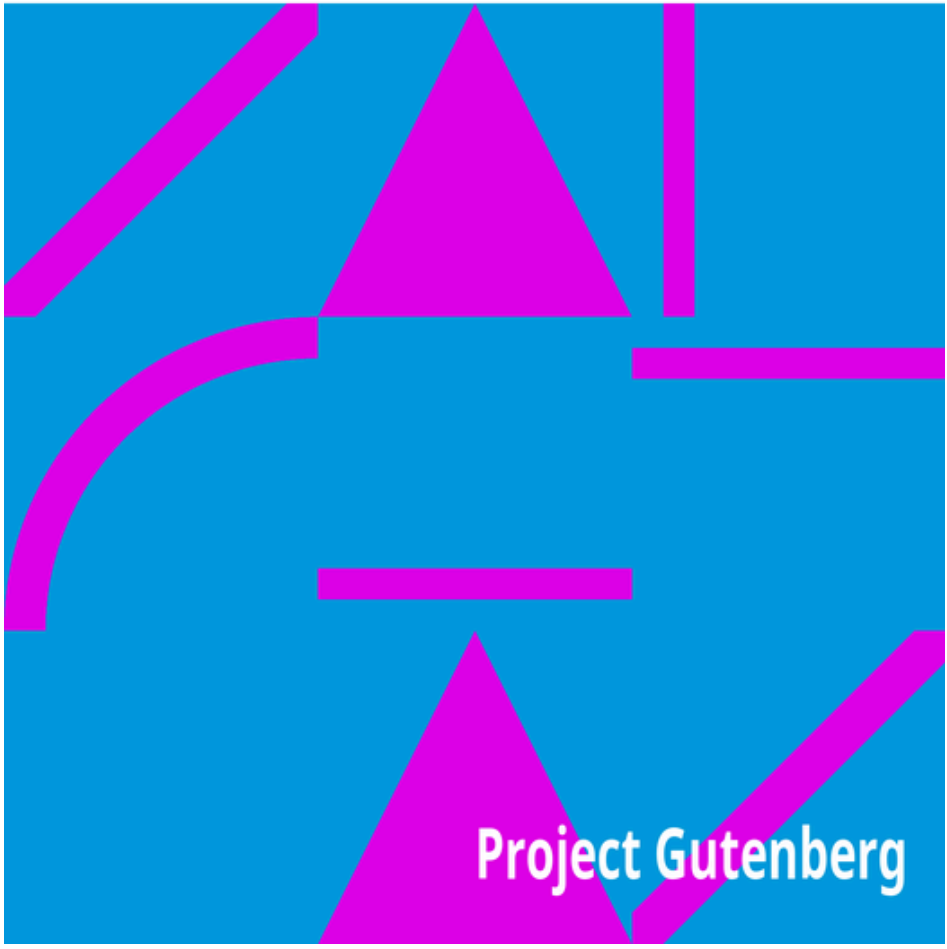
Nature and Art

Mrs. Inchbald and Henry Morley



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NATURE AND ART

BY

MRS. INCHBALD.

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INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth Simpson was born on the 15th of October, 1753, one of the eight children of a poor farmer, at Standingfield, near Bury St. Edmunds. Five of the children were girls, who were all gifted with personal beauty. The family was Roman Catholic. The mother had a delight in visits to the Bury Theatre, and took, when she could, her children to the play. One of her sons became an actor, and her daughter Elizabeth offered herself at eighteen—her father then being dead—for engagement as an actress at the Norwich Theatre. She had an impediment of speech, and she was not engaged; but in the following year, leaving behind an affectionate letter to her mother, she stole away from Standingfield, and made a bold plunge into the unknown world of London, where she had friends, upon whose help she relied. Her friends happened to be in Wales, and she had some troubles to go through before she found a home in the house of a sister, who had married a poor tailor. About two months after she had left Standingfield she married, in London, Mr. Inchbald, an actor, who had paid his addresses to her when she was at home, and who was also a Roman Catholic. On the evening of the wedding day the bride, who had not yet succeeded in obtaining an engagement, went to the play, and saw the bridegroom play the part of Mr. Oakley in the "Jealous Wife." Mr. Inchbald was thirty-seven years old, and had sons by a former marriage. In September, 1772, Mrs. Inchbald tried her fortune on the stage by playing Cordelia to her husband's Lear. Beauty alone could not assure success. The impediment in speech made it impossible for Mrs. Inchbald to succeed greatly as an actress. She was unable to realise her own conceptions. At times she and her husband prospered so little that on one day their dinner was of turnips, pulled and eaten in a field, and sometimes there

was no dinner at all. But better days presently followed; first acquaintance of Mrs. Inchbald with Mrs. Siddons grew to a strong friendship, and this extended to the other members of the Kemble family.

After seven years of happy but childless marriage, Mrs. Inchbald was left a widow at the age of twenty-six. In after years, when devoting herself to the baby of one of her landladies, she wrote to a friend,—"I shall never again have patience with a mother who complains of anything but the loss of her children; so no complaints when you see me again. Remember, you have had two children, and I never had one." After her husband's death, Mrs. Inchbald's beauty surrounded her with admirers, some of them rich, but she did not marry again. To one of those who offered marriage, she replied that her temper was so uncertain that nothing but blind affection in a husband could bear with it. Yet she was patiently living and fighting the world on a weekly salary of about thirty shillings, out of which she helped her poorer sisters. When acting at Edinburgh she spent on herself only eight shillings a week in board and lodging. It was after her husband's death that Mrs. Inchbald finished a little novel, called "A Simple Story," but it was not until twelve years afterwards that she could get it published. She came to London again, and wrote farces, which she could not get accepted; but she obtained an increase of salary to three pounds a week by unwillingly consenting not only to act in plays, but also to walk in pantomime. At last, in July, 1784, her first farce, "The Mogul Tale," was acted. It brought her a hundred guineas. Three years later her success as a writer had risen so far that she obtained nine hundred pounds by a little piece called "Such Things Are." She still lived sparingly, invested savings, and was liberal only to the poor, and chiefly to her sisters and the poor members of her family. She finished a sketch of her life in 1786, for which a publisher, without seeing it, offered a thousand pounds. But there was more satirical comment in it than she liked, and she resolved to do at once what she would wish done at the point of death. She destroyed the record.

In 1791 Mrs. Inchbald published her "Simple Story." Her other tale, "Nature and Art," followed in 1794, when Mrs. Inchbald's age was forty-one. She had retired from the stage five years before, with an income of fifty-eight pounds a year, all she called her own out of the independence secured by her savings. She lived in cheap lodgings, and had sometimes to wait altogether on herself; at one lodging "fetching up her own water three pair of stairs, and dropping a few tears into the heedless stream, as any other wounded deer might do." Later in life, she wrote to a friend from a room in which she cooked, and ate, and also her saucepans were cleaned:—"Thank God, I can say No. I say No to all the vanities of the world, and perhaps soon shall have to say that I allow my poor infirm sister a hundred a year. I have raised my allowance to eighty; but in the rapid stride of her wants, and my obligation as a Christian to make no selfish refusal to the poor, a few months, I foresee, must make the sum a hundred." In 1816, when that sister died, and Mrs. Inchbald buried the last of her immediate home relations—though she had still nephews to find money for—she said it had been a consolation to her when sometimes she cried with cold to think that her sister, who was less able to bear privation, had her fire lighted for her before she rose, and her food brought to her ready cooked.

Even at fifty Mrs. Inchbald's beauty of face inspired admiration. The beauty of the inner life increased with years. Lively and quick of temper, impulsive, sensitive, she took into her heart all that was best in the sentiments associated with the teaching of Rousseau and the dreams of the French Revolution. Mrs. Inchbald spoke her mind most fully in this little story, which is told with a dramatic sense of construction that swiftly carries on the action to its close. She was no weak sentimentalist, who hung out her feelings to view as an idle form of self-indulgence. Most unselfishly she wrought her own life to the pattern in her mind; even the little faults she could not conquer, she well knew.

Mrs. Inchbald died at the age of sixty-eight, on the 1st of August, 1821, a devout Roman Catholic, her thoughts in her last years looking habitually through all disguises of convention up to Nature's God.

H. M.

CHAPTER I.

At a time when the nobility of Britain were said, by the poet laureate, to be the admirers and protectors of the arts, and were acknowledged by the whole nation to be the patrons of music—William and Henry, youths under twenty years of age, brothers, and the sons of a country shopkeeper who had lately died insolvent, set out on foot for London, in the hope of procuring by their industry a scanty subsistence.

As they walked out of their native town, each with a small bundle at his back, each observed the other drop several tears: but, upon the sudden meeting of their eyes, they both smiled with a degree of disdain at the weakness in which they had been caught.

“I am sure,” said William (the elder), “I don’t know what makes me cry.”

“Nor I neither,” said Henry; “for though we may never see this town again, yet we leave nothing behind us to give us reason to lament.”

“No,” replied William, “nor anybody who cares what becomes of us.”

“But I was thinking,” said Henry, now weeping bitterly, “that, if my poor father were alive, *he* would care what was to become of us: he would not have suffered us to begin this long journey without a few more shillings in our pockets.”

At the end of this sentence, William, who had with some effort suppressed his tears while his brother spoke, now uttered, with a voice almost inarticulate,—“Don’t say any more; don’t talk any more about it. My father used to tell us, that when he was gone we must take care of ourselves: and so we must. I only wish,” continued he, giving way to his grief, “that I had never done anything to offend him while he was living.”

“That is what I wish too,” cried Henry. “If I had always been dutiful to him while he was alive, I would not shed one tear for him now that he is gone—but I would thank Heaven that he has escaped from his creditors.”

In conversation such as this, wherein their sorrow for their deceased parent seemed less for his death than because he had not been so happy when living as they ought to have made him; and wherein their own outcast fortune was less the subject of their grief, than the reflection what their father would have endured could he have beheld them in their present situation;—in conversation such as this, they pursued their journey till they arrived at that metropolis, which has received for centuries past, from the provincial towns, the bold adventurer of every denomination; has stamped his character with experience and example; and, while it has bestowed on some coronets and mitres—on some the lasting fame of genius—to others has dealt beggary, infamy, and untimely death.

CHAPTER II.

After three weeks passed in London, a year followed, during which William and Henry never sat down to a dinner, or went into a bed, without hearts glowing with thankfulness to that Providence who had bestowed on them such unexpected blessings; for they no longer presumed to expect (what still they hoped they deserved) a secure pittance in this world of plenty. Their experience, since they came to town, had informed them that to obtain a permanent livelihood is the good fortune but of a part of those who are in want of it: and the precarious earning of half-a-crown, or a shilling, in the neighbourhood where they lodged, by an errand, or some such accidental means, was the sole support which they at present enjoyed.

They had sought for constant employment of various kinds, and even for servants' places; but obstacles had always occurred to prevent their success. If they applied for the situation of a clerk to a man of extensive concerns, their qualifications were admitted; but there must be security given for their fidelity;—they had friends, who would give them a character, but who would give them nothing else.

If they applied for the place even of a menial servant, they were too clownish and awkward for the presence of the lady of the house;—and once, when William (who had been educated at the free grammar-school of the town in which he was born, and was an excellent scholar), hoping to obtain the good opinion of a young clergyman whom he solicited for the favour of waiting upon him, said submissively, "that he understood Greek and Latin," he was rejected by the divine, "because he could not dress hair."

Weary of repeating their mean accomplishments of “honesty, sobriety, humility,” and on the precipice of reprobating such qualities,—which, however beneficial to the soul, gave no hope of preservation to the body, —they were prevented from this profanation by the fortunate remembrance of one qualification, which Henry, the possessor, in all his distress, had never till then called to his recollection; but which, as soon as remembered and made known, changed the whole prospect of wretchedness placed before the two brothers; and they never knew want more.

Reader—Henry could play upon the fiddle.

CHAPTER III.

No sooner was it publicly known that Henry could play most enchantingly upon the violin, than he was invited into many companies where no other accomplishment could have introduced him. His performance was so much admired, that he had the honour of being admitted to several tavern feasts, of which he had also the honour to partake without partaking of the expense. He was soon addressed by persons of the very first rank and fashion, and was once seen walking side by side with a peer.

But yet, in the midst of this powerful occasion for rejoicing, Henry, whose heart was particularly affectionate, had one grief which eclipsed all the happiness of his new life;—his brother William could *not* play on the fiddle! consequently, his brother William, with whom he had shared so much ill, could not share in his good fortune.

One evening, Henry, coming home from a dinner and concert at the Crown and Anchor found William, in a very gloomy and peevish humour, poring over the orations of Cicero. Henry asked him several times "how he did," and similar questions, marks of his kind disposition towards his beloved brother: but all his endeavours, he perceived, could not soothe or soften the sullen mind of William. At length, taking from his pocket a handful of almonds, and some delicious fruit (which he had purloined from the plenteous table, where his brother's wants had never been absent from his thoughts), and laying them down before him, he exclaimed, with a benevolent smile, "Do, William, let me teach you to play upon the violin."

William, full of the great orator whom he was then studying, and still more alive to the impossibility that *his* ear, attuned only to sense, could ever descend from that elevation, to learn mere sounds—William caught up the tempting presents which Henry had ventured his reputation to obtain for him, and threw them all indignantly at the donor's head.

Henry felt too powerfully his own superiority of fortune to resent this ingratitude: he patiently picked up the repast, and laying it again upon the table, placed by its side a bottle of claret, which he held fast by the neck, while he assured his brother that, "although he had taken it while the waiter's back was turned, yet it might be drank with a safe conscience by them; for he had not himself tasted one drop at the feast, on purpose that he might enjoy a glass with his brother at home, and without wronging the company who had invited him."

The affection Henry expressed as he said this, or the force of a bumper of wine, which William had not seen since he left his father's house, had such an effect in calming the displeasure he was cherishing, that, on his brother offering him the glass, he took it; and he deigned even to eat of his present.

Henry, to convince him that he had stinted himself to obtain for him this collation, sat down and partook of it.

After a few glasses, he again ventured to say, "Do, brother William, let me teach you to play on the violin."

Again his offer was refused, though with less vehemence: at length they both agreed that the attempt could not prosper.

"Then," said Henry, "William, go down to Oxford or to Cambridge. There, no doubt, they are as fond of learning as in this gay town they are of music. You know you have as much talent for the one as I for the other: do go to one of our universities, and see what dinners, what suppers, and what friends you will find there."

CHAPTER IV.

William *did* go to one of those seats of learning, and would have starved there, but for the affectionate remittances of Henry, who shortly became so great a proficient in the art of music, as to have it in his power not only to live in a very reputable manner himself, but to send such supplies to his brother, as enabled him to pursue his studies.

With some, the progress of fortune is rapid. Such is the case when, either on merit or demerit, great patronage is bestowed. Henry's violin had often charmed, to a welcome forgetfulness of his insignificance, an effeminate lord; or warmed with ideas of honour the head of a duke, whose heart could never be taught to feel its manly glow. Princes had flown to the arms of their favourite fair ones with more rapturous delight, softened by the masterly touches of his art: and these elevated personages, ever grateful to those from whom they receive benefits, were competitors in the desire of heaping favours upon him. But he, in all his advantages, never once lost for a moment the hope of some advantage for his brother William: and when at any time he was pressed by a patron to demand a "token of his regard," he would constantly reply—"I have a brother, a very learned man, if your lordship (your grace, or your royal highness) would confer some small favour on him!"

His lordship would reply, "He was so teased and harassed in his youth by learned men, that he had ever since detested the whole fraternity."

His grace would inquire, "if the learned man could play upon any instrument."

And his highness would ask "if he could sing."

Rebuffs such as these poor Henry met with in all his applications for William, till one fortunate evening, at the conclusion of a concert, a great man shook him by the hand, and promised a living of five hundred a year (the incumbent of which was upon his death-bed) to his brother, in return for the entertainment that Henry had just afforded him.

Henry wrote in haste to William, and began his letter thus: “My dear brother, I am not sorry you did not learn to play upon the fiddle.”

CHAPTER V.

The incumbent of this living died—William underwent the customary examinations, obtained successively the orders of deacon and priest; then as early as possible came to town to take possession of the gift which his brother's skill had acquired for him.

William had a steady countenance, a stern brow, and a majestic walk; all of which this new accession, this holy calling to religious vows, rather increased than diminished. In the early part of his life, the violin of his brother had rather irritated than soothed the morose disposition of his nature: and though, since their departure from their native habitation, it had frequently calmed the violent ragings of his hunger, it had never been successful in appeasing the disturbed passions of a proud and disdainful mind.

As the painter views with delight and wonder the finished picture, expressive testimony of his taste and genius; as the physician beholds with pride and gladness the recovering invalid, whom his art has snatched from the jaws of death; as the father gazes with rapture on his first child, the creature to whom he has given life; so did Henry survey, with transporting glory, his brother, dressed for the first time in canonicals, to preach at his parish church. He viewed him from head to foot—smiled—viewed again—pulled one side of his gown a little this way, one end of his band a little that way; then stole behind him, pretending to place the curls of his hair, but in reality to indulge and to conceal tears of fraternal pride and joy.

William was not without joy, neither was he wanting in love or gratitude to his brother; but his pride was not completely satisfied.

“I am the elder,” thought he to himself, “and a man of literature, and yet am I obliged to my younger brother, an illiterate man.” Here he suppressed every thought which could be a reproach to that brother. But there remained an object of his former contempt, now become even detestable to him; ungrateful man. The very agent of his elevation was now so odious to him, that he could not cast his eyes upon the friendly violin without instant emotions of disgust.

In vain would Henry, at times, endeavour to subdue his haughtiness by a tune on this wonderful machine. “You know I have no ear,” William would sternly say, in recompense for one of Henry’s best solos. Yet was William enraged at Henry’s answer, when, after taking him to hear him preach, he asked him, “how he liked his sermon,” and Henry modestly replied (in the technical phrase of his profession), “You know, brother, I have no ear.”

Henry’s renown in his profession daily increased; and, with his fame, his friends. Possessing the virtues of humility and charity far above William, who was the professed teacher of those virtues, his reverend brother’s disrespect for his vocation never once made him relax for a moment in his anxiety to gain him advancement in the Church. In the course of a few years, and in consequence of many fortuitous circumstances, he had the gratification of procuring for him the appointment to a deanery; and thus at once placed between them an insurmountable barrier to all friendship, that was not the effect of condescension on the part of the dean.

William would now begin seriously to remonstrate with his brother “upon his useless occupation,” and would intimate “the degradation it was to him to hear his frivolous talent spoken of in all companies.” Henry believed his brother to be much wiser than himself, and suffered shame that he was not more worthy of such a relation. To console himself for the familiar friend, whom he now perceived he had entirely lost, he searched for one of a softer nature—he married.

CHAPTER VI.

As Henry despaired of receiving his brother's approbation of his choice, he never mentioned the event to him. But William, being told of it by a third person, inquired of Henry, who confirmed the truth of the intelligence, and acknowledged, that, in taking a wife, his sole view had been to obtain a kind companion and friend, who would bear with his failings and know how to esteem his few qualifications; therefore, he had chosen one of his own rank in life, and who, having a taste for music, and, as well as himself, an obligation to the art—

"And is it possible," cried the dean, "that what has been hinted to me is true? Is it possible that you have married a public singer?"

"She is as good as myself," returned Henry. "I did not wish her to be better, for fear she should despise me."

"As to despise," answered the dean, "Heaven forbid that we should despise anyone, that would be acting unlike a Christian; but do you imagine I can ever introduce her to my intended wife, who is a woman of family?"

Henry had received in his life many insults from his brother; but, as he was not a vain man, he generally thought his brother in the right, and consequently submitted with patience; but, though he had little self-love, he had for his wife an unbounded affection. On the present occasion, therefore, he began to raise his voice, and even (in the coarse expression of clownish anger) to lift his hand; but the sudden and affecting recollection of what he had done for the dean—of the pains, the toils, the hopes, and the fears he had experienced when soliciting his preferment —this recollection overpowered his speech, weakened his arm, and

deprived him of every active force, but that of flying out of his brother's house (in which they then were) as swift as lightning, while the dean sat proudly contemplating "that he had done his duty."

For several days Henry did not call, as was his custom, to see his brother. William's marriage drew near, and he sent a formal card to invite him on that day; but not having had the condescension to name his sister-in-law in the invitation, Henry thought proper not to accept it, and the joyful event was celebrated without his presence. But the ardour of the bridegroom was not so vehement as to overcome every other sensation—he missed his brother. That heartfelt cheerfulness with which Henry had ever given him joy upon every happy occasion—even amidst all the politer congratulations of his other friends—seemed to the dean mournfully wanting. This derogation from his felicity he was resolved to resent; and for a whole year these brothers, whom adversity had entwined closely together, prosperity separated.

Though Henry, on his marriage, paid so much attention to his brother's prejudices as to take his wife from her public employment, this had not so entirely removed the scruples of William as to permit him to think her a worthy companion for Lady Clementina, the daughter of a poor Scotch earl, whom he had chosen merely that he might be proud of her family, and, in return, suffer that family to be ashamed of *his*.

If Henry's wife were not fit company for Lady Clementina, it is to be hoped that she was company for angels. She died within the first year of her marriage, a faithful, an affectionate wife, and a mother.

When William heard of her death, he felt a sudden shock, and a kind of fleeting thought glanced across his mind, that

"Had he known she had been so near her dissolution, she might have been introduced to Lady Clementina, and he himself would have called her sister."

That is (if he had defined his fleeting idea), “They would have had no objection to have met this poor woman for the *last time*, and would have descended to the familiarity of kindred, in order to have wished her a good journey to the other world.”

Or, is there in death something which so raises the abjectness of the poor, that, on their approach to its sheltering abode, the arrogant believer feels the equality he had before denied, and trembles?

CHAPTER VII.

The wife of Henry had been dead near six weeks before the dean heard the news. A month then elapsed in thoughts by himself, and consultations with Lady Clementina, how he should conduct himself on this occurrence. Her advice was,

"That, as Henry was the younger, and by their stations, in every sense the dean's inferior, Henry ought first to make overtures of reconciliation."

The dean answered, "He had no doubt of his brother's good will to him, but that he had reason to think, from the knowledge of his temper, he would be more likely to come to him upon an occasion to bestow comfort, than to receive it. For instance, if I had suffered the misfortune of losing your ladyship, my brother, I have no doubt, would have forgotten his resentment, and—"

She was offended that the loss of the vulgar wife of Henry should be compared to the loss of her—she lamented her indiscretion in forming an alliance with a family of no rank, and implored the dean to wait till his brother should make some concession to him, before he renewed the acquaintance.

Though Lady Clementina had mentioned on this occasion her *indiscretion*, she was of a prudent age—she was near forty—yet, possessing rather a handsome face and person, she would not have impressed the spectator with a supposition that she was near so old had she not constantly attempted to appear much younger. Her dress was fantastically fashionable, her manners affected all the various passions

of youth, and her conversation was perpetually embellished with accusations against her own “heedlessness, thoughtlessness, carelessness, and childishness.”

There is, perhaps in each individual, one parent motive to every action, good or bad. Be that as it may, it was evident, that with Lady Clementina, all she said or did, all she thought or looked, had but one foundation—vanity. If she were nice, or if she were negligent, vanity was the cause of both; for she would contemplate with the highest degree of self-complacency, “What such-a-one would say of her elegant preciseness, or what such-a-one would think of her interesting neglect.”

If she complained she was ill, it was with the certainty that her languor would be admired: if she boasted she was well, it was that the spectator might admire her glowing health: if she laughed, it was because she thought it made her look pretty: if she cried, it was because she thought it made her look prettier still. If she scolded her servants, it was from vanity, to show her knowledge superior to theirs: and she was kind to them from the same motive, that her benevolence might excite their admiration. Forward and impertinent in the company of her equals, from the vanity of supposing herself above them, she was bashful even to shamefacedness in the presence of her superiors, because her vanity told her she engrossed all their observation. Through vanity she had no memory, for she constantly forgot everything she heard others say, from the minute attention which she paid to everything she said herself.

She had become an old maid from vanity, believing no offer she received worthy of her deserts; and when her power of farther conquest began to be doubted, she married from vanity, to repair the character of her fading charms. In a word, her vanity was of that magnitude, that she had no conjecture but that she was humble in her own opinion; and it would have been impossible to have convinced her that she thought well of herself, because she thought so *well*, as to be assured that her own thoughts undervalued her.

CHAPTER VIII.

That, which in a weak woman is called vanity, in a man of sense is termed pride. Make one a degree stronger, or the other a degree weaker, and the dean and his wife were infected with the self-same folly. Yet, let not the reader suppose that this failing (however despicable) had erased from either bosom all traces of humanity. They are human creatures who are meant to be portrayed in this little book: and where is the human creature who has not some good qualities to soften, if not to counterbalance, his bad ones?

The dean, with all his pride, could not wholly forget his brother, nor eradicate from his remembrance the friend that he had been to him: he resolved, therefore, in spite of his wife's advice, to make him some overture, which he had no doubt Henry's good-nature would instantly accept. The more he became acquainted with all the vain and selfish propensities of Lady Clementina, the more he felt a returning affection for his brother: but little did he suspect how much he loved him, till (after sending to various places to inquire for him) he learned—that on his wife's decease, unable to support her loss in the surrounding scene, Henry had taken the child she brought him in his arms, shaken hands with all his former friends—passing over his brother in the number—and set sail in a vessel bound for Africa, with a party of Portuguese and some few English adventurers, to people there the uninhabited part of an extensive island.

This was a resolution, in Henry's circumstances, worthy a mind of singular sensibility: but William had not discerned, till then, that every act of Henry's was of the same description; and more than all, his every act towards him. He staggered when he heard the tidings; at first

thought them untrue; but quickly recollected, that Henry was capable of surprising deeds! He recollected with a force which gave him torture, the benevolence his brother had ever shown to him—the favours he had heaped upon him—the insults he had patiently endured in requital!

In the first emotion, which this intelligence gave the dean, he forgot the dignity of his walk and gesture: he ran with frantic enthusiasm to every corner of his deanery where the least vestige of what belonged to Henry remained—he pressed close to his breast, with tender agony, a coat of his, which by accident had been left there—he kissed and wept over a walking-stick which Henry once had given him—he even took up with delight a music book of his brother's—nor would his poor violin have then excited anger.

