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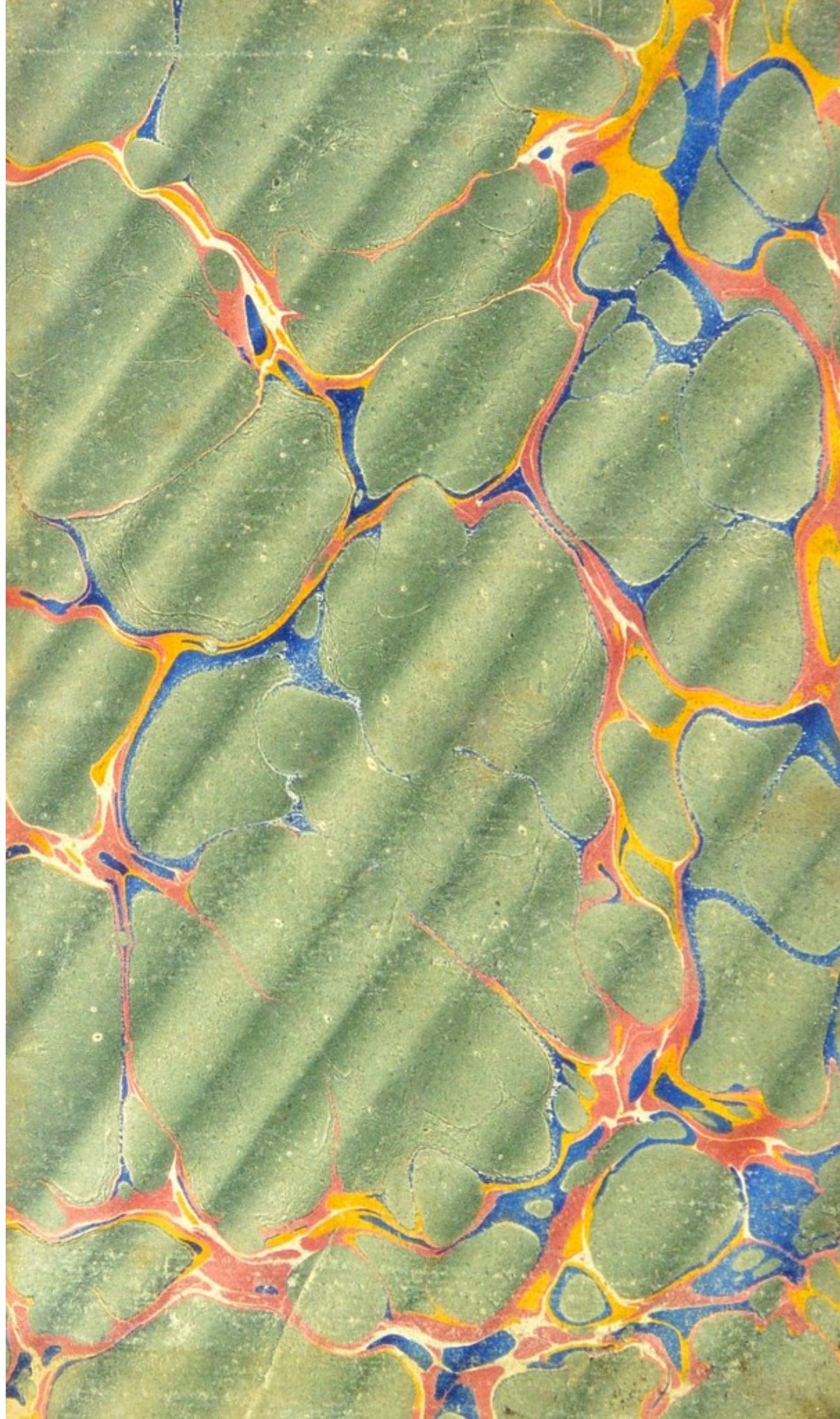
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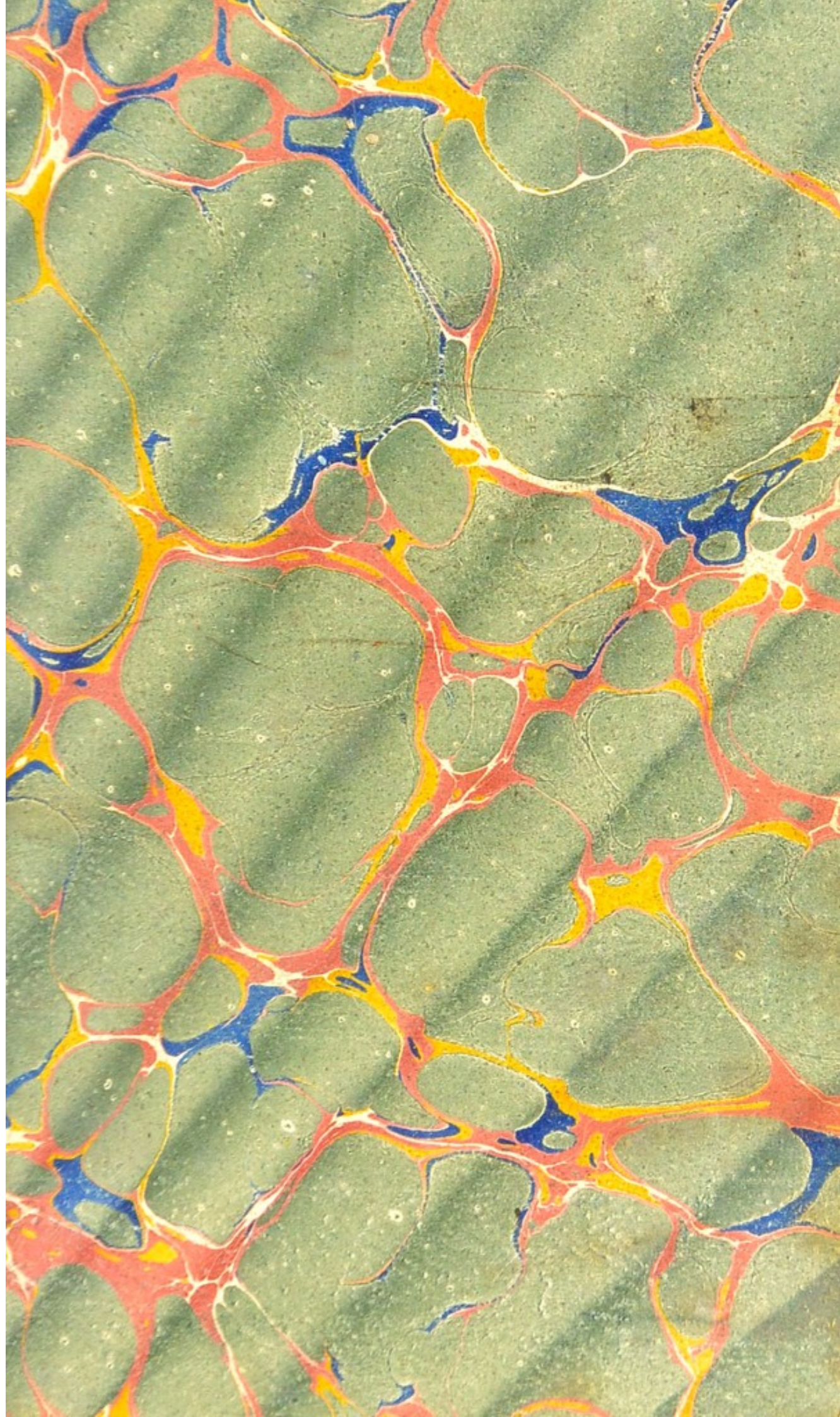
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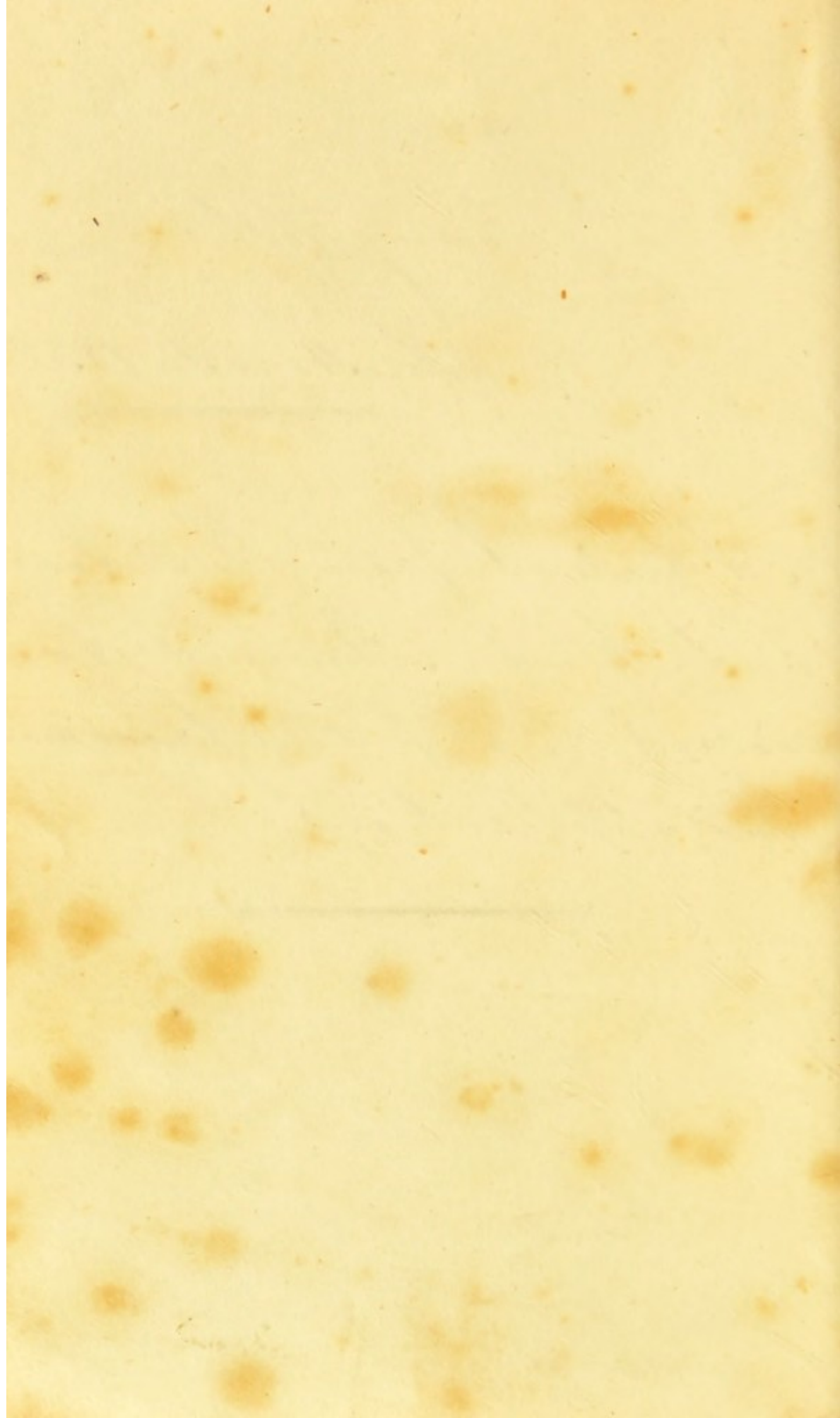
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Fanny Foster

Christmas - 1832

A present from her dear
and kind Mamma, to
reward her for improvement
and application.





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TALKS

BY THE AUTHOR

TALES
OF
A PHYSICIAN.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

TALES
OF
A PHYSICIAN.

BY W. H. HARRISON.

“ We crave exceeding pardon in the audacity of the attempt.”

SIR THOMAS BROWN.

LONDON:
ROBERT JENNINGS, POULTRY.

MDCCCXXIX.



ADVERTISEMENT.

SHOULD the title of this volume have betrayed any of its readers into a fruitless search for the author's name in the list of M.D.'s, he will very much regret the trouble they have incurred; at the same time, he would, in all humility, suggest, that, as it is not unusual for the disciple of *Æsculapius* to seek his diploma in one city, and reputation in another, they are bound carefully to examine the records of the university of Timbuctoo, ere they pronounce the author an impostor or empiric.

In the mean time, they will perhaps have the condescension to take for granted, that the narrator of these Tales, having retired

from practice, or practice having retired from him, gathered the materials for his volume during a residence in one of our maritime counties, whither he retreated, and where, from the circumstance of there being no other physician in the vicinity, he was frequently applied to for professional advice.

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THE VICTIM.

THE 11th 1817

THE 11th 1817

THE VICTIM.

“ Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.”

SHAKSPEARE.

ABOUT a month after I had been settled in my new residence, and just as I had risen from the breakfast-table, a very splendid carriage, with servants in superbly decorated liveries, drew up at my door. In the next instant, a personage, whom I had observed on the box, was ushered into my library. He was apparelled in a light drab great coat, with huge pearl buttons, white breeches, striped waistcoat, and a prismatic handkerchief tied round his neck with an affectation of carelessness. Judging from his appearance that he could be no other than the coachman, I was somewhat surprised at the unceremonious air with which he made his *entrée*; and it was not until he had announced himself as Mr. Timothy Downing, the son of Mr. Alderman Downing of Woodland Park, that

I pointed to a chair, and begged the favour of his commands. He presented the compliments of his mother, with a request that I would visit her daughter, concerning whose health the family were under some apprehensions. He added, without waiting for my reply, that having brought the carriage for the purpose of exercising the horses, he would give me a *cast*, as he termed it, to the Park. I observed that he was probably not aware that I had retired from practice, and had no inclination whatever to resume it; but, as I believed he would have some difficulty in procuring immediate professional advice, at that distance from town, and as the case appeared somewhat urgent, I should certainly not hesitate to obey the summons. I thanked him for his offer of the *cast*; but added, that my servant was leading my horse to the door, as I had previously resolved upon a ride, and I should prefer that exercise to proceeding in the carriage; an election at which the countenance of my booted visitor expressed, as well as it could express any thing, some surprise; and, muttering what sounded to me like "*de gustibus*" done into English, he made his bow, ascended to his proper station, and drove off. As soon as he was gone, I mounted my horse, and, followed by Jonathan, whose gray livery formed a

striking contrast to the glittering appointments of the worthy alderman's serving men, I took the nearest road to the mansion, and arrived there some time before its hopeful heir. It occurred to me, as I approached the house, that if the young lady resembled the sample I had already seen of the family, her speedy restoration to health would be as desirable to the physician as to the patient.

The alderman was from home, but I was received by his lady, who conducted me to the apartment of the invalid. On entering, I beheld a girl about nineteen, rather above than below the ordinary height of women. A profusion of dark hair fell, somewhat negligently, upon her shoulders, but was parted off on one of the finest foreheads I ever beheld. Her eye was of a light blue, approaching to gray, and her face, though perhaps not what the critic would style a beautiful one, shone even through the languor of sickness, with an expression that indicated what a bright spirit had been quelled by the power of disease. The memory of other days had closed my bosom against the attractions of the fairer sex; but he must, indeed, have a cold heart, who can contemplate a woman in distress, be the cause or the nature of it what it may, without sympathy and compassion; sentiments which are

doubtless considerably deepened, when the sufferer is a beautiful one. That this interest should be augmented by the latter circumstance cannot, I fear, be justified upon any plea; although it may probably be traced to the feeling, which induces us to lament the withering of a rose more than of a flower of less beauty, though both were formed by the same hand, cherished by the same sun, and watered by the same dew.

I questioned the young lady with an air of as much cheerfulness as I could assume, as to her malady; but I soon discovered, by the indifferent manner in which she answered me, that she had little faith in any remedy that medical skill could suggest. I found, however, that she laboured under extreme nervous irritability; and, having prescribed such medicines as I deemed proper, I took my leave. I was followed down the stairs by Mrs. Downing, a lady who appeared to possess the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and to be most affectionately attached to her daughter; concerning whose complaint she anxiously inquired my opinion. I requested leave to suspend my judgment until I had made another visit, which I proposed to do on the following day.

In the interval, I gleaned some particulars of the

alderman's history. He had risen, from a very humble station, to the possession of immense wealth, and to the chief office in the magistracy of the first city in the world. He was distinguished by a pertinacity of purpose, which was the result rather of a certain decision of character than of obstinacy. He was never known to relinquish a pursuit while the attainment of his object was within the remotest limit of probability. If there were a straight road to it, he preferred it as the shorter; but he was not scrupulous in taking a crooked one, if he thought it expedient. He had nothing of the polish, and few of the habits, of a gentleman: in early life they would have encumbered him, and they are not of easy acquirement in maturer years. In point of intellect, however, he was many grades above the level of his fellow citizens, an advantage which gave him consequence in the civic senate. He was haughty, tyrannical, and austere in his family, but his whole mind was bent upon its aggrandisement. He was miserably disappointed, however, in his son, who was deficient in application to business; while his want of courage would have disgraced the army, and his dullness and profligacy the church. The alderman's hopes were, therefore, centred in the beauty and attractions of his daughter, upon

whose education he had spared no cost. He considered matrimony a traffic, woman the merchandise, and love, the title-deed of beauty, a feather in the scale.

On my second visit, in which I had greater facility of observation, the opinion I had formed in the first instance was fully and sadly confirmed. The disease was in the delicate anatomy of the mind, and was beyond the control of the earthly physician. If, upon this occasion, I felt the irregular pulse, or examined the feverish tongue, they were but minor points of observation. I looked upon her countenance, the best index of the heart that has not learned deception in the cold school of the world, and I saw written, in characters which could not be mistaken, for they were plain as the finger of God upon the face of the creation, the anguish of that deferred hope which has been well said to sicken the heart. Resignation, indeed, sat upon her melancholy brow; and, if there lingered aught of hope in her yet eloquent eye, the darkness of the grave was between it and what it promised.

Mrs. Downing, as in the former instance, attended me from the apartment, and conducted me into another; where, for the first time, I beheld the alderman. He was apparently between fifty

and sixty; tall, and rather thin; his complexion was dark, and his features were prominent and rigid. His eye was gray and piercing, and his brow stern and severe.

Upon his tendering me the customary fee, I rejected it with a motion of my hand, and said, "Sir, I should but rob you in accepting it. It is not in the power of the art which I profess to render your daughter any essential relief. Medicine, it is true, may soothe her sufferings, as well as protract them, but it cannot avert the catastrophe they threaten. The wound is in her mind;—how and by whom inflicted, you probably know. I desire not to pry into family secrets; but, if there be any earthly remedy for her affliction, and that remedy be within your power, it is my duty to tell you, that not a moment should be lost in applying it. If, on the contrary, there be no such remedy, your only hope is, by amusing her mind, to divert it, as far as may be, from the subject upon which it is now so fatally brooding." As it appeared that she was strongly averse from change of residence, I suggested, that she should be prevailed upon to take an airing in the carriage every day on which the weather and her strength would permit. I added, that, upon any occasion on which they

might deem it satisfactory, I should be most happy to attend their daughter at their residence, or to see her at mine. Mrs. Downing thanked me with much warmth, and her husband with great civility; but he appeared in no degree impressed with the sense of his child's danger which was entertained by his wife.

A few days afterwards, about noon, I received a visit from Mrs. Downing and her daughter, made, I imagine, rather as a pretext for inducing the invalid to take an airing, than with any view of advantage in consulting me. Considering it, therefore, rather as an ordinary call, after some little conversation, I showed them the improvements in my house, which had formerly belonged to a friend of theirs, and introduced them to my library, where I endeavoured to amuse my patient with the contents of my portfolio, and a rather valuable collection of minerals, medals, &c. I should not have noticed this visit, but for a remarkable circumstance with which it was connected. It happened that I had occasion to open a drawer in my writing table for a microscope, for the purpose of a more minute examination of a medal, when a bulbous root, which had been deposited there by accident, attracted her notice. "Who would ever think," said she, "in

looking upon this unsightly root, that it was once the pride of the garden, gladdened by the sun-beam, and fanned by the breeze ! Now that its blossoms are gone, how unlovely and neglected it lies !” “ Ay, madam,” said I, perceiving the allusion to the fallen blossoms of her own blighted hopes, “ but the spring-time is at hand, when it will shine in all the beauty of its earliest bloom.” She replied, with a melancholy smile, “ True, sir, but it must be laid in the earth first.” The words smote upon my heart like the knell of the speaker. It was well, for the right interpretation of my feelings, that Mrs. Downing was, at that moment, engaged in the examination of some prints at a remote part of the room. I threw down the glass, which my hand trembled too violently to apply to the object, and walked to the window to conceal my emotion, and, may I add, to wipe the tear from my cheek. I recovered my self-command in time to offer my visitors some refreshment, which the servant had just brought into the room. They soon afterwards took their leave, but not until they had obtained from me a promise that I would call upon them in a few days.

When I next visited the Park, it happened that the alderman and his lady were out, and that there

were none of the family at home but Emily and her brother. The latter was in the breakfast parlour, caressing a puppy of the bull-dog breed, nearly as handsome and intelligent as himself. He returned my salutation with something between a bow and a nod, and informed me, that, if I wanted to see his sister, she was in the drawing-room; adding, that he supposed I knew the way. A servant, however, better bred than her young master, announced me to the invalid, whom I found exhibiting but slight indications of amended health. She received me with an expression of kindness, and rather as a friend than as her physician. In reply to my inquiries concerning her health, she said, "It cannot, I am certain, have escaped your penetration, that the cause of my malady is seated much too deeply to be reached by any remedies that medicine can offer. You have been kind to me, most kind; and the silent sympathy with which you have regarded my sufferings claims my gratitude as well as my confidence. It will be a sensible relief to a heart which it has pleased Heaven, for wise and merciful purposes, to charge with affliction, to unburthen itself to one who will compassionate, although he cannot relieve my sorrow." I interrupted her by saying, that it was far from

my wish to invite a confidence which might be painful to her; but that, if there were any thing wherein my services might be availing, I should experience real gratification in devoting them to her.

The reader will, ere this, have conjectured that her malady was that which has blanched many a cheek, once blushing with beauty; and dimmed many an eye which joy and hope once illumined with their brightest beams: the malady which, so early as the Augustan age, was pronounced to be

“ medicabilis nullis herbis.”

Her story was this: Edward Netherton had been recalled from his studies at the university by the death of his father, which deprived him of the means of pursuing them. He had little money, and few friends, and was compelled to abandon all hope of embracing a profession to which he had ardently aspired, and to accept of a situation in the counting-house of Mr. Alderman Downing; to whom, in the course of time, he proved eminently useful. He was occasionally a guest at his table, where he became introduced to Emily. From what I could gather from her, as well as from all I had previously heard, Edward was a fine scholar, an elegant poet,

somewhat of an artist, and withal a most amiable man. It appeared, also, that, at the request of her father, he undertook to become her preceptor in one or other of the accomplishments in which he excelled. Alas ! the game of master and scholar, at which hearts are often the stake, is rarely played by young persons of opposite sexes, but, as in all other games, one of them, and not unfrequently each, rises from the table a loser. And thus it was with them. “ Oh, sir !” said the dear sufferer, “ if I have not been a giddy, thoughtless girl, borne away by the tide of fashion, and every whim of the day, it is to him that I owe the inculcation of those principles which have imparted steadiness to my character and strength to my mind. For whatever I possess beyond the tinsel accomplishments which, in the present day, are used to cover the poverty of the mind, I am chiefly indebted to him. He struggled, sir, with his passion ; and, whatever the conflict might have cost him, would, I am persuaded, have carried it unrevealed to the grave. In an unguarded moment, however, in which his life was in peril, and perilled for me, I discovered to him the state of my heart. The alternative of confessing a reciprocal feeling, or appearing to slight what, alas ! he prized too dearly, was before

him. He made the election. If there be a bliss of earthly origin, it exists in the moment when two affectionate hearts discover that their love is mutual;—that moment was ours—a blessed but a brief one. The storm soon broke over our heads, in the indignation of my father, who discarded Edward; and bade me, under the penalty of his curse, never more to think of him as my future husband. He prides himself upon what he terms decision of character, and has never relented. His opposition was, moreover, strengthened by my having, about the same period, declined the addresses of a baronet of large fortune, and ancient family; but whom, even had I not previously formed an attachment, it was impossible I could have loved. He was nearly double my age, and had led a life of great profligacy. Separation from Edward you would perhaps deem an adequate punishment for my offence, if such it were. Imagine, then, sir, what I must endure in hearing, as I am often condemned to do, the being in whom I saw all that in my wildest day-dream I had imagined of human excellence, alternately reviled and ridiculed; his very virtues denied or distorted, and his talents held up to scorn, as badges of beggary and degradation. Had it rested with my father, you would never have been consulted

in my case; and now, in despite of your opinion, he affects to disbelieve that the state to which I am reduced is the consequence of the line of conduct which he has adopted towards me."

The poor girl was almost exhausted by the exertion, which the recital of her story had called forth. Availing myself of a pause, I ventured to express a hope that her father might yet be awakened to a sense of her real situation, and avowed my resolution of remonstrating with him on the subject. She thanked me for my solicitude, but added, "Alas! sir, it is now too late; the hand of death is upon me, his arrow is in my heart! I have not troubled you with my melancholy history, in the expectation of deriving benefit from any interference your kindness would suggest on my behalf; but rather to enable you to do justice to my memory, and to the character of Edward, when I am in the grave; for we have both been the subject of much misrepresentation. My brother will not vindicate us, and my mother dares not."

I was vainly endeavouring to chase the forebodings which had, too justly I feared, taken possession of her mind, when the sound of a carriage announced the return of the alderman, of whom I requested a private interview, which he, somewhat sullenly I

thought, condescended to grant. I opened the conference by stating, that it was with extreme reluctance I entered upon what, I feared, might be construed into an unwarrantable interference in the affairs of his family, with which, in a general sense, I had certainly nothing to do. I had, however, been consulted in the case of his daughter, which I ought not to disguise from him, had undergone a change materially for the worse. As a professional man, I had a duty to perform, and that duty I should not hesitate to discharge respectfully, but fearlessly. I called to his recollection the opinion and recommendation I had given on my second visit, and I added, that a conversation I had just had with his daughter, the nature of which he would have no difficulty in guessing, had confirmed that opinion, and justified the recommendation. I implored him, whatever doubts he might have entertained with regard to the cause or degree of his daughter's illness, now to dismiss them; and, if he needed any further evidence of the correctness of my view of her case, to go into the next room, and gather conviction from her wasted form, faded cheek, and sunken eye. I beseeched him to strike at once at the root of the disease, by sending, without delay, for the young gentleman to whom his daughter was

attached; assuring him, that, in her restoration to his society, existed the only chance of arresting the progress of the complaint.

The countenance of the alderman grew dark as a thunder cloud, as he replied sternly, "By what right do you presume to dictate to a father the conduct he should pursue towards his child?" "The right, sir," I answered, "with which yourself have invested me; the right of a physician to name a remedy for the disease he is called upon to combat." "But, sir," said he, "you will allow me to entertain doubts of the infallibility of your judgment. I am disposed to consider her indisposition as rather the result of temper than affliction. You appear to attach great importance to my opposition to my daughter's wishes, and, with singular impartiality, to leave entirely out of the question her obstinate resistance to mine. I had selected for her a husband who, in point of wealth and consequence, might vie with any gentleman in the county; but, in utter disregard of the entreaties, as well as the authority of a parent, she persisted in rejecting him; pleading, forsooth, a prior attachment—and for whom?—a beggar." "Beggar, sir," said I, "is a harsh word to apply to a gentleman, who, I presume, never asked or received from you more than

the stipulated reward, or rather repayment, for his service; but this beggar, as you are pleased to designate him, is, if the world, which is not given to overrate merit, speak the truth, of most unblemished character, and your daughter's equal in every respect, save in wealth, which would appear to be the principal recommendation of his rival. But, sir, your daughter would not wear the golden fetters you had forged for her, and you have bound her fast in 'misery and iron,' the iron that enters the soul. Such marriages, sir, may be contracted by men, but they have not the blessing of Heaven;—they are made at the shrine of avarice, not on the altar of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold such iniquitous sacrifices. Untimely as would be your daughter's fate, and bitterly as I should lament the cutting off of such a flower in the spring-time of its beauty, I say, sir, it were better that she call the worm her sister, than such a man her husband! Let earth have its own, but rob not beauty of her birthright, the choice of her love." "You speak your sentiments with tolerable freedom," said Mr. Downing. "And to little purpose, it would seem," rejoined I, "and, therefore, it were idle to prolong the discussion. I pointed out to you, in the first instance, the only means upon which a hope of

your daughter's recovery could be founded; it had been well for your future peace had you then adopted them: I do not say that is not now too late; but, late as it is, it is your imperious duty to apply them without delay. The laws of your country cannot, it is true, avenge her death; but if, without an effort to save, you suffer her to perish, the blood of Abel did not cry more loudly against the murderer Cain, than will the blood of this innocent against you." With these words, which I delivered impressively, for I felt deeply, I quitted the apartment, and, mounting my horse, returned to my home.

