quite as little taste for his present residence as the invalid herself could have, he quitted the country for
the metropolis, where, in the bustle of politics, he endeavoured to lose the sense of his double disappointment; but he found his health at times so extremely indifferent that he was obliged to yield to its demands; but, alas! his sick pillow was strewn with thorns; and at these times when he most courted repose, he most sensibly found it was fled from him for ever.

CHAP. VI.

Oh! let me join
Grief to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.  Pope.

One of the visitors of lord Egerton, on that eventful day which had drawn him to the earl of Brocksbury's, was well acquainted with the character of major Sedgewood, and was not personally unknown to him; this gentleman (sir Thomas Frankland) was a gay young man, but possessed humanity and honour; the scene he witnessed severe-
ly affected him; and as it was impossible for him to convey any assistance to the suffering lady, who was soon after declared to be in the most imminent danger, and as to do nothing is a case the young and active find too difficult to engage in, he determined, if possible, to find out major Sedgewood, give him the particulars which had come under his own notice, and assist him in bringing the earl to account; though in what way this could be done the ardent baronet was not well able to imagine, all things considered, he confessed.

As major Sedgewood had not been seen in London since the time when the earl of Brooksbury had quitted it so suddenly, it was generally believed that he had followed his father to France, where the unexpected marriage of his uncle would, by completely disgusting him with his English connexions, induce him to remain, unless the situation of his country occasioned his presence professionally: on the strength of this information, sir Thomas actually set off for Nice, where he learnt Mr.
Sedgewood resided; at Amiens he met with the marquis of Blandington; and as Englishmen are always glad to meet with each other, though but slightly acquainted in England, (from the extreme youth of the marquis), yet a considerable intimacy ensued; and the baronet, in the course of conversation, mentioned his intention of pursuing his journey to Nice with all possible expedition, as he was anxious to meet major Sedgewood there.

"I will go with you to the Antipodes, if the sight of the major will reward my toil!" exclaimed the marquis; "but what is the lucky rogue doing there? This is the time, or nearly so, that he ought to be at home, performing an enraptured benedict's duties."

The baronet, glad to find a person acquainted with the engagement, related all he knew of the affair, and saw, with surprise, the terrible impression it made on his youthful auditor, who swore, sung, raved, and stormed alternately, in a manner that proved how nearly his own heart
was still interwoven with all that affected Caroline. They set out together for Nice; but on their arrival found that Mr. Sedgewood was at present a stranger to the place where his unhappy son resided; all the letters he had received from him for many months had indicated marks of a disturbed, unhappy mind, but had imparted his sorrow in too general terms to enable his anxious parent to judge of its nature, farther than to surmise that it was a tender disappointment. Sir Thomas related, of course, all that had come under his knowledge, and the warm interest he took in the affair, which was, indeed, sufficiently evident from the long journey he had taken to serve a man to whom he was personally unknown. He now began to repent his own folly, in not making those inquiries after the major which a less impetuous temper would have pointed out as indispensable, acknowledging that he had only set out for France on the strength of general report, and that it was probable the major might be visiting his native county at the
very time the circles of fashion had sent him to Nice.

"That, I am certain," replied Mr. Sedge-wood, "cannot possibly be the case, as my brother declares he has married because all his family were dispersed, and he was lost for want of a friend. Poor man," he continued, "the wife he has taken is little likely to supply his loss, further than as she will be a good nurse to him when he is laid up by the gout; and as she is our distant relation, a person his own equal in years, and much attached to Theodore, I regret that the state of his mind has been such as to prevent his visiting those whose cordial sympathy at least would not have been wanting; for though my new sister is a woman of few words and confined notions, she has a good understanding and a feeling heart."

"Infamous plotters!" exclaimed Sir Thomas, as he recollected the circumstance lady Egerton had mentioned, of the duke's letter containing an account of this wed-
ding, and which had escaped lady Caroline in her wanderings, with a chain of circumstance too regular to be deemed the effusion of delirium, and which she had therefore communicated to her family.

This incident, added to his vexation on reflecting on the wild-goose-chase he had taken, made sir Thomas resolve to return as suddenly as he came; although Mr. Sedgewood gave it as his decided opinion, that the report of his son's travelling was true, it being now near two months since he had received a letter from him; that it was probable he had gone into Switzerland, as it was a place for which he had an uncommon predilection; and he now hoped he should hear from him soon, as he never failed to write when it was possible; therefore he could not rationally assign any other reason for not having received his letters, than those which may be accounted for from change of situation.—

"Theodore," said the fond father, "has a mind too regulated to allow any grief to
afflict the friends who love him, farther than as they participate, by sympathy, in his sorrows."

"Ah! 'tis fine talking," cried the baronet, "of minds being attempered, when such a mind as they tell me this sweet girl possessed is thrown off the hinges. By Heaven! if your son is not as mad as her, I shall regret running after him; but if he is, I shall glory in him—he shall command my fortune and my life."

Tears of gratitude bedimmed the eyes of Mr. Sedgewood as he shook sir Thomas's hand at parting; he would willingly have returned to England with them, but from the conviction he felt that his son was really journeying on the continent, and that he should shortly hear from him, and that at any hazard it was desirable that his inquiries should be pursued in France, while sir Thomas was kindly searching for his son in England; and that such search might be made with more effect, he presented the baronet with various letters of
introduction to his brother, and other friends of the family. Thus provided, this generous volunteer in the cause of an unknown friend was desirous of leaving Nice as soon as possible, to which the marquis of Blandington observed—"He could not possibly object; but as he had made no bargain to return with him, and found himself extremely happy where he was, (save the anxiety he felt for his friend, the major, and still more that which touched his heart for lady Caroline,) and as his tutor had no objection, he purposed remaining there some months longer."

Sir Thomas Frankland perceived that the daughter of Mr. Sedgewood had at least divided the heart of this amiable youth with her brother; but as she was a very lively, engaging girl, he thought his fellow-traveller might bestow himself worse, especially at a time when the vivacity he so eminently possessed might be of use to the spirits of her excellent father. He therefore hastily retraced his steps, was favoured in his passage, and in less than ten days
presented himself at the seat of sir Charles Sedgewood, where he was received with old English hospitality, but found not the object of his search, which so many concurring circumstances appeared to render so totally out of his power, that he accepted the baronet’s invitation to remain with them for some weeks. As, however, it was no part of this gentleman’s character to be stationary, in less than a fortnight he was on his road for Bath; and lord Egerton’s being very little out of the way, he stepped aside, not only to show his respect for a family he loved, but to inquire particularly after the interesting sufferer, whose situation had affected him so much, and caused him such useless, though indefatigable exertion.

Sir Thomas was received with the usual hospitality by the family, and now found lady Caroline in the mitigated, but still hopeless, state of suffering we have described. When he informed lady Egerton how he had been engaged since their parting,
she informed him, that it was her full persuasion that major Sedgewood, wherever he might be, was certainly happier than he could be if the actual state of lady Caroline was known to him; and as there was no hope of their union, she thought it would be cruel to bring them to an interview, which might be almost heart-breaking to him, and would probably again unsettle the little returns of reason evinced by Caroline.

After this conversation had taken place, sir Thomas proposed proceeding one stage farther that night, as the evening was remarkably fine, and the moon nearly at the full, and set out, notwithstanding the solicitations of the family. On emerging from the near environs of the park, the sweetness of the surrounding scene, pensive thoughts arising from the preceding subject of discourse, and some tender recollections connected with the history of his own feelings, occasioned sir Thomas to check his horse, to indulge in the train of thought which was thus awakened, at the same time
that he bade his servant ride forward and order his supper and bed: he had not proceeded far when he observed a man emerge from a neighbouring thicket, who, abruptly crossing his path, sprang over the opposite fence, and thus entered the park which surrounded Thorp Hall, to which he advanced by rapid steps; there was something in his air which formed so perfect a contrast to his habit, that it was impossible not to notice him; for his dress, as he crossed the path, was that of a mere peasant, and his agile step, and even dignified gait, were those of the finished gentleman, and at this period the line of distinction was more strongly marked than it is in the present; it therefore instantly struck Sir Thomas that this disguise must be assumed for a purpose inimical to the welfare of the friends he had left: ever rapid in his conceptions, he spurred his horse, leaped the same barrier the stranger had done, and overtook him in the course of five minutes; on seeing him, the man endeavoured to shun him, by taking a bye-
way, that appeared too narrow for the horse, as it wound through a partial plantation; on seeing this, the baronet called out that "he was determined to follow him, go which way he might, and would leave his horse rather than permit his escape."

"And by what right do you presume to intrude on my privacy?" said the man, stepping back, and grasping more firmly the cudgel in his hand.

"Right, indeed! but I am not mistaken, I find; I am confident you are not the person you would appear to be; and your words, insolent as I conceive them to be, confirms me in the supposition; and I must be allowed to say, wherever I perceive mystery, I suspect guilt."

"Probably," returned the man; "for guilt is allied to suspicion."

The baronet was ever hasty; fired with the tone as much as the words now uttered, he sprang from his horse, and would have collared his affronter, who parried his efforts by the cudgel he held, but forbore
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striking him; in doing this, the large hat he wore was thrown off, and the moon shone full upon a countenance of most manly beauty, shaded by a profusion of fine brown hair, that fell in disorder on the forehead, and contributed to give an expression of melancholy grandeur to a face which he felt to be not wholly unknown to him: in an instant recollection rushed upon his mind, and he exclaimed—"Good God! do I not behold major Sedgewood?"

The stranger was silent; he turned round for his hat, and was withdrawing hastily from the astonished gaze of the baronet, whose anger having once yielded to a new emotion, enabled him to consider that his present rencontre could not fail to be highly unpleasant to the unhappy lover; in an altered voice he therefore continued to say—"Do not shun me, major; though a stranger to you personally, or nearly so, you may recollect the name of sir Thomas Frankland, as one not unworthy your acquaintance; and when I farther inform you that I have letters to you from your
father at Nice and your uncle in Yorkshire, you will, I trust, accord me your society for a few minutes, or inform me where I may have the pleasure of delivering my credentials?"

The major (for it was indeed him) advanced, and offering his hand, endeavoured to express some apology for his warmth, allowing that his appearance had been sufficiently extraordinary to awake suspicion in a friend of lord Egerton's; and that he trusted the circumstance—

"Don't say a word about circumstances," cried the impatient baronet; "do you think a man who has run after you all over France and England is not aware, too fully aware of your misfortunes, not to keep your secrets or assist your plans? stranger as I am now, we shall not be so long; only tell me how I can serve you? I am an Irishman, it is true, and my zeal may outstrip my wisdom; but with all my impetuosity, you will find me tractable as a child."

There had been a time when the major
would have comprehended in a moment the generous ardour of the person who addressed him; but the conduct of the earl of Brooksbury had chilled his confidence in human nature, and a long and painful illness, from which he was scarcely recovered, had combined, with the more terrible malady of his mind, to render hope, and the sweet sensations arising out of it, to be strangers to his bosom; but his curiosity and gratitude were both awakened towards sir Thomas, whose arm he now took, and whom he entreated to favour him with a detail of such circumstances respecting his own affairs as were calculated to awaken so lively and generous a sense of friendship towards one who had no claims upon his goodness.

The baronet briefly, but with all the warmth of pity and benevolence, recited the events I have mentioned, and wept abundantly over his own narration, while a slow tear coursed over the cheek of his more deeply-wounded auditor, who became 3.
so ill, that he was at length obliged to confess that he was unable to stand, and yet feared to lie down upon the grass.

The baronet perceived his horse grazing near them; he assisted the major to mount, and without betraying his intention, led him by a circuitous path to the house, when perceiving some of the servants, he called for help; and before the major had time to recollect himself, he found himself stretched on a sofa in lord Egerton's breakfast-parlour, and several kind faces looking upon him with unspeakable tenderness; but the alteration in his person from sickness, and the dress he wore, was such as to render sir Thomas's information necessary in the way of introduction, though he carefully avoided mentioning his name in the presence of the servants. The major complained of a violent pain in the back of his head, and expressed some fears of the return of a rheumatic fever, from which he had scarcely recovered: the housekeeper was summoned, and gave it as her decided opinion, that the poor man should
be got into a warm bed directly, drink plentifully of hock whey, and be wrapped in flannel. She looked somewhat surprised to hear the best bed in the house ordered by her lady for his reception; but the offices of humanity were ever dispensed at Thorp Hall too liberally, to make her doubt the propriety of this; and she observed, that "To be sure the badly man was very handsome;" and as she felt his pulse, she "saw he had a shirt on as good as my lord's, and a skin under it as white as my lady's, so she thought he may be had been somebody sometime, as poor as he was."

There was an unresisting obedience to the will of those around him, which surprised and gratified the baronet, while it evinced to the more discerning lady Eger- ton a degree of bodily suffering and imbecility which called only for her sincere pity; and though she was ever happy to relieve the sufferings of all the children of affliction, yet she could not divest herself of the fear, that if any accident should discover the major's residence under the same
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roof to lady Caroline, that it would destroy the first glimmerings of reason, or perhaps hurry her to some fatal and irretrievable act of imprudence. She concluded that major Sedgewood was aware of the residence of his beloved Caroline with her, from the circumstance of his being found in disguise near the house; but sir Thomas had been too busy in relating his own narrative to learn the particular views which had brought him thither, and her ladyship justly thought she ought to be acquainted with them. To her lord she communicated her anxiety by words and looks, conveyed as well as she was able, for her delicacy towards their sick guest rendered particular communication impossible; his assurances quieted her fears, and she proposed that the major should be carried to the chamber which was prepared for him. The manifest change in his countenance proved his knowledge of lady Caroline's situation, as it changed to a still deeper paleness, and the hand which was held by lord Egerton shook as with convulsive tremors; the good
old man, considerately sending the servant before them, led the invalid himself, informing him that the person on whose account he felt some alarm was most probably retired to rest, and he had therefore nothing to fear—an information which seemed in some measure to restore him, as he regained the courage which his mental conflict appeared to have overpowered, and retired to his bed with comparative composure.