When his grief became more calm, he sat in deep and melancholy meditation, calling to mind when and where he saw his brother last. The recollection gave him fresh cause of regret. He remembered they had parted on his refusing to suffer Lady Clementina to admit the acquaintance of Henry's wife. Both Henry and his wife he now contemplated beyond the reach of his pride; and he felt the meanness of his former and the imbecility of his future haughtiness towards them.

To add to his self-reproaches, his tormented memory presented to him the exact countenance of his brother at their last interview, as it changed, while he censured his marriage, and treated with disrespect the object of his conjugal affection. He remembered the anger repressed, the tear bursting forth, and the last glimpse he had of him, as he left his presence, most likely for ever.

In vain he now wished that he had followed him to the door—that he had once shaken hands and owned his obligations to him before they had parted. In vain he wished too, that, in this extreme agony of his mind, he had such a friend to comfort him, as Henry had ever proved.

CHAPTER IX.

The avocations of an elevated life erase the deepest impressions. The dean in a few months recovered from those which his brother's departure first made upon him: and he would now at times even condemn, in anger, Henry's having so hastily abandoned him and his native country, in resentment, as he conceived, of a few misfortunes which his usual fortitude should have taught him to have borne. Yet was he still desirous of his return, and wrote two or three letters expressive of his wish, which he anxiously endeavoured should reach him. But many years having elapsed without any intelligence from him, and a report having arrived that he, and all the party with whom he went, were slain by the savage inhabitants of the island, William's despair of seeing his brother again caused the desire to diminish; while attention and affection to a still nearer and dearer relation than Henry had ever been to him, now chiefly engaged his mind.

Lady Clementina had brought him a son, on whom from his infancy, he doated—and the boy, in riper years, possessing a handsome person and evincing a quickness of parts, gratified the father's darling passion, pride, as well as the mother's vanity.

The dean had, beside this child, a domestic comfort highly gratifying to his ambition: the bishop of --- became intimately acquainted with him soon after his marriage, and from his daily visits had become, as it were, a part of the family. This was much honour to the dean, not only as the bishop was his superior in the Church, but was of that part of the bench whose blood is ennobled by a race of ancestors, and to which all wisdom on the plebeian side crouches in humble respect.

Year after year rolled on in pride and grandeur; the bishop and the dean passing their time in attending levées and in talking politics; Lady Clementina passing hers in attending routs and in talking of *herself*, till the son arrived at the age of thirteen.

Young William passed *his* time, from morning till night, with persons who taught him to walk, to ride, to talk, to think like a man—a foolish man, instead of a wise child, as nature designed him to be.

This unfortunate youth was never permitted to have one conception of his own—all were taught him—he was never once asked, "What he thought;" but men were paid to tell "how to think." He was taught to revere such and such persons, however unworthy of his reverence; to believe such and such things, however unworthy of his credit: and to act so and so, on such and such occasions, however unworthy of his feelings.

Such were the lessons of the tutors assigned him by his father—those masters whom his mother gave him did him less mischief; for though they distorted his limbs and made his manners effeminate, they did not interfere beyond the body.

Mr. Norwynne (the family name of his father, and though but a school-boy, he was called *Mister*) could talk on history, on politics, and on religion; surprisingly to all who never listened to a parrot or magpie—for he merely repeated what had been told to him without one reflection upon the sense or probability of his report. He had been praised for his memory; and to continue that praise, he was so anxious to retain every sentence he had heard, or he had read, that the poor creature had no time for one native idea, but could only re-deliver his tutors' lessons to his father, and his father's to his tutors. But, whatever he said or did, was the admiration of all who came to the house of the dean, and who knew he was an only child. Indeed, considering the labour that was taken to spoil him, he was rather a commendable youth; for, with the pedantic folly of his teachers, the blind affection of his father and mother, the obsequiousness of the servants, and flattery of the visitors, it was some credit to him that he was not an idiot, or a brute—though

when he imitated the manners of a man, he had something of the latter in his appearance; for he would grin and bow to a lady, catch her fan in haste when it fell, and hand her to her coach, as thoroughly void of all the sentiment which gives grace to such tricks, as a monkey.

CHAPTER X.

One morning in winter, just as the dean, his wife, and darling child, had finished their breakfast at their house in London, a servant brought in a letter to his master, and said “the man waited for an answer.”

“Who is the man?” cried the dean, with all that terrifying dignity with which he never failed to address his inferiors, especially such as waited on his person.

The servant replied with a servility of tone equal to the haughty one of his master, “he did not know; but that the man looked like a sailor, and had a boy with him.”

“A begging letter, no doubt,” cried Lady Clementina.

“Take it back,” said the dean, “and bid him send up word who he is, and what is his errand.”

The servant went; and returning said, “He comes from on board a ship; his captain sent him, and his errand is, he believes, to leave a boy he has brought with him.”

“A boy!” cried the dean: “what have I to do with a boy? I expect no boy. What boy? What age?”

“He looks about twelve or thirteen,” replied the servant.

“He is mistaken in the house,” said the dean. “Let me look at the letter again.”

He did look at it, and saw plainly it was directed to himself. Upon a second glance, he had so perfect a recollection of the hand, as to open it instantaneously; and, after ordering the servant to withdraw, he read the following:—

"ZOCOTORA ISLAND, *April* 6.

"My Dear Brother William,—It is a long time since we have seen one another; but I hope not so long, that you have quite forgotten the many happy days we once passed together.

"I did not take my leave of you when I left England, because it would have been too much for me. I had met with a great many sorrows just at that time; one of which was, the misfortune of losing the use of my right hand by a fall from my horse, which accident robbed me of most of my friends; for I could no longer entertain them with my performance as I used to do, and so I was ashamed to see them or you; and that was the reason I came hither to try my fortune with some other adventurers.

"You have, I suppose, heard that the savages of the island put our whole party to death. But it was my chance to escape their cruelty. I was heart-broken for my comrades; yet upon the whole, I do not know that the savages were much to blame—we had no business to invade their territories! and if they had invaded England, we should have done the same by them. My life was spared, because, having gained some little strength in my hand during the voyage, I pleased their king when I arrived there with playing on my violin.

"They spared my child too, in pity to my lamentations, when they were going to put him to death. Now, dear brother, before I say any more to you concerning my child, I will first ask your pardon for any offence I may have ever given you

in all the time we lived so long together. I know you have often found fault with me, and I dare say I have been very often to blame; but I here solemnly declare that I never did anything purposely to offend you, but mostly, all I could to oblige you—and I can safely declare that I never bore you above a quarter of an hour's resentment for anything you might say to me which I thought harsh.

"Now, dear William, after being in this island eleven years, the weakness in my hand has unfortunately returned; and yet there being no appearance of complaint, the uninformed islanders think it is all my obstinacy, and that I *will not* entertain them with my music, which makes me say that I *cannot*; and they have imprisoned me, and threaten to put my son to death if I persist in my stubbornness any longer.

"The anguish I feel in my mind takes away all hope of the recovery of strength in my hand; and I have no doubt but that they intend in a few days to put their horrid threat into execution.

"Therefore, dear brother William, hearing in my prison of a most uncommon circumstance, which is, that an English vessel is lying at a small distance from the island, I have entrusted a faithful negro to take my child to the ship, and deliver him to the captain, with a request that he may be sent (with this letter) to you on the ship's arrival in England.

"Now my dear, dear brother William, in case the poor boy should live to come to you, I have no doubt but you will receive him; yet excuse a poor, fond father, if I say a word or two which I hope may prove in his favour.

"Pray, my dear brother, do not think it the child's fault, but mine, that you will find him so ignorant—he has always shown a quickness and a willingness to learn, and would, I

dare say, if he had been brought up under your care, have been by this time a good scholar, but you know I am no scholar myself. Besides, not having any books here, I have only been able to teach my child by talking to him, and in all my conversations with him I have never taken much pains to instruct him in the manners of my own country; thinking, that if ever he went over, he would learn them soon enough; and if he never *did* go over, that it would be as well he knew nothing about them.

"I have kept him also from the knowledge of everything which I have thought pernicious in the conduct of the savages, except that I have now and then pointed out a few of their faults, in order to give him a true conception and a proper horror of them. At the same time I have taught him to love, and to do good to his neighbour, whoever that neighbour may be, and whatever may be his failings. Falsehood of every kind I included in this precept as forbidden, for no one can love his neighbour and deceive him.

"I have instructed him too, to hold in contempt all frivolous vanity, and all those indulgences which he was never likely to obtain. He has learnt all that I have undertaken to teach him; but I am afraid you will yet think he has learned too little.

"Your wife, I fear, will be offended at his want of politeness, and perhaps proper respect for a person of her rank: but indeed he is very tractable, and can, without severity, be amended of all his faults; and though you will find he has many, yet, pray, my dear brother William, call to mind he has been a dutiful and an affectionate child to me; and that

had it pleased Heaven we had lived together for many years to come, I verily believe I should never have experienced one mark of his disobedience.

"Farewell for ever, my dear, dear brother William—and if my poor, kind, affectionate child should live to bring you this letter, sometimes speak to him of me and let him know, that for twelve years he was my sole comfort; and that, when I sent him from me, in order to save his life, I laid down my head upon the floor of the cell in which I was confined, and prayed that Heaven might end my days before the morning."

This was the conclusion of the letter, except four or five lines which (with his name) were so much blotted, apparently with tears, that they were illegible.

CHAPTER XI.

While the dean was reading to himself this letter, his countenance frequently changed, and once or twice the tears streamed from his eyes. When it was finished, he exclaimed,

“My brother has sent his child to me, and I will be a parent to him.” He was rushing towards the door, when Lady Clementina stopped him.

“Is it proper, do you think, Mr. Dean, that all the servants in the house should be witnesses to your meeting with your brother and your nephew in the state in which they must be at present? Send for them into a private apartment.”

“My brother!” cried the dean; “oh! that it *were* my brother! The man is merely a person from the ship, who has conducted his child hither.”

The bell was rung, money was sent to the man, and orders given that the boy should be shown up immediately.

While young Henry was walking up the stairs, the dean’s wife was weighing in her mind in what manner it would most redound to her honour to receive him; for her vanity taught her to believe that the whole inquisitive world pried into her conduct, even upon every family occurrence.

Young William was wondering to himself what kind of an unpolished monster his beggarly cousin would appear; and was contemplating how much the poor youth would be surprised, and awed by his superiority.

The dean felt no other sensation than an impatient desire of beholding the child.

The door opened—and the son of his brother Henry, of his benefactor, entered.

The habit he had on when he left his father, having been of slight texture, was worn out by the length of the voyage, and he was in the dress of a sailor-boy. Though about the same age with his cousin, he was something taller: and though a strong family resemblance appeared between the two youths, he was handsomer than William; and from a simplicity spread over his countenance, a quick impatience in his eye—which denoted anxious curiosity, and childish surprise at every new object which presented itself—he appeared younger than his well-informed and well-bred cousin.

He walked into the room, not with a dictated obeisance, but with a hurrying step, a half pleased, yet a half frightened look, an instantaneous survey of every person present; not as demanding "what they thought of him," but expressing almost as plainly as in direct words, "what he thought of them." For all alarm in respect to his safety and reception seemed now wholly forgotten, in the curiosity which the sudden sight of strangers such as he had never seen in his life before, excited: and as to *himself*, he did not appear to know there was such a person existing: his whole faculties were absorbed in *others*.

The dean's reception of him did honour to his sensibility and his gratitude to his brother. After the first affectionate gaze, he ran to him, took him in his arms, sat down, drew him to him, held him between his knees, and repeatedly exclaimed, "I will repay to you all I owe to your father."

The boy, in return, hugged the dean round the neck, kissed him, and exclaimed,

"Oh! you *are* my father—you have just such eyes, and such a forehead—indeed you would be almost the same as he, if it were not for that great white thing which grows upon your head!"

Let the reader understand, that the dean, fondly attached to every ornament of his dignified function, was never seen (unless caught in bed) without an enormous wig. With this young Henry was enormously struck; having never seen so unbecoming a decoration, either in the savage island from whence he came, or on board the vessel in which he sailed.

“Do you imagine,” cried his uncle, laying his hand gently on the reverend habiliment, “that this grows?”

“What is on *my* head grows,” said young Henry, “and so does that which is upon my father’s.”

“But now you are come to Europe, Henry, you will see many persons with such things as these, which they put on and take off.”

“Why do you wear such things?”

“As a distinction between us and inferior people: they are worn to give an importance to the wearer.”

“That’s just as the savages do; they hang brass nails, wire, buttons, and entrails of beasts all over them, to give them importance.”

The dean now led his nephew to Lady Clementina, and told him, “She was his aunt, to whom he must behave with the utmost respect.”

“I will, I will,” he replied, “for she, I see, is a person of importance too; she has, very nearly, such a white thing upon her head as you have!”

His aunt had not yet fixed in what manner it would be advisable to behave; whether with intimidating grandeur, or with amiable tenderness. While she was hesitating between both, she felt a kind of jealous apprehension that her son was not so engaging either in his person or address as his cousin; and therefore she said,

“I hope, Dean, the arrival of this child will give you a still higher sense of the happiness we enjoy in our own. What an instructive contrast between the manners of the one and of the other!”

“It is not the child’s fault,” returned the dean, “that he is not so elegant in his manners as his cousin. Had William been bred in the same place, he would have been as unpolished as this boy.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said young William with a formal bow and a sarcastic smile, “I assure you several of my tutors have told me, that I appear to know many things as it were by instinct.”

Young Henry fixed his eyes upon his cousin, while, with steady self-complacency, he delivered this speech, and no sooner was it concluded than Henry cried out in a kind of wonder,

“A little man! as I am alive, a little man! I did not know there were such little men in this country! I never saw one in my life before!”

“This is a boy,” said the dean; “a boy not older than yourself.”

He put their hands together, and William gravely shook hands with his cousin.

“It *is* a man,” continued young Henry; then stroked his cousin’s chin. “No, no, I do not know whether it is or not.”

“I tell you again,” said the dean, “he is a boy of your own age; you and he are cousins, for I am his father.”

“How can that be?” said young Henry. “He called you *Sir*.”

“In this country,” said the dean, “polite children do not call their parents *father* and *mother*.”

“Then don’t they sometimes forget to love them as such?” asked Henry.

His uncle became now impatient to interrogate him in every particular concerning his father’s state. Lady Clementina felt equal impatience to know where the father was, whether he were coming to live with them, wanted anything of them, and every circumstance in which her vanity

was interested. Explanations followed all these questions; but which, exactly agreeing with what the elder Henry's letter has related, require no recital here.

CHAPTER XII.

That vanity which presided over every thought and deed of Lady Clementina was the protector of young Henry within her house. It represented to her how amiable her conduct would appear in the eye of the world should she condescend to treat this destitute nephew as her own son; what envy such heroic virtue would excite in the hearts of her particular friends, and what grief in the bosoms of all those who did not like her.

The dean was a man of no inconsiderable penetration. He understood the thoughts which, upon this occasion, passed in the mind of his wife, and in order to ensure her kind treatment of the boy, instead of reproaching her for the cold manner in which she had at first received him, he praised her tender and sympathetic heart for having shown him so much kindness, and thus stimulated her vanity to be praised still more.

William, the mother's own son, far from apprehending a rival in this savage boy, was convinced of his own pre-eminence, and felt an affection for him—though rather as a foil than as a cousin. He sported with his ignorance upon all occasions, and even lay in wait for circumstances that might expose it; while young Henry, strongly impressed with everything which appeared new to him, expressed, without reserve, the sensations which those novelties excited, wholly careless of the construction put on his observations.

He never appeared either offended or abashed when laughed at; but still pursued his questions, and still discovered his wonder at many replies made to him, though "simpleton," "poor silly boy," and "idiot," were

vociferated around him from his cousin, his aunt, and their constant visitor the bishop.

His uncle would frequently undertake to instruct him; so indeed would the bishop; but Lady Clementina, her son, and the greatest part of her companions, found something so irresistibly ridiculous in his remarks, that nothing but immoderate laughter followed; they thought such folly had even merit in the way of entertainment, and they wished him no wiser.

Having been told that every morning, on first seeing his uncle, he was to make a respectful bow; and coming into the dean's dressing-room just as he was out of bed, his wig lying on the table, Henry appeared at a loss which of the two he should bow to. At last he gave the preference to his uncle, but afterwards bowed reverently to the wig. In this he did what he conceived was proper, from the introduction which the dean, on his first arrival, had given him to this venerable stranger; for, in reality, Henry had a contempt for all finery, and had called even his aunt's jewels, when they were first shown to him, "trumpery," asking "what they were good for?" But being corrected in this disrespect, and informed of their high value, he, like a good convert, gave up his reason to his faith; and becoming, like all converts, over-zealous, he now believed there was great worth in all gaudy appearances, and even respected the earrings of Lady Clementina almost as much as he respected herself.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was to be lamented that when young Henry had been several months in England, had been taught to read, and had, of course, in the society in which he lived, seen much of the enlightened world, yet the natural expectation of his improvement was by no means answered.

Notwithstanding the sensibility, which upon various occasions he manifested in the most captivating degree, notwithstanding the seeming gentleness of his nature upon all occasions, there now appeared, in most of his inquiries and remarks, a something which demonstrated either a stupid or troublesome disposition; either dulness of conception, or an obstinacy of perseverance in comments and in arguments which were glaringly false.

Observing his uncle one day offended with his coachman, and hearing him say to him in a very angry tone,

"You shall never drive me again"—

The moment the man quitted the room, Henry (with his eyes fixed in the deepest contemplation) repeated five or six times, in a half whisper to himself,

"*You shall never drive me again*."

"*You shall never drive me again*."

The dean at last called to him. "What do you mean by thus repeating my words?"

"I am trying to find out what *you* meant," said Henry.

“What don’t you know?” cried his enlightened cousin. “Richard is turned away; he is never to get upon our coach-box again, never to drive any of us more.”

“And was it pleasure to drive us, cousin? I am sure I have often pitied him. It rained sometimes very hard when he was on the box; and sometimes Lady Clementina has kept him a whole hour at the door all in the cold and snow. Was that pleasure?”

“No,” replied young William.

“Was it honour, cousin?”

“No,” exclaimed his cousin with a contemptuous smile.

“Then why did my uncle say to him, as a punishment, ‘he should never’”—

“Come hither, child,” said the dean, “and let me instruct you; your father’s negligence has been inexcusable. There are in society,” continued the dean, “rich and poor; the poor are born to serve the rich.”

“And what are the rich born for?”

“To be served by the poor.”

“But suppose the poor would not serve them?”

“Then they must starve.”

“And so poor people are permitted to live only upon condition that they wait upon the rich?”

“Is that a hard condition; or if it were, they will be rewarded in a better world than this?”

“Is there a better world than this?”

“Is it possible you do not know there is?”

“I heard my father once say something about a world to come; but he stopped short, and said I was too young to understand what he meant.”

“The world to come,” returned the dean, “is where we shall go after death; and there no distinction will be made between rich and poor—all persons there will be equal.”

“Aye, now I see what makes it a better world than this. But cannot this world try to be as good as that?”

“In respect to placing all persons on a level, it is utterly impossible. God has ordained it otherwise.”

“How! has God ordained a distinction to be made, and will not make any Himself?”

The dean did not proceed in his instructions. He now began to think his brother in the right, and that the boy was too young, or too weak, to comprehend the subject.

CHAPTER XIV.

In addition to his ignorant conversation upon many topics, young Henry had an incorrigible misconception and misapplication of many *words*. His father having had but few opportunities of discoursing with him, upon account of his attendance at the court of the savages, and not having books in the island, he had consequently many words to learn of this country's language when he arrived in England. This task his retentive memory made easy to him; but his childish inattention to their proper signification still made his want of education conspicuous.

He would call *compliments*, *lies*; *reserve*, he would call *pride*; *stateliness*, *affectation*; and for the words *war* and *battle*, he constantly substituted the word *massacre*.

"Sir," said William to his father one morning, as he entered the room, "do you hear how the cannons are firing, and the bells ringing?"

"Then I dare say," cried Henry, "there has been another massacre."

The dean called to him in anger, "Will you never learn the right use of words? You mean to say a battle."

"Then what is a massacre?" cried the frightened, but still curious Henry.

"A massacre," replied his uncle, "is when a number of people are slain—"

"I thought," returned Henry, "soldiers had been people!"

"You interrupted me," said the dean, "before I finished my sentence. Certainly, both soldiers and sailors are people, but they engage to die by their own free will and consent."

“What! all of them?”

“Most of them.”

“But the rest are massacred?”

The dean answered, “The number who go to battle unwillingly, and by force, are few; and for the others, they have previously sold their lives to the state.”

“For what?”

“For soldiers’ and sailors’ pay.”

“My father used to tell me, we must not take away our own lives; but he forgot to tell me we might sell them for others to take away.”

“William,” said the dean to his son, his patience tired with his nephew’s persevering nonsense, “explain to your cousin the difference between a battle and a massacre.”

“A massacre,” said William, rising from his seat, and fixing his eyes alternately upon his father, his mother, and the bishop (all of whom were present) for their approbation, rather than the person’s to whom his instructions were to be addressed—“a massacre,” said William, “is when human beings are slain, who have it not in their power to defend themselves.”

“Dear cousin William,” said Henry, “that must ever be the case with every one who is killed.”

After a short hesitation, William replied: “In massacres people are put to death for no crime, but merely because they are objects of suspicion.”

“But in battle,” said Henry, “the persons put to death are not even suspected.”

The bishop now condescended to end this disputation by saying emphatically,

“Consider, young savage, that in battle neither the infant, the aged, the sick, nor infirm are involved, but only those in the full prime of health and vigour.”

As this argument came from so great and reverend a man as the bishop, Henry was obliged, by a frown from his uncle, to submit, as one refuted; although he had an answer at the veriest tip of his tongue, which it was torture to him not to utter. What he wished to say must ever remain a secret. The church has its terrors as well as the law; and Henry was awed by the dean’s tremendous wig as much as Paternoster Row is awed by the Attorney-General.

CHAPTER XV.

If the dean had loved his wife but moderately, seeing all her faults clearly as he did, he must frequently have quarrelled with her: if he had loved her with tenderness, he must have treated her with a degree of violence in the hope of amending her failings. But having neither personal nor mental affection towards her sufficiently interesting to give himself the trouble to contradict her will in anything, he passed for one of the best husbands in the world. Lady Clementina went out when she liked, stayed at home when she liked, dressed as she liked, and talked as she liked without a word of disapprobation from her husband, and all—because he cared nothing about her.

Her vanity attributed this indulgence to inordinate affection; and observers in general thought her happier in her marriage than the beloved wife who bathes her pillow with tears by the side of an angry husband, whose affection is so excessive that he unkindly upbraids her because she is—less than perfection.

The dean's wife was not so dispassionately considered by some of his acquaintance as by himself; for they would now and then hint at her foibles: but this great liberty she also conceived to be the effect of most violent love, or most violent admiration: and such would have been her construction had they commended her follies—had they totally slighted, or had they beaten her.

Amongst those acquaintances, the aforesaid bishop, by far the most frequent visitor, did not come merely to lounge an idle hour, but he had a more powerful motive; the desire of fame, and dread of being thought a man receiving large emolument for unimportant service.

The dean, if he did not procure him the renown he wished, still preserved him from the apprehended censure.

The elder William was to his negligent or ignorant superiors in the church such as an apt boy at school is to the rich dunces—William performed the prelates' tasks for them, and they rewarded him—not indeed with toys or money, but with their countenance, their company, their praise. And scarcely was there a sermon preached from the patrician part of the bench, in which the dean did not fashion some periods, blot out some uncouth phrases, render some obscure sentiments intelligible, and was the certain person, when the work was printed, to correct the press.

This honourable and right reverend bishop delighted in printing and publishing his works; or rather the entire works of the dean, which passed for his: and so degradingly did William, the shopkeeper's son, think of his own homiest extraction, that he was blinded, even to the loss of honour, by the lustre of this noble acquaintance; for, though in other respects he was a man of integrity, yet, when the gratification of his friend was in question, he was a liar; he not only disowned his giving him aid in any of his publications, but he never published anything in his own name without declaring to the world "that he had been obliged for several hints on the subject, for many of the most judicious corrections, and for those passages in page so and so (naming the most eloquent parts of the work) to his noble and learned friend the bishop."

The dean's wife being a fine lady—while her husband and his friend pored over books or their own manuscripts at home, she ran from house to house, from public amusement to public amusement; but much less for the pleasure of *seeing* than for that of being seen. Nor was it material to her enjoyment whether she were observed, or welcomed, where she went, as she never entertained the smallest doubt of either; but rested assured that her presence roused curiosity and dispensed gladness all around.

One morning she went forth to pay her visits, all smiles, such as she thought captivating: she returned, all tears, such as she thought no less endearing.

Three ladies accompanied her home, entreating her to be patient under a misfortune to which even kings are liable: namely, defamation.

Young Henry, struck with compassion at grief of which he knew not the cause, begged to know “what was the matter?”

“Inhuman monsters, to treat a woman thus!” cried his aunt in a fury, casting the corner of her eye into a looking-glass, to see how rage became her.

“But, comfort yourself,” said one of her companions: “few people will believe you merit the charge.”

“But few! if only one believe it, I shall call my reputation lost, and I will shut myself up in some lonely hut, and for ever renounce all that is dear to me!”

“What! all your fine clothes?” said Henry, in amazement.

“Of what importance will my best dresses be, when nobody would see them?”

“You would see them yourself, dear aunt; and I am sure nobody admires them more.”

“Now you speak of that,” said she, “I do not think this gown I have on becoming—I am sure I look—”

The dean, with the bishop (to whom he had been reading a treatise just going to the press, which was to be published in the name of the latter, though written by the former), now entered, to inquire why they had been sent for in such haste.

“Oh, Dean! oh, my Lord Bishop!” she cried, resuming that grief which the thoughts of her dress had for a time dispelled—“My reputation is destroyed—a public print has accused me of playing deep at my own house, and winning all the money.”

“The world will never reform,” said the bishop: “all our labour, my friend, is thrown away.”