In the dead of that night, I was awakened by my servant, who entered my room half-dressed, saying that a messenger had just arrived from Mr. Downing, requesting my immediate attendance at the Park, as Miss Emily's disorder had taken an alarming turn since my visit in the morning.

I dressed in haste, and flinging myself upon my horse, I desired Jonathan to follow me, and galloped to the residence of Mr. Downing, whom I found in a frame of mind very different from that in which I left him in the morning. The fountains of parental affection have been frozen by pride, or checked by avarice, but they are seldom dried up.

The springs which had so long ceased to flow now gushed forth from his heart, but they were the waters of bitterness. He was indeed a picture of the most poignant, nay, the most abject misery. "Oh, Doctor *****!" he exclaimed, as soon as he saw me, "I had not thought it would have come to this! would to God I had listened to your counsel before it had been too late, as now I fear it is!" I interrupted him by requesting to see his daughter. As I approached her bed, she held out her hand, and smiled faintly. I saw very clearly that the sum of the poor girl's existence was reduced to a very few hours; and, retiring for a short space with her father, I unreservedly stated to him my opinion, for which he seemed in some measure prepared, though he wept bitterly. I added, that, although death could not be averted, its pangs might yet be softened, and requested to know if he would now consent to send for Mr. Netherton. He smote his forehead, as if in reproach for having so long delayed it, and begged I would order his carriage for that purpose. I preferred, however, to employ Jonathan, upon whose zeal I had good cause for relying; and furnishing him with the address of the young gentleman, who was in a neighbouring town, I explained to my messenger

the urgency of the case, well knowing that he needed no other stimulus to expedition. He mounted one of my horses, and, leading the other, immediately departed on his errand. I returned to the bed-side of my patient, who was perfectly conscious of her approaching end. The tears gushed from her eyes, as she thanked me for all the kindnesses I had rendered her; and which had encouraged her, she added, to urge upon me a request which she felt she had no right to prefer, but which she yet trusted I would not refuse. I assured her, that any injunction she laid upon me should be most religiously fulfilled, if within the scope of my ability. She then said, "Poor Edward has not a friend in the world! will you be a friend to him when I am gone?" "Yes," replied I, "my poor girl, I will." I then implored her to dismiss from her mind all apprehensions for his welfare; assuring her, that I would make it my peculiar care, and that my purse and my influence should be employed to promote it. "God bless you, then!" said the dying sufferer; "you have relieved my mind of the only weight that pressed on it in this my parting hour, and I shall die happy."

The gray light of the morning was breaking upon the window, when the clattering of hoofs

was heard upon the road, and, in a moment afterwards, in the court-yard beneath the apartment. I looked forth, and beheld my horses in a foam, and a gentleman casting himself from one of them. I had barely time to reach the door, to prevent his breaking upon Emily too abruptly. He was a fine young man, and the nobleness of his mien was discernible even through his affliction. As he approached the bed, a gleam of joy lighted her eye and flushed her cheek, imparting to her countenance an expression so heavenly, that, but for the mourners around me, I could almost have imagined that the bitterness of death was past, and she was smiling upon him from a better world.

It is not within the power of language to convey an adequate idea of the afflicting scene that followed. Edward's grief was boundless: the manly cheek which, upon any other occasion, would have scorned a tear, or dried it instantly with the blush of shame, was now deluged like an infant's. "Weep not so bitterly, my own Edward," said the dying girl; "it was your voice that recalled me from the gaieties of a vain world to the path that leadeth to happiness, and do you weep that I am arrived at the threshold of her dwelling? Yes, my love, I am speeding to that blessed country where sighing and

sorrow shall be no more. He who has summoned my spirit from her dwelling of clay hath not left me comfortless in this hour of trial. Weep not, then, my Edward, when I am in the dust, or mourn not as those who sorrow without hope!" Edward could reply to her only in sobs and tears.

In the mean time, her strength was gradually failing her, and shortly after she had motioned her father and mother to her bed-side, and kissed and blessed them both, she sunk upon the bosom which had so long cherished her image, and whispering "We shall meet again," yielded up her spirit, full of charity towards the world she left, and full of hope towards that to which she sped; thus affording a bright example of the confidence with which a Christian, clinging to the cross, commits himself to the ocean of eternity, having the "sure and certain hope" that it will float him over the dark waters to "the haven where he would be."

THE CURATE.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON
FROM THE FOUNDATION
TO THE PRESENT
TIME
BY
JOHN STOW
1618

THE CURATE.

“How was he honoured, in the midst of the people, in his coming out of the sanctuary.”

ECCLESIASTICUS.

THE incumbent of the village in which I resided was with us but a small portion of the year, and his duty was of course delegated.

The curate who was appointed shortly after my settling in the place was but recently in orders, and if a judgment might be formed from the manner in which he exercised his functions, he had embraced the profession, with a very just notion of its important duties, and a zealous determination to perform them to the best of his abilities. His person was not singularly handsome, nor had his features any claim to the same epithet; but there was a dignity in his manner, and an intelligence in his countenance, which, nevertheless, combined to render him a very interesting young man. He had a dark eye, and a forehead remarkably high

and expanded. I was always extremely gratified by the very great propriety with which he performed the service of the church. He was not probably what might be termed a finished reader, but he had a fine, deep, clear voice, and his delivery was, upon all occasions, emphatic and distinct; while, in the supplicatory parts of the service, he was singularly fervent and devout. In the composition of his sermons he appeared to have been guided by a maxim worthy of adoption by all writers and orators, be their object to improve the mind, or to delight the fancy; namely, that the language which flows most naturally from our own hearts is the best calculated to find its way to the bosom of another. His sermons were therefore distinguished by a simplicity of diction, which rendered them as intelligible to the rudest as to the most refined of his auditors; and when he had occasion to address the feelings, or awaken the sympathies of his congregation, he was eminently successful. In point of doctrine, he was not one of those who would make narrower the narrow path: he declared the gospel of Christ to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" maintaining, that salvation is freely offered to all, and that if a few only are saved, it will be through

the obstinacy of the many, and not by the decree of God, who "willeth not the death of a sinner." He insisted much upon the promise of his divine Master, that whoever came to Him in faith and repentance, He would in no wise cast out. He avoided controversy in the pulpit, alleging, that it was idle to attack sectarians who were not there to vindicate their tenets; that his flock was at present undivided, and that when the wolf approached the fold, it would be time enough to go out to give him battle. He was a frequent visitor in all the cottages of the poor, and a faithful and judicious steward of the funds which, for their benefit, had been placed at his disposal by the wealthier of his parishioners. He was not more attentive to their instruction in the precepts of the Gospel, than anxious for their practical application of them: to which end it was his endeavour to reconcile all their disputes, and to cultivate among them "that most excellent gift," by which alone the harmony of society can be preserved.

The unaffected dignity of his manner repelled any approach to that familiarity which might weaken his influence upon their minds; while the kindness and benevolence of his heart were calculated to inspire them with confidence, and to win their regard.

It was towards the close of the year, on an unusually chilly evening, that I had drawn my chair to the fire, and sat down to read, with that feeling of thankfulness and comfort which we ought always to experience when the wind is howling around our dwelling, and scattering the seared leaves, while we are snugly sheltered from the "pitiless blast." It was not long, however, before Jonathan, who is a privileged man, broke in upon my solitude, ushering in a young woman, whom he announced as the servant of Mr. Everton, the curate. She said that he had been unwell for some days; but, on that morning, he had been unable to rise from his bed, where he was then lying, as she conceived, very seriously ill. She added, that, without consulting him, she had ventured to request my attendance, and hoped that I would not refuse to see the poor young gentleman. The garden of the rectory-house (which he occupied) skirted my own grounds, so that I was soon by the bed of the sick man, whom I found in a high state of fever, and apparently not conscious of any thing which was passing around him. His malady was rapidly approaching a crisis, which in a short time it attained; and, in the interim, I was very regular in my attendance on him, and latterly almost constantly by his side. He had an unusually strong constitution,

which grappled powerfully with its assailant, and at length, with the blessing of God, prevailed, and he began slowly to amend.

On calling one morning, I was informed by his servant, that he had slept very soundly since I saw him on the preceding night, and that he was not yet awake. I sat for some time by his bed, and at length, with a deep sigh, he awoke. He started up, and after gazing around him, and at last recognizing my person, he became sensible of the situation in which he had been, and questioned me as to the nature and duration of his malady. When I had satisfied him upon these points, he inquired if he had talked much in his fits of delirium; and, upon my informing him that he had, he asked the theme of his wanderings, and if he had mentioned the names of any persons. On my stating that "Elizabeth" was of frequent occurrence in the temporary aberration of his reason, his pale cheek became flushed, and he inquired if any but myself had heard him. I replied, that I was very constantly in attendance on him, and that my necessary absence had been supplied by my servant Jonathan, upon whose discretion I could implicitly depend; and, with regard to myself, secrecy upon such matters formed one of the qualifications of our pro-

fession ; so that he need be under no apprehensions that any thing which might have escaped his lips, when in that state, would be divulged. He then thanked me with much warmth for my attention to him during his illness, and made some allusion to remuneration. I interrupted him by requesting him at once to dismiss the idea, and assured him that I had visited him entirely as a friend and a neighbour, and that I was more than repaid by the reflection of having been in any way instrumental in preserving a life so valuable to society. I continued to visit him every day ; and upon one occasion, after he was sufficiently recovered to quit his bed-room, I found him in his parlour, labouring, as I conceived, under considerable depression of spirits. On my attempting to rally him by observing, that, if his cheerfulness returned not with his health, I should begin to fear that the incoherences of his late delirium had some foundation in reality,

“ Alas ! Doctor **** !” he replied, “ I would to Heaven that there were no such foundation for them. I have exposed myself in my wanderings ; but it is well—it is the just punishment of my folly and presumption. Sir,” he added, “ when I first undertook this cure, I brought with me a zeal for

the service of Him under whose banner I had enlisted. I went forth among my flock in a strength that was not my own, and I bless God that my labours have not been in vain. It is true, I cannot reproach myself with any relaxation in my duty towards my parishioners; but latterly, I fear, I have not proceeded in the work which has been given me to do with the earnestness and devotion with which I entered upon it. An absorbing passion has stolen in upon my heart, and has striven for mastery with the Spirit of God. Fervently, and through many a night, have I prayed that it might not prevail; for He will not always be striving with our sinful natures. Nor have my prayers been wholly disregarded, although the struggle that has brought my bodily frame to such a perilous pass has not altogether terminated within me. Do you know Elizabeth Hargrave? Nay, I believe you visit at her father's house. But it was not there that I received the fatal impression that has haunted me like a perturbed spirit. It was not in the festive hall, where the laugh, and the song, and the dance, were around her; but it was when the pride of beauty was kneeling and praying by the sick one's bed, cheering the weak-hearted, and speaking peace to the dying. Nay, I have seen the loveliest

and purest of that sex, from whom it has been said that

“ Every woe a tear can claim,
Except an erring sister's shame,”

bending over the couch of a misguided sister, upon whose guilt had come disease that poisons life, and penitence that sweetens death; and Elizabeth, in closing that frail one's eyes, cherished the consoling hope, that a flower would blossom in Heaven, which, but for her instrumentality, might have perished for ever on the bleak highway of the world.”

“ When she goes ‘ about doing good,’ the gilded standard of ostentation is not borne before her, as though she would ‘ be seen of men;’ the banner under which she serves is waving invisibly on high, where her sevenfold reward is laid up. Humility is the grace of all she does. The feelings with which she regards the frailties of those around her are widely remote from the proud pity of conscious virtue, and the balm of her consolation is ever so unobtrusively applied, that it falls upon the sinner's heart like dew upon the thirsty ground.”

I inquired of him if he had ever elicited from her aught that indicated a reciprocal feeling. “ Oh, no!” he replied, “ I am free from that guilt; I

have not profaned the chamber of death by the breathings of an earthly passion—I have not dared the vengeance of God in the presence of the dread messenger alike of His mercy and His wrath. The distance at which He has placed the object of my attachment convinces me that it has not His blessing, and therefore is my passion unholy; and therefore have I striven with it as with the enemy of my peace; and frequently, when perhaps my time should have been devoted to the care of another's soul, have I spent it in supplicating deliverance from the leprosy which clung to my own. Oftentimes, too, have I entered the house of God in trembling, lest, when my spirit should ascend to Him in praise, a voice which mine ear had singled out, though myriads formed the choir, should chain it down to an image of clay, which, in my idolatry, I had set up. But ‘affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;’ and it was doubtless to humble my presumption that this temptation has been permitted to assail me. It may be that, in contemplating the success which has attended my ministry, I have not given all the glory to God, but ascribed a share of it to the unworthy instrument by which His holy

spirit has been pleased to operate on the hearts of sinful men ”

“ But, sir,” he added, “ I am calmer now, and I yet hope that, though I may not altogether and at once eradicate the passion, I may so far subjugate it, that it shall not be a stumbling-block in the path of my duty.”

On the following Sunday, Mr. Everton made his appearance at church, for the first time since his illness, of which he still bore the traces in his countenance ; and his step, as he approached the desk, was not so firm as it was wont to be. The interest which the congregation felt for their pastor was very generally apparent ; but there was one being among them, who directed towards him, as he passed through the aisle, a look of more than common inquiry.

He entered the reading-desk, and appeared absorbed in silent prayer for rather longer than the time usually allotted to that purpose, and when he raised his head, there was a firmness in his look, and a serenity on his brow, which assured me that his petition for tranquillity had been heard. He maintained the same composure throughout the hymn for the morning : the voice

that had once been so dangerous was, on this occasion, tremulous, and scarcely heard by those immediately around her. He commenced the service by pronouncing, in a tone of deep humility, "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me;" and proceeded in the duty with a manner so fervent and devotional, as to convince me that his whole soul was engaged in it. At the conclusion of the sermon, he was met at the church-door by many of his parishioners, rich and poor, who lingered for the purpose of congratulating their minister upon his recovery, and among them was the family of the Hargraves. He was deeply affected by the solicitude so generally evinced towards him, and by that family in particular; but when he took the hand of Elizabeth, which was extended to him in common with that of each of her sisters, I could observe no change either in his countenance or demeanour; and he afterwards assured me, that he had gone through the whole scene of that morning with a fortitude for which he could never be sufficiently grateful to the source whence he felt he derived it.

I called upon Mr. Everton again in the course of the week, and observing that he was somewhat discomposed, I ventured to inquire the cause. He

informed me, that he had just received a letter acquainting him of the death of his rector, and that its consequence would be his removal from the curacy; a circumstance, he added, which he could not but regret. I inquired if such were the necessary result of the appointment of a new rector. He said there could be little doubt of it, as a new incumbent had usually some friend to serve, and would questionless have many applicants at a time when "titles for orders" were in such great requisition.

I suggested, that the gentleman in whose gift the living was might, by a timely and judicious representation from some of his opulent parishioners, be prevailed upon to recommend his continuance in the curacy to the clergyman on whom he should confer the living; and I inquired of him the name of the patron. He replied, that it was the Earl of R****. It happening that I had, in early life, had some little intercourse with his lordship, I offered to make the application to him myself. Mr. Everton thanked me, but said he had not very sanguine hopes of my success. It was then early in the day, and I determined to ride over immediately to the nobleman's residence, which was within a few miles of the village. The earl, I remembered, was, when

I had been in the habit of meeting him, distinguished by a very strong sense of religion; but I knew not what change might since have been wrought in his feelings. He was high in court favour, and held a place in the cabinet, and in the confidence of his sovereign. His lordship, to whose presence I was admitted immediately on sending up my card, received me with a warmth which evinced the pleasure he felt in a visit from an old acquaintance, although he expressed some surprise at seeing me. He had heard, he said, of my success in my profession; of my sudden accession of property; and of my having subsequently retired, but whither he knew not; and was pleased to express himself gratified at my being so near a neighbour, as well as by my attention in calling. I hastened to undeceive him as to the motive of my visit, by assuring him, that I had not, until that morning, been aware of his living so near me, and that I came entirely in the character of a suitor. He said it happened opportunely that he was disengaged for the rest of the day; and that, if I would stay and dine with him, he would very readily listen to any request I might have to prefer. Availing myself of his lordship's hospitality, I introduced the subject after dinner, and requested

the exertion of his influence with the gentleman whom he might appoint to the vacant rectory, for the continuance of Mr. Everton as curate. The earl did not reply so readily to my solicitation as might have been anticipated from his former professions, but proceeded to put some questions as to my knowledge of Mr. Everton's character and qualifications; in replying to which, I referred his lordship to some of the most respectable parishioners for a confirmation of my statement.

The earl at length dismissed the subject, by assuring me, that he would not be unmindful of my request, but would do all he could to prevent the removal of Mr. Everton. When coffee had been served up, I took my leave, after receiving a cordial invitation to repeat my visit whenever I found it agreeable.

I called on the following morning at the rectory, and communicated to Mr. Everton the particulars of my interview with the earl. He thanked me with much warmth for the interest I had taken in his welfare, but did not anticipate a result favourable to his wishes; appearing to consider the assurance of his lordship as a method, common among courtiers, of politely ridding themselves of a suitor whom they have no desire to offend. Assuredly I

could not censure a conclusion which was perhaps but too well warranted by the custom of the great, nor was I prepared to prove it an erroneous one.

I called upon Mr. Everton again at the end of a few days, during which interval I had not heard a syllable from the earl on the subject of my application, and began to apprehend that the young clergyman might boast a better knowledge of the world than myself, and that my noble friend had “kept the word of promise to the ear, but broke it to the hope.”

I found Mr. Everton busied in preparations for quitting the rectory, having had, as he informed me, authentic intelligence that a new rector had been appointed, although he could not ascertain his name. He said he had that morning been making several valedictory visits in his parish; among other places, he had called at Mr. Hargrave's, and had been ushered into the drawing-room, where he found Elizabeth, the only one of the family at home. He said that, whatever reluctance he had previously felt, on his personal account, at quitting the curacy, the nature of that interview was such as to convince him that his departure was absolutely necessary, both as it respected his own peace of mind, and, it grieved him to add, the welfare and tranquillity of another.

While we were conversing on the subject, Jonathan entered with a packet addressed to myself, which he said had been left at my house by a groom. There was a coronet on the seal, on breaking which, I found a note couched in the following terms :

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ If there be a point, in the range of my patronage, whereon I have been assailed by more scruples of conscience than on another, it is the disposition of the church livings in my gift. It is a privilege I would gladly altogether forego, and the only way in which I can reconcile myself to the exercise of it, is by nominating men of exemplary piety and usefulness to the vacancies which it falls to my lot to fill up. You will believe me then, that, in requesting you will do me the favour to offer to Mr. Everton the presentation of the living of **** in my name, I am heartily rejoiced in having it in my power to appoint so worthy a man, and very much indebted to you for having introduced him to my notice. Believe me, my dear sir, very faithfully yours,

“ R****.”

Without an observation, I put the letter into Mr. Everton's hand. He perused it, and sunk down upon a chair, overwhelmed by the variety and strength of his feelings. His first exclamation was "Oh, God! I have not merited this at Thy hands." Next to the sentiment of thankfulness to Heaven, was that of gratitude to the earl as the dispenser of its bounty, and to myself for my interference. I interrupted his acknowledgments by assuring him, that I had only done what it was my duty to do, and that which I was persuaded there was not one in the village who would not have done, had the means been equally in his power.

Mr. Everton had been accustomed to rise early in the morning, a practice which, his strength being re-established, he was enabled to resume. It happened that, shortly after his appointment to the rectory, he was walking in a lane at some distance from the village, and heard voices in conversation on the opposite side of a fence which divided the road from the meadow; a circumstance, at such an hour, and in such a place, so unusual, induced him to look through the hedge, when he discovered four gentlemen, two of whom had pistols in their hands, while the others appeared to be measuring

the ground. Their purpose was not to be mistaken; and Mr. Everton, leaping the fence, advanced towards the party, and beheld, in the antagonists, Lord D****, the only son of the Earl of R****, and Mr. Edward Hargrave, the brother of Elizabeth.

By the time Mr. Everton had reached the spot, the parties had taken their respective stations, and were waiting the signal to fire. He immediately stepped between them, exclaiming, "In the name of the living God, whose servant I am, I command you to forbear." One of the seconds sternly desired him to withdraw, and not interfere in a matter which he could not avert. Mr. Everton replied, that, as a Christian minister, it was peculiarly his duty to prevent the shedding of blood. The gentleman, whose external was that of a man of the first fashion, advanced towards the clergyman, with the design of thrusting him from the ground. Mr. Everton awaited his approach with great calmness, and allowed himself to be seized before he made any show of resistance. He then grasped his assailant in turn, and, holding him off at arm's length, said, with a smile, "Young man, had I been as quick to resent aggression as some I see around me, you had measured your length on the

green sward at my feet." He then, loosing his hold, pushed him gently from him; and the young man, although his countenance had been well bronzed in the sunbeams of fashion, wanted the audacity, and possibly the courage, to repeat the offence.

Then, turning towards the nobleman, Mr. Everton said, "My lord, I am shocked to see the son of your father with the weapon of a murderer in his hand. Is it thus you seek to lay the pride of his heart and the hope of his age in an untimely grave? Is it thus you prize the noble blood that fills your veins, that you would pour it out upon the earth like water? And you, sir," addressing Mr. Hargrave, "who are of my own flock, and whom, so lately as the last sabbath, I heard, in the house of God, beseeching Him to deliver you 'from battle, and murder, and from sudden death,' how comes it that you proclaim yourself a hypocrite before God and man, by courting the evils you then deprecated? or do you imagine, that He who heard you then doth not look down upon you now? What, I pray you, do you both seek in thus perilling your lives in an encounter, the result of which will probably be, that one of you will be sent into the presence of his Maker fresh from the violation

of His laws, and the other, if he escape a death of shame, be driven forth a wanderer, with the curse of Cain upon his brow? What seek you, I say?" "Satisfaction," said the young lord; "what else think you?" "Satisfaction!" repeated Mr. Everton; "yes, the survivor of you will have satisfaction; for, if his vengeance be not glutted with the blood of his victim, the tears of the widow and the childless cannot fail to slake its thirst. Are the lilies of the field too fair, that ye must stain them with blood? Is the face of nature so exuberantly beautiful, that you must walk forth into her loveliness to darken it with crime? The emblems of Him who died that ye might live are grazing around you in peace, and would ye crucify Him afresh, and put Him to an open shame? Put up your weapons, return to your homes, and bless God that you have been saved from the guilt of murder."

"And what think you, reverend sir," replied the nobleman, "would be said of our courage, were we to follow your advice, or, I should rather say, your dictation?"

"Oh! my lord!" rejoined Mr. Everton, "none could doubt your courage, for you have gone beyond the usual daring of men, and have defied the living God: Him who proclaimed, in the thunder

of Sinai, 'Thou shalt do no murder.' But, since an appeal to His laws will not prevail with you, I pray you both, and these gentlemen, seriously to consider whether the offence between you be of so deep a dye, that blood alone can wash it out; and whether, if one of you should fall, the survivor would not envy him his bloody grave, when he goes forth an exile, pursued by fear, and agonized by remorse."

Much time had now been consumed in the altercation, if such it may be termed; and the party, perceiving that the affair could not be proceeded in without interruption, and possibly somewhat wrought upon by the denunciations and entreaties of the clergyman, agreed that the seconds should retire a few paces, and reconsider the matter in dispute. The result was a proposal which was approved of by the principals, and a reconciliation followed. Mr. Everton then said, with a smile, that, as the gentlemen had probably not made any arrangements for their breakfast, they would perhaps do him the honour of taking coffee at the rectory; and the worthy divine had the pleasure of beholding at his board, in perfect amity, four beings, of whom, but for his interference, one had in all

probability been a corpse, and the others fugitives for their lives.

The late antagonists, when taking leave of their host, thanked him for having saved them from embruining their hands in the blood of their friend; since, as each was exposed to the hazard of it, both had reason to be grateful for his interference.

The young nobleman was unwilling to shock or anger his father by a recital of that morning's adventure, and Mr. Everton was not a man to boast of his own good deeds, or to expose the evil ones of another; and in after years, when his conduct upon that occasion came to the knowledge of the earl, his lordship's gratitude for the service was not a little augmented by the delicacy which had concealed it.

On the first Sunday after the appointment of Mr. Everton to the living, I observed, as he entered the church, that his sudden elevation had not tended in any way to change the meek and unostentatious demeanour which had distinguished him as the curate. Towards the conclusion of his sermon, he alluded to his recent appointment; but there were no professions—no promises, as if of himself he could do any thing—no attempt to

magnify the importance of his charge, or the arduous nature of its duties. He simply reminded his congregation, that, in his former capacity, he was, as it were, a mere sojourner among them, subject to removal at the pleasure, or on the death, of his rector; but that now, in all probability, his head would be pillowed in the green churchyard that surrounded them: and he beseeched his parishioners that they would join their prayers to his, that the Almighty would endue him with knowledge to perceive, and strength to discharge, the duties of the ministry to which he had been called; and that he might so prepare and make ready the way of his master, that, at His second coming, he and they might be found acceptable in His sight.

It was not many days after this, that Mr. Everton called upon me in the morning, and intimated that he desired to consult me upon a matter in which his happiness was involved. He said, that the interview with Miss Hargrave, at which he had formerly hinted as tending to diminish his reluctance at leaving the neighbourhood, formed the ground of his present hope, that a proposal for her hand might not be rejected by the lady, but that

his expectations of the concurrence of her family were not altogether so well founded. Upon this latter point, then, he requested my opinion; and upon my declaring that I saw no reasonable objection that could be made to the connexion, he stated that he could not overcome his reluctance to make the proposal to her family in person, and requested me to save him the embarrassment of such an interview, by becoming his ambassador, for which office my intimacy with the parties peculiarly qualified me. I readily acceded to his request, and availed myself of an early opportunity of introducing the subject to Mr. Hargrave, whose reply was, “ Dr. ****, I will be candid with you. I have long perceived a growing attachment on the part of Elizabeth for this young man, and while he was our curate, I own it occasioned me some regret, inasmuch as his curacy, and the little fortune I have yet been able to save out of an entailed estate for my daughters, would not have enabled him to support her in the manner in which she has been accustomed to live. I was certainly not aware of his attachment to her, and the principle upon which he concealed it does him infinite honour. Tell him, sir, I shall be proud of

him for a son-in-law, and with that assurance I leave him to plead his cause with Elizabeth as he best may."

The reader will anticipate the result. The flowers that were strewn in their bridal path faded with the sun which saw them gathered; not so the flowers that sprung up in the path of their future life, for they had taken root in the good ground, they were cheered by the sunbeams of Heaven's favour, and refreshed by the dew of its blessing!

THE GOSSIP.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.

AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.