When lord Brooksbury, by openly retracting his promise, had awakened the just indignation of major Sedgewood, his first thought was to hasten to his uncle, as the only friend now within his reach, to whom his wounded spirit could freely communicate its vexation; happy would it have been had this resolution been put in practice; but as the desire of seeing lady Caroline, and hearing her lips again confirm the promise now doubly necessary to his peace, kept him some days lingering in the vain hope of effecting such a purpose, without subjecting him again to the insult
ing dismissal, he, of course, lost his chance, by the hasty departure of his lordship for his seat in Staffordshire. As soon as, through the medium of his faithful servant, he had discovered the suddenness of this movement, and the irritation of temper in which it was undertaken, he was convinced that lady Caroline was suffering under the severe persecution of her father on his account; and conscious that every attempt to see her, or even convey a letter to her, must be attended with an increased portion of suffering to her, he determined to abstain from the attempt, until his man should have been enabled to form such an acquaintance with some domestic as to render the discovery utterly improbable; yet finding it impossible to quit the neighbourhood where a being so tenderly beloved was enduring unmerited sorrow for his sake, he laid aside his military insignia, announced himself as Mr. Varley, and procured lodgings at a farmer’s in the neighbourhood, as a person who had been recommended to try change of air, from be-
ing reduced by a fever, a story which gained full credit, from the paleness of his countenance and the abstractedness of his manners; while his servant was represented as a relation, who frequently came from a neighbouring town to visit him.

So well had the earl taken his measures, that from the circumstance of the major's servant being well known to his household, it became impossible for some time to forward a letter with safety; for though love to their master had little place in the earl's household, yet fear and self-interest held a high place there; and though some would have been glad to forward the wishes of their young lady, whom they pitied, yet as they were the more simple and honest of the household, John wisely thought they might be easily circumvented by the watchful eyes who were interested in detecting a correspondence, which the earl very naturally thought would arise from his interdictions. At length he succeeded in forwarding a billet, through the medium of that servant whom I formerly,
mentioned as a Fairborough man, and who, in common with his townsmen, loved the name of a Sedgewood; to this person he revealed likewise the marriage of Sir Charles Sedgewood, which he had just heard of by mere chance, as his master's concealment had precluded the possibility of receiving letters, without acquainting his uncle where he was; the man was grieved at a marriage, which he thought could not fail being bad for the major, and in his hurry to communicate his fears, drew suspicion on himself from his lordship's valet; he was examined in the earl's presence, and the guilty billet, which he had not had time to deliver, found in his bosom. His lordship was too good a politician to discharge him; he even laid the billet aside with apparent good humour, saying he would give it lady Caroline when she next visited him; and then ordered the man to set out immediately with his steward on particular business to his Hampshire estate.

On the strength of this marriage information, the earl proceeded as we have
seen, while major Sedgewood's servant, from the absence of his confidant, became utterly unable to receive an answer from lady Caroline; but from the manner in which he afterwards found the man was sent out of the way, he could scarcely allow himself to hope that it had ever been delivered. For a few days, the report of the earl's illness diverted him from the anxiety which consumed him; after that he heard vague reports of some terrible oath that was exacted from the unhappy lady Caroline, which assisted to distress him, as well as the various gossip accounts which had represented the earl as locking up his only daughter every night, and feeding her on bread and water; for though he did not credit either the one or the other, yet he thought but too justly there was some foundation from which they sprung; he knew enough of the earl to believe it was but too likely that he would, if possible, exact a solemn promise from his daughter, which she would, from principles of religion and honour, preserve with as
much strictness towards him, as he had with levity broken them towards her: he believed too that the earl had not sufficient tenderness to spare his daughter from even corporeal suffering, if she could not otherwise be subdued to his purpose; and therefore while he refused implicit credence to "what she said to her neighbour," he yet nourished a thousand fears for the safety of his unhappy mistress.

Soon after this the duke appeared, and it was known that lady Caroline had been once more admitted to walk in the garden; in a short time he heard that she rode out with the duke and her father; in this situation, with a slouched hat, and wrapt in a large roquelaire, he had once more an opportunity of beholding for a moment the idol of his heart; her face was pale, and bore the marks of sorrow and confinement; but at the moment the carriage passed him, a smile irradiated her countenance, as she was listening to the duke, who was gazing at her with a look that spoke his passion: the very heart of Theodore sunk in him at
the sight, and a pang, to which all other pangs are light, spread its poignant venom through his tortured bosom, and he returned to his humble home so very a wretch, it seemed as if the very air he had inhaled had mildewed his soul, and blighted its very powers of happiness. As if to aggravate his woes beyond endurance, his rustic hostess began bitterly to lament that he had been walking out at the very time when the fine folks from the castle had rode past in the grand coach that the duke had brought to carry away his bride; “For after all,” added she, “that Sally Grubbs and dame Carter a sed, it seems she is to haf he at last; and her father, who knos the duke is as old as he, made her take her affidavit down on her pended knees, poor lamb, that she would marry he, and no other, though her heart be gone over the sease to a fine hansom young soldier, as I be told.”

The major answered only by a deep groan; but the woman heard something in it so much beyond all common sympathy, that she felt grieved at the pain she
had imparted; and as she followed the major into his little parlour, under pre-
tence of wiping down the dust, she added —“Nay, for matter o that, I do hope
she'll be happy at last too; for you see poor lady Caroline be very young, and
when she gets a grand house of her own, and a power of fine diamonds and lace,
and remembers that its a good thing to be an old man's darling, and, God help her,
that's what she's never been yet, why she'll make up her mind to it. Indeed Mrs.
Jackson at waits on her says, she be far better in her spirits like, for some days
past.”

The major's total silence indicating dis-
pleasure, now induced the honest tattler to
leave the room; and the major, throwing
himself on the bed, gave way to the foul
fiend which had taken possession of him,
and most rancorously consigned love and
its objects to every devil in Quevedo's ca-
talogue; but scarcely had he done that,
when the pale face of his adored Caroline
arose to his view, a benign exorciser; he
remembered her tempered sweetness, her steady friendship, her fervent piety, and he abhorred himself for daring to doubt her fidelity. Every proof of tender affection, consistent with the purity of her own nature, he had received from her, and the proof of what she had lately suffered for him was read in the very countenance whose guiltless and transient smile he had been so ready to condemn. True, she was young, extremely young; but her judgement was ripened beyond her years, nor had she ever known the weak frivolities that govern half her sex: so young, ambition could not stimulate her to forego that tender union which had so long bound her to a heart congenial with her own: but still, that smile, that damned smile, which she had accorded to the detested being whose gloating eye the purity of Caroline's soul would have shrunk from, had she been the angelic being his fancy had imaged her—

A thought now seized him; he determined to challenge the duke, and improbable as it was that the hoary gallant should honour
his assignation, yet a mind thus goaded on to madness found some relief in taking refuge from the dreams of frenzy, in the contemplation of any event which "could better life, or end it."

CHAP. VII.

'Tis now delightful agony no more,
But bitters all unmixed.

John, the major's servant, on arriving the next morning, found his master impatiently expecting him, and still experiencing that dreadful turmoil of thought which characterizes the wretch "who loves, yet doubts," and which has been pourtrayed by our immortal bard in manner beyond all praise. It was a kind of evil for which this honest sympathizer had got no cordial in all his budget of consolations, and he therefore heard the sorrow he lamented with silent commiseration; but when his
master proceeded to say that he was determined to challenge the duke. John started with the idea that his poor master's misfortunes had actually turned his head, and he exclaimed—"Dear heart, your honour is ill, very ill; you are fitter for bed than fighting, to my mind."

The major insisted upon proceeding in his own way.

"Well, well," said John, "you must take it; your honour knows what is best; but you know there are not many wives who will thank a man for killing their husbands, even if they are not quite to their minds; and I have a great notion, if ever lady Caroline really marries that old sinner, it will be this very day."

The major, rising, with distraction in his look, insisted on knowing his reasons for such a supposition.

"Why, your honour, about three miles off, who should I see but lord and lady Egerton, and several other gay people, and they all drove down to the castle: now your honour cannot but recollect that
of all people in the world, there was nobody lady Caroline loved like lady Egerton; and she used to wish her father was like his lordship so much, that the servants used to fancy like that Mr. Saville, their son, had a fancy for her."

The major's eyes flashed fire; he sprung to his portmanteau, took his pistols, ran out of the house, and made directly for the castle, determined, in despite of its haughty owner, to claim his betrothed Caroline, even if she were pronouncing those vows which bound her to another.

It was happy for this unfortunate gentleman, that the very distraction of his mind, by urging him to take the nearest road, defeated his intention, as it would only have led him to expose sorrows sacred to the eye of friendship, and rage which, however naturally and justly excited, could not lead him to the revenge he sought, without subjecting him to everlasting regrets; he was near five miles from the castle, the first three of which were easily past, as they were open inclo-
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sures; but having quitted all traces of road, as he approached the mansion, he fell into some plantations, whose winding paths entirely bewildered him; and after walking and running for near two hours, he found himself, by a sudden opening, in full view of the castle, but still at a very considerable distance from it. Vexed and surprised, he now regretted his impetuosity, and stood still for the purpose of reconnoitring: while his ardent eye rested on the castle, he beheld the carriage of lord Egerton, and a chariot that seemed of the same party, with some gentlemen on horseback, drive from the door; the chariot and horsemen went off at a brisk trot, but the movement of the coach was so slow, as to indicate its containing a sick traveller—"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it is a plain case that lady Egerton is ill, and that nothing less than an affair of the utmost importance would have drawn her out—doubtless the marriage has been performed.
by a special licence. Yes; all now is over! — all, all is lost!"

The major threw himself on the ground in utter despair; and the agitation of his mind appeared so to overcome his body, that when, on the appearance of his servant, he would have risen, from a sense of shame at having suffered a deceitful girl thus to destroy a veteran soldier, he found himself scarcely able to rise; and his haggard countenance betrayed the severity of his sufferings, to which poor John hoped he should give instant relief, by the assurance that he had seen lady Caroline placed in the carriage between lord and lady Egerton; that she appeared ill; and from the style of her dress, gave no indication of being made a bride.

A few moments ago, major Sedgewood believed that he despised lady Caroline; he now felt that he loved her to distraction; that his pity for her unmerited sorrow was equal even to his affection. He now sought only to throw himself at her feet, to en-
treat her forgiveness for his unworthy suspicions, and again vow to live only for her sake; he could not help rejoicing that she had left her father's house, and was under the protection of friends who well knew the situation in which he had been placed in the earl's family. But then again, the green-eyed monster seized him, for might not their cares be extended for the sake of their son, the young and accomplished colonel Saville, a rival infinitely more to be dreaded than the duke? Again he walked forward with hurried step, and an air of resolute defiance, followed by his servant, who, perceiving that he had quitted the path to the castle, justly conceived that he wished to proceed to lord Egerton's, and therefore ventured to remind him that he was in a very different direction to that which led to Thorp Hall, adding, that it was ten miles distant, and the skies portended heavy rain. The major stopped to inquire the road, and being shewn it, informed John he had no farther occasion
for him at present, and that he wished to be alone. The faithful servant instantly withdrew; but when at a distance, he cast many a lingering look towards his master, whose perturbed and changeful step but too strongly revealed the state of inward warfare he was now experiencing.

Anxious as the major was to reach Thorp Hall, he had still fixed on no pretext for making his appearance there, which he could think sufficient to justify his abrupt intrusion; but to be once more capable of seeing his Caroline, without subjecting himself to entering the earl's grounds, was a satisfaction not to be resisted; though if she was really ill, it was most probable she would be denied to him, especially if the Egerton family had indeed an interest in keeping them asunder: as these thoughts passed his mind, he found himself in the precincts of the park; and now one part of his object was attained, he checked for a moment the hurrying step he had assumed, and stood to consider how
he should proceed in his advances to the house.

The rain now fell in torrents, and the poor woman who lived at the outer lodge, observing a gentleman standing still so as to receive the full benefit of it, instantly conceived that nothing less than positive madness could prompt him to such conduct. The fact was, the servant who had passed about an hour before, and of whom she had inquired—"Who my lady had brought back in the coach?" had answered, that—"To the best of his belief it was a poor young thing that had lost her senses:" the idea of insanity being thus introduced into the woman's head, she fastened it upon the first object she came near, who appeared, indeed, by no means unlikely to justify her conclusion; in consequence, however, of this unfortunate association, when the major, recollecting himself, became aware of his situation, and requested her permission to enter her cottage, and dry his clothes, she instantly closed the door, locked it, and, by the help of her child, made
a further barricade with every article of moveable furniture, calling out of her window—"Go away, poor man; God bless you, go away, that's a good dear; go back again to your straw, that's a honey."

An address meant to convey pity and tenderness, accompanying an action devoid of both, surprised the major; he entreated her to unbar the door, saying she need not be afraid of him; he was a gentleman, a friend of her lord's; and so far from robbing her, he would pay her very handsomely for the paltry accommodation he requested. Her child, as they stood at the window, joined in the request, saying—"You see, mammy, he is wet, quite dripping wet; let him come and warm himself; he looks as if he would hurt nobody."

"Not for the wide world," returned the mother: "why he might bite us both in a minute; and as to the rain, why it'll never hurt he; cold and hunger, frost and snow, never hurts mad folks, they say; and that poor young thing that's gone through with
my lady, as delicate as she looks, would take no harm at all, if they turned her stark naked with the deer in the park, seeing as how she have clean lost her wits, poor creeter.'

The information thus conveyed lost not its full effect upon the irritated mind of the agonized lover; he no longer entreated admittance, but rushing forwards with a velocity which confirmed the poor woman in her opinion, soon found himself in the midst of a thick grove of oak, which bounded one side of the park; here he again threw himself on the ground, overcome by anguish, which appeared even more terrible than that he had experienced in the morning, and where, if the bitterness of his grief had not found the salutary relief of tears, he felt as if his burning brain would have partook the dreadful evil he deplored. Yes, the major could weep; for grief was the passion under which he now bent. Jealousy does not weep, for it is ever commingled with the more malignant elements of human suffering; but the
afflicted by sorrow only have the sad privilege of tears; and the unhappy Theodore, stretched on the damp ground, wept, prayed, and groaned for his beloved Caroline, till the shades of evening closed around him, and night, in sympathetic gloom, partook the agony under which he laboured.