“But is it possible,” cried the dean, “that any one has dared to say this of you?”

“Here it is in print,” said she, holding out a newspaper.

The dean read the paragraph, and then exclaimed, “I can forgive a falsehood *spoken*—the warmth of conversation may excuse it—but to *write* and *print* an untruth is unpardonable, and I will prosecute this publisher.”

“Still the falsehood will go down to posterity,” said Lady Clementina; “and after ages will think I was a gambler.”

“Comfort yourself, dear madam,” said young Henry, wishing to console her: “perhaps after ages may not hear of you; nor even the present age think much about you.”

The bishop now exclaimed, after having taken the paper from the dean, and read the paragraph, “It is a libel, a rank libel, and the author must be punished.”

“Not only the author, but the publisher,” said the dean.

“Not only the publisher, but the printer,” continued the bishop.

“And must my name be bandied about by lawyers in a common court of justice?” cried Lady Clementina. “How shocking to my delicacy!”

“My lord, it is a pity we cannot try them by the ecclesiastical court,” said the dean, with a sigh.

“Or by the India delinquent bill,” said the bishop, with vexation.

“So totally innocent as I am!” she vociferated with sobs. “Every one knows I never touch a card at home, and this libel charges me with playing at my own house; and though, whenever I do play, I own I am apt to win, yet it is merely for my amusement.”

“Win or not win, play or not play,” exclaimed both the churchmen, “this is a libel—no doubt, no doubt, a libel.”

Poor Henry’s confined knowledge of his native language tormented him so much with curiosity upon this occasion, that he went softly up to his uncle, and asked him in a whisper, “What is the meaning of the word libel?”

“A libel,” replied the dean, in a raised voice, “is that which one person publishes to the injury of another.”

“And what can the injured person do,” asked Henry, “if the accusation should chance to be true?”

“Prosecute,” replied the dean.

“But, then, what does he do if the accusation be false?”

“Prosecute likewise,” answered the dean.

“How, uncle! is it possible that the innocent behave just like the guilty?”

“There is no other way to act.”

“Why, then, if I were the innocent, I would do nothing at all sooner than I would act like the guilty. I would not persecute—”

“I said *prosecute*,” cried the dean in anger. “Leave the room; you have no comprehension.”

“Oh, yes, now I understand the difference of the two words; but they sound so much alike, I did not at first observe the distinction. You said, ‘the innocent prosecute, but the *guilty persecute*.’” He bowed (convinced as he thought) and left the room.

After this modern star-chamber, which was left sitting, had agreed on its mode of vengeance, and the writer of the libel was made acquainted with his danger, he waited, in all humility, upon Lady Clementina, and assured her, with every appearance of sincerity,

"That she was not the person alluded to by the paragraph in question, but that the initials which she had conceived to mark out her name, were, in fact, meant to point out Lady Catherine Newland."

"But, sir," cried Lady Clementina, "what could induce you to write such a paragraph upon Lady Catherine? She *never* plays."

"We know that, madam, or we dared not to have attacked her. Though we must circulate libels, madam, to gratify our numerous readers, yet no people are more in fear of prosecutions than authors and editors; therefore, unless we are deceived in our information, we always take care to libel the innocent—we apprehend nothing from them—their own characters support them—but the guilty are very tenacious; and what they cannot secure by fair means, they will employ force to accomplish. Dear madam, be assured I have too much regard for a wife and seven small children, who are maintained by my industry alone, to have written anything in the nature of a libel upon your ladyship."

CHAPTER XVI.

About this period the dean had just published a pamphlet in his own name, and in which that of his friend the bishop was only mentioned with thanks for hints, observations, and condescending encouragement to the author.

This pamphlet glowed with the dean's love for his country; and such a country as he described, it was impossible *not* to love. "Salubrious air, fertile fields, wood, water, corn, grass, sheep, oxen, fish, fowl, fruit, and vegetables," were dispersed with the most prodigal hand; "valiant men, virtuous women; statesmen wise and just; tradesmen abounding in merchandise and money; husbandmen possessing peace, ease, plenty; and all ranks liberty." This brilliant description, while the dean read the work to his family, so charmed poor Henry, that he repeatedly cried out,

"I am glad I came to this country."

But it so happened that a few days after, Lady Clementina, in order to render the delicacy of her taste admired, could eat of no one dish upon the table, but found fault with them all. The dean at length said to her,

"Indeed, you are too nice; reflect upon the hundreds of poor creatures who have not a morsel or a drop of anything to subsist upon, except bread and water; and even of the first a scanty allowance, but for which they are obliged to toil six days in the week, from sun to sun."

"Pray, uncle," cried Henry, "in what country do these poor people live?"

"In this country," replied the dean.

Henry rose from his chair, ran to the chimney-piece, took up his uncle's pamphlet, and said, "I don't remember your mentioning them here."

"Perhaps I have not," answered the dean, coolly.

Still Henry turned over each leaf of the book, but he could meet only with luxurious details of "the fruits of the earth, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea."

"Why, here is provision enough for all the people," said Henry; "why should they want? why do not they go and take some of these things?"

"They must not," said the dean, "unless they were their own."

"What, uncle! does no part of the earth, nor anything which the earth produces, belong to the poor?"

"Certainly not."

"Why did not you say so, then, in your pamphlet?"

"Because it is what everybody knows."

"Oh, then, what you have said in your pamphlet is only what—nobody knows."

There appeared to the dean, in the delivery of this sentence, a satirical acrimony, which his irritability as an author could but ill forgive.

An author, it is said, has more acute feelings in respect to his works than any artist in the world besides.

Henry had some cause, on the present occasion, to think this observation just; for no sooner had he spoken the foregoing words, than his uncle took him by the hand out of the room, and, leading him to his study, there he enumerated his various faults; and having told him "it was for all those, too long permitted with impunity, and not merely for the *present* impertinence, that he meant to punish him," ordered him to close confinement in his chamber for a week.

In the meantime, the dean's pamphlet (less hurt by Henry's critique than *he* had been) was proceeding to the tenth edition, and the author acquiring literary reputation beyond what he had ever conferred on his friend the bishop.

The style, the energy, the eloquence of the work was echoed by every reader who could afford to buy it—some few enlightened ones excepted, who chiefly admired the author's *invention*.

CHAPTER XVII.

The dean, in the good humour which the rapid sale of his book produced, once more took his nephew to his bosom; and although the ignorance of young Henry upon the late occasions had offended him very highly, yet that self-same ignorance, evinced a short time after upon a different subject, struck his uncle as productive of a most rare and exalted virtue.

Henry had frequently, in his conversation, betrayed the total want of all knowledge in respect to religion or futurity, and the dean for this reason delayed taking him to church, till he had previously given him instructions *wherefore* he went.

A leisure morning arrived, on which he took his nephew to his study, and implanted in his youthful mind the first unconfused idea of the Creator of the universe!

The dean was eloquent, Henry was all attention; his understanding, expanded by time to the conception of a God—and not warped by custom from the sensations which a just notion of that God inspires—dwelt with delight and wonder on the information given him—lessons which, instilled into the head of a senseless infant, too often produce, throughout his remaining life, an impious indifference to the truths revealed.

Yet, with all that astonished, that respectful sensibility which Henry showed on this great occasion, he still expressed his opinion, and put questions to the dean, with his usual simplicity, till he felt himself convinced.

“What!” cried he—after being informed of the attributes inseparable from the Supreme Being, and having received the injunction to offer prayers to Him night and morning—“What! am I permitted to speak to Power Divine?”

“At all times,” replied the dean.

“How! whenever I like?”

“Whenever you like,” returned the dean.

“I durst not,” cried Henry, “make so free with the bishop, nor dare any of his attendants.”

“The bishop,” said the dean, “is the servant of God, and therefore must be treated with respect.”

“With more respect than his Master?” asked Henry.

The dean not replying immediately to this question, Henry, in the rapidity of inquiry, ran on to another:—

“But what am I to say when I speak to the Almighty?”

“First, thank Him for the favours He has bestowed on you.”

“What favours?”

“You amaze me,” cried the dean, “by your question. Do not you live in ease, in plenty, and happiness?”

“And do the poor and the unhappy thank Him too, uncle?”

“No doubt; every human being glorifies Him, for having been made a rational creature.”

“And does my aunt and all her card-parties glorify Him for that?”

The dean again made no reply, and Henry went on to other questions, till his uncle had fully instructed him as to the nature and the form of *prayer*; and now, putting into his hands a book, he pointed out to him a

few short prayers, which he wished him to address to Heaven in his presence.

Whilst Henry bent his knees, as his uncle had directed, he trembled, turned pale, and held, for a slight support, on the chair placed before him.

His uncle went to him, and asked him “What was the matter.”

“Oh!” cried Henry, “when I first came to your door with my poor father’s letter, I shook for fear you would not look upon me; and I cannot help feeling even more now than I did then.”

The dean embraced him with warmth—gave him confidence—and retired to the other side of the study, to observe his whole demeanour on this new occasion.

As he beheld his features varying between the passions of humble fear and fervent hope, his face sometimes glowing with the rapture of thanksgiving, and sometimes with the blushes of contrition, he thus exclaimed apart:—

“This is the true education on which to found the principles of religion. The favour conferred by Heaven in granting the freedom of petitions to its throne, can never be conceived with proper force but by those whose most tedious moments during their infancy were *not* passed in prayer. Unthinking governors of childhood! to insult the Deity with a form of worship in which the mind has no share; nay, worse, has repugnance, and by the thoughtless habits of youth, prevent, even in age, devotion.”

Henry’s attention was so firmly fixed that he forgot there was a spectator of his fervour; nor did he hear young William enter the chamber and even speak to his father.

At length closing his book and rising from his knees, he approached his uncle and cousin, with a sedateness in his air, which gave the latter a very false opinion of the state of his youthful companion’s mind.

“So, Mr. Henry,” cried William, “you have been obliged, at last, to say your prayers.”

The dean informed his son “that to Henry it was no punishment to pray.”

“He is the strangest boy I ever knew!” said William, inadvertently.

“To be sure,” said Henry, “I was frightened when I first knelt; but when I came to the words, *Father*, *which art in Heaven*, they gave me courage; for I know how merciful and kind a *father* is, beyond any one else.”

The dean again embraced his nephew, let fall a tear to his poor brother Henry’s misfortunes; and admonished the youth to show himself equally submissive to other instructions, as he had done to those which inculcate piety.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The interim between youth and manhood was passed by young William and young Henry in studious application to literature; some casual mistakes in our customs and manners on the part of Henry; some too close adherences to them on the side of William.

Their different characters, when boys, were preserved when they became men: Henry still retained that natural simplicity which his early destiny had given him; he wondered still at many things he saw and heard, and at times would venture to give his opinion, contradict, and even act in opposition to persons whom long experience and the approbation of the world had placed in situations which claimed his implicit reverence and submission.

Unchanged in all his boyish graces, young William, now a man, was never known to infringe upon the statutes of good-breeding; even though sincerity, his own free will, duty to his neighbour, with many other plebeian virtues and privileges, were the sacrifice.

William inherited all the pride and ambition of the dean—Henry, all his father's humility. And yet, so various and extensive is the acceptation of the word pride, that, on some occasions, Henry was proud even beyond his cousin. He thought it far beneath his dignity ever to honour, or contemplate with awe, any human being in whom he saw numerous failings. Nor would he, to ingratiate himself into the favour of a man above him, stoop to one servility, such as the haughty William daily practised.

"I know I am called proud," one day said William to Henry.

“Dear cousin,” replied Henry, “it must be only, then, by those who do not know you; for to me you appear the humblest creature in the world.”

“Do you really think so?”

“I am certain of it; or would you always give up your opinion to that of persons in a superior state, however inferior in their understanding? Would else their weak judgment immediately change yours, though, before, you had been decided on the opposite side? Now, indeed, cousin, I have more pride than you; for I never will stoop to act or to speak contrary to my feelings.”

“Then you will never be a great man.”

“Nor ever desire it, if I must first be a mean one.”

There was in the reputation of these two young men another mistake, which the common retailers of character committed. Henry was said to be wholly negligent, while William was reputed to be extremely attentive to the other sex. William, indeed, was gallant, was amorous, and indulged his inclination to the libertine society of women; but Henry it was who *loved* them. He admired them at a reverential distance, and felt so tender an affection for the virtuous female, that it shocked him to behold, much more to associate with, the depraved and vicious.

In the advantages of person Henry was still superior to William; and yet the latter had no common share of those attractions which captivate weak, thoughtless, or unskilful minds.

CHAPTER XIX.

About the time that Henry and William quitted college, and had arrived at their twentieth year, the dean purchased a small estate in a village near to the country residence of Lord and Lady Bendham; and, in the total want of society, the dean's family were frequently honoured with invitations from the great house.

Lord Bendham, besides a good estate, possessed the office of a lord of the bed-chamber to his Majesty. Historians do not ascribe much importance to the situation, or to the talents of nobles in this department, nor shall this little history. A lord of the bed-chamber is a personage well known in courts, and in all capitals where courts reside; with this advantage to the inquirer, that in becoming acquainted with one of those noble characters, he becomes acquainted with all the remainder; not only with those of the same kingdom, but those of foreign nations; for, in whatever land, in whatever climate, a lord of the bed-chamber must necessarily be the self-same creature: one wholly made up of observance, of obedience, of dependence, and of imitation—a borrowed character—a character formed by reflection.

The wife of this illustrious peer, as well as himself, took her hue, like the chameleon, from surrounding objects: her manners were not governed by her mind but were solely directed by external circumstances. At court, humble, resigned, patient, attentive: at balls, masquerades, gaming-tables, and routs, gay, sprightly, and flippant; at her country seat, reserved, austere, arrogant, and gloomy.

Though in town her timid eye in presence of certain personages would scarcely uplift its trembling lid, so much she felt her own insignificance, yet, in the country, till Lady Clementina arrived, there was not one being of consequence enough to share in her acquaintance; and she paid back to her inferiors there all the humiliating slights, all the mortifications, which in London she received from those to whom *she* was inferior.

Whether in town or country, it is but justice to acknowledge that in her own person she was strictly chaste; but in the country she extended that chastity even to the persons of others; and the young woman who lost her virtue in the village of Anfield had better have lost her life. Some few were now and then found hanging or drowned, while no other cause could be assigned for their despair than an imputation on the discretion of their character, and dread of the harsh purity of Lady Bendham. She would remind the parish priest of the punishment allotted for female dishonour, and by her influence had caused many an unhappy girl to do public penance in their own or the neighbouring churches.

But this country rigour in town she could dispense withal; and, like other ladies of virtue, she there visited and received into her house the acknowledged mistresses of any man in elevated life. It was not, therefore, the crime, but the rank which the criminal held in society, that drew down Lady Bendham's vengeance. She even carried her distinction of classes in female error to such a very nice point that the adulterous concubine of an elder brother was her most intimate acquaintance, whilst the less guilty unmarried mistress of the younger she would not sully her lips to exchange a word with.

Lord and Lady Bendham's birth, education, talents, and propensities, being much on the same scale of eminence, they would have been a very happy pair, had not one great misfortune intervened—the lady never bore her lord a child, while every cottage of the village was crammed with half-starved children, whose father from week to week, from year to year, exerted his manly youth, and wasted his strength in vain, to protect them from hunger; whose mother mourned over her new-born infant as

a little wretch, sent into the world to deprive the rest of what already was too scanty for them; in the castle, which owned every cottage and all the surrounding land, and where one single day of feasting would have nourished for a mouth all the poor inhabitants of the parish, not one child was given to partake of the plenty. The curse of barrenness was on the family of the lord of the manor, the curse of fruitfulness upon the famished poor.

This lord and lady, with an ample fortune, both by inheritance and their sovereign's favour, had never yet the economy to be exempt from debts; still, over their splendid, their profuse table, they could contrive and plan excellent schemes "how the poor might live most comfortably with a little better management."

The wages of a labouring man, with a wife and half a dozen small children, Lady Bendham thought quite sufficient if they would only learn a little economy.

"You know, my lord, those people never want to dress—shoes and stockings, a coat and waistcoat, a gown and a cap, a petticoat and a handkerchief, are all they want—fire, to be sure, in winter—then all the rest is merely for provision."

"I'll get a pen and ink," said young Henry, one day, when he had the honour of being at their table, "and see what the *rest* amounts to."

"No, no accounts," cried my lord, "no summing up; but if you were to calculate, you must add to the receipts of the poor my gift at Christmas—last year, during the frost, no less than a hundred pounds."

"How benevolent!" exclaimed the dean.

"How prudent!" exclaimed Henry.

"What do you mean by prudent?" asked Lord Bendham. "Explain your meaning."

“No, my lord,” replied the dean, “do not ask for an explanation: this youth is wholly unacquainted with our customs, and, though a man in stature, is but a child in intellects. Henry, have I not often cautioned you —”

“Whatever his thoughts are upon the subject,” cried Lord Bendham, “I desire to know them.”

“Why, then, my lord,” answered Henry, “I thought it was prudent in you to give a little, lest the poor, driven to despair, should take all.”

“And if they had, they would have been hanged.”

“Hanging, my lord, our history, or some tradition, says, was formerly adopted as a mild punishment, in place of starving.”

“I am sure,” cried Lady Bendham (who seldom spoke directly to the argument before her), “I am sure they ought to think themselves much obliged to us.”

“That is the greatest hardship of all,” cried Henry.

“What, sir?” exclaimed the earl.

“I beg your pardon—my uncle looks displeased—I am very ignorant—I did not receive my first education in this country—and I find I think so differently from every one else, that I am ashamed to utter my sentiments.”

“Never mind, young man,” answered Lord Bendham; “we shall excuse your ignorance for once. Only inform us what it was you just now called *the greatest hardship of all*.”

“It was, my lord, that what the poor receive to keep them from perishing should pass under the name of *gifts* and *bounty*. Health, strength, and the will to earn a moderate subsistence, ought to be every man’s security from obligation.”

“I think a hundred pounds a great deal of money,” cried Lady Bendham; “and I hope my lord will never give it again.”

“I hope so too,” cried Henry; “for if my lord would only be so good as to speak a few words for the poor as a senator, he might possibly for the future keep his hundred pounds, and yet they never want it.”

Lord Bendham had the good nature only to smile at Henry’s simplicity, whispering to himself, “I had rather keep my—” his last word was lost in the whisper.

CHAPTER XX.

In the country—where the sensible heart is still more susceptible of impressions; and where the unfeeling mind, in the want of other men's wit to invent, forms schemes for its own amusement—our youths both fell in love: if passions, that were pursued on the most opposite principles, can receive the same appellation. William, well versed in all the licentious theory, thought himself in love, because he perceived a tumultuous impulse cause his heart to beat while his fancy fixed on a certain object whose presence agitated yet more his breast.

Henry thought himself not in love, because, while he listened to William on the subject, he found their sensations did not in the least agree.

William owned to Henry that he loved Agnes, the daughter of a cottager in the village, and hoped to make her his mistress.

Henry felt that his tender regard for Rebecca, the daughter of the curate of the parish, did not inspire him even with the boldness to acquaint her with his sentiments, much less to meditate one design that might tend to her dishonour.

While William was cautiously planning how to meet in private, and accomplish the seduction of the object of his passion, Henry was endeavouring to fortify the object of *his* choice with every virtue. He never read a book from which he received improvement that he did not carry it to Rebecca—never heard a circumstance which might assist towards her moral instruction that he did not haste to tell it her; and once when William boasted

"He knew he was beloved by Agnes;"

Henry said, with equal triumph, “he had not dared to take the means to learn, nor had Rebecca dared to give one instance of her partiality.”

Rebecca was the youngest, and by far the least handsome daughter of four, to whom the Reverend Mr. Rymer, a widower, was father. The other sisters were accounted beauties; and she, from her comparative want of personal charms, having been less beloved by her parents, and less caressed by those who visited them, than the rest, had for some time past sought other resources of happiness than the affection, praise, and indulgence of her fellow-creatures. The parsonage house in which this family lived was the forlorn remains of an ancient abbey: it had in later times been the habitation of a rich and learned rector, by whom, at his decease, a library was bequeathed for the use of every succeeding resident. Rebecca, left alone in this huge ruinous abode, while her sisters were paying stated visits in search of admiration, passed her solitary hours in reading. She not merely read—she thought: the choicest English books from this excellent library taught her to *think*; and reflection fashioned her mind to bear the slights, the mortifications of neglect, with a patient dejection, rather than with an indignant or a peevish spirit.

This resignation to injury and contumely gave to her perfect symmetry of person, a timid eye, a retiring manner, and spread upon her face a placid sweetness, a pale serenity indicating sense, which no wise connoisseur in female charms would have exchanged for all the sparkling eyes and florid tints of her vain and vulgar sisters. Henry’s soul was so enamoured of her gentle deportment, that in his sight she appeared beautiful; while she, with an understanding competent to judge of his worth, was so greatly surprised, so prodigiously astonished at the distinction, the attention, the many offices of civility paid her by him, in preference to her idolised sisters, that her gratitude for such unexpected favours had sometimes (even in his presence, and in that of her family) nearly drowned her eyes with tears. Yet they were only trifles, in which Henry had the opportunity or the power to give her testimony of his regard—trifles, often more grateful to the sensible mind than efforts of

high importance; and by which the proficient in the human heart will accurately trace a passion wholly concealed from the dull eye of the unskilled observer.

The first cause of amazement to Rebecca in the manners of Henry was, that he talked with *her* as well as with her sisters; no visitor else had done so. In appointing a morning's or an evening's walk, he proposed *her* going with the rest; no one had ever required her company before. When he called and she was absent, he asked where she was; no one had ever missed her before. She thanked him most sincerely, and soon perceived that, at those times when he was present, company was more pleasing even than books.

Her astonishment, her gratitude, did not stop here. Henry proceeded in attention; he soon selected her from her sister to tell her the news of the day, answered her observations the first; once gave her a sprig of myrtle from his bosom in preference to another who had praised its beauty; and once—never-to-be-forgotten kindness—sheltered her from a hasty shower with his *parapluie*, while he lamented to her drenched companions,

"That he had but *one* to offer."

From a man whose understanding and person they admire, how dear, how impressive on the female heart is every trait of tenderness! Till now, Rebecca had experienced none; not even of the parental kind: and merely from the overflowings of a kind nature (not in return for affection) had she ever loved her father and her sisters. Sometimes, repulsed by their severity, she transferred the fulness of an affectionate heart upon birds, or the brute creation: but now, her alienated mind was recalled and softened by a sensation that made her long to complain of the burthen it imposed. Those obligations which exact silence are a heavy weight to the grateful; and Rebecca longed to tell Henry "that even the forfeit of her life would be too little to express the full sense she had of the respect he paid to her." But as modesty forbade not only every kind of declaration, but every insinuation purporting what she felt, she

wept through sleepless nights from a load of suppressed explanation; yet still she would not have exchanged this trouble for all the beauty of her sisters.

CHAPTER XXI.

Old John and Hannah Primrose, a prudent hardy couple, who, by many years of peculiar labour and peculiar abstinence, were the least poor of all the neighbouring cottagers, had an only child (who has been named before) called Agnes: and this cottage girl was reckoned, in spite of the beauty of the elder Miss Rymers, by far the prettiest female in the village.

Reader of superior rank, if the passions which rage in the bosom of the inferior class of human kind are beneath your sympathy, throw aside this little history, for Rebecca Rymer and Agnes Primrose are its heroines.

But you, unprejudiced reader, whose liberal observations are not confined to stations, but who consider all mankind alike deserving your investigation; who believe that there exists, in some, knowledge without the advantage of instruction; refinement of sentiment independent of elegant society; honourable pride of heart without dignity of blood; and genius destitute of art to render it conspicuous—you will, perhaps, venture to read on, in hopes that the remainder of this story may deserve your attention, just as the wild herb of the forest, equally with the cultivated plant in the garden, claims the attention of the botanist.

Young William saw in young Agnes even more beauty than was beheld by others; and on those days when he felt no inclination to ride, to shoot, or to hunt, he would contrive, by some secret device, the means to meet with her alone, and give her tokens (if not of his love) at least of his admiration of her beauty, and of the pleasure he enjoyed in her company.

Agnes listened, with a kind of delirious enchantment, to all her elevated and eloquent admirer uttered; and in return for his praises of her charms, and his equivocal replies in respect to his designs towards her, she gave to him her most undisguised thoughts, and her whole enraptured heart.

This harmless intercourse (as she believed it) had not lasted many weeks before she loved him: she even confessed she did, every time that any unwonted mark of attention from him struck with unexpected force her infatuated senses.

It has been said by a celebrated writer, upon the affection subsisting between the two sexes, "that there are many persons who, if they had never heard of the passion of love, would never have felt it." Might it not with equal truth be added, that there are many more, who, having heard of it, and believing most firmly that they feel it, are nevertheless mistaken? Neither of these cases was the lot of Agnes. She experienced the sentiment before she ever heard it named in the sense with which it had possessed her—joined with numerous other sentiments; for genuine love, however rated as the chief passion of the human heart, is but a poor dependent, a retainer upon other passions; admiration, gratitude, respect, esteem, pride in the object. Divest the boasted sensation of these, and it is not more than the impression of a twelve-month, by courtesy, or vulgar error, termed love.

Agnes was formed by the rarest structure of the human frame, and destined by the tenderest thrillings of the human soul, to inspire and to experience real love: but her nice taste, her delicate thoughts, were so refined beyond the sphere of her own station in society, that nature would have produced this prodigy of attraction in vain, had not one of superior education and manners assailed her affections; and had she been accustomed to the conversation of men in William's rank of life, she had, perhaps, treated William's addresses with indifference; but, in comparing him with her familiar acquaintance, he was a miracle! His unremitting attention seemed the condescension of an elevated being, to

whom she looked up with reverence, with admiration, with awe, with pride, with sense of obligation—and all those various passions which constitute true, and never-to-be-eradicated, love.

But in vain she felt and even avowed with her lips what every look, every gesture, had long denoted; William, with discontent, sometimes with anger, upbraided her for her false professions, and vowed, "that while one tender proof, which he fervently besought, was wanting, she did but aggravate his misery by less endearments."