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THE GOSSIP.

“ Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THERE was a lady of considerable fortune, and some consequence in the village, whom I usually met whenever I had occasion to go abroad, and particularly in the morning. Her visits, if a judgment might be formed from appearances, were rather numerous than long, and were made upon so regular a system, that she could scarcely fail of calling upon every acquaintance in the place at least once in the day. It was observed that her last visit was always the longest, and was at a particular house. There was such an air of earnestness in her countenance, and such celerity in her gait, as to give a casual observer an impression that she was following some important occupation rather than her pleasure.

She was very regular in her attendance at

church, and a communicant at the Lord's table; and was conspicuous in most charitable associations, and a subscriber to them all. She was active in searching out, and, from a laudable motive, in making public the wants and diseases of her poorer neighbours; nor do I believe she was backward in contributing to their relief. But if she was unremitting in her endeavours to find out and to proclaim the physical ailments of her poorer brethren, it is certain she was not less anxious to discover and expose the moral maladies of her friends and acquaintance. Alas, poor woman! she might have found ample employment in the precincts of her own heart for all the scrutiny she so gratuitously bestowed upon others. Her professions were not more lavish than hollow; she was fickle, if not insincere, in her friendships, and bitter in her enmities. She had all the heartlessness of a woman of the world, without any of the prudence attributed to that character. She had accomplishments, but she had neither mind nor stability of purpose. For myself, I have no charge to bring against her, for she ever treated me with great respect, and, in allusion to her unfortunate propensity, with singular forbearance, which I am disposed to attribute to prudential motives supplied to her by a circum-

stance which occurred very shortly after I came to reside in the village. It will probably be concluded that this lady had been disappointed in youth and slighted in age, and was revenging on the world at large the injustice she had sustained from the few; that she was a spinster, old and ill-favoured, and an active propagator of scandal, for want of a better occupation; that having no objects of endearment at home, and no qualifications for securing them abroad, her temper had been soured; but no, Mrs. Crowfoot was a wife and a mother. Her husband was a man of retired but amiable habits, and her children were dutiful and lovely. Heaven had blessed them with abundance, but their dwelling was not a happy one; for she who should have regulated their domestic concerns was always on the wing to pry into those of others. She was an instance of the fact, that, universally as scandal is deprecated, the society of those who deal in it is not generally avoided, especially where their pretensions are supported by the possession of wealth.

Thus it happened, that, with the facility of collecting the venom, she possessed the opportunity of diffusing it. I do not mean to say that she was

a slanderous woman ; for slander I consider to be a sheer lie, invented and propagated to injure a person, with no other motive than the gratification of revenge, or some equally base passion ; but she was a scandalous woman ; and scandal, without reference to its strict etymological derivation, but in the sense in which it is commonly used, I take to be a propensity to discover and to expose the weaknesses of our neighbour ; the ascribing to a bad motive an action which may have originated in a good one ; the receiving with eagerness, and diffusing with delight, a report to the prejudice of another, without employing a moment in investigating its truth, or harbouring a wish to prove it false. The causes of a propensity to scandal are various. In some it proceeds from mere talkativeness, in others from want of employment ; from the poverty of a mind, which, possessing no sources of conversation in itself, seeks them in the conduct and affairs of others ; from a wanton disposition, which would torture the feelings, upon the principle on which a child will torture an insect, or a tyrant his slave. Hypocrisy is an inseparable, as well as a necessary, ally of scandal, which ever affects to deplore the failings it blazons forth ; I say a neces-

sary ally, inasmuch as a person who, in circulating a tale to another's prejudice, exulted in his frailty, would hardly be tolerated in any society.

Slander and scandal differ also in the manner of their attack. Slander is "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," but scandal is "the destruction that wasteth at noonday." Scandal seldom looks forward to the consequence of its acts, and sometimes repents of them; slander ever looks to the result of its labours, and is disappointed if it fail in its object. Slander is deliberate; scandal is thoughtless. Malice is the companion of the one, and folly of the other.

I was waited upon one morning by Mr. Blandford, the village apothecary, who informed me, that he had taken the liberty of calling upon me on behalf of a wretched young woman, who was lying in a state of disease and misery which defied his powers of description. He added, that her parents had, in her early years, occupied a respectable rank in society, but that her mother was dead, and her father had been obliged to fly the country to avoid imprisonment for debt; and that the poor girl, without a friend to help, to protect, or to guide her, had strayed from the path of virtue, and had recently returned from the metropolis to her native

village in the waggon, and finding no other shelter, she was driven to accept of one in the house of persons of disreputable character, who, less from compassion than from sordid views, which her yet beautiful face encouraged, had consented to receive her: that, in a day or two afterwards, she took to her bed, whither he had been summoned: that, finding her complaints to be of such a nature as to baffle his experience, and being still unwilling to abandon her to her fate, he had ventured to request that I would give her the benefit of my opinion upon her case. I commended him for his humanity, and thanked him for the compliment he had paid to mine by so frankly resorting to me, and expressed my willingness instantly to accompany him to the dwelling of the sufferer.

The house where the poor girl had found shelter was an old and rather extensive building, but having been the subject of a suit in chancery, and there being a variety of claimants to the property, no individual of whom thought it worth his while to look after it, it had fallen into a state of ruinous dilapidation, and had of late years never been regularly tenanted. The principal part of the front of the building was shut up, so that it had obtained, among the villagers, the name of the Dark House;

an epithet which accorded, also, with the transactions which its walls were supposed often to conceal. The ostensible inhabitants, at the period of which I am now writing, were a man and a woman, of worse than doubtful characters, leagued, it was supposed, with smugglers; but, from the circumstance of the search of the revenue officers for contraband goods having always been unsuccessful, it was conjectured that the house was used rather as an occasional rendezvous of the lawless band, than as a dépôt for their goods. Its situation was well adapted for either purpose, it being in a narrow and unfrequented lane, at some distance from the village.

On our arrival at this singular abode, we found the man and woman who tenanted it, and who, having discovered that their new inmate was likely to prove not only profitless but troublesome, were anxious to get rid of her, threatening to turn her out of doors, while she, alas! was too feeble either to obey their cruel injunctions or to dispute them. I silenced them by the assurance, that I would undertake to pay the rent they might choose to demand for the spacious but miserable apartment in which we found the wretched girl; whom, on approaching her bed, I perceived to be a poor

emaciated creature, scarcely nineteen, bearing in her countenance, which had once been lovely, the evidence that there is no ravager of beauty so relentless as sin. That, in a remote village, such a compound of diseases was not of that frequent occurrence as to have afforded my kind-hearted companion much experience to guide him in the treatment of her malady, was not difficult to be imagined. The London practitioner, however, has no cause to plead want of experience in such cases.

I saw at once the nature of her disorder, which was as complicated as the vicious practices which had brought it upon her; and what guilt had left undone, poverty and starvation had completed. I told Mr. Blandford, that her constitution was destroyed, but that, to my apprehension, her death was not so near at hand as he had anticipated. Medicine and nourishment, judiciously applied, might, I thought, prolong her life for some weeks; and every hour which afforded space for repentance to so wretched a being, he must be quite aware, was of infinite value. I immediately wrote for her, and delivering the prescription to my companion, I bade him lose no time in preparing it.

I returned home, and having directed my housekeeper to prepare, and send by Jonathan, such

nourishment as my wretched patient's exhausted condition required, I walked to the rectory, and stated to Mr. Everton the miserable situation in which the poor girl was, and inquired if he had any objection to visit her in that abode of darkness and suspicion?

“My dear sir,” replied he, “my master came into the world to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and if the Son of God disdained not to sit down with publicans and sinners, shall I refuse to carry the glad tidings of the gospel to a fellow-sinner, be the house of his abode never so wretched? You have shown a humane solicitude for the body that perisheth, and shall I be less anxious for an imperishable soul, which, if I go not, will surely be required at my hands? I will be at her bedside within two hours from this time: it will give space for her to take the benefit of the nutriment you have anticipated me in sending down to her, and she will then be in a state better fitted to attend to me.”

Mr. Everton was too unostentatious a Christian to add, what I had afterwards good reason to feel assured was the case, that part of those two hours was to be spent in prayers that God would soften

the heart of the sinner, and prepare it for the reception of His word, and send the blessing of His Spirit upon his humble endeavours to bring back a lost sheep to his master's fold.

Visitors, it appeared, had arrived at the Dark House since I had quitted it, for as Mr. Everton entered a large room, which was between the door and the passage leading to the sick one's apartment, many a dark brow lowered upon him, and ere he reached the door at the farther end, one of the party started up, and, opposing his progress, demanded what he did there, and bade him retire.

Mr. Everton was a man of great personal courage, and of uncommonly dignified manners. He drew himself up to his full height, and confronted his opponent with a look as undaunted as the other's was ferocious. "Rude man," said the clergyman, "my errand is one of peace, and concerns not you; and you will do well to let me pass, since the attempt to detain me may be attended with less safety than you may imagine." At that moment, a voice, hoarse as thunder, exclaimed, "Touch him not, but let him pass, for he is the poor man's friend." The ruffian, who bore among his associates the name of Black Barnabas, retired

sullenly to his seat, growling like a baffled bear, and the man of God stood by the bed-side of the sinner.

He came not armed with the terrors of the Lord, to brandish them, in unchristian triumph, over a frail sister already smitten to the dust. He came, rather like the Samaritan, to pour oil into the wound, and to bind up the broken heart. He wasted not the precious moments in eloquently demonstrating to one whose feet were bleeding from the thorns which had sprung up in her path, that the ways of sin are not the ways of pleasantness. Pride, which the evil one delights to oppose to the Gospel, had long since been withered in her breast by the chill blast of poverty and the degradation of her life; and the sense of her sin and her shame was wringing her heart with far greater anguish than the evils they had entailed were inflicting upon her frame. The spirit of the Lord had gone before the minister of His Gospel, and prepared her for the glad tidings of salvation. He could not indeed say, in the words of his divine Master, "Woman, thy sins be forgiven thee;" but he could say, "Be of good cheer, God will not break a reed which He hath bruised in mercy, and not in wrath." He read, explained, and noted down, for

her after meditation, such portions of the Scripture as applied to her case, and remained praying by her bed-side until a late hour of the night, when, after cheerfully assenting to the poor girl's request that he would condescend to repeat his visit, he departed unmolested to his home.

The poor magdalen lingered many weeks, during which the clergyman, Mr. Blandford, and myself, were very constant attendants upon her in our respective capacities. Mr. Everton, however, was the most successful; for he, in the course of his pious labours, had elicited from her such unequivocal evidence of a total change of heart—of “the renewal of a right spirit within her,” as to encourage in him a very lively hope that her soul would be added to the number of “the just made perfect.” Oh! if there be a time when the heart of a christian minister must overflow with gratitude for the blessings of the Gospel he is commissioned to teach, it is when he can, with confidence, stretch forth the hand of peace to the desponding sinner, in the name of his God, and say, “The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.”

It happened that, in the course of her illness, there was a kind of morning conversazione in the house which was alluded to in the commencement

of this narrative, as being the last at which Mrs. Crowfoot paid her morning visits. Among the company present upon this occasion was that good lady herself. They had not proceeded far in the dissections of the day, ere they were interrupted by the entrance of a Miss Meadowcroft, who was not one of that *set*, but had called upon some business with the lady of the house. Miss Meadowcroft was a maiden lady, who contrived to turn aside the ridicule and satire usually aimed at the class to which she belonged, by making it the common theme of her own good-humoured raillery. The following dialogue took place between her and the worthies of the junto :—

A Lady. Well, Mrs. Crowfoot, what news have you for us? is there any thing stirring abroad this morning?

Mrs. C. News, indeed! what novelty is likely to find its way to a dull village like ours, and to me, of all others of its inhabitants, who trouble myself so little with matters which do not concern me?

Miss M. True, Mrs. Crowfoot, your domestic concerns, if properly attended to, as doubtless they are, must pretty fully occupy your time, and leave you little to throw away upon the affairs of others.

Mrs. C. By the by, Miss Meadowcroft, I have seen your servant walking about very frequently with a gay-looking fellow of a sailor.

Miss M. Poor girl! I don't wonder at it; she must find the house of an old maid dull enough, and I cannot blame her for picking up a beau if she can. I can only say that the maid is more fortunate than her mistress has ever been.

Mrs. C. But this man is a loose character, I am quite persuaded: I saw him with her but an hour ago, at the coach-office, and the fellow took her round the neck, as familiarly as possible, and kissed her previously to his getting on the mail.

Miss M. Happy girl! how I envy her!

Mrs. C. Nay, madam, if you choose to wink at such gross improprieties on the part of your servant, I have certainly nothing to do with it; but I thought it proper that you should be informed of it.

Miss M. For which I am infinitely indebted to you, madam: but unless the "impropriety code" has been very recently amended by the Imperial House of Petticoats, I apprehend that a brother kissing his sister is no offence in law; for precisely in that relation do the sailor and my poor Patty stand to each other.

A Lady. So our rector's lady has presented him with a son?

Mrs. C. Ah, poor woman!

A Lady. Why, what is the matter? she is doing well, I hope.

Mrs. C. For aught I know to the contrary, she is.

Miss M. Then, whence your pity, Mrs. Crowfoot?

Mrs. C. Poor woman!

Miss M. Poor, indeed! Now I think she is about the wealthiest woman I know of; she is rich in beauty, rich in graces, christian, moral, and personal; rich in health, a very monopolizer of the love of all around her; and, finally, rich in one of the kindest, most benevolent, and talented husbands in the world.

Mrs. C. Talented he is, no doubt; at least so people say; but I am no judge in such matters.

Miss M. The breath of calumny has never rested upon his character either as a Christian or a man.

Mrs. C. Ah, madam! we are all frail mortals at the best.

Miss M. The maxim, coming from a lady of

your experience, madam, cannot be doubted for a moment.

Mrs. C. A christian minister too ! Oh ! I have heard a story of him that has made my heart ache.

A Lady. 'Tis said, that, to unburden our bosoms of the cause of a heartache, is one remedy for its affliction.

Miss M. A consolation which will not be wanting to Mrs. Crowfoot upon the present occasion.

Mrs. C. I would not for the world that what I am about to mention should be repeated ; but you most of you remember that impudent hussy, Hannah Clover, who thought so much of a pretty face that brought her to ruin. Well, do you know, she has had the assurance to return to her native place, and is actually residing, under a feigned name, in the Dark House ?

Miss M. Poor deluded girl ! I do well remember her, and my heart bled for her at the time. Her mother died, and her father, who had been educated as a gentleman, with ideas of expense above his means, became involved in difficulties. Some say he was hardly used ; so, to avoid a prison, he fled to a foreign land, and left poor Hannah virtually an orphan, upon the wide world, without a friend to help her. But what has this to do with

our worthy pastor? You do not mean to say that he led her astray, do you?

Mrs. C. No, but I mean to say, that, several times since her return to the village, Mr. Everton has been seen entering that house, where no person who had a character to lose would venture. His horse has been seen tied to the door-post for hours together. What think you of that, madam?

Miss M. Think! why that it was ten chances to one the poor horse caught cold.

Mrs. C. It may be well for you to jest upon the matter, but I assure you it is a fact.

Miss M. May I presume to inquire what evidence you have of it?

Mrs. C. I had it, madam, be assured, from good authority.

Miss M. Then I must crave leave to doubt; for that same "good authority," to my certain knowledge, is a common liar.

Mrs. C. Well then, madam, if I must speak out, I have had the evidence of my own senses. I followed him down the lane in which the house is situated.

Miss M. I am heartily rejoiced to find that you tread so closely on the steps of your minister.

Mrs. C. Nay, but I saw him enter the door with my own eyes.

Miss M. Then, madam, I devoutly wish that your own eyes had followed him into the house; for, if they had, I am persuaded we should have heard little or nothing from you upon the subject.

Mrs. C. I follow him into such an abode of vice and iniquity! Upon my word, madam, you appear to have an exalted opinion of me.

Miss M. Why, upon your own showing, you were at the door; and there is an ugly proverb against those who venture on the threshold of vice.

Mrs. C. But let me ask you, madam, what motive but one, and that an evil one, could Mr. Everton have in visiting a girl of so notoriously abandoned a character?

Miss M. I grant you, that he could have had but one evil motive, but he might have had many good ones; of which, I presume, I have your permission to choose any, or all; and, yielding to you the undisputed possession of the bad one, I wish you a good morning. One word, however, before we part. This is not the first nor the second company in which you have sported versions of this story, with the benefit of your charitable inference.

I warn you against a further repetition of it. Whatever purpose led Mr. Everton to that poor girl's dwelling, I will stake my life it was a charitable one; and believe me, madam, they who report it otherwise will repent it in shame and degradation.

It happened, upon most occasions, that Mr. Everton visited Hannah alone, although he was more than once attended by Mr. Blandford or myself; but in one instance, unaccompanied by us, he went not alone; for a dark figure traced his steps, and glided after him unperceived into the sick one's apartment, where he retired into a recess, and the minister proceeded in his duty unobserved, as he thought, by any other eyes than those of God and the penitent.

After some conversation, in which the seriousness and sincerity of his manner were not less conspicuous than its soothing kindness, he read, as usual, to her, from the Scriptures, and then knelt by her bed-side to pray. He concluded his devotional exercise with the Lord's prayer; and the "amen," which was pronounced at its close, was echoed in a voice hoarse and dissonant, which appeared to Mr. Everton to proceed from some person in the room. He turned his head, and beheld the dark figure of Black Barnabas kneeling beside

him. "Ruthless man!" said the minister, "is not the chamber of death sacred from your intrusion? Stand up, and tell me wherefore you are come." Barnabas remained kneeling, but crossing his arms upon his breast, exclaimed, "Pardon me, in that I so lately presumed to arrest the minister of God upon his errand of peace."

"Kneel not," was the reply, "to a fellow-sinner. May God Almighty forgive thee all thy sins as freely as I have long since forgiven thine offence to me. But rise, and I will teach you how to implore His forgiveness, which alone can avail you."

"Reverend sir," said the intruder, "I will not disguise from you that my object in following you into this chamber was the gratification of a curiosity excited by your frequent, and to me mysterious, visits to this house. I have been a witness of your pious labours. Believe me, the word of God was not always strange to my ears, nor foreign to my lips; but calamity (undeserved of men, though well merited of Heaven), which should have chastened my spirit, hardened my heart, and made me what you see, an outcast of the world, and an alien from my God.

"When you commenced the Lord's prayer, re-

collections of other days came upon me ; my heart melted, and, yielding to an impulse mysterious but irresistible, I sunk upon my knees by your side."

He had scarcely finished speaking, when the curtains were suddenly thrown aside, and Hannah, starting up in the bed, and fixing her eyes upon Barnabas, exclaimed with a shriek, "My father! my father!" and sunk back, in a state of insensibility, upon her pillow. Barnabas rushed to the bed, and, parting the black locks which hung over his brow, he cried out, "My Hannah! my child!" and cast himself beside her. As soon as the father and daughter had recovered from the shock of this mutual recognition, Mr. Everton departed, promising to see them again on the following day.

When Mr. Everton made the promised repetition of his visit to the Dark House, he found Barnabas sitting by the side of his daughter's bed. "Sir," said he, rising, "Hannah has been telling me all that you have done for her; that you have led her out of the dark labyrinth in which sin had involved her, making peaceful her last moments, and giving her a blessed hope of everlasting rest in that world whither she feels she is hastening. In all my wanderings, the misery of remorse which I have endured has been more on her account than on my

own. I felt myself a devoted being; that my ruin was certain; but I could not endure the thought of my child's perdition. She will now be taken from me, and the eye which hath not wept for many a day will shed tears upon her early grave; but they will not now be bitter tears. And all this, sir, I owe to you, and for this I am your bounden slave."

"You owe it to God," said the clergyman, "and to Him, and not to the frail instrument of His power, give the glory."

He then approached the bed, and saw that nature, which had held out so long, was giving way at last, and, turning to her father, he said, "I should wish the physician to see your daughter;—my horse is at the door, mount him, and go instantly for Dr. ****, and, if you find him not, bring Mr. Blandford." Barnabas departed on the instant. The clergyman then took the hand of the suffering girl, and inquired how she was. She replied, "Sir, I feel that I am going at last; but blessed be God Almighty, who hath taken me 'out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon a rock,' the prospect of death is not a gloomy one. I am going to that blessed country, whither you have directed my way, for which you have the dying thanks of a sinful, but, I trust, not ungrateful

heart. May God bless you, sir,—nay, He will surely bless you;—may He bless the wife of your bosom, and the child of your hopes. Pray, sir, if they come not before I go hence, convey my humble, yet deep acknowledgments to those kind gentlemen, whose attention to the diseases of my perishing frame has given me time to profit by your instructions and prayers, and to make my peace with Him whom I have so wickedly offended. One thing only presses on my spirit in the hour of its departure. Alas, my father! his life has been a wild and a fearful one! He will listen to your voice as to that of an angel from heaven. Oh, sir! do for him what you have done for his once wretched daughter.” The minister promised that his endeavours should not be wanting. “May the spirit of God,” said the poor girl, “rest upon your holy labours! and then, though we have been widely separated on earth, we shall meet again in heaven. But my breath is fast fleeting, and I would that it may depart from me in prayer.” Mr. Everton read some sentences from the Bible appropriate to the solemn occasion, and then prayed fervently. Poor Hannah followed him with her lips, but her voice was not heard. There was a sudden lighting up of her

countenance, as she raised her head a little; and uttering, in a low but distinct tone, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!" fell back upon her pillow, and spoke not again. On that instant, there was a noise from without like the approach of a multitude, and, on the next, a loud thundering at the outer door of the building, accompanied by a cry from many voices of "Bring forth the hypocrite!" Mr. Everton rushed to the window in front of the house, and throwing up the sash, demanded the meaning of the tumult. He soon discovered, from the expressions which fell from the mob (composed of the very dregs of the people), that he was the object of their attack, and that his alleged offence was his frequent visits to poor Hannah. He said, "My friends, what have you ever seen in the conduct of your minister, that you should suspect him of so horrible a crime?" His voice was rendered inaudible by cries of "Unbar the door, or we will pull the house about your ears!"

There was a struggle in Mr. Everton's bosom between his natural courage, which would prompt him to resist unlawful violence, and a feeling that a christian minister should, to maintain the in-

fluence so essential to the usefulness of his character, not only be, but appear to be, virtuous; and that, therefore, something should be yielded even to the prejudices of his parishioners. He walked deliberately from the window, and throwing open the door, he exclaimed, pointing to the room of the poor penitent: "There! you would not hear the living: let the dead speak for me!" The foremost of the rabble rushed into the apartment, where they found upon the bed their minister's hat, an open Bible, and a corpse. This appeared to have wrought conviction on the majority of the multitude, for many of them slunk from the spot, as if ashamed of the disgraceful part they had acted; but there were some who still gathered about Mr. Everton, crying out, "The dead tell no tales," and were proceeding to offer violence to his person. One of them, more audacious than the rest, advanced, and laid his hand upon the collar of the clergyman, who, disengaging himself, without a blow, threw his assailant at a considerable distance from him; an action which proved the signal for a general attack. The noise, however, of the trampling of hoofs, and the immediate appearance of three horsemen, for a moment, arrested the attention of the mob. The foremost of the three dashed

his horse into the crowd, and clearing the way up to the minister, cast himself from the saddle, and, with one blow of his fist, laid in the dust a ruffian who was in the act of striking Mr. Everton; another, and another, shared a similar fate. The rabble, whose numbers were somewhat thinned by desertion, now fell back as Mr. Blandford and myself rode up to the scene of action. He who had dealt about him such effective blows now advanced to the mob, who were gathered into a body within a few yards of the house. He cast off the slouched hat, which had thrown a deeper shade upon his dark brow, and exclaimed, "What would ye with this just man? Look upon my countenance! there are many among you who cannot have forgotten me; nay, I see that ye have not. Yes; I am indeed the father of that poor girl who has been plucked from ruin by the minister of whom this day has proved ye are not worthy. You know well, that, lawless as I have been, I am not a man to wink at the dishonour of my daughter, still less to defend the partner of her shame. Hence, then, to your homes, for the first of you that shall raise his hand against the innocent object of your cowardly attack, I swear shall never lift it again."

The rabble, finding that they were altogether in

the wrong, and fearing the arrival of the magistracy, soon dispersed; and the minister, mounting his horse, immediately rode home, whither he arrived, providentially, before the tidings of the outrage which had been committed upon him.

The circumstance, however, was soon generally known, and was taken up with much spirit by the neighbouring gentry; and the Earl of R**** came over to the village, for the purpose of aiding in bringing the offenders to punishment, and tracing the evil report to its source, which latter object was not difficult of attainment.

Mrs. Crowfoot, to whom the circumstance of Mr. Everton's repeated visits to the Dark House had been casually mentioned, without a hint to his prejudice, and who, by her own confession, had taken the trouble on one occasion to follow him thither, had reasoned upon it after the manner of her tribe, and had published as a fact her own charitable inference on the subject. The respectable portion of those to whom the story was repeated, treated it with the contempt it deserved, and even the gossiping part of the community stood too much in awe of Mr. Everton's character to give currency to the report; but it had reached the ears of the lower classes, of whom there are, in every town or village,

many who are eager to catch at the alleged delinquencies of their superiors. Hence, then, a result which had nearly proved of serious injury to Mr. Everton.

The worthy minister, however, could not be prevailed upon to take any steps against the offending party; but such and so general was the indignation excited against the authoress of so scandalous a report, that Mrs. Crowfoot was compelled to quit the neighbourhood.

Black Barnabas, as he was called, in consideration of the active part he had taken in defending Mr. Everton from the attack of the rioters, was given to understand, that, if he were willing to abandon the lawless course of life he had hitherto pursued, his past offences against the revenue should not be remembered to his prejudice.

THE FATE OF A GENIUS.

THE FATE OF A GENIUS.

“ And Love, and Hope, and Beauty's bloom
Are blossoms gather'd for the tomb,—
There's nothing bright but Heaven !”

MOORE.

It was on the evening of a remarkably sultry day, that I was riding, on a visit to a patient, through a valley formed by a double chain of hills, which divided the counties of **** and ****. The hills upon my right hand were covered with wood, while those on my left, having been cultivated, exhibited a less uniform appearance. It was on the eve of the hay harvest; and the large patches of cinquefoil and clover, relieved by the green corn-fields, and the brown fallow, presented a rich and beautiful variety to the eye.

About half way up a hill of more gradual ascent than any of the others which formed the valley, was the residence of the person, then a stranger to me, whom I was summoned to attend. The cottage, although its walls, originally white, had been

stained by the weather, and the thatch exhibited symptoms of frequent repairs, had nevertheless an air of neatness and comfort. The climbing rose and the honeysuckle spread over it, and fell clustering upon a little portico of trellis work. It was encircled by a garden, which in front reached to the pathway, and at the back was divided from a copse by a small orchard. On entering the cottage, I found the object of my visit reclining on a sort of couch, at the head of which sat an elderly female, and at the foot a girl of about sixteen. They were his mother and sister. My patient was a young man, about two and twenty, somewhat singular, yet interesting, in his appearance and manner. He had a high forehead, and dark hair, rather abundant, and curling naturally. His eyes, which were gray and lively, gave animation to a very pale but finely formed countenance. He wore no handkerchief; his collar being fastened round his neck by a broad black riband. There was a simple dignity in his demeanour, and an elevation in his language, which convinced me that he was a being of no ordinary cast. His complaint, I had little doubt, was that which, in this country, has taken off so many in the dawn of manhood, and crushed the fondest hopes of thousands. I wrote for him, rather

with a view of alleviating his sufferings than with any hope of removing the cause of them ; and then pursued my way homewards, occasionally roused from meditations, to which my visit had imparted a melancholy tone, by the shrill scream of the stone curlew, or the hoarse note of the bittern, from the valley beneath me.