Poor John, who knew no peace while his master was a stranger to comfort, had unwillingly returned to the major's lodgings; but when the rain came on, he set out with his roquelaire on his arm, saying, his relation would be getting wet. Convinced that he was gone to Thorp Hall, he made immediately for that place; but on passing the lodge, had the precaution to inquire; the mistress was at that moment relating to her husband the story of the poor madman who wanted to come in and dry himself, and John was but too soon convinced that his dear master had been the object of her ridiculous fears. Though John had witnessed his master's power, in many a perilous situation, to brave fatigue and laugh at luxurious wants, yet he re-
collected that he had now been nearly two years surrounded by English comforts, and was so unused "to bear the warring of the elements," that it was impossible he could bear the rain and cold, to which he had been subjected, without suffering most severely, especially when he was assured by the woman that the poor gentleman had branched off into the plantation, and could not have reached the house without being seen either by her or the child, who being somehow quite grieved for him, had watched at the window till night-fall. The man, whose humanity was roused, proposed seeking the gentleman in the woods with John, to which the latter with difficulty assented, being well aware that it was but too likely that his master's delicacy would be wounded by the appearance of a stranger; this was, however, over-ruled by the difficulties of his situation, and they set out together.

When the major first heard voices in the wood, he began to be sensible of his situa-
tion, and found himself, as it were, root-bound to the earth, every effort he made to move occasioned excruciating pain in his limbs, and daggers seemed entering into his temples—"Surely," said he, "these are the pains of death; the hand of the Almighty is upon me; he calls me from the misery of life, to that rest which can alone end my miseries. In the very prime of my days, I am the victim of unmerited affliction; after being spared from the field of honour, I am condemned to expire unfriended and alone, not only torn from the voice of love, which I had once so fondly hoped would cheer the bed of death, and point the way to everlasting bliss, but from the lowest tone of compassion which man bestows on man. Oh God! surely this is too much!"

"Nay, but who art thou, oh man, that repliest against God?"

These words struck full upon the mind of the disconsolate being, even as he heard the last sounds of the distant voices die upon his ear; he recollected now that if
he were indeed called at this awful hour to stand at that tribunal before whose solemn audit even the wisest and best cannot answer for one in a thousand of his errors, that he was unprepared to render up the dread account. Had not his grief been immoderate, even to sin? and his very prayers mingled with reproach to the hand which afflicted him? Had he not, in the intemperance of jealous rage, that very morning sought the life of a fellow-creature? and had not the evening hour witnessed an abhorrence of his own? Had not his love been carried to an excess sinful in the eyes of him who hath forbad idolatry? and how, therefore, could he appear in the sight of him who readeth not only the actions but the hearts of the children of men, and who is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity?"

Such are the awful thoughts which every reasonable being must meditate upon at the near approach of death—the veil of self-deceit is then rent; and however justly man may to his fellow-worm appeal for
acquittal, as to the tenour of his life, and even the exalted morality of his actions, he knows that, before his great Creator and Judge, he is no other than a fallen being, whose best actions have been ever blended with unworthy motives, whose wisest resolutions have been defeated by inconsistent weakness, and who cannot dare to lift his conscious eyes towards the throne of judgment, but as he is led by humble faith and pious hope in the gospel of peace to seek for mercy through his Redeemer's intercession; and if such are the fears of the righteous at this awful hour, well may it be asked—"Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

As the major thus cogitated, the sound of the voices again broke on his ear, and communicated a ray of hope to his heart, which was felt in despite of the sorrow which reigned there, for religion now brooded there like the spirit on the great abyss, when life sprang from the genial warmth. He exerted himself to give a faint halloo, which was instantly answered
Says she to her neighbour, what?

by poor John, and the voice of this faithful domestic was now music in his master's ear; in a few moments the dim light of a lanthorn was seen, and the arms of his attendants succeeded in raising him; but the motion was attended with such torturing pain, that for a few moments it was succeeded by apparent insensibility: as it was however impossible to avoid inflicting this suffering, the two men were obliged to carry him between them; and, by the stranger's advice, they made the best of their way to a farm-house at no great distance, where it was thought necessary comforts and proper attendance might be easily procured.

Just as they emerged from the wood, the moon, now in the earliest wane, shone out from the dark clouds which had hitherto enveloped her, with a brilliant and triumphant light, which shed its full rays on the face of the major, and discovered to the attendants that they had dropped his hat in the woods, and, of course, exposed his head to a double portion of the mid-
night air; as John drew a silk handkerchief from his own neck to remedy this loss, and was tying it round his master's icy brows, now throbbing with accumulated pangs, he whispered—"Have a good heart, your honour; see what a glorious night we have got at last; the moon has had hard work to climb so many black mountains of clouds; but she has conquered all, and has nothing to do now but shine on till the sun comes."

"She is in the wane," said the major, with a deep sigh.

"True, your honour; but she gives a sweet light for all that—we must take joy when God sends it: but I beg your honour's pardon; but somehow I feel as if this moonshine came over my heart on purpose to comfort it, and I couldn't help speaking."

Madame Genlis has called the belief in presentiment the "superstition of tender souls;" and as Theodore's was a tender, though a manly soul, he yielded for a moment to the soothing idea suggested by
the untutored, but feeling heart of his faithful attendant; and as he watched the beauteous orb shed her benignant beams on "herb, tree, fruit, and flower," with an irradiation so soft, that it seemed to veil the very beauties it revealed, his bosom expanded to the idea, that as he seemed providentially rescued from immediate death, he might be preserved for future enjoyment; but the severe pains he endured would scarce allow his mind the power of arresting hope; and before the farmer's door had opened to receive its unexpected guest, every idea, save that of obtaining present relief from excessive, and still increasing pain, was banished from the memory of the suffering Theodore.
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

CHAP. VIII.

How every heart-string bleeds at thoughts of parting!

Blair.

When John had procured that medical assistance which was now become highly necessary for his master, he learnt, with extreme sorrow, that the major was now in a rheumatic fever, the worst part of which lay in his head; though his whole body was likewise so much affected by it, that it threatened to deprive him of the use of his limbs, and render him an invalid for life. This melancholy sentence the humane servant concealed, as far as it was possible, from his master; and perceiving that it was a complaint which required uncommon exertion on the part of the sufferer, he neglected no means of presenting to his master's consideration every stimulant for exertion he could devise; and as his vicinity to Thorp Hall enabled him to make many inquiries after lady Caroline,
he always endeavoured to give the major that kind of information respecting her, which was most calculated to engage him in an endeavour to procure himself the power of seeing her. The major still went by the name of Varley; and the family at the Hall, who never failed to hear of the wants of all who were afflicted in their neighbourhood, did not fail to offer the sick stranger any comforts which their house afforded; but when they found he was attended by an attached friend, and in possession of all that he really wanted, they did not incommode him with useless inquiries; so that he remained unknown and unsuspected, through many weeks of racking pain and tedious languishment; during which he learnt, with tolerable precision, the real state of his beloved partner in affliction, over which he mourned unceasingly, yet not without a latent hope, that it would be possible for the voice of love to restore what grief had taken away, until he learnt the fears of lady Egerton, lest any affecting circumstance, especially seeing
or hearing suddenly from major Sedge-wood, should again destroy the fine fabric which the trembling hand of friendship was now so cautiously repairing.

Before his sickness, there is no doubt but the major, if it had been in his power, would have rushed forward, at all hazards, to have caught the desponding girl to his bosom, and poured his vows of undying love into her ears; but he had now learnt, from bitter experience, how finely the issues of life and reason are connected with the fibres of the frame, and how soon the extremes of sensibility may degenerate into the visions of delirium. As soon, therefore, as his convalescence permitted him once more to use exercise, he allowed himself to walk no further than the bounds of a short meadow, from which, at a considerable distance, he could discern lady Egerton's carriage, which he had reason to believe contained his soul's treasure; and the hope that she was then enjoying the same reviving breeze whose salubrity restored vigour to his own frame, was so de-
lightful a thought, that it never failed to compose his mind, and restore it to a degree of tranquillity highly conducive to his recovery; and he now felt how true it is, that all misery is comparative—he was still the same wretched, bereaved, doubting creature he had been; but the scourge of sickness was removed; one dreadful burden was cast off; and resignation sprung from that patience he had now learnt to practise; and gratitude to Heaven for that which was removed, gave him fortitude to bear that which remained.

John informed him one day, that it was, he believed, the custom of lady Caroline, on moonlight nights, to sit frequently till near midnight in her window, watching the orb with a kind of melancholy pleasure, in which lady Egerton ever insisted on her being indulged. He added, that he had ascertained the window in which she generally sat, and could easily show it his master when he was able to walk so far. His master became able in a short time not only to walk but to run; he even ventured
to leap the farmer's stile; and in a very few days, John allowed that his honour was equal to the expedition.

Ever bearing in mind the real welfare of his beloved mistress, the major equipped himself in the farmer's clothes, and, accompanied by John, set out as soon as the fair queen of night gave promise of success. As soon as the servant had pointed to the window, he withdrew from the arm of his master, leaving him a strong staff in his hand, and entreatng him to suffer no fatigue to induce him to rest again upon the treacherous damp ground.

The major replied not; his palpitating heart scarce permitted him to breathe, and his strained eyes, bent towards the window, darted a beam that seemed as if it could almost consume the base impediments that kept her from his ardent gaze; ages of fear and hope seemed concentered in those moments of trembling expectation; but when at length she appeared, when he was convinced it was indeed her form he saw, and even her features met his view, he was
obliged to lean against the friendly tree under whose shade he stood concealed, and where he sobbed in very agony.

The unconscious maid, throwing open a wide casement, stepped out upon a little balcony, made to contain a few flowering shrubs; she was drest in a white silk nightgown, and her flowing ringlets simply confined by a wreath of eglantine, which had wound its tendrils round her window; the major perceived that she was become much thinner, and the smile of dimpled beauty which had once played round her mouth in all the fascination of youthful loveliness was now fled; but the mournful cast of her exquisite features, the very self-desertion they evinced, rendered her the object of a feeling dearer than even love itself; and it was with the utmost difficulty the major could refrain from rushing forwards, and calling her once more—"His own, his adored Caroline."

Happily for him, John returned in time to convey him home in safety; and finding no bad effects had arisen from this excur-
sion, the weather being now perfectly warm and pleasant, this indulgence was permitted again; and the major was making his fifth pilgrimage to his unconscious shrine, when sir Thomas crossed his path, and produced that temporary return of his fever which we have already noticed.

As soon as major Sedgewood's servant learnt the situation of his master, he applied to lord Egerton for permission to attend him; and as he was become not only an active but a skilful nurse, he had the praise of warding off the attack which now threatened him; and in two days the major was ready to leave his chamber.

Colonel Saville not being now at home, lord Egerton exerted himself to amuse their lively guest, sir Thomas; and as the day was gloomy, and lady Egerton declined her accustomed airing with lady Caroline, he proposed to the baronet to exchange his usual ride for a drive round the grounds, to which he assented. While this arrangement took place, major Sedgewood hearing the chariot was at the door, withdrew
SAYs SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT? 191

from the window, even while he was most fondly desiring to catch a single look of the beauteous invalid, and listened with an anxious ear to the receding sound of its wheels; as he was aware that the gentlemen would be about taking their accustomed ride very soon, he thought it best to step down and pay his respects to lord Egerton before he set out, and at the same time to announce his departure. He had seen sir Thomas early that morning, as the friendly baronet generally visited him the moment he had put his clothes on, and had partly agreed to accompany him to Bath, as he was well aware the warm baths of that celebrated spring were most likely to prove of essential benefit to him; but he felt the constraint he was now in of breathing the same air, yet not beholding the dear form of his Caroline, become every hour more irksome; and he wished to turn to his lodging and arrange his affairs there immediately, that he might be ready to accompany his new but warm-hearted friend.
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

Under this idea he descended to the breakfast-parlour, which he found empty; but as a newspaper was laying on the table, he took it up, and holding it up to his eyes, which had been a little injured by his indisposition, he did not perceive the entrance of any person, till an exclamation from the lips of lady Egerton made him start; he dropt the paper, and beheld her ladyship, with Caroline hanging upon her arm, standing before him.

To fly the sight of her he adored was impossible; but a sign from lady Egerton (whose benevolent countenance shewed how sensibly her fears were awakened) recalled him to some portion of self-command; and repressing, as far as it was possible, the emotion he felt, he addressed the common compliments of the day to both the ladies; the sound of his voice, though faltering and inarticulate, awakened more fully the recollection of the fair sufferer—her countenance became suddenly illumed with intelligence, she approached hastily towards him, then checked her-
self, then again gazing with a look of apprehensive doubt and extreme compassion, she at length said—"Poor, poor Theodore;" and falling into the arms of her maternal friend, she wept for the first time—she wept upon her bosom.

This was the eventful moment to which that kind friend had so long looked, and she embraced it with joy; she did not even repel Theodore, when he, now advancing, took the hand of Caroline, and dropping on his knees, as he pressed it to his lips, besought her once more to look upon him; she raised her eyes wistfully to lady Eger-ton's, saying, "Will that break my vow?"

A pang like the bolt of heaven shot through the major's heart as these words fell from her guileless lips, and scarcely could he refrain cursing the cruel policy of a father, which could thus fetter the innocent mind of such a child as this; he was, however, somewhat relieved from this distracting sensation by the reply of—"No, my sweet child, you will break no
vow by conversing with him a short time; you know you have made a vow to marry him sometime, and he deserves your love.”