Agnes had been taught the full estimation of female virtue; and if her nature could have detested any one creature in a state of wretchedness, it would have been the woman who had lost her honour; yet, for William, what would not Agnes forfeit? The dignity, the peace, the serenity, the innocence of her own mind, love soon encouraged her to fancy she could easily forego; and this same overpowering influence at times so forcibly possessed her, that she even felt a momentary transport in the contemplation "of so precious a sacrifice to him." But then she loved her parents, and their happiness she could not prevail with herself to barter even for *his*. She wished he would demand some other pledge of her attachment to him; for there was none but this, her ruin in no other shape, that she would deny at his request. While thus she deliberated, she prepared for her fall.

Bred up with strict observance both of his moral and religious character, William did not dare to tell an unequivocal lie even to his inferiors; he never promised Agnes he would marry her; nay, even he paid so much respect to the forms of truth, that no sooner was it evident that he had obtained her heart, her whole soul entire—so that loss of innocence would be less terrifying than separation from him—no sooner did he perceive this, than he candidly told her he "could never make her his wife." At the same time he lamented "the difference of their births, and the duty he owed his parents' hopes," in terms so pathetic to her partial

ear, that she thought him a greater object of compassion in his attachment even than herself; and was now urged by pity to remove the cause of his complainings.

One evening Henry accidentally passed the lonely spot where William and she constantly met; he observed his cousin's impassioned eye, and her affectionate yet fearful glance. William, he saw, took delight in the agitation of mind, in the strong apprehension mixed with the love of Agnes. This convinced Henry that either he or himself was not in love; for his heart told him he would not have beheld such emotions of tenderness, mingled with such marks of sorrow, upon the countenance of Rebecca, for the wealth of the universe.

The first time he was alone with William after this, he mentioned his observation on Agnes's apparent affliction, and asked "why her grief was the result of their stolen meetings."

"Because," replied Williams, "her professions are unlimited, while her manners are reserved; and I accuse her of loving me with unkind moderation, while I love her to distraction."

"You design to marry her, then?"

"How can you degrade me by the supposition?"

"Would it degrade you more to marry her than to make her your companion? To talk with her for hours in preference to all other company? To wish to be endeared to her by still closer ties?"

"But all this is not raising her to the rank of my wife."

"It is still raising her to that rank for which wives alone were allotted."

"You talk wildly! I tell you I love her; but not enough, I hope, to marry her."

"But too much, I hope, to undo her?"

“That must be her own free choice—I make use of no unwarrantable methods.”

“What are the warrantable ones?”

“I mean, I have made her no false promises; offered no pretended settlement; vowed no eternal constancy.”

“But you have told her you love her; and, from that confession, has she not reason to expect every protection which even promises could secure?”

“I cannot answer for her expectations; but I know if she should make me as happy as I ask, and I should then forsake her, I shall not break my word.”

“Still she will be deceived, for you will falsify your looks.”

“Do you think she depends on my looks?”

“I have read in some book, *Looks are the lover’s sole dependence*.”

“I have no objection to her interpreting mine in her favour; but then for the consequences she will have herself, and only herself, to blame.”

“Oh! Heaven!”

“What makes you exclaim so vehemently?”

“A forcible idea of the bitterness of that calamity which inflicts self-reproach! Oh, rather deceive her; leave her the consolation to reproach *you* rather than *herself*.”

“My honour will not suffer me.”

“Exert your honour, and never see her more.”

“I cannot live without her.”

“Then live with her by the laws of your country, and make her and yourself both happy.”

“Am I to make my father and my mother miserable? They would disown me for such a step.”

“Your mother, perhaps, might be offended, but your father could not. Remember the sermon he preached but last Sunday, upon—*the shortness of this life—contempt of all riches and worldly honours in balance with a quiet conscience*; and the assurance he gave us, *that the greatest happiness enjoyed upon earth was to be found under a humble roof, with heaven in prospect*.”

“My father is a very good man,” said William; “and yet, instead of being satisfied with a humble roof, he looks impatiently forward to a bishop’s palace.”

“He is so very good, then,” said Henry, “that perhaps, seeing the dangers to which men in exalted stations are exposed, he has such extreme philanthropy, and so little self-love, he would rather that *himself* should brave those perils incidental to wealth and grandeur than any other person.”

“You are not yet civilised,” said William; “and to argue with you is but to instruct, without gaining instruction.”

“I know, sir,” replied Henry, “that you are studying the law most assiduously, and indulge flattering hopes of rising to eminence in your profession: but let me hint to you—that though you may be perfect in the knowledge how to administer the commandments of men, unless you keep in view the precepts of God, your judgment, like mine, will be fallible.”

CHAPTER XXII.

The dean's family passed this first summer at the new-purchased estate so pleasantly, that they left it with regret when winter called them to their house in town.

But if some felt concern in quitting the village of Anfield, others who were left behind felt the deepest anguish. Those were not the poor—for rigid attention to the religion and morals of people in poverty, and total neglect of their bodily wants, was the dean's practice. He forced them to attend church every Sabbath; but whether they had a dinner on their return was too gross and temporal an inquiry for his spiritual fervour. Good of the soul was all he aimed at; and this pious undertaking, besides his diligence as a pastor, required all his exertion as a magistrate—for to be very poor and very honest, very oppressed yet very thankful, is a degree of sainted excellence not often to be attained, without the aid of zealous men to frighten into virtue.

Those, then, who alone felt sorrow at the dean's departure were two young women, whose parents, exempt from indigence, preserved them from suffering under his unpitying piety, but whose discretion had not protected them from the bewitching smiles of his nephew, and the seducing wiles of his son.

The first morning that Rebecca rose and knew Henry was gone till the following summer, she wished she could have laid down again and slept away the whole long interval. Her sisters' peevishness, her father's austerity, she foresaw, would be insupportable now that she had experienced Henry's kindness, and he was no longer near to fortify her patience. She sighed—she wept—she was unhappy.

But if Rebecca awoke with a dejected mind and an aching heart, what were the sorrows of Agnes? The only child of doating parents, she never had been taught the necessity of resignation—untutored, unread, unused to reflect, but knowing how to feel; what were her sufferings when, on waking, she called to mind that "William was gone," and with him gone all that excess of happiness which his presence had bestowed, and for which she had exchanged her future tranquillity?

Loss of tranquillity even Rebecca had to bemoan: Agnes had still more—the loss of innocence!

Hal William remained in the village, shame, even conscience, perhaps, might have been silenced; but, separated from her betrayer, parted from the joys of guilt, and left only to its sorrows, every sting which quick sensibility could sharpen, to torture her, was transfixed in her heart. First came the recollection of a cold farewell from the man whose love she had hoped her yielding passion had for ever won; next, flashed on her thoughts her violated person; next, the crime incurred; then her cruelty to her parents; and, last of all, the horrors of detection.

She knew that as yet, by wariness, care, and contrivance, her meetings with William had been unsuspected; but, in this agony of mind, her fears fore-boded an informer who would defy all caution; who would stigmatise her with a name—dear and desired by every virtuous female—abhorrent to the blushing harlot—the name of mother.

That Agnes, thus impressed, could rise from her bed, meet her parents and her neighbours with her usual smile of vivacity, and voice of mirth, was impossible: to leave her bed at all, to creep downstairs, and reply in a faint, broken voice to questions asked, were, in her state of mind, mighty efforts; and they were all to which her struggles could attain for many weeks.

William had promised to write to her while he was away: he kept his word; but not till the end of two months did she receive a letter. Fear for his health, apprehension of his death during this cruel interim, caused

an agony of suspense, which, by representing him to her distracted fancy in a state of suffering, made him, if possible, still dearer to her. In the excruciating anguish of uncertainty, she walked with trembling steps through all weathers (when she could steal half a day while her parents were employed in labour abroad) to the post town, at six miles' distance, to inquire for his long-expected, long-wished-for letter.

When at last it was given to her, that moment of consolation seemed to repay her for the whole time of agonising terror she had endured. "He is alive!" she said, "and I have suffered nothing."

She hastily put this token of his health and his remembrance of her into her bosom, rich as an empress with a new-acquired dominion. The way from home, which she had trod with heavy pace, in the fear of renewed disappointment, she skimmed along on her return swift as a doe: the cold did not pierce, neither did the rain wet her. Many a time she put her hand upon the prize she possessed, to find if it were safe: once, on the road, she took it from her bosom, curiously viewed the seal and the direction, then replacing it, did not move her fingers from their fast grip till she arrived at her own house.

Her father and her mother were still absent. She drew a chair, and placing it near to the only window in the room, seated herself with ceremonious order; then gently drew forth her treasure, laid it on her knee, and with a smile that almost amounted to a laugh of gladness, once more inspected the outward part, before she would trust herself with the excessive joy of looking within.

At length the seal was broken—but the contents still a secret. Poor Agnes had learned to write as some youths learn Latin: so short a time had been allowed for the acquirement, and so little expert had been her master, that it took her generally a week to write a letter of ten lines, and a month to read one of twenty. But this being a letter on which her mind was deeply engaged, her whole imagination aided her slender literature, and at the end of a fortnight she had made out every word. They were these—

"D^{r}. Agnes,—I hope you have been well since we parted—I have been very well myself; but I have been teased with a great deal of business, which has not given me time to write to you before. I have been called to the bar, which engages every spare moment; but I hope it will not prevent my coming down to Anfield with my father in the summer.

"I am, D^{r}. Agnes,
"With gratitude for all the favours you have conferred on me,
"Yours, &c.
"W. N."

To have beheld the illiterate Agnes trying for two weeks, day and night, to find out the exact words of this letter, would have struck the spectator with amazement, had he also understood the right, the delicate, the nicely proper sensations with which she was affected by every sentence it contained.

She wished it had been kinder, even for his sake who wrote it; because she thought so well of him, and desired still to think so well, that she was sorry at any faults which rendered him less worthy of her good opinion. The cold civility of his letter had this effect—her clear, her acute judgment felt it a kind of prevarication to *promise to write and then write nothing that was hoped for*. But, enthralled by the magic of her passion, she shortly found excuses for the man she loved, at the expense of her own condemnation.

"He has only the fault of inconstancy," she cried; "and that has been caused by *my* change of conduct. Had I been virtuous still, he had still been affectionate." Bitter reflection!

Yet there was a sentence in the letter, that, worse than all the tenderness left out, wounded her sensibility; and she could not read the line, *gratitude for all the favours conferred on me*, without turning pale with

horror, then kindling with indignation at the commonplace thanks, which insultingly reminded her of her innocence given in exchange for unmeaning acknowledgments.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Absence is said to increase strong and virtuous love, but to destroy that which is weak and sensual. In the parallel between young William and young Henry, this was the case; for Henry's real love increased, while William's turbulent passion declined in separation: yet had the latter not so much abated that he did not perceive a sensation, like a sudden shock of sorrow, on a proposal made him by his father, of entering the marriage state with a young woman, the dependent niece of Lady Bendham; who, as the dean informed him, had signified her lord's and her own approbation of his becoming their nephew.

At the first moment William received this intimation from his father, his heart revolted with disgust from the object, and he instantly thought upon Agnes with more affection than he had done for many weeks before. This was from the comparison between her and his proposed wife; for he had frequently seen Miss Sedgeley at Lord Bendham's, but had never seen in her whole person or manners the least attraction to excite his love. He pictured to himself an unpleasant home, with a companion so little suited to his taste, and felt a pang of conscience, as well as of attachment, in the thought of giving up for ever his poor Agnes.

But these reflections, these feelings, lasted only for the moment. No sooner had the dean explained why the marriage was desirable, recited what great connections and what great patronage it would confer upon their family, than William listened with eagerness, and both his love and his conscience were, if not wholly quieted, at least for the present hushed.

Immediately after the dean had expressed to Lord and Lady Bendham his son's "sense of the honour and the happiness conferred on him, by their condescension in admitting him a member of their noble family," Miss Sedgeley received from her aunt nearly the same shock as William had done from his father. *For she* (placed in the exact circumstance of her intended husband) *had frequently seen the dean's son at Lord Bendham's, but had never see in his whole person or manners the least attraction to excite her love. She pictured to herself an unpleasant home, with a companion so little suited to her taste*; and at this moment she felt a more than usual partiality to the dean's nephew, finding the secret hope she had long indulged of winning his affections so near being thwarted.

But Miss Sedgeley was too much subjected to the power of her uncle and aunt to have a will of her own, at least, to dare to utter it. She received the commands of Lady Bendham with her accustomed submission, while all the consolation for the grief they gave her was, "that she resolved to make a very bad wife."

"I shall not care a pin for my husband," said she to herself; "and so I will dress and visit, and do just as I like; he dare not be unkind because of my aunt. Besides, now I think again, it is not so disagreeable to marry *him* as if I were obliged to marry into any other family, because I shall see his cousin Henry as often, if not oftener than ever."

For Miss Sedgeley—whose person he did not like, and with her mind thus disposed—William began to force himself to shake off every little remaining affection, even all pity, for the unfortunate, the beautiful, the sensible, the doating Agnes; and determined to place in a situation to look down with scorn upon her sorrows, this weak, this unprincipled woman.

Connections, interest, honours, were powerful advocates. His private happiness William deemed trivial compared to public opinion; and to be under obligations to a peer, his wife's relation, gave greater renown in

his servile mind than all the advantages which might accrue from his own intrinsic independent worth.

In the usual routine of pretended regard and real indifference—sometimes disgust—between parties allied by what is falsely termed *prudence*, the intended union of Mr. Norwynne with Miss Sedgeley proceeded in all due form; and at their country seats at Anfield, during the summer, their nuptials were appointed to be celebrated.

William was now introduced into all Lord Bendham's courtly circles. His worldly soul was entranced in glare and show; he thought of nothing but places, pensions, titles, retinues; and steadfast, alert, unshaken in the pursuit of honours, neglected not the lesser means of rising to preferment—his own endowments. But in this round of attention to pleasures and to study, he no more complained to Agnes of "excess of business." Cruel as she had once thought that letter in which he thus apologised for slighting her, she at last began to think it was wondrous kind, for he never found time to send her another. Yet she had studied with all her most anxious care to write him an answer; such a one as might not lessen her understanding, which he had often praised, in his esteem.

Ah, William! even with less anxiety your beating, ambitious heart panted for the admiration of an attentive auditory, when you first ventured to harangue in public! With far less hope and fear (great as yours were) did you first address a crowded court, and thirst for its approbation on your efforts, than Agnes sighed for your approbation when she took a pen and awkwardly scrawled over a sheet of paper. Near twenty times she began, but to a gentleman—and one she loved like William—what could she dare to say? Yet she had enough to tell, if shame had not interposed, or if remaining confidence in his affection had but encouraged her.

Overwhelmed by the first, and deprived of the last, her hand shook, her head drooped, and she dared not communicate what she knew must inevitably render her letter unpleasing, and still more depreciate her in

his regard, as the occasion of encumbrance, and of injury to his moral reputation.

Her free, her liberal, her venturous spirit subdued, intimidated by the force of affection, she only wrote—

> "Sir,—I am sorry you have so much to do, and should be ashamed if you put it off to write to me. I have not been at all well this winter. I never before passed such a one in all my life, and I hope you will never know such a one yourself in regard to not being happy. I should be sorry if you did—think I would rather go through it again myself than you should. I long for the summer, the fields are so green, and everything so pleasant at that time of the year. I always do long for the summer, but I think never so much in my life as for this that is coming; though sometimes I wish that last summer had never come. Perhaps you wish so too; and that this summer would not come either.
>
> "Hope you will excuse all faults, as I never learnt but one month.
>
> "Your obedient humble servant,
> "A. P."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Summer arrived, and lords and ladies, who had partaken of all the dissipation of the town, whom opera-houses, gaming-houses, and various other houses had detained whole nights from their peaceful home, were now poured forth from the metropolis, to imbibe the wholesome air of the farmer and peasant, and disseminate, in return, moral and religious principles.

Among the rest, Lord and Lady Bendham, strenuous opposers of vice in the poor, and gentle supporters of it in the rich, never played at cards, or had concerts on a Sunday, in the village, where the poor were spies—*he*, there, never gamed, nor drank, except in private, and *she* banished from her doors every woman of sullied character. Yet poverty and idiotism are not the same. The poor can hear, can talk, sometimes can reflect; servants will tell their equals how they live in town; listeners will smile and shake their heads; and thus hypocrisy, instead of cultivating, destroys every seed of moral virtue.

The arrival of Lord Bendham's family at Anfield announced to the village that the dean's would quickly follow. Rebecca's heart bounded with joy at the prospect. Poor Agnes felt a sinking, a foreboding tremor, that wholly interrupted the joy of *her* expectations. She had not heard from William for five tedious months. She did not know whether he loved or despised, whether he thought of or had forgotten her. Her reason argued against the hope that he loved her; yet hope still subsisted. She would not abandon herself to despair while there was doubt. She "had frequently been deceived by the appearance of circumstances; and

perhaps he might come all kindness—perhaps, even not like her the less for that indisposition which had changed her bloom to paleness, and the sparkling of her eyes to a pensive languor."

Henry's sensations, on his return to Anfield, were the self-same as Rebecca's were; sympathy in thought, sympathy in affection, sympathy in virtue made them so. As he approached near the little village, he felt more light than usual. He had committed no trespass there, dreaded no person's reproach or inquiries; but his arrival might prove, at least to one object, the cause of rejoicing.

William's sensations were the reverse of these. In spite of his ambition, and the flattering view of one day accomplishing all to which it aspired, he often, as they proceeded on their journey, envied the gaiety of Henry, and felt an inward monitor that told him "he must first act like Henry, to be as happy."

His intended marriage was still, to the families of both parties (except to the heads of the houses), a profound secret. Neither the servants, nor even Henry, had received the slightest intimation of the designed alliance; and this to William was matter of some comfort.

When men submit to act in contradiction to their principles, nothing is so precious as a secret. In their estimation, to have their conduct *known* is the essential mischief. While it is hid, they fancy the sin but half committed; and to the moiety of a crime they reconcile their feelings, till, in progression, the whole, when disclosed, appears trivial. He designed that Agnes should receive the news from himself by degrees, and in such a manner as to console her, or at least to silence her complaints; and with the wish to soften the regret which he still felt on the prudent necessity of yielding her wholly up when his marriage should take place, he promised to himself some intervening hours of private meetings, which he hoped would produce satiety.

While Henry flew to Mr. Rymer's house with a conscience clear, and a face enlightened with gladness—while he met Rebecca with open-hearted friendship and frankness, which charmed her soul to peaceful happiness—William skulked around the cottage of Agnes, dreading detection; and when, towards midnight, he found the means to obtain the company of the sad inhabitant, he grew so impatient at her tears and sobs, at the delicacy with which she withheld her caresses, that he burst into bitter upbraidings at her coyness, and at length (without discovering the cause of her peculiar agitation and reserve) abruptly left her vowing "never to see her more."

As he turned away, his heart even congratulated him "that he had made so discreet a use of his momentary disappointment, as thus to shake her off at once without further explanation or excuse."

She, ignorant and illiterate as she was, knew enough of her own heart to judge of his, and to know that such violent affections and expressions, above all, such a sudden, heart-breaking manner of departure, were not the effects of love, nor even of humanity. She felt herself debased by a ruffian—yet still, having loved him when she thought him a far different character, the blackest proof of the deception could not cause a sentiment formed whilst she was deceived.

She passed the remainder of the night in anguish: but with the cheerful morning some cheery thoughts consoled her. She thought "perhaps William by this time had found himself to blame; had conceived the cause of her grief and her distant behaviour, and had pitied her."

The next evening she waited, with anxious heart, for the signal that had called her out the foregoing night. In vain she watched, counted the hours, and the stars, and listened to the nightly stillness of the fields around: they were not disturbed by the tread of her lover. Daylight came; the sun rose in its splendour: William had not been near her, and it shone upon none so miserable as Agnes.

She now considered his word, “never to see her more,” as solemnly passed: she heard anew the impressive, the implacable tone in which the sentence was pronounced; and could look back on no late token of affection on which to found the slightest hope that he would recall it.

Still, reluctant to despair—in the extremity of grief, in the extremity of fear for an approaching crisis which must speedily arrive, she (after a few days had elapsed) trusted a neighbouring peasant with a letter to deliver to Mr. Norwynne in private.

This letter, unlike the last, was dictated without the hope to please: no pains were taken with the style, no care in the formation of the letters: the words flowed from necessity; strong necessity guided her hand.

> “Sir,—I beg your pardon—pray don’t forsake me all at once —see me one time more—I have something to tell you—it is what I dare tell nobody else—and what I am ashamed to tell you—yet pray give me a word of advice—what to do I don’t know—I then will part, if you please, never to trouble you, never any more—but hope to part friends—pray do, if you please—and see me one time more.
>
> “Your obedient,
> “A. P.”

These incorrect, inelegant lines produced this immediate reply

> “TO AGNES PRIMROSE.
>
> “I have often told you, that my honour is as dear to me as my life: my word is a part of that honour—you heard me say *I would never see you again*. I shall keep my word.”

CHAPTER XXV.

When the dean's family had been at Anfield about a month—one misty morning, such as portends a sultry day, as Henry was walking swiftly through a thick wood, on the skirts of the parish, he suddenly started on hearing a distant groan, expressive, as he thought, both of bodily and mental pain. He stopped to hear it repeated, that he might pursue the sound. He heard it again; and though now but in murmurs, yet, as the tone implied excessive grief, he directed his course to that part of the wood from which it came.

As he advanced, in spite of the thick fog, he discerned the appearance of a female stealing away on his approach. His eye was fixed on this object; and regardless where he placed his feet, he soon shrunk back with horror, on perceiving they had nearly trod upon a new-born infant, lying on the ground!—a lovely male child, entered on a world where not one preparation had been made to receive him.

"Ah!" cried Henry, forgetting the person who had fled, and with a smile of compassion on the helpless infant, "I am glad I have found you—you give more joy to me than you have done to your hapless parents. Poor dear," continued he, while he took off his coat to wrap it in, "I will take care of you while I live—I will beg for you, rather than you shall want; but first, I will carry you to those who can, at present, do more for you than myself."

Thus Henry said and thought, while he enclosed the child carefully in his coat, and took it in his arms. But proceeding to walk his way with it, an unlucky query struck him, *where he should go*.

“I must not take it to the dean’s,” he cried, “because Lady Clementina will suspect it is not nobly, and my uncle will suspect it is not lawfully, born. Nor must I take it to Lord Bendham’s for the self-same reason, though, could it call Lady Bendham mother, this whole village, nay, the whole country round, would ring with rejoicings for its birth. How strange!” continued he, “that we should make so little of human creatures, that one sent among us, wholly independent of his own high value, becomes a curse instead of a blessing by the mere accident of circumstances.”

He now, after walking out of the wood, peeped through the folds of his coat to look again at his charge. He started, turned pale, and trembled to behold what, in the surprise of first seeing the child, had escaped his observation. Around its little throat was a cord entwined by a slipping noose, and drawn half way—as if the trembling hand of the murderer had revolted from its dreadful office, and he or she had heft the infant to pine away in nakedness and hunger, rather than see it die.

Again Henry wished himself joy of the treasure he had found; and more fervently than before; for he had not only preserved one fellow-creature from death, but another from murder.

Once more he looked at his charge, and was transported to observe, upon its serene brow and sleepy eye, no traces of the dangers it had passed—no trait of shame either for itself or its parents—no discomposure at the unwelcome reception it was likely to encounter from a proud world! He now slipped the fatal string from its neck; and by this affectionate disturbance causing the child to cry, he ran (but he scarcely knew whither) to convey it to a better nurse.

He at length found himself at the door of his dear Rebecca—for so very happy Henry felt at the good luck which had befallen him, that he longed to bestow a part of the blessing upon her he loved.

He sent for her privately out of the house to speak to him. When she came, “Rebecca,” said he (looking around that no one observed him), “Rebecca, I have brought you something you will like.”

“What is it?” she asked.

“You know, Rebecca, that you love deserted birds, strayed kittens, and motherless lambs. I have brought something more pitiable than any of these. Go, get a cap and a little gown, and then I will give it you.”

“A gown!” exclaimed Rebecca. “If you have brought me a monkey, much as I should esteem any present from *you*, indeed I cannot touch it.”

“A monkey!” repeated Henry, almost in anger: then changing the tone of his voice, exclaimed in triumph,

“It is a child!”

On this he gave it a gentle pinch, that its cry might confirm the pleasing truth he spoke.

“A child!” repeated Rebecca in amaze.

“Yes, and indeed I found it.”

“Found it!”

“Indeed I did. The mother, I fear, had just forsaken it.”

“Inhuman creature!”

“Nay, hold, Rebecca! I am sure you will pity her when you see her child —you then will know she must have loved it—and you will consider how much she certainly had suffered before she left it to perish in a wood.”

“Cruel!” once more exclaimed Rebecca.

“Oh! Rebecca, perhaps, had she possessed a home of her own she would have given it the best place in it; had she possessed money, she would have dressed it with the nicest care; or had she been accustomed to

disgrace, she would have gloried in calling it hers! But now, as it is, it is sent to us—to you and me, Rebecca—to take care of."

Rebecca, soothed by Henry's compassionate eloquence, held out her arms and received the important parcel; and, as she kindly looked in upon the little stranger,

"Now, are not you much obliged to me," said Henry, "for having brought it to you? I know no one but yourself to whom I would have trusted it with pleasure."

"Much obliged to you," repeated Rebecca, with a very serious face, "if I did but know what to do with it—where to put it—where to hide it from my father and sisters."

"Oh! anywhere," returned Henry. "It is very good—it will not cry. Besides, in one of the distant, unfrequented rooms of your old abbey, through the thick walls and long gallery, an infant's cry cannot pass. Yet, pray be cautious how you conceal it; for if it should be discovered by your father or sisters, they will take it from you, prosecute the wretched mother, and send the child to the parish."

"I will do all I can to prevent them," said Rebecca; "and I think I call to mind a part of the house where it *must* be safe. I know, too, I can take milk from the dairy, and bread from the pantry, without their being missed, or my father much the poorer. But if—" That instant they were interrupted by the appearance of the stern curate at a little distance. Henry was obliged to run swiftly away, while Rebecca returned by stealth into the house with her innocent burthen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

There is a word in the vocabulary more bitter, more direful in its import, than all the rest. Reader, if poverty, if disgrace, if bodily pain, even if slighted love be your unhappy fate, kneel and bless Heaven for its beneficent influence, so that you are not tortured with the anguish of—*remorse*.