Mr. Hopeton, for such was the name of the young man whom I had visited, had excited a powerful interest in my mind ; and I gleaned, on my return, some particulars of his history.

His mother had been early left a widow, upon a rather slender income ; on which, however, she had contrived to bring up her two children respectably. The son, whose docility and talents were equally conspicuous, attracted the notice of a neighbouring clergyman, who gratuitously undertook to educate him, and faithfully performed the task he had assumed, until his death, which occurred when his pupil was about sixteen. Poor Hopeton, unfitted for any employment in his neighbourhood, and unable to procure one suited to his attainments elsewhere, had continued to reside with his mother, and devoted himself to the cultivation of letters with all the ardour of youth.

The nature of his education, the enthusiasm of

his character, and the romantic scenes in which he dwelt, had combined to inspire him with a taste for poetry, which he indulged, and had launched many a little bark upon the wide sea of literature, through the medium of the periodicals of the day. The applause which followed these attempts encouraged him to soar somewhat higher, and he accordingly repaired to the metropolis, like Bristowa's bard,

“ Sublime of hope, and confident of fame ;”

but, after waiting upon every publisher in London with his MS., without being able to prevail upon any of them to take it; and being too poor, and possibly too wise, to assume the risk himself, he returned to the cottage in the valley, after having exhausted his little patrimony during his residence in town, quite dispirited, and almost in despair.

There was, however, he believed, amid all his disappointments, one consolation of which the world could not rob him. He felt assured that there was one who would sympathize in his sorrow, and whose affection would requite him for all that he had suffered from the neglect of others. And surely if there be any comfort which “ cometh forth of the dust,” it exists in the reflection that, amid all the coldness, treachery, and misrepresentation

we have endured, there is one being in the world whose heart beats fondly for us, and whose smile can even gild with sunshine the wreck and ruin of all else that was dear. Poor Hopeton looked for all the comfort of which he deemed his condition susceptible in the sympathy of Emma Heathfield, the daughter of an opulent landholder in his immediate vicinity. They had been companions in childhood, and they had often walked forth together among the beauteous scenes around them, their hearts beating in unison with admiration and delight, as the fair face of nature brightened before them.

If she had not a portion of his genius, she equalled him in enthusiasm of character, and Emma was much above her village companions in point of intellect; while the opulence of her father had given her access to many of the accomplishments of more refined society. But, alas! during Hopeton's absence in London, a sad change had taken place. The wealthy yeoman and his wife had, at length, opened their eyes to the attachment of their daughter, and had no desire to see her united to a youth of such humble pretensions, in point of fortune, as Mr. Hopeton. Emma was not a weak girl, but she was young, fondly attached to her parents, and accustomed to meet their commands,

upon all occasions, with implicit obedience. Whether, however, persuasion or authority were resorted to, I know not; but, when young Hopeton, on his return from the metropolis, presented himself at her father's door, it was closed against him. He wrote to Emma; and although his letter was not sent back, it was left unanswered; and he felt, in the bitterness of his heart, that there was nothing left him in this world but to die. The fatal germ of disease had long before been planted in his constitution, though he knew it not, and although its consequences could not be averted, the progress of the disorder was doubtless accelerated by the double disappointment of his ambition and his love.

Genius, like beauty, is a perilous gift, and poetical genius, of all descriptions of it, the most dangerous, inasmuch as the possessor is more immediately under the dominion of imagination and enthusiasm, which, in his commerce with the world, are perpetually usurping the legitimate authority of sound reason and principle. The poet has scarcely a feeling in common with the world, and views most things in a different light from it. He soars above the sordid employments, and what he would term the low ambition of the common

herd; and they, in return, condemn his pursuits as trifling or absurd. The very constitution of his mind, its susceptibility of all impressions painful or pleasing, renders him the sport of every wind that blows: he is goaded to madness by what the world would treat with contempt, and transported to ecstasy by what it would deride. "Beware," a friend of mine would often observe, "beware of the poetical temperament; for, if it lead you not into the commission of folly, it will very often subject you to the severest penalties of it." The dull man shall go into society, and if he have but the tact to muffle the bells in his cap, shall pass for a discreet, and possibly a wise one; but the enthusiasm of a poet is eternally exposing him to the ridicule of the cold and unimaginative. Refined susceptibility of the impressions of beauty is essential in the formation of a poet, and he does homage to her wherever he can trace her steps, whether she be enthroned in the broad landscape of nature, or in the last and loveliest of nature's works. There are many who are slow to believe that the admiration called forth by personal beauty may be as distinct from any other passion, as if it had been excited by the flower of the field, a fine prospect, or some other interesting object; and such persons

are apt to infer the inconstancy of the poet, if he happen to assign to one beautiful woman the same measure of praise which he may have previously bestowed upon another; as if admiration, like the narrow grasp of their own intellects, were capable of entertaining but one object. In other words, they are continually confounding admiration with love, or making the latter, of necessity, consequent upon the other.

A short time after my visit to Mr. Hopeton, Mr. Everton, having missed him at church, called for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of the absence of one whose talents and amiable disposition had recommended him to his pastor's notice, and who had been a regular attendant on public worship. On learning the circumstances which had led to the dejection of mind under which his young friend laboured, the worthy minister, presuming on his office and long acquaintance, thought it right to expostulate with him upon the subject. "My friend," said Mr. Everton, "the disappointment you have encountered has been the fate of the brightest geniuses of every age; like you, they have gone into the world, unprepared by experience for the difficulties which have beset their path; and, like you, have brooded over the wreck

of their hopes, without having estimated the consequences of their success. It is a common and oftentimes a fatal error to consider that prosperity has no trials. Are you sure that, had you been drawn from the obscurity of your present retirement, your morals and principles would have withstood the shock consequent upon the change which success would have wrought in your condition, and that you would have withstood all the temptations which ever surround a successful candidate for fame? Are you certain that your pen would never have lent itself to corruption in the state, that it would never have been the slave of faction, the pander of the powerful, or the flatterer of the affluent? Have you duly considered the awful responsibility which rests on those upon whose writings the eyes of a nation are turned? If God will bring us into judgment for every idle word, which, proceeding from an ordinary person, may be productive of little mischief to others, how much stricter an account will he have to render whose writings, if their tendency be evil, will carry contamination down to ages yet unborn? The literary history of your own and past times is not unknown to you; turn your eyes, I beseech you, to some of the brightest stars in the horizon of

letters, and see how many have shone but to illumine the path of infidelity, and light thousands to perdition. Look at those whose fame, like the conqueror's, is marked by desolation; and who, like him of Ephesus, polluting all that is pure, and profaning all that is sacred, have lit their names down to posterity, and recked not though a temple fed the flame. Better, far better, were it that the light of genius were extinguished for ever in the night of idiocy, than burn, like the lightning flash, beautiful but terrible, destroying while it shines! But, while pointing out the fearful errors into which many men of splendid talents have been led, several of whom, like you, have set out in life with the best principles which parental anxiety could implant, believe me, I would not be thought to undervalue the gift of genius. It is, indeed, a noble endowment. Nations have bowed down before it; and the shades which distinguish the mighty from the lowly have vanished in its light. It has flashed condemnation upon the tyrant, through the thick cloud with which the incense of flattery hath enveloped his throne. But I would direct your attention to the only reflection which can reconcile us to disappointment; namely, on the providence of God. Man judges imperfectly of the present,

and knows nothing of the future; but He to whom the volume of futurity is ever open often interposes between man's endeavours and their object, because He knows that success would be fatal to him."

Whatever influence Mr. Everton's admonitions might have had in reconciling Mr. Hopeton to the disappointment of his literary expectations, it is certain that they had hitherto operated but feebly in diminishing the melancholy which hung upon his spirits. That disappointment, however, he could have borne;—time would have softened, and finally overcome it; but to be abandoned in his adversity by the being on whose truth he would have ventured his life, and upon whom he had so implicitly rested his happiness, was an affliction for which even time seemed to promise no balm; and when next Mr. Everton visited him, the young man confided to him the main source of his affliction. The worthy minister replied, "Alas! my friend! it is ever thus. We ascribe to a vessel of clay the perfection which belongs only to God. We set up the idol; we bow down before it; and, in the day of our affliction, we fly unto it for succour; but, saith the prophet, 'They cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense, but they shall not be able to save them at all in the time of their

trouble.' Rejoice, then, rather than lament, that God hath cast down the idol, which, in your blindness, you have adored; and taught you thus early, that he who, in his tribulation, looks for deliverance from any other than his God, has a broken reed for support. Oh, my friend! time has been when you would have sought consolation from another source. It is the world, its vanities, and its allurements, which are ever intercepting the rays of divine grace, producing that most awful eclipse of the soul, exclusion from the favour of God. Remember that 'the way of man is not in himself;' that 'it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' Pray, then, earnestly and constantly, for His aid, who, 'when the enemy cometh in like a flood, shall lift up a standard against him.'"

The blessing of Heaven, however, rested upon the labours of the clergyman, and he at last succeeded in calming the mind of his young friend, and restoring it to that tranquillity which the influence of true religion will never fail to produce. But disease was, in the mean time, doing its work upon his frame. It was that malady of the body which, like that of the mind, is perceptible to all but the afflicted one. It was evident to those around him, that decline was daily wasting his

strength, and, with quick but silent steps, conducting him to a premature grave, and yet he did not appear to anticipate the fatal consequences for which all but himself were in some measure prepared. His spirits, although much of their elasticity had been subdued by the circumstances already mentioned, were for the most part good; and there were times when they were excited almost to sprightliness, and when he spoke of distant events as if he doubted not to see their accomplishment. But it is among the peculiarities of the disease, that the patient shall to-day feel its oppression on his frame and on his mind, and to-morrow be comparatively free from pain, and shall experience such a consequent improvement in spirits, as shall almost betray those around him into a hope of his recovery. How often, in the course of my professional experience, have I seen the once beautiful countenance crimsoned with the hectic counterfeit of health, and the eye lit up with that delusive hope which illumines even the brink of the grave: another sun has risen, and the lily was not paler than that cheek, nor the marble of the sepulchre more cold; and that eye, which once opened but to charm, was then so fixed and lustreless, that even the hand of affection was anxious to close it.

It at length became a duty to inform Mr. Hopeton of the nature and evident tendency of his complaint. He received the communication with more composure and resignation than had been anticipated. He said that it had pleased Heaven, by repeated disappointments, to wean him from much that had bound him to a world on which he had vainly and wickedly rested his hopes of happiness. It was good for him, he added, that he had been afflicted, and he bowed meekly and thankfully to the rod that had chastened him. He had failed to gain the laurelled crown of the poet, which, in the days of his vanity, he had sighed for; but he trusted that there was one laid up for him in heaven, in comparison of which the brightest laurels were as the leaves of the autumn, and the diadem of an emperor as the refuse of the furnace. Other and fonder hopes he had cherished, and they, too, had been blighted; but there was One whose love had not deserted him in sin and in sorrow, for it had been his salvation from the one and his comfort in the other.

It soon became known in the neighbourhood that poor Hopeton's case was considered desperate by his physician, and that his speedy dissolution was an event expected by those with whom hope

would linger to the latest, and the intelligence was not long in reaching the dwelling of Mr. Heathfield. The shock to poor Emma was a severe one, but it did not take from her the power to think or to act. She had, for a long time, in obedience to the injunctions of her parents (who enforced them by every precaution which vigilance could devise), and at the expense of many a bitter pang of the heart, resigned the society of him who had been all the world to her; but when she heard of his danger, she rose up in the presence of her parents, and avowed her determination to go down to him. They opposed little resistance to the step, for they knew that the dead do not marry, nor are given in marriage, and that the shroud and the winding-sheet are not meet for the bridal. The meeting, on her part, was such as might be well imagined in the case of a girl, who, yielding to an authority she dared not dispute and could not effectually resist, had been torn from the society of the companion of her childhood and the hope of her youth, and, in her solitude, had cherished for him a passion which time and absence had only rendered more intense; who, in all she had suffered for his sake, had been supported by the hope, that the opposition of her parents might be subdued by time, or yield to

their affection, and that she might one day be united to him to part but once again; and who had been awakened from this dream by the dread tidings that the being, in whom she had thus centred her happiness, was about to be swept away by his icy hand who is not won by the smile of beauty nor melted by the tears of grief. Her love for him was ardent, and, if the epithet can apply to a human affection, it was pure. There is a word by which the world conveys its scoff and its sarcasm on the finest feelings of the human heart, a word which it applies to every sentiment and action in which self is merged in consideration for another. I say that the mind of man, until cleansed of this moral leprosy of selfishness, never walked erect, never imagined a high purpose, or achieved a noble action. Had Emma selected for her love one who, whatever were the endowments of his mind or the principles of his heart, could have bestowed upon her wealth and consequence, her prudence would have been lauded by the grey-headed, and the experienced matron would have been garrulous in her praise; nay, had she, when she heard of the extremity to which poor Hopeton was reduced, avoided his abode as a pest-house, and left him to die "unpitied and alone," there

are those, and I put it to the experience of the reader if he have not met with such, who would have extolled her singular discretion to the skies. But because she had chosen a being, kind, and amiable, and talented, and because, having so selected him, she clung to him in sunshine and in storm, her devotedness could gain no worthier epithet from the world than that of "romantic," as if there were no distinction between the wanderings of an excited imagination, and the warm and generous impulses of a kindly heart. "Woe unto them who call evil good, and good evil," who would sacrifice upon the cold altar of the world all that is good, and bright, and amiable in our natures, and would blot out from humanity every trace of the Divine Image which Adam, in his fall, brought forth with him from Eden.

There is that in some of the human passions, and grief is one of them, so sublime, that, however they may be ridiculed in their absence, subdues and overawes us when we see them in operation. When Emma entered the room of Mr. Hopeton, she approached the couch on which he reclined, and kneeling down at the head of it, sunk upon his bosom, and burst into tears; tears such as they who would deride them, as exhibiting the weakness

of a love-sick girl, would shed over the loss of a little paltry gold, and the loss she was called upon to sustain all the gold of Ophir could not repair.

The Saviour of the world never checked the tear of anguish but to remove its cause, and himself wept at the grave of Lazarus his friend. Away, then, with the cold philosophy which would harden the heart by freezing the current of the feelings, and allege that it is weak and unmanly to weep! What is this but virtually to say to Him who placed the fountain of tears in the human heart, “Why hast thou so fashioned me?”

Although it could not but be a source of gratification to Mr. Hopeton to be assured that the being he had so tenderly loved was yet worthy of his affection, he was too certainly convinced of the near approach of death, to build a solitary hope upon any thing which the world might seem to offer him. His chief earthly concern, therefore, was to prepare Emma for the separation; and since she turned from every prospect which was presented to her of happiness in this life when he should have quitted it, it was his endeavour to open to her such sources of consolation as would be most likely to avail her in her grief for his loss. “Weep not, my beloved,” he would say, “although

my sun is going down while it is yet day, and is hastening to quench its beams in the ocean of eternity, for, blessed be He who died for us at Calvary ! it will rise again more bright and glorious in another world. What though the residue of your days may present to you the prospect as of a dark and wintry desert, remember that it will soon be passed over ; and though not a flower shall spring up to shed its fragrance across your path, remember that there is a bright heaven above you, where there is a perpetual spring ; where all that was worthy of your affection upon earth will be united to you for ever, and where the sigh, and the tear, and the bitter farewell will exist only in our recollection of that world, which, once the source and scene of our troubles, will then be their everlasting grave !”

It were painful further to dwell upon the scenes which marked the closing moments of the subject of this memoir. In a very few hours, there was a voice of wailing in that cottage, “ of mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation :”—death the destroyer had closed with his victim, and earth and eternity divided the spoil.

The days of poor Emma, too, were numbered. I know not whether grief for the loss of her be-

loved were the chief or a secondary cause, but the grass grew not long undisturbed on his grave. The flowers which Hope had reared for the bridal were gathered by Sorrow to deck out the dead!

DISAPPOINTMENTS.

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REMARKS

ON THE
NATURE
OF THE
FISHES
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DISAPPOINTMENTS.

“ My boy, my Arthur, my fair son !
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world !
My widow-comfort, and my sorrow's cure !”

SHAKSPEARE.

WITHIN a few miles of my retreat was an old but elegant mansion, surrounded by a spacious park, and forming the centre of a most extensive domain. It had lately been inherited by the last of the family in a direct line, so that, in the event of his dying without issue, the estate would lapse to a very remote branch of the house.

The young gentleman into whose possession it had descended married immediately upon his coming of age, and as his mind had not been fettered by avarice, warped by pride, or dazzled by ambition, the young lady was the free choice of a free heart, and was every way worthy of it: she was elegant in her person and manners, of an accomplished mind, kind and amiable in disposition,

and, though dowerless, the meekness with which she bore her sudden participation in wealth, and the readiness with which she united with her lord in the charitable application of it, rendered her elevation a matter of rejoicing to all around her.

It was not long, however, after his marriage, that Mr. Danby's health, which was never very good, began to fail, and after availing himself of all the medical skill of his country, and deriving little benefit, he sought the milder climate of Italy, in the hope that the relief he had hitherto looked for in vain might be found in its balmy air and pure sky; but his earthly pilgrimage terminated with the voyage, for, immediately after his disembarkation, he expired in the arms of her who loved him for himself, and deplored his death as the heaviest calamity she could be called upon to sustain. He died calmly and as a Christian; and, although the anguish of parting had left a tear upon his cheek, the last expression of his countenance was a smile.

The preceding possessor of the estate had lived up to its princely revenues, and left his successor but little opportunity of providing for his widow, who returned to England, accompanying the body of her husband.

The remains of the deceased gentleman were consigned to the tomb of his ancestors with a pomp and circumstance becoming the rank and fortune which he had so early resigned; and, among those who followed him to his long home—it would be a gross misapplication of terms to denominate them mourners—was the family who were to succeed to the estate. The head of it was a man of great wealth, but of defective education, vulgar manners, and, withal, of an overbearing and tyrannical disposition. He acquired his money principally by lucrative public contracts; the undeviating perseverance, and oftentimes effrontery, with which he supported every government measure, having conciliated the leading minister, who condescended, on the score of expediency, to make use of a tool which he had too much discernment and good taste not to despise from the bottom of his heart. The sons, who owed their promotion to the political pliancy of their father, were young men of very inferior minds, flippant in conversation, and coxcombs in manner and appearance. The mother was an epitome of vulgarity and coarseness, and her daughters were her counterparts; but both of them, as well as the sons, were altogether under the control of their father, of whom it was

observed, that his frequent use of the imperative mood had led to the neglect and consequent forgetfulness of every other mood in the language.

The clergyman had scarcely pronounced the closing words of the funeral service, before the claimants of the estate had put in requisition the steward, to officiate as cicerone to their party, not one of whom, while surveying the mansion and grounds, failed to suggest some improvements, which, had they all been adopted, would have so metamorphosed the place, that it would never have been recognised as the residence of the ancient family of the Danbys. The party, after their walk, assembled in one of the apartments fronting the lawn, round which lay the approach to the house, and were regaling themselves upon the old wine, and other hospitable cheer, when a young gentleman, followed by a groom, entered the park gate, and rode towards the house. He was apparently not more than five and twenty, fashionably, some might allege rather foppishly attired, bearing in his exterior any thing but the appearance of what he really was, a lawyer. He dismounted from his horse, and, entering the house with an air of perfect nonchalance, introduced himself to the party assembled in the library in a manner which proved him altogether insensible

or regardless of the august presence in which he stood.

Mr. Danby, for the claimants bore the name of the late possessor of the estate, whether it arose from a desire to show his contempt of the visitor, or from the usual urbanity of his manners, I know not, pursued his conversation with the steward, whom he kept standing before him, upon the subject of the improvements, as he termed his projected alterations, without condescending to notice the man of law. The latter, in no degree abashed, took his seat with great unconcern, and, assisting himself to a glass of madeira and a sandwich with the air of a man who did not conceive himself indebted for them to any one present, listened to the conversation with a gravity of countenance and demeanour somewhat at variance with a certain humorous expression, which an attentive observer might have detected in his eye, but which the high contempt or obtuse perception of the Danbys prevented them from remarking.

After he had partaken moderately of the refreshment before him, he interrupted a family council upon a projected alteration in the house, upon which opinions were by no means in concord, by presenting to Mr. Danby a paper, with the ob-

servation, that the perusal of it would save them the trouble of further discussion, by proving the inutility of it.

The countenance of Mr. Danby and that of each of his family, to whom the paper was successively handed, grew black as night at the perusal of it, and they gazed on each other in silence, from which they were roused by the legal gentleman observing, that as there were some few arrangements to be made, in which the contents of that paper would have informed them their assistance was not absolutely necessary, he should have the honour of ordering their carriage, that they might not be inconvenienced by measures which, he feared, would differ, in some essential points, from those which they had contemplated.

Having said this, he rang the bell, and coolly putting his intimated intention into practice, he resumed his seat, and waited patiently until the family were all gone, when he was left alone with the old domestic already mentioned.

“Well, master Edward,” said the old man, “here is a sad change! Who would have thought that the estate would pass into such hands? I have outlived more than one master in this house, and each has been a kind one to me, but I would not

serve the man who has just left us for one half of his estate.

“To be sure, he does not appear likely to give me the choice, for I think he means to take my office into his own hands. Well! I could have wished to have died in the service of the family, for I was born in it; but no matter! my youth was not improvident, nor will my age be destitute.”

“Nay, master Hasleton,” said the young gentleman, “gray as your head has become in the service of the family, I trust it will grow white in your present office.”

“How so?” rejoined the steward; “the new master’s arrangements, if I understand them rightly, will not allow of my being retained.”

“The new master, as you so gratuitously style him,” replied the lawyer, “has nothing to do with the matter. I have dismissed him about his business for one while, I trust. You must prepare to receive your young mistress; and I hope, in a few months, we shall find an inheritor of the estate of gentler blood than the churl who has just left us can boast.”

Their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the gamekeeper and other servants of

the establishment, who, having each in his vocation received some directions from Mr. Danby, were hesitating between their repugnance to obey, and their fears of the consequences of disregarding them.

“Here’s a pretty to do!” said the gamekeeper; “the new master has ordered half a dozen of my finest bucks to be slaughtered and sent to London for himself and his friends. I almost repent me that I prevented my favourite buck from putting his horn where the old man would bestow one of his noble haunches.”

“For shame, Adam!” exclaimed the steward, “waste not your repentance upon your good deeds, your evil ones will need it all.”

“Never mind, Adam,” said the lawyer, “I take upon myself to reprieve your four-footed friends, and will indemnify you against the consequence of disobedience of orders, seeing that they were rather prematurely issued. But pray, master Felltree, may I inquire the grievance which has imparted so dolorous an expression to your goodly countenance?”

“The old gentleman,” said the forester, “has ordered the chestnut-tree at the back of the orchard to be felled, and I would as soon cut off my right

hand as lop a branch of it. 'Tis a noble tree, and has been shelter and shade to me for many a year."

"Be not alarmed for your complexion, master Felltree," said the lawyer; "'twere indeed a pity that what you have been at so much pains, and the family at so much cost, to bring to its present rubicund perfection, should be impaired in your old age. I should have thought, however, that the absorbent properties of your clay, and the assiduity with which you keep it saturated, would have effectually secured you against conflagration from the sunbeams."

It happened as the lawyer had predicted: in a few months an heir was born to the estate, which appeared once more in a fair way of descending still in a straight line, to the great joy of the tenantry and dependants.

The widow of the late Mr. Danby, who had deemed all her prospects of earthly felicity buried with her husband, now beheld him again in her son, whose infant years she watched with an anxiety, natural indeed to a mother, but materially augmented by the peculiar circumstances in which she was placed. New vistas of happiness opened before her, and she looked forward to the day when her son should revive the glory of his ancestors;

and, ripening possibilities into probabilities, saw in him the future pride of his country, the asserter of its freedom, and the supporter of its laws. Every day rendered him an object of intenser interest, and it will be easier to conceive than to describe her grief, when she saw the foundation of all her hopes endangered by the sudden and most alarming illness of her child. It was a fever of a very threatening description, and attacked the sufferer with an extraordinary degree of virulence.

It happened that I had been absent from home for a few days, and, on my return, I found a summons from Mrs. Danby to attend a consultation on the day preceding that on which I returned home. Conceiving, however, that, if I could be of no use, my calling to inquire after the little sufferer would be but a proper mark of respect, I rode over, and, on my arrival, found the lady in despair. Her medical attendant had pronounced the case to be a hopeless one, and she was in the sick room, surrounded by those who might with truth be termed "miserable comforters," for they were Mr. Danby and his family, who, on hearing of the child's illness, had hastened to express their concern and tender their services; and, if we except the mother, there were none who could have watched the pro-

gress of the malady with greater anxiety than those who had so much at stake upon the issue. I approached the bed of the little invalid, and soon discovered that it was not without some foundation that his case had been despaired of; but, after inquiring the symptoms which the disease had exhibited, I stated to the mother, in reply to her almost hopeless question, if I could do any thing for her child, that I certainly knew of a medicine which had been administered in cases very closely resembling her son's, but that I could not disguise from her that the measure was a desperate one; that, in the only two instances in which, to my knowledge, it had been adopted, it was adopted by myself, and had been successful, but I could not venture to vouch for its success in the present instance. In no other than a case of the last extremity, I added, would I hazard the experiment, nor, with reference to its violent nature, would I think of resorting to it without her full approbation.

There was a general cry from Mr. Danby and his family against the application of the medicine, and reiterated protests against the "cruelty of disturbing the last moments of the little innocent." Without noticing the clamour, which was calculated to produce the result it deprecated, I waited the

decision of the mother, who urged me to apply the proposed remedy. This only served to increase the earnestness of the other party in opposing it; and on my stating, that having the consent of the child's parent, I should not hesitate to use the only means, desperate as they were, of saving his life, Mr. Danby, losing his temper, changed the mode of his attack, and threatened that, in the event of the child's dying under the operation of the medicine, he would hold me responsible, and that I should be brought to a strict account for my rash interference. I replied that I was willing to meet all the responsibility I could incur by the act; that as matters now stood the death of the patient was otherwise inevitable; and that, therefore, we could not be in a worse situation, although the catastrophe might arrive a few moments earlier, should the medicine I was about to adopt fail of the effect I desired. I administered the remedy with my own hands. I then sat down by the patient, laid my watch upon an adjacent table, and waited the result. The curtains of the bed had, by my direction, been drawn aside, so that I had a distinct view of every person in the room, and was myself as distinctly visible to them. It was a scene of singular and intense interest to every

individual present. The mother, who seemed to have caught a gleam of hope amid the despair which had been deepening around her, sat down on the opposite side of the bed, watching the countenance of her son with the most acute anxiety. The child's head had been elevated by pillows, and his features were of course clearly discernible by Mr. Danby and his family, whose attention seemed divided between the patient and myself; and many a forbidding look was cast upon me from that quarter of the room. Nor was the part assigned to me in the scene devoid of a powerful and absorbing interest. The history of the family had engaged much of my sympathy for the widow and her son, and, upon the present occasion, inspired me with an ardent desire to preserve, if possible, the last scion of so noble a stock. Any addition which, if I were successful, might accrue to my reputation, never occupied a thought; and the clamour which, if I failed, I was aware would be raised against me by the relatives, to whom that failure would be gain, I treated with equal disregard. Although my success, in the only two instances in which I had tried the experiment, had inspired me with hope, that hope fell far short of confidence in its efficacy. I was, however, sufficiently upon my guard to avoid

betraying aught of the anxiety which I really felt as to the issue ; and, until the arrival of the period at which I was aware the struggle between the remedy and the disease would take place, I was occasionally engaged in observing the countenances of those who were, like myself, silent spectators of the scene. The critical moment arrived : the effect produced by the medicine was powerful, and its violence was so fearfully indicated in the features and frame of the patient, that death appeared already to have laid his hands upon his destined prey. I glanced a furtive look around me. The countenances which had been fixed upon me in forbidding gloom, were now lighted up by a malignant joy, which all their hypocrisy could not conceal from any save the mother, whose agony rendered her regardless of all but the one object before her.