She turned timidly round—“You are very, very pale,” said she, still fearfully, while a transient blush passed her cheek as she laid her hand upon his forehead. That blush trilled through the very soul of Theodore; again his Caroline, the modest maid, whose animated beauty once glowed with speaking thought, was once more brought to his despairing eye; he made a faint effort to catch her in his arms, but, overpowered by his feelings, sunk back on the sofa he had just quitted, nearly insensible. Lady Egerton, now changing the object of her solicitude, seized his hand, and offering him salts, besought him to exert himself, while the gentle Caroline, whose mind by degrees recovered its energies, hung fondly over him, and while her warm tears fell upon his wan cheek, besought him to live, chafed his temples with her hands, and told him the time would yet come when he might claim his
faithful Caroline. Every word she uttered indicated reviving intellect; but, alas! with mind and memory returned the sense of that sorrow which had ruined both; and by the time that the major had overcome the feelings which oppressed him, she was sunk in that unutterable anguish to which even the horror of madness, or the stupor of idiotcy, seems almost preferable.

When, however, lady Caroline was able to speak, she besought the major to remember that her vows were his; and though it was too probable that she should never be more to him than she was at that moment, yet she trusted it would sooth some sad reflections, to remember that her faith was unalienable. She besought him to try if the mild air of Italy would restore his health; and said, that although she found it was impossible to live through another interview like this, yet the belief that he was living, and in health, would be to her the only solace of existence, as she should endeavour to cherish a hope that they
might once more meet, since that hope was inexpressibly dear to her. She paused—a faint endeavour to give the major that liberty she had denied herself, was half expressed, in a voice of perturbation that spoke how much it cost her; but she was interrupted by his suddenly throwing himself on his knees before her, and swearing, that living or dying, no human being but herself should bear his name, or share a heart devoted to a being so purely, though so unhappily beloved.

To describe the last adieu of such a pair as this is utterly beyond my feeble powers; by the advice of their mutual friends it was hastened, and the good-natured baronet tore the major away from a scene which he was utterly unable to bear in his present state, and conducted him to Bath; but as this did not prove a perfect restorative, and the general health of this unhappy man being so affected as to require change of climate, after a few weeks they set out to Italy, having written to their friends at Nice, and informed Mr. Sedgewood that
in a few months they would join him there. In the meantime lady Caroline remained with her attentive friends, who anxious to preserve her in her present convalescence, and sensible that residing with the earl, her father, was not likely to promote the restoration of her spirits, they set out on a tour round the kingdom; agreeable to their original plan, by which means he was still kept in ignorance as to the real state of her intellects. It was found that no means of preserving reason, or improving cheerfulness, were found so efficacious to the mind of this humane young creature, as that of allowing her the power of making others happy; wherever she went, the children of misery were her first care; she visited the abodes of sorrow, entered into the detail of affliction, whether mental or bodily, and appeared to feed life in herself only by her power of imparting it to others; the widow and the fatherless, the aged and the helpless, everywhere partook her bounty; but when the simple story of two tender hearts, divided by sor-
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

row, or contemned by prudence, met her ear, her sympathy assumed an aspect of more tenderness, and her bounty rose to generosity; and when she contemplated the happiness she had caused, a momentary joy lighted her meek eyes, and she felt as if she too tasted the pleasures of love; but, alas! this joy was ever succeeded by the bitter reflection her unhappy and peculiar situation was so well calculated to produce in a heart so tender and so constant as the unhappy lady Caroline's; it was always observed too, that the mention of her father, at such times, gave her great pain, and a kind of cold shudder crept through her frame, as if she was struggling with a sensation she condemned, but could not conquer.

Near three years had passed since the major's departure, in which a few regular visits and formal epistles had passed between a father and daughter, who, being the only natural supports each possessed in the whole world, ought to have been very differently situated; when as lady
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Egerton and her dear protegée were one day slowly perambulating a country village not far from Thorp Hall, they remarked a young woman leading an old one, who was quite blind, to the door of a neighbour; there was something in the attention this young woman evinced beyond the cares of vulgar humanity, for though at an age when curiosity is alert, and in a rank of life which renders a splendid equipage a novel object, she did not allow herself to be withdrawn a moment from her decrepid charge, till she had safely placed her in a wicker chair in the cottage, when she just stepped to the door to take a peep at the ladies, accompanied by the inhabitant, a decent-looking woman.

"Is that poor woman totally blind, my good girl?" said lady Egerton, as she alighted from the carriage, with an intention, if possible, to relieve the sufferer.

"Yes, madam, quite blind, and deaf too," said the young woman, curtseyng; and adding in a lower voice, "she is my grandmother, madam."
"I thought as much," said the lady, "from your attention to her. I love to see young people grateful; and the manner in which you assisted your grandmother, as you guarded her from the stones, convinced me that you were a grateful girl, who had not forgot what you owed to her."

The poor girl was overwhelmed with confusion; but her blushes were succeeded by tears, and she stammered—"Oh yes, madam, I hope I've forgot—I mean, I try to forget all, and I hope it'll please God to teach me to forget every thing."

"I don't understand you," said lady Egerton; "but yet I cannot help thinking well of you." She hesitated.

"Please your ladyship," said the neighbour, "poor Sally here, who I will say is as good a girl as ever was born, doesn't well know how to speak before such fine ladies as you be, and specially when you talked of her not forgetting her old grandmother; for to be sure the old woman did do her a sad spiteful trick, that's for cer-
Says she to her neighbour, what? "Don't say that, an she thought as how your ladyship luded to that, because why ye see it's always uppermost in her own heart, as it were."

"Don't say that," said Sally, weeping, "for I prays against thinking of it every night of my life."

Lady Caroline's attention was aroused, for she saw that Sally's blushes arose from that fatal passion in whose sorrows she could so fully sympathize; she therefore begged the neighbour to inform them a little further on the subject, as they were totally ignorant of what she meant by the spiteful trick.

"Why, miss," said the woman, "I'll tell you how it was; this girl's father was as good a man as ever was born, and he always supported his mother with the rest of his family, and his wife was very good to her; and so they brought up their two children, William and Sally, to behave prettily to her, as it were; but she was a delicate body, and pined away in a waste about six years, and somehow poor he was."
Says she to her neighbour, what?

never quite right after; and he happened a bad accident one day when he was felling a tree; he cut his leg with a hatchet, and it made him bleed so much that he fell into a weak way, and died about two years after; and a grievous thing it was for all his neighbours," said the relater, as she wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"Well, madam, but as I was a saying, William was got up a fine young man, and so he kept up his father's trade of a carpenter, and Sally took in a bit of sewing when she could get it, and spinned at other times; and her grandmother was not quite blind then, but very near it; howsoever, Sally always waited of she duly, and kept the house clean besides, and it was quite comfortable to look at like, to see these young things walk in the ways of their parents, as it were; but, dear heart, there was a young man worked in the same shop with William they called Tom Handy; he was a very good lad, and could read and write; and being very willing to do every
one a good turn, he used to go home with Willy at nights, to teach him to write a bit, and so by degrees he taught Sally too, and a sort of a liking took place; and Willy was glad of it, for he loved em both so, that he would have done any thing to make em happy as it were; besides, Tom Handy got very good wages, because he worked at fine work; so you see it was a very pretty match for Sally as one could have had; but, dear heart, this poor old woman didn’t like Sally should marry at all, for fear she shouldn’t wait on her; so what does she do but pack off Sally to see her uncle, that lives five miles off, and then takes her stick in her hand, and sets off to the next market-town, where she’d hard there was a press-gang; so what does she do but goes away to the captain, and told him that Thomas Handy was a wicked raffletoppin, that wanted to ruin her child, and she hoped he’d rid the country of him; and then she told him where to send his men to take Tom up, for it was a hard job to catch him idling.
about, and specially since he was out of his time, and was getting a little money together to begin the world with; but howsomdever, home comes old Betty, and when the young men came in, as usual, after dark, she said, 'Tom, my lad, I don't feel well; and I wish you would go and fetch Sally; I told her to stay two nights, but I feel quite sick and tired, so set off and fetch Sally home;' so Tom was willing enough; but, dear heart, William being a prudent young man, followed him out, for he thought it hadn't a proper look for his sister to be out with her sweetheart late at night, and Thomas was quite of his way of thinking; so they went together, and, dear heart, in the middle of a lane all the press-gang rushed upon them, and seized em, and because they made resistance, for they were both handsome, stout young fellows, they used them quite shocking, and put irons on their hands, and never let them have a moment's ease till they put them on ship-board: and now there they be, both gone over the wide seas,
and this poor orphan child has not got a friend in the wide world.”

While this sad story was telling, Sally had withdrawn; the tears of lady Caroline fell fast at the recital of such unmerited sorrow, and lady Egerton was much affected; not noticing the agitation of lady Caroline, she inquired of the narrator—“how Sally bore the first shock of such a distressing event?”

“Oh, main bad, madam, you may be sure; for what was worst of all, some neighbours met the poor lads next morning on the road, in their handcuffs on, and their faces bloody and swelled with the blows they had received; so they stopped to tell the press-gang that there must be some mistake, for these were two honest, industrious lads as any in the country; on that the wicked heathens swore a great oath, and told who it was that had betrayed one of the lads to them, and they said it was proper to take his companion too, since birds of a feather flock together. So you see, madam, these neighbours went to Sal-
ly's uncle's, and told her all they had heard, and the poor thing swounded clean away as it were; so they were forced to get a doctor to her, and she was main bad a long while, and pined and pined till she was like an attomy; but grief niver kills poor folks outright, madam, and so in time she came about again, poor young thing—she's had a great share of sorrow for her years."

"How long was it before she returned to her grandmother?"

"Why, madam, her uncle was so angered at old Betty, he said she should never come back at all, but when she got strength she should go to service; but when the poor thing got a bit better of her sickness, she found that the old woman was put in the workhouse, and that her sight was quite gone, so she thought it her duty to come back to her, and she took in spinning, and works at any thing, and the parish encourages her, and so, one way or other, she makes shift to maintain 'em both; and having no time to fret and cry much, she's
Says she to her neighbour, what? beginning to look a little like herself again. You see, my lady, God is good to poor folks in that way; we that have bread to get with our own hands, cannot sit still and grieve same as ladies can."

The simple good sense of this daughter of obscurity could not be heard by lady Caroline without making a deep impression on her heart; but she was too much affected to make any comments. Lady Egerton, whose admiration of Sally was wound to the highest pitch, entered the cottage, and began to express her approbation warmly; but Sally modestly said, it was her duty, and she must have been a wicked girl had she neglected it, seeing her parent had always taught it her—"To be sure," added she, "I would rather have waited on grandmother for love all my life, as I used to do, and hope to do again when I can forget those that are now suffering; indeed when I look at her now, and consider what a poor helpless creature she is, I often forget all my sorrows, and kiss her with the same love I used to do;
and I pray God to forgive her, and to bring good out of evil to us all, as the parson says he very often does, even in this world."

It will be very readily supposed that this cottage was not left without something to cheer its inhabitants; but the worthy visitants were not content with a temporary gratuity; they inquired every particular respecting the present situation of the impressed young men which Sally was able to give them, and the adventure furnished conversation to lady Egerton for the rest of the day; but on the mind of lady Caroline it rested with a deeper influence, and she retired early, as if to give it more serious contemplation; and the next morning at breakfast, she addressed lord and lady Egerton, who were both inexpressibly dear to her, in the following manner:—

"When I consider, my beloved friends, my more than parents, the nature of your goodness to me, and all your unbounded sympathy has made you feel for me, I am ready to conclude it is not less my duty.
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than I feel it to be my inclination, to devote the whole powers of my mind to soothing the remainder of your days, and being unto you as a daughter. But the lesson of self-denying virtue and pure Christian forgiveness which I was taught yesterday by the injured child of poverty, assures me that my father ought to be the object of my care, and that my past sufferings ought not to steel the heart of a child against the claims of duty or the pleadings of nature; in the sorrow that has blighted my days, his hopes are also withered; and in contemplating his sorrows, I shall cease to resent my own; in administering to his affliction, I shall enjoy the only blessing I have yet power to embrace: my mind is, I trust, so far restored, that the exercise of its energies will encrease them; and if I am made the happy instrument of consoling my declining parent's infirmities, or administering to his mental wants, surely I shall find a comfort to which I have been long a stranger. Do not, therefore, be surprised if your poor
Caroline, to whom you have been Heaven's instruments of unbounded good, at length says, in the language of the prodigal, and not without some portion of his feelings too, 'I will arise and go to my father.'

Tears of tenderness and admiration suspended words; the venerable pair loved her as the daughter of their souls, but they felt that her resolution was worthy of herself, and they would not oppose it; the carriage was prepared, for they knew that his lordship was now in their neighbourhood, but for so short a period, that it was advisable to lose no time in joining him there, as he had seldom remained at this seat for more than a week together, since the fatal event which had destroyed his projected greatness; from the fatal hour in which she had left her father's mansion, it had never met the eyes of lady Caroline, and she could not again behold it without evincing symptoms of agitation, which alarmed the kind hearts of her friends; she exerted herself, for their sakes, to overcome these emotions, and when she alight-
ed, proved herself equal to the trial she attempted. The earl received the party with that courtly politeness habitual to him, but without any of that emotion likely to affect a father who was once more receiving his only child to the paternal mansion; but this conduct was the less to be regretted, as it spared the feelings of her too susceptible heart, and was advantageous to his own health, which was evidently more delicate than it used to be.

After taking a family dinner, lord and lady Egerton returned home, promising themselves a frequent interchange of visits with their adopted child, as the only consolation for the loss of her society they could now receive: lady Caroline commanded her tears as she bid them adieu; and though grief lay heavy on her heart, she supported a conversation for the rest of the evening with the earl, which proved how decidedly she had devoted herself to his welfare. In a short time the earl experienced many comforts, to which he had been long a stranger, restored to him
by his kind and attentive companion; she made herself acquainted with every medical help which was necessary to him in the hour of sickness, and every amusement he was enabled to take in returning health; she bore with meekness the petulance he too frequently evinced in one state, and gave brilliancy to those moments which were cheered by the other. On the lips of both parties, Silence set her seal alike as to the past and future; but in the present hour, each found that consolation which virtuous exertion, however applied, still fails not to bestow; for the endeavours of lady Caroline, like the dews of mercy, "were twice blest"—"they blessed her who gave, and him who took them."
Says she to her neighbour, what? 213

**CHAP. IX.**

Self-love but serves the virtuous soul to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake,
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace. Pope.