Deep contrition for past offences had long been the punishment of unhappy Agnes; but, till the day she brought her child into the world, *remorse* had been averted. From that day, life became an insupportable load, for all reflection was torture! To think, merely to think, was to suffer excruciating agony; yet, never before was *thought* so intrusive—it haunted her in every spot, in all discourse or company: sleep was no shelter—she never slept but her racking dreams told her—"she had slain her infant."

They presented to her view the naked innocent whom she had longed to press to her bosom, while she lifted up her hand against its life. They laid before her the piteous babe whom her eyeballs strained to behold once more, while her feet hurried her away for ever.

Often had Agnes, by the winter's fire, listened to tales of ghosts—of the unceasing sting of a guilty conscience; often had she shuddered at the recital of murders; often had she wept over the story of the innocent put to death, and stood aghast that the human mind could premeditate the heinous crime of assassination.

From the tenderest passion the most savage impulse may arise: in the deep recesses of fondness, sometimes is implanted the root of cruelty; and from loving William with unbounded lawless affection, she found

herself depraved so as to become the very object which could most of all excite her own horror!

Still, at delirious intervals, that passion, which, like a fatal talisman, had enchanted her whole soul, held out the delusive prospect that "William might yet relent;" for, though she had for ever discarded the hope of peace, she could not force herself to think but that, again blest with his society, she should, at least for the time that he was present with her, taste the sweet cup of "forgetfulness of the past," for which she so ardently thirsted.

"Should he return to me," she thought in those paroxysms of delusion, "I would to *him* unbosom all my guilt; and as a remote, a kind of unwary accomplice in my crime, his sense, his arguments, ever ready in making light of my sins, might afford a respite to my troubled conscience."

While thus she unwittingly thought, and sometimes watched through the night, starting with convulsed rapture at every sound, because it might possibly be the harbinger of him, *he* was busied in carefully looking over marriage articles, fixing the place of residence with his destined bride, or making love to her in formal process. Yet, Agnes, vaunt!—he sometimes thought on thee—he could not witness the folly, the weakness, the vanity, the selfishness of his future wife, without frequently comparing her with thee. When equivocal words and prevaricating sentences fell from her lips, he remembered with a sigh thy candour—that open sincerity which dwelt upon thy tongue, and seemed to vie with thy undisguised features, to charm the listener even beyond the spectator. While Miss Sedgeley eagerly grasped at all the gifts he offered, he could not but call to mind "that Agnes's declining hand was always closed, and her looks forbidding, every time he proffered such disrespectful tokens of his love." He recollected the softness which beamed from her eyes, the blush on her face at his approach, while he could never discern one glance of tenderness from the niece of Lord Bendham: and the artificial bloom on her cheeks was nearly as disgusting as the ill-conducted artifice with which she attempted gentleness and love.

But all these impediments were only observed as trials of his fortitude—his prudence could overcome his aversion, and thus he valued himself upon his manly firmness.

'Twas now, that William being rid, by the peevishness of Agnes, most honourably of all future ties to her, and the day of his marriage with Miss Sedgeley being fixed, that Henry, with the rest of the house, learnt what to them was news. The first dart of Henry's eye upon his cousin, when, in his presence, he was told of the intended union, caused a reddening on the face of the latter: he always fancied Henry saw his thoughts; and he knew that Henry in return would give him *his*. On the present occasion, no sooner were they alone, and Henry began to utter them, than William charged him—"Not to dare to proceed; for that, too long accustomed to trifle, the time was come when serious matters could alone employ his time; and when men of approved sense must take place of friends and confidants like him."

Henry replied, "The love, the sincerity of friends, I thought, were their best qualities: these I possess."

"But you do not possess knowledge."

"If that be knowledge which has of late estranged you from all who bear you a sincere affection; which imprints every day more and more upon your features the marks of gloomy inquietude; am I not happier in my ignorance?"

"Do not torment me with your ineffectual reasoning."

"I called at the cottage of poor Agnes the other day," returned Henry: "her father and mother were taking their homely meal alone; and when I asked for their daughter, they wept and said—Agnes was not the girl she had been."

William cast his eyes on the floor.

Henry proceeded—"They said a sickness, which they feared would bring her to the grave, had preyed upon her for some time past. They had procured a doctor: but no remedy was found, and they feared the worst."

"What worst!" cried William (now recovered from the effect of the sudden intelligence, and attempting a smile). "Do they think she will die? And do you think it will be for love? We do not hear of these deaths often, Henry."

"And if *she* die, who will hear of *that*? No one but those interested to conceal the cause: and thus it is, that dying for love becomes a phenomenon."

Henry would have pursued the discourse farther; but William, impatient on all disputes, except where his argument was the better one, retired from the controversy, crying out, "I know my duty, and want no instructor."

It would be unjust to William to say he did not feel for this reported illness of Agnes—he felt, during that whole evening, and part of the next morning—but business, pleasures, new occupations, and new schemes of future success, crowded to dissipate all unwelcome reflections; and he trusted to her youth, her health, her animal spirits, and, above all, to the folly of the gossips' story of *dying for love*, as a surety for her life, and a safeguard for his conscience.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The child of William and Agnes was secreted, by Rebecca, in a distant chamber belonging to the dreary parsonage, near to which scarcely any part of the family ever went. There she administered to all its wants, visited it every hour of the day, and at intervals during the night viewed almost with the joy of a mother its health, its promised life—and in a short the found she loved her little gift better than anything on earth, except the giver.

Henry called the next morning, and the next, and many succeeding times, in hopes of an opportunity to speak alone with Rebecca, to inquire concerning her charge, and consult when and how he could privately relieve her from her trust; as he now meant to procure a nurse for wages. In vain he called or lurked around the house; for near five weeks all the conversation he could obtain with her was in the company of her sisters, who, beginning to observe his preference, his marked attention to her, and the languid, half-smothered transport with which she received it, indulged their envy and resentment at the contempt shown to their charms, by watching her steps when he was away, and her every look and whisper while he was present.

For five weeks, then, he was continually thwarted in his expectation of meeting her alone: and at the end of that period the whole design he had to accomplish by such a meeting was rendered abortive.

Though Rebecca had with strictest caution locked the door of the room in which the child was hid, and covered each crevice, and every aperture through which sound might more easily proceed; though she had surrounded the infant's head with pillows, to obstruct all noise from his

crying; yet one unlucky night, the strength of his voice increasing with his age, he was heard by the maid, who slept the nearest to that part of the house.

Not meaning to injure her young mistress, the servant next morning simply related to the family what sounds had struck her ear during the night, and whence they proceeded. At first she was ridiculed "for supposing herself awake when in reality she must be dreaming." But steadfastly persisting in what she had said, and Rebecca's blushes, confusion, and eagerness to prove the maid mistaken, giving suspicion to her charitable sisters, they watched her the very next time she went by stealth to supply the office of a mother; and breaking abruptly on her while feeding and caressing the infant, they instantly concluded it was her *own*; seized it, and, in spite of her entreaties, carried it down to their father.

That account which Henry had given Rebecca "of his having found the child," and which her own sincerity, joined to the faith she had in his word, made her receive as truth, she now felt would be heard by the present auditors with contempt, even with indignation, as a falsehood. Her affright is easier conceived than described.

Accused, and forced by her sisters along with the child before the curate, his attention to their representation, his crimson face, knit brow, and thundering voice, struck with terror her very soul: innocence is not always a protection against fear—sometimes less bold than guilt.

In her father and sisters she saw, she knew the suspicions, partial, cruel, boisterous natures by whom she was to be judged; and timid, gentle, oppressed, she fell trembling on her knees, and could only articulate,

"Forgive me."

The curate would not listen to this supplication till she had replied to this question, "Whose child is this?"

She replied, "I do not know."

Questioned louder, and with more violence still, “how the child came there, wherefore her affection for it, and whose it was,” she felt the improbability of the truth still more forcibly than before, and dreaded some immediate peril from her father’s rage, should she dare to relate an apparent lie. She paused to think upon a more probable tale than the real one; and as she hesitated, shook in every limb—while her father exclaimed,

“I understand the cause of this terror; it confirms your sisters’ fears, and your own shame. From your infancy I have predicted that some fatal catastrophe would befall you. I never loved you like my other children—I never had the cause: you were always unlike the rest—and I knew your fate would be calamitous; but the very worst of my forebodings did not come to this—so young, so guilty, and so artful! Tell me this instant, are you married?”

Rebecca answered, “No.”

The sisters lifted up their hands!

The father continued—“Vile creature, I thought as much. Still I will know the father of this child.”

She cast up her eyes to Heaven, and firmly vowed she “did not know herself—nor who the mother was.”

“This is not to be borne!” exclaimed the curate in fury. “Persist in this, and you shall never see my face again. Both your child and you I’ll turn out of my house instantly, unless you confess your crime, and own the father.”

Curious to know this secret, the sisters went up to Rebecca with seeming kindness, and “conjured her to spare her father still greater grief, and her own and her child’s public infamy, by acknowledging herself its mother, and naming the man who had undone her.”

Emboldened by this insult from her own sex, Rebecca now began to declare the simple truth. But no sooner had she said that "the child was presented to her care by a young man who had found it," than her sisters burst into laughter, and her father into redoubled rage.

Once more the women offered their advice—"to confess and be forgiven."

Once more the father raved.

Beguiled by solicitations, and terrified by threats, like women formerly accused of witchcraft, and other wretches put to the torture, she thought her present sufferings worse than any that could possibly succeed; and felt inclined to confess a falsehood, at which her virtue shrunk, to obtain a momentary respite from reproach; she felt inclined to take the mother's share of the infant, but was at a loss to whom to give the father's. She thought that Henry had entailed on himself the best right to the charge; but she loved him, and could not bear the thought of accusing him falsely.

While, with agitation in the extreme, she thus deliberated, the proposition again was put,

"Whether she would trust to the mercy of her father by confessing, or draw down his immediate vengeance by denying her guilt?"

She made choice of the former—and with tears and sobs "owned herself the mother of the boy."

But still—"Who is the father?"

Again she shrunk from the question, and fervently implored "to be spared on that point."

Her petition was rejected with vehemence; and the curate's rage increased till she acknowledged,

"Henry was the father."

“I thought so,” exclaimed all her sisters at the same time.

“Villain!” cried the curate. “The dean shall know, before this hour is expired, the baseness of the nephew whom he supports upon charity; he shall know the misery, the grief, the shame he has brought on me, and how unworthy he is of his protection.”

“Oh! have mercy on him!” cried Rebecca, as she still knelt to her father: “do not ruin him with his uncle, for he is the best of human beings.”

“Ay, ay, we always saw how much she loved him,” cried her sisters.

“Wicked, unfortunate girl!” said the clergyman (his rage now subsiding, and tears supplying its place), “you have brought a scandal upon us all: your sisters’ reputation will be stamped with the colour of yours—my good name will suffer: but that is trivial—your soul is lost to virtue, to religion, to shame—”

“No, *indeed*!” cried Rebecca: “if you will but believe me.”

“Do not I believe you? Have you not confessed?”

“You will not pretend to unsay what you have said,” cried her eldest sister: “that would be making things worse.”

“Go, go out of my sight!” said her father. “Take your child with you to your chamber, and never let me see either of you again. I do not turn you out of my doors to-day, because I gave you my word I would not, if you revealed your shame; but by to-morrow I will provide some place for your reception, where neither I, nor any of your relations, shall ever see or hear of you again.”

Rebecca made an effort to cling around her father, and once more to declare her innocence: but her sisters interposed, and she was taken, with her reputed son, to the chamber where the curate had sentenced her to remain, till she quitted his house for ever.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The curate, in the disorder of his mind, scarcely felt the ground he trod as he hastened to the dean's house to complain of his wrongs. His name procured him immediate admittance into the library, and the moment the dean appeared the curate burst into tears. The cause being required of such "very singular marks of grief," Mr. Rymer described himself "as having been a few moments ago the happiest of parents; but that his peace and that of his whole family had been destroyed by Mr. Henry Norwynne, the dean's nephew."

He now entered into a minute recital of Henry's frequent visits there, and of all which had occurred in his house that morning, from the suspicion that a child was concealed under his roof, to the confession made by his youngest daughter of her fall from virtue, and of her betrayer's name.

The dean was astonished, shocked, and roused to anger: he vented reproaches and menaces on his nephew; and "blessing himself in a virtuous son, whose wisdom and counsel were his only solace in every care," sent for William to communicate with him on this unhappy subject.

William came, all obedience, and heard with marks of amazement and indignation the account of such black villainy! In perfect sympathy with Mr. Rymer and his father, he allowed "no punishment could be too great for the seducer of innocence, the selfish invader of a whole family's repose."

Nor did William here speak what he did not think—he merely forgot his own conduct; or if he did recall it to his mind, it was with some fair interpretations in his own behalf; such as self-love ever supplies to those who wish to cheat intruding conscience.

Young Henry being sent for to appear before this triumvirate, he came with a light step and a cheerful face. But, on the charge against him being exhibited, his countenance changed—yet only to the expression of surprise! He boldly asserted his innocence, plainly told the real fact, and with a deportment so perfectly unembarrassed, that nothing but the asseverations of the curate, "that his daughter had confessed the whole," could have rendered the story Henry told suspected; although some of the incidents he related were of no common kind. But Mr. Rymer's charge was an objection to his veracity too potent to be overcome; and the dean exclaimed in anger—

"We want not your avowal of your guilt—the mother's evidence is testimony sufficient."

"The virtuous Rebecca is not a mother," said Henry, with firmness.

William here, like Rebecca's sisters, took Henry aside, and warned him not to "add to his offence by denying what was proved against him."

But Henry's spirit was too manly, his affection too sincere, not to vindicate the chastity of her he loved, even at his own peril. He again and again protested "she was virtuous."

"Let her instantly be sent for," said the dean, "and this madman confronted with her." Then adding, that as he wished everything might be conducted with secrecy, he would not employ his clerk on the unhappy occasion: he desired William to draw up the form of an oath, which he would administer as soon as she arrived.

A man and horse were immediately despatched to bring Rebecca: William drew up an affidavit as his father had directed him—in *Rebecca's name solemnly protesting she was a mother, and Henry the*

father of her child. And now, the dean, suppressing till she came the warmth of his displeasure, spoke thus calmly to Henry:—

“Even supposing that your improbable tale of having found this child, and all your declarations in respect to it were true, still you would be greatly criminal. What plea can you make for not having immediately revealed the circumstance to me or some other proper person, that the real mother might have been detected and punished for her design of murder?”

“In that, perhaps, I was to blame,” returned Henry: “but whoever the mother was, I pitied her.”

“Compassion on such an occasion was unplaced,” said the dean.

“Was I wrong, sir, to pity the child?”

“No.”

“Then how could I feel for *that*, and yet divest myself of all feeling for its mother?”

“Its mother!” exclaimed William, in anger: “she ought to have been immediately pursued, apprehended, and committed to prison.”

“It struck me, cousin William,” replied Henry, “that the father was more deserving of a prison: the poor woman had abandoned only one—the man, in all likelihood, had forsaken *two* pitiable creatures.”

William was pouring execrations “on the villain if such there could be,” when Rebecca was announced.

Her eyes were half closed with weeping; deep confusion overspread her face; and her tottering limbs could hardly support her to the awful chamber where the dean, her father, and William sat in judgment, whilst her beloved Henry stood arraigned as a culprit, by her false evidence.

Upon her entrance, her father first addressed her, and said in a stern, threatening, yet feeling tone, “Unhappy girl, answer me before all present—Have you, or have you not, owned yourself a mother?”

She replied, stealing a fearful look at Henry, “I have.”

“And have you not,” asked the dean, “owned that Henry Norwynne is the father of your child?”

She seemed as if she wished to expostulate.

The curate raised his voice—“Have you or have you not?”

“I have,” she faintly replied.

“Then here,” cried the dean to William, “read that paper to her, and take the Bible.”

William read the paper, which in her name declared a momentous falsehood: he then held the book in form, while she looked like one distracted—wrung her hands, and was near sinking to the earth.

At the moment when the book was lifted up to her lips to kiss, Henry rushed to her—“Stop!” he cried, “Rebecca! do not wound your future peace. I plainly see under what prejudices you have been accused, under what fears you have fallen. But do not be terrified into the commission of a crime which hereafter will distract your delicate conscience. My requesting you of your father for my wife will satisfy his scruples, prevent your oath—and here I make the demand.”

“He at length confesses! Surprising audacity! Complicated villainy!” exclaimed the dean; then added, “Henry Norwynne, your first guilt is so enormous; your second, in steadfastly denying it, so base, this last conduct so audacious; that from the present hour you must never dare to call me relation, or to consider my house as your home.”

William, in unison with his father, exclaimed, “Indeed, Henry, your actions merit this punishment.”

Henry answered with firmness, “Inflict what punishment you please.”

“With the dean’s permission, then,” said the curate, “you must marry my daughter.”

Henry started—“Do you pronounce that as a punishment? It would be the greatest blessing Providence could bestow. But how are we to live? My uncle is too much offended ever to be my friend again; and in this country, persons of a certain class are so educated, they cannot exist without the assistance, or what is called the patronage, of others: when that is withheld, they steal or starve. Heaven protect Rebecca from such misfortune! Sir (to the curate), do you but consent to support her only a year or two longer, and in that time I will learn some occupation, that shall raise me to the eminence of maintaining both her and myself without one obligation, or one inconvenience, to a single being.”

Rebecca exclaimed, “Oh! you have saved me from such a weight of sin, that my future life would be too happy passed as your slave.”

“No, my dear Rebecca, return to your father’s house, return to slavery but for a few years more, and the rest of your life I will make free.”

“And can you forgive me?”

“I can love you; and in that is comprised everything that is kind.”

The curate, who, bating a few passions and a few prejudices, was a man of some worth and feeling, and felt, in the midst of her distress, though the result of supposed crimes, that he loved this neglected daughter better than he had before conceived; and he now agreed “to take her home for a time, provided she were relieved from the child, and the matter so hushed up, that it might draw no imputation upon the characters of his other daughters.”

The dean did not degrade his consequence by consultations of this nature: but, having penetrated (as he imagined) into the very bottom of this intricate story, and issued his mandate against Henry, as a mark

that he took no farther concern in the matter, he proudly walked out of the room without uttering another word.

William as proudly and silently followed.

The curate was inclined to adopt the manners of such great examples: but self-interest, some affection to Rebecca, and concern for the character of his family, made him wish to talk a little more with Henry, who new repeated what he had said respecting his marriage with Rebecca, and promised “to come the very next day in secret, and deliver her from the care of the infant, and the suspicion that would attend her nursing it.”

“But, above all,” said the curate, “procure your uncle’s pardon; for without that, without his protection, or the protection of some other rich man, to marry, to obey God’s ordinance, *increase and multiply* is to want food for yourselves and your offspring.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

Though this unfortunate occurrence in the curate's family was, according to his own phrase, "to be hushed up," yet certain persons of his, of the dean's, and of Lord Bendham's house, immediately heard and talked of it. Among these, Lady Bendham was most of all shocked and offended: she said she "never could bear to hear Mr. Rymer either pray or preach again; he had not conducted himself with proper dignity either as a clergyman or a father; he should have imitated the dean's example in respect to Henry, and have turned his daughter out of doors."

Lord Bendham was less severe on the seduced, but had no mercy on the seducer—"a vicious youth, without one accomplishment to endear vice." For vice, Lord Bendham thought (with certain philosophers), might be most exquisitely pleasing, in a pleasing garb. "But this youth sinned without elegance, without one particle of wit, or an atom of good breeding."

Lady Clementina would not permit the subject to be mentioned a second time in her hearing—extreme delicacy in woman she knew was bewitching; and the delicacy she displayed on this occasion went so far that she "could not even intercede with the dean to forgive his nephew, because the topic was too gross for her lips to name even in the ear of her husband."

Miss Sedgeley, though on the very eve of her bridal day with William, felt so tender a regard for Henry, that often she thought Rebecca happier in disgrace and poverty, blest with the love of him, than she was likely to be in the possession of friends and fortune with his cousin.

Had Henry been of a nature to suspect others of evil, or had he felt a confidence in his own worth, such a passion as this young woman's would soon have disclosed its existence: but he, regardless of any attractions of Miss Sedgeley, equally supposed he had none in her eyes; and thus, fortunately for the peace of all parties, this prepossession ever remained a secret except to herself.

So little did William conceive that his clownish cousin could rival him in the affections of a woman of fashion, that he even slightly solicited his father "that Henry might not be banished from the house, at least till after the following day, when the great festival of his marriage was to be celebrated."

But the dean refused, and reminded his son, "that he was bound both by his moral and religious character, in the eyes of God, and still more, in the eyes of men, to show lasting resentment of iniquity like his."

William acquiesced, and immediately delivered to his cousin the dean's "wishes for his amendment," and a letter of recommendation procured from Lord Bendham, to introduce him on board a man-of-war; where, he was told, "he might hope to meet with preferment, according to his merit, as a sailor and a gentleman."

Henry pressed William's hand on parting, wished him happy in his marriage, and supplicated, as the only favour he would implore, an interview with his uncle, to thank him for all his former kindness, and to see him for the last time.

William repeated this petition to his father, but with so little energy, that the dean did not grant it. He felt himself, he said, compelled to resent that reprobate character in which Henry had appeared; and he feared "lest the remembrance of his last parting from his brother might, on taking a formal leave of that brother's son, reduce him to some tokens of weakness, that would ill become his dignity and just displeasure."

He sent him his blessing, with money to convey him to the ship, and Henry quitted his uncle's house in a flood of tears, to seek first a new protectress for his little foundling, and then to seek his fortune.

CHAPTER XXX.

The wedding-day of Mr. William Norwynne with Miss Caroline Sedgeley arrived; and, on that day, the bells of every parish surrounding that in which they lived joined with their own, in celebration of the blissful union. Flowers were strewn before the new-married pair, and favours and ale made many a heart more gladsome than that of either bridegroom or bride.

Upon this day of ringing and rejoicing the bells were not muffled, nor was conversation on the subject withheld from the ear of Agnes! She heard like her neighbours; and sitting on the side of her bed in her little chamber, suffered, under the cottage roof, as much affliction as ever visited a palace.

Tyrants, who have embrued their hands in the blood of myriads of their fellow-creatures, can call their murders "religion, justice, attention to the good of mankind." Poor Agnes knew no sophistry to calm *her* sense of guilt: she felt herself a harlot and a murderer; a slighted, a deserted wretch, bereft of all she loved in this world, all she could hope for in the next.

She complained bitterly of illness, nor could the entreaties of her father and mother prevail on her to share in the sports of this general holiday. As none of her humble visitors suspected the cause of her more than ordinary indisposition, they endeavoured to divert it with an account of everything they had seen at church—"what the bride wore; how joyful the bridegroom looked;"—and all the seeming signs of that complete happiness which they conceived was for certain tasted.

Agnes, who, before this event, had at moments suppressed the agonising sting of self-condemnation in the faint prospect of her lover one day restored, on this memorable occasion lost every glimpse of hope, and was weighed to the earth with an accumulation of despair.

Where is the degree in which the sinner stops? Unhappy Agnes! the first time you permitted indecorous familiarity from a man who made you no promise, who gave you no hope of becoming his wife, who professed nothing beyond those fervent, though slender, affections which attach the rake to the wanton; the first time you interpreted his kind looks and ardent prayers into tenderness and constancy; the first time you descended from the character of purity, you rushed imperceptibly on the blackest crimes. The more sincerely you loved, the more you plunged in danger: from one ungoverned passion proceeded a second and a third. In the fervency of affection you yielded up your virtue! In the excess of fear, you stained your conscience by the intended murder of your child! And now, in the violence of grief, you meditate—what?—to put an end to your existence by your own hand!

After casting her thoughts around, anxious to find some bud of comfort on which to fix her longing eye; she beheld, in the total loss of William, nothing but a wide waste, an extensive plain of anguish. "How am I to be sustained through this dreary journey of life?" she exclaimed. Upon this question she felt, more poignantly than ever, her loss of innocence: innocence would have been her support, but, in place of this best prop to the afflicted, guilt flashed on her memory every time she flew for aid to reflection.

At length, from horrible rumination, a momentary alleviation came: "but one more step in wickedness," she triumphantly said, "and all my shame, all my sufferings are over." She congratulated herself upon the lucky thought; when, but an instant after, the tears trickled down her face for the sorrow her death, her sinful death, would bring to her poor and

beloved parents. She then thought upon the probability of a sigh it might draw from William; and, the pride, the pleasure of that little tribute, counterpoised every struggle on the side of life.

As she saw the sun decline, “When you rise again,” she thought, “when you peep bright to-morrow morning into this little room to call me up, I shall not be here to open my eyes upon a hateful day—I shall no more regret that you have waked me!—I shall be sound asleep, never to wake again in this wretched world—not even the voice of William would then awake me.”

While she found herself resolved, and evening just come on, she hurried out of the house, and hastened to the fatal wood; the scene of her dishonour—the scene of intended murder—and now the meditated scene of suicide.

As she walked along between the close-set tree, she saw, at a little distance, the spot where William first made love to her; and where at every appointment he used to wait her coming. She darted her eye away from this place with horror; but, after a few moments of emotion, she walked slowly up to it—shed tears, and pressed with her trembling lips that tree, against which she was accustomed to lean while he talked with her. She felt an inclination to make this the spot to die in; but her preconcerted, and the less frightful death, of leaping into a pool on the other side of the wood, induced her to go onwards.

Presently, she came near the place where *her* child, and *William’s*, was exposed to perish. Here she started with a sense of the most atrocious guilt; and her whole frame shook with the dread of an approaching, an omnipotent Judge, to sentence her for murder.

She halted, appalled, aghast, undetermined whether to exist longer beneath the pressure of a criminal conscience, or die that very hour, and meet her final condemnation.