The struggle passed away, and a cold sweat stood in large drops upon the forehead of the child : it was as the sweat of death. He sunk back upon his pillow, and a shriek from the distracted mother proclaimed her conviction that her son was no more !

There was a simultaneous movement, on the part of the relatives, to the bed-side, to ascertain the fact by the evidence of their senses, but with the ostensible design of offering consolation to the

mother. I bade them retire to their seats, observing, that I hoped their condolence was premature, and that the child was not dead, but that a few moments would decide his fate.

The fact was, the experiment had worked as I had hoped it would. The disease, which was hurrying him to the grave, had been overtaken and headed by the medicine, and was evidently abating; and in about half an hour after the little sufferer had sunk back in a state of exhaustion, I took my watch from the table, and, extending my hand to his mother, exclaimed, "God Almighty has blessed the means which have been used; your son is, for this time, out of danger!"

The patient, who from that hour rapidly regained his strength, was ultimately restored to perfect health; and there is now every reason for hoping that he will escape the early doom which awaited his father, whose virtues he appears to have inherited.

Were we to call to mind the histories of every family with whose circumstances we have been familiar, we should find very few from which a lesson, or an important truth, might not be gathered; and although the moral of this narrative may not be so prominent as that of some of the histories

of which this volume is composed, it is easy of deduction.

Every gift we possess, whether spiritual or temporal, is bestowed, not more for our comfort, than for the honour of the Author of it; and when we forget to ascribe to Him the glory, and to acknowledge our dependence upon His mercy for a continuance of it, we may reasonably expect it will be withdrawn.

In the case of children, we are too prone to venture our whole happiness upon foundations where it was never intended it should rest. A vessel of clay is but a fragile depository for such a treasure. He whose dispensations are daily admonishing us of this truth, hath mercifully pointed out to us the only source whence happiness is derivable, and if we seek it from any other, we have our own presumption to thank for the disappointment which will certainly be our portion.

In many instances, we have seen the basis upon which we have thus presumed to build swept away from us for ever; and, in the case before us, the finger of God, though less awfully, is not less plainly discernible. By the sudden and alarming illness of one, in whom she had too implicitly trusted for that consolation in her widowhood which the

“widow’s Friend” alone is able to bestow, she was taught that the thread of life was but a frail tenure by which to hold a blessing she prized so dearly.

And it would seem the admonition failed not of its effect, for she was heard to say, upon her son’s recovery, that although she could not love him less, she trusted she should thenceforward love her God more !

THE NEGLECTED WIFE.

THE NEGLECTED WIFE

THE NEGLECTED WIFE

THE NEGLECTED WIFE.

“ Most happy metamorphosis! in which
The film of error that did blind my judgment
And seduced understanding is removed.
What sacrifice of thanks can I return
Her pious charity ——— ?”

MASSINGER.

AMONG the families in the neighbourhood of my residence, whom I was in the habit of attending in my professional capacity, was that of Mr. Evelyn, a retired merchant. It consisted of himself, Mr. Evelyn, and two daughters, Mary and Eliza. The elder of the young ladies, whom this narrative particularly concerns, combined with an unusually sound understanding and quick perception, an enthusiasm of character and simplicity of heart, which rendered her more interesting, although she could not have been more amiable, than her younger sister.

Were I in need of a heroine for a romance, and were desirous of clothing her in every attribute of

beauty, my recollections of Mary Evelyn should furnish me with materials for the picture. Even at this remote period, for it is some years since I first saw her, her form is floating before my mental vision in all its freshness and beauty, as when I beheld her before she became a wife. I shall not easily forget her: her slender yet exquisitely proportioned form, her beautifully arched eyebrows, her light blue eye, her round and polished forehead, her cheek, which nature had tinted so slightly, as if she feared to sully its Parian fairness even with the rose,—it was like the blush of morn upon the snow-wreath, tinged but not stained,—her smile, too, that would have won a kingdom, are all within my mind's eye in the vividness of their reality.

Among the aspirants to Mary's favour, a Mr. Melvin and a Mr. Landen were most conspicuous, both as regarded their pretensions, and the terms on which they stood with her family.

The former gentleman was of an elegant and commanding figure, master of most of the external accomplishments which pertain to gentility, and, withal, possessed that encyclopedical description of knowledge, which, embracing a great variety of subject, with little profundity upon any, gave him,

in point of conversational talent, a great superiority over men of more sterling acquirements. He was most assiduous, nay, devoted, in his attentions to Miss Evelyn; watching her every look, and anticipating every wish, and, from a desire to please, rather than any intention of appearing what he was not, conforming so closely to her habits in many points, where they were dissimilar in their tastes, as almost to deceive himself into a conviction that there was a perfect sympathy between them.

These advantages and his powers of pleasing, which were really of no ordinary cast, coupled with an unblemished reputation, and flattering prospects in life, might well render him the object of favour to a woman of more fastidious taste than even Mary Evelyn.

Mr. Landen, although decidedly inferior to Mr. Melvin in personal appearance, was nevertheless a very interesting young man. His complexion was pale, but his eye was dark and penetrating, and his profile I have rarely seen equalled for correct beauty; it was a perfect study for an artist. Mr. Melvin's face glowed with the hue of health, and his restless blue eye imparted to it a perpetual vivacity. Mr. Landen's, although I have seen it lit up by an animation of which it scarcely appeared

susceptible, was, in its general expression, of a calmer and more quiescent kind than Mr. Melvin's. Although Mr. Landen's manners were decidedly those of a gentleman, and were distinguished by an urbanity which could not fail to propitiate all who were acquainted with him, the natural thoughtfulness of his disposition rendered him less generally observant of those little attentions to which the fairer sex conceive themselves, and by acclamation are allowed, to be entitled. Independently of this, although his admiration of Miss Evelyn was as ardent as his respect for her was deep, he possessed a sensibility of a somewhat morbid kind, which rendered the idea of a repulse abhorrent to him, and tended to check those advances in which his bolder rival anticipated him.

These circumstances will enable us, without reflecting upon the lady's discernment, to account for the failure of Mr. Landen's suit, and the success of Mr. Melvin's; to whom, with the full consent of her family, and amid the congratulations of her friends, she was united.

Mr. Landen had a mind too exalted to be reached by so grovelling a passion as envy; but the blow was too much for him, and he left the country shortly after the marriage.

That Mr. Melvin sought the hand of Mary Evelyn from motives altogether unconnected with any sordid views was never doubted. He saw her the pride and the flower of the circle in which she moved; he saw rank and riches suing for her favour, and heard every tongue eloquent in her praise; he admired her beauty, her accomplishments, and her talents; and, in thinking that he loved her, he was not, by thousands, the first person who has mistaken the passion by which he has been actuated; and, in an instance like the present, has confounded love with an ambition to possess what was coveted by so many, and thus to achieve a triumph over his competitors for the prize.

It may be inquired, who shall presume to judge between a man's actions and his heart, and decide on which of these motives has influenced him in such a matter? The test is an easy one. Love, if it be sincere, having obtained the prize, is happy in finding it all that it had imagined of its value. Ambition, equally eager in the pursuit, is limitless, and passes on from one conquest to another.

Thus it happened, that, although Mr. Melvin's vanity was gratified in exhibiting the envied attractions of his wife to the admiration of his friends, and the gaze of the world, the gratification ceased

with the novelty; and a year had barely elapsed, from the time of their union, ere Mrs. Melvin found that she had not so much of her husband's society as she possessed in the early days of her marriage; that he went out very frequently without her; and, in those parties to which she did accompany him, the attentions he was wont to devote so exclusively to her, were employed in obtaining the favour, and attracting the admiration of others. She was, however, in the course of a few months afterwards, spared the mortification of witnessing the transfer of attentions which she could not but feel were justly due to her; for he seldom or never went out with her; very rarely spent an evening at home; and, when he did, the reserve of his manner plainly indicated that it was irksome to him. He would return from his parties at all hours of the night, utterly regardless of the anxiety his protracted absence would create. In fact, his conduct at last assumed the character of cold neglect of one of the loveliest and most amiable women in creation; and he thus sacrificed to the empty admiration of the world, and to worse than idle pleasures, a being who had resigned all the world for him.

When a woman who, in the generous confidence which ever characterizes her love, has intrusted her

happiness to one with whom she deemed it would be secure, finds that she has been betrayed, there is something so terrible and overwhelming in the discovery, that language is altogether inadequate to the description of her feelings; while he who has taken her from the bosom of her family, under a pledge, before God and man, to guard her happiness as his own, and then treats her with neglect, which is the worst of cruelty, for it involves contempt, thus crushing beneath his feet the flower that he should cherish in his bosom, differs only from him the law would deem a seducer, in that the latter brings shame and sin, as well as sorrow, upon his victim.

Poor Mary felt the misery of her situation to its full extent; for there were those who took care that she should not continue in ignorance of any of her husband's faults, but entertain a due sense of her injuries. There are some parents, who, forgetting that their authority over their child ceases with her marriage, and merges in her husband, are perpetually interfering in the concerns of her family; and, as power which is usurped is usually abused, most generally augment domestic dissensions, if they do not originate them. Mrs. Melvin's parents were of the number of those "miserable comforters,"

and were the first to counsel her to upbraid her husband for his treatment, and to meet it with what they were pleased to designate a "becoming spirit."

Out upon such meddlers ! The knowledge a woman possesses of her husband's errors beyond what she can correct, Heaven knows, is superfluous ; and thankless is their office that would tell her of them.

Mrs. Melvin did not fail to show a "becoming spirit" upon the occasion ; but it was a "spirit of health," not the "goblin damned," whose name is legion, for it pervades, not one family, alas ! but many, making a hell where there should be heaven, and producing those awful dissensions between them whom God has joined, by which they forfeit the respect of their children, incur the ridicule of the world, and bring scandal upon the religion they profess to venerate.

But Mrs. Melvin needed not to be reminded of her husband's errors : she had long known and wept bitterly over them. She mourned over the crushed hopes of her young heart, and she mourned also for him ; but she knew that the voice of upbraiding had few charms to win him back from the perilous path into which he had strayed ; and that to fill his home with complaints was not calculated to make him seek it the oftener. She did not, however, trust to

the uncertain deductions of human reason as a rule of conduct. She looked to Him who is a guide and a counsellor in every difficulty, and a comforter in every affliction; and who not only points out the path in which we should walk, but supplies us with a powerful motive for pursuing it. She had pledged herself at His altar to adhere to her husband in sickness; and his was indeed a grievous sickness, for it was that of the soul. She knew that she could not extricate herself from her situation, distressing as it was, without violating the law of her God; and deeming that a plain indication of His will that she should suffer, she needed no other motive for patience. She did not impiously challenge the justice of His dispensations, and inquire of Him what she had done to merit a visitation so severe; it was enough for her that He had the power of abundantly rewarding her, in His kingdom, for all that she could be called to suffer upon earth. The Saviour of the world, who met with revilings, contumely, and death, from those to redeem whom he resigned the glories of heaven, prayed for his murderers; and should she refuse to pray for the conversion of one who added the claim of a husband, to that of a fellow sinner, to her prayers?

But, although her every action bore the stamp of strong religious principle, there was no parade of it. Her virtues were unobtrusive; like the lily, the emblem at once of her beauty and humility, they delighted in the shade, and needed not the stimulus of the world's gaze to bring them into action.

Mr. Melvin, among other accomplishments for which his society was coveted, possessed an uncommonly fine voice, and an exquisite taste for music; talents which, before his marriage, had, notwithstanding his devotion to Mary, led him more into company than was agreeable to her; but she had trusted that such a home as she hoped to make his, would possess attractions which would wean him from the companions of his youthful days.

But, alas! although the first year had flattered her with the appearance of success, she found, too early, that society had regained its hold upon him; and his connexions did not improve as they extended. What is called gay, is closely allied to profligate, society. Indeed, if the terms thus applied be not synonymous, the transition from the one description of company to the other is easy and imperceptible. Although he was an illustration

of the proverb, "*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*," the gradations of his descent were soon completed; and his ruin, which began its career in gaiety, was consummated by the race-course and the gaming-table.

The result was that, in about three years after his marriage with Miss Evelyn, his affairs becoming embarrassed, and his creditors impatient, he was thrown into prison for the debts he was unable to meet. The shock, although he might have anticipated the event, was a severe one to him. Reflection, which may be drowned in the shouts of revelry, or escaped from in the whirl of dissipation, is not to be parried in a prison. It is there her mirror is held up to us, and we cannot choose but gaze upon it. He looked back upon the latter years of his life, and thought of the hours he had squandered among companions, and on pursuits, to whose utter worthlessness he was now awakened by the bitterest remorse. He well knew that not a voice among all those who had flattered him in the day of his pride, would awaken an echo in the vaulted roof which hung frowning above him; for those whom he had once called friends had dropped away from him in his adversity like the leaves from a frost-smitten tree, which are fresh and full upon

its branches at evening, but when sought for in the morning, they are scattered and gone. He looked back through the dark vista of his folly and crimes, on the happiness which was once in his power, and he thought of the blind infatuation in which he had cast it from him. He thought of the name he had lost, and the fortune he had wasted, and both were irretrievable. He thought of his wife, of his neglected, his injured Mary—of her tears, whose mute eloquence had so often pleaded with him in his own behalf—of her smile, which would have won back to her any but a heart of stone; and he felt that there was not one being beside himself who would thus have

———“wandered wild and wide
With such an angel for his guide.”

Poverty, imprisonment, and the world's scorn, are all, in themselves, endurable afflictions: it is the consciousness of having merited them which renders them insupportable, and it was this aggravation that had armed each with a double sting, and tortured him to madness.

He was roused from his gloomy meditations by the approach of footsteps—his door opened, he looked up, and it was Mary!

It is not easy to describe, nor is it perhaps possible to conceive, to their full extent, the feelings of a man whose offences have placed a gulf between him and those whose presence alone could console him, and who, while tortured by the goading consciousness of his shame, is surprised by a visit from one whom even his baseness and ingratitude could not estrange. If it be a friend, how tenaciously does he cling to him as a drowning mariner to a plank ! but, if it be a woman who has thus sought him out in his misery, how does his heart, upon which pride would set a guard in the presence of his fellow man, gush out in gratitude and tenderness ; and with what eagerness does he rush to hide his shame in the only bosom in the world that does not scorn or hate him, and which even the loathsome leprosy of his crimes could not repel from his arms ! Oh, what a relief must it be to his bursting heart and burning brain, though his self-upbraidings should flow faster than his tears !

Such were the feelings of Melvin upon meeting his wife in his prison, for his heart, though lamentably corrupted, was not of adamant.

Mrs. Melvin “her soul-subduing voice applied,” to moderate the ebullitions of his anguish and

remorse. "My Edward," she said, "all is not lost."

"Call me not *your* Edward," said the wretched man, hastily interrupting her; "I have forfeited every claim to a title of which a monarch might have been proud, and of which, blind ingrate that I am! I never knew the value, until it was past recovery. Oh, no! I have been the willing slave of every unhallowed passion, and the associate of profligates and fools, and you must, you cannot but despise and loathe me."

"Oh, no!" said Mary, "or you had not seen me here. I have mourned for your desertion of a home which, oh! you might have made so happy! and I have wept over your aberrations from the path which you might have adorned; but, believe me, I ever loved you, and gladly would I become the tenant of this dungeon for the remnant of my days, if it would purchase back for you the happiness which you have lost: and, oh, it may yet again be yours!"

"No," Melvin replied, "it may not be: could my liberation be effected, degradation and shame, the world's contumely, and my self-abhorrence, will follow me to the grave; and even these evils were light, if they would purchase indemnity

against the fearful reckoning which awaits me beyond it."

"They will not save you, my husband," exclaimed his wife; "but there is One who is able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come to Him in repentance and faith."

Mrs. Melvin had not encouraged in her husband the hope of obtaining his liberty without good reason, for all of her property over which she had any influence was unreservedly sacrificed to effect the object; and as soon as he was released, she retired with him to a cottage, which, with a small annuity, had been settled on her by her father.

Adversity had, however, wrought a change in Mr. Melvin; he was no longer what he had been; he turned with disgust from his former companions and habits, to her whom he now hailed as his guardian angel. He had, indeed, in his prison light enough to perceive his danger, but not sufficient to discover a way to escape from it. He had begun to look back upon his past life with abhorrence and fear;—a crisis at which despair or a saving repentance awaited him. "Wo to him," saith the preacher, "that is alone when he falleth!" and surely if, while the waters of affliction were gathering around him, there had been none to ex-

tend the hand of encouragement when his heart was failing him, the stream had gone over his soul, and whelmed it for ever in the gulf of despair.

Mr. Melvin's constitution had been materially impaired by the irregular life he had led previously to his imprisonment, and it was not a year after his release when I was summoned to his chamber.

His illness was severe and lingering, and she who had been his comfort in sorrow was his nurse in his sickness; she attended him by night and day with the most unwearied assiduity, the most endearing tenderness.

The vigils of the sick room had indeed blanched her cheek, and dimmed the lustre of her eye; but the smile of her affection had lost none of its sweetness, and when she smoothed down his pillow, or supported his frame, it beamed upon his countenance as the smile of an angel.

To him who, in his estimation of woman's love, typifies its constancy by the breeze, and its duration by the flower, I would say, "Go to the chamber of sickness, or the dungeon of the captive, and you shall behold that flower braving the bitterest blast of adversity, and perishing only with the object to which it clings."

But the voice of affection wins not upon the ear

of Death, who had summoned him to his home. He met the stroke with fortitude, and expressed a confident hope that, although his sins had been many and grievous, He who had given him time and grace to repent of them, would remember him in His kingdom.

Whether his confidence were a well-grounded one, and of what avail will be his repentance who, bankrupt in reputation, fortune, and friends, flies to his Redeemer as a last resource, it may by some be deemed presumptuous to determine. We know, however, that the prodigal, abandoned even by the companions of his sin and his shame, was forgiven by his father, and that they who were willing to enter into the vineyard, even at the eleventh hour, were not rejected. We know, also, that it has often pleased God, by sudden calamity, to arrest a man in his desolating career of sin, and yet He has so mingled mercy with judgment, that the benighted sinner has been guided to the rock of salvation, by the lightnings of the wrath which his crimes have provoked.

Notwithstanding the sacrifices which had been made by Mrs. Melvin, her husband's affairs were so much embarrassed at the time of his death, that the furniture of the cottage was given up to his

creditors. Other motives than curiosity induced me to attend the sale, and, having arrived at the house some time before it commenced, I wandered through the apartments in which the furniture was disposed.

There is a propensity in our nature to identify things with the persons whom we have loved or admired, and which causes us to feel regret when they pass into strange hands. In every room I beheld something that strikingly reminded me of the amiable being whom sorrow and distress had driven from that abode. In one room was her harp, the companion of her youth, and the solace of her later years. When I first saw her, she was bending over that harp; and often have I sat by her side, as it were spell-bound by strains so thrilling and so sweet, as almost to suggest a doubt if the hand that awakened them were fashioned of clay. It was sad to think that that hand would never wake them again; and I could almost have deemed it better that every chord had snapped, with its last vibration to her touch, than have yielded its melodies to the hand of another.

In many of the drawings which adorned the walls I recognized the pencil of Mary; for its touches were as delicate as the hand it obeyed.

Among them I observed a miniature of herself, which she had painted at Melvin's earnest solicitation. The cold eye of the critic, thought I, may glance over it, and discover defects which, in the original, he had searched for in vain. Her library, too, was destined to be scattered. I opened some of the volumes. Her name, written by herself, was in the title pages; and I thought that the hand that obliterated it could not write a worthier in its place. There were flowers, too, which she had planted, and with which she loved to decorate her little drawing-room; but they had missed her fostering care, and were hanging their heads; while some of them, like her own young hopes, were withering in the bud, as if they scorned to shed their blossoms at the feet of the stranger. A melancholy feeling stole over me as I contemplated the scene, and I could not endure to think that those things which, by an association of ideas, I had almost deemed sacred, should be libelled by the awkward praises of the hired eulogist of chairs and tables, and become subjects of the clamorous contention, and of the jests, dull as they are coarse, which make up the Babel of an auction room.

While the auctioneer was pronouncing his exordium, I observed a tall thin gentleman enter the

room, and afterwards, somewhat to my surprise, compete for every lot that was put up for sale, with such perseverance, and total recklessness of cost, that he became the purchaser of each. The portrait of Mr. Melvin was among the things exhibited; and, as it was painted by an artist of eminence, some sharp contest took place, particularly on the part of one person, who appeared to derive a gratification from the chagrin evinced by the stranger, as he found himself outbidden at every advance by the sole remaining competitor. At length I observed a sudden flush upon the stranger's brow; and, in a tone of voice highly indicative of impatience, he named a sum which left competition altogether behind, and the picture became his. A contest nearly similar in its progress, and altogether so in its issue, occurred when the miniature of Mrs. Melvin was produced. The stranger, in fact, became the purchaser of every thing the house contained, at a price far beyond its value, and the premises were gradually cleared of those who came to the sale. I lingered almost to the last, and found myself in the room alone with the stranger. I looked up, and it was Landen, "the ghost of what he was,"—"the shadow of a shade."

"Doctor ****," he said, "you may indeed ap-

pear surprised at meeting me in this house, as well as at the object which has led me hither. I heard of poor Melvin's death, and read in the papers that the furniture of his cottage had been destined for sale, for the benefit of his creditors. You know the feelings I entertained for Mary Evelyn. We cannot bestow our affection where we please, nor will it come back to us at our beck. Her marriage did not blot her out from existence, nor her image from my mind. I will not say that the feeling I retained for her after that event was *love*. Let those who deal in terms give it what name they please. I know that it is such as may be cherished without sin, and owned without a blush. The ivy, torn from the object to which it would have clung until it withered, may be too deeply rooted to perish, though the day of its aspirations be past. The house which she has graced with her presence must not be made a desert; and I would that, when she returns to it, she find every thing as she left it, and therefore have I done what you have witnessed. To-morrow will see me on my way from England, to visit it no more; and I leave to you the arrangement of the matter, in such a way that she may never know who has restored to her the furniture

of her dwelling. Simply tell her that it is her own again.

“I shall make but one reserve of all my purchases,” added he, taking up the miniature, and depositing it in his bosom: “having once possessed, I cannot summon the courage to resign it.”

The arrangement was made in strict conformity to Mr. Landen’s directions, and Mrs. Melvin ever remained in ignorance of the author of an act, which, while it paid a delicate tribute to her feelings and to her worth, afforded a proof, not only of the strength, but of the exalted purity of his affection.

The result of Mr. Landen’s disregard of cost, and determination to purchase every article of furniture the house possessed, was, that the amount produced by the sale was more than adequate to satisfy the demands of the creditors of Mr. Melvin; and the annuity, which was settled upon his widow, enabled her to continue to reside at the cottage, which, notwithstanding his faults, the memory of her husband had endeared to her.

THE JEW.

THE
HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF
NEW-YORK
FROM
THE
FIRST
SETTLEMENT
TO
THE
PRESENT
TIME
BY
JOHN
BUTLER
1764

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HISTORY OF THE
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THE JEW.

“ Thy grace can send its breathings o'er
The spirit, dark and lost before,
And, freshening all its depths, prepare
For truth divine to enter there.”

MOORE.

EDWARD LESLIE was left an orphan in his childhood, and was adopted by his uncle, a clergyman and a bachelor, who had a living in my neighbourhood. The boy had talents, which were not permitted to remain uncultivated by his eccentric, but most worthy and erudite, protector. Among other qualities by which Edward was distinguished, was a facility for the acquirement of languages; and his views having been directed towards the church, he had made the Hebrew so much his study, that, at the age of nineteen, he was considered to have attained a proficiency at which many who have devoted a lifetime to the task have scarcely arrived. It had been the intention of his uncle to send him to one of the universities, but Death, who is ever

interposing between man and his best concerted projects, deprived Edward of his patron, and left him the most friendless and unprotected being in the world. His education, instead of adapting, had unfitted him for any of those employments in which a youth of half his talents would have fought his way through the world; while the secluded manner in which his uncle lived had deprived him of the opportunity, if he had even possessed the wish, of forming connexions through whom he might have obtained a situation, in which his peculiar acquirements would have enabled him to acquit himself with credit and advantage.

It was on the evening of the day on which, a solitary, but sincere mourner, he had followed the remains of his lamented relative to the grave, in which all his own hopes appeared to have been buried, and while he was reflecting on the manner in which he should dispose of himself on the morrow, when the arrival of the new incumbent would banish him for ever from the roof which had so long and so hospitably sheltered him, that a message was brought from the occupant of a very large mansion in the vicinity, who was desirous of an interview with him on the ensuing morning. The person from whom the summons proceeded was a Jew,

who lived altogether retired from the world, abstaining from all intercourse with the surrounding gentry, who were as unacquainted with his person and habits as if such a being had never existed in their neighbourhood. He was, however, not less the object of their curiosity, which the mystery in which every thing connected with him was involved tended materially to sharpen. Jacobi Ben Israel, from the day on which he took possession of the property, was never known to pass the gates of his park, nor were any of his domestics permitted to do so, except in cases of urgent necessity. His house was a spacious and magnificent building, in the style of architecture which prevailed about the time of the second Charles. The park, in the centre of which it stood, was of great extent, abounding in deer and game, and studded with very valuable timber; while the views which, from various situations, it commanded, were not to be surpassed for variety and richness.

Leslie was altogether at a loss to conjecture the object of Jacobi in desiring to see him, and at first hesitated as to the answer he should return to his message. The youth had, however, a tincture of romance in his composition; there was an air of adventure in the thing which captivated him, and

he signified his readiness to wait upon the Jew at the appointed hour.

Accordingly, on the following morning, he proceeded to the park, at the gates of which he was met by the person who brought him the summons on the preceding day, and by him conducted to the mansion. He was ushered into a room so spacious and magnificently furnished, that Leslie almost fancied himself in the palace of some eastern potentate, rather than in the residence of a private gentleman.

He had not waited long before a pair of folding doors were thrown open, as if by invisible agency, and a figure, considerably above the ordinary stature of man, advanced towards him. He was apparently above sixty years old, but was singularly erect and dignified in his carriage. His complexion inclined to the olive; his eye was dark, full, bold, and penetrating; his hair and beard were black, the latter curling in profusion about his chin, while the picturesque effect of his appearance was considerably heightened by his dress, which was that of an Armenian, of very costly materials.

There was an air of intellectuality in his countenance, although its general expression, assumed perhaps for the occasion, was somewhat stern and

stoical, while his reception of his visiter was cold almost to repulsiveness. Jacobi returned his obeisance by a slight inclination of the head, and was the first to break the silence which prevailed for some seconds.

“Christian youth,” said he, “I am informed that you have devoted much of your time to the acquirement of languages; tell me now, have you a knowledge of the Hebrew?”

“I have studied it,” was the reply, “and of late somewhat assiduously.”

“Then,” continued his interrogator, throwing down a manuscript on the table, “those characters are not strange to you?”

“Assuredly not,” said Edward, glancing at the parchment.

“Take a pen, then, and transcribe them,” rejoined the Jew.

The youth did as he was commanded, and although his hand trembled slightly during the process, he wrote about a dozen lines with considerable expedition, when he was interrupted by the exclamation,

“Enough! now understand you what you have written?”

Edward bowed.

“ Translate it, then,” said the other.