Sir Thomas Frankland attended major Sedgewood to Naples, from thence to Venice; they then visited Switzerland, and the melancholy of even the heart-stricken lover was for some time amused by the bold scenery and novel landscape to be found in that enchanting country; but the simplicity of its inhabitants, while it charmed his bosom, reopened all its wounds. Here he saw love dethrone ambition, and trample on the fetters of avarice; here the tender relationship of parent and child bound their soft cords through every rank of society, and purified the heart, while they civilized the manners; disdaining the weakness of voluptuous bondage which enervated the race they had so lately quitted, these hardy mountaineers, free as the
chamois that bounded o'er their glaciers, and firm as the rocks that sheltered them, yet proved all the tenderness which marks the manly and the gentle characteristics of wedded love; and in their happiness the major beheld all the extent of his unutterable loss; he therefore hastened to Nice, where his presence conferred the pleasure he was unable to share; his father and sister lost no means of adding to his comfort; but after having assured himself of their welfare, he was again desirous of moving; and as sir Thomas importuned him to return to Italy, a pair of Neapolitan eyes having made strange havoc in the baronet's heart, they once more set out together, but varying their travelling system, by embarking at Marseilles; they soon reached the spot so eagerly desired; and the lively Hibernian was convinced that the eyes of signora Eulalia were not injured since their departure; it happened, however, somewhat unluckily, that their brightest rays were ever darted towards his sombre companion: the fair Italian was ambitious; she
scorned the easy conquest of the honest Irishman, and set all the spirit of an intriguing mind, and the charms of her fascinating person, to conquer the melancholy of the handsome Englishman, or at least to turn the sadness which interested her, into the vehicle of that tender sentiment she sought to inspire.

Signora Eulalia had not only the charms of beauty, accompanied by superior accomplishments in music and singing, but she possessed an exuberant fancy, considerable information, and a mind far above the common class of her countrywomen; to these she joined considerable address, a specious appearance of morality, when it suited her purpose, and an air of modest simplicity, resembling that which an Englishman at this period seldom found in such perfection as in his own country, and which she could so blend with the bewitching voluptuousness of her own, that the being she aimed to ensnare fancied that the form of Virtue herself was won to indulge him, a species of flattery the coldest can feel,
Says she to her neighbour, what?

and the wisest will be at little pains to analyse.

As the major, in a very early period of their acquaintance, had thought proper to hint that friendship was all his heart could now admit for woman, the lady was platonic to admiration; but as he had soon after owned that the tender sorrows which oppressed him were ever alleviated by music, she lost no opportunity of calling her lute to aid the powers of her reason, and sung to its melting strains with eyes of such soft languishment, that it was no wonder the gay baronet, who was admitted, as far as form went, to the same honorary distinction,

Soon wander'd, a willing example, to prove,

That friendship with woman is sister to love.

Though the major did not believe he could take pleasure in any thing, yet he certainly found himself subject, at the usual hour, to accompany the baronet to the fair friend's, with a quicker step and gayer air than he wore on any other occa-
Says she to her neighbour, what? 217

sion; but he thought it proceeded from his regard to the baronet, who certainly merited his greatest attention, from the disinterested attachment he had evinced, and the wearisome wanderings he had so patiently partaken; and as he really believed that he wished his friend all possible success, yet he was not as sorry as he ought to have been, when the lady positively refused to be made lady Frankland, which was going farther in the affair than the baronet meant; nor could he understand from the tell-tale glances of those "orbs of dewy light" which revealed the state of the gentle Eulalia's bosom, that he was the man who, malgre his pallid looks and absent air, had touched the susceptible maid, without feeling some little glow of pleasure play on his benighted heart; but it was only like the moonbeam which sparkles on the icicle it cannot melt; it shone, but could not warm the faithful shrine where the image of the far-distant Caroline sat on her holy throne; and the penetrating Eu-
Italia soon discovered, that while his vanity enjoyed her homage, or his pity lamented it, yet his unshaken heart denied the slightest promise of return; and in vain the lure of beauty, the charm of talents, or the stimulus of coquetry, bent their united arms against the impregnable battery of a passion not more hopeless than faithful—yet still she played on; for there was amusement in the action, though victory were denied to her prowess.

After another winter, the major had regained his strength, and appeared to perfect his personal merits, since he now adopted the rich hue which an Italian sun throws over the features, and he was not sorry to return to his military duties; the British troops were then carrying a brilliant career of arms in the East, where he proposed immediately to join them; and such was the faithful attachment which sir Thomas felt for him, that he would probably have gone with him as a volunteer, when an English family, passing through Naples on their way to Sicily, engaged his
attention, and eventually took him in their suite, for he found one of the two daughters of his new friend nearly as charming as the syren who discarded him; and as the major told him—"She had that within which passeth show," he determined, like a wise man, to extinguish one flame by feeding another; and he had now the good fortune, before he reached the land of saints, to take home a very amiable wife; so that it could not be said he had run a wildgoose-chase for nothing at all.

Disappointments in tender attachments of the heart have improved some soldiers, and made others, a circumstance we may trace in the private history and military achievements of several great names in our own day; and which may be accounted for, partly by the carelessness of life the loss of a beloved object is but too apt to inspire, and partly from considering that some very active principle is required to deliver the mind from the morbid sensibility it has lately indulged, and that glory,
220 says she to her neighbour, what?

and its accompanying irritabilities, are the most powerful of the energetic feelings. Be this as it may, it is certain that the major everywhere signalized himself, not only for undaunted bravery, but superior discipline, and, above all, for that tender humanity by which he sought to bind the wounds of suffering humanity, even where she is most decidedly outraged; his merit occasioned him advancement in the first campaign, and at the end of the second he was brigadier-general.

The laurels thus earned on the banks of the Ganges shed refreshing odours on the distant retirement of her who now soothed the sickbed of declining age, and bade her gentle heart partake heroic ardour; but the private suffering of a part of his excellent family, every branch of which, though personally unknown, were yet tenderly bound by those fine fibres in which the lover lives a twofold life, awoke her sorrow. I mentioned that the young marquis of Blandington had conceived a passion for the major’s pretty sister when she was little
more than a child, and which succeeded in banishing from his heart its first impression; this flame had literally grown with the growth, and strengthened with the strength of the young people; and as so splendid an alliance with so amiable a young man could not fail being highly acceptable to Mr. Sedgewood, he had no farther exerted his parental authority, than to postpone the marriage until his daughter had attained her eighteenth year, at which period finding himself gradually declining, he wished to return to his native country, and present his new connexions to his brother, as there still existed the same undivided affection between them, notwithstanding their long parting, that has ever distinguished the relationships of the Sedgewood family.

Switzerland, ever the land where the young and romantic paint the purest triumphs of hallowed love, was fixed on by the bridegroom-elect as the place in which he wished to receive the promised boon; and as Mr. Sedgewood had never been
there, notwithstanding his long vicinity, he readily consented. The day before that fixed on for the marriage, it was proposed to make a small party on the lake of Geneva, in whose beautiful environs they had fixed their temporary abode; two young Englishmen and several ladies were of the party; but the latter declaring that the water appeared so rough they durst not venture, the marquis observed, he thought so indeed; the Englishmen rallied the young nobleman on his cowardice, and observed, that he had taken such a fright at his dip in the Thames, they supposed he had had the hydrophobia ever since: the marquis had not the courage to avow his fears; he protested he was ready to go on board with the first, and sprang forwards for that purpose; his gay bride, proud of his spirit, applauded the motion; yet Mr. Sedgewood observed that as he passed her, and gallantly saying "adieu!" raised her hand to his lips, that his countenance was indicative of alarm, and he hurried on to conceal his agitation. For an hour or two the lake
appeared becoming smoother, and the females regretted the weakness which had lost them their diversion, and suffered the vivacious raillery of the disappointed Barbara on that account, who wished a thousand times that she had gone with them; but during the afternoon, a heavy storm of thunder and rain too fully justified the prognostics of the morning, and the sunset without affording one glimpse of their return: all night long the distracted girls and my venerable uncle traversed the banks of the lake, employing guides, pilots, and boatmen, to ascertain the situation of the vessel; but the morning rose without betraying the awful secret; and it was not till a journey on the distant bank informed them that the ill-fated vessel had sunk, and, except one waterman and his boy, all on board had perished.

To tell the agony of this "parting stroke" is utterly beyond my powers; for many a wearisome month did the fond parent bend over his stricken child, as if the order of nature were reversed, and he was.
called in duteous submission to await her languid smile: he bore her to the classic scenes of Italy, and pointed out whatever could interest in antiquity or charm in art; and happily found his own strength renewed, in proportion as his tender and efficacious energy was exerted. The poor girl became sensible of her father's love, and for his sake struggled to overcome the depression of her withered heart; she entreated him at length to return to their own country, since it was evident that he could now bear the climate, and England was become as much a novelty to her, as any his affection could now point out for her amusement. The good man gladly consented, and returned to gladden the last days of his beloved brother, who now, with him, rejoiced over the success of their darling Theodore, or wept at his unmerited misfortunes, the peculiar circumstances of which, from motives of delicacy to sir Charles, had never been revealed till now, nor would they, if that intimate intercourse which leads us in conversation to reveal
thoughts we should not allow ourselves to write, at length brought forwards the circumstance on which the earl had thought proper to affix the barrier between the unfortunate lovers. The old gentleman was now fast advancing to that period when he must resign all earthly distinctions; but it has been said, with great truth, that we are most tenacious of life when we are about to quit it; and it might be added, so we are of every thing we consider as the goods of life also; so that if ever money or honour have been esteemed by us, they are held with a tenfold grasp by the trembling hand which feels they must be soon removed for ever. I have made these observations as a prelude to sir Charles's conduct.

The good old man was sitting with his two gouty feet laid up on pillows before him, or he would most probably have risen to take the hand of his brother, who was leaning on a table near him, and whose handkerchief was at his eyes; for though
the aged do not shed many tears, yet the
remembrance of his son's sufferings, blend-
ed as they must now be with the blighted
hopes of his youngest darling, had bade
them course freely down his cheeks; at
this moment the baronet, leaning towards
him, said, with an expression of sorrow
contending with a warmer emotion—"And
is it possible, Thé, that for so many years
you should have suffered our gallant boy
to languish thus, while the means of help
were in your power?"

Mr. Sedgewood instantly withdrew his
handkerchief from his eyes, and looked
wistfully in his brother's face.

"Aye, you may look, and look again,"
said the old man, reddening as he spoke,
"before you find any thing in the counte-
nance of Charles Sedgewood that tells you
he has deserved this want of confidence in
any of you. You may call it delicacy to-
wards me. What do you suppose I could
have suspected you of, if you had told me
all these facts as they were developed to
you? why, of wishing that an old bache-
lor would resign his title and estates to a
fine young fellow who was likely to make
the family tree flourish—a boy that he had
dangled on his knees, to whom he had
given his fondest affections, and whose race
would have been dear to him as the blood
that warms his heart veins. Oh, what fol-
ly! what madness is there in having any
secrets in families like ours! There is a
pleasure, nay a virtue, in unbounded con-
fidence, which ought never to be sacrificed
to these impertinent scrupulosities. I sup-
pose if I had died while you were in France,
you would have resigned every thing to
Theodore directly?”

“Undoubtedly; I was his father.”

“Umph! so was I!”

“You perhaps think,” continued the
baronet, “that I was never so generous to
our dear Thé in his first outset in life, as to
give you a right to believe that an old man
would give up that he had seemed to re-
tain as a young one; and I can now see,
that I too have been to blame in not ex-
plaining to you my motives. Theodore.
was a fine young man; I thought he should have the honour of pushing his own fortunes, and maturing his own virtues; and as I had begun a plan of redeeming the estate from the many dilapidations it had suffered during the civil wars of Charles, I would not break in upon my plans till I saw further occasion for it; you were at that time the father of a numerous family, and they all lay very near my heart, and their mother——” (here the baronet’s eyes watered; and while his brother rose to slowly pace the room, an invariable custom with him when her beloved name was brought to his ear, he too stopped, unable to conceal his agitation.)

“ Well, well,” resumed the old man, “when our boys were all gone, I became only the more anxious for Thé; but he became unfortunately possessed of a jointure, you know, the last time he was down; nor have I once seen him since his introduction to this upstart lord, whose ancestor was first distinguished by being known to some of the dirty favourites of James I.
You have ever been good and kind to every creature round you; and if I had known a positive want, I should never have hesitated to reveal it; but the only

and who has presumed to reject a Sedge-wood. But as we must all submit to love, why no wonder Theodore did it too; and had he but told me, all might have been well, and this new lord satisfied; he would then have found whether I could part with money or not, and he would have seen the fields where it has been hoarding for my boy. You have been living on frogs in France, and wanted nothing; but you do not suppose if Barbara had brought over her noble lover, that I had not made up a dowry worthy his acceptance. Brother, I did not say as much to you either of my motives or intentions as I ought to have done, and you have not confided to me your wishes or your wants as you should have done; but I believe I have been most to blame, for in proportion as I felt my heart warm with projects for your good, I have been accustomed to seal my lips.”
Says she to her neighbour, what?

One I ever had went to stripping you of your dignity as well as property, and well as I love my boy, I love my brother too; you know you became a married man too, and—"

"Why, aye," said the baronet drily, "and I got a good wife too; but you had no fear of any heirs, hey?"

"Very true; but ladies love titles, and—"

"And she will gladly resign hers. But we will ask her," said the old gentleman, "for her resignation will not weary us with its declamatory fulness."