She proceeded a few steps farther, and beheld the very ivy-bush close to which her infant lay when she left him exposed; and now, from this minute recollection, all the mother rising in her soul, she saw, as it were, her babe again in its deserted state; and bursting into tears of bitterest contrition and compassion, she cried—"As I was merciless to *thee*, my child, thy father has been pitiless to *me*! As I abandoned *thee* to die with cold and hunger, he has forsaken, and has driven *me* to die by self-slaughter."

She now fixed her eager eyes on the distant pond, and walked more nimbly than before, to rid herself of her agonising sensations.

Just as she had nearly reached the wished-for brink, she heard a footstep, and saw, by the glimmering of a clouded moon, a man approaching. She turned out of her path, for fear her intentions should be guessed at, and opposed; but still, as she walked another way, her eye was wishfully bent towards the water that was to obliterate her love and her remorse—obliterate, forever, William and his child.

It was now that Henry, who, to prevent scandal, had stolen at that still hour of night to rid the curate of the incumbrance so irksome to him, and take the foundling to a woman whom he had hired for the charge—it was now that Henry came up, with the child of Agnes in his arms, carefully covered all over from the night's dew.

"Agnes, is it you?" cried Henry, at a little distance. "Where are you going thus late?"

"Home, sir," said she, and rushed among the trees.

"Stop, Agnes," he cried; "I want to bid you farewell; to-morrow I am going to leave this part of the country for a long time; so God bless you, Agnes."

Saying this, he stretched out his arm to shake her by the hand.

Her poor heart, trusting that his blessing, for want of more potent offerings, might, perhaps, at this tremendous crisis ascend to Heaven in her behalf, she stopped, returned, and put out her hand to take his.

“Softly!” said he; “don’t wake my child; this spot has been a place of danger to him, for underneath this very ivy-bush it was that I found him.”

“Found what?” cried Agnes, with a voice elevated to a tremulous scream.

“I will not tell you the story,” replied Henry; “for no one I have ever yet told of it would believe me.”

“I will believe you—I will believe you,” she repeated with tones yet more impressive.

“Why, then,” said Henry, “only five weeks ago—”

“Ah!” shrieked Agnes.

“What do you mean?” said Henry.

“Go on,” she articulated, in the same voice.

“Why, then, as I was passing this very place, I wish I may never speak truth again, if I did not find” (here he pulled aside the warm rug in which the infant was wrapped) “this beautiful child.”

“With a cord?—”

“A cord was round its neck.”

“’Tis mine—the child is mine—’tis mine—my child—I am the mother and the murderer—I fixed the cord, while the ground shook under me—while flashes of fire darted before my eyes!—while my heart was bursting with despair and horror! But I stopped short—I did not draw the noose—I had a moment of strength, and I ran away. I left him living—he is living now—escaped from my hands—and I am no longer ashamed, but

overcome with joy that he is mine! I bless you, my dear, my dear, for saving his life—for giving him to me again—for preserving *my* life, as well as my child's."

Here she took her infant, pressed it to her lips and to her bosom; then bent to the ground, clasped Henry's knees, and wept upon his feet.

He could not for a moment doubt the truth of what she said; her powerful yet broken accents, her convulsive embraces of the child, even more than her declaration, convinced him she was its mother.

"Good Heaven!" cried Henry, "and this is my cousin William's child!"

"But your cousin does not know it," said she; "I never told him—he was not kind enough to embolden me; therefore do not blame *him* for *my* sin; he did not know of my wicked designs—he did not encourage me—"

"But he forsook you, Agnes."

"He never said he would not. He always told me he could not marry me."

"Did he tell you so at his first private meeting?"

"No."

"Nor at the second?"

"No; nor yet at the third."

"When was it he told you so?"

"I forget the exact time; but I remember it was on that very evening when I confessed to him—"

"What?"

"That he had won my heart."

"Why did you confess it?"

“Because he asked me and said it would make him happy if I would say so.”

“Cruel! dishonourable!”

“Nay, do not blame him; he cannot help *not* loving me, no more than I can help *loving* him.”

Henry rubbed his eyes.

“Bless me, you weep! I always heard that you were brought up in a savage country; but I suppose it is a mistake; it was your cousin William.”

“Will not you apply to him for the support of your child?” asked Henry.

“If I thought he would not be angry.”

“Angry! I will write to him on the subject if you will give me leave.”

“But do not say it is by my desire. Do not say I wish to trouble him. I would sooner beg than be a trouble to him.”

“Why are you so delicate?”

“It is for my own sake; I wish him not to hate me.”

“Then, thus you may secure his respect. I will write to him, and let him know all the circumstances of your case. I will plead for his compassion on his child, but assure him that no conduct of his will ever induce you to declare (except only to me, who knew of your previous acquaintance) who is the father.”

To this she consented; but when Henry offered to take from her the infant, and carry him to the nurse he had engaged, to this she would not consent.

“Do you mean, then, to acknowledge him yours?” Henry asked.

“Nothing shall force me to part from him again. I will keep him, and let my neighbours judge of me as they please.”

Here Henry caught at a hope he feared to name before. “You will then have no objection,” said he, “to clear an unhappy girl to a few friends, with whom her character has suffered by becoming, at my request, his nurse?”

“I will clear any one, so that I do not accuse the father.”

“You give me leave, then, in your name, to tell the whole story to some particular friends, my cousin William’s part in it alone excepted?”

“I do.”

Henry now exclaimed, “God bless you!” with greater fervour than when he spoke it before; and he now hoped the night was nearly gone, that the time might be so much the shorter before Rebecca should be reinstated in the esteem of her father, and of all those who had misjudged her.

“God bless *you*!” said Agnes, still more fervently, as she walked with unguided steps towards her home; for her eyes never wandered from the precious object which caused her unexpected return.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Henry rose early in the morning, and flew to the curate's house, with more than even his usual thirst of justice, to clear injured innocence, to redeem from shame her whom he loved. With eager haste he told that he had found the mother, whose fall from virtue Rebecca, overcome by confusion and threats, had taken on herself.

Rebecca rejoiced, but her sisters shook their heads, and even the father seemed to doubt.

Confident in the truth of his story, Henry persisted so boldly in his affirmations, that if Mr. Rymer did not entirely believe what he said, he secretly hoped that the dean and other people might; therefore he began to imagine he could possibly cast from *his* family the present stigma, whether or no it belonged to any other.

No sooner was Henry gone than Mr. Rymer waited on the dean to report what he had heard; and he frankly attributed his daughter's false confession to the compulsive methods he had adopted in charging her with the offence. Upon this statement, Henry's love to her was also a solution of his seemingly inconsistent conduct on that singular occasion.

The dean immediately said, "I will put the matter beyond all doubt; for I will this moment send for the present reputed mother; and if she acknowledges the child, I will instantly commit her to prison for the attempt of putting it to death."

The curate applauded the dean's sagacity; a warrant was issued, and Agnes brought prisoner before the grandfather of her child.

She appeared astonished at the peril in which she found herself. Confused, also, with a thousand inexpressible sensations which the dean's presence inspired, she seemed to prevaricate in all she uttered. Accused of this prevarication, she was still more disconcerted; said, and unsaid; confessed herself the mother of the infant, but declared she did not know, then owned she *did* know, the name of the man who had undone her, but would never utter it. At length she cast herself on her knees before the father of her betrayer, and supplicated "he would not punish her with severity, as she most penitently confessed her fault, so far as is related to herself."

While Mr. and Mrs. Norwynne, just entered on the honeymoon, were sitting side by side enjoying with peace and with honour conjugal society, poor Agnes, threatened, reviled, and sinking to the dust, was hearing from the mouth of William's father the enormity of those crimes to which his son had been accessory. She saw the mittimus written that was to convey her into a prison—saw herself delivered once more into the hands of constables, before her resolution left her, of concealing the name of William in her story. She now, overcome with affright, and thinking she should expose him still more in a public court, if hereafter on her trial she should be obliged to name him—she now humbly asked the dean to hear a few words she had to say in private, where she promised she "would speak nothing but the truth."

This was impossible, he said—"No private confessions before a magistrate! All must be done openly."

She urged again and again the same request: it was denied more peremptorily than at first. On which she said—"Then, sir, forgive me, since you force me to it, if I speak before Mr. Rymer and these men what I would for ever have kept a secret if I could. One of your family is my child's father."

"Any of my servants?" cried the dean.

"No."

“My nephew?”

“No; one who is nearer still.”

“Come this way,” said the dean; “I *will* speak to you in private.”

It was not that the dean, as a magistrate, distributed partial decrees of pretended justice—he was rigidly faithful to his trust: he would not inflict punishment on the innocent, nor let the guilty escape; but in all particulars of refined or coarse treatment he would alleviate or aggravate according to the rank of the offender. He could not feel that a secret was of equal importance to a poor as to a rich person; and while Agnes gave no intimation but that her delicacy rose from fears for herself, she did not so forcibly impress him with an opinion that it was a case which had weighty cause for a private conference as when she boldly said, “a part of *his* family, very near to him, was concerned in her tale.”

The final result of their conversation in an adjoining room was—a charge from the dean, in the words of Mr. Rymer, “to hush the affair up,” and his promise that the infant should be immediately taken from her, and that “she should have no more trouble with it.”

“I have no trouble with it,” replied Agnes: “my child is now all my comfort, and I cannot part from it.”

“Why, you inconsistent woman, did you not attempt to murder it?”

“That was before I had nursed it.”

“’Tis necessary you should give it up: it must be sent some miles away; and then the whole circumstance will be soon forgotten.”

“*I* shall never forget it.”

“No matter; you must give up the child. Do not some of our first women of quality part with their children?”

“Women of quality have other things to love—I have nothing else.”

“And would you occasion my son and his new-made bride the shame and the uneasiness—”

Here Agnes burst into a flood of tears; and being angrily asked by the dean “why she blubbered so—”

“*I* have had shame and uneasiness,” she replied, wringing her hands.

“And you deserve them: they are the sure attendants of crimes such as yours. If you allured and entrapped a young man like my son—”

“I am the youngest by five years,” said Agnes.

“Well, well, repent,” returned the dean; “repent, and resign your child. Repent, and you may yet marry an honest man who knows nothing of the matter.”

“And repent too?” asked Agnes.

Not the insufferable ignorance of young Henry, when he first came to England, was more vexatious or provoking to the dean than the rustic simplicity of poor Agnes’s uncultured replies. He at last, in an offended and determined manner, told her—“That if she would resign the child, and keep the father’s name a secret, not only the child should be taken care of, but she herself might, perhaps, receive some favours; but if she persisted in her imprudent folly, she must expect no consideration on her own account; nor should she be allowed, for the maintenance of the boy, a sixpence beyond the stated sum for a poor man’s unlawful offspring.” Agnes, resolving not to be separated from her infant, bowed resignation to this last decree; and, terrified at the loud words and angry looks of the dean, after being regularly discharged, stole to her home, where the smiles of her infant, and the caresses she lavished on it, repaid her for the sorrows she had just suffered for its sake.

Let it here be observed that the dean, on suffering Agnes to depart without putting in force the law against her as he had threatened, did nothing, as it were, *behind the curtain*. He openly and candidly owned, on his return to Mr. Rymer, his clerk, and the two constables who were

attending, “that an affair of some little gallantry, in which he was extremely sorry to say his son was rather too nearly involved, required, in consideration of his recent marriage, and an excellent young woman’s (his bride’s) happiness, that what had occurred should not be publicly talked of; therefore he had thought proper only to reprimand the hussy, and send her about her business.”

The curate assured the dean, “that upon this, and upon all other occasions, which should, would, or *could* occur, he owed to his judgment, as his superior, implicit obedience.”

The clerk and the two constables most properly said, “his honour was a gentleman, and of course must know better how to act than they.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

The pleasure of a mother which Agnes experienced did not make her insensible to the sorrow of a daughter.

Her parents had received the stranger child, along with a fabricated tale she told "of its appertaining to another," without the smallest suspicion; but, by the secret diligence of the curate, and the nimble tongues of his elder daughters, the report of all that had passed on the subject of this unfortunate infant soon circulated through the village; and Agnes in a few weeks had seen her parents pine away in grief and shame at her loss of virtue.

She perceived the neighbours avoid, or openly sneer at *her*; but that was little—she saw them slight her aged father and mother upon her account; and she now took the resolution rather to perish for want in another part of the country than live where she was known, and so entail an infamy upon the few who loved her. She slightly hoped, too, that by disappearing from the town and neighbourhood some little reward might be allowed her for her banishment by the dean's family. In that she was deceived. No sooner was she gone, indeed, than her guilt was forgotten; but with her guilt her wants. The dean and his family rejoiced at her and her child's departure; but as this mode she had chosen chanced to be no specified condition in the terms proposed to her, they did not think they were bound to pay her for it; and while she was too fearful and bashful to solicit the dean, and too proud (forlorn as she was) to supplicate his son, they both concluded she "wanted for nothing;" for to be poor, and too delicate to complain, they deemed incompatible.

To heighten the sense of her degraded, friendless situation, she knew that Henry had not been unmindful of his promise to her, but that he had applied to his cousin in her and his child's behalf; for he had acquainted her that William's answer was—"all obligations on *his* part were now undertaken by his father; for that, Agnes having chosen (in a fit of malignity upon his marriage) to apprise the dean of their former intercourse, such conduct had for ever cancelled all attention due from him to her, or to her child, beyond what its bare maintenance exacted."

In vain had Henry explained to him, by a second application, the predicament in which poor Agnes was involved before she consented to reveal her secret to his father. William was happy in an excuse to rid himself of a burthen, and he seemed to believe, what he wished to be true—that she had forfeited all claim to his farther notice.

Henry informed her of this unkind reception of his efforts in her favour in as gentle terms as possible, for she excited his deepest compassion. Perhaps our *own* misfortunes are the cause of our pity for others, even more than *their* ills; and Henry's present sorrows had softened his heart to peculiar sympathy in woe. He had unhappily found that the ardour which had hurried him to vindicate the reputation of Rebecca was likely to deprive him of the blessing of her ever becoming his proved an offender instead of his wife; for the dean, chagrined that his son was at length nephew, submitted to the temptation of punishing the latter, while he forgave the former. He sent for Henry, and having coldly congratulated him on his and Rebecca's innocence, represented to him the impropriety of marrying the daughter of a poor curate, and laid his commands on him, "never to harbour such an intention more." Henry found this restriction so severe that he would not promise obedience; but on his next attempt to visit Rebecca he met a positive repulse from her father, who signified to him, "that the dean had forbidden him to permit their farther acquaintance;" and the curate declared "that, for his own part, he had no will, judgment, or faculties, but that he submitted in all things to the superior clergy."

At the very time young Henry had received the proposal from Mr. Rymer of his immediate union with his daughter, and the dean had made no objection Henry waived the happiness for the time present, and had given a reason why he wished it postponed. The reason he then gave had its weight; but he had another concealed, of yet more import. Much as he loved, and looked forward with rapture to that time when every morning, every evening, and all the day, he should have the delight of Rebecca's society, still there was one other wish nearer his heart than this one desire which for years had been foremost in his thoughts, and which not even love could eradicate. He longed, he pined to know what fate had befallen his father. Provided he were living, he could conceive no joy so great as that of seeing him! If he were dead, he was anxious to pay the tribute of filial piety he owed, by satisfying his affectionate curiosity in every circumstance of the sad event.

While a boy he had frequently expressed these sentiments to both his uncle and his cousin; sometimes they apprised him of the total improbability of accomplishing his wishes; at other times, when they saw the disappointment weigh heavy on his mind, they bade him "wait till he was a man before he could hope to put his designs in execution." He did wait. But on the very day he arrived at the age of twenty-one, he made a vow—"that to gain intelligence of his father should be the first important act of his free will."

Previously to this time he had made all the inquiries possible, whether any new adventure to that part of Africa in which he was bred was likely to be undertaken. Of this there appeared to be no prospect till the intended expedition to Sierra Leone was announced, and which favoured his hope of being able to procure a passage, among those adventurers, so near to the island on which his father was (or had been) prisoner, as to obtain an opportunity of visiting it by stealth.

Fearing contention, or the being dissuaded from his plans if he communicated them, he not only formed them in private, but he kept them secretly; and, his imagination filled with the kindness, the

tenderness, the excess of fondness he had experienced from his father, beyond any other person in the world, he had thought with delight on the separation from all his other kindred, to pay his duty to him, or to his revered memory. Of late, indeed, there had been an object introduced to his acquaintance, from whom it was bitter to part; but his designs had been planned and firmly fixed before he knew Rebecca; nor could he have tasted contentment even with her at the expense of his piety to his father.

In the last interview he had with the dean, Henry, perceiving that his disposition towards him was not less harsh than when a few days before he had ordered him on board a vessel, found this the proper time to declare his intentions of accompanying the fleet to Sierra Leone. His uncle expressed surprise, but immediately gave him a sum of money in addition to that he had sent him before, and as much as he thought might defray his expenses; and, as he gave it, by his willingness, his look, and his accent, he seemed to say, "I foresee this is the last you will ever require."

Young William, though a very dutiful son, was amazed when he heard of Henry's project, as "the serious and settled resolution of a man."

Lady Clementina, Lord and Lady Bendham, and twenty others, "wished him a successful voyage," and thought no more about him.

It was for Rebecca alone to feel the loss of Henry; it was for a mind like hers alone to know his worth; nor did this last proof of it, the quitting her for one who claimed by every tie a preference, lessen him in her esteem. When, by a message from him, she became acquainted with his design, much as it interfered with her happiness, she valued him the more for this observance of his duty; the more regretted his loss, and the more anxiously prayed for his return—a return which he, in the following letter, written just before his departure, taught her to hope for with augmented impatience.

"My Dear Rebecca,

“I do not tell you I am sorry to part from you—you know I am—and you know all I have suffered since your father denied me permission to see you.

“But perhaps you do not know the hopes I enjoy, and which bestow on me a degree of peace; and those I am eager to tell you.

“I hope, Rebecca, to see you again; I hope to return to England, and overcome every obstacle to our marriage; and then, in whatever station we are placed, I shall consider myself as happy as it is possible to be in this world. I feel a conviction that you would be happy also.

“Some persons, I know, estimate happiness by fine houses, gardens, and parks; others by pictures, horses, money, and various things wholly remote from their own species; but when I wish to ascertain the real felicity of any rational man, I always inquire *whom he has to love*. If I find he has nobody, or does not love those he has, even in the midst of all his profusion of finery and grandeur, I pronounce him a being in deep adversity. In loving you, I am happier than my cousin William; even though I am obliged to leave you for a time.

“Do not be afraid you should grow old before I return; age can never alter you in my regard. It is your gentle nature, your unaffected manners, your easy cheerfulness, your clear understanding, the sincerity of all your words and actions which have gained my heart; and while you preserve charms like these, you will be dearer to me with white hairs and a wrinkled face than any of your sex, who, not possessing all these qualities, possess the form and features of perfect beauty.

“You will esteem me, too, I trust, though I should return on crutches with my poor father, whom I may be obliged to maintain by daily labour.

“I shall employ all my time, during my absence, in the study of some art which may enable me to support you both, provided Heaven will bestow two such blessings on me. In the cheering thought that it will be so, and in that only, I have the courage, my dear, dear Rebecca, to say to you

“Farewell! H. Norwynne.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Before Henry could receive a reply to his letter, the fleet in which he sailed put to sea.

By his absence, not only Rebecca was deprived of the friend she loved, but poor Agnes lost a kind and compassionate adviser. The loss of her parents, too, she had to mourn; for they both sickened, and both died, in a short time after; and now wholly friendless in her little exile, where she could only hope for toleration, not being known, she was contending with suspicion, rebuffs, disappointments, and various other ills, which might have made the most rigorous of her Anfield persecutors feel compassion for her, could they have witnessed the throbs of her heart, and all the deep wounds there imprinted.

Still, there are few persons whom Providence afflicts beyond the limits of *all* consolation; few cast so low as not to feel pride on *certain* occasions; and Agnes felt a comfort and a dignity in the thought, that she had both a mind and a body capable of sustaining every hardship, which her destiny might inflict, rather than submit to the disgrace of soliciting William's charity a second time.

This determination was put to a variety of trials. In vain she offered herself to the strangers of the village in which she was accidentally cast as a servant; her child, her dejected looks, her broken sentences, a wildness in her eye, a kind of bold despair which at times overspread her features, her imperfect story who and what she was, prejudiced all those to whom she applied; and, after thus travelling to several small towns and hamlets, the only employer she could obtain was a farmer; and the

only employment to tend and feed his cattle while his men were in the harvest, tilling the ground, or at some other labour which required at the time peculiar expedition.

Though Agnes was born of peasants, yet, having been the only child of industrious parents, she had been nursed with a tenderness and delicacy ill suited to her present occupation; but she endured it with patience; and the most laborious part would have seemed light could she have dismissed the reflection—what it was that had reduced her to such a state.

Soon her tender hands became hard and rough, her fair skin burnt and yellow; so that when, on a Sunday, she has looked in the glass, she has started back as if it were some other face she saw instead of her own. But this loss of beauty gave her no regret—while William did not see her, it was indifferent to her, whether she were beautiful or hideous. On the features of her child only, she now looked with joy; there, she fancied she saw William at every glance, and, in the fond imagination, felt at times every happiness short of seeing him.

By herding with the brute creation, she and her child were allowed to live together; and this was a state she preferred to the society of human creatures, who would have separated her from what she loved so tenderly. Anxious to retain a service in which she possessed such a blessing, care and attention to her humble office caused her master to prolong her stay through all the winter; then, during the spring, she tended his yeaning sheep; in the summer, watched them as they grazed; and thus season after season passed, till her young son could afford her assistance in her daily work.

He now could charm her with his conversation as well as with his looks: a thousand times in the transports of parental love she has pressed him to her bosom, and thought, with an agony of horror, upon her criminal, her mad intent to destroy what was now so dear, so necessary to her existence.

Still the boy grew up more and more like his father. In one resemblance alone he failed; he loved Agnes with an affection totally distinct from the pitiful and childish gratification of his own self-love; he never would quit her side for all the tempting offers of toys or money; never would eat of rarities given to him till Agnes took a part; never crossed her will, however contradictory to his own; never saw her smile that he did not laugh; nor did she ever weep, but he wept too.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

From the mean subject of oxen, sheep, and peasants, we return to personages; i.e., persons of rank and fortune. The bishop, who was introduced in the foregoing pages, but who has occupied a very small space there, is now mentioned again, merely that the reader may know he is at present in the same state as his writings—dying; and that his friend, the dean, is talked of as the most likely successor to his dignified office.

The dean, most assuredly, had a strong friendship for the bishop, and now, most assuredly, wished him to recover; and yet, when he reflected on the success of his pamphlet a few years past, and of many which he had written since on the very same subject, he could not but think "that he had more righteous pretensions to fill the vacant seat of his much beloved and reverend friend (should fate ordain it to be vacated) than any other man;" and he knew that it would not take one moment from that friend's remaining life, should he exert himself, with all due management, to obtain the elevated station when be should he no more.

In presupposing the death of a friend, the dean, like many other virtuous men, "always supposed him going to a better place." With perfect resignation, therefore, he waited whatever change might happen to the bishop, ready to receive him with open arms if he recovered, or equally ready, in case of his dissolution, to receive his dignities.

Lady Clementina displayed her sensibility and feeling for the sick prelate by the extravagance of hysteric fits; except at those times when she talked seriously with her husband upon the injustice which she thought

would be done to him, and to his many pamphlets and sermons, if he did not immediately rise to episcopal honour.

“Surely, dean,” said she, “should you be disappointed upon this occasion, you will write no more books for the good of your country?”

“Yes, I will,” he replied; “but the next book I write for the good of my country shall be very different, nay the very reverse of those I have already written.”

“How, dean! would you show yourself changed?”

“No, but I will show that my country is changed.”

“What! since you produced your last work; only six weeks ago!”

“Great changes may occur in six days,” replied the dean, with a threatening accent; “and if I find things *have* taken a new and improper turn, I will be the first to expose it.”

“But before you act in this manner, my dear, surely you will wait—”

“I will wait until the see is disposed of to another,” said he.

He did wait: the bishop died. The dean was promoted to the see of ---, and wrote a folio on the prosperity of our happy country.

CHAPTER XXXV.

While the bishop and his son were sailing before prosperous gales on the ocean of life, young Henry was contending with adverse winds, and many other perils, on the watery ocean; yet still, his distresses and dangers were less than those which Agnes had to encounter upon land. The sea threatens an untimely death; the shore menaces calamities from which death is a refuge.

The affections she had already experienced could just admit of aggravation: the addition occurred.

Had the good farmer, who made her the companion of his flocks and herds, lived till now, till now she might have been secure from the annoyance of human kind; but, thrown once more upon society, she was unfit to sustain the conflict of decorum against depravity. Her master, her patron, her preserver, was dead; and hardly as she had earned the pittance she received from him, she found that it surpassed her power to obtain the like again. Her doubtful character, her capacious mind, her unmethodical manners, were still badly suited to the nice precision of a country housewife; and as the prudent mistress of a family sneered at her pretensions, she, in her turn, scorned the narrow-minded mistress of a family.

In her inquiries how to gain her bread free from the cutting reproaches of discretion, she was informed “that London was the only private corner, where guilt could be secreted undisturbed; and the only public place where, in open day, it might triumphantly stalk, attended by a chain of audacious admirers.”

There was a charm to the ear of Agnes in the name of London, which thrilled through her soul. William lived in London; and she thought that, while she retired to some dark cellar with her offences, he probably would ride in state with his, and she at humble distance might sometimes catch a glance at him.

As difficult as to eradicate insanity from a mind once possessed, so difficult it is to erase from the lover's breast the deep impression of a *real* affection. Coercion may prevail for a short interval, still love will rage again. Not all the ignominy which Agnes experienced in the place where she now was without a home—not the hunger which she at times suffered, and even at times saw her child endure—not every inducement for going to London, or motive for quitting her present desolate station, had the weight to affect her choice so much as—in London, she should live nearer William; in the present spot she could never hope to see him again, but there she might chance to pass him in the streets; she might pass his house every day unobserved—might inquire about him of his inferior neighbours, who would be unsuspicious of the cause of her curiosity. For these gratifications, she should imbibe new fortitude; for these she could bear all hardships which London threatened; and for these, she at length undertook a three weeks' journey to that perilous town on foot, cheering, as she walked along, her innocent and wearied companion.