It was done with facility and precision. His task-master, comparing the translation with the original, added,

“ It is well: I have not been misinformed, then. I am in need of a person of your acquirements, in the capacity of my amanuensis, and if the situation, under the conditions which I shall attach to your acceptance of it, be agreeable to you, we will not quarrel for a little gold. The first is, that you will not pass beyond the boundary of the park, except upon your Sabbath, and then only for the performance of your religious duties; for I would have every man worship his God after the manner of his fathers, and therefore have the greater right to exact obedience to the second condition which I shall impose; namely, that you will not interfere with the religious creed of any of my household. For the rest, apartments and a table shall be assigned to you, and to any amusements which the park and grounds can afford you will be at full liberty to resort. You shall be free to quit my service, whenever it becomes irksome to you; but while you remain in it, I shall expect implicit obedience to the regulations I have laid down. Go now, and consider my proposal, which, if I see you

not again in three days, I shall conclude you have rejected, and ——”

“The matter, circumstanced as I am,” rejoined Leslie, interrupting him, “requires but little deliberation. Last night my head reposed where it has found shelter from my childhood; to-night it will have no other than the canopy of heaven.”

“I am to understand, then,” said Jacobi, “that you accept my terms?”

“Were they less liberal,” replied the youth, “I could not choose but do so.”

The Jew employed him from an early hour in the morning until three in the afternoon, when he was dismissed, to dispose of the remainder of the day according to his pleasure. Few words passed between him and his employer, who pointedly avoided all conversation but what referred to the subject before them. Edward’s principal occupation was transcribing or translating passages from the Hebrew Scriptures and the Targums, which transcripts or translations he delivered to Jacobi as soon as they were completed, and he never saw them again, nor was he informed of the purpose to which they were applied.

Jacobi Ben Israel, although possessed of that wealth-acquiring energy by which his tribe is

distinguished, was a man of strict probity and unblemished honour. He had been eminently successful as a Mediterranean merchant, and his liberality was as princely as the fortune he had accumulated. He was, withal, one of the most enlightened and talented of his sect, and united to profound learning a spirit of inquiry and research, which had introduced him to a respectable acquaintance with natural philosophy, while it had plunged him, too deeply perhaps, into the science of metaphysics.

He had, particularly since his retirement, dedicated the energies of his powerful mind to the study and investigation of the religion he professed; and the more closely he grappled with his subject, the less satisfied he became with the result. He opened a correspondence with the most learned rabbis in Europe, submitting to their exposition certain passages in the Scriptures, as well as in the Targums, which he was unable to reconcile. It was to assist him in this intercourse that he had engaged the services of Edward Leslie as his amanuensis, or secretary. The answers, however, which Jacobi received from those whom he consulted on the subject of his doubts, instead of satisfying, multiplied them. Deeply rooted prejudice prevented him from exa-

mining the evidences of the Christian religion; but his confidence in his own was shaken to its base. His mind had abandoned its narrow prison for the measureless space of speculation; but it found not a point whereon it could rest. He had quitted the haven wherein he no longer deemed himself secure, and committed himself to the limitless ocean of doubt, to be tossed by the waves, and blown about by every wind of doctrine. He saw his danger: that, like a rudderless bark, he was hourly in peril of shipwreck; while his spiritual darkness prevented him from seeing the "Star in the east" that would have guided him beyond the reach of the storm.

It happened one morning, while Edward was engaged in his usual occupation, in the presence of the Jew, that a door communicating with an inner apartment was opened, and a female advanced to the table on which they were writing. She was young, apparently about eighteen, perfectly symmetrical in her form, and graceful in her carriage. Her countenance, Edward remarked, had very little of the cast of features which, in the generality of instances, so strikingly indicate her tribe. The only points in which she could be considered to partake in that distinction, were her black and very brilliant eyes, dark and correctly arched eyebrows,

and a profusion of beautiful hair of the same colour. The rosy tints of Hygeia were upon her cheeks, delicately relieved by the fairness of a forehead perfect and polished as Parian marble on which the chisel of Canova, or of our own Chantrey, has left the stamp of excellence. There was a slight expression of thoughtfulness, if not of gravity, in her features, which did not altogether consist with her juvenile appearance, and yet was most interestingly contrasted with the smile of indescribable sweetness with which she met the look of Jacobi, her father. The effect of her personal attractions was considerably heightened by her attire, which, although rich, was simple, chaste, and elegant.

Yielding to the first and natural impulse, Edward Leslie rose when Esther, for such was her name, entered the apartment; but, catching a glance from her father, which appeared to intimate that such demonstration of his respect was neither requisite nor agreeable, he instantly resumed his seat and his task, which was never again interrupted in a similar manner. He, of course, often met the young lady afterwards, but uniformly passed her with a slight but respectful inclination of his head; a salutation which she returned, not unfrequently, with a distant but courteous smile.

When three months had elapsed from the commencement of his engagement, and just as he was about to rise from the completion of the task allotted for the morning, Jacobi put a purse into his hand, and said, "Mr. Leslie, it did not occur to me, when I offered to you the situation, to mention the salary I proposed to attach to it; but if the contents of that purse do not equal your expectations, speak boldly, and I will endeavour to satisfy them."

Edward bowed and retired; but, on the following morning, on entering the apartment to resume his duties, he laid the purse before the Jew, and said, "Sir, either you have committed some mistake, or have rated my poor services so far above their value, that I should both abuse your generosity and do violence to my conscience, in consenting to accept the stipend you have assigned to me."

"You are the only Christian," replied Jacobi, relaxing, for the first time since they had met, into a smile, which imparted an expression of singular benevolence to his fine countenance, "I have ever found to refuse the money of our tribe, when he could honestly possess himself of it; but you must remember that no man is a competent judge of his own merits. Put up the purse, therefore, if you would not offend me, and let what you consider to

exceed the value of your services go in part compensation for the loss of your liberty."

These words, pronounced in a tone which precluded expostulation, silenced, if it did not convince, him; and he had nothing left but to replace the purse in his pocket, and to reconcile the acceptance of it to his conscience as thereafter he best might.

The motive of the Jew, in imposing upon him, in common with the rest of his household, a restriction against passing the boundaries of the park, was in all probability his disinclination to the peculiarity of his faith, and his habits of living, forming the subjects of conversation in the village; but, whatever were the reasons on which the regulation was founded, Leslie had very little inducement to contravene it. The life he led in Jacobi's family, although in some sense a solitary one, could not, to a mind constituted as was his, but have possessed very many charms. His time, while he was under the guardianship of his beloved and lamented uncle, was spent for the most part in solitude. Solitude, did I say? Who ever experienced a feeling of loneliness, when, in books, he communes with the mighty spirits whose genius has illumined past ages, and shot its rays into succeeding ones, to light posterity to wisdom? Who, with faculties above

the brute's which perishes, ever walked forth into the quiet and consecrated haunts of Nature,—among her woods and mountains, her fields and floods, and felt that he was alone? Much, then, of the unadulterated enjoyment of his early years was still preserved to him. The park by which Jacobi's mansion was encircled extended over many hundreds of acres, and embraced the varieties of English scenery,—hills and valleys, forest glades, and silver lake. It was there that much of the leisure which, before and after the completion of his diurnal task, remained to him was passed. With his Virgil or Theocritus in his hand, would he stretch himself under the floral canopy of an umbrageous chestnut tree; his eye ever and anon wandering from the page, to repose upon the beauties of the rich landscape that was smiling beneath him. Or, it may be, his mind being imbued with the themes which have inspired the genius of Spenser and Ariosto, would he fling him beside the lake in which, at evening, the oaks that graced its margin were duskily shadowed forth, and fancy that he was gazing in an enchanted mirror, on the dim and giant forms which some mighty necromancer had conjured up; the mysterious music of the wind, as it stole through

the branches, lending its aid to the delusion, and exciting the imagination while it soothed the spirit.

If Edward Leslie had reason to congratulate himself on the means which were thus afforded him for exercise and recreation, he had not less cause to be satisfied with the liberality with which his domestic comforts were cared for. His meals were always served up to him in his own apartment; his table, as we read in the details of a city banquet, was supplied with every delicacy of the season, while his sideboard was furnished with the most costly wines; which, however, such was the abstemiousness of his habits, were frequently removed untasted. The servant who was appointed to wait upon him, although perfectly attentive and respectful, seemed to have been selected for the office on account of his taciturnity; a quality which, as far as Edward's experience extended, appeared to prevail in the family, from Jacobi down to the meanest domestic in his establishment.

Mr. Leslie had often been led to suppose, that, during his absence, his books had been disturbed. His suspicions would naturally have lighted upon the servant, whose peculiar duty it was to keep his apartments in order, had the volumes which the

intruder selected been of a description likely to interest a person in that rank of life. One book, in particular, he frequently found out of its place. It was a copy of the New Testament, which he had caused to be interleaved for the reception of commentaries, which he had employed some of his leisure in making upon the text. A circumstance, however, shortly occurred, which not only placed the fact of his privacy having been invaded beyond a doubt, but afforded some clue to the intruder. On returning one morning, after his dismissal by Jacobi, he found the volume alluded to lying on the table, in about the situation in which he left it, but open at a different chapter; while, beside it, he discovered, to his surprise, a small brooch, composed of stones of apparently considerable value, and evidently adapted for the use of a female. Now, as there was but one woman in that house to whom a trinket of such costly materials was likely to belong, he could have no doubt as to the person who had thus taken advantage of his absence: but what attraction the volume could possess for one whose faith was so decidedly opposed to its revelation and its doctrines; and which, moreover, contained so many and such severe censures upon her

own tribe, was a mystery which he had yet to fathom.

His immediate care was to extricate himself from the dilemma into which the unsought and perplexing custody of the jewel had involved him. It was doubtless a situation of no ordinary embarrassment. On the one hand, to wait until inquiry was made after the lost article before he acknowledged it to be in his possession, could not but place his character, stranger as he was in the family, in a very questionable light; while, on the other hand, were he at once to proclaim the fact, the circumstances under which the trinket was found might induce censure, if not suspicion, upon the fair owner. Preferring, therefore, like a true knight, to risk his own reputation rather than the lady's, he resolved to wait an opportunity of restoring the property unobserved by a third party.

In the rambles which, every morning and evening when the weather was favourable, he was in the practice, on the score of health as well as pleasure, of taking in the park, his retired and unobtrusive habits, as well as a sense of propriety, induced him to avoid that part of it in which Esther or her father might happen to be walking; a rule

on which, even for the purpose of ridding himself of the irksome custody of the jewel, he was unwilling to infringe. Emerging, however, one evening, from a clump of trees, he found himself suddenly within a few paces of Esther; and, although somewhat confused by the unexpected rencontre, he drew the trinket from his bosom, and, presenting it to her, said, "I presume, lady, I am correct in concluding that this brooch, which it has been my good fortune to find, can belong to no other than yourself."

"I thank you, Mr. Leslie," said the maiden, addressing him for the first time in her life, and in those silver tones that thrilled him to the heart; "I am more fortunate than I deserve to be." She took the trinket with a smile and a courtesy, unaccompanied, however, by any indication of her consciousness of the circumstances under which her lost treasure had been found. Leslie, with a bow, resumed his walk, while Esther returned to the house.

Jacobi Ben Israel, apprehensive of plunging his daughter, whom he loved most tenderly, into the sea of doubts in which he was immersed, wisely resolved to hide from her the misgivings which he experienced on the subject of the creed they

both professed ; but the shrewdness of Esther's observation defeated his endeavours at concealment. Equally unsettled by doubts, which, after a mature and anxious examination, she entertained of the security of the basis upon which she rested her hopes of salvation, but much less confirmed in her prejudices than her father, she applied her mind to the contemplation of the life and doctrines of Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, in connexion with the types and prophecies concerning him in the Old. It was to aid her in this study that she had been induced to visit Edward Leslie's apartment in quest of books, and was happy in finding every thing she wanted in the little interleaved volume to which I have alluded ; and, if there ever was a case in which the means were sanctified by the end, hers was one to which the full benefit of the doctrine was due. The perusal of that volume strengthened the doubts which she had previously entertained, and she became "perplexed, but not in despair." She cast herself upon her knees before her God, whose mercies, she remembered, were ever of old ; and He to whom "she cried in her trouble, delivered her out of her distress ;" for He is ever nigh unto such as call upon Him faithfully. The scales fell from her

eyes, and she beheld the dark types of the law rolling away before the Sun of Righteousness, which was rising upon her soul with healing on his wings.

After Leslie had been about a year in the service of the Jew, he found that his health was not so good as it was wont to be. Indeed, the alteration in his appearance elicited, on more than one occasion, from Jacobi, reserved as was his general deportment, an inquiry if he were well. Edward, however, from an unwillingness to give trouble, or the inability to define what was really wrong about him, always evaded the question. One morning, however, while engaged in his duties, the pen suddenly dropped from his hand, and he fell back senseless in the chair. The stoical indifference of the Jew melted instantly before the impulses of a really generous and liberal heart. He immediately summoned his household, and himself applied every restorative that could be procured; betraying, throughout the scene, the utmost anxiety, as well as regard for the unconscious object of his attentions.

Edward was conveyed to his bed, and, in less than an hour afterwards, a carriage, drawn by four horses, was at my door, with an entreaty for my

instant attendance. I was soon, therefore, at the residence of the Jew, and proceeded directly to the chamber of the patient. When I had seen and prescribed for him, I was conducted to Jacobi, whom I found pacing the library in a state of high excitement, and anxiously waiting for my report. I told him what, in my opinion, was the nature of the malady by which Leslie had been attacked ; and added, that it would be wrong to disguise from him that the symptoms were such as to create serious apprehensions as to the issue.

“ Alas !” replied the Jew, in a tone of deep concern, “ the kind, the gentle youth ! For some time I have observed that his complexion was gradually becoming paler, but he has always quieted my apprehensions by assuring me that he was well. Fool that I was ! to trust to such assurances, rather than to the evidence of my own senses, and thus allow him to continue at his employment until it has given him his death blow.”

He then implored me, if I deemed the presence of one or more of the faculty from the metropolis desirable, not to hesitate, on the score of expense, in procuring their attendance. I answered, that, if he were desirous of farther advice, I should be most happy to consult with any medical gentleman

whose opinion he might value ; but that the disease, although alarming, was so far from being complicated, that I believed the village apothecary was quite as competent to the treatment of it as myself ; that, in fact, it was just one of those numerous cases in which recovery depended more upon the constitution of the patient than the skill of the physician.

Mr. Leslie continued to grow worse, and his situation at last became so critical, that I never quitted the mansion, but occupied an apartment communicating with the patient's, for many successive days, during which period the Jew was almost constantly by Edward's bed. The deep solicitude which he betrayed, evidently arose as much from the personal regard which Mr. Leslie's excellent disposition and mild and gentlemanly manners had inspired, as from the supposition that his malady, if not originating in, had been aggravated by, too close an application to his secretarial duties.

The interest which the situation of my patient excited, extended beyond Jacobi Ben Israel. Esther was an anxious witness of that scene of sorrow ; and her feelings upon the occasion were not the less intense, in that they did not find utterance in words.

They spoke a language, however, which could not be mistaken. Often did I observe her, when she was admitted to his chamber, gazing upon his pale and wasted countenance, until her eyes filled with tears, and she has walked out of the apartment in the suffocating attempt to hide the agony with which her heart was bursting.

The poor young man endured his sufferings with amazing fortitude and resignation. The mild and amiable temper of mind, by which he was distinguished when in health, was still more interestingly conspicuous in his illness; nor was the piety, which the precept and example of his deceased benefactor had so early instilled, less apparent. Often did we hear him lifting up his soul in prayer for a supply of grace and strength to endure patiently the chastenings of his God, or pouring out his heart in thanksgiving for the many mercies he had experienced, and, above all, for the blessed hope of eternal life, which He had given him in His Son.

The disorder at length developed symptoms which made it incumbent on me to acquaint Jacobi of the little expectation I entertained of the patient's recovery, and to suggest to him the propriety of a communication to that effect being

made to Edward Leslie. The Jew, although he could not but have been, for some days, prepared for the intelligence, was overwhelmed by grief, his expressions of which were mingled with those of the most affectionate regard for the object of his solicitude.

Shortly after the intimation of his imminent danger had been conveyed to Edward, who received it like one for whom death had no terrors, Jacobi, Esther, and myself, were standing around the bed, in the expectation that every moment would prove his last. Of all in that melancholy chamber, Edward was the least afflicted; for the God whom he had served was present with him in his extremity; "His rod and His staff, they comforted him." He repeatedly implored them to moderate their grief, assuring them of the confidence he felt that, through the mercy of his God, and the merits of his Redeemer, a blessed immortality awaited him. Unwilling further to distress him by the manifestation of their sorrow, the Jew and Esther retired from the bed, and the curtains were drawn around it. Edward doubtless concluded that they had left the room, for he uttered, in a low but distinct voice, a prayer, in which, in the most affecting language, he supplicated the throne of

grace for the conversion of Jacobi and his daughter from the errors of Judaism, to a saving knowledge of the Gospel. While he was thus pouring out his spirit, Esther sank down upon her knees by the side of her father, and, taking his hand, deluged it with tears. He evidently felt the appeal: he did not, he could not, look unmoved upon that scene. He saw before him, stretched upon the bed, from which he never hoped to rise, a fellow mortal and a fellow sinner, engaged in the most fearful conflict which humanity can encounter, looking out calmly upon the dark waters which were surging around him, and clinging to the Rock of his salvation secure amid the storm.

When Jacobi and his daughter quitted the room, which they did at my solicitation, I sat down by the side of the patient, and, shortly afterwards, perceiving that he respired more freely than he had done for a long time, I drew back the curtain, and, to my surprise, discovered that he had fallen into a profound slumber, in which he continued for some hours. On his awaking, he was evidently refreshed, and my hopes of his recovery revived. The disorder had, in fact, attained a crisis, and the fever was subsiding.

The joy of Jacobi, on his being informed of the

favourable alteration that had taken place, could not have been more lively had Leslie been his son. The gratification of Esther, though more subdued in its expression, was not less deeply felt, nor less plainly observable, exhibiting itself in her re-illuminated countenance, and in the light step with which she proceeded upon her domestic duties. When, however, Leslie was so far convalescent as to leave his bed for a couch in an adjoining apartment, Esther was enabled, with greater propriety, to assume the office of his nurse. Every little delicacy which was necessary to recruit his strength, if not prepared, was administered, by her hand; and when his progress towards recovery had rendered it safe as well as expedient that he should quit his room for the open air, Esther's was the arm which supported his feeble steps as he tottered across the lawn.

I well remember the morning on which this occurred. It was in the blessed month of June: the woodland choristers, whose music, at such a season, is more inspiring than the melody of a thousand flutes, were singing from every spray. There was not a cloud in the blue vault of heaven, which hung clear and bright and beautiful above him; but it was not more clear nor bright nor beautiful

than the countenance that was turned upon his own at every pause which his extreme weakness compelled him to make. The perfumed breath of the summer morning was not more balmy to his debilitated frame, than were the silver tones that cheered him as he crept along, to his spirit. There are many—I appeal not to the puling sentimentalist—who can conceive, if they have not experienced, the sensations which belong to the scene I have described: to such I need not paint them; and to those who are not of that order, the attempt would be vain indeed.

I have said that I was a witness of the occurrence. I was standing at the window of an apartment immediately over that from which Edward and Esther had issued, and Jacobi Ben Israel was by my side. I occasionally stole a glance at him, curious to discover the effect which the scene produced upon him. I looked in vain for traces of that displeasure, which I apprehended he might feel upon the occasion: he regarded them for some time with intense interest, his countenance expanding with benevolence, and at length he raised his eyes, streaming with tears, towards Heaven, as if invoking its blessing upon the youthful pair.

Leslie, however, soon found that the intercourse

with the fair Esther, to which the events narrated had given rise, dear and delightful though it were, threatened destruction to his peace. Young persons, situated as they were, did not require the stimulus of a rescue from fire or robbers, or the rivalry of some yellow griffin of a rich but detested suitor, to encourage a feeling which it was very natural they should cherish under circumstances less favourable for its development, and which had obtained root in their minds, and an influence on their conduct, before they were well aware of its existence.

Edward was the first to discover the danger of the connexion; and although he felt deeply, he felt correctly. His conscience told him that he was not justified in sacrificing her tranquillity to the selfish gratification he was deriving from her society; and although the causes which had contributed to throw him so constantly into it, were not of his seeking, he was bound to respect the confidence which had been reposed in him by Jacobi in permitting him so long to enjoy it. He knew also that his was one of those cases in which it behoved him to act promptly, since every hour would tend to weaken the resolution he had so magnanimously formed. He had, it should be remarked,

by this time so far recovered from the effects of his late indisposition, as to be quite competent to the resumption of his secretarial duties. On several occasions, however, on which he had reminded Jacobi of this fact, the latter evaded the subject, and at length told him, what Leslie had previously good reason to be assured was the case, that the circumstances under which he had been induced to require his assistance no longer existed; thus affording to Edward an opportunity of taking the step he had contemplated.

Accordingly, after expressing to Jacobi the deep sense he entertained of his liberality and kind treatment, and his gratitude for his unceasing attentions during his illness, he stated that, since his services were no longer useful, it was neither creditable nor agreeable to him to continue to eat the bread of idleness, and therefore he must look for employment elsewhere.

“ And whither would you go, my poor child ?” inquired the benevolent old man. “ Into a world with which you were never formed to contend ; where the hand of every man will be against you ; where your piety will be reviled as hypocrisy, or derided as fanaticism ; where your generous, confiding nature will be requited with suspicion and

wrong; where your talents will scarce gain you bread, and where you will see the knave and the fool preferred to honour before you. Oh, trust me, trust one whose feet have grown weary in the paths of the world, they are not strewn with flowers! What is there, really essential to your comfort, which this house does not possess? name it, and, if money can procure it, it shall be yours."

"Nay, my kind and generous master," replied Edward, "you mistake me: your liberality has always outstripped my wildest wishes, and, believe me, when I go forth from these hospitable walls, I shall ever look back upon the hours I have passed in them as among the happiest of my life. Never can I forget you, my kind and noble patron! It is not that I have not been happy; alas! I have been too happy."

"Then, wherefore would you leave us, my child?" rejoined Jacobi: "my daughter—surely she cannot have given you cause of offence—it is scarcely in her nature to do so."

"Your daughter offend me? oh, heavens! no," replied Edward hastily. Unable longer to repress his feelings, he burst into tears, and, covering his face with his hands, he added, in a voice scarcely arti-

culate, "I pray you, do not question me further, but let me go,—I beseech you dismiss me."

"Yes, Edward," said Jacobi, "I will dismiss you from my service, but it will be to take you to my bosom as my son. These eyes, dimmed though they be by age and some affliction, are not blind: I have long seen—ay, even before you discovered it yourselves, the growing affection between you; and, believe me, I should not have exposed you to so severe a trial, had I not determined to reward your generosity with the treasure it would so nobly have foregone. We are already, blessed be God for His mercy! united in faith; let us now become one family, and then, when I am called upon to set my house in order, I shall close my eyes in peace, since I shall leave my Esther under the protection of one who will cherish her as fondly as I have done."

A material and most happy change had indeed been working in Jacobi Ben Israel. Pride, the last fortress that falls before the conviction of the truth, had surrendered, and he awoke to a sense of his danger. The Spirit of God had done its blessed work upon his heart, and had sent light into his dwelling, while Egyptian darkness per-

vaded the habitations of his tribe. "With a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm," He had brought him out of the "house of bondage," in the face of his spiritual enemies, and had not left him to perish in the wilderness; for He sustained him with the bread of life, and refreshed his soul with rivers of living water. In the fervency of a grateful heart, he blessed God Almighty, who had given him to know, in this his latter day, the things which belonged to his peace, and had taught him to confess that Jesus was indeed "that prophet that should come into the world,"—whose day his father Abraham rejoiced to see, and the light of whose Gospel the prophets of old beheld through the dim mists of futurity.

THE STRANGER GUEST.

THE HISTORY OF

THE STRANGER GUEST.

THE STRANGER GUEST.

“ I brought him on and off with honour, lady ;
And when in all men's judgments he was sunk,
And in his own hopes not to be buoy'd up,
I stepp'd unto him, took him by the hand,
And set him upright.”

MASSINGER.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of my youth, and some intervals in my subsequent life, were spent in the country ; and when my professional pursuits fixed my residence in the metropolis, I often looked back upon the hours I had passed among rural scenes, with blended sensations of pleasure and regret ; while one of my principal excitements for pressing forward in the path I had chosen, was supplied by the hope of some day arriving at that point, from which I might diverge into the peaceful haunts of my childhood.

I was ever an interested spectator of the occupations of husbandry, and not unfrequently mingled in the society of those who pursued them. The British farmer is one of the most useful members

of the middle rank of life, and the character which he generally sustains places him among the most honourable. He is not exactly the description of person which existed under that name a hundred years ago, nor is it very likely that he should be; and, I confess, I could never join in the general clamour, and pronounce those effects of a refined state of society, which are termed improvements in other classes of men, degeneracy in him. The peasantry, too, of England, in the majority of instances where they have regular employment, I have found to be a very contented and well-ordered race; although, it may be, they do not possess the spirit and intellectuality ascribed by modern tourists to the denizens of the Alps and the Abruzzi, whose fingers, by the way, are more familiar with the trigger of a musket, than the handle of a plough.

There was in my neighbourhood a farm-house which was remarkable, as well for the peculiarity of its structure, as the very beautiful country by which it was surrounded. It was a very extensive building, and of a style of architecture quite distinct from any that prevails in houses of that description. It presented (I know not if I shall make myself understood by the terms I use) the appearance of three gables in front, on the centre one of which

rose a staff or spire, very much resembling a sceptre. Hence, I suppose, originated a tradition, current in the country, that the structure was formerly the residence of a Saxon prince. I am not sufficient of an antiquarian to venture an opinion upon the correctness of the hypothesis, but certain it is, the building was a very ancient one. The principal apartment on the ground floor was a spacious brick-paved hall, extending from the front of the house to the back, and communicating with other rooms on either side. It was decorated with the horns of the stag and the buck, which had grown black with age, and the smoke proceeding from a very large fire-place, graced by brand irons, to support the wood, which was the only description of fuel consumed throughout the house. The upper rooms opened into a long gallery or corridor, ornamented by some very antique and curious carved work in black oak, of which the pannels and flooring were generally composed. The surrounding buildings, appropriated as barns and stables, were of comparatively recent erection. There were two fish-ponds, apparently of ancient formation, within a few hundred yards of the house: one of them was tolerably stocked, the other was nearly dry. The circumjacent scenery was chiefly of a sylvan

character, occasionally opening into vistas of an undulating and highly cultivated country; the effect of which was considerably heightened by the windings of a rapid and clear stream, celebrated for the fineness and abundance of its trout.

The farm was of considerable extent, and formed part of the estate of a nobleman who had large possessions in the county, but who rarely visited them. As a young man, he was conspicuous for the generosity of his disposition, a nice sense of honour, and the mildness and affability of his manners. His classical and intellectual attainments were of a high order; and his wit, like Yorick's, was wont to "set the table in a roar." He formed an attachment to a young lady, who, a month before the day fixed for their union, suddenly, and without assigning a reason for the alteration in her sentiments, married a nobleman of higher rank. He received the intelligence of her faithlessness without uttering a syllable, or betraying an indication of anger or sorrow; nor was he ever known to allude to the subject: but, from that hour, he was a changed man. He withdrew entirely from female society, and became a member of a fashionable club, where a great portion of his time was passed. He engaged for a season in play; but, although his losses were

insignificant, he soon grew disgusted with the pursuit and his companions. He then plunged deeply into politics, and was constant in his attendance at the House; but the vacuum in his mind was too vast to be filled by such expedients. He then quitted England, and travelled rapidly through France, Italy, and Germany, but could not outstrip the phantom that pursued him. At length he took up his residence entirely on the Continent, and thus his talents were lost to his country, whose senate he had so often charmed by his eloquence, and enlightened by his wisdom.