When lady Sedgewood answered in person to the baronet's inquiries, she heard the story of Theodore's renunciation with uplifted hands and tearful eyes, and now and then an ejaculation seemed to escape her lips, though its sound was not heard; in conclusion the baronet said—"Now, my dear Mercy, it is my wish and my intention, if agreeable to you, to resign my title and estate, and retire to live in the jointure-house with my brother, as it is, you know,
big enough in all conscience; and send for my nephew, and let him bring this lady Caroline down to us here, that we may see his handsome face and his lovely bride, and their dear brats about us before we die; but what say you, Mercy, hey?"

"I say, sir Charles, it is a very good thought; and may God bless them and theirs, and send us all to see it put in execution!"

"Bravo, my good woman; you haven't made so long a speech since you told old Hopkins how to cure his whitlow: so you wont fret at hearing me plain Charles Sedgewood, hey?"

"Why I shall be a little sorry, I confess; but not if the major can't be happy without it."

"But you wont fret after the house, the servants, the state, the coach-and-six going a snail's gallop, and the diamond necklace and shoe-buckles, with the earrings that pinched you so delightfully on our last wedding-day, hey, Mercy?"

"It is not very likely that a woman you
chose should want any thing you thought it right to resign in such a case as this—my mother was a Sedgewood, sir Charles."

"True, Mercy, and your mother's daughter is as good a woman as the whole breed ever produced."

The lady smiled gratefully, through eyes that twinkled with tears, and withdrew, when the baronet, turning to his brother, said—"Well! now you will be easy, I hope, for when lady Sedgewood has once said a thing, she never retracts it, which is one of the many extraordinary qualities for which I married her. I have known hundreds of women who, upon this occasion, would have made a magnificent shew of generosity, and have been impatient till the hour arrived when they could throw theirhonours, their very comforts, at the feet of the lovely young couple; but they would have given many a long sigh after them when the deed was done, and have considered their successors as ever after their debtors. This is not Mercy's way—once resigned, her sacrifice is made; once
She is yours for ever. You would be surprised that I married her, because I professed to do it for want of a companion, and she was the most silent woman of our acquaintance; but I proved my judgment in women, for she has answered the purpose wonderfully well."

"I see every day some trait in my sister's character which assures me of the real goodness of her heart; but unless some very extraordinary occurrence, like the present, induces her to speak, I cannot perceive her improved as a companion."

"But you must surely have perceived, since your return, that I talk ten times more than I used to do; for like my grandfather, sir Henry, of whom the historians truly observed, 'He was a man of few words,' I very seldom used to speak at all; whereas finding that my silent wife had really a heart that beat responsive to a generous sentiment, and an understanding that fully comprehended a reason, I imperceptibly found pleasure in offering them to her, in return for the thousand si-
lent attentions which my bodily ailments were ever receiving from her quiet tenderness and active affection; she understands this, and her gratitude is as pleasant to me as mine is amusing to her; and we are become the best company imaginable, for there is only one tongue and one heart between us."

"I rejoice in your happiness, my dear sir Charles; but I have known a great deal, where there were two tongues and one heart, as you have often silently witnessed."

"Aye, my dear Thé, but yours was no common lot; had that angel been spared, your bachelor brother would still have borrowed a ray from the blaze of your happiness to light him to the grave; but we must not look back—come, let us think of our conqueror, and the most ready way to bring him, for as there is now a cessation of hostilities, he can come back with honour; and if I am a prophet, honours await, such as Brooksbury may be proud to claim kindred with. It is many years since I went to court, and then I scarcely
took a glimpse at them, for the Stuarts gave us all a sickening of royalty, I believe, and we have had no great taste for the German princes who succeeded them; but depend upon it, brother," said the baronet, rising as he spoke, as high as the gout would let him, "depend upon it, when Frederic fills the throne, I will once more, with my boy in my hand, pay the tribute of honest respect to the sovereign I can honour; I will then say, that a Sedge-wood, a descendant of that man whose rights even the conquering Norman acknowledged and upheld, a limb of that body which has defied bad kings, protected suffering kings, bled for a beloved prince, but never stooped to sue to any prince, can yet accept the kindness of a good one. You shall then see, brother, that——"

The entrance of the ladies and tea cut short the baronet's speech, but not his enthusiasm; from this time his mind was devoted to one object, that of seeing his nephew established near him; but as it was impossible that that nephew could
bless his longing eyes for a very considerable period, he could not otherways divert his impatience, than by projecting some plan in unison with his favourite pursuit. The house in which he resided was comfortable, being a modern mansion, built on a beautiful spot of ground, about a mile from that castle, in whose tremendous bulwarks his ancestors had lived in feudal times, the bounded sovereigns of a surrounding district, allowed ever to be the most beautiful and fruitful spot in the West-Riding, and on that account too often subjected to the horrors of war during the time of border ravages, and which having been demolished, along with seven other castles, by command of the Parliament, now presented a fine ruin, rather more pleasing to the artist than the surviving branches of the Sedgewoods, I apprehend, since the house they built immediately after, did not, among its other beauties, embrace the picturesque ruins of this castle, though they were seen from many parts of the surrounding pleasure-grounds. Sir Charles Sedgewood
heard his brother and niece speak of the many beautiful places they had seen abroad, and he determined to please himself, and, as he trusted, the future bride of his nephew too, by erecting a suite of summer apartments, which should afford a prospect of every thing most beautiful in the vicinity of his mansion, and which should be furnished in a style worthy the rank and merits of the fair inhabitant. The most eminent projectors were consulted; the plan no sooner arranged than the workmen were employed; and long before the vessel arrived in India which was meant to convey the welcome intelligence of recall to his native land to Theodore, this friendly beacon was raising its benignant head, as if to beckon his return. The benevolent heart of Barbara now found a stimulus to exertion she had never found before; and in projecting improvements for her brother's marriage, there were times when her native vivacity returned in its pristine vigour, to the delight of her father and uncle; but there were others, when her
own marriage preparations, and all their fatal circumstances, rushed on her mind, and overpowered it with unutterable anguish, for extremes were blended in the fine sensibility and genuine warmth of her character; but their channel was now turned to another object; the good baronet, forgetful of himself, and unmindful of the short but salutary counsels of his lady, insisted on being carried out in his gouty chair, to witness the finishing stone laid on the top of the new building. This was not an uncommon exertion; but he protracted his stay till the cold damps of evening fell; and his enemy, which had been some days giving indications of his approach to the feet, was thrown upon the stomach; and the generous baronet, after two hours of severe suffering, exchanged his fond hopes of seeing his family flourishing around him on earth, for a better seat among the family of heaven. His sudden death, at this critical time, was a severe shock to his widow and friends; and the surrounding country felt it as a
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT? 239

terrible affliction the virtues of his successor only could alleviate.

CHAP. X.

What is life but to shift from side to side, from sorrow to sorrow? Sterne.

The activity of sir Charles Sedgewood's mind, and his admirable method of managing his estate, and conducting his affairs, made him a loss to the neighbourhood, which was not likely to be fully compensated by the mild virtues and quiet habits of his successor, who was now entering his sixtieth year, and had lived too long in the happy privacy of undistinguished rank and scholastic leisure to adopt any other system, without deranging his habits, and destroying that perfect freedom which was, to a man of his habits, invaluable. It was not without reason that the late baronet had been at one period
anxious to save a fortune: he saw that his brother, though the most affectionate of husbands and the most tender of fathers, yet did not possess that kind of energy which was necessary in a man, who at one time was the father of five sons, who might not be all, like himself, content to till a few paternal acres, and vegetate in virtuous retirement. The wisdom and virtue of his brother's life was undoubted; but it was so little likely to be adopted by his sons, and still less by the wives his sons would be likely to choose, that the baronet saw some provision must be made to keep the younger branches of the Sedgewoods in their own place in society, or they must be compelled either to the disquietude of poverty, or the degradations of vicious dependence. When they were taken away, the dispersion of the family followed, and the baronet found himself growing richer than he expected; though there was a pleasure in accumulation, under the idea that Theodore might yet return and enjoy it; yet sir Charles did not allow that en-
croaching fiend, the spirit of accumulation, to grow upon him; he married a woman of small fortune, on whom he settled a handsome jointure; he increased his establishment, extended his charities according to the judicious benevolence of his wife, and thus increased his happiness and his consequence, and placed the name of Sedgewood on the same footing it was a century before, as appears from a statement in the reign of——

"Stop, sir! you will never get to the end of your story if you step back to the family muster-rolls."

Madam, I obey; but you have lost a fine opportunity of hearing something about king James I. when he went to take possession of his English crown. I am certain I have not shewn you one of my family you don’t like: my poor uncle of whom I am speaking, ma’am, was a fine noble-looking man, with a Ramilies wig, and a face under it that Rubens might have been proud of sending down to the latest
posterity; he was good-tempered, warm-hearted, and high-spirited; not quite so interesting as his brother, I grant; but I question whether you would not have cried at his funeral, especially if you had seen that brother, and could have beheld his face as he approached the family vault, where lay the ashes of her, and her little ones, who was indeed

Belov'd till life's last sigh be o'er,
And mourn'd till pity's self be dead.

At the earnest request of the present possessor, lady Sedgewood remained in the family mansion until some information from India should arrive to justify her removal. When the first mourning was over, sir Theodore and his daughter removed to London, that they might be so much nearer the object of their anxiety on his landing. During their stay there, Miss Sedgewood was presented; and by a singular coincidence, lady Caroline made her appearance at court for the first time also, in obedience to the long-repeated wishes of the earl; the
beauty, the foreign air, and the well-known misfortune of the former, attracted much attention; and as lady Caroline withdrew from the presence, whither Barbara was hastening, she inquired of the duchess of Athol, who had undertook her introduction—"Who was the lovely girl with such fine auburn tresses, so fine that she had never seen them equalled but once?"

The duchess knew nothing of lady Caroline's story, she therefore answered immediately—

"She is indeed a lovely girl, the only daughter of sir Theodore Sedgewood. That fine-looking old man is her father; I mistook him at first for a bishop, but very foolishly, for he is much more like an apostle."

The duchess perceived her companion grew pale to faintness; she made her lean upon her arm, and they soon after left the room; but the idea of being so near to two people unknown, yet so very dear, became every moment a source of encreasing
perturbation to the still lovelorn Caroline. The sorrows, too, of the youthful Barbara, so like her own, gave her an additional interest, and she longed to fold her to her bosom, and call her sister. The duchess perceiving her agitation, and believing it proceeded wholly from the heat and the novelty of the scene, to a person of extremely retired habits, pressed forward, and increased the evil she sought to remedy; and lady Caroline's trepidation was increased exceedingly. — “What shall I do,” said the duchess, looking wistfully towards some of her friends. The nearest person was at that moment speaking to sir Theodore; both the gentlemen came forward; the heart of Caroline palpitated more violently, as, seeing her situation, he took her hand, and drawing it gently under his own, followed the duchess. The air revived lady Caroline, and she looked as if she would have spoken, but the sound of words died away upon her lips: sir Theodore lamented that he had not the honour of being introduced, but begged her to be-
He was happy in rendering this slight service; but entreated her not to fatigue herself by speaking. The sound of his voice, broken as it was by age, yet bore an affinity to the major's, and every note sunk into the heart of Caroline; yet her natural timidity, the consciousness that many eyes were upon her, and most probably among the rest her father's, sealed her lips, but she could not refuse herself a tender pressure of the arm that was supporting her. Sir Theodore imputed this to increased weakness, and he besought her, in the most fatherly manner, to lean more upon him; and in order to reassure her, said—"I have a daughter, madam, who has been subject to much weakness of this kind."

"Yes! yes! you have two daughters," said lady Caroline, with quickness, for her gasping breath scarcely admitted words, "and I—I—Oh, sir Theodore, do you not know me? You must have heard of Caroline Ingleby."

"My God, I thank thee," said the ba-
Says she to her neighbour, what?

ronet, while his gushing eyes bore witness how deeply his heart was affected, and for a moment he held the trembling girl to his bosom: they were now at the foot of the stairs, and not knowing when he might be permitted to see her again, he began instantly to inform her that he had sent for his son from India; that he was holding himself in readiness to invest him with the title and estates of his uncle, the hour he returned, and had come to London to learn what forms were necessary, and to receive him there; and that he hoped—but, alas! before the good man had the power to whisper that dearest hope, an old gentleman, adorned with the insignia of nobility, with an air of chilling civility said—“I will release you from your trouble, sir; the young lady may now take the arm of her natural protector.”

Unnatural protector, sir Theodore would have said, but he checked his words, but not the look of cool contempt with which he surveyed the nobleman, when gently disengaging the hand of lady Caroline from
his arm, and presenting it to her father—
"The lady is now better, sir; it is not the first time the earl of Brooksbury has received a restored child from a Theodore Sedgewood, I believe."

At this moment the duchess turned round—"Good Heavens! how strange it is, that of all the people in the world, you see sir. Thé should be the person to support my young friend! Lord Mordaunt is just telling me that your son, the general, saved her brother, at the risk of his life, about seven years ago, from drowning. How very odd!—I dare say it was the remembrance of that very thing which helped to affect poor lady Caroline, for she turned pale the very moment she saw your daughter: no wonder; gratitude for so singular a favour was too much for her. I hear there never was such a man as your son, sir Thé; so handsome, all the women in India are dying for him; so brave, that he is the very soul of the army; and so good, that the Gentooos consider him an object of idolatry."
The pale cheek of Caroline now glowed with roses, more vivid from their long desertion, and for a moment gave to the fond respectful gaze of the baronet a view of those charms which had captivated so entirely the affections of his son: the duchess, amiable, gay, and warm-hearted, thought only on the subject she was speaking of, and neither saw the blushing cheek of Caroline, nor the bilious one of her tortured father; she continued—"In short, I never heard of such a paragon; if he chooses he may marry an Indian queen, and live in an ivory palace; or a Persian princess, and trample on diamonds—(surely, lady Caroline, you are not ill again?) or he may build a haram as large as the park, and stock it with Asiatic beauties, for his enemies admire him as much as his friends adore him, I am told; and he equally commands the services of both. I wish he were come back; the duke promises me his acquaintance, and assures me there is not a family in the kingdom that might not be proud not only of his acquaintance,
but his alliance; in fact, that there is not a father in the kingdom who might not be proud of it."