William—in your luxurious dwelling, possessed of coffers filled with gold, relations, friends, clients, joyful around you, delicious viands and rich wines upon your sumptuous board, voluptuousness displayed in every apartment of your habitation—contemplate, for a moment, Agnes, your first love, with her son, your first and only child, walking through frost and snow to London, with a foreboding fear on the mother that, when arrived, they both may perish for the want of a friend.

But no sooner did Agnes find herself within the smoke of the metropolis than the old charm was renewed; and scarcely had she refreshed her child at the poor inn at which she stopped than she inquired how far it

was to that part of the town where William, she knew, resided?

She received for answer, “about two miles.”

Upon this information, she thought that she would keep in reserve, till some new sorrow befell her, the consolation of passing his door (perchance of seeing him) which must ever be an alleviation of her grief. It was not long before she had occasion for more substantial comfort. She soon found she was not likely to obtain a service here, more than in the country. Some objected that she could not make caps and gowns; some that she could not preserve and pickle; some, that she was too young; some, that she was too pretty; and all declined accepting her, till at last a citizen’s wife, on condition of her receiving but half the wages usually given, took her as a servant of all work.

In romances, and in some plays, there are scenes of dark and unwholesome mines, wherein the labourer works, during the brightest day, by the aid of artificial light. There are in London kitchens equally dismal though not quite so much exposed to damp and noxious vapours. In one of these, underground, hidden from the cheerful light of the sun, poor Agnes was doomed to toil from morning till night, subjected to the command of a dissatisfied mistress; who, not estimating as she ought the misery incurred by serving her, constantly threatened her servants “with a dismission;” at which the unthinking wretches would tremble merely from the sound of the words; for to have reflected —to have considered what their purport was—“to be released from a dungeon, relieved from continual upbraidings, and vile drudgery,” must have been a subject of rejoicing; and yet, because these good tidings were delivered as a menace, custom had made the hearer fearful of the consequence. So, death being described to children as a disaster, even poverty and shame will start from it with affright; whereas, had it been pictured with its benign aspect, it would have been feared but by few, and many, many would welcome it with gladness.

All the care of Agnes to please, her fear of offending, her toilsome days, her patience, her submission, could not prevail on her she served to retain her one hour after, by chance, she had heard “that she was the mother of a child; that she wished it should be kept a secret; and that she stole out now and then to visit him.”

Agnes, with swimming eyes and an almost breaking heart, left a place—where to have lived one hour would have plunged any fine lady in the deepest grief.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Agnes was driven from service to service—her deficiency in the knowledge of a mere drudge, or her lost character, pursued her wherever she went—at length, becoming wholly destitute, she gladly accepted a place where the latter misfortune was not of the least impediment.

In one of these habitations, where continual misery is dressed in continual smiles; where extreme of poverty is concealed by extreme of finery; where wine dispenses mirth only by dispensing forgetfulness; and where female beauty is so cheap, so complying, that, while it inveigles, it disgusts the man of pleasure: in one of those houses, to attend upon its wretched inhabitants, Agnes was hired. Her feelings of rectitude submitted to those of hunger; her principles of virtue (which the loss of virtue had not destroyed) received a shock when she engaged to be the abettor of vice, from which her delicacy, morality, and religion shrunk; but persons of honour and of reputation would not employ her: was she then to perish? That, perhaps, was easy to resolve; but she had a child to leave behind! a child, from whom to part for a day was a torment. Yet, before she submitted to a situation which filled her mind with a kind of loathing horror, often she paced up and down the street in which William lived, looked wistfully at his house, and sometimes, lost to all her finer feelings of independent pride, thought of sending a short petition to him; but, at the idea of a repulse, and of that frowning brow which she knew William *could* dart on her petitions, she preferred death, or the most degrading life, to the trial.

It was long since that misfortune and dishonour had made her callous to the good or ill opinion of all the world, except *his*; and the fear of drawing upon her his increased contempt was still, at the crisis of

applying, so powerful, that she found she dared not hazard a reproof from him even in the person of his father, whose rigour she had already more than once experienced, in the frequent harsh messages conveyed to her with the poor stipend for her boy.

Awed by the rigid and pious character of the new bishop, the growing reputation, and rising honours of his son, she mistook the appearance of moral excellence for moral excellence itself, and felt her own unworthiness even to become the supplicant of those great men.

Day after day she watched those parts of the town through which William's chariot was accustomed to drive; but to see the *carriage* was all to which she aspired; a feeling, not to be described, forced her to cast her eyes upon the earth as it drew near to her; and when it had passed, she beat her breast, and wept that she had not seen *him*.

Impressed with the superiority of others, and her own abject and disgustful state, she cried, "Let me herd with those who won't despise me; let me only see faces whereon I can look without confusion and terror; let me associate with wretches like myself, rather than force my shame before those who are so good they can but scorn and hate me."

With a mind thus languishing for sympathy in disgrace, she entered a servant in the house just now described. There disregarding the fatal proverb against "*evil communications*," she had not the firmness to be an exception to the general rule. That pliant disposition, which had yielded to the licentious love of William, stooped to still baser prostitution in company still more depraved.

At first she shuddered at those practices she saw, at those conversations she heard, and blest herself that poverty, not inclination, had caused her to be a witness of such profligacy, and had condemned her in this vile abode to be a servant, rather than in the lower rank of mistress. Use softened those horrors every day; at length self-defence, the fear of ridicule, and the hope of favour, induced her to adopt that very conduct from which her heart revolted.

In her sorrowful countenance and fading charms there yet remained attraction for many visitors; and she now submitted to the mercenary profanations of love, more odious, as her mind had been subdued by its most captivating, most endearing joys.

While incessant regret whispered to her “that she ought to have endured every calamity rather than this,” she thus questioned her nice sense of wrong, “Why, why respect myself, since no other respects me? Why set a value on my own feelings when no one else does?”

Degraded in her own judgment, she doubted her own understanding when it sometimes told her she had deserved better treatment; for she felt herself a fool in comparison with her learned seducer and the rest who despised her. “And why,” she continued, “should I ungratefully persist to contemn women who alone are so kind as to accept me for a companion? Why refuse conformity to their customs, since none of my sex besides will admit me to their society a partaker of virtuous habits?”

In speculation these arguments appeared reasonable, and she pursued their dictates; but in the practice of the life in which she plunged she proved the fallacy of the system, and at times tore her hair with frantic sorrow, that she had not continued in the mid-way of guilt, and so preserved some portion of self-approbation, to recompense her in a small degree, for the total loss of the esteem of all the reputable world.

But she had gone too far to recede. Could she now have recalled her innocence, even that remnant she brought with her to London, experience would have taught her to have given up her child, lived apart from him, and once more with the brute creation, rather than to have mingled with her present society. Now, alas! the time for flying was past; all prudent choice was over, even all reflection was gone for ever, or only admitted on compulsion, when it imperiously forced its way amidst the scenes of tumultuous mirth or licentious passion, of distracted riot, shameless effrontery, and wild intoxication, when it *would* force its way, even through the walls of a brothel.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Is there a reader so little experienced in the human heart, so forgetful of his own, as not to feel the possibility of the following fact?

A series of uncommon calamities had been for many years the lot of the elder Henry; a succession of prosperous events had fallen to the share of his brother William. The one was the envy, while the other had the compassion, of all who thought about them. For the last twenty years, William had lived in affluence, bordering upon splendour, his friends, his fame, his fortune, daily increasing, while Henry throughout that very period had, by degrees, lost all he loved on earth, and was now existing apart from civilised society; and yet, during those twenty years, where William knew one happy moment, Henry tasted hundreds.

That the state of the mind, and not outward circumstances, is the nice point on which happiness depends is but a trite remark; but that intellectual power should have the force to render a man discontented in extraordinary prosperity, such as that of the present bishop, or contented in his brother's extreme of adversity, requires illustration.

The first great affliction to Henry was his brother's ingratitude; but reasoning on the frailty of man's nature, and the force of man's temptations, he found excuses for William, which made him support the treatment he had received with more tranquillity than William's proud mind supported his brother's marriage.

Henry's indulgent disposition made him less angry with William than William was with him.

The next affliction Henry suffered was the loss of his beloved wife. That was a grief which time and change of objects gradually alleviated; while William's wife was to him a permanent grief, her puerile mind, her talking vanity, her affected virtues, soured his domestic comfort, and, in time, he had suffered more painful moments from her society than his brother had experienced, even from the death of her he loved.

In their children, indeed, William was the happier; his son was a pride and pleasure to him, while Henry never thought upon *his* without lamenting his loss with bitterest anguish. But if the elder brother had in one instance the advantage, still Henry had a resource to overbalance this article. Henry, as he lay imprisoned in his dungeon, and when, his punishment being remitted, he was again allowed to wander, and seek his subsistence where he would, in all his tedious walks and solitary resting-places, during all his lonely days and mournful nights, had *this resource* to console him—

"I never did an injury to any one; never was harsh, severe, unkind, deceitful. I did not merely confine myself to do my neighbour no harm; I strove to do him service."

This was the resource that cheered his sinking heart amidst gloomy deserts and a barbarous people, lulled him to peaceful slumber in the hut of a savage hunter, and in the hearing of the lion's roar, at times impressed him with a sense of happiness, and made him contemplate with a longing hope the retribution of a future world.

The bishop, with all his comforts, had no comfort like this; he had *his* solitary reflections too, but they were of a tendency the reverse of these. "I used my brother ill," was a secret thought of most powerful influence. It kept him waking upon his safe and commodious bed; was sure to recur with every misfortune by which he was threatened to make his fears still stronger, and came with invidious stabs, upon every successful event, to take from him a part of his joy. In a word, it was *conscience* which made Henry's years pass happier than William's.

But though, comparatively with his brother, William was the less happy man, yet his self-reproach was not of such magnitude, for an offence of that atrocious nature as to banish from his breast a certain degree of happiness, a sensibility to the smiles of fortune; nor was Henry's self-acquittal of such exquisite kind as to chase away the feeling of his desolate condition.

As he fished or hunted for his daily dinner, many a time in full view of his prey, a sudden burst of sorrow at his fate, a sudden longing for some dear associate, for some friend to share his thoughts, for some kind shoulder on which to lean his head, for some companion to partake of his repast, would make him instantaneously desist from his pursuit, cast him on the ground in a fit of anguish, till a shower of tears and his *conscience* came to his relief.

It was, after an exile of more than twenty-three years, when, on one sultry morning, after pleasant dreams during the night, Henry had waked with more than usual perception of his misery, that, sitting upon the beach, his wishes and his looks all bent on the sea towards his native land, he thought he saw a sail swelling before an unexpected breeze.

"Sure I am dreaming still!" he cried. "This is the very vessel I last night saw in my sleep! Oh! what cruel mockery that my eyes should so deceive me!"

Yet, though he doubted, he leaped upon his feet in transport, held up his hands, stretched at their length, in a kind of ecstatic joy, and, as the glorious sight approached, was near rushing into the sea to hail and meet it.

For awhile hope and fear kept him in a state bordering on distraction.

Now he saw the ship making for the shore, and tears flowed for the grateful prospect. Now it made for another point, and he vented shrieks and groans from the disappointment.

It was at those moments, while hope and fear thus possessed him, that the horrors of his abode appeared more than ever frightful. Inevitable afflictions must be borne; but that calamity which admits the expectation of relief, and then denies it, is insupportable.

After a few minutes passed in dreadful uncertainty, which enhanced the wished-for happiness, the ship evidently drew near the land; a boat was launched from her, and while Henry, now upon his knees, wept and prayed fervently for the event, a youth sprang from the barge on the strand, rushed towards him, and falling on his neck, then at his feet, exclaimed, “My father! oh, my father!”

William! dean! bishop! what are your honours, what your riches, what all your possessions, compared to the happiness, the transport bestowed by this one sentence, on your poor brother Henry?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The crosses at land, and the perilous events at sea, had made it now two years since young Henry first took the vow of a man no longer dependent on the will of another, to seek his father. His fatigues, his dangers, were well recompensed. Instead of weeping over a silent grave, he had the inexpressible joy to receive a parent's blessing for his labours. Yet, the elder Henry, though living, was so changed in person, that his son would scarcely have known him in any other than the favourite spot, which the younger (keeping in memory every incident of his former life) knew his father had always chosen for his morning contemplations; and where, previously to his coming to England, he had many a time kept him company. It was to that particular corner of the island that the captain of the ship had generously ordered they should steer, out of the general route, to gratify the filial tenderness he expressed. But scarcely had the interview between the father and the son taken place, than a band of natives, whom the appearance of the vessel had called from the woods and hills, came to attack the invaders. The elder Henry had no friend with whom he wished to shake hands at his departure; the old negro servant who had assisted in young Henry's escape was dead; and he experienced the excessive joy of bidding adieu to the place, without one regret for all he left behind.

On the night of that day, whose morning had been marked by peculiar sadness at the louring prospect of many exiled years to come, he slept on board an English vessel, with Englishmen his companions, and his son, his beloved son—who was still more dear to him for that mind which had planned and executed his rescue—this son, his attentive servant, and most affectionate friend.

Though many a year passed, and many a rough encounter was destined to the lot of the two Henrys before they saw the shores of Europe, yet to them, to live or to die together was happiness enough: even young Henry for a time asked for no greater blessing—but, the first glow of filial ardour over, he called to mind, “Rebecca lived in England;” and every exertion which love, founded on the highest reverence and esteem, could dictate, he employed to expedite a voyage, the end of which would be crowned by the sight of her.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The contrast of the state of happiness between the two brothers was nearly resembled by that of the two cousins—the riches of young William did not render him happy, nor did the poverty of young Henry doom him to misery. His affectionate heart, as he had described in his letter to Rebecca, loved *persons* rather than *things*; and he would not have exchanged the society of his father, nor the prospect of her hand and heart, for all the wealth and splendour of which his cousin William was the master.

He was right. Young William, though he viewed with contempt Henry's inferior state, was far less happy than he. His marriage had been the very counterpart of his father's; and having no child to create affection to his home, his study was the only relief from that domestic incumbrance called his wife; and though, by unremitting application there (joined to the influence of the potent relations of the woman he hated), he at length arrived at the summit of his ambitious desires, still they poorly repaid him for the sacrifice he had made in early life of every tender disposition.

Striding through a list of rapid advancements in the profession of the law, at the age of thirty-eight he found himself raised to a preferment such as rarely falls to the share of a man of his short experience—he found himself invested with a judge's robe; and, gratified by the exalted office, curbed more than ever that aversion which her want of charms or sympathy had produced against the partner of his honours.

While William had thus been daily rising in fortune's favour, poor Agnes had been daily sinking deeper and deeper under fortune's frowns: till at last she became a midnight wanderer through the streets of London,

soliciting, or rudely demanding, money of the passing stranger. Sometimes, hunted by the watch, she affrighted fled from street to street, from portico to portico; and once, unknowing in her fear which way she hurried, she found her trembling knees had sunk, and her wearied head was reclined against the stately pillars that guarded William's door.

At the sudden recollection where she was, a swell of passion, composed of horror, of anger, of despair, and love, gave reanimated strength to her failing limbs; and, regardless of her pursuer's steps, she ran to the centre of the street, and, looking up to the windows of the mansion, cried, "Ah! there he sleeps in quiet, in peace, in ease—he does not even dream of me —he does not care how the cold pierces, or how the people persecute me! He does not thank me for all the lavish love I have borne him and his child! His heart is so hard, he does not even recollect that it was he who brought me to ruin."

Had these miseries, common to the unhappy prostitute, been alone the punishment of Agnes—had her crimes and sufferings ended in distress like this, her story had not perhaps been selected for a public recital; for it had been no other than the customary history of thousands of her sex. But Agnes had a destiny yet more fatal. Unhappily, she was endowed with a mind so sensibly alive to every joy, and every sorrow, to every mark of kindness, every token of severity, so liable to excess in passion, that, once perverted, there was no degree of error from which it would revolt.

Taught by the conversation of the dissolute poor, with whom she now associated, or by her own observation on the worldly reward of elevated villainy, she began to suspect "that dishonesty was only held a sin to secure the property of the rich; and that, to take from those who did not want, by the art of stealing, was less guilt, than to take from those who did want, by the power of the law."

By false yet seducing opinions such as these, her reason estranged from every moral and religious tie, her necessities urgent, she reluctantly accepted the proposal to mix with a band of practised sharpers and robbers, and became an accomplice in negotiating bills forged on a country banker.

But though ingenious in arguments to excuse the deed before its commission, in the act she had ever the dread of some incontrovertible statement on the other side of the question. Intimidated by this apprehension, she was the veriest bungler in her vile profession—and on the alarm of being detected, while every one of her confederates escaped and absconded, she alone was seized—was arrested for issuing notes they had fabricated, and committed to the provincial jail, about fifty miles from London, where the crime had been perpetrated, to take her trial for—life or death.

CHAPTER XL.

The day at length is come on which Agnes shall have a sight of her beloved William! She who has watched for hours near his door, to procure a glimpse of him going out, or returning home; who has walked miles to see his chariot pass: she now will behold him, and he will see her by command of the laws of their country. Those laws, which will deal with rigour towards her, are in this one instance still indulgent.

The time of the assizes, at the county town in which she is imprisoned, is arrived—the prisoners are demanded at the shire-hall—the jail doors are opened—they go in sad procession—the trumpet sounds—it speaks the arrival of the judge—and that judge is William!

The day previous to her trial, Agnes had read, in the printed calendar of the prisoners, his name as the learned justice before whom she was to appear. For a moment she forgot her perilous state in the excess of joy which the still unconquerable love she bore to him permitted her to taste even on the brink of the grave! After-reflection made her check those worldly transports, as unfit for the present solemn occasion. But alas! to her, earth and William were so closely united that, till she forsook the one, she could never cease to think, without the contending passions of hope, of fear, of joy, of love, of shame, and of despair, on the other.

Now fear took place of her first immoderate joy—she feared that, although much changed in person since he had seen her, and her real name now added to many an *alias*—yet she feared that same well-known glance of the eye, turn of the action, or accent of speech, might recall her to his remembrance; and at that idea shame overcame all her other sensations—for still she retained pride, in respect to *his* opinion, to wish

him not to know Agnes was that wretch she felt she was! Once a ray of hope beamed on her, "that if he knew her, he recognised her, he might possibly befriend her cause;" and life bestowed through William's friendship seemed a precious object! But again, that rigorous honour she had often heard him boast, that firmness to his word, of which she had fatal experience, taught her to know, he would not for any unproper compassion, any unmanly weakness, forfeit his oath of impartial justice.

In meditations such as these she passed the sleepless night. When, in the morning, she was brought to the bar, and her guilty hand held up before the righteous judgment seat of William—imagination could not form two figures, or two situations more incompatible with the existence of former familiarity, than the judge and the culprit—and yet, these very persons had passed together the most blissful moments that either ever tasted! Those hours of tender dalliance were now present to *her* mind. *His* thoughts were more nobly employed in his high office; nor could the haggard face, hollow eye, desponding countenance, and meagre person of the poor prisoner, once call to his memory, though her name was uttered among a list of others which she had assumed, his former youthful, lovely Agnes!

She heard herself arraigned with trembling limbs and downcast looks; and many witnesses had appeared against her before she ventured to lift her eyes up to her awful judge. She then gave one fearful glance, and discovered William, unpitying but beloved William, in every feature! It was a face she had been used to look on with delight, and a kind of absent smile of gladness now beamed on her poor wan visage.

When every witness on the part of the prosecutor had been examined, the judge addressed himself to her—"What defence have you to make?"

It was William spoke to Agnes! The sound was sweet; the voice was mild, was soft, compassionate, encouraging! It almost charmed her to a love of life!—not such a voice as when William last addressed her; when he left her undone and pregnant, vowing never to see or speak to her more.

She could have hung upon the present words for ever! She did not call to mind that this gentleness was the effect of practice, the art of his occupation: which, at times, is but a copy, by the unfeeling, from his benevolent brethren of the bench. In the present judge, tenderness was not designed for the consolation of the culprit, but for the approbation of the auditors.

There were no spectators, Agnes, by your side when last he parted from you: if there had, the awful William had been awed to marks of pity.

Stunned with the enchantment of that well-known tongue directed to her, she stood like one just petrified—all vital power seemed suspended.

Again he put the question, and with these additional sentences, tenderly and emphatically delivered—"Recollect yourself. Have you no witnesses? No proof in your behalf?"

A dead silence followed these questions.

He then mildly, but forcibly, added—"What have you to say?"

Here a flood of tears burst from her eyes, which she fixed earnestly upon him, as if pleading for mercy, while she faintly articulated,

"Nothing, my lord."

After a short pause, he asked her, in the same forcible but benevolent tone—

"Have you no one to speak to your character?" The prisoner answered—

A second gush of tears followed this reply, for she called to mind by *whom* her character had first been blasted.

He summed up the evidence; and every time he was compelled to press hard upon the proofs against her she shrunk, and seemed to stagger with the deadly blow; writhed under the weight of *his* minute justice, more than from the prospect of a shameful death.

The jury consulted but a few minutes. The verdict was—

“Guilty.”

She heard it with composure.

But when William placed the fatal velvet on his head, and rose to pronounce her sentence, she started with a kind of convulsive motion; retreated a step or two back, and, lifting up her hands, with a scream exclaimed—

“Oh! not from *you*!”

The piercing shriek which accompanied these words prevented their being heard by part of the audience; and those who heard them thought little of their meaning, more than that they expressed her fear of dying.

Serene and dignified, as if no such exclamation had been uttered, William delivered the fatal speech, ending with, “Dead, dead, dead.”

She fainted as he closed the period, and was carried back to prison in a swoon; while he adjourned the court to go to dinner.

CHAPTER XLI.

If, unaffected by the scene he had witnessed, William sat down to dinner with an appetite, let not the reader conceive that the most distant suspicion had struck his mind of his ever having seen, much less familiarly known, the poor offender whom he had just condemned. Still this forgetfulness did not proceed from the want of memory for Agnes. In every peevish or heavy hour passed with his wife, he was sure to think of her: yet it was self-love, rather than love of *her*, that gave rise to these thoughts: he felt the lack of female sympathy and tenderness to soften the fatigue of studious labour; to sooth a sullen, a morose disposition—he felt he wanted comfort for himself, but never once considered what were the wants of Agnes.

In the chagrin of a barren bed, he sometimes thought, too, even on the child that Agnes bore him; but whether it were male or female, whether a beggar in the streets, or dead—various and important public occupations forbade him to waste time to inquire. Yet the poor, the widow, and the orphan, frequently shared William's ostentatious bounty. He was the president of many excellent charities, gave largely, and sometimes instituted benevolent societies for the unhappy; for he delighted to load the poor with obligations, and the rich with praise.

There are persons like him, who love to do every good but that which their immediate duty requires. There are servants who will serve every one more cheerfully than their masters; there are men who will distribute money liberally to all except their creditors; and there are wives who will love all mankind better than their husbands. Duty is a familiar word which has little effect upon an ordinary mind; and as ordinary minds make a vast majority, we have acts of generosity, valour,

self-denial, and bounty, where smaller pains would constitute greater virtues. Had William followed the *common* dictates of charity; had he adopted private pity, instead of public munificence; had he cast an eye at home before he sought abroad for objects of compassion, Agnes had been preserved from an ignominious death, and he had been preserved from—*Remorse*—the tortures of which he for the first time proved, on reading a printed sheet of paper, accidentally thrown in his way, a few days after he had left the town in which he had condemned her to die.

"*March the* 12th, 179-

"The last dying words, speech, and confession; birth, parentage, and education; life, character, and behaviour, of Agnes Primrose, who was executed this morning, between the hours of ten and twelve, pursuant to the sentence passed upon her by the Honourable Justice Norwynne.

"AGNES PRIMROSE was born of honest parents, in the village of Anfield, in the county of ---" [William started at the name of the village and county]; "but being led astray by the arts and flattery of seducing man, she fell from the paths of virtue, and took to bad company, which instilled into her young heart all their evil ways, and at length brought her to this untimely end. So she hopes her death will be a warning to all young persons of her own sex, how they listen to the praises and courtship of young men, especially of those who are their betters; for they only court to deceive. But the said Agnes freely forgives all persons who have done her injury, or given her sorrow, from the young man who first won her heart to the jury who found her guilty, and the judge who condemned her to death.

"And she acknowledges the justice of her sentence, not only in respect of the crime for which she suffers, but in regard to many other heinous sins of which she has been guilty, more especially that of once attempting to commit a murder upon

her own helpless child, for which guilt she now considers the vengeance of God has overtaken her, to which she is patiently resigned, and departs in peace and charity with all the world, praying the Lord to have mercy on her parting soul."

"POSTSCRIPT TO THE CONFESSION.

"So great was this unhappy woman's terror of death, and the awful judgment that was to follow, that when sentence was pronounced upon her, she fell into a swoon, from that into convulsions, from which she never entirely recovered, but was delirious to the time of her execution, except that short interval in which she made her confession to the clergyman who attended her. She has left one child, a youth about sixteen, who has never forsaken his mother during all the time of her imprisonment, but waited on her with true filial duty; and no sooner was her fatal sentence passed than he began to droop, and now lies dangerously ill near the prison from which she is released by death. During the loss of her senses, the said Agnes Primrose raved continually on this child; and, asking for pen, ink, and paper, wrote an incoherent petition to the judge recommending the youth to his protection and mercy. But notwithstanding this insanity, she behaved with composure and resignation when the fatal morning arrived in which she was to be launched into eternity. She prayed devoutly during the last hour, and seemed to have her whole mind fixed on the world to which she was going. A crowd of spectators followed her to the fatal spot, most of whom returned weeping at the recollection of the fervency with which she prayed, and the impression which her dreadful state seemed to make upon her."

No sooner had the name of “Anfield” struck William than a thousand reflections and remembrances flashed on his mind to give him full conviction whom it was he had judged and sentenced. He recollected the sad remains of Agnes, such as he once had known her; and now he wondered how his thoughts could have been absent from an object so pitiable, so worthy of his attention, as not to give him even a suspicion who she was, either from her name, or from her person, during the whole trial!