The management of his estates, in the mean time, was confided to his steward, Mr. Giles Jenkins; a man who, although he would have made a grenadier among Lilliputians, was but a Lilliputian among grenadiers, being in stature exactly five feet two inches. His sallow complexion and forbidding aspect were by no means improved by an obliquity of vision, and a red nose, which latter decoration was obtained at the expense of his temperance. He had been originally bred to the law, to the tortuosities of which his mind was admirably adapted. Diminutive as was his person, there was room enough in his bosom for the operation of some of the fiercest passions that deform humanity. His

indomitable arrogance, grasping avarice, and insatiable revenge, made him the terror of all who were subjected to his influence, particularly of the tenants, among whom he exercised the most tyrannical sway. He was, moreover, a consummate hypocrite, and, as far as regarded his master, a successful one.

The farm, at the period of which I am writing, was tenanted by Andrew Hodson, whose ancestors had cultivated the same soil for more than a century.

Andrew had passed his fiftieth year; but the temperance of his habits, and the healthful nature of his employment, had protected him, in a great degree, from the inroads of time, and gave him the appearance of being much younger. His complexion exhibited the ruddy hue of health; and, although naturally fair, was imbrowned by the sun of many summers. His hair, as I have often remarked in persons engaged in agricultural pursuits, was somewhat scanty; a circumstance which, as it imparted a semblance of greater expansiveness to his forehead, improved rather than detracted from the general effect of his fine countenance. He was tall and well formed, although, probably from having in his early days taken an active share in the labours of the field, he had contracted a slight

stoop in his shoulders. His eye, though of a light blue, which is generally considered indicative rather of vivacity than sense, was not deficient in intelligence; while it added to the expression of that benevolence which had its home in his heart. His usual dress was a gaberdine, or linen frock, which was, however, laid aside on a Sunday for more befitting habiliments.

Andrew's wife, who had been pretty, and was then a very comely dame, was somewhat younger than himself. Her domestic virtues and acquirements were admirably adapted for a farmer's wife; and, although a shrewd, she was a very kind-hearted woman. They had two children, a son and a daughter; the former about one and twenty, and the latter two years younger.

Frank Hodson, very like his father in person, was an industrious, good humoured lad; and, when dressed in a smart green riding frock, light corduroy breeches, and long leather gaiters, or leggings, as they are called, was a very likely object to draw a second look from the village maidens, or even from dames of higher degree, as, mounted on his rough-coated forester, he passed on his way to the market town.

Of Amy Hodson, I fear I shall be able to give

but an inadequate description. I am, at best, but a sorry hand at depicting female beauty, and I know I shall fail in the portraiture of hers. Although, as the reader will have inferred from the publication of this volume, I have not a larger share of modesty than my neighbours, I know not how it is, but I never could look a lady long enough in the face to catch such an idea of her beauty, as to bring a description of it within any thing like an approximation to the original. I am not, it would seem, altogether singular in this particular, with regard to Amy Hodson; for even the sun, who, by his heathen *alias*, was not conspicuous for the unobtrusive quality I have named, had not turned his glances with sufficient pertinacity on her countenance, to sully the delicacy of the lily which Nature had there planted by the rose.

Those who, in their estimate of a rustic belle, are unable to separate the idea of vulgarity from the character, would do gross injustice to Amy Hodson, both as regards the style of her beauty, and the gentleness of manner by which it was graced. Nature is no respecter of persons; and, in the formation of our race, has little reference to the stations we are destined to fill; since she as often bestows the fair heritage of beauty on the

child of a peasant as on the heiress of a peer. Nor am I aware of any thing in the habits or occupation of a farmer's daughter, which has not a tendency rather to improve than to impair the symmetry of the form. Amy rose with the lark, breathing as sweet a hymn to the portals of heaven, and returning the first glance of Aurora with an eye as bright, and a smile as rosy as her own. Nor is Nature always aristocratic in dispensing understanding, and Amy's was an excellent one, on which the few advantages she had derived in point of education had not been thrown away.

The family, parents and children, were bound together, not only by links of the strongest affection, but by the firmer bands of religion, of which they had all a deep and influential sense. The voice of contention was never heard in their dwelling.

Andrew Hodson for many years had prospered in the world, but on the expiration of the lease, which had descended to him from his father, a reluctance to quit a spot which so many recollections had endeared to him, induced him to take the farm at a rent above its value; so that, instead of saving money every year, as he was wont to do, he began to find it a losing concern. At length, however,

the failure of a provincial banker deprived him of the few hundreds he had laid by, and placed him in circumstances of much difficulty. Thus it happened, that, in lieu of having his homestead surrounded by wheat-stacks, the growth of former years, his sheaves were transferred directly from the harvest-field to the thrashing-floor, and the produce was sent to market, under all the disadvantages of a forced sale, to meet his Michaelmas rent. Again, if a horse died, or was worn out, he was unable, for want of money, to supply its place; and thus the strength on his farm became gradually so much reduced, that many acres of his land, which might have been made productive, remained uncultivated.

Andrew and his family met this reverse of fortune as became them, by the sacrifice of very many comforts, in which, under more prosperous circumstances, they were warranted in indulging. The old man exchanged his favourite hackney for a cart-horse, and superintended the operations on his farm on foot. Frank gave up his forest galloway to the harrow and light plough; and poor Amy's pony was sold to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who had taken a fancy to it for his daughter. The privation, however, which they most lamented

was the necessity of contracting, not only the scale of their hospitality, but the sphere of their charity. It is true, the wayfaring man never passed their door unrefreshed, nor the houseless wanderer unrelieved; and their hearth still shed its genial warmth upon the poor dependant, whom they had not the heart to displace from his seat in the chimney corner; but there were many who were left bitterly to regret that the liberal hand should ever be closed by the pressure of calamity.

Under the influence of all these inauspicious events, they had sources of comfort of which the world could not deprive them. The sound of the dance, and the voice of innocent hilarity were no longer heard in their hall, but the still small voice of an approving conscience consoled them for the loss. Where a family are thus united, their home, although it were a hovel, cannot be desolate. Instead of sitting down in despair under their misfortune, each strove to cheer and support the other beneath its weight. They had all been early taught to look up to their God, and to put their trust in His mercy and wisdom under every dispensation; nor, at the morning and evening sacrifice, were their hearts less fervent in their thanksgivings for the blessings which were left to them,

than when they were showered down with a profuser hand. Another source of consolation was supplied to them in the uniform respect of those around them, who regarded their calamity with that silent sympathy which is worth all the condolence that proud prosperity ever dinged into the ears of the unfortunate. Often would the neighbouring farmers, aware of the difficulties he laboured under for want of strength upon his land, club together, each contributing a horse, and thus furnish him with the use of a team for several days, in the busy seasons of seed-time and harvest.

One evening, towards the close of the summer, as Andrew Hodson and his family were sitting at the window, they observed a horseman riding along the road which lay within a few yards of the house. Frank, whose admiration of a fine horse was in no degree diminished by the circumstance of his no longer possessing one, exclaimed to his sister, "Look, Amy! is not that a fine creature? what action he has! and see how he throws his feet out: a little ewe-necked, to be sure, but that is a sign of blood."

In the mean time, the traveller had arrived nearly opposite to the house. He was rather tall, somewhat in years, but sat very erect on his horse,

whose appearance justified the encomiums which Frank had bestowed on it. The gentleman's dress consisted of a blue coat, not remarkable for its lustre, and of a fashion almost coeval with the wearer; it was buttoned close up to his throat. His legs were encased in riding boots, and his intermediate habiliment was of buckskin, which however did not fit its present proprietor quite so tightly as it did its deceased one.

"I wish, Frank," said the farmer, "you would keep that dog tied up," alluding to a small terrier which ran out at the gate, and barked at the heels of the traveller's horse. The animal reared in consequence, and then, in plunging, one of its feet alighted on a rolling-stone; it stumbled and fell, throwing its rider to the ground with considerable violence. The steed was soon on its legs again; its master rose more slowly, approached his horse, passed his hand over its knees, and then attempted to remount, but in vain, and he was compelled to lean against the saddle for support.

By this time, all the family were at his side, expressing much regret for the occasion of the accident, and apprehensions for the consequences. The stranger was with difficulty conducted into the house, and placed upon a sort of couch, where

he remained for some minutes, without uttering a word, although his countenance was sufficiently indicative of his feelings, in which vexation appeared to predominate over pain. On his making a movement, which those around him interpreted into an attempt to rise, he was earnestly entreated not to think of quitting the house until the following day. He replied, in no very conciliatory tone : “ No, no, you have me safe enough ; I shall be your guest for some time to come, to my comfort, and no doubt to yours ; and if that abominable cur be not hanged or shot, I think your house stands a fair chance of becoming a hospital.”

Frank expressed himself deeply concerned for the accident, but alleged that the dog had been tied up, and had broken its chain. He added, however, that the animal should not commit a similar offence, and, taking a gun from over the chimneypiece, declared his intention of destroying the culprit immediately.

“ I pray you, young gentleman, forbear,” said the stranger ; “ what warrant have I that the animal is not mad ? He may have bitten my horse, and my horse may go mad also, and bite me. No, no, sir, tie the brute up again, securely, if you please, and, when he foams at the mouth, you may shoot him

and the horse together." Perceiving that the gentleman was in great pain, the farmer inquired if he would prefer being conducted to bed to remaining on the couch. He replied, "Yes; and the sooner you take me there the better, if you wish to have the assistance of my legs in transporting me, for they are growing confoundedly stiff, I can tell you."

As soon as the difficulty of conveying him to bed was surmounted, Frank, borrowing a neighbour's horse, rode off to the village for the assistance of Mr. Blandford, the only surgeon within some miles. He unfortunately being from home, Frank applied to me, supposing that a physician would answer the same purpose.

It was a case scarcely within my province, but conceiving I might be of some use, I put a lancet in my pocket, and accompanied the messenger on his way back to the farm.

I ascended to the apartment which the stranger occupied, and found him stretched upon the bed, apparently suffering very much from the effects of his accident. He regarded me, for some seconds, with a most acrimonious expression of countenance, and answered the questions which I found it necessary to put to him, at the least possible expense of

words; differing very much, in this particular, from the generality of patients who have come under my notice. Every allowance, however, was to be made for his temper, the equilibrium of which, it must be confessed, such a tumble as he had met with was very likely to derange. I bled him, as a precautionary measure, and ordered some simple applications to his ankle, which had been severely sprained, and was much swollen. After assuring him that he need not entertain any apprehensions for the result of his accident, for that a few days' confinement would be the extent of the inconvenience, I promised to call on him again in a few days, and took my leave.

On descending to the hall, I found the family assembled at their frugal supper, mingling their expressions of regret for the unpleasant occurrence, with conjectures as to the quality of the guest it had so unexpectedly procured them. Frank, who valued himself upon the knowledge he had acquired in his visits to the neighbouring market towns, and an excursion he had once made to the metropolis, pronounced him to be a *bagman*; the provincial appellation for a character which the language of modern refinement has dignified by the more imposing title of a "commercial gentleman."

They all, however, concurred in allowing that it mattered very little to them who or what he was ; through their remissness, in not having had the dog better secured, the accident had occurred, and therefore it behoved them to see that he did not want for any attention or comfort while in their house, of which it was more his misfortune than theirs that he was an inmate.

Agreeably to my promise, I called again at the farm, and found the stranger much improved, both in health and temper, although he was then very lame. He entered into conversation upon indifferent topics, in the course of which he dropped, as if incidentally, some questions regarding the character and circumstances of his host ; in answering which, I bore testimony to the high respectability and worth of the one, and expressed my regret at the change which had occurred in the other.

The unremitting assiduity with which he was waited on by the family, combined, perhaps, with the improvement in his health, appeared to have wrought a material change in his behaviour towards them. His manner was more conciliating, particularly to Amy, who was frequently in attendance upon him. He never made the remotest allusion to his accident, until one day when the unlucky cur

whose freak had occasioned it, happened to intrude into his apartment, he smiled, and remarked in reference to his own danger, and the sentence which had so nearly been executed on the dog, that their acquaintance had nearly proved fatal to both of them. He never mentioned his name, or dropped the slightest hint as to his quality, although there were some points in his conduct which did not altogether accord with the rank assigned to him by Frank. As soon as he could walk about without pain, he mingled freely with the family, and apparently took an interest in their concerns, and the business of the farm. The only suspicious circumstance connected with him was his uniformly retiring on the approach of strangers, so that, in fact, he was never seen by any but the family and their domestics.

The reader will not be surprised on learning that Amy had a lover; nay, he will rather marvel, perhaps, that she had not half a dozen, which, by the way, she might have had, for aught that I know to the contrary. Certain it is, however, she had but one favoured lover, and he was Robert Hawkhurst, the only son of an opulent freeholder in the neighbourhood, who farmed his own land. Robert was a tall, good-looking young man—Amy thought him

handsome—and his general bearing and habits of life were adapted to the wealth, rather than to the occupation, of his father, who had bestowed on him a fair education, kept him a horse, and extended to him other indulgences, which, it is but justice to add, were well merited by his son.

His father, who did not at first oppose the intimacy between Robert and Amy, had no wish, when he saw how matters were going with the Hodsons, that his son should involve himself in their misfortunes, and therefore had of late discountenanced, although he did not altogether forbid, his visits. But the prudent caution of age and the generous devotion of youth are somewhat opposite counsellors; and Robert, if he had not been too affectionately attached to Amy, possessed too honourable a mind to desert her when the tide of her family's prosperity was turning. On the contrary, it was his pride and pleasure to show to those around him, that the change in her circumstances had produced no alteration in his love. He always called for her on his way to church, and left her at the farm on his return. He would frequently put a side-saddle on his horse, a high-couraged but temperate animal, and take her for a ride; and he often observed, that he loved his bonny bay the

better, for carrying his Amy so safely. In fact, it was remarked that his attentions increased as the fortunes of the family were verging towards the crisis of ruin.

It was within a few days of the period which the stranger had fixed for his departure, and while he was sitting with Andrew Hodson and his family, that the steward was observed approaching, on horseback; when their guest, as was his custom, retired to his room, and, by accident or design, left the door communicating with the apartment he had quitted partially open. The visit of the steward was on no very agreeable errand, as may be imagined, its object being to demand payment of the rent due at the preceding quarter-day, the amount of which Andrew had used every exertion to raise, but in vain. The steward became pressing, and affected to lament the necessity imposed on him by the orders of his lordship, to distrain for the money, if it were not immediately forthcoming. The farmer, on the other hand, pleaded for a delay of a few weeks, alleging the hardness of the times for agriculturists, the very high rent at which he stood, and finally the severe loss he had sustained by the failure of the banker. The other, in reply, merely stated that the instructions of his master

were imperative, and admitted neither of modification nor delay.

“Alas!” said the distressed Andrew, “is there no method by which the sacrifice of my farming stock and furniture can be prevented?”

“There is one way, Master Hodson,” rejoined the steward, “at which I have hinted pretty strongly upon more than one occasion, but you either could not or would not understand me. You know I have long loved your daughter Amy, and if you will effectually favour my suit, I need scarcely tell you, that I would strain a point rather than that my father-in-law should be degraded in the eyes of the world by an execution being served upon his premises, and himself ejected from the farm.”

“What, master Jenkins, you marry my daughter Amy!” said the honest farmer.

“Ay, that I will!” responded the condescending steward, evidently mistaking an exclamation of surprise for an interrogatory.

“Stop, stop, master Jenkins,” rejoined Andrew, “not quite so fast. Have you ever said any thing to Amy about the matter?”

“Why, yes,” said the other, hesitatingly, “I have, but it is some time since.”

“ Well, and what did she say?”

“ Nothing very favourable, I must confess,” continued the steward, “ or I should have had to ask your sanction only, instead of the exercise of your interest, and, if necessary, your authority, on the occasion.”

“ What! I persuade Amy to marry a man she does not like! Are you mad, master Jenkins?”

“ Not quite,” was the reply; “ but I think you are, or you would not so hastily reject my offer. Come, come, Andrew, see your own interest, and favour my views, and I will not only at once advance the money for the arrears of rent, but use my influence with my lord to cancel the present lease, and grant you a new one on more easy terms.”

“ No!” said the farmer, “ not if you were to offer me the freehold, instead of a new lease. I will not sell my daughter to you, or any man; no, not if he was the king.”

“ Then take the consequences, obstinate fool!” exclaimed the steward, throwing off the mask: “ before you are three days older, you shall be left without a wisp of straw that you can call your own:” and he quitted the house breathing vengeance upon the devoted farmer and his family.

It occurred, that on the same evening, the stranger, pleading increased lameness, kept his apartment, into which Amy carried his tea. He remarked that her air was that of deep dejection, and that she had recently been in tears. On one occasion their eyes met, and she beheld him gazing upon her with an expression of kindness and sympathy, of which she had scarcely believed his rigid countenance susceptible.

“What has happened, my pretty maid, that you look so sorrowful?” said he, in a tone of almost paternal tenderness.

“Alas, sir!” said the afflicted girl, “my poor father has long been struggling with hard times and a heavy rent, and, being unable to raise the sum due at the last quarter, they are going to put an execution, I think they call it, on the premises, and turn him out of the house. I do not care so much for myself, but for my poor father and mother to be cast upon the wide world, in their old age, without a shilling, and, it may be, without a friend to help them—oh, sir! it is hard, it is very hard!” and she burst into tears.

The stranger drew out his handkerchief, and, passing it over his face, complained of the closeness of the evening, and walked to the window for air;

then, returning to Amy, he took her hand. "Nay, my poor girl," continued he, "be comforted; things may not come to so bad a pass as you anticipate; your landlord, from all that I know and have heard of his character, is not a man to push matters to extremities with so old and honest a tenant as your father."

"Alas, sir!" rejoined Amy, "the landlord, though they say he is far from being a bad-hearted man, lives abroad, and cannot, at that distance, know an honest tenant from a dishonest one. Besides, he leaves every thing to his steward, and he is a very wicked man, sir."

She was proceeding unreservedly to describe to him the situation of her father, and the motives and conduct of the steward, when the door was opened, and Robert Hawkhurst entered the room. He started on perceiving the stranger seated by the side of his Amy, holding her hand, and wiping the tears from her cheeks with his handkerchief.

"I beg pardon, I intrude," said the young man, as his brow became flushed, and he was precipitately quitting the room, when the stranger exclaimed, "Stop, sir!" in a tone of voice which startled Amy, while it arrested Robert in his progress towards the door.

The stranger walked across the room, with a firmness of step which did not quite agree with his recent plea of increased lameness, and, taking the young man by the arm, he drew, or rather dragged him, towards the window, and said, "I pray you, sir, to take the benefit of the little daylight that is left, and tell me if you do not think me a very likely personage to inspire the tender passion in the heart of a pretty damsel of nineteen. No, no, sir, my limbs are too old and too stiff, to lead so young a partner down the dance of life." Then, perceiving that the young gentleman was somewhat ashamed of the unfounded, though very natural suspicion that had crossed his mind, the senior added, "Go to, thou jealous-pated boy! surely an old man may offer consolation to a fair maiden in her distress, although he may not be so successful in the attempt as a young one whom I could name. Come, come, I know all about it: the next time you make love under my window, do not talk quite so loudly as you did the other night."

The stranger then quitted the room, pleading a desire to breathe a little fresh air before he retired to bed. On his return, in passing through the hall, he saw Andrew Hodson upon his knees, with an open book before him, and his fine countenance

lifted towards heaven in the act of prayer, while his family and domestics were kneeling around him. Unwilling to disturb them, the stranger did not advance into the room so as to be seen; but, as he contemplated the group, he could not help thinking that there must surely be something more in religion than his philosophy had ascribed to it, since it could inspire with calmness, and even thankfulness and resignation, a family who were upon the brink of ruin, and who might, on the morrow, like the Saviour in whom they trusted, have not where to lay their heads. "And these," thought he, "are they whom, under circumstances in which I should rather have been grateful to Providence for the preservation of my life, I stung with reproaches for what they could neither foresee nor prevent."

As he was passing on towards his bed-room, at the conclusion of the prayers, the farmer came up to him, and informed him of the calamity which was impending, intimating that it would be advisable for the stranger to depart early in the morning, as his horse would be included in the seizure which was expected to be made, under the execution, about noon.

"I thank you, Mr. Hodson," was the reply, "for your friendly caution, but never mind the

horse. You sheltered me in my misfortune, and I will not desert you in yours. I cannot help you out in the payment of your rent, for my purse, you see," continued he, producing it, "is somewhat of the lightest; but I will wait the event, and, if I cannot avert the storm, I will try to comfort you under it. By the way, farmer, a word with you: these retainers of the law will make clean work of it when they come. That steward, if report belie him not, has the eye and the rapacity of a hawk. They will not leave you so much as a wooden ladle. Now I see you have some valuable articles of plate;—that vase, for instance."

"Sir!" exclaimed Andrew inquiringly, having never before heard of such a thing.

"I mean the cup and cover there," explained the other.

"Ay," replied Andrew, "it was won by my grandfather at a ploughing match: it will grieve me to part from it."

"No doubt it would," said the stranger; "there are those tankards, too,—that ladle,—those massive old-fashioned spoons: they are all very portable."

"Well, sir?" said the farmer, not understanding the stranger's drift.

"How dull you are!" rejoined the other, touching

him with his elbow. "How easy would it be to get these things out of the way. You could confide them to some friend, or relative—your mother earth, for instance—until the sweeping hurricane of the law has blown over. You understand me now, do you not?"

"Sir," replied the farmer, "you mean well enough, I dare say, but you do not know old Andrew Hodson, or you would not have made such a proposal to him."

"Tush, man! the thing is done every day."

"I am sorry for it, sir, because the world must be much worse than I took it to be. The debt is just, though my creditor is a hard one, and I will pay him as far as the things will go."

"But I maintain that the debt is not a just one. Is not the rent much higher than is warranted by the value of the land?" said the stranger.

"No matter, I agreed to pay it."

"You are too scrupulous by half."

"Now, what do you suppose, sir, my neighbours would think of me, if I were to follow your advice?"

"Tut, tut, who will know any thing of the matter but you and I?"

"God Almighty, sir!" said the farmer.

"But consider, my good man," continued the

stranger, "there may be enough to pay your rent without these articles, the value of which would set you up in the world again; for, remember, these harpies will take every thing away from you."

"No, they won't: they can't take my wife, nor my children, nor my good name; and I would not part with one of them for all the gold that was ever coined."

"You will not be guided by my counsel, then, and remove the plate?" said the stranger.

"No, not a teaspoon of it," was the positive reply.

"Then I can only say," added the other, snatching up his candle, and hastening to bed, "that you are, without exception, the most obstinate, impracticable, honest old man I ever met with, and I must forswear your company."

The morning arrived on which the storm, which had been so long gathering, was to break over the heads of the devoted farmer and his family, who were stirring unusually early. In fact, the expectation of the catastrophe had allowed them to sleep but little, as their looks, when they assembled at the breakfast-table, plainly indicated. The stranger also had quitted his bed an hour before his wont,

and betrayed great restlessness in his manner, for he walked to the window, which commanded the road, every five minutes, as if watching for the arrival of the expected but unwelcome visitors.

Giles Jenkins was in advance of his myrmidons a quarter of an hour's march, and, taking the farmer apart, said to him, "Master Hodson, I did not threaten you without the power to execute. The officers will be here in a few minutes, which you will do well to use in reconsidering my proposal. Give me your daughter, and not only shall every thing about you remain as it is, but the possession of it shall be secured to you for many years."

The farmer, losing his patience at the repetition of the insulting proposal, shook off the tempter (who in his earnestness had taken him by the arm), and said, "Villain, do your worst, for not for all you are going to take away from me—no, not for all your master's money, twice told, will I sell my lamb to the wolf."

"Dotard," rejoined the steward, "you have pronounced your doom, and I go to fulfil it;" and, quitting the farmer, he conferred with his followers, who by this time had joined him, and they proceeded in their duty by taking an inventory

of the farming stock, before they began upon the household furniture.

Robert Hawkhurst arrived shortly afterwards, and assisted the stranger in his endeavours to console the afflicted family. One of the domestics at length informed them that the officers were coming into the house to finish their task, when the stranger betrayed some little agitation, and retired to that part of the room in which he was least likely to attract observation. He had scarcely time to effect this, before the steward and his retainers entered, and proceeded in their ungracious office without the slightest respect to the feelings of the sufferers. Giles Jenkins, in particular, appeared to exult in the exercise of his authority, and to take a pleasure in witnessing the distress which his cruelty had occasioned. The silver vase, before alluded to, was standing on a kind of sideboard in the apartment. The steward, who was about to remove it, had no sooner laid his fingers on it, than the voice of the stranger was heard exclaiming, "Mr. Jenkins, I'll thank you to let that cup alone, for I like it very well where it is."

The steward withdrew his hand from the vessel, as if it had been of heated iron. He turned as pale as death, his red nose, like a live ember on a heap

of ashes, adding to the ghastliness of his countenance. In the language of the poet,

“*Steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit;*”

and he looked about in all directions, as if he thought the person, from whom the voice proceeded, was as likely to drop from the clouds, or start out of the earth, as to make his appearance from any other quarter. The stranger at last arose from his seat, and with a dignity which none of the family had before observed him to assume, he advanced into the middle of the room, and confronted the steward; who, somewhat recovering from his surprise, and glancing at the other's bandaged leg, said, with an affectation of great concern, “My lord, I grieve to see your lordship so lame.”

“You mistake, you abominable old hypocrite and measureless liar,” said the earl; “a fortnight's residence in this house has cured me of my lameness, and my blindness too, and, having recovered the use of my own eyes, I shall have no further occasion for yours.”

“My lord!” stammered the steward.

“Your lord no longer,” said the earl, interrupting him: “how dared you, sir, for the gratification of your diabolical passions, abuse the powers

with which I intrusted you, and oppress this worthy man, in direct contravention of my injunction that you should, on no account, distrain upon a tenant, unless he were a fraudulent one. Now, be pleased to relieve me of your presence, taking with you these two worthy associates ; and, do you hear me, sir, let your accounts be made up with all despatch, for I shall shortly reckon with you." Then, addressing himself to the farmer, he continued: "Mr. Hodson, I am very sorry for the trouble which this unfortunate affair has occasioned you. It was necessary, however, that I should have such evidence of that man's baseness. For yourself, I can only say, that your arrear is remitted, your present lease shall be cancelled, and substituted by another, at such a rent, that it shall not be my fault if you do not thrive again. I owe you thus much for the lesson you have taught me of resignation under unmerited calamity, as well as for the instance you have given me of uncompromising integrity, under circumstances of temptation that very few would have withstood. I pray you to forgive me for the experiment I made on your honour in the matter of the plate. It is refreshing to me, in my old age, to meet with such examples in a world which,

I fear, I have hitherto regarded on the darker side.

“Your kindness, Mrs. Hodson, and yours, Amy, to a petulant old man, I shall not forget; nor your honourable adherence to your mistress and her family in their adversity, Mr. Robert. Of you, Frank, I have a favour to beg; you must give me that terrier of yours, to which I am primarily indebted for my introduction to this house, and for the advantages which have resulted to me from it.”

The earl, after taking a kind leave of the circle he had thus made happy, mounted his horse, and departed to his mansion, from which he had been so long absent, and to which he was returning when he met with the accident already related. The occurrences which followed so un auspicious an event, produced a most beneficial effect upon his mind: he became a better, and, consequently, a happier man. His lordship took up his permanent residence on the estate, to the great joy of the tenantry, and to the discomfiture of Mr. Jenkins, who, it is almost needless to add, was dismissed in disgrace.

I know it will be considered a somewhat trite

termination, if I finish my story with a marriage ; and yet, should any of my readers be curious upon the subject, I cannot deny that such an event took place, and that Amy forgot all her past sorrows in the *nepenthé* of her Robert's affections.

circumstances. If I had my story with a stranger
and yet should any of my readers be curious
to know I cannot deny that an event took
place, and that they have all but passed in
the world of our fiction's attention.