"The duke is very good to entertain these sentiments, which my son, as far as relates to himself, certainly merits; but it is my misfortune, and his, to know there is one father in the kingdom who could refuse him."

"Some ignorant man, who does not know him;" said the duchess, "undoubtedly; when he comes back, your lordship (turning to the earl) shall go to him, and unfold a tale of his noble daring in your son's defence; 'that shall harrow up his heart, and make his eyes'—my dear earl, how you stare! you think I've forgot Shakespeare, but I have not; if you were to hear how I can recite—'Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel,' you'd never forget me; or how admirable I can enact the death of Beaufort, when the 'busy meddling fiend has got hold of' his poor conscience, and is making a pin—"
cushion of it to stick his fangs in;' then I have all the rest of the fine parts of his other speeches in the greatest perfection, such as—' Ah! but to die, and go one knows not where;' and, 'In that sleep of death, what dreams may come!' and nothing can be finer than my enunciation of 'swear!'; there, my lord, I saw it run through you, and I am sure you must feel this, 'Remember your oath!'

The beseeching eyes of lady Caroline at this moment obtained the mercy they had long sought from the duchess, who, it will be perceived, had heard a good deal from lord Mordaunt, as he led her through the lobby, where they had been forced to wait; and it may be presumed, that although the duchess lived and died before quizzing had been talked of, yet it was plain she was no bad proficient in it; and as she was considered a wit, and yet known to be a very good-natured one, several persons of distinction had assembled round her little party, to the great distress of lady Caroline, who could not bear to see shame sit
on her father's brow, whatever were his just claims to the distinction. When the duchess ceased speaking, the group dispersed, walking away by two and three at a time, each whispering to the other what they had known or surmised of the affair alluded to by the duchess: she and lady Caroline set off in her grace's carriage, but the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, where sir Theodore was treated with the most marked respect, and the praises of his son the theme of universal panegyric. The earl of Brooksbury had once loved, always admired major Sedgewood, but of late years had hated him; he knew, however, perfectly well, that this hatred proceeded only from the sense he had of deserving his hatred, and the consciousness that he must be despised by him. He was now obliged to see that the man he had scorned as a son-in-law, would have thrown that lustre on his declining years, which was, in his opinion, the only desideratum of life; he learnt, too, that the Sedgewood estate was equal to the expense of any.
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

title royal beneficence might bestow, and he could not doubt but the Sedgewoods might obtain any thing in that way they chose to seek for; and he was so well acquainted with the major's talents, that he could have no doubt of his success in the cabinet being equal to that he had gained in the field. In him the name and honour of the earls of Brooksbury might have been preserved, much better, in fact, than by the marriage he had projected with the duke of Roverton, since the greater glory would have swallowed up the less; and though the duke had married soon after his disappointment, he was still childless: in short, whatever way the earl looked, he beheld himself an isolated old man, every day becoming of less consequence in society; unallied to the younger branches of his courtly circle, and forsaken by the old, who were either dropping into the grave, preparing for it, or clinging to their tender connexions for support they could not extend; he had but one hold on life, one gentle being, who still smoothed the
Says she to her neighbour, what? 253

downward path of existence; and would have softened all its asperities; but he could not look at her without seeing the traces of past sufferings in her countenance; and remembering that he had driven her to conduct which had, in its effects, produced the celibacy he now lamented:

The earl, too much of a courtier to show the mortification he experienced, profited from the information he gained on this eventful evening, so as to learn what were the views of sir Theodore respecting his son's future destination; and as he could not help feeling, in case of the general's return and accession to his father's rank, that his own consequence would be increased by becoming the father-in-law of a successful general, after consulting his pillow, he determined to forget the mortifications of the evening, and, if possible, even the contemptuous brow of sir Theodore, and seek a conciliation where he had lately menaced an indignity; he first began by promoting an interview between Miss Sedgewood and
lady Caroline, which was equally dear to them both, and which laid the foundation of a friendship that ended only with their lives. When the baronet learnt that lord Brooksbury was indeed desirous of conciliating an intimacy, he was too sincere a Christian to refuse him forgiveness, and too much attached to lady Caroline to refuse complying with overtures which could not fail of being agreeable to her; so that notwithstanding the vindictive emotions under which they first met, in the course of a few weeks, there was as much intimacy between them as was necessary for a general good understanding:—friendship between characters so opposite was altogether impossible.

In the meantime, another campaign had been renewed in India, and it became a question whether Theodore could leave the army under existing circumstances: the first dispatches spoke still flatteringly of his valour, and there was reason to hope that success would be the forerunner of peace, which would undoubtedly bring him.
home: it did not appear from these letters that he had received the pressing solicitation of his uncle to return again. That sickness which ariseth from hope deferred sunk the renovated spirits, and preyed on the fragile form of lady Caroline; but she exerted herself; and where she could not command fortitude, she submitted to patience. At length the last vessels arrived from India, and the general came not; but dispatches respecting the army were still looked for by government. To beguile the tedious time, the earl proposed the party adjourning to his country-seat, leaving a servant in London, who should lose no time in forwarding intelligence; to this they consented, and the young ladies delightedly withdrew to a scene more congenial to their feelings. Here the goodness of lady Caroline had a field for the exercise of that benevolence which weaned her own heart from sorrow, while it relieved the sorrows of others; and here Barbara had an opportunity of seeing how nobly the wealth of a large income may be
dispensed; her generous heart rejoiced in the extended means of good which was lately granted to her father, and which she had not yet had an opportunity of rejoicing in, for mere splendour had little to engage a heart that yet languished in its widowhood. Their rides and walks were frequently extended considerably, and had included nearly every village within five or six miles; but lady Caroline remarked one day; they must go farther still, to include the circle of all her acquaintance; and as Miss Sedgewood expressed a desire to see all, the first fine morning afterwards they set out for the village of Thorp, which included in its way the temptation of spending an hour with lady Egerton, who had long ere this been acquainted with the favourable circumstances in which her dear young friend's affairs now stood: after engaging to dine with her on their return, they proceeded to the entrance of the village, where they alighted; and lady Caroline giving her arm to Miss Sedgewood, bent her steps towards a neat cot-
tage, in front of which was a small garden, where two children were laid on the grass-plot, the elder presenting flowers and cakes to the baby, as if he had undertaken the important office of nurse, though himself was still young enough to claim the cares of one.

While the ladies stopped a moment at the wicket gate, to contemplate the lovely form of infantine affection, Miss Sedge-wood remarked, that there was an unusual number of people in the cottage, and she had an idea it was some grand festival.

"Then we will not call to-day," said lady Caroline.

At the sound of their voices the little boy looked up, and springing on his feet, cried out, as he ran into the house—"Mudder, mudder, she is comed; own lady is comed again."

"The urchin has discovered us, so we might as well go forward," said lady Caroline, stepping on to the cottage.

A modest-looking young woman, neatly dressed in her holiday apparel, sprung to
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

the door, and welcomed lady Caroline with a smile that was instantly followed by a tear; but there was equal happiness in both, and Miss Sedgewood thought she had never seen welcome so gracefully expressed.

"My good Sally, I rejoice to see you well," said lady Caroline, "but I fear I have broken in upon you at a bad time (waving her hand to the rustic visitants to keep their places); I wish I had come any other day."

"Surely not, my lady, for this will ever be the day, of all days in the year, I shall love the best, I be very sure."

"It is your wedding-day I guess, hey, Sally?"

"Yes, my lady, an what's more, 'tis the versary of that blessed day when you first came among us; God forbid I should ever forget it!" said Sally, again brushing a grateful tear.

"Yes, my lady," said a good-looking dark man, who had just took his youngest child in his arms; "and when, two years
after, you procured my discharge; and I came home, I couldn't persuade her to be married till this day came round; and to tell your ladyship's goodness the truth, we have all been to brother Will's wedding this very morning."

William, with an awkward bow, now came forwards, leading a blushing bride, who having never been seen by the fine ladies before, could not feel the ease in their presence experienced by those who had been the happy partakers of her bounty, and who owed every comfort they enjoyed to her goodness; but their conciliating manners soon relieved her. Lady Caroline insisted on tasting their bride-cake—inquired where William's cottage lay; and by many kind inquiries proved that interest in their affairs so dearly estimated by the humble children of labour: she then begged the bride to tell her candidly if there was any way in which she could contribute to her happiness. The young woman, looking her new-made spouse in the face, hesitated. "Speak
out to her ladyship, Nancy," said the husband, "if you have anything to say, because for why, it does her heart good to help everybody: if it hadn't been for she, ye know Thomas and I should have been tossing on the salt ocean, or may be laid down in the bottom, and sister there wearing her heart away, instead of nursing her own children by her own fireside, and the man she loves sitting by her. A very great difference," added William, with a knowing nod, as he looked round at the humbler part of his auditory. Thus encouraged, the young woman ventured to say, that her father's lease for his little farm was nearly out, and she had been told that lord Egerton was going to take it into the park, which made her very unhappy, lest her parents should lose their home in their old age.

"Haven't I told you," said William, interrupting her, with an offended air, "that I will——"

"I know you will do anything you can, my dear William; but you know you told
me to speak to madam, and so I did; for I was sure and certain that one word from she, to any lord, would settle the matter at once."

"You are perfectly right, Nancy," said lady Caroline; "and depend upon it that my word shall not be wanting on behalf of your parents; and with so good a landlord as lord Egerton, there is little doubt of my success: but have you no wants for yourself, Nancy?"

"Oh no, my lady," said the bride, as her eye shot a beam of tenderness to her William, which dispelled the vexation that had made a transient visit to his generous, honest countenance.

The feeling heart of lady Caroline was not slow to read the language of untutored feeling, and a gentle moisture rose to her eye as she said—"Well, Nancy, I will not forget either you or your parents; and may God grant that you may never know any contention with your husband, save which of you shall best fulfil your duties, or prove the sincerity of your attachment."
SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT?

She then shook hands with Nancy, wished the party a good morning, and retired amid a silent but admiring sense of grateful love and respect.

All the way home, the ladies conversed on the sorrows and merits of Sally Handy, whose story my readers are already acquainted with, and in contriving some useful present for the new housekeepers. It was long since lady Caroline had felt so truly alive to the sweet influences of hope, or dared to bring home a scene of happiness similar to that she had witnessed to her own heart. Miss Sedgewood perceived her happy friend was now allowing herself to rest on the sweet visions of long-protracted hope, and she rejoiced in her happiness; but it recalled forcibly the sense of her own situation; on which the sun (as far as regarded this world) was for ever set, and that resignation only could be hers—an involuntary sigh reminded lady Caroline of the melancholy difference now discernible in the fate of her she had often considered similar in
suffering, and she checked her own spirits. After spending a pleasant day at lord Eger-ton's, and pleading their little cause very successfully with his lordship, they returned home. They did not find either of their fathers in the usual sitting-room; and on inquiry, found that the earl had retired to his room, and sir Theodore was either there, or gone into the grove—"Being, poor gentleman, quite overpowered as it were, so that he can neither speak nor any thing else, said the servant."

"Overpowered," said Miss Sedgewood; "what do you mean? is my father ill?"

"Yes sure, miss; but you know nothing about it; and he said 'twas of no use sending for you; you should be happy as long as you could."

"Johnson, what is the matter?"

Lady Caroline, unable to speak, could only look the same terrible question.

"Why, ma'am, my lady, I'm very sorry to say that Dixon be come; and it seems there has been an engagement in the In-
gees, and poor general Sedgewood, it seems, is—"

Lady Caroline dropt senseless on the floor; Johnson, alarmed, exclaimed—"Not dead indeed, my lady; I did not say he was positive dead."

"Is he—my brother! speak! is he alive?"

"I doubt not; there seems no chance of that."

"How you torture me! tell me all, all—I insist upon it."

"Why, ma'am, there was a terrible engagement, and the major, I mean the general, though I knew him a major, you know, miss, and a handsome man he was; but, as I was saying, he led on his troops like a hero, and carried the day; but it is supposed he fell from his wounds, as he was seen streaming with blood just before the conclusion of the action. His body was not found; but the necessity there was of burying the dead immediately, gives too much room to suppose, that being
disfigured with blood and dust, he was, in the hurry of the service, thrown into the general grave, as no other particulars have been heard of him.”

Lady Caroline was slowly recovering her senses, in the arms of his weeping daughter, when sir Theodore entered the room: he saw at once the dreadful information was given, and his sorrows were freely mingled with hers, who knew not till now how closely she had nurtured in her heart the germ of that hope which was now rent thus cruelly from her bleeding bosom; yet she was sensible of some consolation, from beholding the father of her beloved Theodore thus sympathizing in her grief, and endeavouring to bestow the support her sorrows so much wanted; but it was only in the depth of retirement her heart could gain fortitude to endure the stroke, since it was only there she could look up to that heavenly Father for strength to bear the burden of those sorrows with which he saw it good to afflict her.
When some days had been given to the first demands of nature on this dreadful occasion, during which time the earl of Brooksbury had seldom appeared among the mourners, he one day surprised his daughter, by proposing to remove her to his seat in Hampshire, as being likely to benefit her health and amuse her feelings; but he did not make any proposition of this nature to his guests.

Sir Theodore observed, that he had flattered himself the earl and lady Caroline would accompany him to Yorkshire for that very purpose.

The earl "was obliged, very much obliged to his dear friend, sir Theodore Sedgewood; but the health of his invaluable daughter forced him to renounce that pleasure; he knew the north air was bad for her constitution, which exactly resembled his own, whereas the sea breeze would prove restorative to both."

Lady Caroline, throwing herself into the arms of Miss Sedgewood, wept freely, and the pitying eye of sir Theodore said
so plainly—"They ought not to be parted," that the earl could not misunderstand its language; he therefore observed, that the young ladies were evidently of great disservice to each other, by encouraging inordinate affliction; and that for his part, he was quite shocked to perceive Miss Sedgewood suffer so much from the claims so perpetually made on her sympathy.