But wonder, astonishment, horror, and every other sensation was absorbed by—*Remorse*:—it wounded, it stabbed, it rent his hard heart, as it would do a tender one. It havocked on his firm inflexible mind, as it would on a weak and pliant brain! Spirit of Agnes! look down, and behold all your wrongs revenged! William feels—*Remorse*.

CHAPTER XLII.

A few momentary cessations from the pangs of a guilty conscience were given to William, as soon as he had despatched a messenger to the jail in which Agnes had been communed, to inquire after the son she had left behind, and to give orders that immediate care should be taken of him. He likewise charged the messenger to bring back the petition she had addressed to him during her supposed insanity; for he now experienced no trivial consolation in the thought that he might possibly have it in his power to grant her a request.

The messenger returned with the written paper, which had been considered by the persons to whom she had intrusted it, as the distracted dictates of an insane mind; but proved to William, beyond a doubt, that she was perfectly in her senses.

"TO LORD CHIEF JUSTICE NORWYNNE.

"My Lord,—I am Agnes Primrose, the daughter of John and Hannah Primrose, of Anfield. My father and mother lived by the hill at the side of the little brook where you used to fish, and so first saw me.

"Pray, my lord, have mercy on my sorrows; pity me for the first time, and spare my life. I know I have done wrong. I know it is presumption in me to dare to apply to you, such a wicked and mean wretch as I am; but, my lord, you once condescended to take notice of me; and though I have been very wicked since that time, yet if you would be so merciful as to spare my life, I promise to amend it for the future. But if you think it proper I should die, I will be resigned; but

then I hope, I beg, I supplicate, that you will grant my other petition. Pray, pray, my lord, if you cannot pardon me, be merciful to the child I leave behind. What he will do when I am gone, I don't know, for I have been the only friend he has had ever since he was born. He was born, my lord, about sixteen years ago, at Anfield, one summer a morning, and carried by your cousin, Mr. Henry Norwynne, to Mr. Rymer's, the curate there; and I swore whose child he was before the dean, and I did not take a false oath. Indeed, indeed, my lord, I did not.

"I will say no more for fear this should not come safe to your hand, for the people treat me as if I were mad; so I will say no more, only this, that, whether I live or die, I forgive everybody, and I hope everybody will forgive me. And I pray that God will take pity on my son, if you refuse; but I hope you will not refuse.

"Agnes Primrose."

William rejoiced, as he laid down the petition, that she had asked a favour he could bestow; and hoped by his protection of the son to redress, in some degree, the wrongs he had done the mother. He instantly sent for the messenger into his apartment, and impatiently asked, "If he had seen the boy, and given proper directions for his care."

"I have given directions, sir, for his funeral."

"How!" cried William.

"He pined away ever since his mother was confined, and died two days after her execution."

Robbed, by this news, of his only gleam of consolation—in the consciousness of having done a mortal injury for which he never now by any means could atone, he saw all his honours, all his riches, all his

proud selfish triumphs fade before him! They seemed like airy nothings, which in rapture he would exchange for the peace of a tranquil conscience!

He envied Agnes the death to which he first exposed, then condemned, her. He envied her even the life she struggled through from his neglect, and felt that his future days would be far less happy than her former existence. He calculated with precision.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The progressive rise of William and fall of Agnes had now occupied nearly the term of eighteen years. Added to these, another year elapsed before the younger Henry completed the errand on which his heart was fixed, and returned to England. Shipwreck, imprisonment, and other ills to which the poor and unfriended traveller is peculiarly exposed, detained the father and son in various remote regions until the present period; and, for the last fifteen years, denied them the means of all correspondence with their own country.

The elder Henry was now past sixty years of age, and the younger almost beyond the prime of life. Still length of time had not diminished, but rather had increased, their anxious longings for their native home.

The sorrows, disappointments, and fatigues, which, throughout these tedious years, were endured by the two Henrys, are of that dull monotonous kind of suffering better omitted than described—mere repetitions of the exile's woe, that shall give place to the transporting joy of return from banishment! Yet, often as the younger had reckoned, with impatient wishes, the hours which were passed distant from her he loved, no sooner was his disastrous voyage at an end, no sooner had his feet trod upon the shore of Britain, than a thousand wounding fears made him almost doubt whether it were happiness or misery he had obtained by his arrival. If Rebecca were living, he knew it must be happiness; for his heart dwelt with confidence on her faith, her unchanging sentiments. "But death might possibly have ravished from his hopes what no mortal power could have done." And thus the lover creates a rival in every ill, rather than suffer his fears to remain inanimate.

The elder Henry had less to fear or to hope than his son; yet he both feared and hoped with a sensibility that gave him great anxiety. He hoped his brother would receive him with kindness, after his long absence, and once more take his son cordially to his favour. He longed impatiently to behold his brother; to see his nephew; nay, in the ardour of the renewed affection he just now felt, he thought even a distant view of Lady Clementina would be grateful to his sight! But still, well remembering the pomp, the state, the pride of William, he could not rely on *his* affection, so much he knew that it depended on external circumstances to excite or to extinguish his love. Not that he feared an absolute repulsion from his brother; but he feared, what, to a delicate mind, is still worse—reserved manners, cold looks, absent sentences, and all that cruel retinue of indifference with which those who are beloved so often wound the bosom that adores them.

By inquiring of their countrymen (whom they met as they approached to the end of their voyage), concerning their relation the dean, the two Henrys learned that he was well, and had for some years past been exalted to the bishopric of ---. This news gave them joy, while it increased their fear of not receiving an affectionate welcome.

The younger Henry, on his landing, wrote immediately to his uncle, acquainting him with his father's arrival in the most abject state of poverty; he addressed his letter to the bishop's country residence, where he knew, as it was the summer season, he would certainly be. He and his father then set off on foot towards that residence—a palace!

The bishop's palace was not situated above fifty miles from the port where they had landed; and at a small inn about three miles from the bishop's they proposed (as the letter to him intimated) to wait for his answer before they intruded into his presence.

As they walked on their solitary journey, it was some small consolation that no creature knew them.

“To be poor and ragged, father,” the younger smilingly said, “is no disgrace, no shame, thank Heaven, where the object is not known.”

“True, my son,” replied Henry; “and perhaps I feel myself much happier now, unknowing and unknown to all but you, than I shall in the presence of my fortunate brother and his family; for there, confusion at my ill success through life may give me greater pain than even my misfortunes have inflicted.”

After uttering this reflection which had preyed upon his mind, he sat down on the road side to rest his agitated limbs before he could proceed farther. His son reasoned with him—gave him courage; and now his hopes preponderated, till, after two days’ journey, on arriving at the inn where an answer from the bishop was expected, no letter, no message had been left.

“He means to renounce us,” said Henry, trembling, and whispering to his son.

Without disclosing to the people of the house who they were, or from whom the letter or the message they inquired for was to have come, they retired, and consulted what steps they were now to pursue.

Previously to his writing to the bishop, the younger Henry’s heart, all his inclinations, had swayed him towards a visit to the village in which was his uncle’s former country-seat, the beloved village of Anfield, but respect to him and duty to his father had made him check those wishes; now they revived again, and, with the image of Rebecca before his eyes, he warmly entreated his father to go with him to Anfield, at present only thirty miles distant, and thence write once more; then again wait the will of his uncle.

The father consented to this proposal, even glad to postpone the visit to his dignified brother.

After a scanty repast, such as they had been long inured to, they quitted the inn, and took the road towards Anfield.

CHAPTER XLIV.

It was about five in the afternoon of a summer's day, that Henry and his son left the sign of the Mermaid to pursue their third day's journey: the young man's spirits elated with the prospect of the reception he should meet from Rebecca: the elder dejected at not having received a speedy welcome from his brother.

The road which led to Anfield by the shortest course of necessity took our travellers within sight of the bishop's palace. The turrets appeared at a distance; and on the sudden turn round the corner of a large plantation, the whole magnificent structure was at once exhibited before his brother's astonished eyes. He was struck with the grandeur of the habitation; and, totally forgetting all the unkind, the contemptuous treatment he had ever received from its owner (like the same Henry in his earlier years), smiled with a kind of transport "that William was so great a man."

After this first joyous sensation was over, "Let us go a little nearer, my son," said he; "no one will see us, I hope; or, if they should, you can run and conceal yourself; and not a creature will know me; even my brother would not know me thus altered; and I wish to take a little farther view of his fine house, and all his pleasure grounds."

Young Henry, though impatient to be gone, would not object to his father's desire. They walked forward between a shady grove and a purling rivulet, snuffed in odours from the jessamine banks, and listened to the melody of an adjoining aviary.

The allurements of the spot seemed to enchain the elder Henry, and he at length sauntered to the very avenue of the dwelling; but, just as he had set his daring yet trembling feet upon the turf which led to the palace gates, he suddenly stopped, on hearing, as he thought, the village clock strike seven, which reminded him that evening drew on, and it was time to go. He listened again, when he and his son, both together, said, "It is the toll of the bell before some funeral."

The signals of death, while they humble the rich, inspire the poor with pride. The passing bell gave Henry a momentary sense of equality; and he courageously stepped forward to the first winding of the avenue.

He started back at the sight which presented itself.

A hearse—mourning coaches—mutes—plumed horses—with every other token of the person's importance who was going to be committed to the earth.

Scarcely had his terrified eyes been thus unexpectedly struck, when a coffin borne by six men issued from the gates, and was deposited in the waiting receptacle; while gentlemen in mourning went into the different coaches.

A standard-bearer now appeared with an escutcheon, on which the keys and mitre were displayed. Young Henry, upon this, pathetically exclaimed, "My uncle! it is my uncle's funeral!"

Henry, his father, burst into tears.

The procession moved along.

The two Henrys, the only real mourners in the train, followed at a little distance—in rags, but in tears.

The elder Henry's heart was nearly bursting; he longed to clasp the dear remains of his brother without the dread of being spurned for his presumption. He now could no longer remember him either as the dean or bishop; but, leaping over that whole interval of pride and arrogance,

called only to his memory William, such as he knew him when they lived at home together, together walked to London, and there together almost perished for want.

They arrived at the church; and, while the coffin was placing in the dreary vault, the weeping brother crept slowly after to the hideous spot. His reflections now fixed on a different point. "Is this possible?" said he to himself. "Is this the dean, whom I ever feared? Is this the bishop, of whom within the present hour I stood in awe? Is this William, whose every glance struck me with his superiority? Alas, my brother! and is this horrid abode the reward for all your aspiring efforts? Are these sepulchral trappings the only testimonies of your greatness which you exhibit to me on my return? Did you foresee an end like this, while you treated me, and many more of your youthful companions, with haughtiness and contempt; while you thought it becoming of your dignity to shun and despise us? Where is the difference now between my departed wife and you? Or, if there be a difference, she, perchance, has the advantage. Ah, my poor brother! for distinction in the other world, I trust, some of your anxious labours have been employed; for you are now of less importance in this than when you and I first left our native town, and hoped for nothing greater than to be suffered to exist."

On their quitting the church, they inquired of the bystanders the immediate cause of the bishop's death, and heard he had been suddenly carried off by a raging fever.

Young Henry inquired "if Lady Clementina was at the palace, or Mr. Norwynne?"

"The latter is there," he was answered by a poor woman; "but Lady Clementina has been dead these four years."

"Dead! dead!" cried young Henry. "That worldly woman! quitted this world for ever!"

“Yes,” answered the stranger; “she caught cold by wearing a new-fashioned dress that did not half cover her, wasted all away, and died the miserablest object you ever heard of.”

The person who gave this melancholy intelligence concluded it with a hearty laugh, which would have surprised the two hearers if they had not before observed that amongst all the village crowd that attended to see this solemn show not one afflicted countenance appeared, not one dejected look, not one watery eye. The pastor was scarcely known to his flock; it was in London that his meridian lay, at the levée of ministers, at the table of peers, at the drawing-rooms of the great; and now his neglected parishioners paid his indifference in kind.

The ceremony over, and the mourning suite departed, the spectators dispersed with gibes and jeering faces from the sad spot; while the Henrys, with heavy hearts, retraced their steps back towards the palace. In their way, at the crossing of a stile, they met a poor labourer returning from his day’s work, who, looking earnestly at the throng of persons who were leaving the churchyard, said to the elder Henry—“Pray, master, what are all them folk gathered together about? What’s the matter there?”

“There has been a funeral,” replied Henry.

“Oh, zooks! what! a burying!—ay, now I see it is; and I warrant of our old bishop—I heard he was main ill. It is he they have been putting into the ground! is not it?”

“Yes,” said Henry.

“Why, then, so much the better.”

“The better!” cried Henry.

“Yes, master; though I should be loth to be where he is now.”

Henry started—“He was your pastor, man!”

“Ha! ha! ha! I should be sorry that my master’s sheep, that are feeding yonder, should have no better pastor—the fox would soon get them all.”

“You surely did not know him!”

“Not much, I can’t say I did; for he was above speaking to poor folks, unless they did any mischief—and then he was sure to take notice of them.”

“I believe he meant well,” said Henry.

“As to what he meant, God only knows; but I know what he *did*.”

“And what did he?”

“Nothing at all for the poor.”

“If any of them applied to him, no doubt—”

“Oh! they knew better than all that comes to; for if they asked for anything, he was sure to have them sent to Bridewell, or the workhouse. He used to say, ‘*The workhouse was a fine place for a poor man—the food good enough*, *and enough of it*;’ yet he kept a dainty table himself. His dogs, too, fared better than we poor. He was vastly tender and good to all his horses and dogs, I *will* say that for him; and to all brute beasts: he would not suffer them to be either starved or struck—but he had no compassion for his fellow-creatures.”

“I am sensible you do him wrong.”

“That *he* is the best judge of by this time. He has sent many a poor man to the house of correction; and now ’tis well if he has not got a place there himself. Ha, ha, ha!”

The man was walking away, when Henry called to him—“Pray can you tell me if the bishop’s son be at the palace?”

“Oh, yes! you’ll find master there treading in the old man’s shoes, as proud as Lucifer.”

“Has he any children?”

“No, thank God! There’s been enow of the name; and after the son is gone, I hope we shall have no more of the breed.”

“Is Mrs. Norwynne, the son’s wife, at the palace?”

“What, master! did not you know what’s become of her?”

“Any accident?—”

“Ha, ha, ha! yes. I can’t help laughing—why, master, she made a mistake, and went to another man’s bed—and so her husband and she were parted—and she has married the other man.”

“Indeed!” cried Henry, amazed.

“Ay, indeed; but if it had been my wife or yours, the bishop would have made her do penance in a white sheet; but as it was a lady, why, it was all very well—and any one of us, that had been known to talk about it, would have been sent to Bridewell straight. But we *did* talk, notwithstanding.”

The malicious joy with which the peasant told this story made Henry believe (more than all the complaints the man uttered) that there had been want of charity and Christian deportment in the whole conduct of the bishop’s family. He almost wished himself back on his savage island, where brotherly love could not be less than it appeared to be in this civilised country.

CHAPTER XLV.

As Henry and his son, after parting from the poor labourer, approached the late bishop's palace, all the charms of its magnificence, its situation, which, but a few hours before, had captivated the elder Henry's mind, were vanished; and, from the mournful ceremony he had since been witness of, he now viewed this noble edifice but as a heap of rubbish piled together to fascinate weak understandings, and to make even the wise and religious man, at times, forget why he was sent into this world.

Instead of presenting themselves to their nephew and cousin, they both felt an unconquerable reluctance to enter under the superb, the melancholy, roof. A bank, a hedge, a tree, a hill, seemed, at this juncture, a pleasanter shelter, and each felt himself happy in being a harmless wanderer on the face of the earth rather than living in splendour, while the wants, the revilings of the hungry and the naked were crying to Heaven for vengeance.

They gave a heartfelt sigh to the vanity of the rich and the powerful; and pursued a path where they hoped to meet with virtue and happiness.

They arrived at Anfield.

Possessed by apprehensions, which his uncle's funeral had served to increase, young Henry, as he entered the well-known village, feared every sound he heard would convey information of Rebecca's death. He saw the parsonage house at a distance, but dreaded to approach it, lest Rebecca should no longer be an inhabitant. His father indulged him in the wish to take a short survey of the village, and rather learn by indirect means, by observation, his fate, than hear it all at once from the lips of some blunt relater.

Anfield had undergone great changes since Henry left it. He found some cottages built where formerly there were none; and some were no more where he had frequently called, and held short conversations with the poor who dwelt in them. Amongst the latter number was the house of the parents of Agnes—fallen to the ground! He wondered to himself where that poor family had taken up their abode. Henry, in a kinder world!

He once again cast a look at the old parsonage house: his inquisitive eye informed him there no alteration had taken place externally; but he feared what change might be within.

At length he obtained the courage to enter the churchyard in his way to it. As he slowly and tremblingly moved along, he stopped to read here and there a gravestone; as mild, instructive conveyers of intelligence, to which he could attend with more resignation, than to any other reporter.

The second stone he came to he found was erected *To the memory of the Reverend Thomas Rymer*, Rebecca's father. He instantly called to mind all that poor curate's quick sensibility of wrong towards *himself*; his unbridled rage in consequence; and smiled to think; how trivial now appeared all for which he gave way to such excess of passion!

But, shocked at the death of one so near to her he loved, he now feared to read on; and cast his eyes from the tombs accidentally to the church. Through the window of the chancel, his sight was struck with a tall monument of large dimensions, raised since his departure, and adorned with the finest sculpture. His curiosity was excited—he drew near, and he could distinguish (followed by elegant poetic praise) "*To the memory of John Lord Viscount Bendham*."

Notwithstanding the solemn, melancholy, anxious bent of Henry's mind, he could not read these words, and behold this costly fabric, without indulging a momentary fit of indignant laughter.

“Are sculpture and poetry thus debased,” he cried, “to perpetuate the memory of a man whose best advantage is to be forgotten; whose no one action merits record, but as an example to be shunned?”

An elderly woman, leaning on her staff, now passed along the lane by the side of the church. The younger Henry accosted her, and ventured to inquire “where the daughters of Mr. Rymer, since his death, were gone to live?”

“We live,” she returned, “in that small cottage across the clover field.”

Henry looked again, and thought he had mistaken the word *we*; for he felt assured that he had no knowledge of the person to whom he spoke.

But she knew him, and, after a pause, cried—“Ah! Mr. Henry, you are welcome back. I am heartily glad to see you, and my poor sister Rebecca will go out of her wits with joy.”

“Is Rebecca living, and will be glad to see me?” he eagerly asked, while tears of rapture trickled down his face. “Father,” he continued in his ecstasy, “we are now come home to be completely happy; and I feel as if all the years I have been away were but a short week; and as if all the dangers I have passed had been light as air. But is it possible,” he cried to his kind informer, “that you are one of Rebecca’s sisters?”

Well might he ask; for, instead of the blooming woman of seven-and-twenty he had left her, her colour was gone, her teeth impaired, her voice broken. She was near fifty.

“Yes, I am one of Mr. Rymer’s daughters,” she replied.

“But which?” said Henry.

“The eldest, and once called the prettiest,” she returned: “though now people tell me I am altered; yet I cannot say I see it myself.”

“And are you all living?” Henry inquired.

“All but one: she married and died. The other three, on my father’s death, agreed to live together, and knit or spin for our support. So we took that small cottage, and furnished it with some of the parsonage furniture, as you shall see; and kindly welcome I am sure you will be to all it affords, though that is but little.”

As she was saying this, she led him through the clover field towards the cottage. His heart rebounded with joy that Rebecca was there: yet, as he walked he shuddered at the impression which he feared the first sight of her would make. He feared, what he imagined (till he had seen this change in her sister) he should never heed. He feared Rebecca would look no longer young. He was not yet so far master over all his sensual propensities as, when the trial came, to think he could behold her look like her sister, and not give some evidence of his disappointment.

His fears were vain. On entering the gate of their little garden, Rebecca rushed from the house to meet them: just the same Rebecca as ever.

It was her mind, which beaming on her face, and actuating her every motion, had ever constituted all her charms: it was her mind which had gained her Henry’s affection. That mind had undergone no change; and she was the self-same woman he had left her.

He was entranced with joy.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The fare which the Henrys partook at the cottage of the female Rymers was such as the sister had described—mean, and even scanty; but this did not in the least diminish the happiness they received in meeting, for the first time since their arrival in England, human beings who were glad to see them.

At a stinted repast of milk and vegetables, by the glimmering light of a little brushwood on the hearth, they yet could feel themselves comparatively blest, while they listened to the recital of afflictions which had befallen persons around that very neighbourhood, for whom every delicious viand had been procured to gratify the taste, every art devised to delight the other senses.

It was by the side of this glimmering fire that Rebecca and her sisters told the story of poor Agnes's fate, and of the thorn it had for ever planted in William's bosom—of his reported sleepless, perturbed nights; and his gloomy, or half-distracted days; when in the fullness of *remorse*, he has complained—"of a guilty conscience! of the weariness attached to a continued prosperity! the misery of wanting an object of affection."

They told of Lord Bendham's death from the effects of intemperance; from a mass of blood infected by high-seasoned dishes, mixed with copious draughts of wine—repletion of food and liquor, not less fatal to the existence of the rich than the want of common sustenance to the lives of the poor.

They told of Lady Bendham's ruin, since her lord's death, by gaming. They told, "that now she suffered beyond the pain of common indigence by the cutting triumph of those whom she had formerly despised."

They related (what has been told before) the divorce of William, and the marriage of his wife with a libertine; the decease of Lady Clementina, occasioned by that incorrigible vanity which even old age could not subdue.

After numerous other examples had been recited of the dangers, the evils that riches draw upon their owner; the elder Henry rose from his chair, and embracing Rebecca and his son, said—"How much indebted are we to Providence, my children, who, while it inflicts poverty, bestows peace of mind; and in return for the trivial grief we meet in this world, holds out to our longing hopes the reward of the next!"

Not only resigned, but happy in their station, with hearts made cheerful rather than dejected by attentive meditation, Henry and his son planned the means of their future support, independent of their kinsman William —nor only of him, but of every person and thing but their own industry.

"While I have health and strength," cried the old man, and his son's looks acquiesced in all the father said, "I will not take from any one in affluence what only belongs to the widow, the fatherless, and the infirm; for to such alone, by Christian laws—however custom may subvert them —the overplus of the rich is due."

CHAPTER XLVII.

By forming a humble scheme for their remaining life, a scheme depending upon their *own* exertions alone, on no light promises of pretended friends, and on no sanguine hopes of certain success, but with prudent apprehension, with fortitude against disappointment, Henry, his son, and Rebecca (now his daughter), found themselves, at the end of one year, in the enjoyment of every comfort with such distinguished minds knew how to taste.

Exempt both from patronage and from control—healthy—alive to every fruition with which Nature blesses the world; dead to all out of their power to attain, the works of art—susceptible of those passions with endear human creatures one to another, insensible to those which separate man from man—they found themselves the thankful inhabitants of a small house, or hut, placed on the borders of the sea.

Each morning wakes the father and the son to cheerful labour in fishing, or the tending of a garden, the produce of which they carry to the next market town. The evening sends them back to their home in joy: where Rebecca meets them at the door, affectionately boasts of the warm meal that is ready, and heightens the charm of conversation with her taste and judgment.

It was after a supper of roots from their garden, poultry that Rebecca's hand had reared, and a jug brewed by young Henry, that the following discourse took place.

"My son," said the elder Henry, "where under Heaven shall three persons be met together happy as we three are? It is the want of industry, or the want of reflection, which makes the poor dissatisfied.

Labour gives a value to rest which the idle can never taste; and reflection gives to the mind a degree of content which the unthinking never can know."

"I once," replied the younger Henry, "considered poverty a curse; but after my thoughts became enlarged, and I had associated for years with the rich, and now mix with the poor, my opinion has undergone a total change; for I have seen, and have enjoyed, more real pleasure at work with my fellow-labourers, and in this cottage, than ever I beheld, or experienced, during my abode at my uncle's; during all my intercourse with the fashionable and the powerful of this world."

"The worst is," said Rebecca, "the poor have not always enough."

"Who has enough?" asked her husband. "Had my uncle? No: he hoped for more; and in all his writings sacrificed his duty to his avarice. Had his son enough, when he yielded up his honour, his domestic peace, to gratify his ambition? Had Lady Bendham enough, when she staked all she had, in the hope of becoming richer? Were we, my Rebecca, of discontented minds, we have now too little. But conscious, from observation and experience, that the rich are not so happy as ourselves, we rejoice in our lot."

The tear of joy which stole from her eye expressed, more than his words, a state of happiness.

He continued: "I remember, when I first came a boy to England, the poor excited my compassion; but now that my judgment is matured, I pity the rich. I know that in this opulent kingdom there are nearly as many persons perishing through intemperance as starving with hunger; there are as many miserable in the lassitude of having nothing to do as there are of those bowed down to the earth with hard labour; there are more persons who draw upon themselves calamity by following their own will than there are who experience it by obeying the will of another. Add to this, that the rich are so much afraid of dying they have no comfort in living."

“There the poor have another advantage,” said Rebecca; “for they may defy not only death, but every loss by sea or land, as they have nothing to lose.”

“Besides,” added the elder Henry, “there is a certain joy of the most gratifying kind that the human mind is capable of tasting, peculiar to the poor, and of which the rich can but seldom experience the delight.”

“What can that be?” cried Rebecca.

“A kind word, a benevolent smile, one token of esteem from the person whom we consider as our superior.”

To which Rebecca replied, “And the rarity of obtaining such a token is what increases the honour.”

“Certainly,” returned young Henry, “and yet those in poverty, ungrateful as they are, murmur against that Government from which they receive the blessing.”

“But this is the fault of education, of early prejudice,” said the elder Henry. “Our children observe us pay respect, even reverence, to the wealthy, while we slight or despise the poor. The impression thus made on their minds in youth is indelible during the more advanced periods of life; and they continue to pine after riches, and lament under poverty: nor is the seeming folly wholly destitute of reason; for human beings are not yet so deeply sunk in voluptuous gratification, or childish vanity, as to place delight in any attainment which has not for its end the love or admiration of their fellow-beings.”

“Let the poor, then,” cried the younger Henry, “no more be their own persecutors—no longer pay homage to wealth—instantaneously the whole idolatrous worship will cease—the idol will be broken!”

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