THE STRANGER

THE SMUGGLER.

THE KNIGHT

THE SAILOR

THE SMUGGLER.

“ Hang consideration !

When this is spent, is not our ship the same,
Our courage, too, the same, to fetch in more ?”

MASSINGER.

THE village where I resided was but a few miles from the sea, near which I had purchased a cottage ; and, for the convenience of bathing, and an occasional change of scene, I removed thither for some weeks in the autumn. It was on a very romantic part of the coast, but as its beauties had not yet been discovered by the fashionable world, it was resorted to by only a few, who, like myself, were fond of retirement. The sands were particularly fine, and, at low water, might, for several miles, be traversed, either on horseback or in a carriage, with perfect safety and convenience. The country was level for about a mile and a half from the shore, where it was divided from the inland district by a magnificent chain of hills, some of which were

crowned with wood, while the others afforded pasturage to a very celebrated breed of sheep. There was a river, navigable for some distance up the country, which discharged itself into the sea, and formed a harbour for vessels of considerable burden.

There were some cottages of less pretension scattered around my own, tenanted chiefly by fishermen, and others connected with the sea; and, among them, was one inhabited by a widow and her daughter, who, adding the produce of their industry in lacemaking to a small annuity, contrived to live in a style of respectability and comfort by no means characteristic of the majority of their neighbours.

Mrs. Homewood had indeed seen more prosperous days, and, being a woman of some talent and acquirements, had educated her daughter Margaret in a manner which consorted better with her former, than her present station in the world. Margaret was rather an interesting than a pretty young woman. She was tall and elegantly formed, but her complexion, though exquisitely fair, was colourless; her hair, of a deep auburn, was glossy and luxuriant; and her eyes, though gray, were rich in expression and brilliancy. In her disposition, enthusiasm was tempered by judgment, and

decision of character by perfect gentleness, and the most retiring modesty. The precepts of that religion on which her mother, in all her vicissitudes, had leaned for consolation and support, were early instilled into her mind, and maintained a powerful influence on her conduct. Her piety was ardent, consistent, and pure: it was not clouded by the gloom of the fanatic, nor contracted by the bigotry of the sectarian. She was not a *fancier* of religion: she did not do homage to her Maker out of compliment to some favourite and talented preacher. Her heart, while it worshipped God in spirit and in truth, overflowed in charity to all mankind; a charity which was not only applied to the wants, but extended to the failings, of those around her. Although she might truly be said to have "God in all her thoughts," she did not, like some zealous but injudicious persons, introduce religion in all societies, and mix it up with all subjects. She was not one of those who, by *spiritualizing*, as it is termed, on every occasion, degrade its dignity by unworthy, and oftentimes ridiculous associations. Neither did she run into the opposite, and, it must be confessed, the more dangerous extreme, and appear "ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Never did she neglect an opportunity of diffusing or en-

forcing its truths, nor allow an observation to its disparagement to pass in her presence unreprieved. The meanest hovel of the poor was often the temple from which her prayers arose, and the hard pallet of the sick bed the cushion on which her bible rested.

Among the associates of Margaret's infancy was Richard Dalton, who was remarkable as a very handsome and clever boy, and who attached himself to her in all their juvenile amusements. With her he would search the meadow for wild flowers, the woodlands for strawberries, and the beach for shells; and when their ramble was concluded, he would pour the produce of his own industry into her lap. In the course of time, their childish predilections assumed the more settled character of a mutual attachment. Their dispositions, however, were dissimilar in many essential particulars, although that dissimilarity was rendered less striking by the facility with which Richard adapted himself to the tastes, pursuits, and habits of Margaret; and yet, in this apparent consonance of tastes and principles, existed the main point of difference between them: Margaret's originating in her love of God, and Richard's springing from an attachment to an imperfect though beautiful creation of His hands.

Richard was generous and good-tempered; but there was a spirit of daring in his bosom, and a love of sway over his youthful companions of his own sex, altogether opposed to the mild and unassuming disposition of Margaret.

At the early age of fourteen, Richard had decided upon the path he should pursue in the world. Born and brought up, as he was, upon the coast, and familiar with shipping and sailors from his infancy, the preference he showed for the sea was natural, and was perhaps confirmed by an invincible repugnance, which he always expressed, to being bound to any trade; little reflecting, that there are few servitudes which involve so many hardships and privations as the apprenticeship of a sailor. Ambition, however, was the main prompter of his choice: the hope of one day walking the quarter-deck of a gallant ship, the arbiter of her movements, and the monarch of her crew, with, it might be, letters of marque in his locker, had irresistible charms for his romantic and daring nature.

Some years, however, of his apprenticeship passed away without producing any material change in his conduct. The master of the vessel in which he sailed was a man of devotional feelings, and strictly enforced the observance of the external duties

of religion among his crew. This circumstance, coupled with that of his voyages being principally to and from the port in which Richard was brought up, contributed to preserve in the latter many of the habits he had acquired in the society of Margaret, with whom, as he was very frequently on shore, a great portion of his time was still spent.

At length, however, his vessel was chartered for a voyage to distant regions; an event which occasioned much uneasiness in the mind of Margaret, who, with all her confidence in his good qualities, trembled at the temptations to which the life of a sailor is so much exposed. She loved him, too, with an intensity which rendered the idea of separation for such a period, painful under any circumstances, peculiarly distressing, when taken in connexion with the hazard which his profession of necessity involved.

On the evening previous to his departure, he called at Margaret's cottage to take leave of her. At the moment of parting, she put a bible into his hand, and said, in a tone in which solemnity and affection were blended, "Take this, Richard: it is the only gift I can bestow upon you, but it has that within its leaves which is more precious than gold. Be guided by its counsels: be warned by

its denunciations: be confident in its promises. Cherish it as the richest freight your bark can bear; fly to it in every affliction—consult it in every emergency. It will be your truest compass in the darkest night,—your unerring chart in the strangest seas,—your surest anchor in the wildest storm.”

For the first year after his leaving England, Margaret heard from him at intervals. His letters breathed the warmest affection, and were balm to her heart. A long period elapsed before she heard again, and then it was of, and not from him, and the tidings were vague and unsatisfactory. Intelligence was brought that he had been promoted in his ship; then came a rumour that he had quitted her. While Margaret was suffering under the apprehensions which the nature and contrariety of these reports so naturally tended to inspire, she had occasion to go to a village, about two miles distant, the road to which was by the beach; and, having been detained longer than she had expected, the evening was beginning to close in when she set out on her return. The moon, although but in its first quarter, cheered and illumined her path, while its beams were dancing upon the waves that rippled by her side; and Margaret, having frequently performed the same journey at as late an hour, felt

little apprehension for her safety. When she had arrived within half a mile of her mother's cottage, she observed, about a hundred yards in advance of her, a dark line, extending from the water's edge to the highest part of the beach. On approaching nearer, she heard a confused murmur of voices, and found that they proceeded from a body of men, engaged in transferring some packages from a boat, to the backs of several horses collected on the bank which divided the shingle from the meadows. Her first impulse was to retrace her steps; but a moment's reflection upon the anxiety which her protracted absence would occasion to her mother, determined her to proceed, and endeavour to cross the almost continuous line, at the point which appeared to present the least obstacle to her progress. This, however, she was not permitted to do; and, in the attempt, was surrounded by a number of persons, whose occupation and discourse left no doubt of their being a party of smugglers, engaged in *running* a cargo of contraband goods.

They insisted, in no very gentle language, upon her remaining on the spot until the operation in which they were engaged was completed; doubtless with the view of preventing her from giving such information, in her way, as might lead to their

being interrupted, and perhaps despoiled of their cargo. One or two of them, in enforcing their mandate, laid their hands on her somewhat rudely, and Margaret, struggling to disengage herself, earnestly implored them to let her pass. She had scarcely spoken, when a tall person, who appeared to be the leader of the gang, suddenly quitting the work on which he was employed, approached the spot where she was, and, in a voice of authority, commanded them to release her, and return to their duty. He then, taking her hand, said, "Margaret! is this an hour for you to be walking here without protection?"

As she looked up, the moon shed a faint beam upon the speaker's countenance. "Richard!" she exclaimed, "and leagued with such as these!"

"Ay, Margaret," was the calm reply, "even so, and all of them honest men and true."

"Alas, Richard!" rejoined the maiden, "call you these honest—these wild and lawless men?"

"Nay, Margaret," continued the other, "blame rather those who make, than us who break, the law. We pay honestly for our goods, and deal faithfully with those who buy them of us; and where is the merchant, who meanly contributes out of his gains

to pamper the luxury of the tyrants who oppress him, that does more?"

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Margaret, clasping her hands together in agony, and looking upwards, her eyes sparkling in the moonbeam, and streaming with tears, "that I should have lived to see him thus banded with the worthless and the vile, and hear him justify the connexion."

At that moment, and just as the smugglers had taken the last package from the boat, and were moving from the beach, there was a cry from one of them of "'Ware hawk!" and immediately a party of revenue officers appeared from behind a projection in the bank. The foremost called upon Richard to surrender. He replied by drawing a pistol from his belt, and, taking a deliberate aim at the man, fired. His shot, which did not take effect, was returned by another, which whistled past Margaret's ear, but was equally harmless. Richard then leaped upon a horse, which had been left for him, and rode off in the direction of his band. They were, in all probability, pursued by the opposite party, for when Margaret, who had fainted, came to herself, she was alone.

Her first duty, on her arrival at the cottage,

after satisfying her mother of her safety, was to seek her chamber, and, casting herself upon her knees, to thank God for the preservation of her life. When she arose, she began to reflect upon the fearful occurrences of the evening, and to weep bitterly over the hope which they had blighted for ever. She had beheld him, whom she had so long loved as a dearer self, leagued with a band of ferocious men, whose daring and lawless exploits were the talk of the whole country. She had heard him justifying, if not glorying in, his connexion with them; and, what inspired her with greater horror than all, she had seen him deliberately attempt the destruction of a fellow being. She felt, in the deepest anguish of spirit, that he was utterly unworthy of the place she had so long given him in her affection; and she knew that, although her passion was interwoven with the tenderest fibres of her heart, it was her duty to pluck it thence, and to resign him for ever; “for what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” But, alas! she had set up the idol so firmly in her bosom, that she had not strength to cast it down. To whom, then, did she fly, but to Him who is the strength of all such as put their trust in Him? Humbling herself, there-

fore, at the footstool of His mercy, she implored His assistance in the work. Fervent, and often repeated were her petitions, and, as she prayed in the spirit of him who said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," her importunity prevailed, and she was at length enabled to sacrifice, upon His altar, the passion that had inthrallled her, and to implore His forgiveness for having cherished it so long.

The reports which had previously reached her, regarding Richard, were not without foundation. As his former correctness of conduct was the effect of habit, induced and preserved by an overruling passion, rather than of principle, his resolution yielded to the first powerful temptation. He, by degrees, grew less fervent in his duty to his God, and at last totally neglected it. He imperceptibly acquired a taste for the dissipation and extravagance for which men of his pursuits are but too remarkable. Still, however, his quickness and attention to his professional duties were such as to procure for him the good opinion of those with whom he sailed, and, at the expiration of his apprenticeship, he was made the mate of a vessel in the merchant service. This situation, the offer of the command of a schooner, employed in a contraband traffic

between Holland and England, induced him to abandon; and thus the elements in his character, which, had his path in life been different, might have made a hero, combined to form a daring and desperate smuggler.

More than a year had passed away, and she heard no tidings of him. One evening, after having been closely occupied at her work, she walked out upon the beach. The preceding night was one of storms and wrecks, and the waves, which had been subsiding during the day, broke gently upon the shore, moaning like a repentant sinner for the evil he has committed. After strolling for some distance, she sat down upon a bank of sand, and was gazing upon the vessels that were spreading their sails to the wind in the offing. She heard a step behind her, and, immediately turning round, she beheld Richard Dalton. "Margaret," said he, "we parted in a tempest, we meet in a calm. Fortune has smiled upon my enterprises."

"And Heaven has frowned upon your deeds," was the answer.

"But do not you frown upon me, Margaret," rejoined Richard; "you once loved me."

"Ay," she replied, "but not more fervently than I have since implored of God to aid me in

tearing your unworthy image from my bosom. It has cost me many a prayer, and many a pang; but it is done."

"And have you so soon forgotten me?" said Richard reproachfully.

"Yes, Richard Dalton, in all but in my prayers; and they have been, and are, constantly offered, that your feet may be turned from your evil ways."

"And your prayers have been heard, Margaret, for I have made my last trip,—have realized enough to lay up in harbour for the rest of my life; and am about to quit, not only my late pursuits, but the companions of them. Call you not this turning away from my sins?"

"Yes," replied Margaret, "with the wages of them in your hand. Oh, Richard! this may pass with men, but God is not to be mocked. Remember, He sees your heart, and that, alas! is unchanged."

"To you it is, indeed, unchanged," he replied; "but tell me, what are those my sins which you regard with such pious horror? The law I have broken is but a human one, and is not sanctioned by justice."

"Oh! it is not that, Richard—I know not, I care not, whether the law be just or unjust; but can I

forget that you have been associated with a band of ruffians, with whose atrocious deeds the whole country is ringing? Can I forget your deliberate attempt upon the life of a fellow creature who had never wronged you?"

"He *would* have wronged me though; was he not endeavouring to rob me of my property?" demanded Richard; "but," he added, "I do but waste time, and risk my safety: listen to me, then. I have, as I told you, been successful—beyond my hopes, successful. My schooner is at anchor in the bay;—fly with me, then, to Holland, France, Italy, to any climate you prefer; only be mine, and you shall do with me as you please."

"No, Richard, not to share the wealth of India would I be your wife. I have no part with you; leave me, I beseech you," said the maiden.

"Nay, Margaret, but hear me—"

"I have listened too long—farewell—may God give you grace to repent," she said, and was turning away from him, when Richard gave a shrill whistle. She was immediately surrounded by sailors, enveloped in a large cloak, to stifle her screams, and hurried into a boat, which, at that instant, shot round a point of land.

The outrage could not have been committed

many minutes, before it was announced to me by some persons who had observed it, but from such a distance, as to render interference impossible, even if it could have been availing. I hastened to the beach, with the hope of engaging some of the boatmen in the pursuit; but they, reasonably enough, alleged the madness of unarmed men attempting to cope with so desperate a gang as the smugglers.

Casting my eyes along the shore, I perceived a boat, belonging to a frigate then riding at anchor in the bay, waiting for an officer who was walking down the shingle towards it. I accosted him as he was about to embark, and briefly stated the circumstance which had occurred. He was a fine, frank, noble-looking youth, about eighteen, the younger son, as I afterwards learned, of a peer. He listened very courteously to my relation, and replied, "Sir, I fear I can do little in the case; the smuggler's boat is already too far on her way to be overtaken; even if my orders permitted the attempt. But," said he, after a pause, "I will do thus much for you; I will give you a seat in the gig to the frigate, where you may see the captain, who may perhaps lend you some assistance in recapturing the prize."

With due acknowledgments, I accepted the offer

of the young gentleman, who threw a cloak over my shoulders, stowed me away very snugly, and took his seat at the helm. "Now, my lads," said he, addressing his men, "bear a hand; the smuggler will get under weigh, as soon as her boat is hoisted on board, and if night come on before we can do any thing, good bye to her."

The crew of the boat were as fine a set of men as I ever beheld. The man who pulled the after oar, being of course next to me, I had an opportunity of particularly observing. He was nearly six feet high, but, from having lived so much between decks, he had acquired a slight stoop. He was, I understood, the captain's coxswain. On the little finger of his right hand was a very massive gold ring, apparently of foreign manufacture; and, around the middle finger of the left hand, was tattooed, a ring intersecting a heart, an emblem of constancy which struck me as being highly poetical. The connexion which existed between this man and the officer who commanded the boat was an interesting one. They had sailed together, under the same captain, for some years; and when the midshipman first entered the service, the strong arm of the bluff seaman very frequently stood him in good stead. When the youngster was ordered

upon duty aloft, and he was deliberating between his honour and "lubber's hole," the powerful grasp of the coxswain would pull him into the top by the orthodox route. Often, too, in the battle, when boarding the enemy, has honest Ben interfered between some sturdy opponent and the midshipman, whose boyish arm was unequal to the contest which his courage had provoked. These kind offices, which had procured for the rough tar the appellation, among his messmates, of the middy's nurse, were not lost upon the young gentleman, who availed himself of every occasion to show his sense of them; and, indeed, had so successfully exerted his interest with the captain, that it was understood the coxswain was to be made a warrant officer upon the first opportunity.

The gig was, in the mean time, making her way through the billows. The men were urged and encouraged to exertion by their juvenile officer, who, from time to time, exclaimed to them, "Give way, give way, my lads! that's right, bowse her through it: remember your grog!" Before, however, we reached the frigate, I had the mortification of observing that the smugglers had gained their vessel, which got under weigh, and stood out to sea, with most of her sails set.

I sent my card to the captain of the king's ship, and was ushered into his apartment, which was spacious, well furnished, and elegantly fitted up, the panels being of mahogany, with gilded mouldings. He was seated at a table, with a book in his hand. He was apparently about forty years old; rather short in stature, which, however, the lowness of the ceiling rendered less obvious than it would otherwise have been. He was, notwithstanding, a well-made and rather handsome man; and a strong expression of decision was imparted to his countenance by a natural or habitual compression of the nether lip.

He received me in a manner which combined the frankness of the sailor with the elegance of the gentleman, and listened with much courtesy to my story, which, when I had finished, he said, "Sir, without presuming to doubt a syllable of the communication which you have done me the honour to make, I fear it is scarcely warrant sufficient for me to interpose my authority in the matter. It would be a pity, too, for the poor girl to be carried off in this manner. However, we will see what can be done. Mr. ****," he added, addressing the first lieutenant, who entered at the moment, "do you

know any thing of that schooner upon the weather beam?"

"I know her well enough, sir," was the reply; "she is the Wolf smuggling vessel. She has succeeded in running her last cargo, and is now returning for another."

"Who commands her?" inquired the captain.

"A man they call handsome Dick, a very bold and desperate fellow," answered the other.

"This tallies with your story," said the captain, turning to me, and, again addressing the lieutenant, he desired that the schooner might be brought to.

The officer having given the necessary direction, a gun was fired, and, shortly after, he re-entered to report that the vessel had disregarded the signal.

"Say you so?" said his superior; "then put a shot before the next cartridge, and the gun may speak plainer perhaps." The captain followed the lieutenant, and, being invited to accompany them, I was much interested by the scene which took place.

As soon as the orders were communicated to the captain of the gun, he exclaimed, "Ay, ay, sir:" and after adjusting the elevation, added, "There goes, then, right athwart her fore-foot." So truly

was the ball aimed, that it dipped immediately under the bowsprit of the schooner, and threw the spray over a man who was standing on her fore-castle. The smuggler, however, had the audacity not only to continue on her course, but to hoist an additional sail. "The fellow is mad," said the captain; "let the next hint be a little stronger."

"Shall I drill a hole in her mainsail, your honour?" inquired the man at the gun, of the officer who gave the order.

"A little higher, Tom, for fear of accidents," was the reply.

"Ay, ay, sir," repeated the man. The next shot carried away the smuggler's gaff, and her mainsail fell down upon the deck. Some confusion prevailed on board of her for a few seconds, and at length she hove to.

"Mr. ****," said the captain, addressing the midshipman who had brought me on board, "as you have led us into this scrape, you may as well go through with it. Man a boat, therefore; board the schooner, and if, in overhauling her, you find a young woman who has no desire to remain there, bring her away with you."

The young gentleman touched his hat, and went below, whence he returned immediately, with a

brace of pistols in his belt. The men who were appointed to attend him were also armed.

“Take care, sir!” said the captain to the midshipman, as the latter was going over the ship’s side, “that no unnecessary violence is resorted to. I know you have a ready hand where blows are to be struck, although the smuggler will scarcely show fight within the range of our guns.”

The young officer and his party were soon on the schooner’s deck, and, on inquiring if there was not a female on board, were answered in the negative.

“You have a bad memory, friend,” said the young gentleman to the man who gave the answer, “and deserve to have it refreshed with a rope’s end. Here,” continued he, addressing his men, “some four or five of you, come with me below, while the rest remain on deck, and see that none of the schooner’s men follow us.”

The party proceeded straight to the cabin, the door of which was closed, but they could distinctly hear the sobbing of a female in distress, and the voice of a man endeavouring to soothe her. The door not being opened at their summons, Ben, who was of the party, split it to shivers with his foot; and, on entering, they found the captain of

the schooner and the object of their search. Dalton started up, and demanded, in an angry tone, what they wanted on board his vessel?

“Merely to deliver a message to that young woman,” said the midshipman, “from the captain of his majesty’s frigate ****, and to inform her, that, if she does not like her berth here, his protection is at her service if she chooses to claim it.”

Margaret, thus addressed, suddenly disengaged herself from Dalton, and, clinging to the arm of the young officer, exclaimed, “I do claim your protection, sir! Oh, if you have any pity, do not leave me in the power of that ruthless man!”

“Never fear, young woman,” was the reply; “it is not a trifle that shall part us then.” The midshipman was turning, to conduct his new charge upon deck, when Richard asked for a few moments’ conference, which, being granted, he approached her ear, and said:

“Are you so blind, Margaret, as not to perceive, that, in quitting one who will make you his wife the instant his foot touches the shore, to embrace the specious offer of this man-of-war captain, you will abandon an honourable for a dishonourable protection? With what character, think you, will you land in the morning, after having passed the

night in the frigate, which, from the lateness of the hour, you must necessarily do? To quote from your favourite book, do you hope to touch pitch and not be defiled?"

"Oh, Richard," she replied, "add not another blasphemy to the fearful catalogue of your crimes. I will trust myself with this young gentleman. He will not, he cannot, offer injury or insult to an orphan maiden in her distress."

"As a man of honour, young woman," replied the gallant youth, "I could not do so, and, as an officer, I dare not."

As he spoke, he took Margaret by the hand, and assisted her upon the deck, whither Dalton followed them, and, turning to his mate, who was surrounded by his ship's crew, he exclaimed, "Will you stand by, Jack, and you my messmates, and see your captain used in this fashion?"

"Why," said the mate, hitching up his trousers with one hand, and depositing a piece of tobacco in his mouth with the other, "I will stand by my captain as long as another, in any cause, or in no cause, for that matter, against reasonable odds; but it is stark madness to talk about resistance, under the guns of a four-and-forty, that will sweep every stick and stitch away from us at the first fire, run

us alongside in the twinkling of a handspike, and then the yard-arm will be too good for the best of us. I told you all along what would come of this precious freight of yours."

Dalton, half frantic at being deprived of his prize, and at the defection of his crew, rushed forward, and, seizing Margaret's arm, as she was approaching the gangway, he said, in a voice of strong agitation,

"Then you will leave me? You will not be mine?"

"Never!" was the reply.

"Then no other's shall you be!" he exclaimed; and, drawing a pistol, presented it at Margaret, and fired.

A blow, however, from the dirk-handle of the midshipman, whose quick eye had detected the murderous purpose, diverted the pistol at the moment of explosion, and the shot passed harmless through the gunwale of the schooner.

The crew of the smuggler succeeded in mastering their frantic commander, in time to prevent the direction of his remaining pistol to his own bosom, while Margaret, who had fainted, was conveyed over the ship's side. She had scarcely recovered, when the midshipman entered the state-room of

the frigate, where I was sitting with the captain, to report the completion of the duty upon which he had been despatched, and to take his further orders.

“Let her be restored to her friends without delay,” said the captain; of whom, having extorted from him a promise to spend a day with me before he quitted the station, I took my leave, with many acknowledgments for the assistance I had received, and accompanied Margaret in the boat.

The inhabitants of the little village were assembled on the shore when we landed, and raised a shout of exultation as I presented to them the evidence of my success.

THE END.

LONDON:

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A

The report of the committee on the
subject of the proposed amendment
to the constitution of the State
is hereby presented to the people.

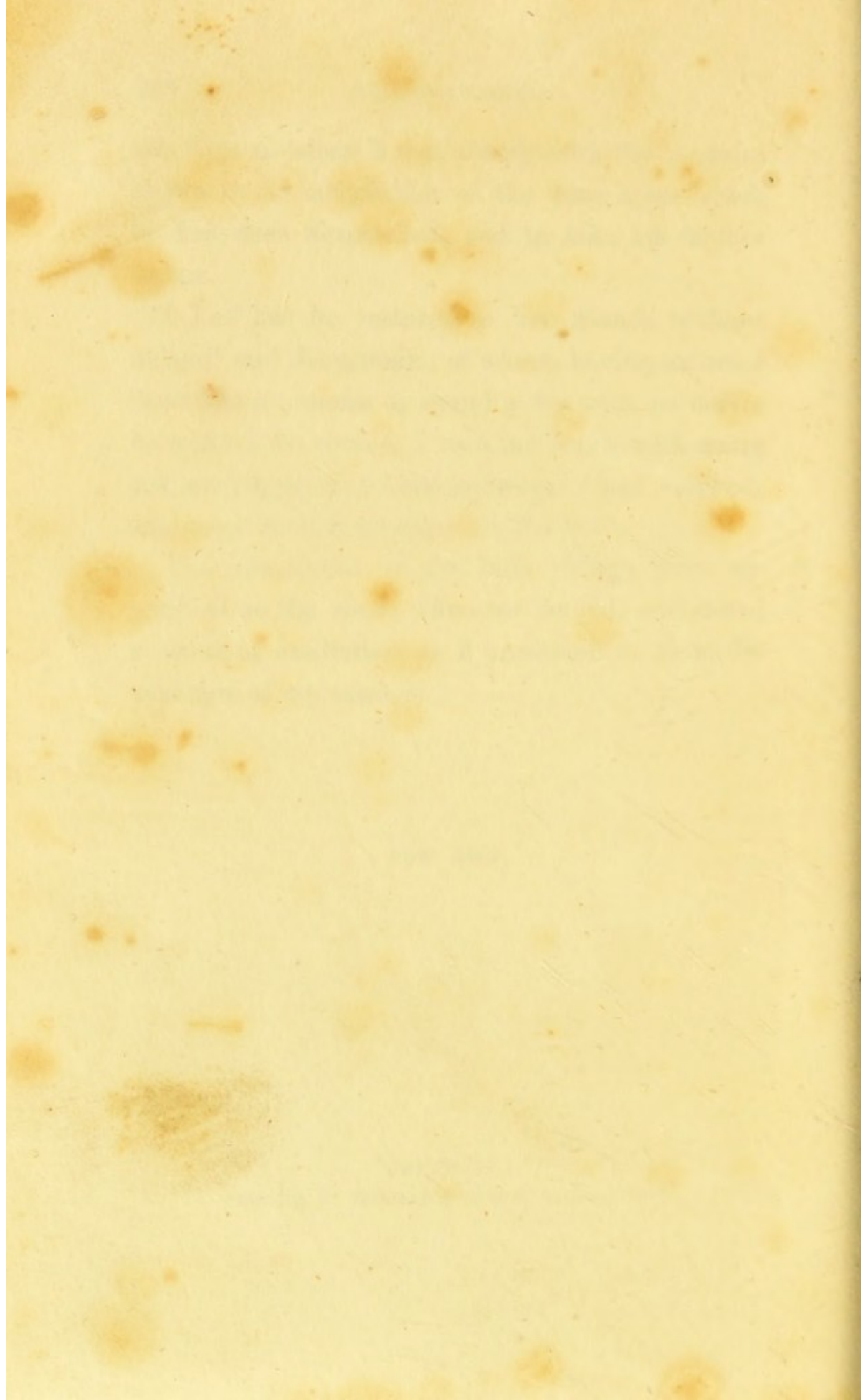
The committee on the subject of the
proposed amendment to the constitution
of the State, and its members, have
been instructed to report to the people
the result of their deliberations.

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6 Nov.