In a few days these amiable women bade each other a long and sad farewell.

Each of these exemplary daughters became to her parent the tender solace of his age, and made up to him, as far as it was possible, the privations and chasms which every man in the decline of life must necessarily feel; but there was a material difference in the success of their endeavours; for whilst one daughter was enabled to smooth the passage of life to her parent, the other, with the same views, equal tenderness, and more meekness, appeared to be the source of many a thorn in the path of life to hers—the matter stood thus.
Says she to her neighbour, what?

Notwithstanding the seclusion in which these ladies endeavoured to live, yet their rank in life, their personal charms, and their well-known virtues and accomplishments, for several years rendered them, in their several circles, objects of admiration, and they were sought in marriage by men of rank and respectability. On these occasions the earl of Brooksbury, if the proposal accorded with his notions of aggrandizement, never failed to demand his daughter's acceptance of it; and when she told him that her heart forbade the union, he became so fretful, peevish, and unkind, her existence was rendered burdensome from his ill-humour. On the other hand, when sir Theodore represented to his daughter, that "he should have much comfort in seeing her the wife of some worthy man, who should become the protector he must soon cease to be, and who, by adopting her name, might still preserve the memory of their ancient house," and she too replied, that her heart was whelmed beneath the wave that destroyed her
Says she to her neighbour, what? only love, the good man gave a gentle sigh, and said, he would never distress her by urging his wishes.

The consequence of the earl's distressing pertinacity was this—lady Caroline adopted the idea, that notwithstanding the silence which still sealed his fate, that her beloved Theodore was still living, and that her father was aware of it; and she was the further confirmed in this, from his positively insisting on her dropping all correspondence with the Sedgewood family. This hope, however vague and groundless, was the support of her mind through many years of suffering, and was another proof how frequently our successful sins become our eventual punishers, since the consciousness of having been once duped by the earl's duplicity had awakened a suspicion in her mind, which was, in fact, without foundation; but which became the groundwork of that meek, but steady opposition to his wishes, it is not probable would have taken place under any other circumstances.
On the other hand, Miss Sedgewood felt it a duty and pleasure to obey the wishes of a father, so reasonable in themselves, and offered to her with so much delicacy. Among others who sued for her attention, was the honourable Mr. Elland, a son of lord St. Allens, a young man of mild, engaging manners, graceful, though slight in his person, generous and amiable in his disposition, but of delicate health and retired habits. For this interesting young man, Barbara felt a degree of tenderness, which she endeavoured to improve into that affection which might enable her to fulfil to him the duties of a wedded partner; and as she had every opportunity of cultivating favourable impressions, and the heart of a woman of sensibility could not have many more engaging objects presented to her choice, the baronet had soon the satisfaction of perceiving that his daughter entertained a very serious prepossession in his favour, and that he had every prospect of seeing her perhaps nearly as happy as she could have been with him who was the
object of a more ardent passion. But, alas! there appears a fatality attending the loves of this excellent, but most unfortunate lady—the young man, who was devoted to her in the most fond and tender manner, declined in his health as he approached the zenith of his happiness, and before the period fixed on for their marriage, he became far advanced in a decline. As pity was now added to friendship, Miss Sedgewood found herself more and more attached to the dear being from whom she was about to be separated for ever; and before the final scene took place, she was convinced, from bitter experience, that it is indeed possible to love a second time, with all the tenderness, if not the violence, of a first attachment; and so acute were the sufferings she experienced from this second disappointment, that even her father never could prevail on himself to lead her mind towards forming another engagement; and he now looked only to the divine mercy to console the mind of his
daughter, and teach resignation to him- self.

There were not wanting, at that time of day, those who censured both these ladies, as romantic, affected, and ridiculous, in thus suffering the disappointments of love to prevent them from enjoying the charms which state, splendour, and fortune, still held out for them—"Such lovesick airs they thought well enough in their teens; but when a woman got towards thirty, 'twas positively silly to the last degree—"men would die, and worms would eat 'em;" but it did not follow, that women were to pine to death after them, so long as others were left in the world, ready and willing to supply their places." Yet if either of these amiable women, duly considering this convenient doctrine, had taken to themselves a spouse, she would have said to her neighbour—"How true it is, that fickleness and inconstancy are the characteristics of women! the most me-

lancholy fate binds not her heart; the most
awful vows impose no shackles on her conscience: let a poor man be once laid in his grave, 'tis all over with him; he is forgotten, notwithstanding his merit, his constancy, and his misfortunes; the first upstart that comes in her path is accepted; and notwithstanding all the parade of sorrow and sentiment these sighing ladies have made, they are like the old proverb, and conclude 'that a living ass is better than a dead lion.'

This was the way "she used to talk to her neighbours" the middle of the last century; but she is so wonderfully improved since then, that, in a similar case, she would have informed you not only of a lapse of sentiment, but, very probably, a lapse of conduct in the ladies. In this case, "'twould have been no wonder they remained single so long, seeing they looked upon themselves as widows; that, indeed, poor creatures, they had been as good as wives—for her part, she should be sorry to make reflections on any body, im
a case which seemed so very hard; nor did she like to give ear to such things; but certainly there was something very odd in lady Caroline's being so long at lord Egerton's; during which time, to her own certain knowledge, for she had it from lady Egerton's maid's sister's daughter, she never wore any thing but loose morning gowns for six months, which had a very odd look with it, especially as she took a journey, rambling nobody knew where, so soon after. It must be granted, lady Egerton was the most correct woman in the world; quite a prude indeed; but prudes had often concealments of their own; nobody knew what had passed to herself in her youth, so she might have a fellow-feeling; there is no saying how the matter was; but certainly there are people in the world who must suspect lady Caroline, notwithstanding her sanctity and modesty."

Then as to poor Miss Sedgewood, "she, poor thing, was barely eighteen, and the marquis under age; there was no saying
what might happen with two young people, when there was no mother to take care of the girl. It always seemed strange that Mr. Sedgewood should go dangling into Italy, and them places, instead of bringing his daughter home at once. Nobody knew what happened abroad; but one of the men said—‘His young mistress was very bad at Florence, with seeing a picture so like the marquis, that it made her faint on the spot, and she wouldn’t go out again for a fortnight.’ Well, well, I scorn an ill-natured conclusion as much as any body; but it is much to me if a miniature of the marquis wasn’t the picture that touched the poor girl so nearly at that time. But, however, these things had best be forgot and forgiven; only when people set themselves up for saints, as it were, and make a fuss about their constancy, and all that, one cannot help remembering these things. It was a happy thing poor Elland died when he did; he was a poor creature; and his gay wife (for gay she is by nature) would have led him a
Says she to her neighbour, what?

fine dance, if they had gone to live in London."

Such is the improved state of the society we live in, that the spirit which used merely to find fault with its neighbour, is now so obliging as to make the faults, and place them in so accommodating a point of view, that we cannot help finding them, and wondering at the stupidity of our former blindness, which prevented us, in the common incidents and every-day occurrences of life, from seeing most wonderful intrigues, most solemn contrivances, and most gigantic vices, which those, thus gifted with this admirable second-sight, never fail to observe. I cannot help believing myself, that the optics of many of my good neighbours experience this species of divination, much in the same way that the inhabitants of the Highlands are said to possess theirs; and as that is peculiar to the northern parts of the island, which thus possesses a decided superiority over the southern in the art of foretelling, I do not see any reason why we should not
Says she to her neighbour, what? 277

Claim to ourselves like honours in the art of mistelling, which I therefore propose to consider as likewise proceeding from second-sight; and which, as being equally like with the other to proceed from the mysterious influences of bad spirits, may, with considerable propriety, so far as it is deemed "a gift," be supposed a devilish gift; and so far as it is considered an art, be called a black art.

We are told, that the Highland seers, in the moments of the exercise of their functions, fall into various contortions, and evince terror of the object before them; are sometimes flushed and sometimes pale, and seem willing to fly from the vision, which is, nevertheless, necessarily impressed upon their imagination; so that they are evidently acting, and acted upon, by a power superior to their own, and, as they would insinuate, very opposite to their own will and nature. In like manner, I have frequently observed, that persons possessed with the southern second-sight, with whatever anxiety they may
hasten to reveal their oracles, and however
evident it may be to all around them, that
they are as full of inspiration as the Py-
thian priestess, and can no way rest, eat,
or even breathe, till they have got vent
for the foul spirit which is inwardly tearing
and consuming them, yet never fail to
betray certain symptoms of uneasiness, or
express themselves in terms of self-condo-
lence, on being actually obliged to deli-
ver that to the world, which they are ma-
ifestly unable to conceal any longer
than I have observed in the little circle
of my neighbours which I mentioned in
my first chapter, and who will, I well
know, sit in judgment on every chapter of
this my first book; that whenever Mrs.
Featherbottom sits in judgment on her ac-
quaintance, she generally precedes her
sentences by three distinct tosses of the
head, a long, and, as I apprehend, very
painful tension of the vertebrae; and then,
with a nasal twang, quite distinct from the
voice with which she inquires after your
health, or invites you to the breast of a.
chicken, she prefaced her vision of vice by declaring—"She is quite sorry to say it, and really would not say it for the world, if it was not proper that such wickedness should be discountenanced;" and then proceeds to say what it is plain she would not, or could not, keep an hour longer on any account.

Before lady Frances Stickerton commences her operations, I observe that her eyes are affected with a certain disorder, which occasions them to dart out long, malignant glances, as if to take in the sense of the company at one moment, and to see where their vulnerable parts lie in another, so that she may be enabled at once to wound the absent, and cut the present by the same sally—thus she addresses a handsome woman on the subject of some fallen beauty, who may thank her fine face for her present dishonour; and she tells the mother of a family, of the disgraceful, ruinous conduct of her neighbour's children; yet she too winces under the demon who commands her, and never fails to de-
"It makes her blood run cold to hear of such things;" while she draws up her gown, strokes down her apron, and sidles in her seat, as if her chair bottom had been stuck full of pins with the points upwards.

Poor Mrs. Maxwell, without being possessed of the more malignant powers of the second-sight, and who really relates mischief for sorrow's sake, experiences the same symptoms in a milder degree; yet she never begins a tale of slander without giving several deep, doleful sighs, and appearing to turn her eyes inwards, as if to say—"Ah! there is sorrow enough in my heart, whatever there may in those I am going to talk about."

Violent flushing of the face, an unusual trepidation in the tongue, a quick tremulous motion of the hand or foot, and an exclamation of—"I really have no patience to see such things!" and many other febrile symptoms, indicate the distressing sensations experienced by both Mr. and Mrs. Parley on these occasions; while an
extreme anxiety to speak, a distressing watchfulness of the eye, a languid listlessness towards all around them, and an irritable restlessness, contending with that listlessness in all that concerns themselves, mark the nervous affection under which the Misses Robinson suffer when the slandering romancia is upon them, so different, and yet so distressing are its effects, so manifest its contortions.

In Mrs. Manby I must allow the possessing demon is a merry one, nor does he condescend to use any of the eternal apologies of—"For my part, I don't believe a word of it; and I should be the last person to credit it; but what can one do? facts are stubborn things."—Or—"I am sure it grieved me to the heart—I was inexpressibly hurt; but there is no denying it:" on the contrary, this lady boldly promulgates whatever she hears, with such emendations and comments, that two-thirds of the edition may be fairly considered her own; and as she makes few converts to her assertions, nor seems desirous of making any.
Says she to her neighbour, what?

but retails scandal for the simple pleasure of proving how fine an opportunity her neighbours' errors afford for the exercise of wit, volubility, and mirth, which is probably the reason why she suffers less than others in delivering her opinions and decisions. In the case of doctor Cantha-rides, the operation of the inspiring demon is exactly the reverse; for although his bantling falsehoods seem to be a puny race, and present themselves in a form so equivocal, being garnished and tricked out with all convenient truths, yet he parts with them with as much difficulty as if they were giants, a circumstance which can only arise from a consciousness, that although, like "the locusts, they are a pigmy race, yet they go forth to destroy the land;" and it is impossible to see the doctor settle his wig three times, by violent twitchings at the ears, draw up his mouth and chin, or witness the general cramp which purses his lips at the moment of speaking, without being sensible that he suffers equally with the Highland seer,
who perceives a procession of carb candles and shrouds, with his own bringing up the rear.

"Pray, sir, what have you done with the history of your grandfather?"

My dear madam, I was talking of my neighbours, and telling you their faults; and if you have any sympathy in your nature, you must forgive me—it is one of those things which ever detain people, whatever may be the urgency of their business, from the woman of quality, who has twenty-seven visits to pay in one morning, to the poor gossip who meets her neighbours at the baker's shop, when she is fetching a loaf for half-a-dozen hungry children; what an amazing progressive distance is between them! but they have one thing in common, one little propensity, which alike marks them daughters of Eve—"They only just stop to mention to one person what they have heard that is bad of another person, that is all." I will return now, my dear madam, to my grandfather with all convenient speed; but as
he is now in the East Indies, which is a place at a very considerable distance, and, moreover, in his grave, a place we are willing to believe still more distant, I think we will take another volume for the recommencement of his story, which volume, I trust, will travel with amazing celerity over the remaining adventures of my ancestors, as I really feel impatient for the honour of presenting myself more immediately to the contemplation of my dear, patient, accommodating readers; having always observed, that although people take pleasure in displaying the good parts, or the wonderful enterprizes and dismal sufferings of those who are dear to them, yet they have a still greater complacency in detailing such things as are exhibited, accomplished, or endured by themselves; and so great is the satisfaction derived by such relation, that in many instances it supersedes even the pleasure of talking of our neighbours; and it will be rarely found, that a confirmed egotist is a great scandal-monger; and though appearances
at present may contradict the assertion, yet I declare, upon the honour of a Sedge-wood, that so much more highly do I esteem the former character than the latter, that it is my sincere hope, "to that complexion I shall come at last."

END OF VOL. I.
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